

Midland DHB Leadership Conference

Novotel – Rotorua

Collaborative Leadership – Consultation + Collaboration = Results

Tena koutou katoa

Ko Matawhaura te maunga
Ko Rotoiti te moana
Ko Ngati Hinerangi te whanau
Ko Ngati Pikiao te iwi
Te Arawa te waka

Anei te taha o taku papa

Ko Ngaroma Grant ahau

Greetings to you from across our land and I support Eru's warm welcome to you all

My name is Ngaroma Grant - I am CE for the Korowai Aroha Health Service.

The discussion today on collaboration, leadership, consultation and the production of results will be a familiar one for many of us who have undertaken leadership training and who are required to lead our organizations into the future in these changing times

First of all though, let's have a look at the steps behind our modern thinking and discuss how working together must have shaped the world for our tupuna – our ancestors

In earlier times, to be able to communicate strategy, gather forces, identify each other's weaknesses and depend upon each other's strengths would have meant the difference between life and death – it meant the ability to work together to hunt, live, keep warm, be safe - survive in fact

The terms changed over the years – we became familiar with phrases like – the magna carta, treaty, charter, founding document, declaration.

More recently, we hear in this busy, business driven, outcome focused time phrases like service level agreements, memorandum's of understanding, consultative approaches to planning

Do we actually mean anything different than we really meant at the beginning of time?

We may not need to band together any more to stay alive – pandemic scares may indicate that can be questioned – but the reality is the same. We need to work together if we want success and this totally depends upon the relationships we develop and how we maintain them. Like the relationship between Leonhard Euler and Ivan Kulibin seen here following the successful testing of the model of the one-arch bridge – these relationships take trust, time and planning to produce successful results.

The discussion today is to look at how collaboration, through effective consultation, produces results. We may end up with more answers by the end of this discussion - but the journey for us as leaders is a thrilling and eventful one in all respects.

I have a question for you all – from what frame / from what vision are you leading your organization? Where you reference your thoughts, drive, passion, is always the motivating factor behind how we collaborate and consult.

We've all been to leadership courses and heard this but this is really, really important – there MUST be a vision and everyone working for you, working with you, must be a part of that. This vision will be the touch-stone for any future planning, discussion, values development or strategy.

Unfortunately though, sometimes organizations develop their vision, and then make the vision so ambiguous, no-one can actually see what it is – take care about that

From this base of common vision and value then – and this is a huge piece of work, I know – we can turn to collaboration.

The term 'Collaboration' presumes the intent to discuss and negotiate – however, in the modern sense, what we really do is develop our thoughts, write them down, we may seek some advice about our document and then we go out to present these thoughts to a select group, committee, community or roopu.

This is the way leadership with a business intent or a focus on time-saving/money saving/ resource efficiency may consult. It is an effective way to deal with input from large numbers of people in a short space of time.

This is not collaboration in the sense that I am speaking of – because sometimes when we speak to that select group, committee, community or roopu, they may not agree with us..... believe me that's happened to me and probably many of us. And particularly Maori do not take kindly to this style of consultation.

Collaboration – with the intent to consult – is exactly that. Discussing in an open-minded manner – open to changes or critique what may be possible. The driver however, is that shared vision. Ownership and development of new ideas and strategy come about because people can see that they can make a difference and be a part of forwarding the vision they believe in. Decisions can then be made together rather than in isolation. That takes time, interest in the perspective of others and a commitment to seeking out answers to our questions before we make up our minds about what may be written.

Imagine what it is to collaborate at a Finance ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting on international banking – now that would take something.

The fundamental factor that makes a difference to how successful we are in our collaboration is how we lead our organizations and what vision we have for and with others. Is it a vision of survival or a vision of people – connected, focused and in tune with each other and the outcomes they want to achieve. In other words is our organization a balance of staff, excellent core business and financial responsibility or one of output driven and short term planning to avoid crisis? This committee met in the Raffles Hotel in Singapore for their annual meeting over two days – their work is effective because of the common vision they share and the commitment to achieving the same outcomes.

This doesn't just work on a grand international scale however, we all learn skills in negotiation, trust and relationships from a very young age – we hone our skills and develop them but basically, we all want to be on a committed team that makes a difference.

This work is not easy. Leadership has never been easy. Mason Drurie discusses how - much will be asked of us in the future as leaders. Among the many impacts of globalisation, health leaders will be especially challenged by specific possibilities. First, and in parallel with the 'export' of New Zealand medical staff, there is internationalisation of health and there is a need for us to develop our own skills in creating relationships based on differing societal ethos. We must learn and re-learn quickly how to do this. Our capacity to collaborate effectively depends on our ability as organisational leaders to engage in meaningful collaboration and consultation with all cultures.

Secondly the ageing workforce and the parameters of sustainability point to the need for accelerated leadership. However, accelerated leadership assumes that health leadership will have the characteristics of a career. Planning for accelerated leadership assumes that young people will see health as a long term option that provides opportunities to develop their strategic planning, relationship building and systems management skills and these skills can be practised and developed. With the current view of career development and multiple career change, the understanding of leadership development within health takes on some urgency - what will be required of us to be able to effectively collaborate and plan in this climate?

Chris Newman of the Centre for Management and Organization Effectiveness (CMOE) – presents us with a further dynamic – “our new challenge as leaders is to bring real collaboration to an increasingly virtual world”.

This is a challenge for the future – (however, it may also be the TOOL of the future) this too will be a part of the development of future leadership – that we will not have the luxury of direct contact and more and more our communications and development of relationships will be sustained through different media and other forums.

We are required to interact with our fellow human beings in a way that recognizes in each other the sharing of strengths and thoughts and skills to enhance our potential as individuals and organizations – to develop in fact - our society.

I am absolutely clear that the decisions we make as leaders in our organizations effect that society. We, all those of us here today, influence health, education, business and we have a responsibility to do that well and to the best of our capacity – if we don't we have our children and grandchildren to hold us to account.

So it is in our skill in creating and maintaining relationships and our capacity to hold the vision for our organizations that real collaboration and consultation can take place – so that all can benefit – so that we can live our lives knowing we make a difference.

I want to leave you with is from Barack Obama:

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time
- we are the people we have been waiting for – we are the change we seek”

It is up to us to develop the skills needed to go forward, to do our jobs well, to create a healthy Aotearoa-NZ for us all.

Thank you for your time today and I wish you well in your endeavors in the future.

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