



Data Works Sheet: Collaboration

*using survey data to launch reflection, discussion,
and action in Minnesota theaters*

We asked ... Think of the MN theaters with which you have direct knowledge and experience. Where have you seen **effective collaboration**? This could be for a production, within a department, within the organization, or with another organization. **How did it happen** and **what was its impact**?

People said ... They've seen it, there are ways to make it happen, and it has impact!

Where have people seen effective collaboration?

(pretty much
everywhere)

- ◆ For **productions** (traditional, devised, touring, festivals, series)
- ◆ Within **overall organizations** of all sizes and all types
- ◆ Among all types of **departments** within organizations
- ◆ **Between organizations** (theaters, art organizations, service organization, libraries, buildings, community education, schools)
- ◆ **One person** who leads the collaboration or creates the environment for it
- ◆ Between **two people**
- ◆ Within a **team**
- ◆ Across **departments**
- ◆ People in different **roles** (employees, contractors, volunteers)
- ◆ **Peers** across organizations

How do people say collaboration happens?

1. **Create a team** with people good at collaboration, those who:
 - ◆ Work well independently and with others
 - ◆ Are experts, creative, offer a different perspective
 - ◆ Can communicate well
 - ◆ Are sensitive, kind, warm
 - ◆ Pitch in, help others
2. **Be clear** about and focused on:
 - ◆ Vision, purpose, goals
 - ◆ Tasks, roles, and responsibilities
3. **Trust** your people
4. Provide **leadership**
5. **COMMUNICATE**
 - ◆ Do it clearly, early, and often
 - ◆ Use regular meetings (or whatever works best for people involved)
 - ◆ Include all voices at the table
 - ◆ Ask for input
 - ◆ Listen
 - ◆ Connect old and new people; bring new people in
6. Give it **time**

Source: The PAHRTS (Performing Arts Human Resources Toolkit Series) survey, funded by the Mardag Foundation and developed by a [Minnesota Theater Alliance](#) steering committee and consultant [Rachel Brown](#) was conducted in August 2015. Over 400 people who work in MN theater – in production, creation, and administration roles—responded to the 34-question survey. As a pilot study, this data is NOT representative of the field as a whole but provides a starting point for discussion and more research. For more information, see <http://www.pahrts.mntheateralliance.org>



What do people identify as collaboration's impact?

1. Good for the product
 - ◆ Better art
 - ◆ More programs
 - ◆ More money
 - ◆ Greater attendance
2. Good for people
 - ◆ Makes the work more ... easy, fun, smooth, efficient, creative, rewarding
 - ◆ Creates a sense of ownership
 - ◆ Creates a better experience for audience, patrons, volunteers
3. Solves problems
 - ◆ New ways of doing things
 - ◆ Different perspectives
 - ◆ More efficient, economical
4. More economical when resources are shared
 - ◆ Things (props, sets, light boards, lists, etc.)
 - ◆ People (skills, schedule)
5. Enriches community
 - ◆ Widen audiences
 - ◆ Builds programming

Thoughts and Questions ...

... for Organizations

- Do you want your organization to be known as a collaborative place to work? If so, why? Compare your motivations with those from survey respondents (orange box above) to see if there are other benefits that could motivate you.
- Where do you see effective collaboration in your organization? Are there particular departments, people, teams, or types of productions that are more collaborative than others? If so, how can they share their expertise with others in the organization?
- Check your practices against the survey respondents' list of ways collaboration happens (blue box on previous page). What can you do, do more of, or do better?

... for Individuals

- Do you see yourself as collaborative? Compare your motivations with those of survey respondents (orange box above) to see if there are other benefits that could motivate you.
- Do others see you as collaborative? (If you don't know, asked a trusted colleague or friend). If there is a disconnect between how you and others see you as a collaborator, explore those differences.
- Find someone who collaborates well and talk to them about the strategies they use for effective collaboration.

For more information, see the Collaboration section of the PAHRTS online Toolkit at <http://www.pahrts.mntheateralliance.org>

Leaders: How to Use this Data Works Sheet in Your Organization

1. Examine the data yourself and reflect on your responses to it.
2. Explain to staff the background of the data and its purpose – to help organizations improve management of their most important resource, the humans!
3. Ask staff to respond to the questions themselves. Let people keep their responses private.
4. Together, review the data presented in this Data Works Sheet. Given your organization's context, what is surprising? Obvious? Different? Affirming? Challenging?
5. What practices can you, as individuals and an organization, change to address the issues raised through these reflections?

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