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## HOW COLLABORATION WORKS: LEVERAGING THE POWER OF A COMMON GOAL

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An organization with whom we work was studying how to increase its wins with clients. In a deep-dive study, they found that collaboration was key. While this isn't novel – everyone knows collaboration is important – it was the specifics of the proof statement that were powerful. The report found that in order for their 1000-person sales group to win new clients, various factors made a difference. They were things like having a champion inside the potential customer, having a great product, building personal relationships, and the like. They found that the factor that made the most difference though, and actually had a predictive effect, was the presence or absence of a strong team. In fact, without strong collaboration and an effective team, they lost the sale between 60% – 70% of the time. Collaboration was utterly necessary to their success and without it, nothing else mattered as much – not the inside champion, not the product, not the relationships with the client.

In the corporate world, sometimes there is pressure to quantify the business impact of teams or collaboration, and this is one powerful example of collaboration's effects on business outcomes. Collaboration matters and it's a key part of

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There are plenty of definitions of collaboration, but from

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, it is teamwork that is driven by a common goal. And this unifying objective makes a big difference. The team has to be working together toward a common aim. This seems straightforward enough, but it's actually more complex than you might think, because the common goal helps to create the conditions for success down the road.



At Mars Drinks, we've dug into collaboration in detail. Based on deep literature review and partnerships with social science experts, we find that collaboration has some very specific ingredients. While there are a lot of things to pay attention to, we've narrowed to an elegantly simple list of 7 factors including:

1. common goals
2. communication and open sharing
3. giving and receiving help
4. appreciation and recognition
5. adaptation to change
6. well-managed conflict
7. coordination outside the team

When teams have these 7 key factors in place, they will outperform other teams who struggle without these kinds of conditions.

It's all about the phenomenon of a common goal. Here's a classic story that illustrates the point: There was a group of middle school boys on a camping trip in the mountains. They were arguing and generally not getting along or working well together. As they were setting up camp, a giant storm came up unexpectedly. The boys were suddenly united against the storm and working together to quickly set up tents, secure equipment, and generally persist through the night. The common goal of surviving the storm united the group and helped to resolve conflicts. It clarified what was important – and what was not – so the group could really focus on what was most critical.

Common goals are like this. For sales groups, for surviving a storm, for all kinds of teams and the challenges they face, shared goals unite us. They illumine priorities, and they align our efforts. They aren't all it takes of course, but they do tend to make everything else more clear on the path toward creating Workplace Vitality™.

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*Tracy Brower, PhD, MM, MCR is the Global VP of Workplace Vitality for Mars Drinks and the author of Bring Work to Life by Bringing Life to Work: A Guide for Leaders and Organizations which focuses on work-life fulfillment. Mars Drinks creates great-tasting moments at work and is a 100% workplace dedicated segment of Mars, Incorporated. Mars Drinks supports businesses who want to provide great working environments for their people by creating Workplace Vitality™ at the intersection of workplace engagement, collaboration, productivity and well-being.*

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