

Most businesses face regular changes in the technology they need to do their work, or in the demand for their products and the emerging challengers in their markets. Employees operating individually can miss a lot and be slow to react. They may not see what is happening until it is too late, and they typically need to bring together multiple skill sets in new ways to address changes. **Collaboration is critical to business success.**

At the same time, many educational systems still emphasize individual effort, and companies often focus on recognizing the “rock stars” who do great on their own. As your newer employees arrive from schools where they were taught to work by themselves, and as longer-term employees have spent their careers focused on individual achievement, you need to create a culture where it is expected that your employees will work together.

A collaborative environment boosts business success by

- Creating innovative ideas as people share information from diverse perspectives
- Reducing the time needed for project completion when employees understand each other’s needs and capabilities better
- Improving the retention of corporate knowledge even as individuals leave

Getting the full value of each employee is best achieved when employees work together.

Because collaboration is not normal for many people, simply hanging posters in the elevator or giving out coffee mugs with “One Team!” printed on them has little effect. You need policies that not only facilitate collaboration but also make it the expected way of working. Many companies focus on technology that enables collaboration: social media platforms, instant messaging, videoconferencing, and more. That is wasted if your culture only encourages and rewards individual effort. Technology can be useful for collaboration, but the right environment needs to exist first. This session will help front-line managers and more senior leaders to:

### **CREATE A PURPOSE-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION**

If your employees are going to work together to advance the business, they need to know what the business needs from them. That requires them to both understand your business goals and be able to recognize when your direction is taking you away from those goals. We will explore ways to help your employees understand how your business operates, and also how to help them feel comfortable introducing new ideas that may contradict conventional wisdom.

### **RECOGNIZE AND REWARD COLLABORATION**

If you expect your employees to collaborate, you need to evaluate them for that just as much as you do for their individual skills. Look for certain behaviours and skills you want your employees to display, and then reward those when they occur and develop them when they do not. We will discuss how to set the right expectations and then follow through in a way that drives the performance you need for business success.

### **ATTRACT COLLABORATIVE EMPLOYEES**

The only way to sustain a collaborative culture is to hire collaborative people. Your employment brand will set you apart from others, but only if you communicate it well. We will examine how to position your company in a way that attracts recruits who actively want to be part of a collaborative environment. A common message about the company is essential for attracting the right people, so the actions of managers and line employees can often be as important as the job ads that recruiters post.