

The Art of Collaboration

By its very nature, the technical communication process demands that participants collaborate in some manner, whether it be in the planning stage, during the revision process, or on a more ad hoc, continual basis. At its best, collaboration can be an expansive and creative process. On the other hand, conflicts of interest, personalities, schedules, etc. can make collaboration a frustrating and unsatisfactory experience. Because collaboration optimizes resources and our work demands collaboration, we are interested in concrete methods, interesting experiences, and examples of collaboration that works.

If you have been in the communications field for at least a year and have one or more personal experiences in collaborative writing, we would like you to complete and return the following questionnaire by

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- 1. What kinds of groups have you worked in where the members were required to collaborate, e.g., groups of all writers or all editors, groups of writers/editors and engineers, groups where you were the only non-engineer.**

- 2. How well did the members operate as a group?**

- 3. What methods did the group use to work together to analyze purpose, audience, and to discover its material.**

- 4. What techniques did the group use to communicate among themselves?**

- 5. How successful was the group in maintaining harmony while carrying out its task?**

- 6. What trouble spots emerged?**

12. The following are questions that will help us interpret your responses.

- a. **How long have you been a technical communicator?** _____
- b. **How long have you been working with the group you described in the preceding questions?** _____
- c. **Was this the first time you worked collaboratively?** _____
- d. **How many years experience do you have in collaborative writing?** _____
- e. **What type of business is the one you work(ed) for that you described in the preceding questions? _____ How big is the firm?** _____
- f. **Have you done any other types of writing? _____ What kind?** _____

We would like to know who you are so that we can send the results of this survey to you. If you'd like, please provide us with your name, home address, and phone number.

1. Name _____ Address _____
 _____ Daytime Phone _____ FAX _____

If you don't want us to publish your name and/or firm that you are associated with, let us know and we will avoid direct reference.

Thank you for your cooperation. We greatly appreciate it!

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