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2. **What's in it for them?** Why should people bother collaborating with you? The bottom line is people are busy with their own work commitments and priorities. To collaborate successfully, each person needs to feel like they are gaining value in investing their time, energy, ideas, and intellect to the party. Whatever that value is, identify it, name it, and make it clear. Additionally, recognise what value *you* are getting from this investment as well, as this is a big source of motivation for collaborating, especially when working solo is your preference.

"After learning about personal differences in personality preferences and the impact that this has on collaboration, a senior manager of a public sector organisation stood in awe as she came to a sudden insight and understanding as to why the people in her team 'don't listen to her'. She realised the differences between her and many of her direct reports, and understood why she wasn't getting through- She wasn't speaking their language. As a senior manager she realised the value in tuning into people's differences and preferences and was able to identify where collaboration was going wrong for her."

3. **Determine the rate-limiting step.** In chemistry, the rate-limiting step is the slowest step in a chemical reaction or process that requires the greatest amount of energy. It is essentially determining the rate at which the process functions and is complete, and regardless of how efficient everything else is, the rate-limiting step is the queen of timing. So, what is your rate-limiting step when trying to collaborate with your team, stakeholders, or suppliers? Is it a person? A protocol or procedure? A technical resource? Team moral or mindsets? Absence of trust? If something is holding you back from creating great collaboration, it is essential to name it and work on it before trying to collaborate. Persistent efforts to make collaboration work when an invisible anchor is bound to your team's feet is discouraging, laborious, counterproductive and time-wasting.

4. **Reveal your cards.** When we have recreated situations where either collaboration or competition were both equally probable outcomes, we have witnessed fear reveal its ugly head in many ways. Fear of failure, fear of losing, fear of having an idea stolen- whatever it was- came out as competitiveness which elicited dishonest, greedy, and possessive behavior when people were trying to achieve their personal or group objectives. Through post discussions, it often came out that people felt a need to lie about their own objectives as a means to maintain a sense of power leverage over the 'competitor'. Observing this situation, I often noticed that both withdrawing the truth and explicitly lying created confusion, time wasting, and in all cases I've seen so far, a failure to achieve the group's objective.

Post discussions also elicited recognition that in order for collaboration to happen and for everybody to gain, there must be a willingness to be open and honest; to show your cards. While this certainly isn't easy, it might be worth at the very least asking yourself, what is holding you back from showing your cards and telling people what you *really* need? Dare yourself to be a role model of openness and transparency; you will often find that people admire this bravery and feel that they have permission to follow suit.

So there you have it. Four insights from our recent client work that bring to life the real challenges of collaboration and what you can do to overcome them. If you forget everything, just remember one thing. In a collaborative space there are 3 key factors: yourself, the 'other', and the context in which you are collaborating in. If you begin with a clear understanding of all three factors then you are, at the very least, starting on the right foot to brilliant collaboration.