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COLLABORATION

(Advanced collaboration through modern technologies and tools)

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1. Introduction

All the more widespread term “global village” (more on: [wikipedia „global village term“](#)) is conditioning an increasingly wider need for cooperation and collaboration. In this age communication among individuals and groups is simplified through a variety of tools that anyone can use without charge, virtually anywhere and anytime. Is not unusual to see young people working together on a variety of papers, projects, events, etc. with colleagues from around the world. Collaboration becomes a normal thing in the society and it is simplified because of the more open access to modern technologies. Of course, with mutual cooperation it is easier to achieve certain goals, whether the collaboration was planned or unplanned. It is important to conclude that not all collaborations are planned. For an example, we can analyze various Facebook groups which gathers people of different interests and goals and together they generate temporary cooperations when the individuals inside the groups feel the need for it. All forms of cooperation from sharing some files to the common task solving can be seen as some form of collaboration. In these and similar ways of cooperation, information is spread with incredible speed and produces results very quickly, which was previously impossible due to poor knowledge of information technologies in the masses. But when we talk about planned collaborations of individuals, work groups or teams, then we see the full force of a combination of modern technologies and tools which lead to fantastic results.

2. Synergistic effect

The most important thing to mention is called a synergistic effect that occurs with collaborative work. Mutual cooperation and continual communication in teams come up with results that are better than the sum of the results of the ones that certain individuals could separately achieve. So two teams that are mutually cooperating on a particular task "X" achieve the level of results "3", while two independent teams who are also working on a task "X" individually achieve the level of results "1", which means that they collectively provide the level of results "2" indicating advantage of collaborative practices.

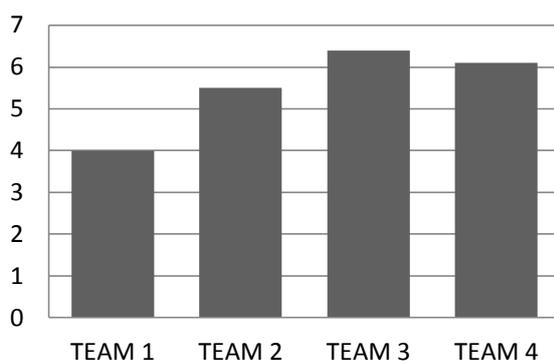


Chart 1.: Teams as separate individuals

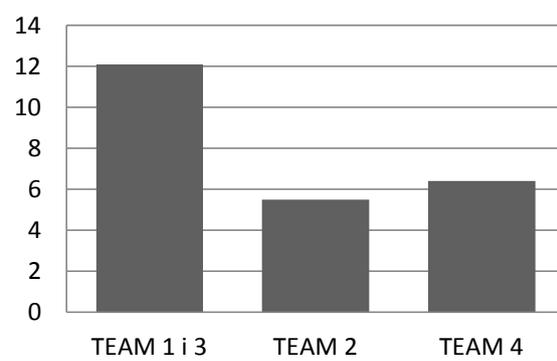


Chart 2.: Team 1 and 3 in collaboration

In the case indicated on the first chart, teams that worked alone reached the final result coefficient that reaches the maximum number of 6.4, while in the second case, that we see on the second chart, the teams in collaboration achieved coefficient result of 12.1 because of mutual cooperation that enabled them to achieve more than a separate individual teams could. It is important to note that collaborative teams did not get the mere sum of the coefficients of the two teams, but something more than that. Collaboration has made a synergistic effect and result of the teams that have worked together has made extra value.

The example shown had an intention to simplify conceptual meaning of collaboration and synergistic effect through an example of a common problem. But now we see that it is important to strive for mutual cooperation in order to achieve better results. The work of the individual is no longer sufficient to achieve excellent results when there are more and more collaborative teams that hold market competition. What is it today that is leading us to a growing need for teamwork?

3. Modern technologies and tools

Today's world is changing very fast and rapid adaptation to the environment around us is important. Progress in technology brings many tools with whom we are able to work faster, more efficient and do the right things the right way. Will it be effective is the question of individual teams, but there is a much greater chance for effective work in collaborative mode than in a single handed work.

3.1. Google Drive

The advantage of Google Drive is that Google itself has a large user base and chances are that most, if not all, colleagues with whom we work have a Google account which means we will be able to use Google Drive with them. Specifically, it is the Internet application that allows storing of files on a disk space in the "cloud" (more on: [wikipedia](#) „Cloud computing“)



Once you save the file, or create it online, you can share it with other people. So, you can work on a document simultaneously with a few people and see how changes immediately appear on the screen. At the same time on the same document one person can write an introduction, the second topic of work, and the third conclusion. Another advantage is when sending large files you do not need to wait to upload a file to a remote location to send it, you can just send a link to a document you made in Google Drive.

Many people still use the name Google Docs for Google Drive, and the reason is that the older version of Google Docs was virtually the same tool but Google

released on 24.05.2012. a much stronger and better tool, which they called Google Drive. Now in your drive you can browse over 30 types of files and use a variety of applications for assistance in the work. For more information see: [Google Drive features](#).

3.2. Producteev

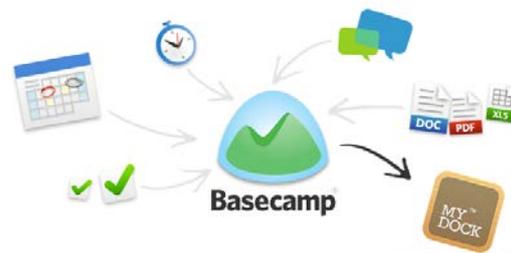
Producteev is an online collaboration tool for teams of people working on a joint project. In a very simple way the team leader sets the tasks and timelines for the entire team. Team members can clearly see at what stage each task is and how much time they have to perform tasks and can also ask questions and discuss about the problem within each project. Such a tool is very useful for projects that are extensive and require a good division of labor to be completed within the given timeframe.



However, there are certain restrictions. Individual projects are grouped into so-called "workspaces" which are quite simplified for users who use the free version of the tool. Only users that pay for an upgrade unlock advanced features. Also, the biggest drawback in the free version is that it doesn't allow you to collaborate with more than two people. Nevertheless, Producteev is a very good tool for collaboration and priced at 10\$ per month can be worth for many serious teams. Definitely worth investing in this kind of project management, especially in the case of international collaboration where team members cannot be easily contacted, either because of time zone differences or other restrictions.

3.3. Basecamp

If your network of associates is ready to use new tools for collaboration, this tool can be of great help. It is a kind of social network where everyone has their profile with projects portfolio. You invite people to team groups inside projects in order to connect with one another. In the end you have a simple overview of the projects currently being run. Each project also looks very simple and everything is practically on the same page. So the people invited into a certain project have their site updated with a new project box in which they can see all relevant information about the project, the deadlines of task execution, chat communications, files related to the project and other details.



Basecamp is one of the oldest tools for project management, and has recently been completely redesigned and new features have been set. However, there are limitations and the tool allows free use of only the first 60 days after which you must subscribe to the service and re-evaluate cost-effectiveness of subscribing for you and your team.

3.4. Skype

Represents a great advantage for teams of associates who want to establish a simple and free communication. Skype is a widespread tool that all your associates probably already use. Free version of the program is quite sufficient for communication among colleagues and it offers video or just audio / chat communication. It also allows conference calls that can contribute to the team productivity. These features greatly reduce the costs of teamwork, because this way you can remove various expenses such as international calls, which are not cost-effective comparing to these modern alternatives.



Like most tools, Skype has a subscription model for advanced users. Here you can find that the most interesting feature is the video conference call. From 5\$ for a day or 10\$ a month, you can unlock the ability to video conference and invite more people into the common video call. Video conference calls have become widespread only in the recent period due to widespread sales of laptops with built-in web cameras which is a requirement for video conference calls. Before, when sales of desktop computers were widespread, users had to set aside money for an external webcam to use such a function, and today this is unnecessary, if owning a laptop. Skype has its alternatives, but it is definitely the best known and most widely used program of its kind.

3.5. Facebook groups

Widespread Facebook network in this day and age is so large that you can presume in advance that all your colleges have their Facebook profiles. Therefore it can also be used for collaboration. By creating a group or joining an existing one, you have a very simple way to share information with your colleagues around the world and work together on projects. Groups can be understood as a place where discussion among members and sharing files is in the center of the focus. All group features are completely free and very simple to use.



Here, the most prominent is an unplanned collaboration where people join different groups according to their interests and begin to collaborate with colleagues from their own interests, and therefore attendance and active participation in discussions contributes to others in group. Groups are the most prominent among student population who collaborate via the group very quickly and efficiently, and share documents and information all the time. Get the right information at the right time is crucial for everyone, so the participation in this kind of collaboration, whether planned or unplanned, is definitely advisable for anyone, professional project managers or just ordinary students.

4. Conclusion

It is time that we begin to think globally and to refine methods of collaboration with which we can reach excellent results that used to be difficult to reach, if not impossible to achieve. French political thinker and historian named Alexis de Tocqueville said back in the 1835th in his book Democracy in America: "As I have said before, the art of association becomes the mother of all the action that you can study and participate in" and only now is it pointed out around the world in all communities where people understand the benefits of collaboration through the ubiquity of modern tools and technologies. Today's society is becoming more aware of the fact that through the use of technology we can be organized into groups, teams, or even a large communities in a very short time and can achieve incredible results. We ourselves have witnessed organizations of various protests that virtually overnight gathered crowds of people across various social networks, on a variety of network events and groups where people collaboratively arranged time, place and purpose of the protests. It's just one of the extreme examples but it perfectly describes unplanned mass collaboration.

Of course, except producing that added value that comes through collaboration, we can see various other effects. So we can see that over various networks people work together to lobby, trying to expand their interests in the wider scene, creating a deceptive and corruptive content. Fortunately, most of these groups are unplanned groups of people, not teams that are working on a project that will create additional value. However, unplanned collaborations cannot create such a strong synergistic effect as in the case of the planned collaboration of teams of experienced people.

The world is increasingly interconnected. What awaits us tomorrow, it is difficult to predict, but it is important to adapt to the upcoming changes and take advantage of what's best. Through lifelong learning and training we can achieve our goals and it is important that we keep in mind that we are not alone in the world and that the advantage of teamwork and joint collaboration is of great importance in order to achieve a competitive advantage over others in the community.