LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

IOWA

COLLABORATIVE

DEFINITION

A collaborative leader brings divergent ideas, voices, and skillsets into conversations and decision-making processes and integrates multiple viewpoints to create an environment where meaningful contributions are made by all.

WHY IT MATTERS

Collaboration leads to better ideas, shared ownership, and stronger outcomes. Whether you're leading a team or contributing to one, being collaborative helps you build influence, expand your network, and create a space where everyone can do their best work.

HOW CAN I MAXIMIZE THIS ATTRIBUTE?

Invite varied perspectives

- In meetings or group work, ask: "*Does anyone see it differently?*" or "*Who else should we include in this conversation?*"
- You can amplify collaboration by surfacing and building on other's ideas: "*That's a great point—can you share more?*" or "*I think ___ had an idea earlier that's worth hearing.*"

Make collaboration visible

- Share credit openly: "*This idea came from the group—we built it together.*"
- In meetings, presentations, or collaborative work, name contributors and acknowledge group efforts.

Integrate input, don't just gather it

- After getting feedback, show how it's shaping your approach. For example: "*Based on what we heard, here's what we're changing.*"
- Even if you're not the decision-maker, you can summarize input to help guide the group: "*Here's a theme I heard from our discussion... How might we use it?*"

Reduce barriers to participation

- Suggest multiple ways to contribute: live discussion, written input, or individual follow-up.
- As a peer, invite input from those not yet heard: "*Would you be open to sharing your thoughts later if now's not the right time?*"

HOW CAN I STRENGTHEN THIS ATTRIBUTE?

Practice asking, not just telling

- Replace statements with questions such as: "*What's your take?*" or "*What would make this even better?*"

Start with shared goals

- When starting a project, initiative, or group work, align on purpose: "*What are we trying to achieve together, and what does success look like for all of us?*"

Be open to changing your mind

- In discussions, you might say: "*That's a good point. I hadn't thought of it that way.*"
- Show that input matters by being flexible when needed.

Strengthen cross-group relationships

- Reach out to someone in another department, discipline, or unit to co-create or co-solve a problem you both face. Collaboration starts with connection.

TAKE ACTION

Choose one of the actions above and make a plan to use it this week. You may also want to use the Leadership Development Planner for more intentional leadership growth.