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Collaboration Practices: An Analysis Within an Army Acquisition Program Office

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Collaboration Practices

This project focuses on the complexity of stakeholder collaboration within the defense acquisition environment and builds on an inter-organizational capacity (ICC) model and associated assessment tool that was developed at NPS by Hocevar, Thomas, and Jansen (2006).

A longitudinal view of group collaborative activities results in a series of stakeholder collaboration principles. The research concluded that developing and fostering effective collaboration with the stakeholder community contributes immensely to the success of the acquisition strategy and that the changing collaborative relationships can and should be supported with different levels of information.

The Collaborative Activity Matrix (CAM) shows the ICC assessment, domain changes through key events, and the active members of the stakeholder community moving from positions of involvement based on the progression of the program from the POM meeting to the Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) Brief.

| | | Collaborative Activity Matrix | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| | | Static | Active Collaboration by Event | | | | |
| | | ICC | POM Meeting | BCA Results | PEO Brief | DASM Brief | AAE Brief |
| Domain | Purpose & Strategy | Green | Green | Green | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow |
| | Structure | Red | Yellow | Green | Green | Yellow | Yellow |
| | Incentives & Rewards | Yellow | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red |
| | Lateral Mechanisms | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| | People | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Green | Green |
| Stakeholder Types* | Stakeholder type 4 Observers Strategy: inform | 7 8 6 | 8 | 8 | | | |
| | Stakeholder type 3 Supporters Strategy: monitor | 5 | 5 6 7 | 5 6 7 | 7 8 | 7 8 7 | 7 |
| | Stakeholder type 2 Facilitators Strategy: collaborate | 3 4 2 | 3 4 2 | 3 4 5 6 | 5 6 | 5 6 3 4 | 5 6 3 4 8 |
| | Stakeholder type 1 Influencers Strategy: involve | 1 | 1 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 3 4 |
| | | | | | | | |

1. Program Management Office
2. HQ, Department of the Army G-3/5/7
3. HQ, Department of the Army G-8
4. Department of the Army Systems Coordinator

5. Training and Doctrine Capabilities Manager
6. Program Executive Office-Primary
7. Program Executive Office-Secondary: Systems Integrator
8. Research lab-Technical Advisor

Dominant domain ■
Active domain ■
Passive domain ■

*adapted from Savage et. al model

Answers to Research Questions:

What practices contribute to building collaborative capacity within an Army acquisition program office?

- Leaders should take appropriate steps to identify stakeholders involved in an upcoming critical event.
- Leaders should consider their professional network outside of their parent organization.
- Leaders should determine the type of engagement strategy most applicable to gain needed stakeholder buy-in at key times and events. It is not practical to have all stakeholders involved in all meetings and events, so the strategy should address what level of involvement is appropriate for each group, while also not under-informing any key member.
- The idea of boundary-spanning among stakeholders was shown to be a key attribute among the collaborators.

What factors facilitated or inhibited collaboration for a successful project?

- Setting the workplace conditions to enable these domains is proven to be important for a PM or manager.
- Purpose is an initiating domain this must be conveyed clearly.
- As the group internalizes the purpose and begins to use other skills, such as boundary spanning, to seek solutions to the problem, the stakeholder community now gains momentum and creates synergy in the problem-solving activities.

How do collaborative practices change over time, related to critical events involving stakeholders?

- Collaboration changes over time when members of the team internalize the purpose and strategy.
- The Purpose and Strategy domain is then overtaken by lateral mechanisms, where members initiate the social aspect to collaboration and extend the network beyond the core members, spanning boundaries to seek information and solutions to problems.
- Stakeholders and the collaborative domains are dynamic throughout the process with differing levels of involvement.