How Does a Collaboration Culture Unite IT & Business Teams?

Scale SAP Transformation Projects Without the Silos

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Today's SAP projects need to be **fast, agile and proactive** to keep pace with the rate of technological change and get ahead of it. Without rapid movement, new solutions become outdated before they are even out the door. When teams do not collaborate, especially within the IT space, achieving true transformation is nigh impossible.

97% of employees and executives believe a lack of alignment within a team impacts the outcome of a task or project.

Many organizations like to talk about **collaboration** and how it drives their **success**. But when it comes to building collaboration cultures, their actions fall short of their words.

Although they might have regular team check-ins, hold brainstorming sessions every so often, and include collaboration as a part of their mission statements, little else happens.

And when you look at the way work takes place, it is easy to spot why. Teams tend to operate in silos — and those that aren't siloed often find themselves competing with each other. Employees do not feel empowered to speak up about their ideas, let alone their problems.

While **collaboration culture** — or a lack thereof — has been problematic for organizations since, well, forever, we are only now getting to the point where it is starting to become a drain on organizational performance. This comes down to one thing: **Digital transformation.**

According to The Business Reality Check, a report developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit, **42% of executives surveyed rank technology as their top concern,** the highest of any factor. Given the dizzying pace of technological change, this should come as no surprise. Technology has encroached on the lives of everyone and everything, driving major changes in the way businesses organize themselves, engage with customers and launch their products and services.

With the growth of digital technologies, organizations are in a **near-constant state of transition**. Leaders need to find ways to bring in technological advancements as quickly as possible. One area where this holds particular importance is **SAP**.

To stay on top of changes and evolve operations at a pace that can keep up, development teams turn to change management tools — albeit with varying success. And that's the problem: **Change management** — i.e., DevOps continuous integration continuous delivery, agile — requires **significant levels of collaboration to be effective.**

However, organizations that have failed to foster a collaborative culture will find that their IT teams will be unable to collaborate effectively. This causes problems across the board, particularly for SAP transformation programs, which often struggle to keep up with the pace of SAP change.

This is illustrated by a recent SAP Insider Report, which found that **37% of respondents indicated that ineffective collaboration is a challenge** among business teams — particularly development, change management and testing. The ramifications of this **lack of collaboration can be severe**, potentially causing organizations to push **outdated solutions** and **fail to deliver** their products on time.

All this makes it clear that a collaborative culture is important for long-term operational success, but there is still a tendency for executives to brush it off. After all, defining an abstract concept like collaborative culture and implementing changes isn't exactly straightforward, and there are more pressing issues to take care of.

This may well be the case, but when **70% of all digital transformation initiatives fail to meet their goals**, decision-makers need to do everything they can to increase their chances of success. Implementing a collaborative culture plays a huge part in this for the long term, and goes beyond the band-aid approach of buying a license for a project management tool.

What Is a "Collaboration Culture"?

It's simple — a collaboration culture is one where **collaboration is common, deliberate and open**. A collaboration culture is one where collaboration doesn't occur because it is forced, but because it is inherent in organizational operations, processes and the way people go about their work every day.

While collaboration by its literal definition takes place in every organization, not every organization has a collaborative culture. They are two very different things. The former can be achieved simply by working together to achieve a common goal. In contrast, **a collaborative culture goes further by reinforcing the idea that ongoing collective effort drives innovation and progress.**

Why Teams Can't, Won't or Don't Collaborate

If collaboration is so great, why aren't organizations doing more about it?

Historically, it was beneficial for employees working in professional organizations to hide their knowledge from others. This boiled down to the fact that workers were disposable if they were deemed to not hold value, which is a highly toxic attitude that is no longer a worry thanks to modern labor laws.

These days, however, a lack of collaboration tends to boil down to one of two situations: either employees haven't developed the skills they need to contribute to a collaborative culture or they do not feel empowered to do so.

In the former scenario, this might be due to a lack of training or undeveloped interpersonal skills. In the latter (and more likely) scenario, this might happen because managers do not trust their team to collaborate without some level of micromanagement or oversight, or because teams operate in silos and hoard information.

A deep-rooted culture of siloed teams that compete with one another instead of collaborating is a major problem for organizations. It leads to breakdowns in communication, a lack of trust between teams and a slowdown of progress.

75% of employees rate teamwork and collaboration very important yet 18% get communication evaluations as part of their performance reviews.

Source: Queens University of Charlotte

Creating synergies between IT & other teams through collaboration

So, it's clear to you that you need to create synergies between your teams through a collaboration culture. Unfortunately, doing so is not as simple as saying, "We've bought this fancy new collaboration tool!" and using it to get on the road to a collaborative culture. **Much more work needs to be done for change to take root at the core of the organization.**

Here's some inspiration.

Facilitate Transparency

Collaborative cultures are transparent ones where everybody is on the same page. Nobody is left second-guessing what the higher-ups want.

To work together effectively, all teams need to be aligned around the same common goals. On top of setting KPIs, go a step further and consider implementing OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), a collaborative goal-setting methodology for setting goals that are more challenging and ambitious than those that can be achieved via KPIs.

Transparency isn't just the responsibility of your teams. In a collaborative culture, leaders must be transparent and openly share both positive and negative news and information. The latter is key: in a collaborative culture, it's not about always winning. It is about learning from everything, especially mistakes that are made.

While it is not always fun to talk about things that have gone wrong, hiding the facts will cause more harm than good

in the long term. Collaborative cultures that share both the good and the bad are more likely to establish best practices that make the most of everyone's skills and expertise. When this happens, keeping pace with change becomes easier.

Use the Right Tools

We are living in a tech-driven world and nowhere is this more apparent than in the corporate sphere. Everything that organizations do nowadays is data-driven and influenced by technology — and this includes collaboration.

It is not enough to merely buy a license for a collaboration tool and expect it to fix all your problems. But it is still a good idea to use the right tools as part of your quest to instill a collaboration culture.

These can make a big difference in how well employees in different locations are able to communicate, meet, build relationships and work on projects together.

All teams should have access to the same tools and resources so nobody is left in the dark. This prevents the issue of siloed teams by putting all information in one place that can be accessed by anyone at any time.

Up to 80% of businesses use social collaboration tools for enhancing business processes.

Source: McKinsey

Make Leaders Model Collaboration

Leaders arguably play the most important role in building a lasting collaborative culture. What should you be doing as a leader who wants to instill lasting collaboration?

Use the Tools You Implement

You can't tell your team to do one thing and then do the opposite. Your team members need to see you using the very tools you have told them to start using.

Empower Your Employees

Don't stand over your team members' shoulders watching their every move. Don't exercise oversight over every decision. Don't micromanage them at every opportunity. Empowering employees to collaborate means stepping back and letting your people exercise some autonomy. Not every single little decision needs to be OK'd by a manager. After all, nothing slows down progress quite like bureaucracy.

Practical steps for handing over more autonomy could include:

- Delegating tasks typically "reserved" for managers to trusted team members.
- Allowing mistakes to be made and rectified without manager intervention.
- Clearly defining employee roles and responsibilities so no ambiguity exists.
- Investing in training that upskills employees beyond their roles.
- Ensuring that the strategic intent (goals, mission statement) of the organization is clear.

Work with Your Teams

One of the easiest ways to undermine your collaborative culture efforts is to wax poetic about working together before you go off on your own. Leaders should leverage the skills and experience of their teams by working closely with them.

Take Your First Steps Toward a Collaborative Culture

Building a collaborative culture requires a lot of heavy lifting, but it's something that needs to be done to help your organization stay ahead in the modern digital landscape. **But where do you start?**

Like any successful organization, you must place a huge emphasis on the quality of your software products and development projects. **But do you have the necessary tools in place to empower team collaboration and ensure that your teams own everything that they do?**

This makes a huge difference in ensuring that quality is everyone's responsibility. And when responsibility is shared rather than siloed, collaboration naturally follows as different teams work with one another to see projects through to completion.

If this sounds like something your teams could benefit from, **try out a demo of Copado Robotic Testing** and see where it could fit into your teams' project workflows.

About Copado Robotic Testing

Copado Robotic Testing transforms the way cloud teams test, document and train-end users. This 3-in-1 solution delivers end-to-end test automation across SAP applications and 40+ other enterprise-grade platforms (Salesforce, Microsoft, ServiceNow, Oracle Cloud, etc.)

Copado Robotic Testing is the tool of choice for global brands like Air France-KLM, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein and more. Our cloud-based solution integrates natively with SAP Solution Manager Test Suite — making it easy to automate regression and functional testing and record business process documentation.

With a certified integration for SAP, your team can leverage Copado Robotic Testing to save up to 80% effort and document business processes 7X faster.

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