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Collaboration in a HYBRID WORKPLACE

How leaders can effectively manage people and technology to strike the perfect balance

Physical Location
(Place and Time)

Design for people not for location

Wherever the collaboration takes place, in-person or virtually, design the methods and location accordingly. In-person collaboration may involve redesigning spaces. Virtual collaboration may need to facilitate a range of ways of collaborating like: small group activities, whole group conversations, interactive whiteboards and gamification. Regardless of the location, if one method of collaboration doesn't work, be ready to switch to another.

Strategically reassess your technologies

With digital collaboration now deemed essential, you need to ensure that your organisation's current technology is up to the task. Does it facilitate the type and level of collaboration you require? Do the different technologies you're using work together effectively? Is everyone on the team set up to access it remotely? Asking these questions may begin the process of your organisation strategically reassessing the technologies which it uses.

Determine your ways of working

Increased flexibility in how, where and when we work needs to be reflected in the team processes. Acknowledge, understand and respect these changes to build new agile team norms and processes to enable people to collaborate at their best.

Operational Dynamics
(Team size, bandwidth and skill levels)

Create a Compelling Vision

Whether in-person or virtual, collaborative activities must orient, energise and engage participants. Leaders need to communicate the goals and the long-term vision that they are working towards. Goals should be challenging, yet achievable, and consequential in terms of intrinsic or extrinsic reward.

Prioritise collaborative activities

For successful collaboration to occur, we need to invest time and effort into it. This may involve scheduling time in our diaries, choosing and planning suitable tasks and designating a team lead for it. This gives the team the bandwidth and headspace to think creatively.
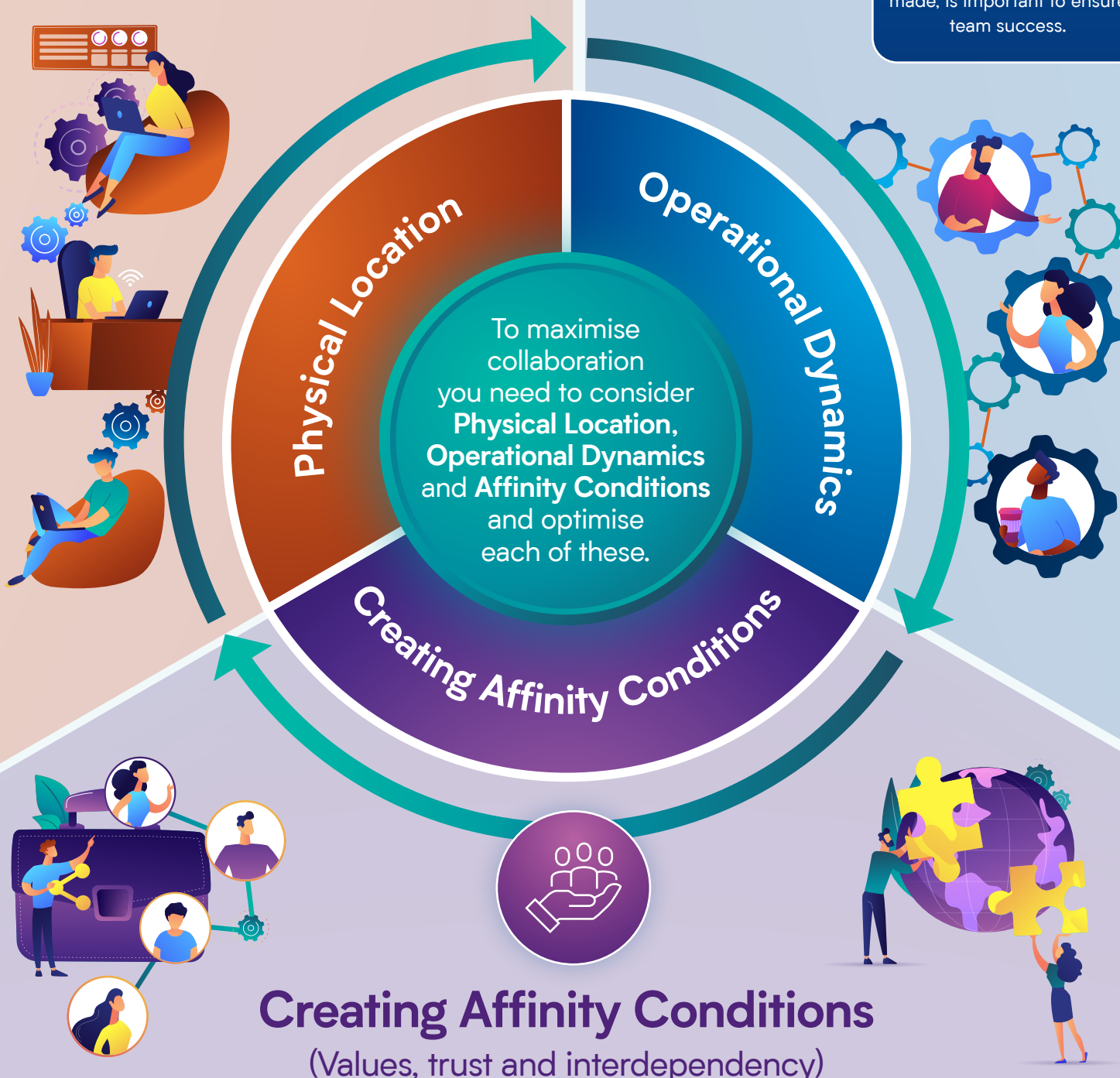
Empower decision-makers

Collaborative activities need to be more than just fun and inspiring, they also need to be actioned for development. Empowering team members to take responsibility for further actions ensures that they are operationalised. Including frontline leaders in this process ensures that decisions will be followed up on with their teams when necessary.

Select the best team

It is vital to fully understand the roles of people within your organisation, know their different skillsets, and select them accordingly. This will enable you to assess the value of different contributors and get the most out of the collaboration. Setting common norms and expectations around things like the communication tools people use, how meetings are run, or how decisions are made, is important to ensure team success.

To maximise collaboration you need to consider **Physical Location**, **Operational Dynamics** and **Affinity Conditions** and optimise each of these.

Physical Location

Operational Dynamics

Creating Affinity Conditions

Creating Affinity Conditions
(Values, trust and interdependency)

Establish effective communication patterns

Team members will vary in their communication preferences. For example, introverts and extraverts will communicate differently, so when communicating virtually, you need to consider your tone and messaging and how your organisation's modes of communication may influence the outcomes. Prioritising clear communications over concise communications is critical, especially in the virtual world.

Build and strengthen social connections

Creating social connections among team members helps them to work better collaboratively. When working remotely, make sure to design virtual team-building activities to give them the opportunity to interact and socialise to build team camaraderie outside of business-as-usual activities.

Invest in your culture

Building a culture of shared leadership among individuals, their teams, and their managers is vital to sustain long-term collaborative behaviours. Creating trust within teams helps members feel comfortable collaborating with each other. Being honest about how the organisation is navigating the future and engaging employees by demonstrating how they can contribute to that future is paramount.

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