

Partnering – An Introduction

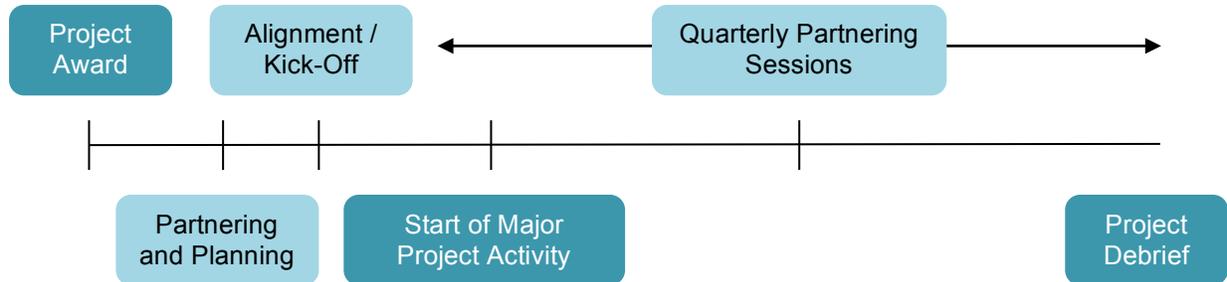
Partnering is an effective process to build a collaborative, successful outcome-focused team. It is a structured process by which multiple key stakeholders with shared interests function as a high-performing team to achieve project success with mutual benefits to all. It requires empowering team members to solve problems at the lowest possible organizational level. A successful partnering arrangement includes:

- Active participation of key stakeholders who impact the success of the project;
- Alignment of common goals, objectives and agreement on how the team will work together
- Establishes shared accountability for project outcomes;
- Improves effectiveness and efficiency by extending relationships beyond contracts and removes organizational impediments to communication;
- Requires open communication and active listening, especially on challenges to progress;
- Results in acceptance by all parties to maintain and improve the partnering process;
- Demonstrates a personal commitment by every team member;
- Establishes an expedited process for issue identification and resolution.

Partnering is not a waiver of a party's contractual rights and responsibilities, but rather a recognition and respect of those rights and responsibilities and a willingness to work together to help all stakeholders fulfill them. The Partnering approach works to identify issues and drive action. Partnering will not erase every issue on a project, but rather provides a structure to help anticipate and mitigate issues proactively.

Projects that fully engage in partnering -- driven by stakeholder leadership support -- result in a higher degree of successful outcomes for all stakeholders, along with fewer claims, better financial results, greater connection to the mission, no surprises, higher performance evaluations, and enhanced experience for all team members.

Partnering is not an event, but a process. It begins at project award with the identification of integral stakeholders, a commitment from stakeholder leadership, and planning for periodic execution. Throughout the life of the project, facilitated partnering sessions will be conducted to identify critical issues and the associated actions and team members required to resolve those issues in a timely manner. The following graphic and table represent a simplified illustration of the process and meeting frequency.



Alignment of stakeholder goals and objectives is a critical part of the partnering process. The purpose is to involve each stakeholder entity into the process so they feel invested in the project and their needs and concerns, possibly articulated as goals and objectives, are communicated and understood by other project stakeholders so as to avoid surprise objections later. Stakeholder goals and objective may change during the life cycle of the project and should be reassessed regularly.

Three Project Success Factors provide the structure for the positive and measurable outcomes of a partnering process.

1. Alignment around clear definitions of success and commitment to common goals.
 - a. Considering most, if not all, project stakeholders are both competent and committed to the success of their organization and the project, they will drive the project towards what they believe defines success.
 - b. If one or more stakeholder groups are not completely aligned around the same definitions of success, eventually they will begin to pull against each other, with the best intentions.
 - c. Partnering ensures an ongoing alignment around what is possible and constitutes a win for everyone involved.
2. Consistent delivery and continual improvement of project fundamentals.
 - a. There are key processes that enable the effective and efficient delivery of project results. The challenge is different stakeholders

- often have different expectations or ways of executing key processes.
- b. When project fundamentals breakdown, the time spent repeating work, chasing decisions, or fixing mistakes means time not spent proactively managing risk and planning for upcoming work.
 - c. Partnering enables teams to slow down and implement lessons learned and bring in best practices to create smoothness and momentum on the project.
3. Developing the culture, mindset, and behaviors of a high performing team.
- a. Trust, open communication, collaboration, and personal ownership are some of the hallmarks of a high performing team.
 - b. Often challenges or changes, industry stereotypes, or feeling overwhelmed can cause teams to revert into their silos and cause teams to work with their proverbial shields up.
 - c. Partnering enables teams to understand and commit to the behaviors and mindset that enable high performing teamwork.
 - d. Crew Consulting Group's partnering process utilizes the Good to World Class chart as a tool to enable accountability to World Class behaviors. 95+% of their projects will rate themselves as a World Class team during the life of the project. (See the attached Good to World Class chart).

The current data coming from the International Partnering Institute and their research on successfully partnered project reflects that for every dollar spent on partnering results in \$114 in project savings.

<https://partneringinstitute.org/about/what-is-construction-partnering/>

From Good to World Class™

Your Project's Best Tool for Managing Risk, Controlling Cost, Achieving Overall Project Excellence & Personal Fulfillment

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	COMBAT PROJECT TEAMS	BUSINESS AS USUAL PROJECT TEAMS	GOOD PROJECT TEAMS	WORLD CLASS PROJECT TEAMS
A	Cutting corners where and whenever you can.	You have to keep your eye on everyone.	Good intentions that at best meet schedule, budget and quality requirements.	Measurable team goals that acknowledge, but aren't limited by contract or specs, & with specific committed actions by all.
B	Back stabbing and open hostility.	CYA mentality by all employees. Tennis, game playing, case building and posturing.	Individuals tend to suppress criticism or suggestions for improvement. Complaints are kept to oneself.	When you can meet, don't call. When you can call, don't email or write. Open, direct, verbal communication with no surprises.
C	Risks are realized and lawyers mitigate issues for their respective clients.	Push risk onto others. Defer to contract with written case building. Clean up mess at the end of the job. Profit is a bad word.	Reactive approach to risk. Your risk is your responsibility. Profit or loss never acknowledged or discussed.	Proactive & collaborative discussion of potential risks with mitigation & prevention plans. Notion of shared team risk. Profitability openly discussed and supported.
D	One excuse after another. Meetings are rare and dysfunctional.	Team members blame failures on others. Accountability is avoided.	Can be limited by circumstances seemingly beyond the team's control. Meetings are reactive.	Team and individuals own the game regardless of the circumstances. No excuses mentality. Adversity strengthens the team.
E	Every man, woman and child for themselves!	Peaceful co-existence, you do your job and I'll do mine. Live & let live.	Teamwork within traditional roles. Helps others when they ask for it.	Organizational lines are blurred & everyone is 100% accountable for everything. Help others without being asked.
F	Thinking is geared toward individual survival and collection of paperwork for potential claims and litigation.	Everyone's efforts and energy put into risk aversion or transference.	Conventional approach to work processes means and methods by contractor only.	Outside the box thinking by entire team, as a team in everything. Develop schedule as a team.
G	Intentionally taking advantage of other stakeholders' vulnerabilities.	Intentionally non-transparent. Expressing vulnerability would put you at risk.	Willing to be transparent, express vulnerability but partner's indifferent to these.	Intentional willingness to acknowledge vulnerability, express transparency and seek help if needed. Not willing to let partners fail.
H	Positioning and posturing for claims from the get go.	Disputes linger and fester. Unwilling to acknowledge mistakes or errors. Issues develop into potential claims.	No claims. Conflicts can be resolved, however the process can be painful. Job can be stalled and egos get in the way.	Conflicts resolved, or if not, quickly elevated to the next level without ill will or rancor. Still trust partner and job continues moving forward.
I	Try to get away with anything you can. Cat and mouse game.	Enforced compliance at best.	"Good" is good enough. No point in trying any harder or doing any better. Individuals do what they have done before.	Continuous improvement that is measured. Ongoing review of goals & key processes. Team members learn & grow.
J	"See you in court" or Us vs. Them. Dread coming to work. Stress & Anxiety.	Relationships are bureaucratic & stereotypical. It's just a job. Not willing to seek or offer advice.	Clients satisfied & relationships last for the life of the job. Advice may be seen as self serving.	Clients delighted & lifelong relationships created. Trusted Business Advisor. Client, CM, Inspectors as "coaches".

"I am not remotely interested in just being good."

- Vince Lombardi



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