

Break Through Ministry Silos with 4-Phase Collaboration

*Below is a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. Sums Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

>> [Subscribe to Sums Remix](#) *How do we create the foundation for true collaboration to flourish?*

Phase 1 – Capacity: Select small, diverse teams of two to eight people who will thrive in an environment of discovery learning and collegiality.

> *How can our collaboration team reframe the problem at hand, driving the greatest range of creativity and breakthrough solutions?*

Phase 2 – Context: Focus the outlook of the team toward development of new context that broadly frames the problem or challenge under consideration. Use a combination of individual learning plus hands-on activities to drive perspectives for potential solutions.

> *Can the collaboration team stay the course and continue forward despite disagreements?*

Phase 3 – Coherence: Maintain collaboration momentum, creating frameworks for progress through inspiration and inspirational leadership even though disagreements may exist. Newly discover, or re-emphasize, the shared purpose that binds the team together.

> *How can our collaboration team leverage internal and external networked resources nimbly and with speed?*

Phase 4 – Complexity: Equip and reskill teams to implement new ideas or new solutions using internally and externally networked resources, rapidly accessing or managing complex data streams the team must navigate. Leave a footprint that contributes to a broader collective intelligence.

Sarah Miller Caldicott, *Midnight Lunch*

A NEXT STEP

Church leadership teams aren't working to invent the next light bulb, but Edison's Four

Collaboration Phases can be instructive for leaders who want to break down silos on their teams.

Within the four phases of capacity, context, coherence, and complexity lies the invisible glue that can help your organization develop true collaboration practices to achieve your mission.

Phase 1 – Capacity

Create your own “midnight lunch” experience by ordering pizza or other takeout food. Pick a unique place in your normal environment that is not normally associated with regular tasks, or go offsite. Use the informal atmosphere to foster conversations about interest areas of all your group members. Actively listen to the conversations, and develop a deeper level of knowledge - and connection – with your teammates.

Phase 2 – Context

As a team, take 10 minutes and create an individual list of the various sources of information you draw from each week. Does your team see a pattern in their lists? Now challenge them to create another list of five additional sources that will intentionally shift the context of their information-gathering. During weekly meetings, take five minutes to share how this new context is broadening their ministry context.

Phase 3 – Coherence

When team members begin to use self-referencing language (I, me, mine) more than team-referencing language (us, our, ours), it is an indicator that defenses are being raised and the team is in danger of losing coherence. Often, the language of the team is the first indicator of a team losing its momentum toward a shared goal. Lead your team to be constantly aware of their language, and guide them to practice inclusive language by first modeling it yourself.

Phase 4 – Complexity

Among all organizations, the church has the most potential for the existence of excessive hierarchy. To overcome this, lead your team to clear away internal roadblocks which add unnecessary time and complexity to your process. The use of the strategy map process above can be both a beginning point and continual guide to your journey toward simplification.

Closing Thought

Collaboration is the key to breaking down the organizational silos that are keeping you from achieving your mission.

To learn more about breaking down the silos in your organization, [start a conversation with the Auxano team today](#).

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