

Seventeen Gorman

ADVISORS LLC

"Innovation through Collaboration"



Creating Individual and Organizational Excellence via Leadership Development, Management Development, Mentoring, Coaching, Team Building, Skill Building

Achieving Excellence

Issue 18

September, 2020

In This Issue

[Welcome](#)

[In Your Quest for Excellence](#)

[The Power of Collaboration](#)

[My Top 5 Collaboration Partners](#)

[Our Offerings](#)

Welcome

Welcome to the September issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of **Seventeen Gorman Advisors**. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

We are dedicating this edition to my brother Tim, who passed away from cancer on August 26, 2020 at age 70.

Tim was much more than my big brother; he was an artistic talent, strategic thought partner and my chief collaborator over many years!

Over the course of my lifetime, he was always there to provide support and

experience that amazing things happen when people with diverse talents and skills join forces with a singular purpose or focus to build something unique and special.

The outcome of this partnership is innovative ideas and solutions that could only have been created through the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

What are the ingredients of effective collaboration?

In my experience, effective collaboration does not happen by accident. Instead, in order to create an atmosphere where people feel safe to innovate new ideas or products, certain ingredients need to be present. The key ingredients include the following:

- A shared or common goal so everyone understands where they are headed
- Commitment to the purpose or goal and mutual accountability for producing tangible results
- Open and honest communication, as well as a willingness to share information freely while listening to each person's ideas and suggestions
- Complementary skills that can be coordinated to become more powerful in accomplishing the agreed-upon objective
- Mutual trust and respect for the participants so that everyone's contributions can be valued and appreciated

What is the true value of collaboration?

While I realize that creating a collaborative workplace takes time and effort, the benefits of collaboration are both numerous and tangible. Here are just a few examples of what genuine collaboration can produce in an organization:

- **Better Team Chemistry** - Collaboration brings people together to focus on common goals. Along the way, team members learn to work with one another and appreciate each others' unique knowledge and skills.
- **Improved Communication** - Partnering with colleagues helps open channels of communication and encourages information sharing to solve problems and business challenges faced by the organization.
- **Expanded Innovation** - Working with team members who possess complementary skills and abilities promotes new ways of thinking and understanding. Breakthrough ideas lead to new products and services that can be offered to clients.
- **Enhanced Employee Engagement** - Employees who are challenged to work with others to develop new ideas find more excitement in their work. They enjoy the opportunity to learn new approaches for producing solutions that are valued by the company. As a result, both employee morale and engagement are enhanced.
- **Higher Retention Rates** - A workplace that supports collaboration typically attracts job candidates who like to perform at a high level in their role. If the collaborative effort is rewarded and recognized by the organization, employees tend to stay at the firm longer and produce sustained results.
- **Increased Efficiency & Productivity** - Partnering with others is a way to share the workload and apportion responsibilities among employees who have specialized skills. This approach promotes synergy to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of the individual work product, plays to each team member's strengths, and leads to greater productivity.

What are some examples of successful collaboration?

In history, there are many examples of collaboration that resulted in discoveries, innovative products and sports championships.

Here are a few of my favorite examples of partnerships that produced great success:

- Wilbur and Orville Wright gave us the gift of fixed-wing aircraft.
- Marie and Pierre Curie announced the discovery of two new elements - radium and polonium.
- Ed Catmull, Steve Jobs and John Lassiter developed Pixar Animation Studios.
- Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield devised a unique blend of ice cream.
- Terry Bradshaw, Franco Harris, Joe Greene and Jack Lambert helped produce 4 superbowl championships.
- Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and D.W. Griffith joined forces to create the United Artists Corporation.
- Sandra Lerner and then-husband Len Bosack founded what would become technology giant Cisco while working together at Stanford University.
- John Lennon and Paul McCartney formed The Beatles.

The Collaboration Challenge

In conclusion, the benefits of collaboration are undeniable - in life and in the world of business. Given the true value of collaborating with others, when will you partner with someone to create the next great innovative idea or product to help shape the world we live in?

My Top 5 Collaboration Partners



As referenced above, I have been blessed to collaborate with many incredible people throughout my life and I have experienced first-hand, the true value of collaboration on numerous occasions.

My experience has taught me that the common themes which underlie every valued partnership are:

- **Trust**
- **Mutual Respect**

In each of my personal experiences, I trusted my collaborator to do his / her part to make the partnership work so that we achieved our common goal. In every case, I

also respected the person that I collaborated with and valued the talent and skills they added to the equation. Fortunately, my collaborators also trusted and respected me as we worked together to produce something unique, valuable and special!

Lisa - My Wife

Over the course of 28 years of marriage, my wife and I have collaborated so many times that I have lost count. Our greatest accomplishment is obviously our son and daughter - who have succeeded in life beyond our wildest dreams. We have bought and sold homes together (including those owned by our parents), planned numerous family vacation trips, managed several funerals for family members, and even planned our own wedding. Despite challenges, hurdles and impediments that seemed daunting at times, we persevered in the face of adversity to achieve our goals! Our ongoing collaborative success is a tribute to our mutual love, respect and admiration!

Tim - My Brother

My brother and I collaborated numerous times over a period of many years. Working together with a singular focus, we typically started with an idea or concept to create something unique and special to address a business need or to benefit others. Over a period of many years, we created one-of-a-kind sports caricatures for my son and daughter during their high school athletic careers. We also designed all of the graphic art for my first book - "In Your Quest for Excellence." In addition, Tim and I formulated a template for my business card, bookmark and the visual image for "Innovation through Collaboration" - my tag line for my consulting practice. His support and guidance as an admired partner have always been invaluable to me.

Linda - My Cousin

Over nearly a decade, my cousin and I have partnered on many activities that supported the creation and maintenance of my consulting practice. During a period of several months, we collaborated to create my firm website which is a true work of art! In addition, Linda has reviewed all of my articles as my personal editor, given her journalism background with The Philadelphia Inquirer. Linda's candid, insightful feedback ensures that my work product is well-written, professional and meaningful to my readers. Her constant support and collaboration is enlightening, timely and always highly valued!

Gabs - My Business Partner

My partner in creating the Willis Re Academy was a young professional named Gabriel (Gabs for short). Gabs was based in London and I was based in Philadelphia when we started to create the Academy from scratch. Because our budget was very limited, we were forced to construct every facet of the Academy ourselves, drawing upon our past experience in the insurance industry. Surprisingly, neither one of us started our careers in Learning & Development. After creating a Project Plan, we employed a "divide and conquer" approach and developed the Academy piece-by-piece over a period of 4 years. By collaborating with numerous department executives and guiding them along the way, we were able to build a robust Academy comprised of over 100 Instructors - with a curriculum of 50 courses that were delivered to our employees globally.

Mitch - My Fellow Manager

Mitch and I were fellow Managers at Cigna many years ago. Since we managed the

two largest Teams in the Environmental Claims Division, we worked closely with one another over a period of several years. We soon developed a friendly rivalry and began to share our knowledge and expertise to enhance our respective performance in the division. We enjoyed regular lunches in Philadelphia, during which we would brainstorm solutions to various employee challenges that we encountered. Over time, Mitch became a trusted confidant and we routinely exchanged ideas for enhancing the professional development of our respective Teams. Working together as true partners, we elevated the overall performance of the division.

"Top 5" List Challenge

I am confident that all of us have personally experienced great partnerships that yielded incredible results over the course of our lives. If you were asked to name the best collaboration partners that you have worked with in your life, who would make your "Top 5" List?

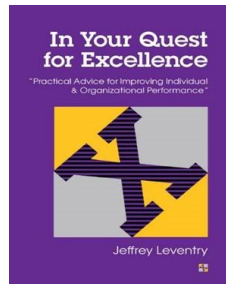
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If you wish to purchase a copy of my book that offers practical advice for improving individual and organizational performance, click on the following link:

<http://seventeengormanadvisors.com/book/>

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Seventeen Gorman Advisors looks forward to collaborating with you.

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