

HOW COLLABORATION WORKS IN GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

By Ali Bagley

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” - Helen Keller

COLLABORATION

the action of working with someone to produce something.

"he wrote a book in collaboration with his son"

synonyms:

cooperation · alliance · interaction · partnership · participation · combination · association · concert · teamwork · joint effort · working together · cooptation



What are the key words and phrases here in terms of how we use these activities to grow our businesses?

‘working with’, ‘interaction’,

‘teamwork’, ‘partnership’, ‘produce something’

Let’s look at these in more detail to find out how they impact on our success

1. ‘working with’

“I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.” – Mother Teresa

Ask yourself a simple question: How much time do I spend working alone on my business?

100%, 75%, less, more?

For the first six months or so of running my business I spent a great deal of time in front of my lap top, developing content, creating courses, working on my strategy to get new clients and generally working very hard to become known (mostly through social media posts!)



Guess what! I didn’t do that well in terms of attracting new clients.

However, during that time I had kept in touch with my fellow coaching trainees and had started turning up at networking events. Everything online due to the pandemic but actually I found that this enabled me to meet people from all over the world, something that wouldn't have happened pre-Covid.

So, my cohort and I put on a couple of events and set up some initiatives, 'working with' them in combining our individual knowledge, skills and experience to help others. Such as:



inspiring wellness

The Coaching Summit – where we delivered the Coaching Summit event in December 2020 which was designed to help people struggling in the pandemic.

And in July 2021 the Workplace Wellness Event for Business Owners, designed to support our fellow entrepreneurs.



In terms of growing our business this gave each of the six of us exposure to each others networks, a FB group with over 190 members and a wondrous way to learn from each other by sharing our skills.

For me this meant new relationships with new people and as a result, a new client. Slow start but building.

Next came a pivotal moment in my business, as a result of networking in a free training event. (I highly recommend that you attend free training at least twice a month for inspiration and knowledge and for their networking opportunities).

In a breakout room I met an Italian fella called Marco. We hit it off instantly and as a result contacted each other after the event. In the 18 month since we have been working together non-stop and now we have a company together; Emotional Geography UK LTD which has a website, 'The Festival of Emotions' <https://www.emotional-geography.com> and comprises 84 Geographers of Emotions and many more members all 'working with' each other to conceive, develop and deliver multiple services to help others in their personal and professional growth and significance.

So how has that grown my business? Well . . .

1. I have gained several clients who I met directly through my collaboration with Marco
2. I am part of a collaborative network which help me to promote my services
3. I have an income from our platform which enables me to invest in my business
4. I have a massive pool of collaborators to work with on my projects
5. My work here has led to paying contracts with other organisations

Would any of that have happened if I hadn't started working in collaboration with Marco? Probably not. And why not? Simply because 'working with' Marco meant that we grew something amazing by pooling our skills, resources and contacts to 'produce something'.

2. 'Interaction'

"All human interactions are opportunities either to learn or to teach" – M. Scott Peck

At the end of each day I like to know that I have learned something new and shared something which is new to the person I shared it with. Collaboration makes this very easy to achieve as I, and they, learn constantly as we 'interact'.

Collaboration is about interaction, after all you cannot collaborate on your own! So, looking at 'interaction', how does that help you to grow your business?

Besides the learning and the teaching interaction is also a very powerful way of becoming known, liked and trusted. You know the saying:

"People buy from people they know, like and trust"

Being known, liked and trusted is therefore key to building relationships that develop into customers for your business. So what kind of 'interaction' works best for that relationship building?

Here are a few ideas:

- Running free Masterclasses that share valuable knowledge and information to help others grow and making sure that those classes have an element of interaction between you and your attendees and plenty of opportunity for follow up. For an example of how a Masterclass works join me for: 'How Collaboration Will Help You to Grow Your Business' here: <https://alibagleycoach.samcart.com/products/collaboration-masterclass> using the code GEO100 at the checkout:
- Look out for collaboration opportunities such as;
 - contributing a chapter to a business book,
 - taking part in an online or live event,
 - interacting with others posts on social media with more than just a like,
 - attending free training and networking sessions
- Giving more than you take in interaction with others so that you grow a reputation for being a supporter of others goals
- Providing prospective clients and contacts with something tangeable that shows them who you are, what you do and how that will help to solve their problems
- Becoming part of a collaborative platform, like the Festival of Emotions where you will become well known in that community for your expertise.
- Providing something for prospective clients that few others offer so it sets you apart



'Interact' with others, either in collaborative ventures or at least by relating to people in networking groups, through social media and in live events.

3. 'teamwork'

'Teamwork' is a collaborative activity that is designed to bring a variety of strengths, knowledge and skills together to produce an end result.

TOGETHER
EVERYONE
ACHIEVES
MORE



Whilst collaboration is generally about people working together on a 'level playing field', no leaders or followers, simply a group working together for the mutual benefit of each other and others, teamwork often comes with an hierarchical structure that includes a team leader.

When you collaborate with a group, rather than a single other individual, that collaboration will become more like 'teamwork'. This is a good thing however, you need to be prepared to deal with more complex interpersonal dynamics that you would find in a one-to-one collaboration, such as:

- Possible contest for leadership of the group
- Duplication of skills and or roles that might see you less involved than you would like to be
- Competition for roles
- Having to get to know and work with people you might not be so comfortable 'working with'
- Differences of opinion on strategy, direction, outputs and even shares of any profits or benefits

Don't worry, being aware will help you to prepare for these possibilities and therefore make your 'team working' a smoother, more enjoyable experience.

Are there ways to avoid these issues? Yes of course, or at least to minimise the possibilities of them occurring:

- Only work with people you 'know, like and trust'
- Make sure that ground rules are in place from the start such as:
 - who will be in the team,
 - what the roles will be;
 - what the desired end result of the team working is,
 - how benefits and profits will be shared, and
 - who is responsible for what
- Have a 'project plan' with defined objectives, responsibilities and timelines so that everyone is clear on who does what by when

'Team working' really is a fantastic way to share tasks and increase the success when it is done well and by people who are collaborating effectively.

In Emotional Geography we have a Marketing Team and a Board. All involved are volunteers who have a vested interest in the success of the company and the website where their services are promoted. We work brilliantly together because we 'know, like and trust' each other and because we have clarity on objectives, roles and responsibilities.

As a result, all of our 84 Geographers of Emotions know that we can be trusted to support them, provide them with the resources and support they need in service development and delivery and as such we have built a tremendously close and supportive community.



Just a few of us together in Italy at the launch of the website

4. 'partnership'

Our success has really been based on partnerships from the beginning – Bill Gates

When you develop a partnership with another like-minded individual or business magic can happen. Just look at what happened when Marco and I joined forces.

Emotional Geography was more of a hobby than a business for Marco and I was searching for something to grow and develop that would give me the reputation, income and satisfaction that I needed as an entrepreneur.

'Working together' in 'partnership' we have grown this organisation into a thriving business whilst still maintaining the core community and values which we both share.

Collaboration is 'working with' others to produce something

Teamwork is 'working with' a group of others to produce something

Partnership goes beyond this as 'partnership' is a long term relationship that works together to build something more than single projects, events or products.

It is about sharing values and goals with a partner which you then bring your skills, experience, knowledge and resources to. Combining those assets, in a partnership is generally a more concrete and lasting relationship and can result, as in Emotional Geography UK Ltd in a contracted official enterprise.





Partnership is still collaboration. You are still 'working with' others, you are 'interacting' on projects and ideas inside and outside of your 'solo-preneur bubble' and it will involve teamworking as you develop ideas, events and products that grow your businesses. And it will 'produce something', something that you would probably not have been able to produce working alone, that will benefit from your combined skills and knowledge and that will enable growth in your skills, abilities and profits as a business

In summary

***“When there is teamwork and collaboration wonderful things can be achieved” –
Mattie Stepanek***

So what have we learned?

1. Making an effort to be seen and known through your own and others networks is a great way to build relationships
2. Working with others to deliver events, value content, and other benefits for potential clients helps you to become known, liked and trusted
3. Interacting with others through many channels and activities builds on your reputation and gets you noticed
4. Teamworking can be difficult yet can achieve great results for all concerned when done properly
5. Partnerships are great for building your business to the next level

Collaboration - the action of working with someone to 'produce something' – has been absolutely pivotal to building my business and it will be for yours too.

Come and visit the Festival of Emotions to see great collaboration in action. Check out our Membership for more opportunities to collaborate, discounts to learning and development services, free promotion for your business and much more.

And remember I said to have something that not many others can offer? Well why not join Emotional Geography as a Geographer of Emotions and benefit from our network of 84 current Geographers, all our networks and your services on the website and in our promotions. Plus we collaborate fully with you in developing your services.

We only take 10 new Geographers a quarter and there are only 7 places left for the next training which takes place on the weekend of the 14th & 15th May 2022.

Plus, if you have read this blog to the end then you can use the code GEO50 to get 50% off the training if you enrol before 30th April 2022. That's a saving of £499.99 and we are only doing this on this run.

Just go to: <https://alibagleycoach.samcart.com/products/geographer-of-emotions-certification-course> to find out more and register.

If you have any questions then please contact me: ali@emotional-geography.com

About the Author

Ali Bagley is a Director of Emotional Geography UK Ltd, an international coaching platform that provides services to help individuals and organisations in their personal and professional growth and significance.

She is also a certified coach specialising in helping business owners to develop their books and courses to grow their businesses through demonstrating their skills and services. She is a best selling author herself having written and co-written several business support books such as 'Love Coaching, Hate Business' and 'The Flow of the River'.

Ali works one to one with her writing clients as well as delivering master classes and courses on various business and personal growth subjects such as 'How to develop your writing skills for business' and 'How to develop a masterclass for your business'.

She is also a qualified project and proposals manager and works freelance on contracts.

Most of all Ali is a mother, grandmother, wife, friend, collaborator, pizza lover, and lover of travel and adventure.



<https://www.emotional-geography.com>