

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING



RECIPE 1

Recipe one

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The occasion: Partnership working is an increasingly central feature of service provision across the EU. It plays a pivotal role in the EU's competitiveness and workforce development agenda and will be a critical factor in the achievement of the EU 2020 priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

But what are the secret ingredients that make a partnership work? Are there any special utensils that can make things easier?

Key ingredients of an effective partnership: Do you and your partners have the following ingredients in your food cupboard? If so you are well on the way to cooking up a good partnership:

Here is a list of ingredients to blend your perfect partnership:

<i>Ingredients to add to your shopping list</i>	✓	✗
Partners see real benefit and results in collaboration		
Partnership will achieve more than can be achieved without it		
The partnership is inclusive and representative of stakeholder interests		
The common interest is a higher priority than individual partner interest		
Partners use "we" when talking about partnership issues		
Partners are willing to change to achieve shared goals		
Responsibilities and rewards are shared		
There is a real will to succeed and dedicate resources to make this happen		
There is a shared vision of what success looks like		
Partners understand and respect each others' diversity and cultural differences		
Partners understand the use of strengths and talents within different organisations		
Effective communication methods are in place		
There is regular review in which partners assess how well the partnership is performing and decide on actions to improve if appropriate		

Utensils: So now you are clear about the ingredients, what utensils do you need to blend them together effectively? What skills and knowledge are required to make this recipe work?

First on the list is **LEADERSHIP** – a good leader needs to be able to help partners come together to identify the difference they want to make and what steps they need to take to make it happen. Key attributes include:

Communication, consultation, delegation, consensus building, negotiation, assertiveness, ability to influence, knowledge of policy and funding developments

Next let's look at **TRUST** – partners absolutely have to trust one another to work together towards a common goal effectively. The mixture may get a little lumpy while trust develops but strong trusting relationships will come and help smooth out the lumps. Trust involves:

Empathy, listening and hearing, constructive approaches, ability to engage in genuine dialogue and promote mutual understanding, an understanding of group dynamics and processes / systems to help in challenging times

Finally come **LEARNING and REVIEW** – like the cake mixture a partnership's constitution will change when it starts to cook. It is important to have the skills and knowledge to learn and grow together and review progress – these include:

Problem solving and creative thinking, review and evaluation (internal and external), benchmarking and process mapping, good facilitation, systems to introduce new partners.

Takeaway menu: if you like the sound of this recipe and want to try it in your kitchen you can find lots of useful equipment to make your life easier at:

www.workforcepartnership.com

www.winchester.gov.uk

www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk

www.lgpartnerships.com

www.nawb.org National Association of Workforce Investment Boards

Partnerships: Policy and Practice, 2006, Susan Balloch and Marilyn Taylor
Working across boundaries: Collaboration in public services (Government beyond the Centre), 2002,
Helen Sullivan

Good food guide listing: The US Workforce Investment Boards have been testing this recipe since 1998 and seem to have perfected it in some States. The 'WIBs' play a central role in creating more integrated strategies to address employment and skills within broader economic development strategies locally. There are 650 WIBs across the US, at state and local level. They are led by business, chaired by business and have a majority business membership. They also include representatives from labour unions and local educational institutions as well as economic development officials. Businesses take a genuine lead. There is more emphasis on corporate social responsibility and the State plays a smaller role. WIBs experiment with new activities and have a proven capacity to deliver. States in the US can apply for certain laws to be waived to allow for additional flexibility in implementing innovative workforce strategies and initiatives which they develop. This approach not only promotes innovation but also awards flexibility to those most able to make use of it. It is an example of a national level employer driven intervention which has benefitted local economies.

Maybe chefs in the EU could learn from this?

Serving tip:

turn the page for an example of successful partnership work in practice in the UK.

Serving tip

AN EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING:



Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership

Basingstoke and Deane is a medium sized town about 80 km west of London in the UK and has massive potential for economic growth. Like many places in the UK there are a large number of public and private stakeholders with overlapping responsibilities. In 2002 these stakeholders decided to come together in a voluntary partnership to develop a joint approach to improving the quality of life to the benefit of everyone living and working the borough.

Ingredients:

a) Strategic partnership approach

A strategic body focuses on current strategic issues and on future challenges.

Individual partners carry out the work of delivering the agreed key priorities.

Working in partnership provides an opportunity for networking and helps organisations to come up with solutions together. Working together gives them a chance to share information and resources and achieve more than they could do on their own.

b) Strong membership representing all stakeholders

The Strategic Partnership is made up of local elected representatives and representatives of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

Representatives include:

- Local authority councillors and senior staff
- Businesses and business intermediaries
- Education and training providers
- Housing services
- Health service and wellbeing organisations
- Environmental organisations
- Children and family organisations
- Police and Community safety organisations
- Cultural organisations
- Voluntary and community organisations



The partnership had developed, consulted and agreed a long term vision which is defined in Sustainable Community Strategy

There are 5 Priority Action Groups as follows:

- Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership
- Skills and Employability Group
- Basingstoke Area Children's Strategic Partnership
- Housing Partnership

The Borough Business Partnership feeds in business views through short early morning breakfast meetings. There are regular reviews of goals and strategy with wide scale consultation.

Sell-by date: The partnership continues to flourish and indeed has become stronger during the recent economic downturn. There is recognition that working together achieves more than working apart. With public sector budgets shrinking fast in the UK the signs are that the strategic partnership will become more and more important to all involved.

Takeaway menu: See www.basingstokelsp.org for more information.

Secret ingredients – herbs and spices

- Buy in at all levels
- Mutual trust and benefit – working together to achieve a common goal – a win win situation
- Shared vision and commitment
- Strong leadership
- Equal status for all partners
- Immediate access to decision makers for all
- Strong strategic and operational structure with clear distinctions between the two
- Ability to focus on strategy and enable delivery by individual partners or groups of partners

Cook's tip:

"Local partners need to fight fragmentation. The Local Strategic Partnership attracts all enterprises to focus on agreeing and delivering a vision for the area. The net effect is not to replace, but to support the council in its local leadership".

Stephen Sheedy,
Chair of Basingstoke Area
Strategic Partnership.

Calories: The BASP does not have access to mainstream budgets and is not directly responsible for service delivery. This responsibility remains with the individual partner members. There is however a resource requirement for the BASP to carry out its own operational aims and objectives. The BASP is therefore supported by:

- staff – a Partnership manager is employed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council;
- accommodation provided by one or more of the partners;
- administration and financial management provided by one or more of the partners;
- a small operating budget provided by contributions from partners
- project funding raised on a case-by-case basis



