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***Doing More with Less – Public/Private Collaboration  
as a Key Nonprofit Trend***

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## **I. Introduction.**

In today's economy, nonprofits have been innovative at serving client and community needs by partnering with other nonprofits, government and for-profit businesses to advance their cause. Collaboration occurs when people from different organizations produce something together by sharing knowledge and resources, building consensus and sharing the ownership of the final product or service. This is caused by a number of macro-level forces, including economic, political, and social forces. They also have a number of benefits, including cost savings, synergies, and increased impact (Austin, p.7-11).

Nonprofit organizations collaborate with private businesses and governmental organizations in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. Collaboration can be as limited as a business providing free services to a nonprofit, or can be as complete as a formal partnership that serves as the primary or entire operations of the nonprofit, or it can fall somewhere between those extremes. Nonprofits may seek collaboration with private businesses or governmental organizations for many different reasons, including: to obtain a new source of funds; to obtain free or reduced cost services; to take advantage of a private business' expertise, equipment, or facilities; to reach a broader audience with the nonprofit's message; to create synergy from associating with a complimentary organization or business; or because the nonprofit is unable to continue operations on its own.

## **II. Making Collaboration Work.**

Whether you call it collective impact, collaborative entrepreneurship, or coalition-building, collaboration requires constructing a strategic framework, convening a diverse group of stakeholders, developing ground rules for managing relationships and shared decision-making, and generating ongoing, meaningful value for each stakeholder. However, the form that the collaboration takes is incredibly important to determine what legal needs will be required. See *Figure 1 – Collaboration Continuum: Forms* (Adapted from Austin, p. 20-28) on the next page.

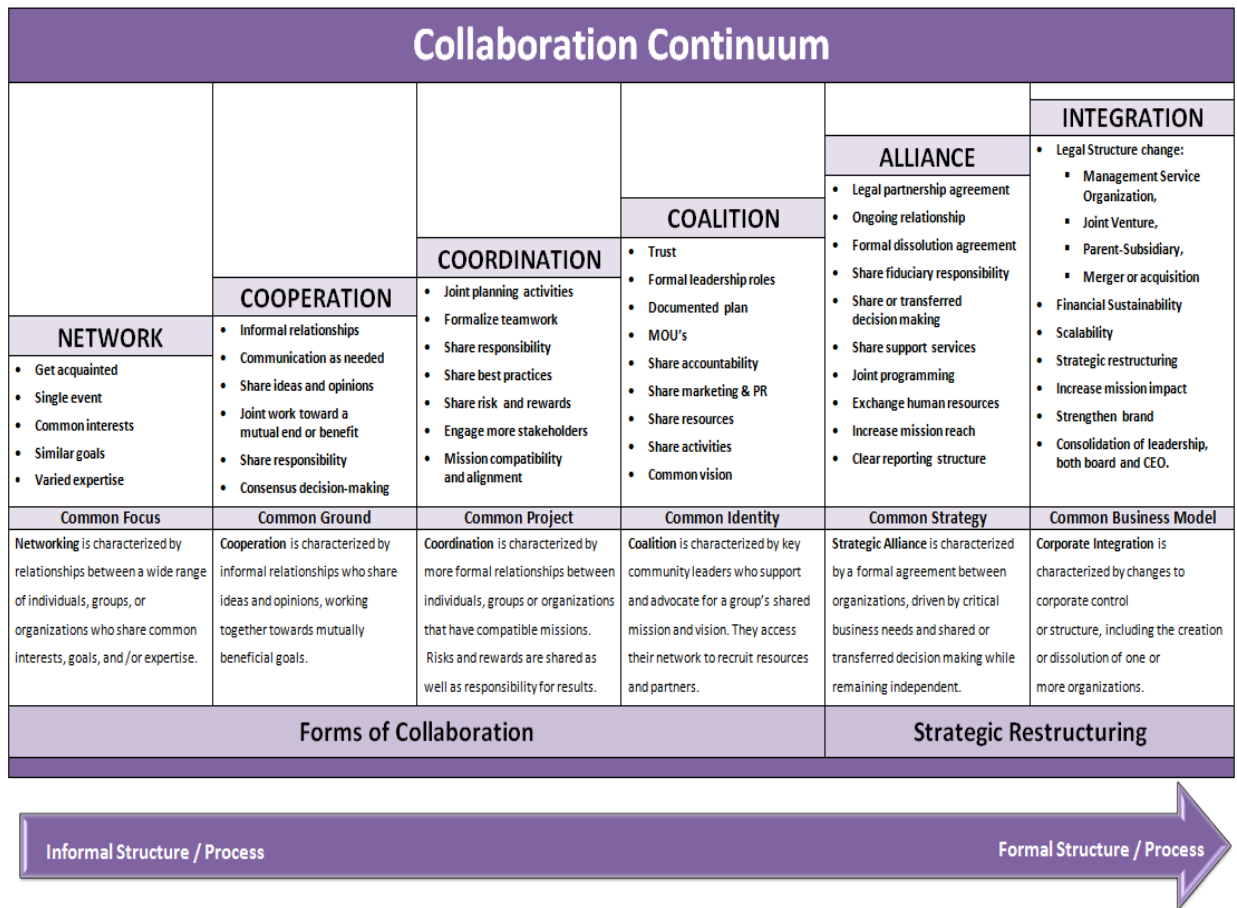


Figure 1

Collaborations range from networks, which are loose forms of collaboration but a great starting point, to integration, which creates a separate legal structure. Before starting, it is important for the stakeholders to gather and determine what their ultimate aim is and how best to form the collaboration. The following questions can serve as a guide:

- Why should we collaborate?
- What type of collaboration should we undertake?
- With whom should we collaborate?
- When should we collaborate?
- How should we collaborate?

In the book, The Collaboration Challenge, author James E. Austin suggests the following five steps for collaboration:

- Understanding strategic collaboration
- Making the connection
- Ensuring strategic fit

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## Title search: Doing More with Less: Public/Private Collaboration as a Key Nonprofit Trend

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