

Collaboration for Contractors.

5 ways to integrate contractors to working in collaborative cultures and why it is essential for success.

Organisations with processes and structures to ensure collaborative work, maintain they drive better financial results, considerable engagement and greater ROI from human capital investment. They cite several benefits to collaborate working, including higher levels of peer-to-peer learning, faster problem solving, more frequent innovation and greater overall process efficiencies.

Conversely, as many professional contractors have experienced, some companies do everything they can to ensure demarcation and segregation between their highly experienced contractors and their permanent employees. Occasionally this is done due to a misguided perception as to what employment law requires. However, in some cases it's due to old work methods around the management of contractors on

site not being reviewed, as contractors are seen as a temporary resource and hardly worth that effort.

Both collaborative working and the greater use of expert contractors, (over 80% of companies regularly or occasionally draw on this talent pool), are both key leadership initiatives. Here are five ways to ensure both are fully leveraged.

1. Onboard your contractors fully. Don't use a cut out version of that which you use for your permanent employees. Make sure to be clear about organisation purpose, the purpose the contractor will serve, and how the latter supports achievement of the former. Pay particular attention to their relationship building with key internal contacts.

2. Be sure to clarify the project and set of tasks (scope) to be undertaken by the contractor to the wider group they will work with. Ideally this occurs ahead of the contract commencement and the group input as to what is included, and where the priorities sit. The group including the contractor should meet to discuss the final "scope" sharing feedback and opinions. This is a great opportunity for the contractor to share knowledge and learn about the organisation efforts and practices to date.

3. Manage mission creep effectively. Projects have a habit of expanding and highly experienced contractors often bring expertise from other areas. Make sure the wider group including the contractor has input and shares perspective on what might be appropriate to add to scope. Make

it safe for any party to say No to additional tasks if they have a clear and objective reason.

4. Building trust is crucial in any collaborate group. It's not always easy. Permanent employees may have concerns about their own contribution and security. It's for this reason that high levels of communication are essential. Open, honest and consistent exchanges help to develop trust amongst any group. This also applies to teams of independent contractors working together. The same benefits of collaborative working can arise.

5. If your organisation uses informal incentives or recognition points, ensure that the wider group is in receipt and not just permanent employees. It's important too, that contractors participate in or lead

presentations on behalf of the collaborative group, as would a permanent member of your firm. Even more so when hybrid working, where it is too easy for the contractor to become invisible.

Professional contractors deliver elevated levels of expertise for defined periods or purposes. They regularly have a wide range of experience, even outside the specific performance you presently seek, which your organisation can draw from. The creation of a collaborative culture around their work delivers maximum value from your investment in their services as well as facilitating learning for your permanent employees too.