Boundary Spanning Leadership
How important is it for you to collaborate effectively across boundaries in your professional and community life?
How important is it for you to collaborate effectively across boundaries?

99%
86%
13%

79% the critical gap

62%
7%
55%

How effective are you?

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2009 Boundary Spanning study with 128 senior executives
Our research at CCL began...
Our journey crossed...
Yet our relationships with one another remain as divided and jagged as ever.
“In a flat world, bridging boundaries between groups is the new and critical work of leadership.”
What is boundary spanning leadership?

Why is it needed?

How can leaders span boundaries?

So What are the implications for you?
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Boundary spanning leadership
Boundary spanning leadership

Greens

Blues

Direction Alignment Commitment

Shared Goal or Mission

Leadership

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Question for Reflection:

What is a challenge you or your organization currently face that can only be solved by collaborating across boundaries?
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The 5 boundaries of leadership

Vertical

Stakeholder

Geographic

Horizontal

Demographic

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Vertical boundaries across levels & authority

We have a boundary that runs up and down the organizational chart. We have work to do to create better interaction between senior executives and middle to entry managers.

— Sr. Vice President, Automotive Retail
My organization consists of 8 functional units and 7 laboratories, in which more and more of our problems require cross-functional solutions. Unfortunately, each lab has its own management culture, and this causes real challenges in partnering.

— Head Director, Government R&D Agency
Stakeholder boundaries
across external groups & interests

We struggle in creating effective customer-vendor relationships. There is a great need for creating common goals, but our objectives are often conflicting.

— Group President, Clothing Retail
We are incorporating more and more diversity into our organization from what used to be a very monolithic culture. It brings enormous advantages but also management challenges.

— Senior Executive, Pharmaceuticals
We must learn to collaborate not only across our vast country, but with people from around the globe.

— General Manager, Chinese Telecom Company
The 5 boundaries of leadership

- **Vertical**: across levels & authority
- **Horizontal**: across functions & expertise
- **Stakeholder**: across external groups & interests
- **Demographic**: across diverse groups & differences
- **Geographic**: across markets & distance
Question for Reflection: Leadership Across Boundaries

• At Your Best - Across what type of boundary is your organization most effective at collaborating?

• At Your Worst – Across what type of boundary is your organization least effective at collaborating?
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3 boundary spanning strategies

- Managing Boundaries
- Forging Common Ground
- Discovering New Frontiers
Managing Boundaries

Taps into the power of **differentiation** – the need for distinctiveness, divergence, and uniqueness across group boundaries.
Forging Common Ground

Taps into the power of integration – the need for unity, convergence, and belonging.
Discovering New Frontiers

Taps into the power of integration and differentiation simultaneously – the location where the most advanced and innovative opportunities await.
6 boundary spanning practices

- Manage Boundaries
- Forge Common Ground
- Discover New Frontiers

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Buffering
Define Boundaries

Outcome = Safety & Security
Reflecting
Understand Boundaries

Outcome = Awareness & Respect

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Connecting Suspend Boundaries

Outcome = Mutual Confidence & Trust

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Mobilizing
Reframe Boundaries

Outcome = Community, Ownership & Accountability
Weaving Interlace Boundaries

Outcome = Interdependence & Collective Learning

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Transforming Cross-Cut Boundaries

Outcome = Reinvention & Alternative Futures
6 boundary spanning practices

- BUFFERING
- CONNECTING
- WEAVING
- REFLECTING
- MOBILIZING
- TRANSFORMING

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Developing *individuals* to span boundaries

How can you help develop leaders to work collaboratively across boundaries?
Developing **groups and teams** to span boundaries

How can you help develop groups and teams to work across the boundaries between them?
Developing organizations to span boundaries

Leadership is a **collective** activity

Leadership emerges out of **individual knowledge and expertise**

**people in authority** are responsible for leadership

How can you develop leadership cultures that cultivate and encourage spanning boundaries?

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Developing a global society to span boundaries

Job Creation
Innovation
Economic Crises
Climate Change
Natural Disasters
Poverty & Education

How can you contribute to a world that must span boundaries to thrive?
BOUNDARIES
bound·a·ry
1. Something that indicates bounds or limits; a *border* or bounding line
FRONTIERS

bound·a·ry

2. Also called frontier. The location of the most advanced or newest activity in an area.
Thank You —

We invite you to join the conversation at

www.spanboundaries.com