

*Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. Working together is success.*

***Henry Ford***

## Module Two: What is Collaborative Business Writing?



Collaborative writing is often simply defined as a project or piece of work that is created by a multiple of people combined together. It has become especially useful in many companies that prefer employees to work together on a project or require a large assignment to be divided into smaller parts in order to be accomplished on time. After each employee has finished their share, a group leader or editor works to assemble the parts together to create a final work or project.

### Clarifying the Objective



Once a collaborative project has been created, it is important to clarify the objective and outline what needs to be completed. Some objectives will outline the necessary components that need to be completed, as well as address which employee should complete it. Collaborative writing can be tough to start, so it's best when members have some sort of shared goal and are aware of shared responsibility and accountability. Once the objective is established and the members know their role, they can benefit from the shared resources, authority and eventual rewards of working together.

Define the objective:

- What are we doing this project for?
- What do we hope to accomplish?
- What parts/aspects need to be addressed in the project?
- What processes should be done in the project?

## Practical Writing Approaches



Collaborative business writing has become a great tool to better design group processes and procedures used in a company. Because of this, collaborative writing has become a practical writing approach that many companies have begun to adapt for their employees. In collaborative business environments, each employee is able to contribute to the project as a whole, while still being able to edit or revise work as needed. Many collaborative groups even allow for coworker's to make comments on or edit each other's work, allowing more views and ideas throughout the project. In addition, since the collaborative writing process can be done almost anywhere, it is easier for employees to include work from a variety of areas, such as from across the state, the nation or even the world. 0

Benefits:

- Improves collaborative processes
- Increase member communication
- Edit/peer review project segments
- Increase contributions from multiple parties

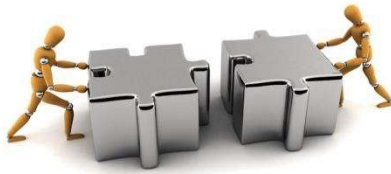
## Collaborative Writing Strategies



There is a number of different collaboration writing strategies that companies can use to fit the project they need completed. Some strategies rely on a small group of employees working on one piece at the same time. Other strategies involve multiple employees working on projects in individual roles to bring together later. Companies will choose a strategy to use based on a number of factors, including the size of the project, number of employees involved and what sort of deadline the project has.

Some examples of writing strategies that will be discussed later:

- Parallel construction
- Sequential writing
- Integrated writing

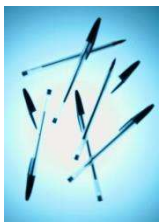


## Collaborative Writing Patterns

A collaborative pattern refers to the 'pattern' in which employees will work together to complete the project. These patterns can be used with a set collaborative strategy or they can be used as an independent tool. The collaborative pattern that is used will focus on what members of the team will complete what tasks and how the rest of the team will work to support the main goal. Different patterns require a single person to perform a task, such as creating an outline or editing peer submissions, while other patterns require a group of employees to work on one task together in order to complete it. The collaborative pattern of the team depends on a number of factors, such as the type of project at hand, how many members are available, and the individual talents of each team member.

### Common collaborative patterns:

- The team collectively plans and outlines the project, and each employee completes their own part and is later compiled together into a whole piece.
- One individual of the team plans and writes a project draft while the group later revises it
- The team plans and writes the draft as a group while one or more other members revise the draft without any additional input.
- One member will dictate various parts of the project while another member transcribes and edits a final draft.



## Case Study

Ginger has been assigned to write a proposal that provides ideas for ways of improving employee proficiency and has asked to include her department coworkers in the process. Ginger knew this would best be done if they collaborated on the writing portions. She hoped that if her coworkers worked together it would generate ideas for the proposal and streamline the process of putting these ideas into words. Ginger used a writing strategy that involved having each employee work individually and then bring the pieces together. Based on this pattern, she decided she could manage the outline of the project as well as edit the employee's work together to form the final proposal. This way, Ginger can get several different opinions from the department, but will be able to present them in an organized fashion to the management board.