NAILING COLLABORATION IN DISPARATE ORGANIZATIONS

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Session Abstract

Professional services networks and other multi-firm and multi-jurisdictional organizations are built on a premise of collaboration yet are highly challenged when it comes to driving the kind of true collaboration that accomplishes their strategic goals.

It was easier when many of these organizations began as they were solely focused on members exchanging referrals to protect client relationships and defend against competitors who were geographically situated where another member was not. Over the years the strategic reasons to belong to a network have changed, with the focus being on joint business development and joint working on client matters as much as it is on the exchange of referrals. Whereas referrals work where there is collegiality, the ability to remain independent yet able to work on high value and complex client matters requires actual collaboration.

In this session we'll consider some of the unique challenges to collaboration in networks as well as explore some of the innovative solutions in the drive towards true collaboration. While the discussion emanates from the perspective of a professional services network, it is equally applicable to any organization attempting collaboration across boundaries such as geography, cultures, or substantive focus. Organizations lacking a unifying strategy also suffer from similar collaboration challenges and the lessons shared in this session apply in those situations as well.

Objectives:

- Understand what can undermine collaboration when independent entities come together for a common purpose, such as cultural issues, communications challenges, technology disparities, and more.
- Gain insights into the potential rewards of nailing collaboration across networks.
- Learn the essential ingredients for collaboration success in a networked environment.
- Hear success examples when collaboration really worked.