

The Four Point Partnership Plan

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Any commonsense approach to building **durable, mutually beneficial bonds** between partners recognizes and supplies natural incentives to each party. Sustainable collaborations will meet parties' short and long-term needs in ways that: reward continued investment; provide mutual benefit; and preserve partner resources. Pursue great partnerships that include:

1 Multiple Sectors

Partner outside your silo. Reach across sectors to find value and needs that do not exist within your own: Be the new market for an industry that doesn't serve your sector; be the supplier for a market that doesn't have your product. The potential for matching needs and goods is greatest at the borders of your industry and beyond.

Measureable Gains

Define success in your own terms. Counter to common wisdom, shared goals and metrics are not essential to lasting partnerships. Mutual benefits emerge when partners pursue gains defined and measured by their own standards. Think of the economy as an ecology: Partnerships are the synergistic, symbiotic relationships that promote health for each partner while perpetuating the system.

3 Frank Talk

Speak honestly and often. Choose venues that encourage open communication. Use language that avoids sector-specific jargon, theories or paradigms that can impede mutual understanding. Frank talk assures each participant's needs are known and met, and that necessary corrections are made; it is the common currency between partners.

4 Lasting Friendship

Shake on it, every time. Friendship and mutual respect are not prerequisites for successful partnership, but they are emergent properties of those partnerships built to last. Consider the power of genuine affection and concern to encourage honesty, to smooth misunderstandings and to generate future projects with the same devotion to sustainable, mutual benefit.

Questions about your own partnership plan?

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