

Weekly Column  
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Melvin University  
and Me

## Collaboration Cube

There is a cube developed in the US by Auxano (Will Mancini, President), a consultancy specialising in helping churches plant and grow, that I have translated and used, and I thought I'd share it here.

The Collaboration Cube (cube) was created to not only encourage team members to join the dialogue, but also to give them the ability to apply it:

- Initiator - for direction
- Processor - for reflection
- Supporter - for affirmation
- Challenger - for questioning

Imagine cubes as representing each of these four roles and what they look like. The cubes are used by the leader or moderator guiding the group and by the team trying to communicate with the team. During the discussion/challenge mode, team members use the cubes to let the rest of the team know which of the four roles they are experiencing as an image.

The cubes allow them to go deeper into the dialogue and get to know the source of their expression. Team members discover this empowerment by participating freely, openly, and with purpose. While it enhances collaboration, the cube also brings the team together while increasing energy and synergy. This cube can also be used as a signal to bring about change in the underlying operating environment: Blue Sky (B/S) and Decision/Commitment.

The Blue Sky mode is an important time to delay judgement and criticism, and

to generate many ideas freely. A fundamental principle of creativity is that great ideas come from many ideas.

Decision/Commitment is the signal for the moderator to move towards agreeing to a decision and for the 'plane to land'. This is when the moderator feels that the discussion has reached a point of moderation, an 'ah-ha' moment, and is moving toward a meaningful conclusion. The moderator turns the cube to show the team the side of the decision/commitment. It indicates the commitment time.

When the cube turns to the decision/commitment side, team members are asked to voice their support for the ideas on the table.

Remember, Decision/Commitment is not about expecting 80% of the group to be 100% satisfied with the decision; rather, it's about getting the whole group (100%) to feel 80% satisfied. 80% satisfaction is a huge success, and much better than 100% satisfaction for only a few people.

When a team is committed to moving forward from an idea, the momentum that rushes towards the finish line after engaging in this healthy, organised communication dynamic is tremendous.

Imagine a team working together, supporting decisions, people looking out for each other, and developing a shared experience as one. Now imagine working with people who have this kind of cohesive culture. When we give this a try with our teams, allowing them to check in with each other and develop a collaborative intelligence, our decisions will multiply results in ministry in ways we never anticipated.