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Tough times call for collaborative leaders

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Article Information:

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Author(s): David Archer, Alex Cameron

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Abstract: Purpose – This paper aims to discuss the development of collaborative leadership skills to address an identified gap in senior management capability.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper is based on research carried out by IPSOS Mori consisting of interviews with 100 directors across the public and private sector.

Findings – The research found that 64 per cent of those questioned identified a gap in collaborative leadership skills and senior levels and this rose to 73 per cent of those who worked for companies with more than 5,000 employees. The paper highlights a key capability for a collaborative leader – the ability to handle conflict in a productive manner.

Practical implications – The paper analyses five areas of development for a collaborative leader with regard to conflict: understanding your own relationship to conflict; understanding the needs of groups; holding difficult

conversations; finding the greater good; and mediating in other people's conflict. In each case it proposes practical steps to help leaders and development professionals handle these issues.

Originality/value – Investing in collaborative leadership capability is a priority for many businesses in these turbulent times. As economic pressures increase, the ability to work efficiently with critical business partners is a necessity. It is all too evident that ineffective collaboration and conflict in business relationships wastes time and money: these days this is something no one can afford. The skills outlined in this paper point the way for training managers to develop key people in their organisations to handle conflict and build effective relationships in tough times and in good.

Keywords: [Conflict resolution](#), [Leadership](#), [Partnership](#)

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