

Why do Partnerships fail?



Voluntary Impact
Northamptonshire
Executive Membership



Background

It's a known fact that 80% of business or Charity Partnerships fail. The reasons can be varied and multi-faceted. Here is a list compiled by Roger White in 2011 (which stands the test of time) and provides some important points to consider and digest, especially if you are thinking of entering an organisational Partnership at some point in the future.

- Source: *Bureaucracy and Government*

- Lack of leadership – no champion at Political, Board or Management Committee Level who understands (or cares) how partnerships succeed or fail.
- Lack of genuine commitment from one or both sides.
- Lack of budget (which reduces any partnership to no more than a talking shop).
- Lack of devolved responsibility/complex decision-making structures: the Partner that has to refer everything back for a decision: the Partnership that cannot delegate within its own structures.
- Lack of dedicated staff: when everyone involved is also doing their day job and no one is wholly associated with the work of the Partnership.
- Poor Governance: A lack of openness, poorly documented discussions and decisions, lack of budgetary control, poor or no ground rules for making decisions and no accountability back to Partners or Boards.
- Different partners speak different languages: their jargon, acronyms and assumed understanding.
- Different processes and procedures: different or no plans and planning cycles, different financial rules, different ways of measuring and improving performance.
- One partner is far too dominant. There is a Lack of Trust.

The Good News:

Every failure point or fracture can be rewritten to ensure it is a success. By simply reversing some of the points above a healthy Partnership could evolve. Due diligence is important in ensuring that any Partnership has a chance of success. Work with organisations that have similar cultures, attitudes and aims. Explore your relationship before committing. If you require any help or advice on what a Partnership could mean for your organisation simply contact Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire at info@voluntaryimpact.org.uk

