

**WORKING TOGETHER:  
A PROFILE OF COLLABORATION**

**A COMPANION  
TO THE ASSESSMENT TOOL**

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## **I. BACKGROUND**

The Working Together survey includes 40 questions that utilize a Likert 4-point scale. Response categories are as follows:

- |          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>“False”</b>                |
| <b>2</b> | <b>“More False than True”</b> |
| <b>3</b> | <b>“More True than False”</b> |
| <b>4</b> | <b>“True”</b>                 |

The survey also includes four, open-ended questions:

1. Based on this and/or prior collaborations, what recommendations do you have for improving this group?
2. What do you think is working well in this collaboration?
3. What is your incentive now for participating in this collaboration?
4. What could we do to increase participation for you and/or others?

Working Together is a statistically valid and reliable instrument designed to measure issues known to be important to the effectiveness of collaborative processes. The tool is designed to provide groups with feedback regarding member perceptions and feelings about the collaboration. The survey includes the following five scales, or categories:

- ❖ The Context of the Collaboration
- ❖ The Structure of the Collaboration
- ❖ Collaboration Members
- ❖ The Collaborative Process
- ❖ The Results of the Collaboration.

OMNI Institute has been using Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration since 1992 in the evaluation and support of collaborative groups and processes.

## II. PURPOSE

*Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration* may be used by groups to:

- ❖ Gain insights about member perceptions of how well the collaborative group process is working
- ❖ Surface specific areas of need to guide action and planning
- ❖ Provide a baseline measurement of the collaboration's current effectiveness, and
- ❖ Serve as an evaluation tool to monitor progress.

## III. THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF *WORKING TOGETHER*

*Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration* is:

- ❖ Statistically valid and reliable
- ❖ Accurately measures perceptions of issues known to be important for collaboration effectiveness
- ❖ Provides information about members' perceptions and feelings about the collaborative group

### **How do we know the instrument measures collaborative effectiveness?**

We learn about things by measuring them. Some things are easier to measure than others. Things such as age, sex, or income suggest obvious questions. We ask a person a question. The answer to the question is the measure. Some people answer our questions accurately. Some people answer inaccurately because they misunderstand the question, they do not know the answer, or they provide false information. When the answer is not accurate, we have measurement error. Measurement error is a problem because it means we are unable to learn about the thing by measuring it.

Complex things (such as collaboration, drug use, family bonding, and attitudes toward violence) cannot be measured accurately by asking only one question. To measure complex things we select and ask several questions. The response to each question provides some information about the thing we are trying to learn about.

Scaling is measuring something using many questions. A scale is a collection of questions where each question or item is trying to measure the same thing. As you may have guessed, measurement error is also a problem when we use a scale. No question is perfect, and even

all the questions taken together still will not guarantee we will accurately measure what we are trying to measure.

The fight against measurement error takes time, dedication and resources. There are two types of measurement error: validity and reliability. First we will discuss validity.

Think of measuring a thing as hitting the bull's eye on a target. If we have a tight pattern but we are off the bull's eye, we have low validity. With low validity, we are measuring some "thing" but it is not our "thing." We used face validity to help us decide if we are measuring what we intend to measure. Face validity is grouping questions together that appear to measure the same thing. In this instrument, we list all the questions under each scale or category so that you can judge for yourself whether we have face validity.

Once we had the questions grouped into scales by face validity, we wanted to explore the second type of measurement error called reliability. Reliability means that each question is measuring the same thing in the same way. Think of a reliable car. It goes anytime and anywhere. It is reliable, giving you consistently good results.

Think again of measuring a thing as hitting the bull's eye on a target. If we are on target but we do not have a tight pattern, we have low reliability. We may be measuring what we want to measure, but not very accurately.

#### **IV. THE RESEARCH UNDERLYING *WORKING TOGETHER***

We selected Cronbach's Alpha as our standard for deciding the reliability of our scales. Cronbach's Alpha is not the only technique but it is well regarded and, therefore, enjoys widespread use among researchers. Cronbach's Alpha is based on the average correlation of questions within the scale. Correlation means to vary together. As the affirmative response to one question increases, for example, the affirmative responses to the other questions are expected to increase, as well. The correlation between questions can vary between 0.00 and 1.00, with 0.00 meaning no correlation and 1.00 meaning perfect correlation. Cronbach's Alpha averages the correlations and comes up with a measure between 0.00 and 1.00.

A high Cronbach's Alpha suggests low spatter around the bull's eye. If all questions were perfectly correlated with each other, the Cronbach's Alpha would be 1.00. If the questions had no correlation with each other, the Cronbach's Alpha would be 0.00. We use the Cronbach's Alpha to tell us if the scale is good enough to use. Do we believe the scale measures what we want to measure? To make this decision, we use the following, well-established guidelines:

## How to Interpret Various Levels of Cronbach's Alpha

<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1.00	Too good to be true– look at the questions, they must be identical.
0.90 – 0.99	Incredibly good– celebrate.
0.80 – 0.89	Very good and worth a good party.
0.70 – 0.79	Acceptable but hold off on partying.
0.60 – 0.69	Be worried, the measurement error is pretty high.
Below 0.60	You really don't have a scale– stick to the items.

### Scale Reliability of the *Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration Instrument*

<i>Scale or Category of Working Together</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Context of the Collaboration	0.46
Structure of the collaboration	0.77
Collaboration Members	0.87
Collaboration Process	0.85
Results of the Collaboration	0.80

The alpha for the scale labeled "The Context of the Collaboration" is too low to assume that the scale is reliable. This is due to the low number of items in the scale and the tendency for respondents to rate the items relatively high. The items in this scale should be viewed independently.

Although we feel good about the reliability of our scales, the battle against measurement error is not over. You may be concerned that we did not measure what we say we are measuring. We have reproduced the questions within our scales so that you can judge the validity of the scale for yourself. Our goal is high validity, high reliability, and low measurement error.

For more information about the research underlying this instrument, please see:

*Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference* by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson, Jossey-Bass, publishers. 1994

## V. DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING AND ANALYZING WORKING TOGETHER RESULTS

**Step 1:** To assess the group, the circles must be converted into numbers, called “scores.”

- If the answer is “True”, the score is 4
- If the answer is “More True Than False”, the score is 3
- If the answer is “More False Than True”, the score is 2
- If the answer is “False”, the score is 1

**Step 2:** Determine the average Group Member Score for each item.

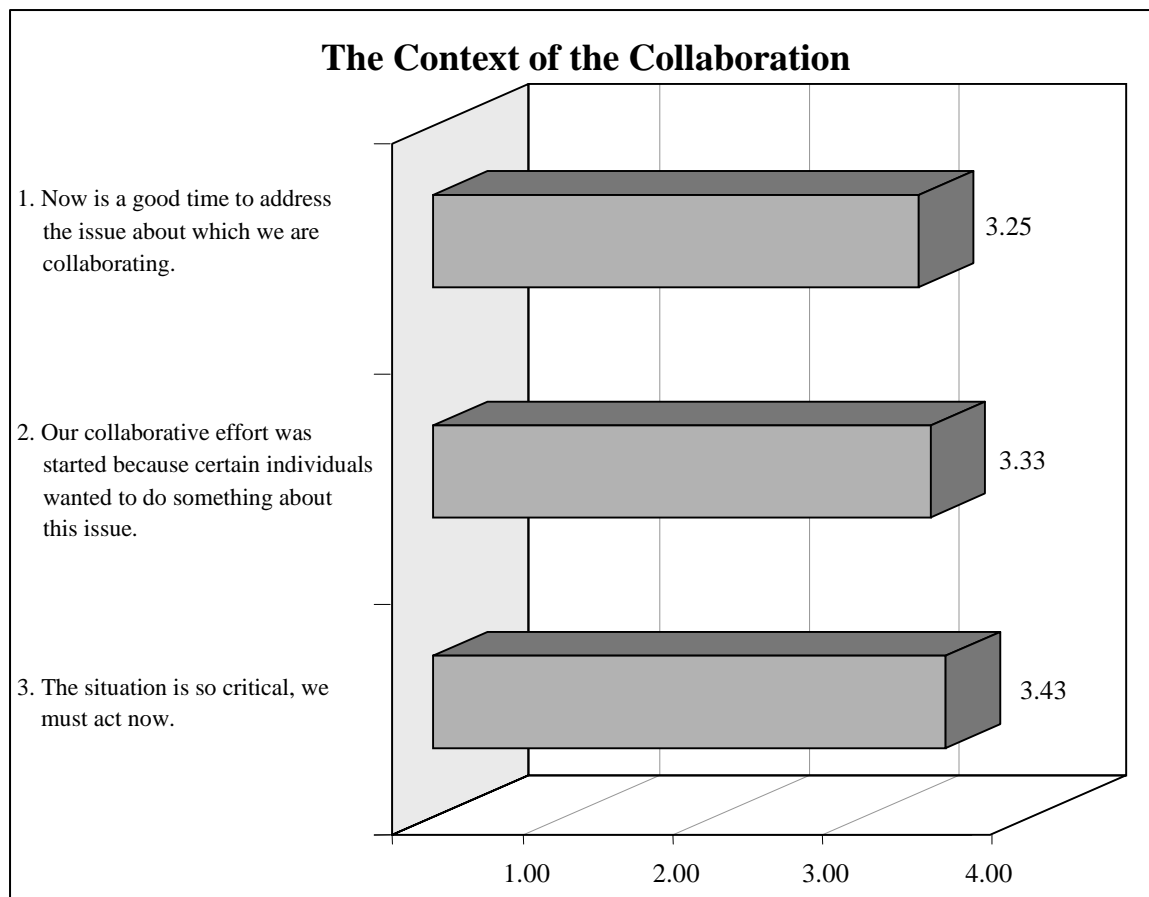
- For each item, record the scores of all the group members
- Total the scores for each item
- Average the scores by dividing the total by the number of members who rated the item

*Example:*

**Item # 1**

Member #	Score
1	4
2	3
3	No response
4	4
5	2
Total Score	13
Total # of Members Responding	4
<b>Average Score</b>	$13/4 = 3.25$

*Note:* The average response for each item can be displayed graphically by listing the questions in the “Y” axis and calibrating the “X” axis from 1 to 4. Draw a Bar to represent the average score for each item. We’ve provided an example on the next page.



**Step 3:** Determine the average Group Member Score for each Category.

- Add the average score for each item in the category and divide by the number of items

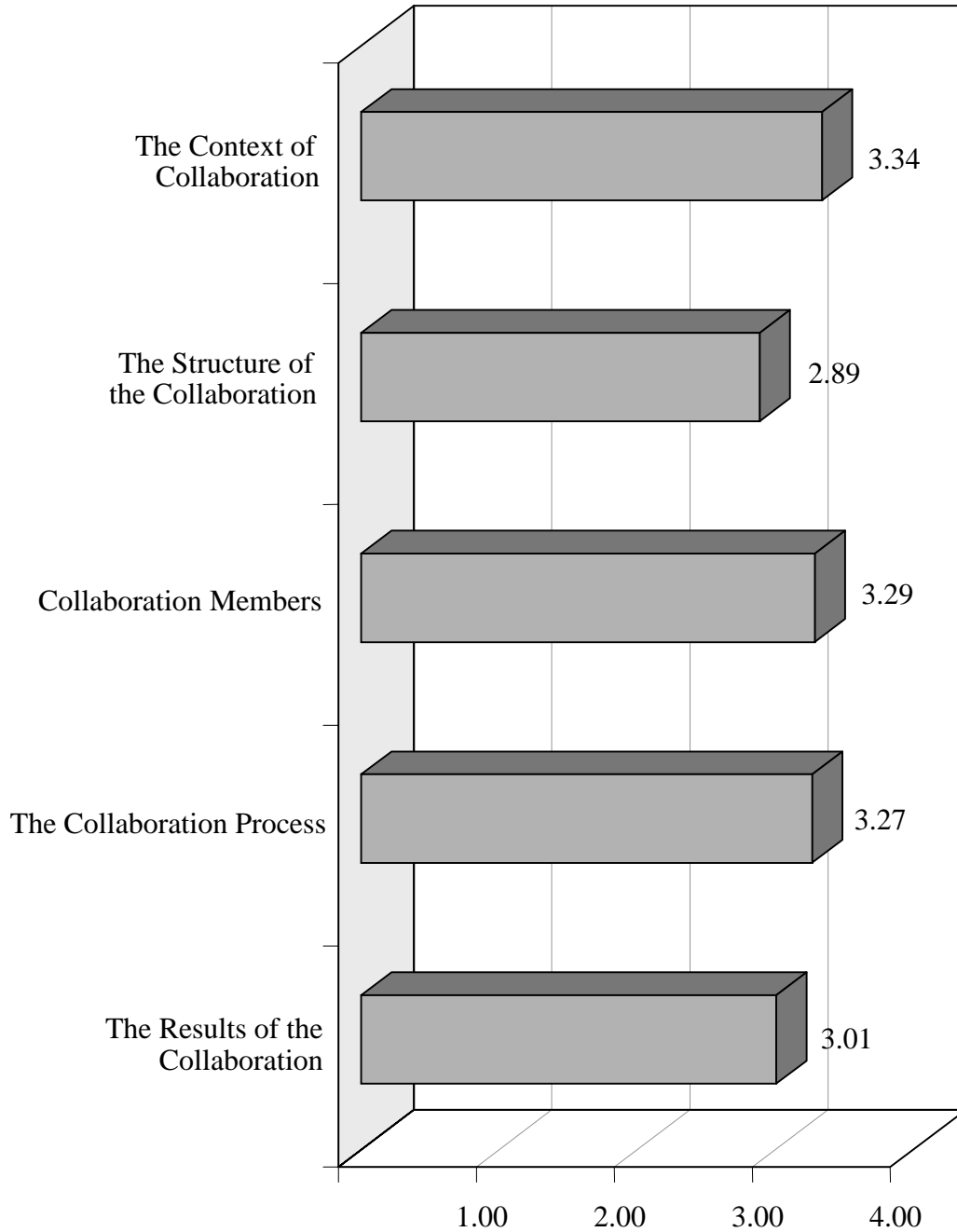
*Example:*

**Category 1 – The Context of Collaboration**

Item #	Average Score
1	3.25
2	3.33
3	3.43
Total Score	10.01
Total # of Items	3
<b>Average Category Score</b>	$10.01/3 = 3.34$

*Note:* The Average Category Score can be displayed in a graph format as well. Here's an example of what this might look like.

## Average Category Scores



## **VI. TECHNIAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT**

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