



Partnership Professional

High-Level Assessment



For ambitious partnership professionals everywhere

Partnership Professional – easy in theory; challenging in reality!

Are you a 'partnership professional' driving the work of a partnership (or a number of partnerships) that is tackling complexity and seeking to deliver value-adding improvements to their place and / or their communities?

Could you best describe yourself as the person responsible for:

- ***'holding the partnership together; making the system work' and***
- ***'minimising partnership risk; maximising partnership value'.***



Partnership professionals can go by any number of job titles including partnership director, partnership manager, partnerships co-ordinator, etc. In essence, the 'partnership professional' is arguably the most important person needed to ensure success for any ambitious partnership. They are a highly credible individual who combines strong skills and experiences in 5 key areas:

1. **visioning and strategy** - keeping all partners focused on the prize;
2. **relationship management** - building value-creating partner relationships;
3. **partnership management** - making the governance structure work;
4. **collaborative working** - the approaches and methods; and
5. **programme management** - the planning, delivery and reporting.

Yet being a Partnership Professional is never easy, usually much misunderstood and full of challenges! Kittel et al (2014) in their paper entitled '*Top 5 Personal Challenging Opportunities – What keeps strategic alliance managers awake at night*' explored the personal challenges facing partnership professionals and identified a Top 5 that needs to be overcome:

1. **Lack of Understanding** – 'Nobody really gets it'!
2. **Role / Career Confusion** – 'What is my role? What is my personal value to the partnership and to my own organisation'?
3. **Lack of Real Power / Strategic Impotence** – 'How do I make things happen when no one understands or values the work I do? I do not have any real power'.
4. **Toxic Atmosphere** – 'The overall climate is counter-productive to collaboration'.
5. **Obstructed Vision** – 'I can see the long-term potential; others do not. The path ahead seems difficult'.

Building and adapting on the above, this Partnership Professionals High-Level Assessment Questionnaire poses 6 statements which – once scored and considered – can help partnership professionals to identify their strengths and their future development needs.

Answer each statement with the ranking that you feel most closely aligns to your own unique context and career.

Partnership Professionals: High-Level Assessment Questionnaire

(Consider the 6 statements below and place a cross in the box that best reflects your own context and career)

STATEMENT	EXPLANATION	a) Strongly Disagree	b) Disagree	c) Neither Agree or Disagree	d) Agree	e) Strongly Agree
1) Lack of Understanding – ‘Nobody really gets it!’	I have a passion for my work that senior leaders and others just do not appreciate. I am often asked challenging questions around what is your partnership; what does it actually do; how is it adding value and making an impact; is it worth all the effort? Few within my organisation really understand the complexities of strategic partnerships and of collaboration itself; it is not seen as part of the core business but rather an add-on!					
2) Role / Career Confusion – ‘What is my role? What is my personal value to the partnership and to my own organisation?’	Very few people – both within my own organisation and my partnership(s) – actually understand and acknowledge the unique nature of my work and the value I bring in ‘holding the partnership together; making the system work’ and ‘minimising partnership risk; maximising partnership value’. They see me as some form of ‘super project manager’ or ‘the organiser of partnership meetings’! I do not have a clear development path because my profession is misunderstood.					
3) Lack of Real Power / Strategic Impotence – ‘How do I make things happen when no one understands or values the work I do? I do not have any real power’.	Senior leaders within my organisation have the real power; and I am not sure they really care about maximising the value to be derived from strategic partnerships and collaborative working. They do not appreciate that skilled and experienced partnership managers see and think completely differently compared to traditional and functional management. For example, I do not manage resources; but I seek to expertly influence partner resources through value-creating relationships.					
4) Toxic Atmosphere – ‘The overall climate is counter-productive to collaboration’.	My organisation has numerous strategy documents littered with statements extolling the virtues of partnership working and collaboration. Yet, our internal culture is dominated by silos, protectionism and bureaucracy! This leads to a ‘senior leadership collaborative approach’ that is focused on short-term quick-wins to the detriment of developing and sustaining long-term value-creating relationships with key stakeholders around a powerful shared vision.					
5) Obstructed Vision – ‘I can see the long-term potential; others do not. The path ahead seems difficult’.	Sometimes I feel incredibly isolated and frustrated. I can see huge untapped potential in our strategic partnerships and collaborative working; yet it feels that no one is listening or wants to create the space and make the time to deep-dive and explore fully. We are very much focused on the ‘here and now’. I find getting my own organisation’s senior leaders and our key partners excited about our untapped potential incredibly challenging; which is also incredibly frustrating.					
6) Career Development – ‘Access to bespoke learning, development and networking opportunities is limited’.	Given the lack of understanding of my unique role and the added value I bring; I find it a challenge to access bespoke learning & development opportunities, and networking events, to further strengthen my impact as a partnership professional that will benefit both my organisation and my partnership(s).					
TOTAL NUMBER OF CROSSES PER RESPONSE:						

To work out your aggregate scores

Response	Number of Crosses	Multiple By	Total
a) Strongly Disagree.		x 5	
b) Disagree.		x 4	
c) Neither Agree or Disagree.		x 3	
d) Agree.		x 2	
e) Strongly Agree.		x 1	
TOTAL SCORE:			

What your aggregate score means?

Total Score	Partnership Profile Score
22 to 30	You are content in your partnership professional role and have significant influence and impact within your partnership(s).
13 to 21	You see great potential in your partnership professional role and your partnership(s); but need to find ways of unleashing it.
6 to 12	You are frustrated in your partnership professional role and the untapped potential of your partnership(s). You need to find ways to enhance your profile and added value.

Completing this high-level assessment enables you to consider where you are on your partnership professional journey. It also provides a helpful starting point for discussion with your line manager when considering your learning, development and networking needs to further strengthen your profile and the future value you can bring to your own career, your organisation and your partnership(s).

To help you advance your career, I offer an invaluable Partnership Professionals Mentoring Service providing you with confidential support and best practice built upon my own 25+ years of real-world 'hands-on' partnership manager experiences – both as the Strategic Partnerships Manager at Southampton City Council and as a consultant working for numerous clients driving high profile partnership programmes. To find out more, please do contact me to arrange a no-obligation meeting.

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About Henry Pavey MBA, CTArcf, FICW:

Henry is a specialist advisor and facilitator; guiding leaders and organisations in building 'Collaborations of Impact'. With over 25 years of real world hands-on experiences – both as a local government employee and as an independent consultant - coupled with relevant academic under-pinning and a military service background; he provides leaders and organisations with practical advice and solutions to the multi-faceted frustrations they face in seeking to build 'Collaborations of Impact'.



As a leading authority in strategic partnership working and collaboration, Henry is a Fellow of the Institute for Collaborative Working and is a Member of both its Advisory Council and its Thought Leadership Special Interest Group. He is also an accredited Collaborative Transformation Architect Fellow from Canterbury Christ Church University; Member of The Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals; and has an MBA from Solent University.