

GROWERTALKS

Growers Talk Business

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Collaboration as the Secret to Innovation & Lasting Impact

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A few months ago, my friend Jim Kennedy from Ball shared a quote that struck a chord with me. He mentioned something Anna Ball often says, “The future belongs to collaborators.” Ever since that conversation, those words have echoed in my mind, embedding themselves as a guiding idea.

When I reflect on this past season at Raker-Roberta’s Young Plants, that quote feels more relevant than ever. While the business arena often glamorizes competition and “beating the other guy,” the real magic happens through collaboration. This year, we achieved remarkable milestones that squarely point to the power of working together—not just within our own walls, but across the industry.

Why collaboration matters more than ever

The modern business landscape is dynamic and endlessly evolving. Markets are faster, trends shift rapidly and the pressure to innovate is relentless. Attempting to go it alone in this age isn’t just challenging; it’s a recipe for stagnation. Collaboration is no longer optional for companies aspiring to remain relevant, grow sustainably and deliver innovation.

Collaboration allows diverse minds, ideas and expertise to converge, unlocking solutions and creating value that would be otherwise unattainable. It fosters creativity, accelerates problem-solving and, importantly, results in shared success.

At its core, collaboration does two vital things:

1. Multiplies impact: By combining resources and expertise, businesses can accomplish more with less.
2. Speeds up innovation: When subject matter experts across fields tackle an idea together, solutions materialize faster and better.

Building a collaborative culture within your organization

At Raker-Roberta's Young Plants, collaboration starts from within. Internal teamwork has been the backbone of some of our most significant successes. Real-life examples highlight the impact of collaboration within our organization.

- **Facility upgrades:** When faced with the challenge of upgrading facilities to accommodate a new product, our Physical Systems and Production teams worked together to find solutions that balanced technical needs with economic considerations.
- **Product administration:** For rolling out new product lines, our Customer Service, Sales and Information Systems teams came together to simplify complex processes, ensuring a smooth launch.

These weren't isolated instances of one department "owning" a solution. They were examples of cross-functional collaboration where every team was an equal stakeholder, leveraging their strengths to ensure success.

Collaboration beyond the company walls

The ripple effects of collaboration stretch far beyond our doors. Working with outside partners, organizations and even competitors can unlock levels of innovation that no single company can achieve on its own.

Take the Firefly Petunia as an example: Bringing this groundbreaking bioluminescent plant to market required a meticulous, collaborative effort. The process spanned several organizations, including Light Bio, GreenFuse Botanicals, Raker-Roberta's Young Plants, MasterTag, Moss Greenhouses, Ball Horticultural Company, Rooted in Solutions and others. Each partner brought specialized expertise to the table, from genetic engineering and breeding to branding and logistics. Together, we turned an ambitious idea into a reality. Without this collaboration, the Firefly Petunia might never have reached consumers.

This spirit of cross-industry teamwork emphasizes one of the most powerful truths about collaboration in today's world: When more minds tackle a problem, solutions are not only better, but arrive faster.

Unlocking the power of partnerships

The power of collaboration doesn't just drive one-off projects; it creates sustainable growth and competitive advantage. Today's most successful companies have realized that partnerships fuel innovation and transform industries.

These partnerships go far beyond contracts or handshake deals. They represent a deep alignment of visions, goals and expertise. For teams, partnerships foster environments of shared learning, creativity and forward momentum. For customers, it means better products, breakthrough innovations and improved experiences.

Businesses that prioritize collaboration develop an ecosystem of mutual benefit, paving the path for long-term growth, industry leadership and meaningful change.

Are you harnessing the power of collaboration?

The era of siloed work and rigid hierarchies is behind us. The future truly belongs to collaborators. Now is the time to rethink how your business approaches partnerships and teamwork.

- How can you break down silos within your own organization to foster a culture of collaboration?
- Are you working with aligned partners who can amplify your strengths and complement your expertise?
- How can you create opportunities for cross-functional and cross-industry teamwork?

Collaboration allows us to tackle challenges with a unified approach, creating solutions that resonate across sectors and communities. It enables us to achieve more—not just for our bottom line, but for the people we serve.

By fostering collaboration and actively seeking meaningful partnerships, we ensure a legacy that isn't just impactful, but also enduring. Whether you're building products, driving efficiency or pursuing innovation, the road ahead is paved with teamwork. **GT**

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