

How to Use a Strategic Alliance to Get Ahead

By BNET Editorial

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In 1999, Starbucks joined forces with humanitarian agency CARE International and eventually contributed more than \$20 million to programs that provide emergency relief and community support in developing countries. What did Starbucks get out of the deal? CARE recognized the company's humanitarian contributions and the move gave Starbucks good reason to call its brew, the "Coffee that Cares." Strategic alliances are much more than just a gesture of mutual goodwill – they have become a necessary tool, whether it's to strengthen social responsibility credentials, pursue complex R&D projects, or simply grow in ways that one company can't manage alone. But getting the most out of an alliance is a more difficult task than it might seem. To help, we've pulled together this package of articles that illustrate the finer points of making strategic partnerships work.

The Three Stages of Strategic Alliances

Source: Harvard Knowledgebase

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Not every alliance is created equal. Harvard business professor James Austin studied five cross-sector alliances and discovered the three stages of how a partnership evolves. Here are his

findings on how companies like Timberland, Starbucks, and Bayer pursued strategic relationships with complementary partners.

How Alliances Fit into Corporate Strategy

Source: The Boston Consulting Group

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This guide breaks down the process of forming a smart partnership, from choosing the right partner and negotiating the deal, to making sure both parties stay goal-oriented. Turn to the handy 10-point CEO checklist if you're too pressed for time to read the entire white paper.

Getting Everyone Together: A Road Map for Action

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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When two organizations decide to partner up, the focus tends toward the financial and contractual aspects of the deal. But if an alliance is going to succeed, authors Jennifer Kemeny and Joel Yanowitz argue that companies must also focus on the #human factors# – the ways that each company's staff will think and interact. In this article, learn how to effectively align two different cultures and their expectations.

Seven Strategies for Maintaining Good Relations

Source: Gruner + Jahr USA Publishing

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According to a Vantage Partners study of 130 companies, somewhere between 55 and 70 percent of business coalitions either fail or don't meet their original goals. Why? Alliance managers cite poor

working relationships as the root cause. The founding partners of Vantage share seven tricks to initiating – and maintaining – a lasting partnership.

Manage and Measure a Partnership's Success

Source: Penton Media



Forming the right alliance is the first hurdle. The next challenge is measuring how much value it's generating for both partners. Find the right metrics to make sure your company is getting out what it's putting into the partnership.

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