

Keys to a Great Collaboration

By Janine Yoro

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At a recent panel discussion, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino said it best, "...for America to be more competitive, it must be more collaborative". In the past several years, the world that we live in has drastically changed. Education, business, health, entertainment, and living are all a part of this transformation. For young adults trying to find their niche and place, it becomes difficult to adapt in a world changing by the second. As a result, individuals find themselves in limbo between following the rules set before them while trying to maintain their individuality and uniqueness. These days, many young entrepreneurs are struggling and competing to find their way to success. In an article by Harvard Gazette, they encourage innovation through partnerships and collaborations to redefine the meaning of a competitive business.

In October of 2012, a group of local Los Angeles businesses came together to host a music and art event called "The Change-Up". The Change Up aimed to raise awareness about impoverished communities in Los Angeles, such as Skid Row. Prior to the date, clothing, food, and monetary donations were gathered for select rescue missions. During the Event, many artists donated original artwork to be displayed and purchased. At the same time, live musical talent was featured to carry throughout the night. After all the efforts of the team behind The Change-Up, they raised roughly \$2,500 and over 4,000 pounds of food and clothing for the cause.

On a larger scale, Bill Rodriguez, M.D. created Daktari Diagnostics to address medical issues globally, especially in some of the world's poorest communities. Geared to serve a major public health need in Africa, a "team of engineers, scientists, physicians, and global health experts" collaborate to design and produce medical technology that can be used anywhere in the world. It's stated, "it remains difficult, costly, and time-consuming to identify exactly when people with slow-moving HIV should start [medication]". Thus, the Daktari CD4 has been built to provide blood test results simply and rapidly to determine if patients have HIV, in which a treatment plan can be offered sooner than later. With the combination of expertise, they bring innovation to the forefront to tackle an issue that normally falls under the radar.

In addition, for many small companies aimed towards a greater cause, the start-up may not always be that easy. Luckily, there are organizations like Acumen who aim to invest in ideas, leaders, and companies that want to create a change in the world. Acumen has partnered with numerous foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Google, to help smaller companies make their dreams a reality with contributions of over \$5,000,000. Acumen serves as a support, network, and resource to offer individuals the tools needed to solve some of the world's most challenging problems. Thus, with the generosity from over 20 countries, it's these types of partnerships that embody the spirit of daring to dream differently together.

Presently, as our world has become accustomed to constant changing, we must allow ourselves and our minds to think critically about our actions and the purpose we serve. Many people have heard to think beyond the box, but it may be time to start thinking there is no box. The highlighted collaborations serve as reminders that businesses are changing and they're demanding for society to look at the larger picture. Many young entrepreneurs, starting their own

companies and building their brands, possess a golden key that can unlock a new way to handle business. With fresh ideas and new innovations, young entrepreneurs have the ability to tear down walls in place and build anew. With a different perspective, young individuals can offer a new angle to view problems that are dying for solutions. We all serve as pieces to the puzzle and the only way it can work is if we do it together. However, it begins with accountability and most importantly, it begins with you.