THE FUNDAMENTALS ARE GOLDEN:

THE VALUE OF FINE-TUNING ALLIANCE OPERATING MODELS

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Preface

It is a perennial question: What is the impact of effective alliance management? After all, alliance professionals don't develop the product or ensure it gets into the hands of customers. Their equally important contribution to success is to ensure that alliance operations and governance provide an environment that is conducive to developing and commercializing that innovative solution.

In codevelopment and cocommercialization alliances this may play out over many years, with many twists and turns. These alliances need to think of themselves as an entity, albeit one that has to exist within the strategies, structures, cultures, and processes of two or more partners. It is the alliance professional that must navigate that path to ensure an effective alliance operating model is in place.

Data from our assessments of individual alliances and alliance management functions demonstrate that improving key aspects in how an alliance works shows up in measurable gains in key outcome measures. This paper examines select components of an alliance operating model, shares data, and offers practical frameworks, guidance, and examples you can put to immediate use. It also includes insights from participants in a Master Class on the topic conducted at the 2023 ASAP Global Alliance Summit.

We encourage you to take a look at your key alliances and find the gold in improving the fundamentals of alliance operating models.

In collaboration and partnership,

Jan and Jeff

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There is much alliance professionals can do to give the alliance teams the best chance to create a blockbuster product. It starts with building effective alliance operating models.

Effective Alliance Operating Models Yield Measurable Increases in Alliance Success

How do you define success in an alliance? By some measures, it is about successful outcomes from codevelopment of a product that leverages the expertise of each partner to produce exponential utility or value. It is also about the growth of market share, customer value, and revenues when partnering produces a result far greater than either partner could achieve on its own.

These are all outcome measures that can take significant time to be able to measure and use in decision making, especially with the long product lifecycles in life sciences. They also speak to the work of the alliance rather than the alliance itself. It is entirely possible that a scientific or market failure dooms a well-functioning alliance.

For alliance professionals, this distinction is essential. Their job is to ensure that the collaboration and management environment are optimal for creating that innovative blockbuster product. They don't have responsibility for the product or its commercialization.

However, there is much alliance professionals can do to give the alliance teams the best chance to create a blockbuster product. It starts with building effective alliance operating models.

FINDING THE HIDDEN GOLD

By a meta-analysis of our data-driven assessments of individual codevelopment and cocommercialization alliances, as well as analysis of the practices of alliance management functions, we find:

A greater than 40% improvement in key outcome measures when an alliance has an effective operating model.

How well an alliance operates day-to-day depends on how:

- The work of the alliance is organized and conducted
- The alliance interfaces with the partners' internal governance practices and processes
- The transparency and timeliness of information flows and communication within and between or among the partners

There are, of course other factors that influence alliance success, notably the willingness of the participants to assume that each is acting with best intentions; the development of trusting, purposeful, and mutually beneficial relationships; the presence of a one-team mentality, and an aligned strategic intent, also known as the North Star.

Operations may seem mundane or something that "smart people will figure out." That is especially not true in an alliance because operations must be bridged across two or more companies, each of whom have different structures, strategies, processes, and cultures. Alliance professionals who proactively bridge those differences and create effective alliance operations are creating measurable value for their stakeholders.

Research Methodology

Our research methodology provides a comprehensive view of an alliance from the perspectives of key alliance members and other key stakeholders such as the legal, finance, and business development teams. It consistently shows a relationship between the effectiveness of alliance operating models and outcomes.

Our data is gathered by querying alliance team members and other stakeholders using consistent frameworks that assess the extent of their agreement with statements that describe conditions and behaviors indicative of alliance success. Based on the many assessments we've conducted we are confident that seventy percent (70%) agreement with the assessment statements is a good benchmark for a reasonably effective alliance. It is hardly a perfect score – only a C- if you equate the score to the typical US academic grading system. Thus, it is not exactly a high bar, but one we find many alliances don't meet.

To conduct our analysis, we group alliances into three categories based on their overall assessment scores:

How well an alliance operates day-to-day depends on how:

The work of the alliance is organized and conducted

The alliance interfaces with the partners' internal governance practices and processes

The transparency and timeliness of information flows and communication within and between or among the partners

Seventy percent (70%) agreement with the assessment statements is a good benchmark for a reasonably effective alliance.

- **Leading alliances** – Those that meet the benchmark of seventy percent (70%) positive on the assessment.
- **Developing alliances** – Those that score between sixty and sixty-nine percent (60%-69%) positive on the assessment.
- **Emerging alliances** – Those that score less than sixty percent (60%) positive on the assessment.

We are then able to examine specific elements of the assessment relative to alliance outcomes, which include measures of tangible results and the teams' level of enthusiasm to work with their partner. The latter measure is included because a lower level of enthusiasm is a leading indicator of sub-par alliance results, as it often marks both a high-level of turnover on the team, resulting in lost time to effect knowledge transfer and an alliance that spends an inordinate amount of time getting to decisions. Both conditions signify lost business value.

Figure 1 – Outcomes by Operating Model Effectiveness, shows that when we compare the results from the assessments that evaluate elements of the operating model, we see 40 percent-plus improvement in the outcome measures of alliance results and team enthusiasm between alliances in the Leading category compared with the Emerging category. (The score for alliance results increases from 57% to 82% and the score for team enthusiasm increases from 52% to 78%). Let's look at how Leading alliances achieve those outcomes.

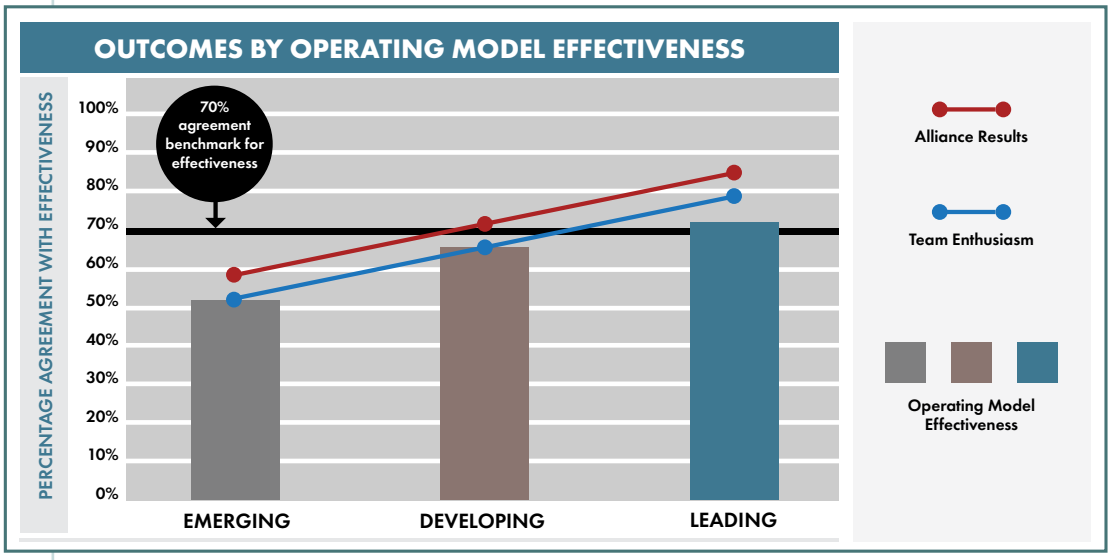

Figure 1 – Outcomes by Operating Model Effectiveness

Defining an Alliance Operating Model

An alliance or collaboration agreement describes what the partners will do and which partner is responsible for what. It frames the alliance business model which consists of three core elements that are tied together by how it collaborates to create, deliver, and capture value as it reaches for its North Star and achieves each partner's individual objectives. *(See Figure 2 – Alliance Business Model).*

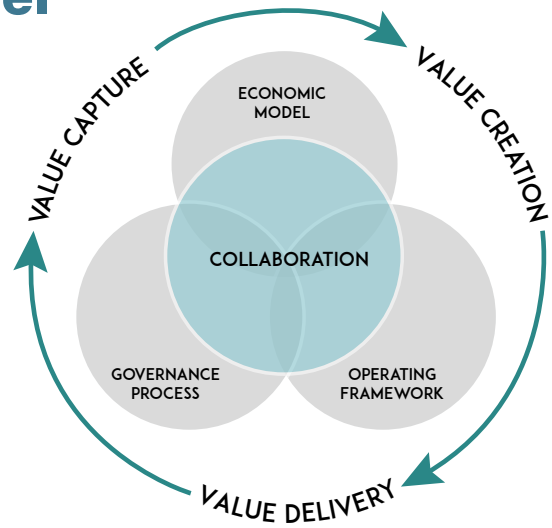

Figure 2 – Alliance Business Model

The three components of the alliance business model are:

1. **ECONOMIC MODEL:**
   The resources each partner makes available and how risk and reward are shared.

2. **OPERATING FRAMEWORK:**
   The form(s) of organization and collaboration best suited for achieving each party's goals. It describes who does what, in light of respective capabilities, expertise, and resources.

3. **GOVERNANCE PROCESS:**
   How strategy is developed and decisions made to commit the financial, people, and other resources to achieve the purpose of the alliance. These decisions are typically made through a joint committee, frequently with subcommittees, that are specified in the collaboration agreement.

The operating model is created when the operating framework and governance process are tied together through the desired collaboration. It describes how the alliance works day-to-day to execute on the value delivery and value capture aspects of an alliance's business model. As it

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should be, it is the components of an alliance that are the least described in the collaboration agreement. It is left to the partners to decide what will work best given their respective organizations and how they want to work together.

At a minimum, an effective alliance operating model embodies the following design principles *(See Figure 3 – Design Principles for Effective Operating Models):*

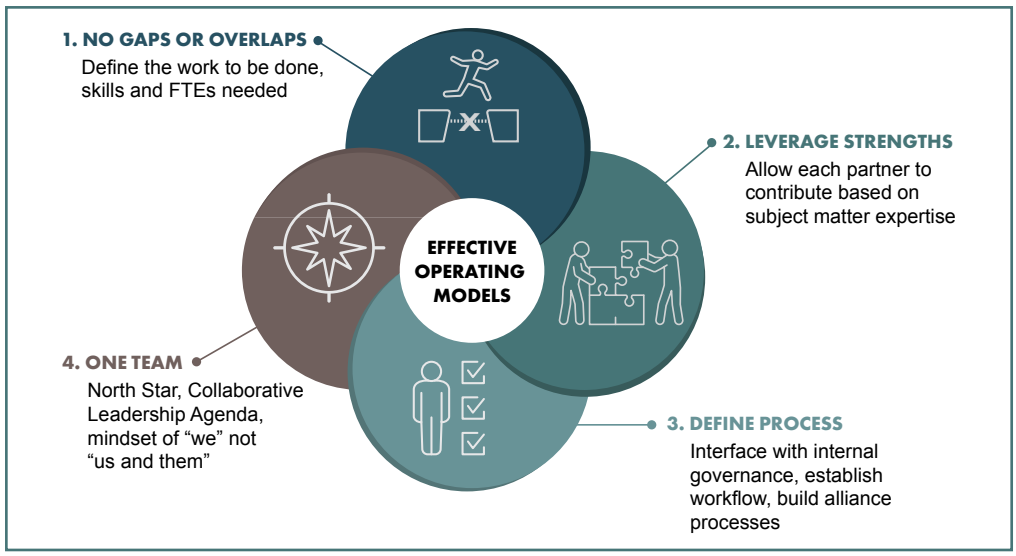

Figure 3 – Design Principles for Effective Operating Models

- **No gaps or overlaps** – The work to be done as described by the approved plans should be distributed among the teams and between the partners with sufficient expertise and resources allocated to get it done. As much as it can be, work is divided so that resources and expertise are leveraged to the greatest extent possible.
- **Leverage strengths** – Take advantage of existing capabilities. For example, if one partner has world class patient services, let that partner take the lead in that area. This sometimes runs afoul of a developing company's desire to build its own capability, so the leverage may not be optimal, but heed the first design principle and avoid duplication of effort.
- **Define process** – How alliance governance should interface with internal governance, workflow for deliverables and distinct joint alliance processes should all be developed.

- **Promote one-team mentality** – The way alliance working teams are organized and function should encourage and enable a mindset of "we" not "us and them." This is accomplished by recognizing and bridging differences in organizational structure, reporting lines, and philosophies about how work gets done.

The alliance operating model is initially designed and agreed to as part of the startup process. As the alliance matures, the alliance professionals must be attuned to when elements need to iterate and evolve to keep pace with the work of the alliance.

When differences in organization structure aren't taken into account, teams can encounter friction in various ways.

Organizing and Conducting the Work of the Alliance

Organizing and carrying out the day-to-day work of the alliance starts with establishing appropriate working teams and determining how they will allocate responsibilities for deliverables among themselves. Every alliance must develop teams that take into account how each partner is organized internally while finding a solution that enables the alliance to efficiently conduct its work.

The alliance professionals from each partner should work together to develop understanding of how their respective organizations are structured. Considerations include reporting lines and geographic structure. They also include whether work is approached using a program team or a functionally-based model, as well as the scope of responsibility of a program leader or asset owner. In some companies a program leader just oversees development activities; in others they are more like an asset owner, who typically oversees all activities throughout the lifecycle of the asset.

When differences in organization structure aren't taken into account, teams can encounter friction in various ways:

- **Mismatches in roles.** For example, the asset owner described above must develop relationships with multiple functionally-based counterparts and may find themselves helping their partner align across its functions.
- **Differences in where decisions are made.** For example, one partner lets individual country managers decide how to implement a global brand strategy and the other has a regional structure that makes those decisions. Information will travel to the field faster without the buffer of a regional layer. With the regional layer, the global team will likely have less detailed information about how well their global strategy is being implemented.
- **Differences in interests.** For example, one partner's Health Economics Outcomes Research (HEOR) reports to medical and the other reports to commercial. The team reporting to medical is interested in generating data, while the one reporting to commercial may not want to chance that a proposed study shows negative data.

- **Lack of clarity about responsibility.** For example, when the partners have different territories, what is done and what information is shared on a global basis and what is just for a specific territory must be mapped out.

The best performing alliances – the Leading alliances in our data – consistently score above the seventy percent (70%) benchmark, whereas the Emerging alliances score less than fifty percent (50%) positive. *(See Figure 4 – Responsibilities Clearly Defined).*

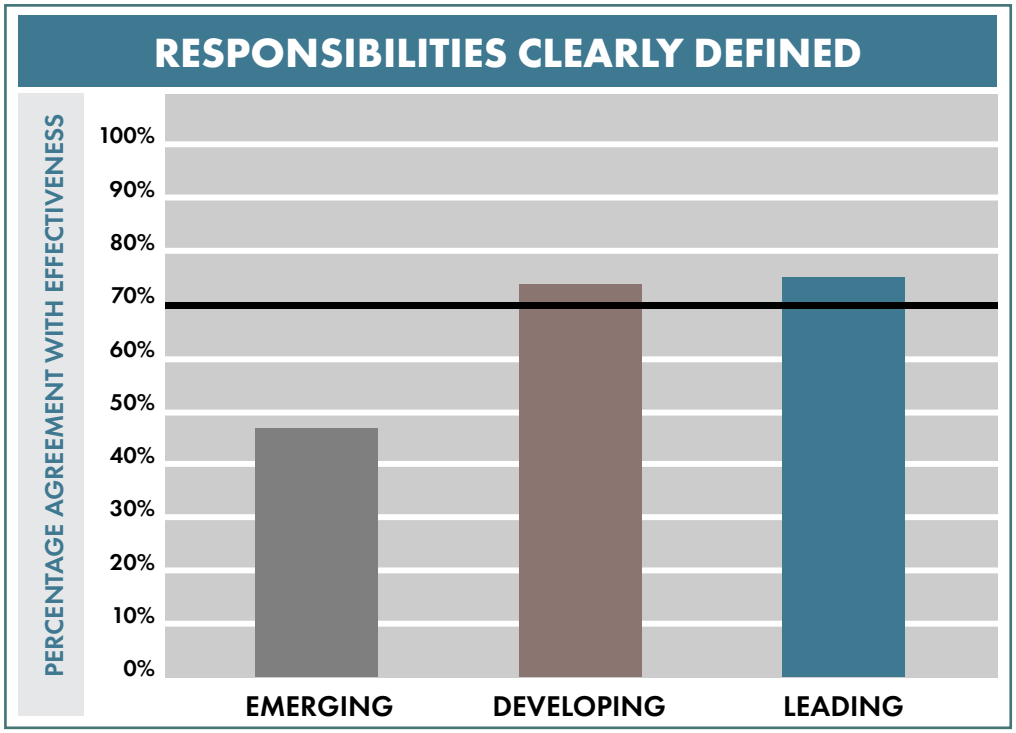

Figure 4 – Responsibilities Clearly Defined

It is not unheard of that there are multiple alliance committees and multiple internal committees that must be aligned before a decision is taken.

Interfacing with Internal Governance and Processes

"I have presented the same information to multiple committees. Can't anyone make a final decision?" This is a common refrain from alliance team members. It is not unheard of that there are multiple alliance committees and multiple internal committees that must be aligned before a decision is taken. Or that a decision is derailed because a manager removed from the alliance nixes a course of action alliance teams thought was agreed to. Worse yet, the decision making authority is held at the highest level of a company and even the Joint Steering Committee can't take a decision. We've seen this at companies with thousands of employees where you would expect more distributed authority.

The impact? Efforts are duplicated and time wasted.

Another common way efforts are duplicated is when each partner separately comes up with a proposal for the same issue or activity and then they try to align through the governance process. If alliance teams develop proposals in isolation and then present them to their partners as a fait accompli, they are inviting their partner to pick it apart, questioning it, and causing defensiveness and multiple reviews. Trust erodes and people feel disrespected, which is not a recipe for a well-functioning alliance.

Yet another way efforts are duplicated and time can be wasted is each partner has its own process for something that must be jointly agreed. The most common examples in codevelopment, cocommercialization alliances are publication review and promotional review. Each party must sign off, yet each has its own risk tolerances, and in some instances, portfolio considerations that impact what it is willing to agree to.

Three Components to Reducing Duplication of Effort

Figure 5 - Minimize Duplication of Effort shows that the Leading and Developing alliances have cracked the benchmark when it comes to minimizing duplication of effort. The Emerging alliances are about 35 points behind the others. This highlights the importance of aligning with internal governance and also the reality that it takes ongoing work to have an effective alliance operating model.

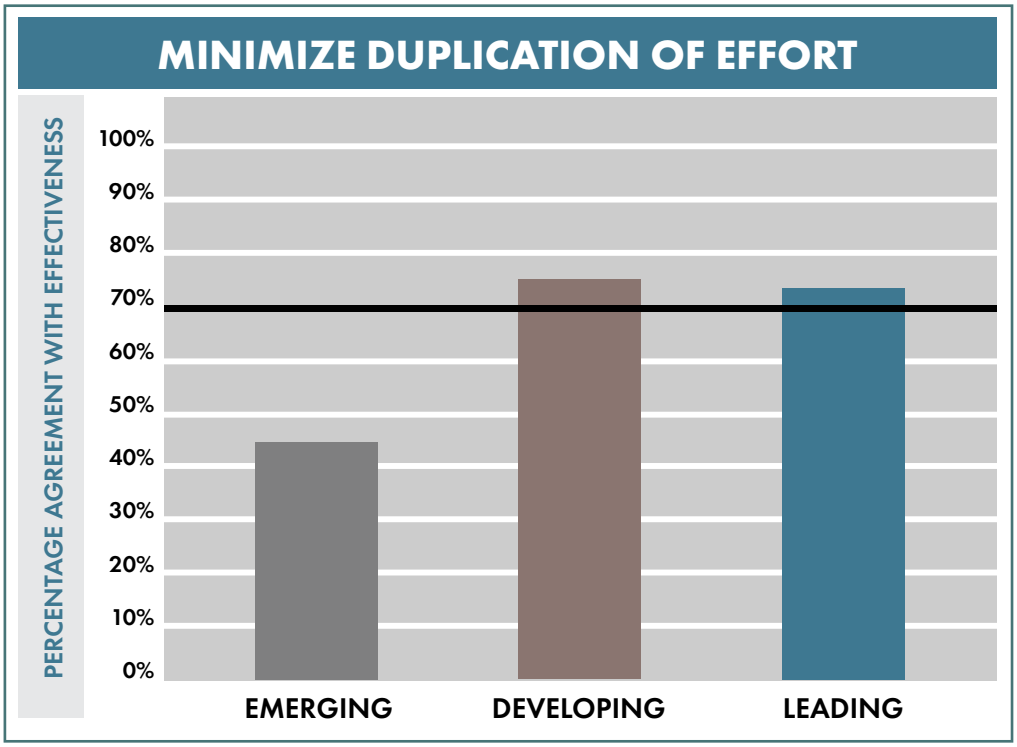

Figure 5 – Minimize Duplication of Effort

One of the activities during the startup of any alliance should be to create common understanding of relevant internal governance bodies and processes.

Interface with Internal Governance

As much as alliances need to think of themselves as an entity, they also have to take into consideration how they interface with each partner's internal governance to gain authority for alliance decisions. This is a delicate balance of gaining guidance about what is in the interest of your company and aligning it with what is in the interest of achieving the joint objectives of the collaboration.

One of the activities during the startup of any alliance should be to create common understanding of relevant internal governance bodies and processes. An excellent conversation is to map out the internal governances each team must navigate and to share timelines for strategy, clinical trial budgeting, and operational budget development and approval. It is only through transparent discussion of timelines and decision processes that alliance governance can align with internal governance.

Typically, this includes agreeing on the ordering of getting internal governance guidance with collaborative decision making through alliance

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governance. In the most effective alliances, governance committees are given "decision envelopes" by their internal organization that define the range of authority within which they can come to agreement with a partner. Once granted, any decision made by governance within that authority is accepted and not second-guessed by any internal governance or individual manager.

A less effective solution to this situation is that once an alliance decision is made based on the up front guidance provided, it needs to be endorsed by internal governance before the parties can accept a decision as final. This isn't ideal as it adds an additional step to the process and thus adds time. More importantly, it demonstrates that governance committee members are not truly empowered to make decisions for the alliance.

What is critically important is for both working teams and governance committees to be clear about and transparently share the limits of their authority. Only then can they align on the ordering of internal approval with alliance governance decision making and be as efficient and effective as possible in moving key decisions, reducing redundant meetings.

Orchestrating Workflow

There are two extreme models for organizing the production of deliverables in an alliance: "Noah's Ark" and "Divide and Conquer." In the Noah's Ark model there is built-in duplication of effort as one partner pairs with the other to get work done. On the other extreme, each partner has separate responsibilities and the other has little to no say in how the work is done, as long as the work conforms to a governance approved plan. The reality for an effective alliance is some balance between the two extremes depending on the work involved, resource availability, and expertise.

Most alliances will say they want to divide and conquer, but that is unlikely at the beginning of an alliance when there is usually significant knowledge transfer that must occur. Trust is also essential, and while teams should always assume best intentions and that each is trustworthy, realistically, sufficient trust doesn't develop until the partners experience that trustworthiness, which takes time.

The most efficient way to organize work on any major alliance deliverable starts with a joint planning process, the objective of which is to adhere to the operating model design principles. Consider the following:

- **Plan projects and deliverables together** – Whomever has the responsibility for a specific deliverable works one-on-one with their counterpart (or as a small subteam) to define what constitutes a successful outcome.
- **Carry out the work separately** – Either one partner takes the lead for producing the work or components of it are allocated to each partner.
- **Stay connected** – Decide upfront on interim touchpoints to keep aligned. If it is a large project, build in specific milestones, each with simple criteria defining their achievement.
- **Acceptance guaranteed** – If the success criteria are met, there is no second guessing about quality of work or style or anything else.

While this may seem overly prescriptive, it reduces duplication of effort on the work team. It also has the added benefit of eliminating the feeling that one partner is reviewing the other's work and must "approve it." This is a sure-fire way to create distrust and resentment.

Creating Joint Alliance Processes

Every company has its way of doing things, often based on the level of risk it is willing to accept. This is both a legal and cultural consideration. It is also driven by past experiences. A company operating under an agreement with a regulatory agency because of past unsupported claims will naturally be more cautious in future advertising. Differences in risk exposure have to be considered in any process where the parties have to come together and agree on something that has each of their names on it or that each partner will be signatory to. The most prominent examples of this include legal, medical, and regulatory review of promotional materials and third party contracting.

Duplication of effort happens when the partners haven't agreed on how they will perform a task as an alliance and run each partner's process and then try to align on output. Alliance professionals can help their teams avoid this or last minute fire drills when they find they don't have a clean way to get something done by helping them anticipate where they will need to have a joint alliance process. Joint processes can be managed by a subteam, which is why many

Duplication of effort happens when the partners haven't agreed on how they will perform a task as an alliance and run each partner's process and then try to align on output.

alliances form publications committees and promotional review committees. The key is that each party accepts the work of the committee as sufficient to meet its internal requirements.

There is a sharp difference between Leading and Emerging alliances when it comes to aligning on joint alliance processes. Among Leading alliances, there is eighty-five percent (85%) agreement that they have aligned, whereas only a little more than forty percent (40%) agree among Emerging alliances.

A few routine processes to align or find a "third way" to reduce duplication of effort are shown in *Figure 6 – Joint Alliance Processes*.

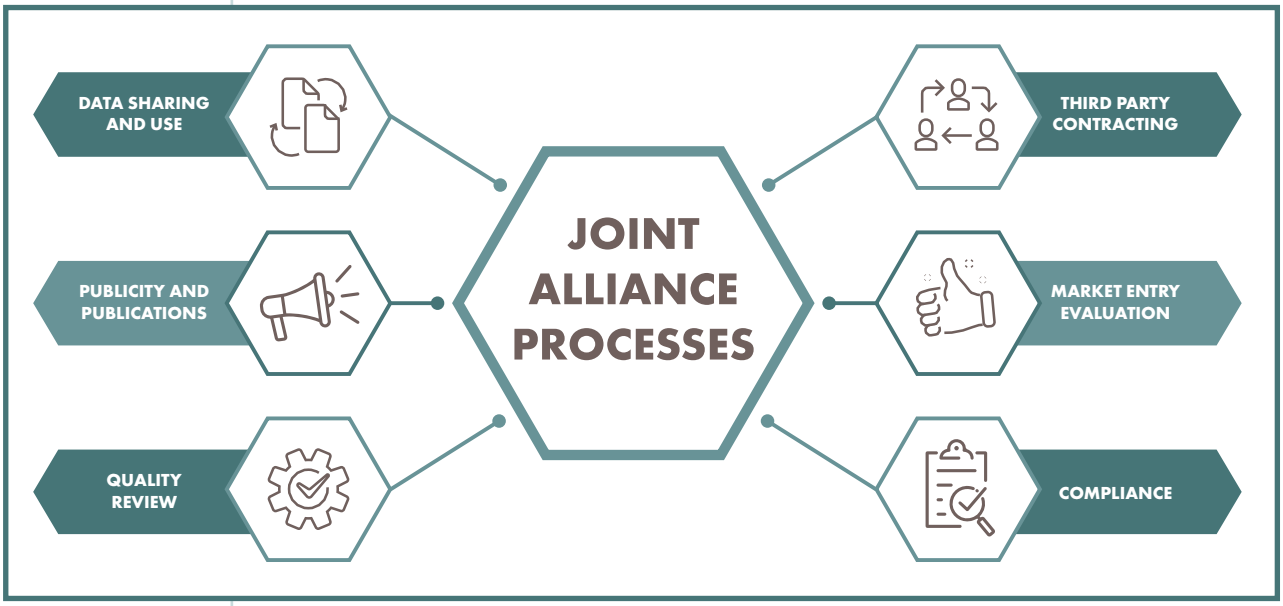


Figure 6 – Joint Alliance Processes

Communication Practices and Protocols

Ineffective communication frustrates everyone. No one likes surprises, especially when they should have been informed before giving a briefing or making a commitment. Lots of surprises translate into churn-causing "fire drills." Shared portals are not as effective as they should be as sources for relevant alliance information and internal communication is often more challenging than communicating with partners. As can be seen in *Figure 7 – Communication Practices,* even the most effective alliances don't clear the benchmark when it comes to communication practices.

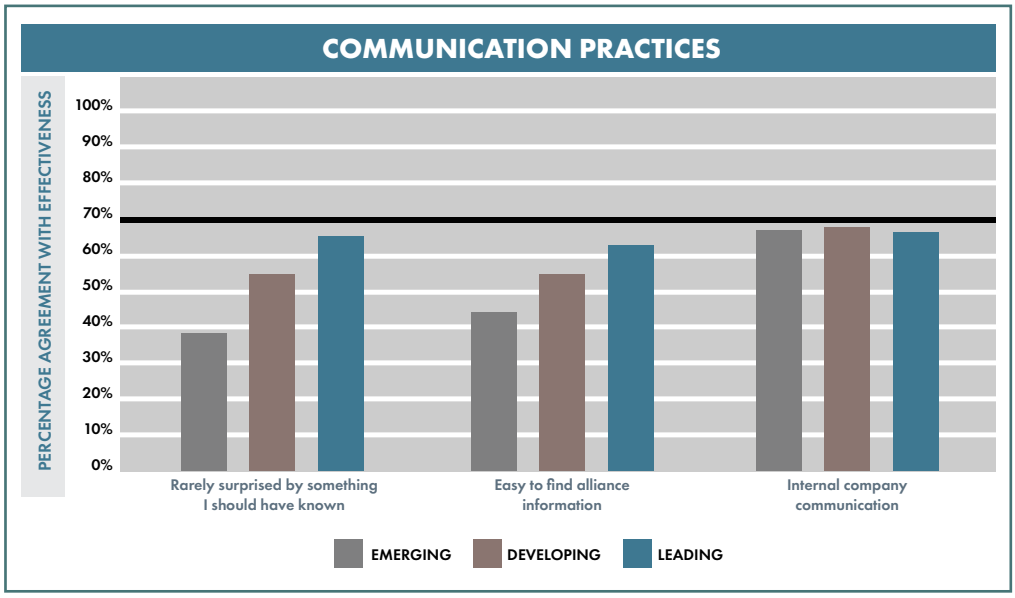


Figure 7 – Communication Practices

Alliance professionals need to build a framework for comprehensive and holistic communications among alliance team members and within each partner company. This has always been the case, but it is even more important with the rise of remote work. People need to easily access alliance related information so they are fully in the know. Information must flow freely enough within the company and between the company and its partners so that team members know what they need to know as they go about their work. At the same time, inappropriate disclosure must be guarded against. Senior executives must be appropriately briefed to make necessary decisions and engage with their counterparts in direct one-on-one meetings and in industry settings.

Even the most effective alliances don't clear the benchmark when it comes to communication practices. Alliance professionals need to build a framework for comprehensive and holistic communications among alliance team members and within each partner company. This has always been the case, but it is even more important with the rise of remote work.

Alliances need a single version of the truth and team members require access to documents such as plans and decision logs. Teams need collaborative work spaces. With collaborative work spaces and a digital alliance management platform to democratize information sharing, alliances can truly become data driven, not just about trial results and commercial impact. Digital platforms can also create transparency into alliance operations, risk management, milestone achievement, upcoming decisions, and any other relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). While alliances require transparency, there is also a need to establish communication protocols that honor competition and data protection laws and protect the alliance and its partners from risk.

Many alliances establish a communication plan. Many also fail to faithfully execute it. In the startup phase, be realistic and rigorous about how the alliance will communicate—to executives, to front line teams, to people in the field, and from partner-to-partner. Consider who should be talking with whom, how different topics should be handled, how a single version of the truth for the alliance is maintained, and how access to information is provided. Communication also includes the KPIs that measure performance as well as reporting and dashboards that make the work of the alliance and that of the alliance management professionals visible. *(See Figure 8 – Sample Communication and Reporting Plan).*

Initiated By	Recipient	Content	Vehicle in Addition to Collaboration Site	Timing
Alliance managers	Joint Steering Committee	Dashboard	Presentation	Quarterly
		Upcoming inflection points	Alert notification	Monthly
Joint Steering Committee	Operating Committees/ Teams	Post joint kickoff communique — expectations of how committees will operate	Video posting	One time with ongoing availability
		Summary from formal meetings	Email	Concurrent with Joint Steering Committee meetings
Operating Committees/ Teams	Team members	Operational guidelines	Video posting	One time with ongoing availability
		Post-meeting updates	Email	Concurrent with meetings
Alliance Managers	All governance and team members	Guidance on use of collaborative platform	Video posting and slide deck	Ongoing availability
		Onboarding process	Video posting and slide deck	Ongoing availability
Joint Steering Committee and alliance managers	Executive Leadership Team	Executive briefing	Discussion with supporting material	Semi-annual

Figure 8 – Sample Communication and Reporting Plan

Onboarding Practices

The first formal communication a new team member receives about the alliance is in the onboarding process. Properly onboarding alliance governance team members is an essential component in orchestrating effective alliance operating models. Based on our research, current onboarding practices are a missed opportunity to deliver value since they tend to primarily focus on the business *(see Figure 9 – Onboarding Practices)*. Thus, roles, deliverables, and culture are either left for functional leaders to deliver or not delivered with people left to "just figure it out."

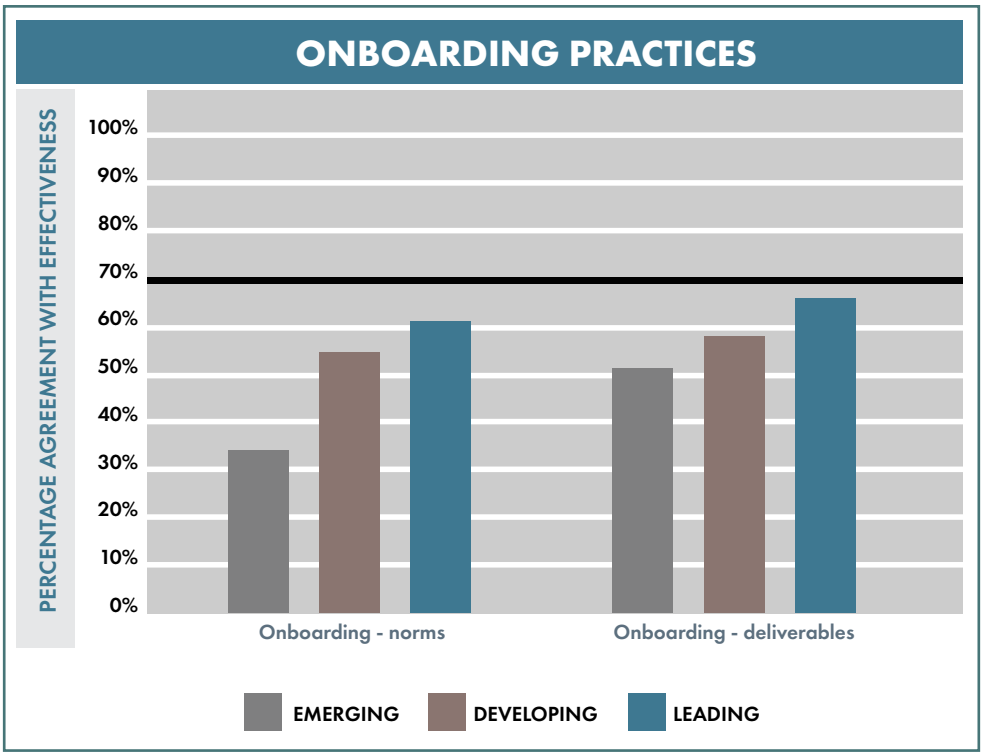


Figure 9 – Onboarding Practices

Based on our research, current onboarding practices are a missed opportunity to deliver value since they tend to primarily focus on the business. Thus, roles, deliverables, and culture are either left for functional leaders to deliver or not delivered with people left to "just figure it out."

Insufficient onboarding results in rehashing decisions and alignment on actions; not appreciating how the partners are working together, and causing churn and frustration. Proper onboarding of new alliance participants has three components:

1. **THE ROLE:**
   The standards and expectations of alliance governance committee and project team members

2. THE NORMS:

The expected way of behaving to bridge differences, collaborate effectively, and build a one-team mentality

3. THE WORK:

The specific responsibilities of the company, governance committee, or project team

This need not be an overly time-consuming process. Alliance professionals should develop a standard Briefing Book consisting of basic information about the alliance that stays relatively constant, with links to more dynamic information, such as governance rosters and the alliance's decision log. A quick video about the alliance culture and norms could be produced by interviewing key members. What's most important is that alliance professionals consistently provide this value-adding service to aid project teams and governance committees in being agile, keeping momentum, and being as productive as they can.

To learn more about building a comprehensive onboarding practice that reflects the importance of alliances in your company and its culture see *"Get a Running Start with a Comprehensive Alliance Onboarding Program"* in The Partnering Guide.

Finding the Gold

Where do you start to look for the gold in improving alliance fundamentals? You could take a data-based approach and conduct a rigorous assessment of your top alliances with your partners. This is a highly beneficial process and should be done regularly. When you have a baseline, you can document improvement over time. But no doubt you can put your finger on elements of the operating model that are contributing to duplication of effort, governance decisions that aren't made timely, or gaps in communications that frustrate teams.

Here is how you can get started improving the fundamentals just based on your observations:

- Enroll your counterpart in the effort.
- Align on one or two areas that are the most problematic for the alliance teams that you'll tackle first.
- Convene key stakeholders or conduct one-on-one interviews to ensure you understand the situation and the impact it is having on the alliance teams' effective functioning.
- Work with your counterpart to identify the internal process, practice, or structure that is hindering the alliance – you aren't trying to change it, but create an alliance way of addressing internal needs.
- Engage key team members to develop and align on an alliance practice or process that will help the alliance operate more effectively.
- Try it out in a limited manner, paying attention to what works, what doesn't, and the benefit it produces.
- Refine based on your learning, educate alliance teams and internal stakeholders, and rollout across the relevant alliance teams.

Our data finds a relationship between the effectiveness of the operating model and key alliance outcomes. Proactively addressing the operating model enables people to enthusiastically deliver their best so that alliances deliver on their objectives.

No doubt you can put your finger on elements of the operating model that are contributing to duplication of effort, governance decisions that aren't made timely, or gaps in communications that frustrate teams.

Insights from Our Master Class at the 2023 ASAP Global Alliance Summit

At the 2023 ASAP Global Alliance Summit we delivered a Master Class on the content presented in this whitepaper. As with all Master Classes, it was highly interactive and included the nearly 100 participants analyzing a fictitious, but very real, case study. What follows is a summary of how the participants applied the insights gleaned from our assessments of numerous alliances to fine-tune the alliance operating model and find the hidden gold.

THE CASE STUDY

Alpha and Zeta Combine Forces to Achieve Net Zero Emissions

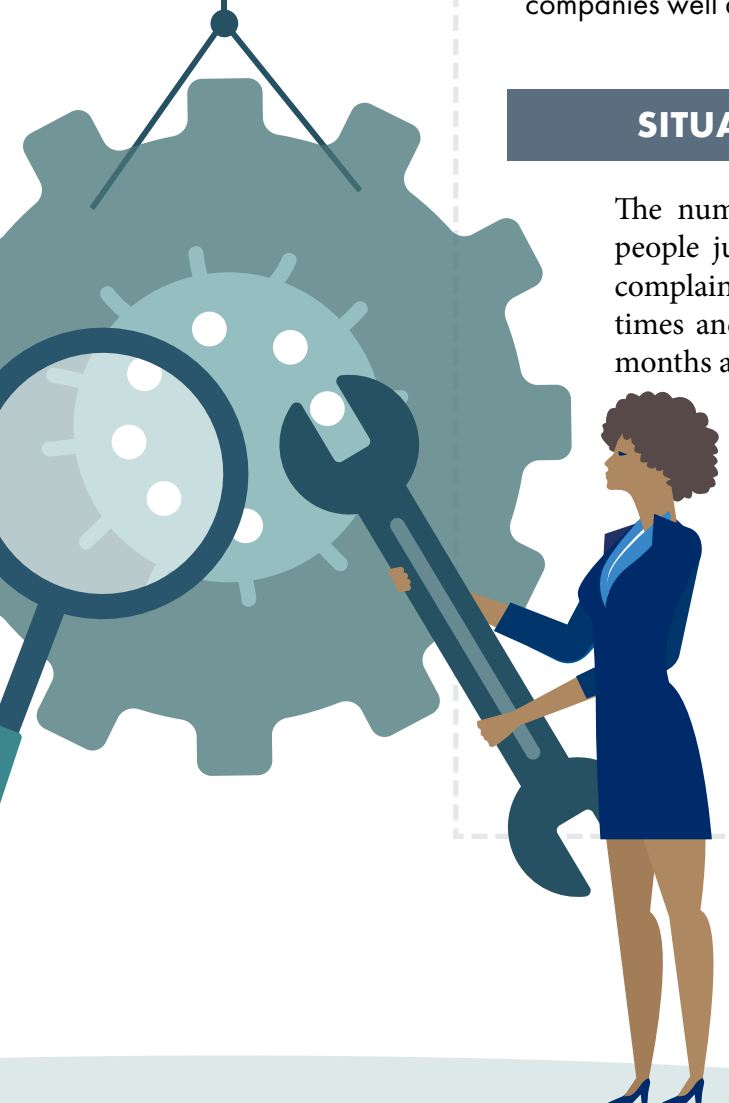
Alpha and Zeta have a global partnership to codevelop and cocommercialize solutions that leverage each partner's proprietary know-how and unique strengths to accelerate customers' ability to achieve net zero emissions.

- The partnership is in its second year and has a service offering about to launch. More comprehensive solutions involving proprietary technology are in development with two approaching critical milestones that will result in payments from Zeta to Alpha.
- The engineering and development teams working on the most advanced of these solutions are starting to build the ecosystem of specialized technologies and service providers that will become part of the solution. New partners and team members are being added every day.
- The commercial teams are recruiting thought leader influencers and go-to-market partners and preparing their customer-facing teams for the launch of the initial service offering.

- For Alpha, this partnership is key to its efforts to break into Zeta's main market of manufacturing and industrial companies, many of whom are eager to adopt game changing technologies to put them on track to reduce emissions and realize the many strategic and financial benefits that brings.

- Zeta is mission driven. Its scientists and engineers passionately believe it is the company to help traditional industries move from good intentions to demonstrable results when it comes to eliminating carbon emissions. Its Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) is a likely Nobel Prize recipient for her work on quantifying the impact of emissions reduction on financial results and customer and employee experience.

- Because of the importance of this partnership, both Alpha and Zeta have senior alliance professionals assigned. Both know their companies well and are respected by executives in both companies.



SITUATION ONE – Duplication of Effort

The number of review meetings is proliferating, with new people just showing up. Zeta's commercial project leader is complaining that she's making the same presentation multiple times and getting asked questions that were addressed three months ago.

PARTICIPANTS' ADVICE – Managing Duplication of Effort

Meetings have become unwieldy in remote work environments where it is easy for people to just sign on. To most smartly leverage alliance resources, be protective of people's time, and minimize duplication of effort, participants advise:

- Determine if there are multiple people from same function attending meetings, and if so, work with functional leaders to have just the most relevant people attend based on the agenda.
- Ensure there is a comprehensive stakeholder mapping or roles and responsibilities communication matrix so that people know who to connect with and don't have to rely on meetings.
- Recognize if there has been a recent inflection point favorably passed that has resulted in increased interest in the alliance and manage attendance accordingly.
- Determine if the reason people are showing up for meetings is because they believe they can't get their information elsewhere.
- Leverage technology or tools to provide the transparency so that you don't have to keep reeducating – have a central place where people can always go to find the information.
- Create the governance for releasing sensitive information.

SITUATION TWO – Managing the Onboarding of a Rapidly Growing Team

People are being added to the team nearly every day. The alliance managers are having a hard time keeping up with the pace that people are joining the alliance teams.

PARTICIPANTS' ADVICE – Onboarding a Rapidly Growing Team

Especially when an alliance is about to hit an important inflection point, such as an initial commercial launch, the alliance managers cannot onboard everyone. Their focus should be on new governance committee members and enable team leaders to properly enable additions to their teams. To manage new members joining the alliance, participants advise:

- Internally align before you just throw them into meetings – get them integrated into the team – bring them up to date on decisions that have already been made.
- Have an onboarding package to share that is codeveloped with your partner.
- Help people appreciate the key strategies that are already part of our goals and that can't change.
- Arm team leaders with your briefing materials and work with them to be the primary onboarding resource for non-governance team members.
- Work with leadership to ensure you are notified when new people are joining the team.
- Create a self-serve package that allows people to access video and documents from the alliance portal.

SITUATION THREE – Building Communications Practices for a Rapidly Growing Alliance

Requests for data and information from the licensee partner are exploding and executives from the licensor are concerned about how the information could be used. Senior executives are not aware of key information about the alliance's progress and are acting on information that is out of date.

PARTICIPANTS' ADVICE – Building Communications Practices

Effective communication in an alliance is everyone's responsibility, but the alliance professionals must take the lead by establishing the practices for the alliance to follow. In this situation, the participants advise the alliance professionals to:

Our Master Class participants offered sage advice.
Like everything about alliances, it seems conceptually simple, but building an effective operating model that bridges two or more companies is operationally very challenging, requiring a diligent focus on alliance fundamentals.

- Build a joint framework for communication establishing peer-to-peer communication, and parameters about what information can or cannot be shared.
- Enter into a data sharing agreement that provides legally approved guidelines for how information should be made available and what can be done with it.
- Provide a post Joint Steering Committee communication to all key executives and governance committee members.
- Ensure there is sufficient and appropriate transparency.
- Establish the necessary one-on-one regular communications.
- Close the loop after meetings to understand if we all have the same mental picture.

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About the Authors and The Rhythm of Business

Jan Twombly, CSAP and **Jeff Shuman, CSAP, PhD** are the principals of The Rhythm of Business, a professional services firm with core expertise in alliance management, strategic alliances, and business collaboration. We work with partnering and alliance management leaders, business unit heads, and organizational development executives to understand how to make alliances successful. We take what is complex and contextual and make it relatable and actionable.

Our mission is to help people partner well. Alliances and collaboration are conceptually simple and operationally very challenging. Successfully practicing alliance management is how to partner well. Since 1999 we have consulted globally and offered education and training, digitization, and data-based assessments to help organizations achieve higher levels of partnering and alliance success. We work with leaders to build and execute a collaborative leadership agenda, break down barriers, and drive consistently excellent alliance practice throughout an organization and its partnerships.

Twombly serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals as Chairman of the Editorial Committee. Shuman is also professor emeritus of management at Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts.

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