

LIAISON conference

Unlocking the Potential of Working in Partnership for Innovation

Session 9: Identifying and Curing the Symptoms of an 'Unhealthy' Partnership for Co-innovation

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Scenarios with potential for a “less than healthy” partnership for co-innovation.....

- The “**Charismatic Leader**”
- “**Joining the Club**”
- “**Dropping the Ball**”
- The “**Fox guarding the Hen-house**”
- The “**Missing Link**”

SCENARIO #1: The “Charismatic Leader”



- The project leader is a well-respected & charismatic individual with a clear vision for setting-up a project
- He/she has all the necessary connections, constructs the partnership & writes the proposal
- However, as the project starts it becomes immediately clear that there is limited opportunity for the partners to develop & realise their own ideas since all discussion and decision-making is dominated by the project leader

SCENARIO #2: “Joining the Club”



- A small core group of people know each other well from previous collaborations & propose a project, but they need additional partners to fulfil the funding criteria
- New partners are quickly found & enthusiastically sign-up to join the project proposal
- However the core group shows very little openness towards the ‘newcomers’ & resists sharing their relevant insights & previous experiences with them

SCENARIO #3: “Dropping the ball”



- A partnership successfully secures funding for an innovation project
- All partners are initially very enthusiastic about working together & the project kicks-off very well
- However, as the project proceeds a key partner begins to lose interest & gives less attention / priority to their allocated responsibilities

SCENARIO #4: The “Fox guarding the Henhouse”



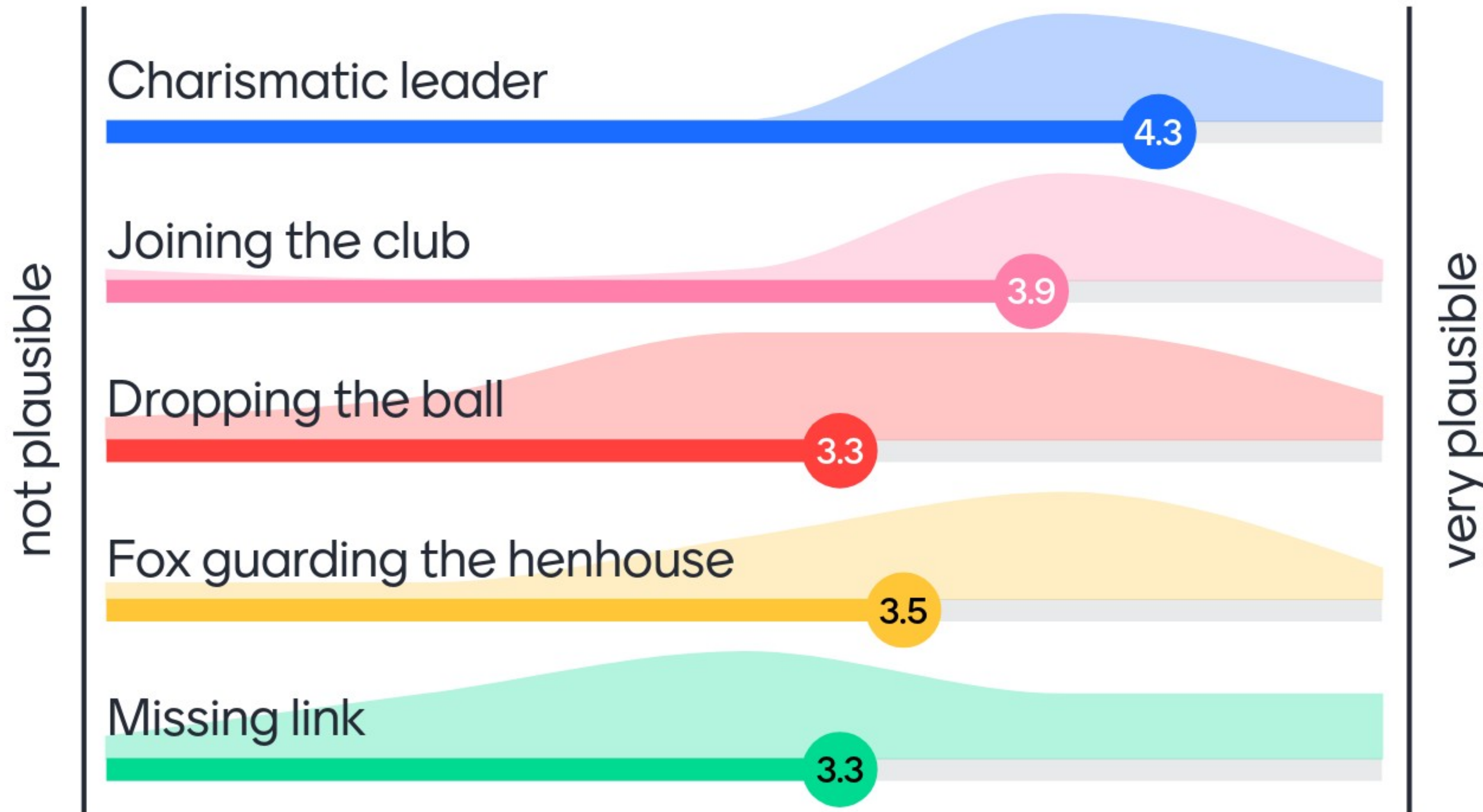
- A project is prepared at short notice & with a quickly assembled partnership
- There is lots of goodwill between the partners, even though they do not know each other very well
- After a few months it becomes clear that one of the partners (although highly skilled in other areas) does not have the necessary competence / capacity for the specific task they have responsibility for & thereby risks compromising the work of the entire partnership

SCENARIO #5: The “Missing link”



- Half-way through a 3 year project the partners realise that essential skills are missing & another organisation needs to be engaged with the project
- The budget & workplan allow some flexibility to re-allocate resources, but one partner refuses to give up a proportion of their budget to correct what they perceive to be the mistake of the project leader

How plausible are these scenarios?



Which (if any) of these scenarios have you experienced in projects? Please describe the experience in one or two sentences.

One, wanting to do activities and collect all the funds.

we usually need someone who inspires the other

An inner circle which does not really communicate enough to the rest of the consortium

Charismatic leaders may have difficult characters, biting away others, however, not always providing to work to be done.

There was a farmer in an O&G I worked with who was very well connected. He took over all relevant tasks but then was frustrated with the high work load

For guarding the hen house puts you in a really difficult situation.

the inner circle, where the rest of the partners are expecting that they can manage by themselves

Charismatic leader that involves everybody else

from a short term study: Not having the right capacity, not saying they did not have it, everyone frustrated in the end and no results...

Which (if any) of these scenarios have you experienced in projects? Please describe the experience in one or two sentences.

Charismatic leader problems... great to move the model along, but in my experience when not moderated the tunnel vision and lack of engagement ended up generating projects that lack dynamism and which had results that confirmed pre conceived ideas

One. Key partner not willing to cooperate much anymore (wanted to focus on their own priorities instead)

a good leader identify potential users that can contribute to more innovated activities

Joining the club: very local Network of 1. farmers in a very conservative territory not much willing to involve external partners (from external territories)



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Thinking of your personal experience, which soft skills would you or your partnership benefit from? How to develop these skills?

Negotiation skills: there are many courses and resources

Being more fluent in english. It sounds stupid but it often hinders real participation and open communication.

Non-violent communication skills

Giving constructive criticism and receiving criticism constructively

Conflict management would be interesting

Decisiveness - who needs to do what, when - harnessing the best from the whole

I think it would be helpful to ask ourselves more often why others act the way they do (or don't). What are they perhaps afraid of? What do they care about?

Mediation/diplomacy skills. Guess training would be needed; learning from concrete experiences

I'd like to be more diplomatic with project co-ordinators - I guess that self-awareness & practice are most important....but also some peer to peer mentoring would be good

Thinking of your personal experience, which soft skills would you or your partnership benefit from? How to develop these skills?

Self awareness

Being able to better understand where the other person or organisation is 'coming from' in a conflict situation.

Decide on clear minimal performance criteria

Being decisive without being a steamroller

Resourcefulness - looking beyond the obvious

I'm trying to be more aware of 'inner circles' - I like the warm feeling of being one of the gang, but I should think more about getting others

Improved retention of top talent, Stronger, more effective interdepartmental communication..

...thank you!



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