# Labor – Management: Path to Partnership

In a Labor – Management Partnership each party respects the other's goals and agrees to engage in a constructive problem solving process that addresses each other's concerns. It is not simply workers and labor leaders cooperating with management's tasks and objective. It does not mean that each side will always agree or that all parties will focus on a single common goal.

## Fundamentals for a Strong Labor – Management Partnership

1. There must be a very strong commitment to the Partnership among top leaders at the company and the union.
2. Both sides will strive to develop trust by demonstrating this commitment to Partnership.
3. There must be appreciation for the political aspects of both management's and the union's organizations. Both sides need to have accomplishments to bring back to their members.
4. The ultimate success or failure of the Partnership will be measured by whether it brings tangible economic benefits to management and the union.
5. The partners need to develop an agreed upon set of metrics to evaluate the Partnership. These metrics must be evaluated and communicated regularly throughout the organization.
6. The two groups should jointly identify a few key initiatives where meaningful improvement is needed as a starting point for establishing small (<10 members) partnership teams.
7. A new and cooperative dispute resolution system can be a clear way of demonstrating the tangible benefits of the Partnership at the ground level.
8. There must be commitment by leadership of both sides to teach lower levels of management about the partnership and the value it can bring. This needs to happen early in the Partnership process.
9. There must be recognition that "command and control" is not a sustainable management practice.
10. For shared decision making to be a reality, union leaders must have sufficient background, training and experience to participate knowledgeably and confidently in decision making discussions.
11. Union leaders have to engage the business problems of management and accept accountability for the results of joint decisions.
12. There is a critical need to improve the day-to-day interactions between mid-level managers and employees and managers should consistently strive to engage the full talents of the workforce.
13. The groups should develop a process for sharing the ongoing learnings and best practices resulting from Partnership activities across the organization.
14. In order to sustain the Partnership over time, senior leadership succession decisions must include "commitment to the Partnership" as an important qualifying criterion.
15. There must be recognition that the most common challenges to partnerships occur when:
    a. Key leaders who were instrumental in establishing the Partnership turn over
    b. Cost pressures are intensified due to competitive forces
    c. Managers or union leaders who have not bought into the Partnership sabotage ideas for new ways of doing things