

HOW TO BUILD SUCCESSFUL WORK TEAMS

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Man was not designed to work alone on earth. God designed man to work in harmony with others for success in life to be gained. After God made Adam, he saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so he made Eve to keep him company and to assist him in this world. When Jesus Christ was on earth, he sent out disciples two by two. He never sent anyone out alone. This is so because it takes team work to succeed in any life endeavor.

Gen 2:18

*18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."
NIV*

People in workplace talk about building the team, working as a team, and my team, but few understand how to create the experience of team work or how to develop an effective team. Belonging to a team, in the broadest sense, is a result of feeling part of something larger than yourself. It has a lot to do with your understanding of the mission or objectives of your organization.

In a team-oriented environment, you contribute to the overall success of the organization. You work with fellow members of the organization to produce these results. Even though you have a specific job function and you belong to a specific department, you are unified with other organization members to accomplish the overall objectives. The bigger picture drives your actions; your function exists to serve the bigger picture.

Finding fitting partners to work within a team can be an uphill task. Teaming up with the wrong people will definitely bring failure as disagreement will cripple the team and their work. This teaching will address this and give guidelines for successful team building.

WHY WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM

1. Someone sees what you don't see.
2. Someone knows what you don't know.
3. Someone can do what you cannot do.
4. What is lacking in you is in another.
5. God did not store all knowledge in one person. We all know in parts.

1 Cor 13:9

*9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
NIV*

6. We are not all gifted equally, and each person's gift differs from his neighbor's. Our gifts complement each other's gift. Each person is supposed to be a missing link in the chain. God made it so, so we will depend on one another and work as a team to succeed in our assignments.

Eph 4:11-13

11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be

built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

NIV

1 Cor 12:4-11

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

NIV

7. All things function according to the design of its manufacturer. We are not designed as men to work independently from others. God designed us to love and be loved; to seek companionship in others around us, especially those who appeal to us. This is the reason why there is a longing for relationship in man.

8. God is a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God works as a team. He is three persons in one God. Man is made in the image of God. So we are designed to work with others.

Gen 1:26-28

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

NKJV

9. You need people to succeed.

10. You need somebody to watch your back. It takes others working with you to keep you from pitfalls of life and save you from the traps of the enemy.

11. You acquire new knowledge and skills while working with others.

12. The body of man functions effectively because all the different parts that make up the body of man work as a team with each playing its complementary role. The team work is such that no one can say this is the most important part of the human body. The same way we are to function without worrying on who is proclaimed the best and most important. All are equally important because all have their different functions and assignment

1 Cor 12:12-31

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if

the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

NIV

Rom 12:3-8

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

NIV

BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER

- 1.** It enhances productivity.
- 2.** It increases speed.
- 3.** It boosts the morals of all involved in the team work – the knowledge that you are not alone encourages, motivates and strengthens the faith of all concerned in accomplishing the assignment.
- 4.** You share the burden and problems of the assignment together.
- 5.** You can defend each other from enemies and all that seek to stop you.
- 6.** Your knowledge and experience will increase as you learn and work with your colleagues and team mates.
- 7.** You will climb the ladder of success faster as you, together as a team share the reward of working as a team.
- 8.** Success, honor, fame, wealth and promotions will be your portion.

HOW TO BE A GOOD AND PRODUCTIVE TEAM MEMBER

Working in a team can be exciting and rewarding, but can be difficult and downright frustrating sometimes. If there are poor communicators on your team, you may often feel left in the dark, confused or misunderstood. To create a successful team, effective communication methods are necessary for both team members and leaders. Even though some people understand their communication skills need improving, many aren't certain how to improve them.

The following will help communication and overall performance of your team if applied:

Communicate Always

Communicate always with your team members so everyone will be up to date on the project you are working on.

If you have a problem with someone in your group, talk to him about it. Letting bad feelings brew will only make you sour and want to isolate yourself from the group. Not only does it feel good to get it out, but it will be better for the team in the long run.

Don't Blame Others

People in your group lose respect for you if you're constantly blaming others for not meeting deadlines. You're not fooling anyone. Team members know who isn't performing well in the group. Pointing the finger will only make you look cowardly. Group members understand if you have a heavy workload and weren't able to meet a deadline. Saying something like, "I'm really sorry, but I'll get it to you by the end of today." will earn you a lot more respect than trying to make it seem like it's everyone else's fault that *you* missed your deadline.

Support Group Member's Ideas

If a teammate suggests something, always consider it – even if it's the silliest idea you've ever heard! Considering the group's ideas shows you're interested in other people's ideas, not just your own. And this makes you a good team member. After all, nobody likes a know-it-all person.

Do Not Bragg Or Boast

It's one thing to rejoice in your successes with the team, but don't act like a superstar. Doing this will make others regret your personal successes and may create tension within the team. You don't have to brag to let people know you've done a good job, people will eventually know the role you played. Have faith that people will recognize when good work is being done and that they'll let you know how well you're doing. Your response should be "Thanks for the encouragement."

Listen Actively

Look at the person who's speaking to you, nod, ask probing questions and acknowledge what's said by paraphrasing points that have been made. If you're unclear about something that's been said, ask for more information to clear up any confusion before moving on. Effective communication is a vital part of any team. The value of good listening skills shouldn't be underestimated.

Don't Be Aloof; Get Involved

Share suggestions, ideas, solutions and proposals with your team members. Take the time to help your fellow teammates, no matter the request. You can guarantee there will be a time in the future when you'll need some help or advice. And if you've helped them in the past, they'll be more than happy to lend a helping hand when you need it with your part of the team work.

IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR TEAM BUILDING

Define And Communicate Clear Expectations

Leadership must clearly define and communicate its expectations for the team's performance and expected outcomes. Team members must make sure they understand why the team was created. Your organization must demonstrate constancy of purpose in supporting the team with resources of people, time and money so the team can succeed. The work of the team must receive sufficient emphasis as a priority in terms of the time, discussion, attention and interest directed its way by executive leaders.

Understand Context Of Team Work

Team members must understand why they are participating on the team. As a team member you must understand how the strategy of using teams will help the organization attain its communicated business or ministry goals. As a team member you should be able to define your team's importance to the accomplishment of corporate goals. Every team must understand how and where its work fits in the total context of the organization's goals, principles, vision and values. Without these, the team will not achieve the desired purpose of its establishment.

Show Commitment

Team members must have the desire to participate on the team. Team members must feel strong about being members of the team. Team members must be committed to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes. Team members must perceive their service as valuable to the organization and to their own careers. Team members should anticipate recognition for their contributions. Team members must expect their skills to grow and develop on the team. Team members should be excited and challenged by the team opportunity.

Be Competently Confident

The team must be sure and have the feeling that it has the appropriate people participating. The team must be confident that its members have the knowledge, skill and capability to address the issues for which the team was formed. The team must have access to the help it needs when it needs it. The team must be confident it has the resources, strategies and support needed to accomplish its mission. Without the team having faith in itself (members competence), it will fail.

Accept Assignment And Define Strategy

The team has to accept assigned area of responsibility and design its own mission, vision and strategies to accomplish the mission. The team must define and communicate its goals, its anticipated outcomes and contributions, its timelines, and how it will measure both the outcomes of its work and the process the team followed to accomplish their task. The leadership team or other coordinating group should support what the team has designed.

Give Team Freedom To Work

Each team must have enough freedom and empowerment to feel the ownership necessary to accomplish its defined strategies. Team members must clearly understand their boundaries - How far members can go in pursuit of solutions. Limitations (i.e. monetary and time resources) have to be defined at the beginning of the project before the team experiences barriers and rework.

The team's reporting relationship and accountability must be understood by all members of the organization, to avoid controversies and conflicts. Your organization must define the team's authority to make recommendations and to implement its plan. There has to be a defined review process so both

the team and the organization are consistently aligned in direction and purpose. The team members should hold each other accountable for project timelines, commitments and results. The organization must have a plan to increase opportunities for self-management among organization members.

Understand Collaboration

Team members must understand team and group process. Members must understand the stages of group development. Team members should be working together effectively interpersonally. All team members must understand the roles and responsibilities of team members, team leaders and team recorders. The team should approach problem solving, process improvement, goal setting and measurement jointly. Team members should cooperate to accomplish the team's defined strategy. The team should establish group norms or rules of conduct in areas such as conflict resolution, consensus decision making and meeting management. The team should use an appropriate strategy to accomplish its action plan.

Communication

Team members must be clear about the priority of their tasks. There has to be an established method for the team to give feedback and receive honest performance feedback. The organization should provide important business information regularly for the team. The team must understand the complete context for their existence. Team members should communicate clearly and honestly with each other. Team members should bring diverse opinions to the table. Conflicts should be raised and addressed without allowing it to weaken the team.

Be Creative

The organization should be really interested in change before setting up a team. The organization should value creative thinking, unique solutions, and new ideas. It should be able to reward people who take reasonable risks to make improvements. The organization should not only reward the people who fit in and maintain the status quo. It should provide the training, education, access to books and films, and field trips necessary to stimulate new thinking.

Take Responsibility For Consequences

Team members should feel responsible and accountable for team achievements. Rewards and recognition should be supplied when teams are successful. Reasonable risk should be respected and encouraged in the organization. Team members should not fear reprisal. Team members should not spend their time pointing the accusing finger rather than resolving problems. The organization designing reward systems should recognize both team and individual performance. The organization should plan to share gains and increased profitability with team and individual contributors. Contributors should see their impact on increased organization success.

Establish Effective Coordination

Teams should be coordinated by a central leadership team that assists the groups to obtain what they need for success. Priorities and resource allocation should be planned across departments. Teams should understand the concept of the internal customer—the next process, anyone to whom they provide a product or a service. Cross-functional and multi-department teams should be working together effectively. The organization should be developing a customer-focused process-focused orientation and moving away from traditional departmental thinking.

Effect Cultural Change

The organization must recognize that the team-based, collaborative, empowering, enabling organizational culture of the future is different than the traditional, hierarchical organization it may currently be. The organization should plan the process of changing how it rewards, recognizes, appraises, hires, develops, plans with, motivates and manages the people it employs.

The organization should plan to use failures for learning and support reasonable risk. The organization should recognize that the more it can change its climate to support teams, the more it will receive in pay back from the work of the teams.

Spend time and attention on each of these tips to ensure your work teams contribute most effectively to your business and ministry success. Your team members will love you, your ministry or business will soar, and empowered people will "own" and be responsible for their work processes.