



BUILDING STRONG TEAMS AT WORK

Cor_2003_Building Strong Teams at Work

Every workplace talks about building a 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 organisation and a strong work team means that every individual is prepared to take on and share common responsibilities to achieve or complete a set of goals or duties given. The team often works successfully and peacefully, and can uphold good communication and develop trust amongst all team members.

Building strong work team requires improvement in communication between individual employees, as well as with the higher management. Team building also helps employee motivation considerably, and with trust comes better productivity.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A STRONG TEAM?



- Require little supervision
- Reduce conflicts
- Reduce stress and burnout



- Happy team members
- Increase positive interaction
- Supportive culture



- Increase productivity
- Promote creativity
- Overall improve business ROI

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WHAT PRINCIPLES MAKE TEAMS HIGH PERFORMERS?

Research has suggested that strong work teams have certain “interpersonal characteristics” or features which make them exceptional. These characteristics are very important to the development of strong work teams.

COMMUNICATION

- Free speech about work related problems is necessary to all team members so they can discuss problems and together resolve issues before they become major problems.
- Effective communication starts with individuals and can be developed on a group level to ensure the team maximising their competencies.

CONFLICT

- Arguments and disagreements among team members are unavoidable. However, the manner in which these are dealt with is important.
- Team leader/supervisor/manager needs to adopt strategies to maintain healthy disagreement within the team.
- These conflicts should not be seen as a drawback of the group’s ability to work together but should be seen as an opportunity to learn from each other.

COHESION

- Almost like a family, team members should have an attachment to their team and feel as though they belong to in it. They should feel a connection, and no team members should feel uncomfortable or out of place.
- To develop a sense of cohesion team members need to feel compelled to stay in their teams, and thrive to make their team work well and work together.

TRUST

- Team members need to believe that even though they may not have control over the actions of their fellow team members they can still trust them to complete the work needed and that all team members behave appropriately to one another. That means helpful and reliable and no bullying or fighter pointing/blaming.

TIPS ON CREATING STRONGER WORK TEAMS

Role Labelling

It is necessary for team members to know exactly what their purpose is, what role each member of the team has to play, what each person is responsible for, and the resources they have to achieve their goals. The team leader can have this responsibility by explaining the team’s purpose in a clear and basic manner and making sure that all team members remain on track.

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Employee Feedback Activities

Employees who are engaged with their job and employer are more productive because they are motivated beyond personal factors. They are more focused and more motivated than their disengaged counterparts. This means they work more efficiently and with the success of the organisation in mind.

Employee surveys and feedback activities are a great way of encouraging employees to speak freely. It shows the employees that their opinion matters to you and may even help surface concerns that you have missed such as unreported conflict between team members.

Rewards

A winning system should recognize and reward two types of employee activity-performance and behavior. Performance is the easiest to address because of the direct link between the initial goals you set for your employees and the final outcomes that result. For example, you could implement an incentive plan or recognize your top salespeople for attaining periodic goals.

Rewarding specific behaviors that made a difference to your company is more challenging than rewarding performance, but you can overcome that obstacle by asking, "What am I compensating my employees for?" and "What are the behaviors I want to reward?"

Create rewards that focus on team achievement as they are more likely to promote cohesion, whereas rewards that focus on individual achievements only encourage competition amongst team members which weakens cohesion.

Plan for Conflict Resolution

The best way to manage conflicts is to have prearranged methods of resolving problems. Team members should have a way of expressing their opinions without fear of causing offense to anyone. Avoid ignoring a growing problem and putting off these issues. Instead, use a hands-on approach that with the team leader organising a sit down with the members in conflict and work out the differences, while remaining objective and without taking sides.

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