

LEAN TEAMWORK (a Successful One is Worth the Effort)

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Successful teamwork requires building one on one relationships, outstanding, constant communication, doing many ordinary things extraordinarily well, paying attention to fine details and then, more communication. Whether a person is part of any type of team, the characteristics do not change. The bottom line always seems to be *if you hope to work well together, you must communicate well together*. This involves communication, coordination, and cooperation.

Good teamwork needs *effective and efficient*, non-stop *communication*. The effective team also must *coordinate* all interactions. Unless the team *cooperates* in an atmosphere of mutual support and assistance, any objectives or goals are meaningless; team members need to know how valuable other members are to the team.

There are three types of people on any team formed

1. *those who make things happen*
2. *those who watch things happen*
3. *those who wonder what happened*

Team Characteristics

A team is a group of people who need one another to take action. The characteristics of effective teams must involve the ability to:

- Solve problems with sustainable solutions
- Satisfy customers with both products/services and courteous, fair treatment
- Contribute to the organization's success and delivering bottom line results.

Skills are essential but attitudes matter; to make teams more effective is by putting teams together with the right mix of natural abilities. When most teams are formed, there is little or no thought given to how the new team should manage information, how it should be pooled and communicated, or how it should document its findings and results.

It is the characteristic of a good team that the group's accomplishments matter most and everyone pulls in the same direction to make it happen. So, what turns a group or committee into an effective team? I think the first point has to be **intention**: They do it knowingly by having a:

- purpose and vision.
- leadership and accountability
- roles, responsibilities, measurable targets and definable goals

- support, through active sponsorship
- abilities: to learn from conflict; to integrate change
- trust, integrity and communication
- recognition, of individual and group successes

Successful Team Requirements

- An agreed approach on how they should work – the plan
- A leader who can keep them on track and keep them honest - the architect
- A set of tools to support knowledge management, data analysis, and collaboration
- Clear goals and a common objective is the foundation for a winning team.

Five Key Team Tasks

Any project that is assigned to a team generally involve the following steps:

1. **Finding the data or information.** After the team receives its direction, it needs to find out what data or information exists about its responsibilities and deliverables.
2. **Finding out who knows what.** Has anyone in the organization or outside the organization done something like this before? What can be learn from it can be simplified through knowledge management.
3. **Meeting with the other team members** to discuss direction, purpose, the information and other information is required. This requires meeting management, leadership, and organizational skills.
4. **Agreeing on a solution or set of alternatives.** The team meets once the data is collected, evaluated, and reviewed and sets a recommendation or defines a set of alternatives.
5. **Creating a recommendation,** documents and a paper trail to establish their rational along with recommendations for the future.

With only five key factors, why is teamwork so hard to achieve? Usually, competing agendas, culture, politics, and unclear goals are some of the main reasons. generally speaking none of these tools exist and few teams establish a set of applications or tools to support themselves. So, lack of clear objectives, and political concerns cloud the ability of the team to interact well, while a lack of tools and processes interfere with the team's ability to gather, analyze, and create new information.

How to Start

- **Initiate** - Start with your thoughts, your dreams, and the vision. What are the goals of forming a team? How many people will be on the team?
- **Locate** - Where do you find quality people to form a winning team? Remember that quality people usually choose quality people to work with.
- **Create** - Make your words and actions consistent with the vision. If the vision was to do "x", then do "x".
- **Educate** – Be sure everyone is fully aware of the problem and has received the proper training, through office or plant training programs, so the team has some idea of how to find a solution for the problem.
- **Cooperate** - The team works well if they work together in a mutually cooperative environment and treat teammates the way they wish to be treated.
- **Communicate** - . A very important aspect of communication is to listen - not merely to speak. Plato said that **“wise men talk because they have something to say and fools talk because they have to say something”**
- **Motivate** – Set realistic goals *together*, that the team can see are realistic. People are motivated by appreciation and a sincere thank you is the *number one incentive* to do better and achieve more.
- **Celebrate** - Take time out to be happy about and proud of the little steps along the way towards the larger goal.