

Media Article



Vocational Guidance Services

Working as part of a Team

I don't think that any serious organization would disagree when I say that team work is key to a company's success. As business culture has evolved away from the dictatorial; cross functional and project teams have become key business drivers. Unit or department heads also consider themselves, first and foremost, as team leaders.

Teams are here to stay, as many brains make light work. Even the advent of technological change is unlikely to totally replace face to face meetings in business. So, the question is, how can you best perform in a team, and how can you understand your team members?

It is important not to forget that a team is just a collection of very different individuals, with various characters and probably cultures thrown together. Some how, your team will need to become a focused unit, building on the different strengths rather than letting personalities and egos become more important than the team as a whole.

The first step will be to understand the various competency and motivation levels within the team. There will be those (and hopefully this includes you) who have high levels of motivation and ability. These 'can do – will do' types will drive the team forward; ensuring the work gets done, enjoying the challenge along the way. They will constantly accept and relish new responsibility and are great to delegate to, as you can trust them full heartedly.

The second type of team members will be those who have high levels of enthusiasm, but perhaps lack experience or competency. With a little bit of guidance, or training, these team members can become invaluable, although to start with the more complex or urgent tasks could be too much for them to handle.

With a bit of luck, your team will be made up mostly of the two types of people described above. Unfortunately though, you will find there are more difficult characters to work with as well. The third type of person you may have in your team are those who have high levels of ability, but no enthusiasm for the task at hand.

This person can never be a team player, thinking of themselves rather than team members' efforts and ideas. This type of person exhibits negativity, and for the team to move forward, the team leader will have to remove this person, whilst questioning their value to the organization as a whole. Either this person will have to 'shape up' or be 'shipped out', no matter how bright they are.

Perhaps even worse, is the type of person who has neither the ability nor the right attitude to be a valuable part of a team. This person is totally unwilling to learn or try anything new. They are the sort of person that makes you wonder how they ever got job in the first place. They get promoted just because they have sat in the same seat 10 years. Again, addressing this issue should be left to the team leader, and although you should voice your concerns, you should try to treat all your team members with respect. Don't let the few difficult cases make you lose your temper, and never allow them to derail the team from reaching their goals.

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