

Teamwork – What is Missing?

If a process is skipped... it usually requires significant work to make the correction.

Bob was out one Sunday afternoon and dropped by a new concept house. With soaring utility prices Bob thought the concept was pretty interesting. Bob owned some land and thought he would take the ideas he saw in the concept house and build one of his own. He called Carol, a good friend and architect. He gave Carol the specs of what he wanted and she went to work on the design. Several weeks after the design was completed, they contacted Ted a mutual friend and home builder. Ted liked the design and went to work on the construction. This took about 4 months to complete and once it was finished they held an open house. Bob's mother Alice came to the open house and almost immediately asked Bob, "where is the laundry room?" They had totally forgotten it.

You see every project has a process it goes through and if a process is skipped it usually requires significant work to make the correction.

The four primary phases are:

- Create
- Advance
- Refine
- Execute

In the case of the missing laundry room, they created the concept (Bob), they advanced it (Carol), and then they executed the project (Ted). They totally missed the refining process.

Many people think all of those on the team who are the refiners, are simply trying to put down the project. They are often viewed as the naysayers and sometimes called the pessimist, when in fact all they are doing is refining what has already been created. It is not that they don't like the concept, they just want to make the concept better.

Now think about a team without creators. What would happen? You would have a very efficient team in refining the current process and executing process, you would just not get any new ideas and potentially the team would become stagnant.

What if there were no executors? Lots of new ideas would be generated, just nothing being completed. This team would be called the "All talk, no action team"

So the question becomes how do you fix the team? As with most challenges you must first acknowledge you have a problem. Next the team needs to identify what is missing

and then how they can fill the void. Sounds simple; and the recognition phase really is that simple. The actual implementation phase is a bit more challenging.

Self awareness is the critical part for every team and every team member. One of the most difficult voids to fill is the creator role. Some people are natural at this phase of a project. Have you ever done a brainstorming session and it seems like one or two people are doing all of the talking? Likely they are the creators and you cannot shut them up. Now think about a brainstorming session where no one talked. How uncomfortable were you? How about the team? That does not necessarily mean that there are no creators. Maybe they have been creative in the past and other team members simply shot them down so now they are quiet and unassuming. Creativity is something that has to be constantly nurtured and developed.

The environment must be conducive to the sharing of ideas. Have the team take creativity workshops on how to become more creative. Remember individuals are creative and teams are innovative.

Suppose your team is missing the advancer. This phase is considered the sales side of the process and the advancer is the cheerleader of the team, the motivator for the project. They are the liaison between the creator (new ideas) and the refiner (perceived naysayer) making sure the process does not get side tracked or even derailed between these two. Here is where you need conflict resolution skills and how to reach agreements.

If your team is missing executors you have significant challenges. Your group will often procrastinate on a project and rush something out at the last minute, sometimes sacrificing quality. Missing this part means that the team must recognize what is missing and then make strict plans on how to proceed and stick to the project holding each member accountable. This also means respecting each other and not causing unwanted conflict.

The simple fact is that every team is a little different and recognition is the first step. If you have the ability and can bring a new person to the team, make sure they compliment the rest of the team in personality and fill the void in the process. Doing so will make everyone's job easier and a whole lot more fun.

Understanding what is missing is important - try to think of your immediate team and see what is happening there. If a team is full of refiners for example they are constantly refining the process and never really ready to turn it in. Maybe you were this way in school - work on a project and make changes all the way up to the last minute and still worry you missed something.

The key is to remember that each phase of the process is equally important to the success of the team and each member must rely on each other member to achieve great success.

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A diverse, twenty-year background in real estate, mortgage banking, event planning, and production, as well as radio and television broadcasting, created a perfect storm that put Gregg Gregory where he is today. Gregg works hard to ensure that different personalities can work together successfully to accomplish your organization's mission, goals, and objectives.

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