

## Ten Tips for Solid Team Development

We have been talking about teamwork for quite some time. I am often amazed at the questions I get about how to structure a team and how the team actually develops. The biggest challenge goes back to something that my father told me when I was in the third grade. He used to always tell me, "You can't put the roof on the house until the foundation is complete."

Now, as a young boy with my Dad being in real estate, I just thought he was talking about building a house. Well, quite frankly, I thought to myself, "... DUH." Actually, he was talking about everything but real estate. I don't know when I came to understand what he was teaching me, though I am sure I was well into my 20's, if not older. In life we have to have a foundation just as in construction.

Teamwork is no different yet I am floored by the number of people who fail to meet the first six of these tips. After all, they are the foundation. Go back over your life and see if any of your previous teams helped in defining these 10 tips.

- **Purpose:** Every team must have a purpose for its existence. Purpose can also be referred to as the vision of the team. If a team has no vision how can you expect the players to hit the target? Simple answer: you can't! Purpose as to why the team exists includes the complete understanding of what role the team plays towards overall goals and vision of the organization.
- **Mission:** We have heard so much about the word "mission." Many people confuse the terms "vision" and "mission." Vision is about where the team is going. Mission is what the team is about. The senior most part of an organization is usually very clear about its mission. Why don't lower level teams have the same clarity? Often, we expect our line-level teams to simply absorb the corporate mission. They simply feel they should just absorb the corporate mission. While the team mission should be congruent with, and supportive of, the corporate mission, it should reflect the more focused mission of the team.
- **Goals:** Do not confuse goals with job or performance standards. Goals are people-based where performance standards are position-based. Each person should have specific goals as well as a tracking system. Goals are easily modified and should be throughout the year.
- **Objectives:** Like goals objectives are people based and objectives are more geared towards the entire team's objectives. These are the results that the entire team is striving for. Objectives need to be task driven and focused on the end results.

- **Common Values:** If you have members who do not share in the common values of each other then the friction will be difficult to overcome. This goes back to Jim Collins' book, "Good to Great," and in particular chapter three, "First Who Then What," getting the right people on the bus, in the right seats, and the wrong ones off of the bus.
- **Behavioral Norms:** A strong leader sets the expectations in advance and begins to hold members accountable. As the team progresses each member begins to hold everyone else accountable. In the beginning acceptable behavior needs to be established.
- **Job Fit:** Understanding one's natural behavioral tendencies is critical to see if a person will be a good fit in a particular position. For example, my natural DiSC® dominion is a very high D and I. This means that my style would not be suitable for an accounting position because repetitive work bores me, and my difficulty with details would eventually result in numerous errors. This is the stage where most leaders pick up the process. This is also where the "job description" comes into play.
- **Maintain Standards:** In fact, I would suggest that instead of maintaining standards you actually raise the standard. This goes for both the team and the individual on the team. One of the biggest challenges is that many leaders start off with high standards and after a short while they soften up on the standards. They say they are conforming to the needs of the team and easing their leadership style. As soon as basic standards are eased the team begins a downward spiral and it may be too difficult to regain control.
- **Identify and Deal with Conflict:** The first part is usually quite easy. The challenge comes with the second part. One of the key reasons leaders fail (leaders does not necessarily mean bosses) is their failure to deal with conflict. Many feel that if they ignore it the conflict will go away. Wrong!
- **Recognize Performance:** Performance recognition does not need to begin from the top down. In fact, peer recognition is critical to the success of any team. Recognition up, down, and across every team will increase the overall performance faster than almost anything else.

While every team is a little different, the process is still the same. The first six tips are the foundation of team development and thus are in the basic "Forming" stage of the process. To learn more about the team development process contact us for additional strategies.

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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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