

Team Working

Effective Teams

Effective and successful *teams* have the following elements:

- ❖ Specific, Well-Defined Goals
- ❖ Develop Interdependent And Collaborative Relationships
- ❖ Share Leadership
- ❖ Provide Feedback
- ❖ Recognise And Reward Performance
- ❖ Celebrate Victories

Successful teams also need team leaders and members who are willing to make a commitment. With respect to task performance, quality and effectiveness is measured in terms of achieving goals. With respect to human resource maintenance, an effective team is one whose members are sufficiently satisfied with their task, accomplishments, and interpersonal relationships to work well together on an ongoing basis. The following is a classic listing of the *characteristics* of a successful and quality-focused team:

- ❖ Members are loyal to one another and the leader.
- ❖ Members and leaders have a high degree of confidence and trust in each other.
- ❖ The team is eager to help members develop to their full potential.
- ❖ The members communicate fully and frankly all information relevant to the team's activities.
- ❖ Members feel secure in making decisions that seem appropriate to them.
- ❖ Activities of the team occur in a supportive atmosphere.
- ❖ Team values and goals express relevant values and needs of members.

For a team to be effective, the following fundamentals must be developed:

- ❖ **Trust** - Team members must learn not be wary of each other. Lack of trust is an obstacle to flexibility and information flow.
- ❖ **Involvement** - Every team member's participation counts and people are dependent on each other, regardless of where they fit into the hierarchy.
- ❖ **Emphasis on strengths not weaknesses** -Team members must look for ways to complement, rather than compete with, each other.
- ❖ **Persuasive and non-paternalistic leadership** -Managers must become good listeners and be willing to involve others in decision making. Everyone must take personal responsibility for completing the task.

- ❖ **Precise objectives** - Members need to have clearly defined, precise goals and specific deadlines.

Increasing Collaboration among Team members

The ability to work together is a prerequisite for team functioning. Facilitating collaboration can be a major challenge for team leaders. A key step to achieving collaboration is the creation of the culture that supports it. Such a culture rewards honesty, integrity, willingness to share, receptivity to information and ideas, consistency and respect for others. Trust is a particularly important ingredient, it allows members to remain focussed on the problem, encourages better communication and coordination, improves the quality of the results of collaboration, and encourages team members to pick up the slack for one another and consequently to improve overall team performance.

Challenges for Team Leaders

Most team leaders are not born with all the right skills or answers. Leading a team involves skills that few managers understand at first. The command - and control - type behaviours they were encouraged to demonstrate before leading a team are no longer appropriate. Some of the most critical skills needed immediately are communication, conflict resolution, and coaching. Other skills that can be learned but take much longer to develop include the patience to share information, trust to let others make decision, and the ability to let go of power, Developing effective work teams is an even greater challenge when a team or team consists of members from different areas, sections, and have different work experiences.