

TEAM BUILDING STUDY GUIDE

(11/2009)

I. Introduction

Every day in some way, you are a part of a team. Teams are incredible things. No task is too great, no accomplishment too grand, no dream too far-fetched for a team. To make any dreams large or small work and come true it takes teamwork.

Our country is built upon the concept of teamwork. Each “team” in our society, whether it’s a sales force, a manufacturing group, a police department, a fire station, a sports team or a family, must work together for our society to flourish and operate smoothly.

Developing a better team always begins with you. To improve the team, each individual on the team must improve. Improving your knowledge skills, physical skills and communication skills will add value to your team. Everyone can choose to become a better teammate by working hard and putting forth his/her best effort.

Teamwork always requires sacrifice. Good team players put the team’s accomplishments ahead of personal stardom, awards or accolades. You put others on the team ahead of yourself to help the team be successful. Why???

Because great challenges require great teamwork!

II. What is a Team?

The word “team” is derived from the use of oxen shackled together to create a focused, shared force for transporting heavy materials. **A team is**

- More than a group of people
- A group of people organized to work together to accomplish a specific objective.
- Built with blood sweat and tears
- Like a car in that it consists of multiple parts joined together to accomplish a particular task
- A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose
- A group of interacting individuals sharing a common goal and the responsibility for achieving it.
- A cooperative unit
- People working together toward common goals.

III. The Benefits of a Team

Here are a few ways teams can bring you success.....

- My team makes me better than I am.
- My team multiplies my value to others.
- My team enables me to do what I do best.
- My team allows me to help others do their best.
- My team provides me with companionship.
- My team helps me fulfill the desires of my heart.

IV. Winning Team Member Characteristics:

Team members need to....

- develop **communication skills** – speaking and listening
- **respect** the ideas and contributions of each team member
- **encourage** teammates in their efforts
- promote **cooperation** within the team
- develop **trust and dependability** within the team
- develop **relationships** with each team member
- be **committed** to the goals and mission of the team, striving for excellence
- be **competent** in your job: paying attention to detail, sweating the small stuff
- be **enthusiastic**: attitude is a choice, enthusiasm is contagious
- be **intentional**: working with a purpose, making every action count
- be **prepared**: lazy people rarely prepare, you must do your homework to succeed
- be **tenacious**: giving all you have, working with determination, quitting only when the job is done
- become **an asset** to the team and **contribute** to the fulfillment of the team’s goals

V. Functional Team Characteristics:

It is very satisfying to work with a functional team. Team members feel they are achieving something, that they add value and that they are part of something bigger. They share a common vision and have common goals in striving for their projects. So what makes a team functional?

- **Common vision**: the team agrees on their goals and strives to achieve them. There is a definite buy-in in the value of the project or work they are doing.

- **A culture of learning:** team members go out of their way to learn from each other. The team is constantly looking for better ways of doing things. They learn from their mistakes and the focus is on problem-solving.
- **Habit of appreciation:** the team gives honest compliments on work well done, sharing knowledge or expertise, and for good ideas. All team members are made to feel appreciated and valued. A team that appreciates each other is likely to bring out the best in each other.
- **Tolerance:** People differ! Where there is tolerance for other viewpoints, cultures, or personality types, people feel free to be themselves. This freedom enables them to do their best.
- **Fun:** Being on a team should be fun. We will spend a majority of our lives everyday being a part of some kind of a team: part of a family, playing a sport or working at our career. If being on a team is not at least somewhat enjoyable, life becomes sad and a tragedy.

VI. Dysfunctional Team Characteristics:

Identifying a dysfunctional team is not that difficult. A dysfunctional team never gets it together, their projects are late, or of very poor quality. There are constant fights and disagreements. Team members feel unappreciated, are not free to express their opinions or ideas, and feel unimportant.

- **Weak leadership:** People need leaders. Someone to inspire and motivate the team to greater heights.
- **Culture of blame:** When something goes wrong, look for some serious finger pointing rather than effective problem solving.
- **Team members with “attitude”:** One person’s negative attitude can break down the morale of the whole team. This person will constantly complain, argue and refuse to cooperate. He or she will criticize, but never come up with an alternative plan. Problems will be raised, but no solutions will be forthcoming or found.
- **Lack of trust:** Team members are uncomfortable with one another. They are unwilling to admit weaknesses, mistakes, or of need of help. They become suspicious of everyone’s ideas and motives.
- **Inability to commit:** Team members fail to achieve buy-in around clear decisions and courses of action.

VII. Characteristics of Successful Leaders

- ✚ **Integrity:** You must be honest with those you lead; it is of the utmost importance that a leader is trustworthy. A good leader is one who leads by example and has a strong sense of “what is right.”
- ✚ **Ability to Listen:** Listening to others will not only help you understand the members of your team, but the members will appreciate it. Many members will have wonderful ideas, and it is vital those members know they can talk to you.
- ✚ **Ability to Communicate:** Being able to communicate your own thoughts and ideas is crucial to your team. Successfully communicating with the team ensures that every team member is fully informed and no one feels left out.
- ✚ **Initiative:** A good leader recognizes what needs to be done and does it. You can make a difference when you take the initiative to turn the team’s ideas into reality.
- ✚ **Dependability:** Do what you say you are going to do, and others will follow your example. Dependable leaders are always on time, never make excuses, and stay on the job until it is done.
- ✚ **Decisiveness:** A good leader has the ability to make decisions in a timely manner. Get all of the facts and information first, and then make up your mind when you have weighed all the facts and options.
- ✚ **Enthusiasm:** Enthusiasm is contagious! Leaders serve as a source of inspiration and motivation. Therefore, show your enthusiasm and others will follow. If you have great pride and excitement, so will your team. Lead by example.

VIII. Famous Quotes about Teamwork

1. No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it. (Halford E. Luccock)
2. One man can be a crucial ingredient on team, but one man cannot make a team. (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar)
3. A boat doesn’t go forward if each one is rowing their own way. (Swahili Proverb)
4. Wearing the same shirt doesn’t make a team. (Buchholz and Roth)
5. None of us is as smart as all of us. (Ken Blanchard)

IX. Final Thought:

In the end, a team fails or succeeds together. The best way to serve the individuals on the team is to see that the whole team wins. Do that, and dreams can come true for everyone. Even when you’re played the game of your life, it’s the feeling of teamwork that you’ll remember. You’ll forget the plays, the shots, the scores, but you’ll never forget your teammates, the victories and what coming together achieved.