

Understanding Team - What is a Team ?

Let us first go through a simple real life situation.

John was working as a key accounts head with a leading advertising firm. He had four members reporting to him. Unfortunately he always underestimated his team members and fought with them constantly. He could never trust them and always thought they were incapable of doing good work. One fine day, he got some major assignment from one of his clients which was to be submitted within two working days. He decided to do it all alone as he thought nobody else could do it apart from him. John could never submit his assignment on the required day and received good criticism from his superiors. His organization also lost one of their major and prestigious clients.

Why do you think John failed ? Why could he not complete his assignment on time ?

Here comes the importance of a team. Had John taken the help of his team members, he would have finished his assignment on time and everyone would have appreciated him.

An individual cannot perform all tasks on his own. He needs the support as well as guidance of others to be excellent in whatever he does. Complex goals can easily be accomplished if individuals work together as a team.

What is a team ?

A team is a group of individuals, all working together for a common purpose. The individuals comprising a team ideally should have common goals, common objectives and more or less think on the same lines. Individuals who are not compatible with each other can never form a team. They should have similar if not the same interests, thought processes, attitude, perception and likings.

Difference between Group and Team

A group is not necessarily a team. **A group can have individuals with varied interests, attitude as well as thought processes.** It is not necessary that the group members would have a common objective or a common goal to achieve.

What happens in a political rally ? The political leader appeals to the individuals to cast the votes in his favour only. Do you think all of them would cast the votes in favour of the leader ? There would always be some individuals who would support his opponent. This is example of a group. All individuals gathered on a common platform but had dissimilar interests and likings. Some were in favour of the leader while some against.

A team must have individuals with a common objective to achieve. They should all work together and strive towards the achievement of a common goal.

What happens in a cricket team ?

All the players have a **common focus and a common objective.** Everyone, the captain, the wicketkeeper, the bowlers, the fielders all work together to achieve a common target i.e. win the game. No one ever thinks of losing the game.

It is not only the individuals who form a team; even animals can constitute a team. Go to any hill station and one can spot many horses all working for a common goal i.e. Carry people to the hill top and bring them back.

Team members

The team members must complement each other. All team members should help each other and work in unison. Personal interests must take a back seat and all of them must deliver their level best to achieve the team objective. Team members must not argue among themselves or underestimate the other member.

Organizations have a sales team, administration team, human resources team operation team and so on. All the members of the sales team would work together to achieve the sales target and generate revenues for the organization.

Team Size

The team size depends on the complexity of the task to be accomplished. **Ideally a team should consist of 7-10 members.** Too many members also lead to confusions and misunderstandings.

It is not always that we require a team. Teams should be formed when the task is a little complicated. A single brain can sometimes not take all critical decisions alone, thus a team is formed where the team members contribute equally making the task easy. A team can actually create wonders if all the team members work in unison.

Team Development - Meaning, Stages and Forming an Effective Team

Teams are becoming a key tool for organizing work in today's corporate world. Teams have the potential to immediately amass, organize, relocate, and disperse. But, teams are an effective tool of employee motivation. It is essential to consider the fact that teams develop and get mature over a period of time. **Team development creates a captivating atmosphere by encouraging co-operation, teamwork, interdependence and by building trust among team members.**

The four stages of team development are:

Stage 1: Forming

During this stage, group members may be anxious and adopt wait-and-see attitude. They will be formal towards each other. There would be no clear idea of goals or expectations. Besides, they may not be sure why they are there.

This is the stage where the team needs to write its own charter or mission statement as well as clarify goals. The most important thing here is that goals must have a personal buy-in.

By doing this the team will be able to establish boundaries as well as determine what is expected. Team members will get to know each other doing non-conflict laden task. This builds the commitment towards one larger goal.

Thus, during the forming stage, the team members are in process of knowing each other and getting at ease with them.

Stage 2: Storming

During this stage, team members are eager to get going. Conflict can arise as people tend to bring different ideas of how to accomplish goals. At this time, they notice differences rather than similarities. This leads to some members dropping out mentally or physically.

At this stage, communication is important. Tensions will increase. So recognizing and publicly acknowledging accomplishments also become important. It becomes important to participate in meetings and diversity needs to be valued.

Thus, during the storming stage, the team members begin showing their actual styles. They start getting impatient. They try to probe into each other's area, leading to irritation and frustration. Control becomes the key concern during this stage.

Stage 3: Norming

This stage is when people begin to recognize ways in which they are alike. They realize that they are in this together. Hence, they tend to get more social and may forget their focus in favour of having a good time. This is the time to help with training if applicable. It becomes important to encourage them in order to feel comfortable with each other and with systems. Also, the group needs to stay focused on goal.

Thus, during the norming stage, there is conflict resolution. There is greater involvement of team members. There is a greater "we" feeling rather than "I" feeling.

Stage 4: Performing

This stage is when team members are trained, competent, as well as able to do their own problem-solving. At this time, ways need to be looked at in order to challenge them as well as develop them. The team is mature now. The members understand their roles and responsibilities. They would require more input in processes. The members would be self-motivated as well as self-trained. Thus, their efforts need to be recognised. Growth has to be encouraged. This is done by giving new challenges to the team.

Thus, teams at the stage of performing are self-controlling, practical, loyal as well as productive. Focus is there on both performance as well as production.

Forming an Effective Team

This is the general approach to forming a successful work team. But not all will take the same steps as discussed above. Success is usually hinged on taking all of the steps just discussed. We have a tendency to want to surround ourselves with people who are just like us. In case you get to choose a team, instead of organizing a pre-formed team, then you'll look for a team of people with a variety of strengths. In case of a team that is already in place, organizing can be more subtle. Like, all the workgroups can be called together in order to discuss what goals you want to accomplish and how everybody can help.

You will also find that imposing goals on people doesn't work nearly as well as having them tell you as to what goals they will strive for. But setting goals is not easy work. Too often they end up in being too unrealistic, too vague, impossible to measure, or just stretching into eternity without any deadline.

Team Management - Meaning and Concept

There are some tasks which can't be done alone. Individuals need to come together, discuss things among themselves and work together towards the realization of a common goal. **The individuals forming a team should ideally think more or less on the same lines and should have similar interests and objective.** People with absolutely different tastes can't form a team. Their goals have to be the same. Every team is formed to achieve a predefined goal and it is the responsibility of each and every member to contribute his level best and accomplish the assigned task within the stipulated time frame. The team members must complement each other and come to each other's help whenever required. Individual performances do not matter much in a team and every individual should strive hard and work in unison.

The team members don't start performing from the very beginning, they need time. It is not always that all the members would perform equally. Some of them might not get along well with their team mates or have other issues with each other. Individuals sometimes find it difficult to adjust with each other and as a result their performance suffers. Any individual fails to perform; the complete team is at loss. Team management activities ensure that all the team members work together on a common platform for a common goal.

What is Team Management ?

Team management refers to the various activities which bind a team together by bringing the team members closer to achieve the set targets. For the team members, their team must be their priority and everything else should take a back seat. They should be very focused on their goals.

Let us understand Team Management with the help of a real life situation.

Maria was representing the training and development vertical of a leading firm. Joe, Kathy, Sandra and Tim were reporting to Maria and helped her in designing the various training programs. Maria left no stone unturned to ensure that all her team members were satisfied with their job responsibilities. The workload was shared equally among four of them. Ideas were discussed on an open forum and each of them contributed to his level best. They went out for movies and stayed in touch even after work.

Maria being the team leader was actually responsible for bringing her team members closer so that none of them feels left out and all are motivated to deliver their level best. With the help of the team management activities, she managed to create a positive ambience at the workplace and promoted healthy competition in her team.

Effective Team Management Skills

Management is essential in every walk of life. Even what we eat should be managed. You just can't put anything in your mouth. One needs to be cautious. In the same way, a team must be managed effectively to expect the best from the team members. The team leader plays an essential role in managing his team well.

- **For effective team management, it is important that the team leader is more of a mentor to his team members rather than just being a strict boss.** Understand your team members well. Gone are the days when people used to fear their bosses. Now a days employees share a healthy relation with their superiors and the comfort level has increased to a large extent. Don't impose things on them.

- **Ensure that each and every team member willingly participates in team discussions.** Debates are important, but make sure you don't end up fighting with each other. Suggestions must be invited from all and do not discuss issues separately with individuals. Call every one on an open forum and formulate strategies keeping in mind every body's inputs. Policies should be made best suited to all. The objective of the team must be clearly set and circulated among all the team members. Everyone should be aware of his roles and responsibilities in the team.
- Communication among the team members must be clear and transparent for an effective team management. **Every team member should get the same information and should have an easy access to the superiors in case of any query.**
- **The team members must not pass on any information to anyone outside the team.** Learn to keep things to yourself. It is unethical to share your professional secrets with others. Don't leak information or any confidential data.
- **The team members must be motivated on a regular basis.** Appreciation is a must. If any team member has performed extraordinarily, do give him a pat on his back. Performance appraisals, perks, incentives, trophies, prizes are all instrumental in motivating the team members to perform even better the next time. Avoid criticizing any of your team members.
- **Loose talks, blame games, dirty politics should find no place in the team.** They spoil the environment and people lose interest in their work and organization. If you come to know anything about someone, it's better to discuss with him face to face, else ignore.
- It is easy to create a team but it is actually difficult to bind the team members together and even make them work. Team management techniques help in strengthening the bond among the employees and creating an environment where they can trust each other. People actually become friends and start working together as a result of team management activities.

Characteristics of a Good/Effective Team

Success in the workplace depends on your ability to build a team, as well as to interact with others on that team. Together, people are able to accomplish what one person alone can not. This is known as synergy.

Following are the characteristics of a Good/Effective team:

- **A clear, elevating goal:** This is a goal which has been communicated to all.
- **A results-driven structure:** The goal has been jointly decided by all the team members. They are fully committed towards achieving it.
- **Competent members:** Each team member has the required skill set in order to achieve the team objectives.
- **Unified commitment:** There is nothing happening in silos. With the total commitment from team members, achieving organizational goals becomes easier.
- **A collaborative climate:** Commitment from team members and a good leadership leads to a collaborative team with a productive work environment.
- **Standards of excellence:** Quality orientation is vital to the success of any organization.
- **External support and recognition:** Appreciation as well as appraisal is required to keep the morale of the team high.
- **Principled leadership:** Leadership defines a team. An able-bodied leadership can chart the team's path to success.
- Each team member participates actively and positively in meetings as well as projects. This shows a person's commitment as well as understanding towards a project.
- **Team goals are clearly understood by all:** Communication is vital for achieving successful completion of any project.
- Individual members have thought about creative solutions to the team's problem. Thinking out of the box is vital in today's economic scenario.

- Members are listened to carefully as well as given a thoughtful feedback. Listening is an important skill for any team. Each team member is important. The thoughts and ideas of each team member have to be listened to, with respect, no matter how silly they may sound at first.
- Everyone takes the initiative in order to get things done. There is no concept of passing the buck. This is an indication of clear communication leading to understanding of individual responsibilities.
- **Each team member trusts the judgment of others:** Mutual trust and respect is highly important for the team. This is the only way to achieve the organization goals.
- **The team has to be willing to take risks:** Risk taking is an attitude which comes with confidence. Confidence on yourself as well as on the team, besides the ability to face all consequences.
- Everyone has to be supportive of the project as well as of others. A team is one unit. Unless these cohesive forces are there, the team will never be able to work efficiently enough.
- There is ample communication between the team members.
- Team decisions are made by using organized as well as logical methods.
- **Dissenting opinions are never ignored:** In fact, they are always recorded in order to be revisited in case the future situations dictate so.
- **Teams are given realistic deadlines:** External support as well as aid is vital to the success of any team.

An efficient team needs support from both inside and outside. It needs to meet the individual needs of its members in order to achieve the organization's goals.

Team Models - Different types of teams

Teams are the principal building blocks of the strategy of successful organizations. The focus of your organization may be on service, quality, cost, value, speed, efficiency, performance, or any other similar goals, but teams remain the central methodology of most organizations in the private, non-profit, as well as government sectors.

The fact remains that when a team becomes more aligned, a commonality of direction emerges, and the individual energies harmonize. This way there is a shared vision as well as an understanding of how to complement each others' efforts.

Once you know the type of team you are in, it will help you choose how to plan your work and what you can expect as outcomes. There are various types of teams. In this article we are going to discuss the five most common ones.

1. The Traditional Model

This is a group of people with a traditional boss. The boss also shares some of his/her responsibility as well as authority. How much is being shared by the boss is usually dependent on the issues under consideration. This traditional boss is in charge. But still, on certain issues, this person may allow his other team members to take on the leadership role.

2. The Team Spirit Model

This is a group of people who are working for one boss. The team members are very happy and everything seems to be going well. There is team spirit in people. The fact remains that in reality this is not really a team. This is because there is one person who calls all the shots. Besides, there is no sharing of authority or responsibility.

3. The Cutting Edge Model

This is a group of people who are managing themselves. There is no single person in this group who has the authority to make any such decisions about the events which will impact the whole group. This is also known as a self-directed work team. This is because each one has the authority as well as responsibility for all the decisions that they need to make.

4. The Task Force Model

This refers to a group that comes together for a specific time only. This is because it has to work on a special project or a task. Such a group has traditionally been called a task force or a committee. This may also include quality circles as are used in TQM efforts.

5. The Cyber Team

In such a team model, members see one another rarely or even, not at all. These are also known as “cyber” or “virtual” teams. What makes these teams different is that the team has to work together in order to accomplish goals, but they may be meeting only at the beginning of their project. Post that, they may be interacting through e-mail, telephone or through video conferencing only.

It is important to know which kind of model your team fits in. Next step is to analyze why you feel that way. Now understand which is the model your team should follow in order to accomplish the given task. This is very important in order to achieve the organizations' goals.

Types of Teams

When individuals with a common interest, goal, attitude, need and perception come together, a team is formed. Individuals need to come and work together to form a team for the accomplishment of complicated tasks. In a team, all team members contribute equally and strive hard to achieve the team's objective which should be predefined.

In any organization, no one works alone. Every employee is a part of a team and works in close coordination with the team members to perform his level best and in turn benefit the organization. The team members should complement each other and come to each other's need whenever required.

Teams can be formed anywhere, anytime whenever the task is little difficult and complicated. Let us understand the various types of teams in detail.

1. **Permanent teams-** These teams perform on a permanent basis and are not dissolved once the task is accomplished. Let us understand the concept with an example.

Mike, Peter, Joe and Ana had a strong inclination towards branding as well as promotions and hence were a part of the branding team with a leading organization. They were primarily responsible for promoting their brand and designing marketing strategies to generate maximum revenue for their organization. They worked extremely hard and always managed to achieve their targets well in advance, but their team was always in place and never dissolved. Their organization never asked them to leave or ever dissolved their team. Such teams are called permanent teams.

Work or no work, the human resources team, operation team, administration team always function effectively through out the year and hence are permanent teams.

2. **Temporary teams** - Unlike permanent teams, temporary teams lose their importance, once the task is accomplished. Such teams are usually formed for a shorter duration either to assist the permanent team or work when the members of the permanent team are busy in some other project.

When organizations have excess of work, they generally form temporary teams which work in association with the members of the permanent team for the accomplishment of the task within the stipulated time.

3. **Task Force** - Such teams are formed for a special purpose of working on any specific project or finding a solution to a very critical problem.

The government generally appoints special teams to investigate critical issues like bomb blasts, terrorist attacks and so on. The task force explores all the possible reasons which led to a severe problem and tries to resolve it within a given deadline.

4. **Committee** - Committees are generally formed to work on a particular assignment either permanently or on a temporary basis. Individuals with common interests, more or less from the same background, attitude come together on a common platform to form a committee and work on any matter.

To organize any cultural event, organizations generally make committees to raise funds, invite celebrities and all the major tasks involved to successfully organize any event. The committee members work together, design strategies to successfully accomplish the task.

In educational institutes, various committees are formed where students with a common interest join hands to organize cultural events and various other activities required for the all round development of students.

5. **Organization/Work Force** - Such groups are formed in organizations where team members work together under the expert guidance of leader. A leader or a supervisor is generally appointed among the members himself and he along with his team works hard to achieve a common goal. The leader all through must stand by his team and extract the best out of each team member. He must not underestimate any of his team members and take his team along to avoid conflicts.

Samuel was working with a leading advertising firm with two members reporting to him. Samuel always believed in his team members and worked together with his team and no doubts his team always did wonders and was way ahead of others.

6. **Self Managed Teams** - Self Managed Teams consist of individuals who work together again for a common purpose but without the supervision of any leader. Here as the name suggests every individual is accountable for his individual performance. The team members of self managed teams must respect each other and should never lose focus on their target. No leader is appointed and the team members have to take their own responsibility. Individuals take the initiative on their own and are their own guides and mentors.

7. **Cross Functional Team** - Let us understand this with the help of an example.

Maria and Andy both were part of the branding team. They got an assignment from their superiors to be completed within two days. Unfortunately Andy met with an accident and was advised complete bed rest. To avoid delays, Peter from the operations team was shifted to the marketing team to assist Maria for the time being and form a team. Such teams are called cross

functional teams. Ideally the employees should be more or less on the same level to avoid ego hassles. Individuals from different areas come and work together for a common objective to form a cross functional team. In such teams, people from different areas, interests and likings join hands to come out with a unique idea to successfully complete a task.

8. **Virtual Teams** - Virtual teams consist of individuals who are separated by distances and connected through computer. Here individuals communicate with each other online through internet. Sam at Los Angeles can form a team with Mandy at Mexico and Sara at Denver all working for a common objective but the communication is totally digital through internet. Such teams are helpful when employees need to connect with each other and are located at different places. Individuals supporting any community in social networking sites such as facebook or orkut also form a virtual team as all the members are from different locations but support a common community. They all have a common objective -to support and promote their community.

Team Work - Meaning and Tips for better Team Work

A single brain sometimes is not capable of taking critical decisions alone. An individual needs the support and guidance of others to come out with an effective solution. When individuals come together on a common platform with a common objective of accomplishing a task, a team is formed. Ideally the team members should be from a common background and have a common goal to ensure maximum compatibility. The team members must complement each other and work in close coordination as a single unit to deliver their best.

As they say "***There is no I in Team Work***", every individual must think of his team first and the personal interests must take a back seat.

The success of any team is directly proportional to the relation among its team members and their collective efforts.

What is Team Work ?

The sum of the efforts undertaken by each team member for the achievement of the team's objective is called team work. In other words, team work is the backbone of any team.

Every member in a team has to perform and contribute in his best possible way to achieve a common predefined goal. Individual performances do not count in a team and it is the collective performance of the team workers which matters the most.

Let us go through a real life situation.

One cannot work alone in any organization and thus teams are formed where individuals work together for a common objective. Peter, Michael, Jackson and Sandra represented the legal team in a leading organization. Peter and Michael always took the initiative and performed their level best while Jackson and Sandra had a laidback attitude towards work. Their team could never meet their targets inspite of Peter and Michael's hard work.

Peter and Michael worked hard, then why do you think their team fell short of targets?

In a team; everyone has to work equally for the maximum output.

Team work is actually the collective effort of each and every team member to achieve their assigned goal. No member can afford to sit back and expect the other member to perform on his behalf. The team members must be committed towards their team as well as their organization to avoid conflicts. Nothing productive comes out of unnecessary conflict and in turn diverts the concentration and focus of the team members. Every member should adopt an adjusting and a flexible attitude. One should consider his team members as a part of his extended family all working together towards a common goal. The team members must be dependent on each other for the best to come out.

Tips for a better team work

Let us go through some **steps for a better team work**

- **Think about your team first** - Every individual should think of his team first and his personal interests should take a backseat. Do not mix your personal issues with your professional life. Keep them separate.

<b

- Never underestimate your team member - Do not neglect any of the members, instead work together and also listen to them as well. Never try to impose your ideas on any member. Avoid demotivating any team member.</b
-
- **Discuss** - Before implementing any new idea, it must be discussed with each and every member on an open platform. Never ever discuss with anyone separately as the other person feels left out and reluctant to perform and contribute to the team.
- **Avoid criticism** - Stay away from criticism and making fun of your team members. Help each other and be a good team player. Be the first one to break the ice and always create a friendly ambience. If you do not agree with any of your team member, make him understand his mistakes but in a polite tone and do guide him. Avoid negativity within the team.
- **Transparency must be maintained and healthy interaction must be promoted among the team members.** The communication must be effective, crystal clear and precise so that every team member gets a common picture. Effective communication also nullifies misunderstandings and confusions. Confusions lead to conflicts and individuals waste their time and energy in fighting rather than working.
- **The team leader must take the responsibility of encouraging the team members** to give their level best and should intervene immediately in cases of conflicts. The personality of the leader should be such that every team member should look up to him and take his advice whenever required. He should not be partial to any member and support each of them equally. It is the duty of the team leader to extract the best out of his team members.

<b

- For better team work, try to understand your team members well. Do not just always talk business, it is okay if you go out with your team members for lunch or catch a movie together. It improves the relations and strengthens the bond among the team members. The team members must trust each other for maximum output.</b
-
- **Avoid conflicts in your team.** Don't fight over petty issues and find faults in others. One should be a little adjusting with each other and try to find an alternative best suited to all the team members.
- **Rewards and Recognition** - Healthy competition must be encouraged among the team members. The performance of every team member must be evaluated timely and the best performer should be rewarded suitably so that the other members also get motivated to perform. Recognitions like "The Best Team Player" or the "The Best Performer" go a long way in

motivating the team members. Appreciate the member who performs the best or does something unique.

Importance of Team and Team Work

Teams are formed when individuals with a common taste, preference, liking, and attitude come and work together for a common goal. Teams play a very important role in organizations as well as our personal lives.

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success- Henry Ford”

The above proverb by Henry Ford can very well highlight the importance of working together in teams.

Every employee is dependent on his fellow employees to work together and contribute efficiently to the organization. No employee can work alone; he has to take the help of his colleagues to accomplish the tasks efficiently. It has been observed that the outcome comes out to be far better when employees work in a team rather than individually as every individual can contribute in his best possible way. In organizations, individuals having a similar interest and specializations come together on a common platform and form a team.

A sales team has employees inclined towards branding and marketing activities to promote their brand. An individual with a human resource specialization would be out of place in such a team. Research supports that organizations with clearly defined teams are more successful as compared to those with a one man show.

Team work is essential in corporates for better output and a better bonding among employees.

- **No organization runs for charity.** Targets must be met and revenues have to be generated. Tasks must not be kept pending for a long time and ought to be completed within the desired timeframe. A single brain can't always come with solutions or take decisions alone. He needs someone with whom he can discuss his ideas. In a team, every team member has an equal contribution and each team member comes out with a solution best suited to the problem. All the alternatives can be explored to come out with the best possible solution. Thoughts can be discussed among the team members and the pros and cons can be evaluated.
- **Tasks are accomplished at a faster pace when it is done by a team rather than an individual.** An individual will definitely take more time to perform if he is single handedly responsible for everything. When employees work together, they start helping each other and responsibilities are shared and thus it reduces the work load and work pressure. Every team member is assigned one or the other responsibility according to his specialization, level of interest and thus the output is much more efficient and faster.
- **Work never suffers or takes a backseat in a team.** Mike was taking care of an important client and was the only one coordinating with them. Mike took a long leave and there was no one else who could handle the client in his absence. When he joined back after a long vacation, the organization had already lost the client. Had Mike worked in a team, others could have taken the charge when he was not there. In a team, the other team members can perform and manage the work in the absence of any member and hence work is not affected much.
- **There is always a healthy competition among the team members.** Competition is always good for the employee as well as the organization as every individual feels motivated to perform better than his other team member and in a way contributing to his team and the organization.

Team work is also important to improve the relations among the employees. Individuals work in close coordination with each other and thus come to know each other better. Team work also reduces the chances of unnecessary conflicts among the employees and every individual

tries his level best to support his team member. The level of bonding increases as a result of team work.

- **Team members can also gain from each other.** Every individual is different and has some qualities. One can always benefit something or the other from his team members which would help him in the long run. Everyone is hungry for recognitions and praises. One feels motivated to work hard in a team and to live up to the expectations of the other members. Each member is a critic of the other and can correct him whenever the other person is wrong. One always has someone to fall back on at the time of crisis.

Team and team work must be encouraged at workplace as it strengthens the bond among the employees and the targets can be met at a faster pace. Workload is shared and individuals feel motivated to perform better than his team members.

Importance of Team Building in Corporates

Employees are the assets of every organization and its success is directly proportional to the hard work every employee puts in. Individuals must work in a little different and smarter way than the others and always feel motivated to give their best. Effort by a single team member goes unnoticed and every team member should contribute equally. Individuals must be aware what his fellow team members are working on and what he is supposed to do.

Team work and Team Building are essential in corporates to make the organization a better place to work.

One does not gain anything out of unnecessary conflicts. **You can't afford to fight with your colleague who sits next to you probably for 7-8 hours, five days a week.** We are not machines or battery operated devices, we are human beings and we need people to talk to and discuss various things. One cannot implement things on his own, he needs individuals who can work as critics and evaluate the pros and cons of his concepts.

Team Building activities bring employees closer and one feels happy to go to work daily. Individuals start enjoying their work and feel fresh the entire day.

Please go through two situations carefully:

Situation 1 - Michael worked with a leading organization and handled a team of five skilled team members. Michael made sure that he interacted with his team members almost daily. He even enquired about their family members and was always available to them. The team members had the liberty to come up with their issues on an open forum or write to him freely. No wonders his team members always appreciated their team leader and looked up to him. His team members never fought among themselves and willingly helped each other.

Situation 2 - Samuel on the other hand also had four individuals directly reporting to him. He always maintained a distance from them and never missed an opportunity to criticize or make fun of his team members. No employee was allowed to enter Samuel's cabin without prior appointment. His team members hated their office like anything and preferred working from home just to avoid Samuel. No body was ready to help each other and everyone worked individually. Their team could never achieve their targets within the stipulated time and there was lots of negativity in their team.

Michael did nothing great. He just reassured his team members that he is always there for them and they can fall back on him anytime. Samuel never encouraged any team building activity and thus his team always suffered.

Team Building activities improve the relations and strengthen the bond among the employees. Every one strives hard to achieve a common goal.

Please refer to Michael's example once again. His team members had the liberty to write to him anytime or freely discuss issues with him. There was never a misunderstanding among the team members as everyone knew what the other person was upto.

Team Building activities also reduce the chances of confusions, misunderstandings and in a way making the communication effective. Individual is very clear about his goals and objectives and what exactly is expected from him.

Team Building exercises also increase the trust factor among the employees. If you are sitting next to a driver, whom you don't trust, you will always feel uncomfortable and will never be able to enjoy the ride. If you don't trust your teacher, you can never learn anything from him. You need to trust people. Don't always assume that your fellow employee will speak ill about you in front of your superiors. Trust him, you will feel relaxed.

The productivity increases when individuals work as a team. They tend to divide work among themselves and hence the objectives are achieved at a much faster pace. People take less leaves and concentrate more on their work and eventually the organization benefits.

Individuals feel more positive and confident at work. Stress disappears and it reflects on their work. Chances of mistakes reduce and people stop cribbing and blaming others. There is positivity all around. Allow team members to express themselves freely.

Being a "Hitler" at work will never give you extra points, instead you will find yourself in the bad books of other employees. No one will come to you, when you actually need them. People will be hesitant to support you and you can't perform with enemies all around. Gone are the days when the word "boss" meant a terror to the employees. Now a days the team leader is also a part of a single team, just with some additional responsibilities. Learn to respect your colleagues.

Team Contracts to outline the ground rules of a team

It is important for any team to make an assessment of their current strengths. This will provide the basis for a plan in order to increase the effectiveness of the team in order to achieve the organizational goals.

Team contracts are meant to outline the ground rules for the team. It is important for the team leader to state what he wants in his team and what he does not want in his team.

Team contracts are created as well as monitored by the team. Any team contract primarily has a Code of Conduct.

This code of conduct may include:

- The way in which a team will operate. Whether a team will work in a proactive manner or not. A team needs to anticipate potential problems. They need to work in such a way that the problems are prevented before they can take place.

- Keeping the other team members informed. Communication is vital to the success of any team. Communication leads to building up of trust between the team members. No one works in silos and team success is achieved due to mutual cooperation and understanding.
- Focus on what is best for the team as a whole. The team has to be bigger than an individual team player. The interests of the team have to come first. Besides, care has to be taken that the interests of the team and the team players are in synergy and do not clash.

Any team contract needs to lay down the Ground Rules for Participation:

- Each team member needs to be honest as well as open. This is very important to ensure the success of the team.
- Encourage a diversity of opinions on all topics. A team is made of people - different people with different views and opinions. These opinions may clash with each other. But in a team, everybody's opinion matters. Hence each suggestion is taken and noted in order to be referred to later.
- Everyone given the opportunity for equal participation. It is the team members who make up a team. Equal participation as well as equal inputs from all team members can lead a team to achieve its goals.
- Be open to new approaches as well as listen to new ideas. The world is changing. The technology is moving too fast. The economy is highly volatile. In such a situation, no organization can afford to sit on its laurels any more.

Ground Rules have to be set for Communication also

- First understand, and then be understood to apply to all team members
- Be clear and concise. This will save time as well as promote better understanding among the team members.
- Keep each discussion on track.
- Use visual means like drawings, charts, as well as tables in order to facilitate discussion. It is very important for each team member to be on the same page.

There are many more ground rules which are laid down in a team contract in order to allow for a smooth functioning of the team. These will be discussed in another article.

Building an Effective Team

Having goals or a clear purpose is important to each of us. In fact, people who set goals are always more successful than the others.

For leaders who are serious about setting goals, some things are to be kept in mind. These goals need to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and with Timelines. Besides, for any organization, goals should also be expressed positively. And for a team, goals need to be personalized for each member of the team. All these goals should be put in writing, where you as well as the team can see them often.

Once you sit down with your team and set some goals, it can be very useful to develop some kind of action plan for accomplishing that goal.

- **Informality as well as Participation:** In order to build an effective team, the climate has to be informal, comfortable, as well as relaxed. There should be no tension or any signs of boredom. Teams enjoy getting together, they interact easily. There should be lots of good-natured kidding and laughter. Have seating arrangements in order to facilitate this. A circle is the best seating arrangement usually, while a typical classroom arrangement is the worst.

- **Listening:** A highly efficient team has team members who use effective listening techniques. These include questioning, paraphrasing, as well as summarizing in order to get out ideas. Listening is the most effective factor that distinguishes effective teams from ineffective teams. This is a highly important subject which needs to be discussed in detail in another article.

The ability to really listen is a highly important skill. Each team member has to have it. Listening lets you understand what the other person is saying. Besides, it shows the other person that you're interested in what he/she has to say. But all of us experience common listening problems.

We tend to let our attention wander. Our mind drifts away. We start thinking about the time, or other tasks at hand. This way we lose our concentration.

We miss the real point of what is being said. We may end up focusing on the personality of the speaker. Else we may let our judgment of the person based on past experiences come in the way. Or, we may be trying hard to look for hidden messages and lose out on the crux of the conversation.

Our emotions interfere with our judgment. This takes away our focus from what is being said. Our judgment of the person interferes with our understanding of what is being said.

We tend to interrupt and step on the statements of others. This way we don't listen to what is being said. Besides, there is a tendency to think ahead to what we want to say next and miss out on what's being said right now. It is important to use the steps of active listening in order to be a good listener.

There are many facets of building an effective team. Having an informal atmosphere as well as listening skills are some of them.

Success Factors in Team Building

Success Factors for Teams

There are many factors that ensure a team's success or failure. Among them, **the three most important factors are:**

- The nature of the leadership of the team along with a shared vision and sense of purpose
- The collaborative nature of the team; and
- The way in which the team members are empowered to the extent that they proactively participate in the team's success.

The succeeding paragraphs look at each of these factors in detail.

If we take the first factor i.e. the leadership of the team and a shared vision articulated by the leader, it is obvious that a team is as good as its leader and a leader is as good as the team. Hence, this two-way symbiotic process determines the extent to which the team is successful. We cannot have good leaders without good teams and we cannot have good teams without good leaders. Hence, they go hand in hand and the ability of the leader to make his or her team believe in the shared vision of the team determines the success of the team.

The next factor that contributes to the success of the team is the collaborative nature of working that the team embraces. Often, people mistake collaboration for competition. Whereas the former results in a win-win situation for the team, the latter results in a win-lose situation which is detrimental to the overall success of the team. We cannot have teams where members work for individual goals at the expense of

the team's goals. Hence, successful teams adopt strategies where each member of the team "rises to the occasion" and puts the goals of the team ahead of his or her individual objectives.

The third factor that contributes to the success of the team is the way in which the individual members of the team are empowered to recommend changes and act in ways that enhances the team's performance. **Successful teams are those where the individual members can act independently and without taking authorization for each and every change and take decisions accordingly.** Hence, a good leader and an effective organization would ensure that the "boots on the ground" are empowered enough to act as the representatives of the team or the organization.

Factors for Strained Relationships

The quality of interaction between the team members is the most important aspect of the relationships between the team members and hence this affects the performance of the team. **Any strained relationships between the team members have an adverse impact on the way the team performs as a unit.** Among the factors that strain relationships within a team, three of them would be the prevalence of personality clashes, uncooperative attitude among the team members and the games of one-upmanship that team members play with each other. The succeeding paragraphs look at each of these factors in detail.

The first factor i.e. that of personality clashes is important as this can have a corrosive impact on the relationships between team members. One or more members of the team may feel that the other members and they do not get along because of clash of values, priorities or style of working amongst them. So, this leads to a souring of the relationships between team members and hence strains the interactions between them. Though the relationships amongst the team members are mentioned, it can also be the case that the manager and the team do not get along because of this factor.

The other factor that can strain relationships between team members is the uncooperative attitude of some members of the team with the rest of the team members. Since we have mentioned the collaborative aspects of the team as one of key success factors, it is the case that if some members are uncooperative, it leads to the overall performance of the team being degraded.

The third factor that strains relationships within a team are the games of one-upmanship that some team members play with the others. There are instances where the manager encourages such behaviour overtly and covertly. Hence, the organization and the manager (as the case may be) need to watch out for such strategies and ensure that they do not "boil over".

Most Critical Success Factor

The most critical success factor for a team is the way in which the team members relate to each other and the manager and vice-versa. This chemistry between the team members and the manager and within the team determines to a large extent the success or failure of the team. Once the elements of trust, integrity and commitment are established within the team and the manager or the leader communicates the same effectively to all the team members, the team is well on its way to becoming a high performing one. The bottom-line here is that the symbiotic relationship between the team members where each gives and takes from the other team members is the most crucial aspect that determines the success of the team.

Conclusion

This article has focused on what makes a team successful and the factors that lead to strained relationships. The essence of a team is the way in which the team acts in unison and in tandem and sings as a chorus instead of a solo performance. Once the team evolves to a point where the entire team acts as one, then the team could have said to be successful in meeting its objectives.

Extracting the best from a Team

All individuals with a similar attitude and interest come together on a common platform to form a team. It is not always that an individual alone is capable of doing a task; sometimes he needs the guidance and suggestions of others as well. You need a team to accomplish a complicated task where every team member can perform something or the other as per his capability and contribute equally for the maximum output.

To extract the best out of a team requires not only hard work but also intelligence. Do not impose things on your team members; let them accept responsibilities on their own.

- **Motivation is the key to a team's success.** Demotivated individuals find it very difficult to concentrate on their work and eventually lose interest in the organization. Reward them suitably. Performance linked incentives and perks also motivate the individuals to perform better.
- **The goal must be clearly set and circulated among the team members.** Every team member should be well aware of his roles and responsibilities in the team. There should be no confusions among the team members. Workload should be equally shared among the team members and one should not interfere in each other's work.

It is the responsibility of the team leader to delegate responsibilities as per the team member's interest and specializations. Understand your team members well and assign them work they can best perform. Never be partial to any of your team members. Do not support anyone just because he is a friend.

- **Don't criticize any of your team members.** Never shout or scold any of your team members in front of everyone. Always do it in private. He might feel insulted if you criticize him in front of others. Call him separately and correct him if you feel he is wrong somewhere. Appreciate him whenever he has done something extraordinary.
- **Prefer communication through emails among your team members.** Encourage your team members to exchange information through emails as it is more transparent and gives a clear picture. Everyone knows what is happening in their team and doesn't feel neglected or left out. One should not attend any meeting or conference without a notepad to note down the important points. One should always come well prepared before attending any meeting.
- **A team leader alone should not take any decisions.** Suggestions should be invited from one and all. The team members feel important for the organization this way and strive hard to perform better. Strategies, policies must be made on an open forum and everyone must give their inputs. A team member should never feel unimportant for the team at any point of time.
- **Take them out for lunches or dinners once in a while.** If not outside, try to have your lunch together with your team members at the workplace only. Discuss issues other than work at the lunch time. Enquire about his family members, friends, relatives, parents and so on. Give your team members sometime to discuss things freely among themselves.

It is okay if your team members leave for the day a little early as compared to other days. Don't be too harsh on your team members. Allow them to take leaves in case of genuine reasons. Don't adopt a "Hitler" approach at work. Be a little more understanding.

- **Set a target for your team members and ask them to achieve the targets within a stipulated time frame.** Let your team members work as per their convenience. Don't be after their life. Give them space and liberty to work on their own and submit it as per the deadlines. The team members must use planners and diaries to jot down important work against the set deadline to avoid forgetting important issues.
- **Send your team members motivational emails or smses to boost their morale.** Paste a poster on motivational thoughts or great quotes on the soft board right at their workstations for

them to read daily and get inspired. Make sure there is enough light on everybody's workstation and the place is not dark. Individuals feel sleepy and dull if the place is not well lit. Light instrumental music should be played for a positive ambience.

- **Performance reviews and appraisals are a must.** Do monitor your team's and team member's performance. Sit with them once in a week and discuss issues, if they have and find out whether they are satisfied with their profiles or not. Timely appraisals are important for growth of the team members and to motivate them.
- **Avoid conflicts within your team.** Don't provoke any colleague to fight with his fellow team members. Intervene immediately in case of conflicts and try to resolve it as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary stress and anxiety. Do not spread rumours about anyone and avoid blaming and cribbing. Discuss issues face to face and learn to own your mistakes.
- **Be a little cooperative with your team.** Make them feel that you are just one of them and always there to support them. One needs to be intelligent and patient enough to not only handle a team but also extract the best out of team members.

How to build Your Best Team

Group of individuals working together for a common objective form a team. Teams are generally formed to accomplish complicated and difficult tasks. All individuals come together on a common platform and strive hard to achieve the set objective. When individuals work as a single unit towards a common predefined goal, a team is formed.

Not all teams can perform well. The performance of a team is dependent on its team members. The individuals must be handpicked very carefully to form a high performance team.

Let us go through some important points one should keep in mind while building a team:

- **The team members preferably must have a similar if not the same taste, interests, likings, needs and attitude.** It has been observed that individuals with a similar taste tend to gel with each other easily as compared to others with different interests. **Individuals should be from similar backgrounds and too much of a gap should be avoided.** The team members must be selected keeping in mind their interests and specialization. Do not form a team just for the sake of it. An individual with a technical bent of mind will always be in a state of confusion in a team of marketing professionals.
- **Always understand the team members well.** No individual is alike. A person might be a very good speaker but may be poor in writing mails or written communication. An individual can be excellent in presentations but might lack the art of making an impressive presentation. It is very important to understand the individuals well and responsibilities must be assigned to them as per their interest and according to their qualification and specialization. An individual with excellent marketing skills never finds a desk job interesting and his best will never come out. Never force any one to be a part of any team. Individuals must participate on their own.
- **The goal or the objective of the team must be clearly defined.** The objective of the team must be shared with every team member and they must be clear what is expected out of them. The purpose why the team has been formed must be very clear to the team members. They should know what they have to work on so that they can deliver their best.
- **Promote effective communication among your team members.** Communicate with the members on an open platform and encourage team members to actively participate in discussions. Prefer a meeting room or a conference room to discuss various issues inviting all the members. It is always better if the communication is through email with all the team members in the loop so that none feels neglected or left out.
- **Avoid conflicts.** Don't let negativity creep in your team. Pick individuals with a positive attitude. One should avoid fighting over small issues and be a little more adjusting. Every thing can't be exactly the same way you want. Team members must be demotivated to criticize or make fun of their fellow team members.

- **Various activities and events must be promoted within the teams.** Work will never suffer if the team members go out for a movie or lunch; instead it strengthens the bond among the team members. Individuals come closer to each other this way and avoid fighting among themselves. People know each other better. Always remember to greet your team members with a warm smile.
- **A leader should be appointed carefully.** A leader should be such that everyone looks up to him for advice and guidance. Do not select anyone just because you like him, instead prefer the voting system. The most favourite candidate among the group is the best choice for a leader. The team leader must extract the best out of his team members and be equal to everyone. He ought to be intelligent and a little tactful. He must motivate the individuals from time to time and be impartial. Never embarrass any of your team members.
- **It is important to take the feedback from each and every individual.** Review your team and team member's performance on a monthly basis. Sit with each and every member to understand whether he is enjoying his work or not. Job rotation is a good option to reduce monotony. Promote healthy competition among the team members. Appreciate if he has done something great. Reward him suitably.
- **Discipline must be maintained at all levels in the team for maximum output.** Team members must reach on time for meetings and discussions. One should avoid a casual or a laid back attitude. The team leaders must be easily available to the team in case of queries and confusions.

Clarity of roles within a team

A major characteristic of effective teams is clear expectations about the roles played by each team member. In such a team, action is taken and clear assignments are made. These roles are duly accepted as well as carried out. Work needs to be distributed fairly among team members, as per each person's skill and capability.

The leader needs to have the ability to give clear assignments in each work area.

- **Work Methods**

Each team member needs to understand their leader's expectations regarding required work methods as well as procedures. This is with regards to each job or project.

- **Time Frames**

It is vital to understand the due dates for the completion of projects. Determine when the dates have slipped and which completion dates are final and nonnegotiable. This is because each task is connected to another in a team. A delay in one task anywhere leads to a delay in the complete project. This way no organization will be able to meet its deadlines leading to huge losses for the company.

- **Work Responsibilities**

Each team member's role is to be clearly understood when they are assigned to a given job or responsibility. This is very important else too much time will be spent due to wrong communications reaching team members.

- **Customer/Supplier Interface**

Understand the leader's expectations while dealing with all kinds of supplier problems. Similarly the customer complaints or requests also need to be handled by each team member as per the

organization's policies. After all, effective relationships have to be built with other work groups in order to achieve the full potential of the team.

- **Work Priorities**

Each person as well as each team will be loaded with a huge amount of work. It is important for each team member to understand which jobs take priority at that particular moment. Besides, changes in work priorities also take place due to changing circumstances. It is important to be able to clearly differentiate between hot jobs and other jobs.

- **Performance Expectations**

Understand what the leader expects in the way of desired outcomes. At this point in time, open communication is vital. Understand what it means to do a good job as per the leader's expectations. Then list down the degree of effort that is expected to be put into a job. At this point in time, it is important to avoid overworking on low-priority jobs, as that will not help in realizing the company's objectives.

- **Resources**

Each team always has limited resources. The aim is to achieve the maximum with the minimum resources. Understand what resources have been allocated to perform a job. These resources may include things such as facilities, support staff, equipment, software, as well as budget. Also understand how much control the team has over resource decisions.

Once the leader is able to clarify each work area, he will be able to smoothen out the way for each of their team members. This way it will be easier for the team to achieve its objectives by making use of allocated time.

Preventing Fall Outs in a Team

An individual alone can't create wonders. He needs the support of others as well to discuss things and evaluate the pros and cons of his thoughts and concepts. Individuals should work together without fighting with each other for the timely accomplishment of a task. The team members must be focused and concentrate on their work rather than back biting or loitering around. It is essential that the team members gel with each other well and are willing to help each other.

Conflicts must be avoided within the team to strengthen the bond among the team members and also to increase the productivity of the team.

Let us find out how one can avoid conflicts and fall outs in the team

- **The team members must not interfere in each other's work.** Respect your colleague's privacy. Don't be after his life to find out what he is up to.
- **Never criticize anyone or make fun of your team members.** If you do not agree to their view points, sit with them and try to come to a common solution. Don't escalate the issue immediately to your superiors without discussing among yourselves.
- **The team members must trust each other.** One spends the maximum time in office and can't afford to have enemies around. Try to be a little secretive. If your fellow team member has shared something with you, don't disclose it to others. Try to help him, if you can't, its better to keep quiet. Never double cross your fellow team mates.

Martin and Jack were working for a common team. Martin was not very happy with his boss's behaviour and shared his displeasure with Jack. Jack walked up to his boss and revealed Martin's secret. Till date; Jack and Martin do not speak to each other despite being in the same team.

- **Don't read your team member's emails or ever open his notepad or diary.** It might contain some information which he does not want to share with others. It is a strict no no. If his hand phone is lying with you, don't start reading his messages. If a colleague has asked to send an urgent mail on his behalf from his system, don't start checking his previous mails or send any unwanted mail from his system.
- **Never spread baseless rumours about anyone in the team.** Avoid loose talks in the office. It's best to concentrate on work rather than gossiping around. If you spot any of your team members with his girlfriend or boyfriend at the market place, its better to keep it to yourself rather than screaming from the roof tops. He may not like it.
- **Don't get too friendly with your team members.** Avoid taking favours from anyone as he might expect you to share a secret with him. When you don't, he would definitely get annoyed, fight with you and thus relationships suffer. One should not promote too much of friendship at the workplace. Try to be a little professional in your approach and keep your professional and personal life separate.
- **Avoid being partial to anyone.** Do not favour anyone blindly. You may be fond of any of your team members, but do not support him if he has done something wrong, instead correct him. Don't criticize the other person just because you don't like him. Never give priority to your personal interests.
- **One should not tamper any data or information important for the team.** Do not add or delete words but pass on the information as it is in the desired form. Everyone loves the appreciation from his boss, but it doesn't mean you will tarnish your team member's image in front of your boss just to gain popularity. Appreciation should be for good reasons. Never speak ill about anyone. It's better to avoid things and not bother much.
- **Do not provoke your team members to fight among themselves.** Counsel them and try to find out an alternative. The team members must motivate each other to perform their level best. Competition is important but make sure it is a healthy one and does not turn into a nasty fight. One must enjoy his work rather than taking it as a burden.
- **Think twice before you speak.** Make sure your speech does not hurt any of your team members.
- **One should avoid fights within the team and it is always better to work as a family.** Don't create tensions and leave the office with a free mind and come back charged and fresh the next morning. Concentrate on work rather than conflicts as only your work will give you the desired recognition in the future.

Role of Communication in Team

A team is formed when individuals with a common goal come together on a common platform. The team members must complement each other and avoid silly conflicts among themselves.

Communication plays a very important role in team building and extracting the best out of the team members.

A team member must clearly understand what his fellow team members are up to. He should be very clear about his roles and responsibilities in the team. It is the duty of the team leader to delegate responsibilities as per the interest and specializations of the team members without imposing things on them. Never confuse any employee.

Verbal communication sometimes may create misunderstandings and confusions, thus it is always better to rely on written communication for better clarity and transparency. Communication

is effective when the information is passed on through emails. Emails are more reliable. Do not send the mails to individuals separately as they might assume that you want to hide something from them. This way they tend to interfere in each other's work, trying to find out what extra is written in their fellow member's mail. The mails should be sent with all the participants in loop. Also invite suggestions from them. It is not always that you are correct; your team members might come out with a brilliant idea as well. Ask them to participate in discussions, this way they feel motivated and indispensable for their team and as well as the organization.

Conference room, board room or a suitable place must be used for meetings and discussions. **It is always better that the issues are discussed on an open forum and the participants are allowed to speak freely.** Avoid a noisy place. The agenda of the meeting should be prepared well in advance and must be circulated among the team members. Ask them to come prepared so that they do not sit blank in the meeting. The speaker should take the help of white board, marker or a pen and paper so that he doesn't miss any point. One should not attend any meeting empty handed. Carry something to note down the important points for future reference. Confusions and misunderstandings are nullified this way and people start trusting each other.

The goal and the objective of the team should not be set only by the team leader itself. Every employee should contribute equally and give his valuable inputs. The team members must not fight among themselves and try to reach to a conclusion best suited to all. The goal must be very well communicated to all the team members and they must be very clear from the beginning what they are supposed to do to avoid problems later. The goal can never be achieved unless and until all of them work hard together and contribute their level best.

Your idea however brilliant it is fails to work unless and until it is implemented in the correct way. The strategies, methods, concepts not communicated in the correct way can lead to severe confusions and have adverse effects. The decisions, thoughts, strategies must be communicated to one and all very clearly. One should not play with words or pass on only half the information. Teams must not be too complicated with a simple hierarchy where the subordinates have an easy access to their team leaders. Policies and strategies must be made taking into consideration each and everyone's suggestions and should be communicated in an effective way.

Every individual should have the freedom to speak. Do not keep things within yourself and crib later. If you feel that your fellow colleague is going wrong somewhere and needs to be corrected, go ahead. Do not hesitate, after all his mistakes will also effect your work also. Do not shout or criticize him, but make him realize his mistakes in a polite but convincing way. If you feel that you need to go for a vacation, please discuss with your superior. Don't just assume that your boss will know things on his own and grant you holidays. You need to communicate to him, instead of cribbing and spreading negativity.

Effective Communication reduces the chances of conflicts and fights among team members. No body has ever gained anything from fights. Communication improves the relations among the team members and they feel fresh and motivated the whole day at work.

Role of Motivation and Attitude in Team

A team is formed when individuals with a similar interest come together to realize a common dream. The team members must think of their team first and all other personal interests should come later. Every individual must contribute equally as per his capability to achieve the predefined targets successfully within the desired time frame.

Motivation and attitude go hand in hand in increasing the output of any team.

You need a match stick for fire, you need ink for a pen to write, and similarly an individual needs motivation to perform. Every individual has some latent talent and needs a push for the talent to come out. Without motivation, the team members feel reluctant to work and also tend to spread negativity

around. Human beings are hungry for praise and appreciation. It is the prime duty of the team leader to appreciate his team members whenever they have done something great. This way they feel happy and motivated to perform even better the next time.

Set a deadline for the submission of work. All the employees submitting the work within the stipulated time frame must be appreciated in public. Circulate a mail among all the employees appreciating your team member's efficiency. Any person coming out with a brilliant idea should be suitably rewarded. It is not always you give cash to motivate your employees, but even small tokens of appreciation can make a difference. Reward your team member with anything he likes. Appreciating one member does not mean you will neglect or criticize the other members of the team who could not perform up to the mark this time. It is the duty of the team leader to motivate them so that they perform well the next time. Ask them to "BUCK UP".

A single member's performance can hardly make a difference to the team's performance; every member has to contribute equally for the maximum output. **Celebrate your team's success inviting all your team members.** Take them out for a lunch to a nearby restaurant. They will feel happy and also come closer to each other this way. Give a pat on their back to appreciate their hard work.

Titles such as "Best Employee of the month" and "Best Team Member" also go a long way in motivating the team members. The names of the best performers must be displayed on the notice boards for everyone to see.

Incentives and perks also motivate the employees to a large extent. If any team member does something outstanding do not forget to appreciate him on an open forum and also ask the other members to reach to his level as well.

Avoid making fun of your colleagues. It is considered highly unprofessional. Don't spread negativity around. Don't depend on blame games or spread unnecessary rumours about your team members.

Motivation alone can't create wonders; it needs to be coupled with positive attitude of the team members to ensure high performance of the team. Adopt a positive attitude at work. Do not always find faults in others. Listen to your team members as well. **Don't assume things or draw conclusions on your own.** Be a little more flexible and adjusting to avoid conflicts at work place. Sit and discuss issues with your team members to reach to an alternative. Results can't be achieved unless and until you believe in yourself. The will power to do something is important. One should have the urge to perform.

Always try to look at life from a larger perspective. Things can not always be the way you like, its better to accept things as it is sometimes. Remember after heavy rains, there is always a clear sky. Problems might crop up anytime, but it is always better to grin and move on. **Do not overreact on petty things.**

Don't be too adamant or rigid, instead be a little forgiving. It is absolutely okay if you take the initiative and say "Sorry". This magical word goes a long way in reducing conflicts to a large extent. Don't unnecessarily create tensions for others and yourself as well.

Don't be disheartened if some one comes to you and corrects you for your mistakes; do take it in a positive and healthy way. Do not step in the office with a mind clouded with negative thoughts. Everything seems wrong to you and you unnecessarily fight with people around.

Team members must adopt a positive attitude to avoid tensions and misunderstandings at work place. Positive attitude with a little motivation can actually create wonders for the team.

Role of Team Leader in Team Building

A single brain sometimes cannot take decisions alone. One needs the assistance and guidance of others as well to accomplish the tasks within the desired time frame. In a team, every member contributes to his level best to achieve the assigned targets. The team members must be compatible with each other to avoid unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings.

Every team should have a team leader who can hold his team together and extract the best out of the team members. The team leader should be such that every individual draws inspiration from him and seek his advice and guidance whenever required. He should be a role model for his team members.

A team leader plays an important role in guiding the team members and motivating them to stay focused.

A team leader is one who sets a goal and objective for the team. Every team is formed for a purpose. The leader alone should not set the goal, **suggestions should be invited from one and all and issues must be discussed on an open forum.** He must make his team members well aware of their roles and responsibilities. He must understand his team members well. The duties and responsibilities must be assigned as per their interest and specialization for them to accept the challenge willingly. Never impose things on them.

A team leader must be impartial. He should support one and all equally. Partiality leads to negativity and conflicts among the team members. Don't favour anyone just because he is your friend.

As a team leader, one should constantly motivate his team members. **Motivate them so that they perform even better the next time.** Avoid criticizing anyone. Never make fun of anyone's mistakes, instead correct him in a polite way.

Encourage the team members to help each other. Create a positive ambience at the workplace. Avoid playing politics or provoking individuals to fight. Make sure that the team members do not fight among themselves. In case of a conflict, don't add fuel to the fire, rather try to resolve the fight immediately. Listen to both the parties before coming to any conclusion. Try to come to an alternative feasible for all.

Be a mentor to your team members. "Hitler approach" doesn't work in the modern scenario. The team members should be able to gain from the team leader's talent and mentorship. He must stand by his team always. When a team performs well, the credit goes to the team leader, similarly at times when the team fails to perform as per the expectations of others, don't try to play safe. A leader should own his mistakes as well as his team member's. Don't play blame games or point fingers at others. No body will respect you this way.

Problems may crop up anytime in the team. The leader must be easily available to his team. The team member should have the liberty to walk up to his mentor whenever he is unable to take a decision on his own. The team members should be able to fall back on their leader anytime without the fear of getting rebuked.

The team leader should take the initiative of bringing the team members closer. A leader should try his level best to break the ice among them. Celebrate their birthdays, anniversaries together so that they can discuss issues apart from work more freely. It is okay if you share one or two jokes with them but make sure you do not cross your limit. Once in a while do organize picnics or parties where families can also be invited. Such activities strengthen the bond among the employees apart from increasing the trust factor between them.

It is the duty of the mentor to monitor the team's performance on a regular basis. Any dip in the performance of any team member must not be ignored. Call him immediately and discuss with him in private. He might feel insulted in front of others. Talk to him face to face. Encourage everyone to

participate in team discussions and express their opinions freely. If any team member is not performing up to the expected level, don't sack him immediately. Try to give him another opportunity or probably any other role and ensure he delivers his best this time.

The team leader is the face of every team as well as the organization. An aeroplane will definitely crash, if the pilot loses focus and control, similarly a team can't perform unless and until the leader has his control on the team. It is okay to be friendly with your team members, but make sure they do not take undue advantage of this gesture. Discipline is a must. Give your team a direction, without which it fails to perform.

If a team member comes to you to discuss any of his personal problems, lend him a sympathetic ear. Try to help him. Keep the things to yourself and do not escalate it to the management. Do not ask for too many favours from your team members. Don't ask them to go for your grocery shopping or book movie tickets for you. Remember if you yourself do not adhere to the rules and regulations of the organization, your team members will never bother to do so. Be disciplined yourself to expect the same from them. A team leader should set an example for others.

Team Failures - Why teams fail and how to overcome it

In spite of the best intentions of the organization, as well as the best efforts put in by the team members, teams still fail. Team failure is due to various reasons.

It is highly important to understand as well as analyze these reasons. This is because the failure of a team affects the morale of the employees, besides affecting the organization financially too. The organization needs to eliminate as many reasons as it can in order to ensure team success.

These reasons can be further divided into broadly five categories:

- Environmental Influences
- Goals
- Roles
- Processes
- Relationships

1. Environmental Influences:

- The team members may be placed at different location making it difficult for them to meet frequently. Hence a solution needs to be found to resolve this issue. Communication is vital for any team to work well. Physical distances can always be overcome with the use of technology.
- The team is not given adequate resources in order to do its job. You cannot expect an employee to work with his hands tied, can you?
- Team efforts can be recognized. This is a key human trait. Appreciation is a big morale booster for any employee.
- A lack of recognition by the organization or its leaders about the existence of a team can also lead a team to its failure.

2. Goals:

- No participation from members in setting goals. This takes away the ownership from the team. It reduces the commitment of the team members.
- Team is not clear about the goals. Communication is vital, whether to a team or to an organization.

- Goals are not effectively communicated. Everybody is doing his own thing with no attention to team goals. Working in silos leads to duplication of work as well as ruining the organization culture.

3. Roles:

- Responsibilities of the team members are poorly defined. This leads to ambiguity as well as lack of commitment.
- No clear leader identified. Leadership is vital to any team. A good leader outlines the strategy and charts the path to reach the goal.
- There is buck-passing of responsibility, which shows lack of commitment.
- Members indulge in power plays for authority and control. This is a problem of attitudes which needs to be managed accordingly by the leader and the organization. Members refuse to recognize their interdependence and act as if they were independent. This will lead to the failure of the team.

4. Processes:

- Lack of processes makes decisions always a crisis situation. A case of decision-making being dominated by one person leads to poor commitment of the team
- Communications are one way: top down and channeled through the leader. This is not the feature of a team. Negligible points are debated continuously. This leads to waste of time as well as energy.
- Meetings are unproductive with the issues unresolved implies that poor planning has been done. Meetings cover trivia versus significant issues as the way to achieve goals is not clear.
- In case, actions are taken without planning, the team will fail.

5. Relationships:

- Members are unwilling to be identified with the team. There is disguised conflict between the team members as well as severe personality conflicts. Relationships are competitive.

Most of the issues mentioned above can be resolved. All that is required is planning, processes and performance appraisal, which will be covered in detail in another article. Teams are vital for any organization. Their failure leads to the failure of the organization as a whole.

How to be a good team player

A team player is an individual who will unify others for a purpose by exchanging information and ideas and empower them and have trust in them. Teamwork is the potential to work together for a common vision. A good team player assists his team by using his strengths, and clearly understanding his task. He must understand the team's objectives. He must be supportive and trustworthy. He encourages participative decision-making. He invites new ideas and feedback from other team members. A good team player keeps on working for continuous improvement.

It is immaterial what you do or where you live, since it is your attitude which will determine the quality of your relationships. Hence, this applies to just about everything else in your life. Hence, you need to select your attitudes. And since you are free to choose any attitude, why not choose a Really Useful Attitude.

In order to face any situation, your attitude will always precede you. In fact, it is the central force in your life. It is your attitude which controls the quality as well as the appearance of everything you do.

Really Useful Attitudes which you want to see in others are the ones which you need to imbibe in yourself. Some of these are being warm and Enthusiastic when dealing with others. Besides, your Confident and Supportive nature will make you a good team player. A Relaxed as well as an obliging attitude will take you everywhere. A Curious as well as a Resourceful person is liked by all. Make others Comfortable with you and be Helpful towards them. Always have an Engaging and a laid back look about

yourself. Be Patient with others and be Welcoming at all times. Have a Cheery and Interested look about yourself.

The Really Useless Attitudes which you need to avoid or even give up completely include being Angry or Sarcastic while interacting with others. Having an impatient or bored outlook is also not appreciated by others. Being Disrespectful or Conceited will definitely not make you a good team player. Being Pessimistic or Anxious at all times is a very negative attitude. Never be Rude or Suspicious of others in your team. To be Vengeful or Afraid is a Really Useless Attitude. By being Self-conscious or mocking others, will not lead you anywhere. Having an Embarrassed or Dutiful attitude is also not good.

This was the primary step. This involved **Identification of the Problem as well as its perceived Solution.**

Next step is the creation of A **Personal Action Plan.** Answer this simple question - My team can count on me to:_____

This answer will tell you about your strengths as well as weaknesses. You will know how you are perceived by others. The fact remains that what we perceive ourselves may be different from the way others perceive us.

The next question which you need to answer is the specific changes that you want to see within your team in the next three months. This will define the goals for your team and the way to achieve them.

Next comes the part that you are going to play in achieving those goals. The answer here has to be quantifiable.

The last question which you need to answer is “**This is how I will know I have done it.**”

Once the matrix is qualitative as well as quantitative, the results become visible to all. This is a good strategy to determine your contribution to your team, as well as to know how good you are as a team player.

To conclude, **to be a good team player**, one must possess both interpersonal skills as well as technical competencies required to perform their job role. The organization must revise the reward structure so as to boost collaborative and team efforts. Also, the organization should provide training to promote teamwork skills and competencies. A good team player must be flexible in approach. He should be an active listener as well as should remain optimistic. He should communicate effectively. He should be honest as well as loyal and committed to the team. Last but not the least; a good team player must be dependable and reliable. He should meet the targets within specified deadline.

Team Building - Meaning, Exercises and its Need

When individuals with similar interest, attitude, and taste come together to work for a common objective, a team is formed. Every individual contributes equally and performs his level best to meet the team targets and achieve the organization’s goal. Team members strive hard to live up to the expectations of others and successfully accomplish the assigned task. A team cannot do well unless and until each and every member is focused and serious about his responsibilities. For every team member, his team should come first and everything else later. Personal interests must take a backseat.

Every individual must feel motivated to perform his level best. Never impose things on anyone; instead, the individuals must take the initiative on their own. They should come forward and accept the challenge.

Let us go through the below example:

Mike and Jordan were reporting to Steve - their team leader. Steve had a tremendous faith on Mike and Jordan, always appreciated them in front of others and even went out for dinners with his team. His team was way ahead of the other teams and never fell short of their targets. Steve was the most admired team leader.

Steve never had to convince Mike and Jordan to take up any new responsibility; they were always on their toes and accepted new assignments willingly.

Why do you think Mike and Jordan were always eager to work ? The answers to this question are the various efforts which their team leader took to motivate and extract the best out of them. This explains team building.

What is Team Building ?

Team building refers to the various activities undertaken to motivate the team members and increase the overall performance of the team. You just can't expect your team to perform on their own. A motivating factor is a must. Team Building activities consist of various tasks undertaken to groom a team member, motivate him and make him perform his best.

We all are human beings and love appreciation. Any individual performing exceptionally well must be appreciated well in public. He feels happy and motivated to perform even better the next time. If any team member has come out with a unique idea; treat him with any thing that makes him happy. Never criticize any team member or demotivate him if he has failed to perform. Ask him to "Buck up".

Team Building Exercises

Let us throw some light on some team building exercises.

- **Encourage many trust building exercises in your team. Team members must trust each other for the maximum output.** Blindfold half of your team members and ask them to jump over bricks with the help of members who can see. Repeat this exercise and now blindfold those who could see earlier. This exercise goes a long way in building the trust among the team members. An individual might be a little hesitant initially, but the moment he jumps over the brick with his fellow team member without getting hurt, he starts trusting him. The trust factor increases with time and relations among the team members improve.
- **One must know his fellow team member well.** You can't work with someone you don't know. Include a lot of exercises which help the team members know each other well. Make pairs and ask them to write whatever they know about their partner and vice a versa. You can ask anyone to write his partner's favourite colour, favourite outfit, preferred hangout zone and so on. Ask his partner to correct him if he is wrong in his answers. People know a lot about each other this way and also find out some unknown facts about their partner. Ask the team members to give their introduction one by one once the team is formed.
- **The team members must be compatible with each other. Include icebreaking activities in the team.** Take them out for picnics; get together where they can interact with each other freely on any topic. Allow the individuals to bring their families as well. People come a lot closer this way. Relationships improve. Remember your team member's birthday, anniversary or any other important date and do not forget to wish him that day. Ask for a treat! This way, individuals are no longer strangers to each other and the bonding increases.
- **Encourage activities where individuals come together as a single unit and work for a common task.** Collect some even sized sticks, rope, nails, hammer, and glue stick. Ask your team members to construct a bridge out of the sticks using the rope, hammer, glue stick and nails. You will be surprised to see that everyone will be involved in the activity and help each other in making the bridge. The concentration and will power to do something increases and individuals

learn to work as a single unit. They all work together, each one contributing something or the other to construct the bridge i.e. accomplish the task assigned to their team.

Need for Team Building - Why Team Building ?

Team Building activities are of utmost importance as they help in the overall development of the team members and in turn improving the team's performance. It also strengthens the bond among the employees and they feel motivated to work and achieve the targets. Some kind of team building activities must be undertaken from time to time to encourage the team members to work hard and realize their dreams.

Tips for Team Building in Corporates

Teams are formed when individuals with a common taste come together on a common platform to achieve a predefined target. In corporates, individuals work in teams to share the workload and responsibilities. Team work is no longer just a topic to read in management classes, it is essential for the motivation of the team members and increase the overall performance of the team. Individuals coming together to realize a common dream form a team.

The team members should be flexible and compatible with each other to deliver their level best. They would not be able to concentrate on their work, if they are constantly engaged in fights.

Team Building activities are of utmost importance at the workplace for employees to start trusting each other and work as a single unit. Team building activities strengthen the bond among the employees and also reduce the chances of conflicts. Employees start enjoying their work and feel motivated to accept challenges and responsibilities. Bringing together employees on a common platform and extracting the best out of them is no easy task. One needs to constantly motivate his team members.

Let us go through some **tips for team building in corporates**:

- **The team leader plays a very important role in binding his team together.** He is a constant guide for his team members. He needs to communicate on an open forum inviting all the related members. Do not communicate with any individual separately. Prefer communication through emails. Learn the art of writing emails and never use derogatory sentences or lewd remarks in your mail. Do mark a carbon copy to all the team members.
- **Invite suggestions from your team members.** This way they feel motivated and important for the team as well as the organization. Ask them to help each other so that they start interacting more often. Motivate the members to assist their fellow workers whenever required.
- **Go out for lunch or movies with your entire team once in a while.** Don't always discuss work with them. Celebrate their birthdays, anniversaries and let them come close to each other. Take them out for picnics for them to open up and discuss things freely.
- **Keep a day separate for team building activities preferably the weekends.** Include lots of puzzles, brain teasers and do ask your team members to participate in it as a single unit.

Give them lots of newspapers and ask them to prepare something creative out of it probably a dress, or some utility item like a bag and so on. You will be surprised to find everyone trying hard to do something or the other as a single unit.

- **Motivate your team members to share responsibilities among themselves at the workplace.** Don't impose things on them; let them happily accept the challenges. They know better what best they can do. Discuss things with them and do take their advice.
- **Always ask your team members to first discuss things among themselves before escalating it further.** Employees willingly or unwillingly sit to sort out issues among themselves

and reach to a conclusion. Through meetings and discussions, they understand the thought process, attitude and taste of their fellow team workers. They would know how a certain employee would react to a particular situation. They tend to become a little more flexible and also come forward to help each other.

- **Encourage morning meetings at workplace so that all the team members can assemble to discuss the agenda of the day.** Don't make it too formal. Allow them to bring their cups of coffee. Be the first one to greet everyone with a warm smile. They would definitely reciprocate. Give them some time to interact among themselves to discuss the movie they watched last night apart from work. Avoid criticizing or blaming others. Ask them to exchange their contact numbers to stay in touch even after work.
- **Team members must take their lunch together at work.** Share your food among yourselves. Relations improve this way. Appreciate each other.

Team building activities doesn't mean entertainment but are simple efforts to motivate the team members to work together towards a common goal. Such activities bring employees close to each other and they start treating each other as their well wishers and friends rather than mere colleagues and acquaintances. Together they work hard to achieve their targets, objectives and eventually their dreams.

Tips for Professionals to be a Good Team Member

Individuals should work in teams at workplaces so that the work is accomplished at a much faster rate and errors are reduced to a large extent. A single human being takes more time to complete a task as compared to individuals working in a team. In a team people can discuss issues among themselves and come out with a unique solution.

Let us go through some handy tips for a professional to be a good team member.

- **A professional mustn't enter his office with a mind clouded with negative thoughts.** It has been observed that individuals who are already upset with any other thing tend to fight with their colleagues or those sitting around. Leave your personal problems out the moment you step in the office. Try to have calm and composed mind once you are at work. Be a little more adjusting and flexible. It is absolutely okay if you compromise sometimes. Adopt a positive attitude and do not always find faults in others. Never back bite or overreact at work. If you do not agree with your team members over certain issues and feel they are wrong somewhere, try to make them realize their mistakes without being rude or harsh.
- **Accept the responsibilities only if you have interest in the same.** Do not accept any role just for the sake of getting a job. It would trouble you later. Discuss your capabilities, specializations and interests with your team manager and then only say yes to any role and responsibility. Be very clear about your KRAs from the very beginning and be focused. In case of a query, don't keep things to yourself, instead discuss with your immediate superior.
- **Your performance will not be affected if you help your team members and be a little more cooperative.** Helping people doesn't mean you will disclose all your professional secrets to others, be a little tactful. Guide them whenever they need your help, but make sure you are not interfering too much in their work. Give each other space. Do not peep at other's computers. It's a bad habit.
- **A team member must avoid playing blame games or dirty politics at the workplace.** It spoils the environment. A professional must have the courage to stand in front of his superiors and make his point clear to all. Don't trust the rumour mill and never assume things on your own.
- **A professional must develop the habit of using planners and organizers at work to set reminders against the desired date and time.** It prevents forgetting important dates and the task is finished within the desired time frame. One can also use desk calendar for the same and

keep it right in front of him at the desk. Set your priorities and never lose focus. Your objective must be clear. Remember you will get the credit only when you finish your task on time and without errors. Concentrate on your work. Don't get involved in loose talks and unproductive things.

- **An individual must be transparent with his colleagues.** You must know the difference between information which should be shared and which shouldn't. If your mentor shares any information to be passed on to others as well, don't keep it to yourself. Never try to play with the information and pass it on as it is.
- **Adopt a friendly attitude at work.** Don't just treat your fellow workers as mere colleagues. You can have friends even at the workplace; after all you spend the maximum time here, but don't get too personal and start revealing things.
- **Be a good communicator.** Acquire a professional approach at work. Never ever use derogatory statements against anyone. It is advisable to depend on written modes of communication. Learn how to write emails. Mark a cc to all the related members. Be careful about your subject line. Don't write hi in the subject line of the mail being sent to your superior.
- **One has to be disciplined at work.** If you have a team meeting at 10 am, make sure you are there in the office at 9.45 am. Avoid getting late at work. If the work is to be submitted on 10th of December at 9 am, it must hit your senior's inbox on 10 December at 8.45 am itself. Don't take too many leaves.
- **Take care of your dressing also.** One has to be neatly dressed to create the desired impact. People will not take you seriously if you are dressed shabbily. Your nails must be clean and shoes polished. Avoid wearing loud colours to work.
- **A team member should be organized.** Don't throw waste papers here and there, use a dust bin instead. The documents must be filed properly with labels carefully put on each file. Keep the files at the proper place where you can find them easily when required. Use a pen stand and do keep a notepad and a pen handy. Avoid writing phone numbers or any other information on papers as you will definitely misplace them after a while. The visiting cards must be placed in the card folder and try to keep your workstation clean.

Team Building Games and Activities

Teams have emerged as managers of significant business functions like analyzing customer needs, performance review, etc. Team games and activities help in team's growth and development. Team games are tools that direct the trainee's / learner's interest on what has to be learned.

Team building games assist in developing an environment for effective communication and community building. They utilize mental abilities of the learner.

Team-building games must be flexible enough and take into consideration the learner's who come from different backgrounds, have different mental levels, different potential, different patience rate and an amalgamation of other differences. Such games assist in employee motivation also.

Some of the **corporate team building games and activities** are as follows:

- ✓ **Celebrate team's success always** - Celebrations are significant as they are a means of demonstrating that the organization has concern for employee's contributions and efforts. They create a feeling of unity among the team. They motivate the team to work harder and experiment new things. Below is mentioned an activity for celebrating team's success:

Conduct a team-information sharing party periodically, may be quarterly or monthly. Do not celebrate success of your team only; do invite other teams to boost up your team in the celebration. The team invited for participating in the celebration must be asked to get along atleast three-four testimonials of their team's success to the party. This testimonial may be momentous, jovial, or metamorphic. It should be a small or a big team success, but worth celebrating and sharing with other organizational

teams. The team leaders should be asked to tell their success stories to the entire group and then the team should be commended. The celebrations can include partying out, or arranging for food, drinks and dancing within office premises.

- ✓ **Encourage effective listening among team members** - [Effective listening](#) is crucial for efficient team building and development. The team members must listen for deeper meaning of communication within the team. Effective listening requires motivating team members to express their views, clarify opinions of whatever is said, reiterate key points, display speaker's thoughts and views, recap the communication context and recognize the speaker's efforts and contribution. Below is mentioned game for encouraging active listening among team:

Make team members sit close to each other around a table. Tie their eyes tightly with a cloth headband through which nothing is visible. The objective of tying a headband is to remove sight sense so as to emphasize the impact of hearing sense. Now the team members should be asked to discuss on a real issue in the team. Talk about issues like less written work, effective communication within team, etc. This team game will make the team members conscious of whatever is being said and make them attentive of other team member's contribution by active listening. As a team leader, you must keep the conversation continued and ensure that all members are indulged in active listening. At the end, remove the headband tied around the eyes of team members and examine the event/happening. It will be observed that the team members will speak what they mean and nobody can boast, act expert/bossy and nobody can act arrogant.

- ✓ **Defining team roles and responsibilities within the team** - In the eagerness to carry new roles and responsibilities, the team members generally don't elucidate the team model they best fit in. Generally, the team is unaware of the principles for good intra-team relationships. Below is game for making the team sensitive to different kinds of team as well as for defining roles within a team.

Conduct a team meeting to evaluate the working of the team. Encourage a relaxed discussion of various types of teams. This can be done by guiding with an idea that team members participating in the meeting should concentrate and emphasize on the relationships within the team. The team members should be asked that which team model they best fit in, and how they shape their behaviours. This meeting should be carried on till the time it is beneficial. This team building game should be conducted periodically to analyze the relationships within the team. Then, the team should be asked to concentrate on the kind of team process, as they evaluate their own team model. This way the team will have an apparent idea of how their team should perform in terms of intra-team relations.

- ✓ **Boosting employee's and team's morale** - Below is game for boosting employee's morale:

Ask the team members to make a congratulations card saying "Wow! U r an asset to our organization. U did a great job! Congratulations!" and mention their name, organization's address, contact number. The card must have a "Truly" salutation as well as the team member's signature. Now, ask them to send this card to randomly selected five-ten names of organizational members. The team member might be unaware of any detail of why the selected names deserve congratulations. The purpose of this team game is to observe the number of people who respond to the team members in some or the other way, and to see that how many were delighted to receive the card for some accomplishment or honour. The team members should then record the feedback and responses received and should link them at a team meeting. Then, a discussion can be carried on how to recognize other's accomplishments and develop self-respect.

Barriers to Effective Team Building

Teams are formed to ease the work pressure on the individual and achieve the targets within the desired time frame. In teams, individuals share responsibilities among themselves, help each other to accomplish a complicated task. The team members must be comfortable with each other and be a little more flexible and adjusting.

Bringing individuals together is easy, but making them perform is difficult. Giving them task is easy, but expecting the best from them is tough”

Let’s go through the below example.

When a cricket team loses a game of cricket, we often hear people saying “The batsman did not understand what his fellow batsman wanted to communicate, ran for a run and got out”

“There was poor coordination between the bowler and the fielder”

“The batsman was actually more interested in completing his century rather than winning the game”

“The fielder was lazy and could not save the run”

What do the above factors indicate?

They are actually the various hurdles which prevented the cricket team to win the game.

The barriers to team building restrict the team members to perform and eventually their performance goes down and the organization is at loss.

Let us understand the various barriers to team building and the methods to overcome them:

- **When individuals give priority to their personal interests than work, the team suffers.**

Mike never wanted to have a team meeting in the morning as he had to first drop his son to school and then his wife to her office. The agenda of the day could never be discussed and everyone worked on their own sweet will. Mike was more concerned about his son’s school and wife’s office. They are important but not at the cost of one’s office. Nothing ever productive came out of Mike’s team as he himself never really was serious about his work. For the maximum output, the team members must think of their team first and everything else should come later. One has to respect his team as well as his organization to expect the same in return.

- **Individuals not being clear about the team’s goal and their roles and responsibilities in the team also create problems in effective team building.** The goal has to be common. Individuals should not have separate goals.

For a marketing team the goal is to generate revenues for the organization and every one including the team leader has to work towards it.

- **The roles and responsibilities must be designed according to the team member’s interest, educational qualification and specializations.**

John, Ali, Kate and Ben were part of the sales team in an organization of repute, but Kate was more interested in helping the operations team. She was never too keen in marketing activities and accepted it just because of pressure from the management and the fear of losing the job. She was more interested in finding a place in the operations team rather than focusing on her work. Individuals should not accept responsibilities unless and until they are very sure about it. It is better to say a no in the beginning rather than troubling yourself and others later.

When a team is formed, the team members are almost new to each other. They do not know each other well and feel shy and hesitant. It is important to break the ice among the employees in the very beginning otherwise it becomes a strong barrier later. We are not robots who can start working just by the push of a button and work non stop without even talking to each other. Human Beings must talk to each other, discuss things among themselves and trust each other. Don't always assume that everyone is jealous of your work and will harm you. Trust people, it will reduce half of your tensions.

- **Lack of discussions is again a barrier to effective team building.** Team members must not sit quietly in team meetings, instead should speak their heart out. One must participate willingly. Debates are important and strategies or policies should not be implemented without evaluating the pros and cons. Every team member must have a say in the team's decisions. Don't attend meetings just for fun, come prepared.
- **Poor communication is also one of the barriers to effective team building.** Too much of a complicated hierarchy also result in poor and ineffective communication. Unorganized thoughts and abstract ideas create misunderstandings and confusions among the team members and in turn decrease the productivity of the team. Individuals should be very careful about what they speak. One should never use derogatory statements or lewd remarks in the office. It is better to communicate through mails as it is more reliable.
- **Lack of discipline and punctuality also create problems in team.** Never be late for work. It is unprofessional to keep others waiting. Always reach before time for team meetings and discussions. One should also maintain the decorum of the workplace. Do not indulge yourselves in unproductive things. Don't loiter around unnecessarily.

One should never forget the objective of his team. Adopt a positive attitude and always strive hard to give your level best without worrying about who is dating whom or who is boss's favourite? These things does not matter in the long run. Behave nicely with everyone and avoid being rude. Be a little more involved in your work.

Skills and Must Have Qualities of a Team Member

Teams are formed when individuals with a similar interest, taste, need and even attitude work together to achieve a common goal. Conflicts must be avoided among the team members so that they are able to concentrate on their work and do not lose their focus and concentration. Every individual is not a good team player and requires skills to successfully work in a team. A team member must have certain qualities in him so that he is not only able to work in a team but also deliver results and grow both professionally and personally.

Let us go through some skills which a team member must have:

- **An individual should be a good communicator to be a good team member.** He should be able to carefully put his thoughts into words for everyone to understand it well. He should be sensible enough to carefully choose his words for sharing his thoughts with others. One should master the art of speaking clearly and convincingly without confusing the listeners.
- Be a little forgiving. Don't unnecessarily drag issues. Take the initiative to say sorry and avoid making issues out of small things. Don't take things to heart.
- **One has to be reliable and trustworthy to survive in a team.** Do not ever discuss any issues with someone outside the team. It is no harm to make friends from the opponent team, but make sure you do not discuss business with him. Always learn to draw a line between your personal and professional lives. The strategies, agendas, critical issues of the team must not be discussed with anyone except those involved in it. Any information with you must not be leaked. Any team

member might trust you and share something important and personal with you, don't reveal his secret in front of your boss as well as others. It will hurt him.

- **You have to be a good listener** to be an effective team player. Listen to other people as well. Don't draw conclusions on your own. Sit with your team and discuss strategies and policies before implementing. Give a patient ear to your team members before coming to any decision.
- **Positive attitude is again a must for a team member.** Do not spread negativity around. Avoid blame games and spreading unnecessary rumours. Sometimes ignore things which are not that important, rather than fighting over it. Avoid people who have a tendency to overreact. Don't go by what others say, it is always better to follow your own instinct. One should never use derogatory sentences or lewd remarks against anyone in the team. Try to look at the positive aspects, instead of cribbing.
- A team member must express his views in front of others. Do not sit quiet in meetings and seminars. Don't assume that the others will laugh at you or make fun of your ideas.
- **Participate in discussions** and try to make your point clear in front of your superiors and team mates. Convince them with valid reasons.
- **Be a little more focused and concentrate on your work rather than interfering in each other's work.** Always respect each other's privacy. Remember you are paid for your work and not for gossiping and loitering around. One must have the zeal to work hard to achieve the team's goal.
- Be a little more creative. Everyone works hard but one who works smartly walks away with the credit. Be very clear about your roles and responsibilities and never take it as a burden. Accept the challenges with a smiling face. Always try to do something out of the box. Be a little more involved and serious about your work.
- **One has to be patient enough to work in a team.** Don't ever get hyper or react over petty issues. One should not unnecessarily indulge in conflicts and misunderstandings. Enter the office with a cool mind. Be a little more flexible. Avoid being adamant and rigid.
- One should always be willing to help each other at the times of crisis. Be helpful and stand by your team members always. Never say ill about anyone in the team. Discuss issues face to face.
- For any individual, his team must come first, and everything else should take a back seat. Do not always think about your personal interests.