

BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

“In the end, all business operations can be reduced to three words: people, product and profit. People come first. Unless you've got a good team, you can't do much with the other two.”

--Lee Iacocca.

A team approach meets the most basic needs of your employees in the workplace. In an important research project, supervisors were asked what they thought their people needed. Then employees were asked to rate the factors in their order of preference. The research showed important differences:

NEEDS OF PEOPLE

<u>Employees</u>	<u>Supervisors</u>	
10	7	Tactful Discipline
9	5	Working Conditions
8	6	Personal Growth
7	2	Promotions
6	4	Interesting Work
5	1	Wages
4	3	Job Security
3	10	Help/Personal Problems
2	9	To be Included
1	8	Appreciation

There are risks involved in the shift toward the team approach. Newly formed teams take additional time to move through the stages of development. The process at first is slow. Additional training, especially cross-training and people skills, requires additional resources. Changes in economic conditions or leapfrogging technology by competition are also risks. However, companies using the team approach have found that the benefits far outweigh those risks.

BENEFITS

Quality Improvement: Increased commitment, discretionary effort and improved problem-solving skills all lead an organization to improved quality.

Motivation: A positive assumption of management that the individual can make a greater contribution.

Cost Reduction: Eliminating doing things over again, correcting mistakes, losing customers, as well as reducing layers of management and increasing spans of control.

Innovation: The magic of getting 6-8 people in a room all genuinely looking for a better way!

Improved Communication: A team system allows information and concerns to be quickly passed upward and downward. This gives managers and workers a way to communicate their ideas officially and systematically.

Total Involvement: Having all the managers participating on teams provides active support and modeling of teamwork. Total involvement sends the message that the team process is worthwhile for everyone and should evolve into the "normal" way of life. Efforts at participation, which do not involve the whole organization, frequently fail.

A Sense of Belonging: There is often a special sense of group power in meeting a goal or winning a competition as part of a team versus "going it alone." Teams provide the worker with an opportunity to contribute particular strengths to the larger group and learn from the strengths of others. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Working as part of a team allows individual strengths to be utilized. Because each team member often has different strengths, the final outcome is often quantitatively superior to what each individual could have produced.

Creative Problem Solving: When groups of people address performance on a systematic and frequent basis, it stimulates creativity that would never surface from individuals addressing the issues alone. Furthermore, when the decision makers are the people who will have to carry the solutions, the resulting commitment level to the final decision increases its chance of successful implementation. Having routine team meetings should enable the group to plan the future rather than just to react to problems as they occur.

For these benefits to become maximized the following success factors are needed:

1. Top management commitment
2. Developing an atmosphere of trust between managers and employees
3. Recognition of the difficulty of change
4. Gradually letting go of the old style while growing into the new
5. Start with a one or two-year strategy
6. Decide which parts of the organization would be best for starting the transformation
7. Decide who will provide guidance and technical assistance
8. Empower teams to make decisions

To maximize benefits, Building High Performance Teams uses modules that invite participants to improve communication skills by developing insight into behavioral tendencies: *Dominance, Influence, Steadiness* and *Compliance*. Participants will learn descriptors, cues for people reading, energizers, stress relievers, and will be given examples of well-known people high in each of the tendencies. They will also take part in team exercises and behavioral workshops geared toward strengthening "people reading."

To provide a foundation for teamwork, participants will be helped with recognition of the importance of values to the team process and will develop a set of values and learn about value power points and definitive value statements.

To continue the Team Improvement Cycle, participants will engage in workshops on baseline measuring, cause and effect analyzing, the generating evaluating and prioritizing of solutions action steps, implementation, and team success guidelines.

Building High Performance Teams is interactive, dynamic, effective and measurable. Many organizations have already realized improvement in quality, motivation, operating costs, innovative thinking, creative problem-solving, improved communication, employee sense of belonging and total involvement.

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