

QUICK TIPS – TEAMS

What is it that differentiates a team from just a group? Are there certain pre-conditions for developing a team and can one observe different performance outcomes from a team, as opposed to a group?

Common Objectives and A Common Vocabulary

A team begins by forging a common set of shared objectives. There has to be sufficient discussion so that all team members understand the objectives in a like manner. The less ambiguity that remains, the stronger will be the team members' commitment to those objectives.

A team also will have developed a common vocabulary. Not argot or jargon, this common vocabulary is shaped by the deep conversations regarding the common objectives and the agreed-upon path to achieve those objectives.

One way to know that you have a team is when “one person can start a sentence and another person can finish it”. The team members obviously are in sync.

Trust, Respect and Co-Operation

The pre-requisites for establishing a team is founded on trust, respect and co-operation.

Trust first must be extended by one team member and then it is returned by other team members. As this process is repeated from a tepid outset through multiple iterations, it becomes embedded in the culture of the team.

Respect is derived from appreciating the integrity of the other team members and the quality of their contributions. This is an attribute that is built over time, as one appreciates the character of other team members and the teachings they share.

Co-operation becomes the operating norm, as the diversity of insights and approaches build solutions through conversations. The common objectives serve to ground the team and help it avoid self-destructive tendencies and actions.

Performance

In a mature team, the synergy of the team becomes unleashed. This produces consistently high performance. The highest level of team co-operation, however, is ongoing full-blown collaboration – which is something that teasingly eludes group performance. How is your team performing?

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