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Getting Our Teams in Gear

One of the ways to understand how teams operate is to imagine gears meshing. In gear theory, we have drivers, followers and idlers. We "gear up" and "gear down." Following this theory, we know that when gears are not properly meshed, friction results.

Work teams operate the same way. Team players are like the followers; they do the useful work. Team leaders are like the driver, the gear with applied force. And, just as the meshing of followers and drivers can speed up the gear train and increase torque, team players that mesh well can accomplish great things.

But what happens when a driver or a follower needs to be replaced and the new player just doesn't match? It's like pushing a screwdriver between the gears. The jolt can throw everything out of whack, and we learn just how fragile a team can be.

The growing emphasis on formalizing work teams to cope with changing workplaces is healthy, but

keeping together a successful team requires an understanding of the importance of team mix. The most important ingredients of a team are its people, and each time we add a new or different person, we run the risk of creating friction and derailing an operation unless we ensure that each new member is a team player, gets along well with others, and understands the culture and style of the team.

Although the structure, purpose and makeup may vary, each well-built team needs these important features:

- **Players who mesh.** Although determining whether a person has the skills to play on a team is not so difficult, the team dynamics – how thinking and working styles match -- are not as easy to discern. Team members do not all have to think alike or move in lockstep, but thinking-working styles need to blend so that team members can work reasonably easily with each other. A team's leader needs to be able to assess a team's strengths and weaknesses and add the pieces that fit, with one person's strengths making up for another's shortcomings, and vice versa.

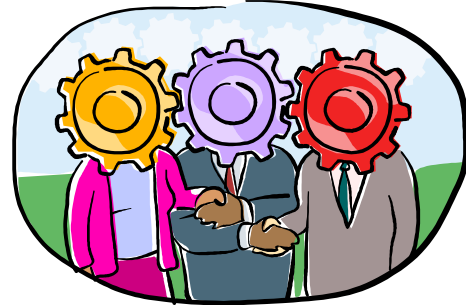


- **A vision.** The simplest way to see the vision is to ask the question, "Why does this team exist?" If you cannot clearly articulate the reason for the team to be, it will founder. Gatherings of team members will be pointless unless the leader knows what he or she wants and spells it out.
- **Examples to follow.** In a culture that reveres individuality, work leaders must set the tone for the kind of work environment they expect. Are your executives team players, or do they think and act alone? Employees throughout the company will quickly take note of what's expected at work by watching those at the top.

(continued)

- **Agreement on how to attain the goal.** If individuals disagree on how to get to their destination (think tug-of-war), the journey will be long and hard and the result will be iffy. Consensus building is a necessary team skill. Make sure your team includes people who can help individual members with strong ideas reach consensus.
- **Support from the organization.** Workers must see that their employers value teamwork as much as individual achievement, and the best way employers can show that is with rewards. These can be anything of value: public praise, days off, bonuses, dinners for the team, or tickets to a sporting event. Think of how coaches of sports teams celebrate their successes, and take your cue from them. Successful coaches are excellent at team building and recognition.

If your workforce consists of individual players performing their own tasks well but big problems grow, it's a sign that your team needs help. Examine your own actions and those of your top managers first, as highly effective teams depend on good coaching and full participation. If you cannot find the problem, seek feedback from others on your top team. Also, studying the assessments of individuals can help predict team dynamics. A good assessment will show who will be likely to lead and who is most inclined to follow. A sound team needs both.



The way to get things done is not to mind who gets the credit for doing them.

-- Benjamin Jowett, English scholar and theologian

Your Team May Be Ineffective if...

1. Members cannot articulate group goals
2. Participants are repeatedly late or absent to meetings
3. Squabbling among members results in tension and prevents frank discussion
4. Meetings are repeatedly cancelled or postponed, and no one asks why
5. The team leader does all the talking
6. Members make no effort to get to know each other
7. The team misses two deadlines in a row
8. Team members criticize ideas offered by others
9. No one gives the team recognition for a job well done
10. Leaders do nothing with data the team presents



STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: Fire 'Em Up!*

21 Days to a Winning, Motivated Team

Will you give 10 minutes each day for the next 21 days to fire up your team like never before?

The sooner you can get a new employee into productivity, the better off you will be. At Profiles, our managers have learned the following techniques for managing and motivating people. These take the usual new-employee orientation to a higher level. This program has been successful in integrating our new team members into the Profiles culture in just 21 days, or about one calendar month. Not only has using this system accelerated the productivity of new team members, but it has proved excellent in making them feel wanted, appreciated and accepted. Based upon the excellent results we have experienced, we heartily recommend you implement a similar program in your company.

Here's a distillation of all you need to know to motivate people – it's drawn from all of the great writers on the subject – along with a simple, 21-day plan.

Employees Want Management They Can Look Up to – Not Management that Looks Down on Them

An honest respect for all, a genuine recognition that everyone has something good to offer – this is at the heart of the successful motivator. Without respect, so-called motivation becomes manipulation, and manipulation is never successful in the long term. If you or your managers cannot show respect for your people, then, before you invest time and energy in motivational efforts, get someone who can – and have that person read on from here!

Take an Interest in the Career and Personal Goals, Aspirations, Interests, Lives and Families of Those Who Work with You

Do you know anyone who complains about getting too much recognition or praise for a job well done? Research consistently shows that people will go to extraordinary lengths for a leader who takes the time to catch them doing something right and, when they do, provides them with sincere praise and recognition in front of their colleagues. Praise and recognition are more motivating than money or any other single thing we can give to the people we lead.

Don't Criticize, Condemn or Complain

Dale Carnegie nailed it with this gem. When you must draw attention to poor performance, don't criticize. Coach. Don't pick at what is being done wrong, but focus all of your attention on the new behavior or action that will put things right; always finish with a positive comment to let the employee see that the reason you've raised the matter is that you have seen that he or she is capable of so much more. Correct the errant action, provide some positive feedback, and then forget it. Act like you expect better performance next time – and you'll get it.

Request – Don't Order

Real leaders lead from the front – they don't need to push from the back. Everyone rebels to some extent against being bossed around. No one minds being asked to help.

Discuss – Don't Argue

Maturity is being able to disagree agreeably.

Be Careful with Humor

Avoid any kind of demeaning humor. If there's the slightest chance of being misunderstood, keep it to yourself. "If in doubt, leave it out."

Listening is the Greatest Compliment You Can Pay Anyone

Our opinions are all sacred to us. Listen – and hear the concerns of your people.

continued



*The way a **team** plays as a whole **determines its success**.*

You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.

-- Babe Ruth, baseball great

Most Importantly of All

Model the behaviors and attitudes you expect others to display. Show them it works.

21-Day Action Plan

Why 21 days? Research shows that it takes 21 days to establish a habit. Take the topics discussed above and apply them for 21 days. You will discover that by the end of this period, you will be doing all of these things naturally. And the level of motivation in your team in general, even in your toughest cases, will be at an all-time high.



To implement your plan:

Create a table with each employee's name down the left-hand side, and each of the motivators listed above across the top. Rule your table so that each person has a box against each motivator.

Target improvements. Copy this strategy and put it in a place where you can review it daily. Each day, make a determination to apply each motivator as often as possible with as many members of your team as you can. Plan to speak to each of your team members often enough to get to know what turns them on and off; determine to catch them doing something right; praise them in front of their colleagues; listen to their opinions, and so on. At the end of each day, put a tick mark in your table for each motivator you effectively applied with each team member. Make sure your table is filling evenly with marks; make sure all motivators are being applied across the whole team. Be careful not to fall into the trap of simply working with those you already get along with, those you like, those who least need real motivational lift, or with the motivators that come most naturally to you.

Review and repeat. At the end of your first 21-day period, stand back and admire the difference you have made. Pat yourself on the back, and start all over again. Select the next person you need to target specifically, and start a new table for the team at large.

Motivation is easy – if you care enough to put in a little extra effort. Anyone can motivate, and anyone can be motivated. All it takes is the right person in the right place, managed by someone who cares. Invest a little of your time over the next 21 days and fire 'em up like never before.

Source 40 STRATEGIES FOR WINNING

**No problem is insurmountable.
With a little courage, teamwork
and determination a person can
overcome anything.**

– Anonymous

Eight Ways to Start '08 with a Bang

1. Bring in new workers by on-target recruiting and interviewing using assessments.
2. Make sure every person fits his/her job.
3. Find ways to engage workers.
Tip: Job fit helps.
4. Plan a training program for employees that continues until retirement.
5. Key departures looming? Start building a succession plan now.
6. Employee feedback is essential. Learn how to give it the right way.
7. Put in place methods of regularly rewarding good performance.
8. Build relationships rather than contacts.

I love to hear a choir. I love the humanity...to see the faces of real people devoting themselves to a piece of music. I like the teamwork. It makes me feel optimistic about the human race when I see them cooperating like that.

—Beatle Paul McCartney

NEW I-9 FORMS

On Wednesday, November 7, 2007, the USCIS released a **revised** Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9), which is now available for use. It is a federal requirement that US employers complete an I-9 form for all employees within the first three days of employment, and retain the form for one year after termination of employment *or* three years, whichever is longer. While employers may start using the form immediately, it will officially become effective when posted in the federal register at a later date.

Download the revised I-9 and instructions at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf> (if the link doesn't work, copy and paste into your browser and hit enter).

Changes were minor but include the documents you can use going forward:

Removed from List A are the following documents:

- 1.Certificate of U.S. Citizenship (N-560 or N-570)
- 2.Certificate of Naturalization (N-550 or N-570)
- 3.Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151)
- 4.Unexpired Reentry Permit (I-327)
- 5.Unexpired Refugee Travel Document (I-571)

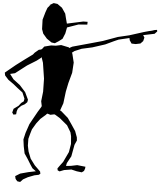
Added to List A is the most recent version of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) (I-766). The revised List A now consists of the following documents:

- 1.U.S. Passport (unexpired or expired)
- 2.Permanent Resident Card (I-551)
- 3.Unexpired foreign passport with a temporary I-551 stamp
- 4.Unexpired Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph
- 5.Unexpired foreign passport with an unexpired Arrival- Departure Record (I-94) for nonimmigrant aliens authorized to work for a specific employer

Another minor revision is that the instructions now indicate that providing the Social Security Number of the employee is voluntary, unless the employer participates in the E-Verify program.

Phyllis Hartman, SPHR
ABI HR Consultant





**These basic HR services are *FREE*
to
Members Only**

All participants receive the following HR services as part of the value-added program offering:

Basic HR Services @ NO COST to participants!!!

- ◆ **FREE** HR Help Line: **TOLL FREE Number**
 - Unlimited telephone conversations on any HR questions
 - Strategy discussions related to difficult employees
 - Discussions on policy and procedural issues



- ◆ Basic creation or basic revision of employee handbooks
- ◆ Federal and state labor poster sources
- ◆ Legally compliant HR forms
- ◆ HR Compliance Audits and policy reviews by phone discussion or checklist survey
- ◆ HR articles via customized monthly e-Newsletters



- ◆ Monthly HR webinars (*on a topic of your choice*)



Customized HR Services (*fee based*)

Customized services at reduced fees for participants, directly billed to the requesting distributor at a substantial discount. These specialized consulting services can include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ◆ Recruitment of key managers | ◆ Merger/acquisition support on integrating new staffs |
| ◆ Key manager development plans | ◆ Change management |
| ◆ Executive coaching | ◆ Team building |
| ◆ Organizational needs analysis | ◆ On-site consulting assistance as requested |
| ◆ On-site HR compliance audits and policy reviews | ◆ Compensation plans |
| ◆ Customized on-site training | |

On-line Training

Now, more and more employees are entering the workforce each year with the expectation that learning will be just-in-time and delivered on-line. Applied Behavioral Insights offers thousands of e-learning courses in desktop and technical computer skills, soft skills and professional development.

View the ABI Demo e-Learning Academy, to see just a few examples of our many courseware options.
<http://66.148.192.105/abidemo/loginhtml.asp?v=abidemo>

