

TEAMING WITH SUCCESS

We are surrounded by examples of great, and not-so-great, teamwork. Recently I flew to Los Angeles, visited relatives, took in a parade with floats, bands and street performers, saw a football game and attended an opera. Countless teams made it all possible, whether on stage or back stage, seen or unseen. You too are a part of a variety of teams. How well you work together tells me how successful you are. Are you teaming with success?

True teamwork takes time and a willingness to contribute to the greater good of the team, as opposed to only looking out for number one. It begins with a desire to work on behalf of the group. Examine your motives. In successful teams, when the teams win their teammates too reap the rewards. Ineffective teams are often betrayed by selfish team members whose individual goals supersede their team's goals.

Among the hallmarks of effective teams, whether in sales or service environments:

- A shared vision of the mission of the team and its goals
- Willingness to meld one's individual talents for the betterment of the team
- Clear communication in both directions: between team leader and team members, and amongst members themselves
- Ample appreciation of individual differences within one's team
- Recognition and reward of team members for their efforts

I have chaired boards of directors, coached basketball teams domestically and internationally, and managed talented and not so talented groups within and beyond high-tech. I know from experience that lines of authority alone do not guarantee dedication, loyalty and a shared sense of team play.

Similarly, I have been a member of functional and dysfunctional teams and have seen first-hand that talent alone doesn't guarantee success. Successful teams are about a coming together of talent, a melding of minds and mindsets, and an ability to focus on the big picture.

Team members seek the following:

- To be heard
- To feel important
- To be valued, appreciated and recognized
- An opportunity to express individuality

These can all occur on well-led teams, without sacrificing the team spirit. It's a mistake to believe that the best team leaders treat everyone the same way. Realistically, not everyone wants nor needs to be treated the same way. Whether in sales or service situations, many team members are self-motivated. They are self-starters who want the keys to the car and then ask that you step away from the curb. Other team members want and need reassurance, support and a little hand-holding. Neither is right nor wrong. But each excels when treated the way they most want to be treated.

Team leaders should strive to achieve the following:

- A clear vision of the team's goals and objectives that they consistently articulate
- Appreciation of who each team member is and how to relate to them: personality, temperament, strengths and weaknesses and style
- Cohesion through regular communication
- Support for each team member
- Recognition for members' accomplishments and group milestones

Teamwork is developed over time. Day by day your team can strengthen itself through experience and the natural relationships that occur over time. With time and attention to these tips, soon your group will be teaming with success!

- Read about Craig's popular interactive presentation *Teaming with Success*: <http://www.expressionsofexcellence.com/teamingwithsuccess.html>

- Download a small PDF file describing Craig's *Teaming with Success* presentation: http://www.expressionsofexcellence.com/onesheets/Teambuilding_1Sheet.pdf

Craig Harrison is an instructor with the University of California at Santa Cruz Extension's Business department, has been profiled in The Wall Street Journal and cited in Business Week. As a manager, consultant, publisher and curriculum developer, he developed his digital dexterity, helping the technical world train and communicate more effectively. Copyright© 2007, Craig Harrison. All rights reserved. For information contact FrogPond at 800.704.FROG(3764) or email susie@FrogPond.com.