

## TEAM BUILDING—DO YOU KNOW HOW TO DO IT?

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### Objectives:

Describe what a team consists of  
 Discuss the different skills each team has  
 Describe the 7 steps of effective team performance

A team has been defined as a cohesive group of individuals who work together with a commitment to reach a common goal. A group organized to work together to accomplish a set of objectives that cannot be achieved effectively by individuals. Simply stated, it is less ME and more WE.

Teams just do not happen. They have to be developed and the success of the team depends on the contribution of the members. Team members must work together toward a properly identified, common goal. It has been said that teamwork divides the tasks and doubles the success. Team development takes work. Meetings have to be scheduled and communication to all members is vital for a team to succeed. Clear expectations must be understood by all and deadlines set to accomplish the goals. Accurate records should be kept of all meetings, noting the successes and failures. Each member must have a clear personal understanding of the team's missions and goals and what part they play in achieving that goal. Team members learn from one another and must be willing to contribute ideas as well as listen to ideas of all members. A good team member must be willing to work with other members until the goal is accomplished.

Each person brings a different

skill to the team and each person has something to contribute. A quote from H.E. Luccock is "You don't get harmony when everybody sings the same note". The saying goes for team building. It takes everyone bringing their thoughts and ideas together, dividing the tasks in order to double the success. Teams need people who possess technical skills, but teams also need people who possess people skills. Technical skills include members who are cross trained in all job tasks. They read job related literature, attend workshops or in-service programs and become certified or licensed in their profession. People skills include being great communicators who shows respect for all team members, who demonstrates a willingness to learn, to share ideas in a positive manner and who lives and demonstrates a positive attitude. In order for a team to be successful, members must be positive about what they are doing. A bad attitude spoils great talent. People skills are the most difficult to develop. There is a difference between attitude and behavior. With attitudes, people must be willing to make sacrifices to do what needs to be done to accomplish the goal. In behaviors, people may have to subordinate their own self-interest on be-



half of the team's purpose and goal to be a successful team player.

It has been said that lessons on team building can be learned from **Geese.**

**Geese Fact #1**-As each bird flaps its wings; it creates uplift for the bird following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if one bird flew alone.

**Team Building Fact #1**-People who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the strength of one another.

**Geese Fact #2**-Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

**Team Building Fact #2**-If we have as much sense as geese, we will stay in formation with those who are ahead of where we want to go and be willing to accept their help as well as give help to others.

**Geese Fact #3**-When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies in the point position.

**Team Building Fact #3**-It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership.

**Geese Fact #4**-The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

**Team Building Fact #4**-We need to make sure your honking from behind is encouraging and not something else.

**Geese Fact #5**—When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation, or they catch up with their flock.

**Team Building Fact #5**—If we have as much sense as geese, we too, will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Having worked in Surgery and Sterile Processing for 44 years, I have served on many teams; some effective and a few ineffective.

The basic building block of good teambuilding is for a leader to promote the feeling that every human being is unique and adds value to the department. Norman S. Hidle once said, “A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contributions to praise the skill of others.

I realize there will be occasions where team members are going to be critical of a team member’s response to a particular situation. Before words are spoken that cannot be retrieved, stop and think about your own personal response. How would you want someone to respond if your performance was in questions? We are most effective as a team when we compliment each other without embarrassment and disagree without fear. When you hear one member criticize another’s performance, ask the following:

“Have you talked to him/her about this?”

“What can you do to help him/her improve the situation?” Often comments are made that are either stated incorrectly or are perceived as negative. These phrases can damage team spirit. Think before you speak and be sure to promote a positive body language. Some examples of phrases that can damage team spirit are as follows:

**“You are doing this wrong!”**

A better choice of words would be **“How about trying to ....”**

**“What are you going to do about this?”**

A better choice would be **“What can we do about this?”**

**“Who is responsible for this?”**

A better choice would be **“How can we fix this?”**

**“Can I help?”**

A better choice would be **“How can I help?”**

**“I don’t think you should...”**

A better choice of words would be **“Why don’t we try...”**

**There are 7 “C” Steps in effective team performance.**

**Clarity**—what is the common goal and what is the expected outcome?

**Capability**—Team members must have the knowledge of how to do and how to get things done.

**Collaborative**—Members must meet on a regular schedule to discuss plans. Collaboration yields results greater than an individual’s contributions. Reaching a consensus requires discussion, debate and collaboration.

**Commitments**—Each member must embrace the job or project and must appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of others.

**Communicate**—Members must be able to give or exchange information, practice active listening and be able to give and receive feedback.

**Continuous Improvement**—Members must be committed to work until the goal is achieved and maintain an on-going

means to make the work processes better and more valuable.

**Creativity**—Members must be able to make or originate new ideas and solutions, utilizing diverse thinking and using creative skills.

**Successful teams in Central Service must**

- ◆ Introduce and manage on-going changes
- ◆ Meet the needs of customers
- ◆ Ensure quality products
- ◆ Ensure good patient outcomes
- ◆ Promote effective communication between staff and departments

Teams, whose members are aligned with its purpose, feel a challenge in their task, have a strong sense of camaraderie, feel responsibility for the outcome and experience growth as a team, will be successful. A quote from Henry Ford says it all. “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is a progress; working together is a success.”

References:

“Tips from Winning Coaches”, Michael Tim Winn, Contract Management, National Contract Management Association  
Tall Ships, Building Effective Teams

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1. A team is defined as a group organized to work together to accomplish a set of objectives that cannot be achieved effectively by individuals.  
                   True                   False
2. Teams do not have to be developed. They just happen.  
                   True                   False
3. Each member brings the same skills to the team.  
                   True                   False
4. Technical skills are the most difficult to develop.    True                   False
5. It is important for the team leader to promote the feeling that every human being is unique and adds value to the department.    True                   False
6. Capability and criticism are 2 of the 7 steps in effective team performance.  
                   True                   False
7. People skills and technical skills are not vital to effective team building.  
                   True                   False
8. Team members are most effective when each other is complimented without embarrassment.  
                   True                   False
9. Team members must have a clear understanding of the team's mission and goals.    True                   False
10. It does not pay to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership.  
                   True                   False

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