

Team Building: A model for Great Teams

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Understanding the model that guarantee's respect in the workplace is key to building a great team.

The Inverted Pyramid Model places the most important members (front line workers) at the top of the inverted pyramid. The two supporting arms of the pyramid represent the role that the working supervisor plays on one side and the role the management team plays on the other. The core values within the center of the pyramid fuels the model and provides the basis for which each entity unites and works together. These core values are; mutual respect, accountability, honesty, clarity and trust and are crucial for making the model work. The front line workers are at the top of the inverted pyramid and are expert team members, are one hundred percent trained, have people skills, and are informed and engaged. The working supervisors and management team provide a supportive role to the front line workers to enable them to perform their job well. The supervisor's role is to remove obstacles and provide information, clarify expectations and set clear performance standards, and to provide feedback, tools, time, direction, training and the necessary resources so team members feel confident and successful. Management's responsibility is to ensure these frontline employees are a hundred percent trained through education and orientations. Additionally, they are responsible for organizational policies and procedures which outline the standards that govern our practice.

Clarity and accountability are essential to making it all work. Clarity ensures that clear performance standards are identified. Realistic expectations that everyone can achieve and held accountable to must be set. Accountability ensures that every team member is accountable to the other to maintain and fulfill performance standards. This is crucial for success and fosters mutual respect within the team.

The tough question is how do we hold our peers/team mates accountable for upholding team based standards? Not an easy thing to do as most people tend to avoid potential conflict. We do not like to hold other team mates accountable for several reasons. It's uncomfortable, we don't know how, we fear they will take offense, we fear they will not like us anymore; we fear that they will think we are trying to show we are better than they are. The truth is that it is important to hold each other accountable as this is the basis for building a strong team. If we don't say anything, nothing changes, and the bar set standards begins to fall. Eventually the team fractures because the overachievers work harder to pick up the slack thereby leading to high levels of frustration. The underachievers do not feel valued or proud of their accomplishments. In the end, everyone becomes miserable.

It is important not to feel offended if someone holds you accountable by respectfully drawing your attention to a certain action or behaviour. Consider it an act of respect and know that the other team mate only has the best interest of you and the team at heart. These are respectful actions that strengthen the team.

Underachievers on the team are simply those team mates who have not yet realized their full potential. However, they are likely underachieving because the standards of performance have not been defined. This can be overcome through the great team building power of mentoring. Performance improves

when standards of performance are clarified and obstacles to learning are removed. Team mates and supervisors should promote independence. The Over Performers are team mates who are often very experienced, motivated and have an abundance of knowledge and energy. They are constantly looking to be challenged. They often do their job and other people's too. These strong team members who constantly seek to overachieve must recognize this and step back and push the learners forward. This increases confidence and helps to motivate the learner to push out of the dormant comfort zone. Spending the time to educate and praise their efforts communicates a sense of value and importance within the team structure. All team mates whether beginner or advanced are equally important, and the core values of mutual respect, accountability, honesty, clarity and trust are paramount in effective team building. We can effectively bridge the gap by using this new model to help promote a positive and rewarding experience as all team members begin to enjoy the fruitfulness that results when the standards of performance are adhered to by all. Positive communication between team members and accountability to team set standards changes the dynamics of the team. The goal is to achieve balance. The end result is that everyone feels like an equal, the expectations for performances are defined, the workload equalizes and all team members feel pride and fulfillment and enjoy coming to work.