



## Teams At Work: 7 Keys to Success

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### 1. COMMITMENT

Commitment to the purpose and values of an organization provides a clear sense of direction. Team members understand how their work fits into corporate objectives and they agree that their team's goals are achievable and aligned with corporate mission and values. Commitment is the foundation for synergy in groups. Individuals are willing to put aside personal needs for the benefit of the work team or the company. When conflict arises, the team uses alignment with purpose, values, and goals as important criteria for acceptable solutions.

### 2. CONTRIBUTION

The power of an effective team is in direct proportion to the skills members possess and the initiative members expend. Work teams need people who have strong technical and interpersonal skills and are willing to learn. Teams also need self-leaders who take responsibility for getting things done. But if a few team members shoulder most of the burden, the team runs the risk of member burnout, or worse -- member turn-off.

### 3. COMMUNICATION

For a work group to reach its full potential, members must be able to say what they think, ask for help, share new or unpopular ideas, and risk making mistakes. This can only happen in an atmosphere where team members show concern, trust one another, and focus on solutions, not problems. Communication --when it is friendly, open, and positive --plays a vital role in creating such cohesiveness.

### 4. COOPERATION

Most challenges in the workplace today require much more than good solo performance. In increasingly complex organizations, success depends upon the degree of interdependence recognized within the team. Leaders can facilitate cooperation by highlighting the impact of individual members on team productivity and clarifying valued team member behaviors.

### 5. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

It is inevitable that teams of bright, diverse thinkers will experience conflict from time to time. The problem is not that differences exist, but in how they are

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managed. If people believe that conflict never occurs in "good" groups, they may sweep conflict under the rug. Of course, no rug is large enough to cover misperception, ill feelings, old hurts, and misunderstandings for very long. Soon the differences reappear. They take on the form of tension, hidden agendas, and stubborn positions. On the other hand, if leaders help work teams to manage conflict effectively, the team will be able to maintain trust and tap the collective power of the team.

#### **6. CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

Teams must not only respond to change, but actually initiate it. To assist teams in the management of change, leaders should acknowledge any perceived danger in the change and then help teams to see any inherent opportunities. They can provide the security necessary for teams to take risks and the tools for them to innovate; they can also reduce resistance to change by providing vision and information, and by modeling a positive attitude themselves.

#### **7. CONNECTIONS**

When a work team is connected to the organization, members discuss team performance in relationship to corporate priorities, customer feedback, and quality measures. When a work team has developed strong connections among its own members, peer support manifests itself in many ways. Colleagues volunteer to help without being asked, cover for each other in a pinch, congratulate each other publicly, share resources, offer suggestions for improvement, and find ways to celebrate together.

*SELECTED BY HANA JAHSHAN*