

Managing Human Resources - Team Building

Author:
Michael Swan, Washington State University

Reviewers:
Mark Whitney, University of Minnesota
Marcia Shannon, University of Missouri

Introduction

Team building is a constant process that helps work groups evolve into an organized unit. The team members not only share expectations for accomplishing group tasks, but trust and support one another and respect one another's individual differences. The manager's role as a team builder is to lead employee teams toward cohesiveness and productivity. With good team-building skills, manager's can unite employees around a common goal and generate greater productivity.

Guiding Principles

Team building can lead to:

- Good communications with participants as team members and individuals
- Improved unit productivity
- Team members motivated to achieve goals
- An environment of cooperation and collaborative problem-solving
- Increased levels of job satisfaction and commitment
- Improved levels of trust and support
- Employees working well together
- Healthier operating policies and procedures



Signs that Signal a Need for Team Building

- Reduced productivity
- Conflicts among employees
- Misunderstanding about assignments and duties
- Decisions not carried through properly
- Apathy and lack of involvement
- Lack of initiation, imagination, innovation
- Complaints about employees
- Unproductive staff meetings
- Negative reactions to the manager

Steps to Building an Effective Team

The first rule of team building is an obvious one: to lead a team effectively, managers must first establish their leadership with each team member. Remember that the most effective team leaders build their relationships of trust and loyalty, rather than fear or the power of their positions.

- Consider all ideas as important and valuable.
- Be aware of employees' feelings
- Act as a harmonizing influence.
- Be clear when communicating.
- Promote trust and cooperation among employees.
- Encourage sharing of ideas and information.
- Entrust problem-solving tasks to the team.
- Facilitate communication.
- Create team values and goals; evaluate team performance.
- Have clear ideas of what you need to accomplish
- Use consensus.
- Establish rules for the team.
- Establish a method for arriving at a consensus.
- Promote listening and brainstorming

For more information, please search for the following resources on PIG:

PIG Answers:

- Team approach to Management

References:

- Swan, M. Managing Employees. Fact Sheet 03-01-02. Pork Information Gateway; 2009.