

Key Strategies & Insights for Project Success

Thoughts, concepts, and ideas for project leaders and professionals

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Teamwork

Most of us know teamwork when we see it. It manifests itself through graceful efficiency of motion, alignment of effort, and seamless integration. A group of individuals working in unison is a beautiful thing.



However, the absence of teamwork can be even more apparent, often painfully so. Regardless of the organization, sports or project team, or group undertaking, a well-coordinated team produces far superior results to those of a group who doesn't work well together. Although we know this to be true, real *teamwork* remains an elusive quality.

"Just because we wear the same uniform, doesn't make us a team."

One primary reason that a high level of teamwork is rarely realized on projects is the tendency to "jump in" and begin the work at hand leaving teamwork to happen. It typically doesn't.

It is clear that a key to realizing effective teamwork is coaching. Just consider the basketball dynasties created by coaches like John Wooden or Dean Smith. These highly successful coaches not only knew the importance of teamwork, but knew how to develop it and put it into effect. It is a key for success in sports, and likewise, it is a key for the success of your project.

COACHING = LEADERSHIP: Teams don't emerge naturally. Even a group of highly talented and dedicated individuals can find it a struggle to function well together. It takes someone at the helm setting clear expectations, organizing and aligning the effort, helping create clarity of purpose, inspiring, encouraging, and challenging - in essence leading. Teamwork requires effective leadership. Effective leaders, like effective coaches, understand the importance of investing time and effort in learning how to work and succeed together. Did you spend any time determining how to work together or did you just start?

COLLABORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Teamwork requires much more than an agreement to get along. It involves straight talk, commitment, accountability, and hard work. It requires a careful balance between collaboration and accountability.

KEY STRATEGY: On your next project, consider investing time specifically devoted to developing your team. Work to clarify goals, lines of communication and authority, roles and responsibilities, decision-making strategies, etc. It can have a significant return on investment. Remember, teamwork won't *just* happen. Provide the leadership to help your team function more effectively. It will help you win.

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