Building a Winning Team

Introduction

Good teamwork is a critical component of business success. Lack of direction, poor communication, and unreasonable expectations can create chaos and have a significant impact on the ways in which a team functions and performs. Nobody wants to be a part of a team that's struggling with unresolved conflict and common purpose issues. People spend a significant amount of time everyday interacting with their teammates, so when one team member fights with another it can make everyone's job that much harder.

In this reading, we will take a look at ten steps that can be used to build a winning team from the ground up.

Ten Steps to Build a Winning Team

Organizations must invest time, energy, and money in order to build effective teams. The following ten steps will provide an outline of this process.

1. Establish a common goal

   Start the team off right by laying the framework for the purpose of the team. Establish the team's goal and mission statement. While this step may seem basic, it is essential that everyone on the team have a clear understanding of what the team is setting out to accomplish. Every new member needs to be brought up to speed to make certain everyone is on the same page regarding the team's objectives and goals.

2. Provide training

   Educate the group on team building skills, leadership topics, and job-related skills. Training can consist of simply video and audio sessions that are short in duration, or it might involve multi-day seminars that provide more in-depth training.

3. Evaluate the team's current performance.

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Understand and learn just how well the team is currently functioning. It is important to have leaders, team members, customers, vendors, and other organizations that interact with the team participate in the evaluation. Compare the team's perceptions against actual results to indicate areas in need of improvement. Encourage honest dialogue on areas functioning well and areas which need improvement. Schedule regular meeting times to continually evaluate the team's performance and progress.

4. Assess team members.

    Identify each team member's preferences, personalities, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. There are many interpersonal assessment tools available to help facilitate this process, including Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B), and DISC profiling. This information will enable members of the team to work together more effectively and efficiently by providing insight on one another's behaviors, styles, and preferences.

5. Be proactive.

    Actively declare acceptable behaviors, expectations, goals, and standards for the team. Do not wait for a crisis to surface before establishing the boundaries. This information can be declared in a team charter, and should be put together by the entire team in order to instill a sense of ownership amongst all group members.

6. Establish common practices.

    Develop a common set of practices for handling conflict, resolving problems, communicating, soliciting help, and providing feedback. This provides team members with an effective and acceptable way to address difficult topics and situations.

7. Communicate often.

    Communicating frequently and effectively is essential for any team. People need to feel comfortable exchanging ideas, discussing problems, and pursuing new opportunities. This interaction should be a two-way discussion, not just a one-way lecture.

8. Team-build.

   Make time for team-building activities on a regular basis, such as quarterly, bi-annually, or annually. Choose activities that are fun and exciting which also offer a learning experience to match the team's latest challenges.

9. Provide recognition and rewards.

   Acknowledge people for their individual contributions to the team. Praise and public recognition go a long way in making people feel appreciated for their hard work and dedication. Rewards do not always have to involve cash supplements but can be as simple as providing paper certificates of achievement or extra vacation days. People love to be recognized and acknowledged for their efforts.

10. Celebrate!

    Do not be afraid to celebrate the team's accomplishments. Seize the moment and have fun. This event could be as simple as hosting a potluck lunch or meeting after work for some drinks and appetizers. The celebration does not have to be huge, just a time to say thank you and to celebrate the team's success.

Summary

- Good teamwork is important to an organization's success but can often be hampered by lack of direction, poor communication, and unreasonable expectations.

- To achieve high performance levels from a team, leaders must initiate team-building activities.

- Ten steps to build a winning team are:

  1. Establish a common goal.
  2. Provide training.
  3. Evaluate the team's current performance.
  4. Assess team members.
  5. Be proactive.

6. Establish common practices.

7. Communicate often.

8. Team-build.

9. Provide recognition and rewards.

10. Celebrate!