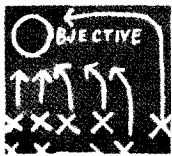


The well-rounded IE

Effective team building

By David G. Rohlander

Building an exceptional team takes persistence, high energy, and deliberate focus on fundamental principles. The results of the team-building process, whether good or bad, can be traced back to the quality of its leadership. The most successful leader will develop an outstanding team of productive people by inculcating each team member with the following fundamental principles:



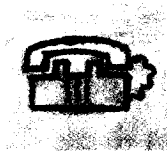
Share the vision

Clearly define and share the team's purpose and goals with all members, and do it often. Much has been said and written about mission, purpose, and goals. Many companies have beautifully framed mission statements hanging in their main lobby. Yet, if you ask the average worker what the mission, purpose, or goal of the company is and how it relates to his or her job, you will occasionally draw a blank stare.

Repetition and personal application are vital to building goal focus and positive emotion within each team member. One-on-one communication is the best way for the team leader to help members become involved. People become involved when they understand why and how the purpose and goals are in their own and the team's best interests. Purpose and goals need to be discussed and explored often.

Encourage involvement

Work isn't only about money. Encourage individuals to help shape team goals and use their unique talents and strengths to get results. People want to be involved and a part of something beyond themselves. When you guide people to share their ideas and then listen to them, you build trust and respect. People will give 100 percent effort if they helped build the plan. On the other hand, if an autocratic leader dictates all the ideas, people have a tendency to become disengaged and lack enthusiasm for the group effort.



Communicate

Communicate honestly and openly. This means you must develop an atmosphere in which information flows freely. People should be able to express their opinions without fear. The focus must be on the quality of the idea and not the popularity of the individual sharing the idea or solution.

Encourage all members to volunteer ideas and solutions. We all know that the only dumb question is the one that isn't asked. Different people see things different ways. Respect each individual and have the patience and courtesy to listen to all questions. Honor the individual. Evaluate and weigh each suggestion based on the quality and merits of the idea, not the personality of the presenter.

Promote feedback

Give and receive honest feedback promptly in a positive way to ideas, attitudes, activities, and results. When individuals are truly comfortable with themselves, they can receive positive and negative feedback without reacting emotionally. Do you receive compliments and criticism with equal grace? There is room for improvement within all of us. It takes a very strong individual to accept valid criticism from someone who is younger, less experienced, or just learning a new job. Never forget the old admonition: If the shoe fits, wear it. You will be a better person.





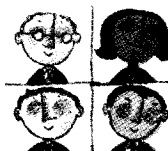
Develop discipline

Develop team standards and reward disciplined work habits. Watch what people pay attention to in the routine of the workflow. Those things that are noticed by the leader will be repeated.

If the leader pays attention to everyone being punctual, people will arrive at work on time. If the leader pays attention to and rewards results, people will strive to get results.

Cultivate respect

Be a peacemaker. Sincerely care for team members and assist others to solve problems and resolve conflicts. The team will function best when people are harmonious. Good communication skills are like oil to a machine. If there is no oil, the machine will run hot and may even seize up under pressure. Make quality communication a priority. Conduct training about communication skills. Have everyone work at treating internal and external customers better. Build understanding through deliberate study. Practice the lessons learned and drill for skills.



Strive for balance

Everyone does things for a reason. It is usually to gain a benefit or avoid a loss. Strive for balance between attaining team results and each member's personal needs and goals. Once you accept the reality that everyone is primarily concerned about his or her own self-interest, building a team becomes a lot easier.

Each person has to benefit personally from his or her efforts. Additionally, the team must benefit. The challenge is to combine the two. The individual must win; the team must win. The two are mutually dependent for success. A good leader will help each team member understand this concept. This is best done over the course of several one-on-one meetings.

These fundamental principles will serve you well as you build and maintain a team. Review them often with each team member. Practice learning together and remember to have fun along the way. ♦

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Creating your dream team

One of the keys to creating the perfect team is attaining diversity, which gives the team a good balance. Fortunately, people behave in definable ways, so it's not difficult to reach this goal.

The most common model of behavior styles is the four-quadrant model. It is very practical to use in the work environment.

Direct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Directive behavior ◆ Impatient ◆ Action-oriented 	Steady: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dependable ◆ Agreeable ◆ Calm
Influencer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Talkative ◆ Optimistic ◆ Persuasive 	Cautious: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Task-oriented ◆ Perfectionistic ◆ Sensitive

The perfect team would be comprised of a group that, as a whole, demonstrates all of these characteristics. Since each person is different, each will bring a different dynamic to the team environment. Everyone has all of these behavioral traits in varying amounts depending on the environment and the group dynamics.

The **Direct** person will focus on getting meetings underway and push for closure and results. This is valuable for any group but needs to be balanced with the needs of other members.

The **Influencer** will be concerned most with how everyone is interacting. He wants it to be an enjoyable process in which everyone has a good time. This skill is invaluable when presenting ideas to management and other people outside the core team in a persuasive and convincing way.

The **Steady** person is the mortar that holds the group together. She will perform tasks consistently in a dependable way. Once clear decisions have been made, she is excellent at follow-up.

The **Cautious** individual will analyze each decision completely. Fortunately, he leans toward perfection, so the odds are good that information will reach a higher standard with his input. ♦