Title:
Five Questions to Ask Before Forming a Team

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Summary:
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form a team to research, solve the problem and implement the solution. Teams
can be a very powerful way to solve problems and implement massive improvements.
But teams aren't the right answer to every situation.

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Article Body:
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But teams aren't the right answer to every situation.

To get the best possible results from the resources available, it is important
that a leader answer a question they typically don't ask - "Is a team the best
way to address this situation?"

Unfortunately when they assume the answer to that first question they jump to
"Who should I put on the team?" When they start there, they may have already
doomed the organization to less than the perfect solution, before they even get
started.

This article poses five questions designed to help you answer this important
first question.

Is the goal clear? If the goal isn't crystal clear yet, don't form a
team. A team can develop a problem statement and solve a problem, but they
can't work successfully (at least not quickly and efficiently) with a goal that
isn't clearly articulated. Once the goal is clear (you might want to meet with
a couple of people in a one time meeting to get this clarity), you can continue
on with the rest of the questions. Until then, don't form a team!

Will the team have the resources they need to succeed? You may be the

person who needs to provide those resources, or you may need to negotiate for them. Teams need to know what resources they have in terms of skills, budget, time, support and more. While a lack of resources will challenge people and teams to be creative, there is a limit to this! Teams will falter and struggle without the necessary resources to succeed. Proceed with out them and you risk massive frustration and low productivity.

Does this really require a team? This is perhaps the biggest of the questions. We all value collaboration and teamwork – but they don't have to go together. Collaboration can be achieved without a team. Perhaps what you need to do is assign or find a person to run a project, and encourage others with valuable input and experience to collaborate and help as needed. Remember there is a big difference between putting people on a team and asking them to help on an as-needed basis. When you remember that you can foster collaboration without a team you allow yourself to really answer this question successfully.

What is the relative importance? Not all projects or problems are created equal. It is important to consider the relative importance of a situation before dedicating lots of resources to it. Think about your overall plan and your people resources. See where this fits into your big picture before you decide to form a team, versus assigning it to a single person to manage.

Is there time? It takes time to schedule, form, acclimate and help a team get a good start. Is there time for all that, relative to the need for a solution or answer? If not, get someone, get and decision and move on.

If you get yes answers to all of the questions above, congratulations! Form your team and help them succeed.

But if you get one or more no answers - do yourself and those you might put on a team – a favor. Think a bit longer before automatically forming a team.