**Putting Your Team First**

Tip Sheet #6 from *Doing the Right Things Right* by Laura Stack

No doubt you've seen too many self-serving maneuvers over the years to be surprised when a leader slinks off into every-man-for-himself territory. So why not surprise your team by facing your in-house rivals like a team player? Keep these things in mind when the going gets tough.

1. **Present Your Needs Clearly.** Who gets the resources he or she needs: the shrinking violet or the fighter who asks for them? Too often, I've seen people curse the darkness when they could just flip the light switch. If you don't get what you want, ask for it. See your superior(s) and outline your needs, especially if you've just landed something new and urgent. Don't make demands, but don't shy away from your duty to provide for your team, either. At the same time, make sure those you compete with for resources know it isn't personal—you're still a team player, and you're trying to build the company by building your team.
2. **Stand Up for Your Team.** Whether they've gotten in trouble for doing something controversial or the com­pany is reducing head count, defend your people. Your team needs to know you're on their side, come what may. This is especially true when someone tries to poach team members or lay them off. Each person who leaves changes the team dynamic and can reduce productivity—unless the departing team member was a poor performer or saboteur.
3. **Take One for the Team.** Nobody wants to suffer when troubles come along—but to protect your team, you may have to. If you head a large division and your CEO orders you to cut your budget by $100,000 next quarter, find a way that minimizes the damage to your team members, such as cutting back on discretionary expenditures, travel, and bonuses instead of cutting valued staff.

**Be There for Your Teammates**

In a world where business competition has reached all the way into the boardroom, you have no choice but to stay alert for those who want to swoop down and steal your resources—whether that makes sense for the company or not. When pre­sented with shortages, some people panic and do anything they can to stay on top. So keep your eyes open, stay calm, and block any unwise attempts to take you or your team down. Be a team player for the organization, but verbalize your needs and stand up for your rights without shirking.

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE, aka The Productivity Pro®, gives speeches and seminars on sales and leadership productivity. For over 25 years, she’s worked with Fortune 1000 clients to reduce inefficiencies, execute more quickly, improve output, and increase profitability. Laura is the author of seven books, including *Doing the Right Things Right: How the Effective Executive Spends Time*. See [www.3TLeadership.com](http://www.3TLeadership.com).