**Instilling Effective Teamwork**

Tip Sheet #9 from *Doing the Right Things Right* by Laura Stack

The greatest advantage of teamwork is that it achieves what individuals can't, through the medium of simple cooperation. Making personal goals secondary to group goals may seem difficult, but it pays off for everyone in the end. Instilling effective teamwork as one of your team's core val­ues will make the team:

1. **More Efficient.**Typically, more efficient also means faster, since many hands make light work. Teamwork is much more effective when team members work together closely throughout the process. Many tasks have no clear-cut edges, so when people work separately, performing separate parts of a project in isolation and then piecing them together later, overlap and duplication may occur. On a team where the members inform each other of their progress, that's easier to avoid. Ongoing feedback also increases the quality of output during the planning, design, and implementation stages. The result is more robust, with multiple perspectives involved.
2. **More Reliant On Multiple Skill Sets.**Even in specialized fields, the constant evolution of knowledge and increase in information makes it impossible to know everything about the field. It takes a lot longer to complete a project if one person has to know everything needed to accomplish it. To make progress, put together subject matter experts on different aspects of the field and have them tackle the project as a team.
3. **Accountable.**Team membership encourages a sense of belonging, which often translates to a greater sense of ownership and accountability for the work. This is especially true when people respect each other and don't want to let the team down.
4. **Synergetic.**Cohesive, closely-knit teams often prove greater than the sum of their parts, such that the results are out of proportion to the number of people involved. Consider composers Gilbert and Sullivan, innovators Jobs and Wozniak, or pioneers Brin and Page.

**And The Beat Goes On**

Close collaboration is vital to human achievement at *all* levels. Teamwork stands as one of the chief hallmarks of human ac­complishment. So encourage and exploit people's tendency to work together for the common good, even if you prefer solitude. Collaboration is basic human nature, and it may be easier to strengthen than you think.

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