

TEAM BUILDING BLOCKS

Building a team takes many tools, all of which must be on hand and ready at all times. It is a long-term continuous commitment, not just a do it once and we are done. Many leaders act as if that is all you have to do; a few fun activities here and there and a tool to teach once in a while and the team is ready to work together and tackle the world.

Below are a few thoughts on some of the core tools that all teams need.

A Focus On The Future.

While it is important to keep the daily activities at the forefront of each day, everyone is concerned about their future. They need and want to know that there is a future in what they are doing. Part of a leader's job is to give the team a focus on where they are headed. Both a long-term future and the incremental steps it takes to get there. This is for leaders at all levels of the organization. It does not have to be a big, long mission statement, or a 14-page PowerPoint presentation, it can be a simple reminder of next week's expectations, or a reminder of the overall fundamental team goals. Each encounter with your team is about letting them know where they are going and how we expect to get there.

Don't Forget About Today.

Yes, the future is an emotional and sometimes disconcerting subject that must be discussed! At the same time TODAY and getting through it... IS a big priority. What is the need today, did it change from yesterday because of something bad OR good that happened yesterday or this morning? The mistake here that leaders make is that they either ignore or overemphasize the needs of today verses the needs of tomorrow, leaving the team frustrated and unsure of the direction. Don't be afraid to discuss needed changes but be prepared to discuss why the change is needed. Change is harder for some people than others so you must be sensitive to each individual team member.

Finally, the three fundamentals of relationship.

Listen Learn Grow

Most of us are fast to speak and slow to listen. The team (and individual members) need to know you are listening, with an expectation of understanding and learning what the team (and individual member) is saying. Learn by listening, don't just let it go in one ear and out the other, listen to THEM, not your thoughts about what you are hearing. HEAR their VOICE and THEIR concern. Grow from it! Proper listening allows you to grow. Just as you did in school you were able to GAIN knowledge when you explored new subjects. A TEAM is a group of individual members, each with their own valuable contributions and experiences. Listening and learning from your teammates allows you to grow individually and as a team.

