

# Leadership Tips

December 2005

from Dr. Marilyn Manning and The Consulting Team, LLC

*(Feel free to forward this e-mail or use it for a team discussion.)*

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## This Month's Topic: Team Building

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***Do you have too many "chiefs" on your team?***

***Are the people on your team constantly stepping on each others' toes?***

Do you work with others as a team? Is your team successful? Do you spend time dealing with interpersonal issues that interfere with productivity?

We all know that there is no "I" in team, so what's the problem? Well there's also no "WE" in team. Just because we call ourselves a team, doesn't mean that we magically learn how to set aside our own agendas for the good of the whole. In fact working as a team is contrary to the rugged individualism that permeates our culture. Working together as a team requires commitment and practice, just like any other skill we need.

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Take our FREE Team Effectiveness assessment to see how your team rates.

**Take it Now:** <http://www.theconsultingteam.com/Quiz-Team.html>

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The purpose of a team is to achieve performance that is superior to that of the individual efforts of its members. A group becomes a team when you treat them like a high level, high profile project. You need to define your desired outcomes, set measurable goals, design your game plan with benchmarks and deadlines, and keep everyone focused.

Three important components of teamwork are:

- Initiating Communication
- Fostering an Appreciation for Difference
- Having a Game Plan

### ***Initiating Communication***

I was recently asked to coach a team that had identified some interpersonal conflicts. They wanted a neutral party to facilitate the problem-solving sessions. They are a team of five high achievers, who each had clear individual goals. One of them even stated: "I don't see why we even meet as a team when we have nothing in common." When I probed to find some evidence of collective work effort on any goals, I found out he was right. There was no evidence of collaboration. However, when the team talked in depth, about their individual roles, purpose and objectives, they started to see some of the potential interconnections.

The more they learned about each other, the more they could see commonalities. It turned out that their conflicts were primarily due to their isolation, and lack of any collaboration. As communication opened up, new creative ways to work were identified.

Here are 5 ways to get team members to communicate with one another:

1. Have a weekly or bi-weekly social hour.
2. At meetings ask each member of your team for input.
3. Split individual projects into group projects.
4. Rotate facilitation of meetings between team members.
5. Have a staff outing or retreat once a quarter.

In your particular situation, try to identify other ideas for initiating communication among your team members.

### ***Fostering an Appreciation for Difference***

Today most teams in order to deal with a global and diverse marketplace need a diverse group of talent. A diverse team is enriched by having individuals with different backgrounds, different approaches and different ways of thinking.

Look for ways to maximize your resources and build on each other's strengths and diversity. On the surface, it may seem easier to work with people of similar styles, thinking and background, but diversity brings richness to a team. Leaders and team members should value, encourage, and reward diversity.

A peak performing team is one with no factions. It is a team without subgroups. It is a total lack of the "we" vs. "they" attitude. An effective leader is one who embraces differences, respects disagreement, honors those who question processes and direction, and doesn't surround him or herself with "yes" people.

### ***Having a Game Plan***

Once you have your diverse group of talent and you've got them communicating, it's vital to define HOW your team is going to work together. What is the team's mission and purpose? What are the decision-making procedures, roles, problem-solving mechanisms, how will meetings be run...and when? How will you interface with the rest of the company or organization?

The basic definition of a team is: "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." (Smith & Katzenbach, 1993) This is a good starting point for defining your game plan. Use the checklist below to help your team start formulating your game plan.

#### **TEAM OUTCOME CHECKLIST:**

1. What is our ideal size?
2. What skills do we have, need to add?
3. What is our mission and purpose?
4. How does each individual contribute to it?
5. How do we mutually set, track, and meet specific performance goals?
6. How do we regularly self-evaluate?
7. Do we set & live by group norms?
8. How do we hold ourselves accountable?

9. Do our results come from a collective effort?

If any of these ingredients are missing, you may be functioning more like a group than a team.

Maintain an atmosphere that encourages participation. Create an environment that encourages people to express ideas, problems, and concerns openly, and design procedures for quick conflict resolution. Include team members in goal setting. These steps help develop trust, which is necessary to the team building process.

## ***Getting Help***

If your team is experiencing interpersonal conflict or a lack of productivity, then don't hesitate to ask for help.

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Check out our *Team Building services* and offer a *Building Better Teams* workshop:

<http://www.theconsultingteam.com/C-TeamBuilding.htm>

<http://www.theconsultingteam.com/W-BuildingBetterTeams.htm>

You can assess your *Leadership Competency* here:

<http://www.theconsultingteam.com/Quiz-LeadershipCompetency.html>

Check out our *Leadership Coaching services* here:

<http://www.theconsultingteam.com/C-Coaching.htm>

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## ***Related Assessments***

We want to help you build the best team possible. We recommend some professional assessments for your team. We offer the *Team Dimensions Profile* and the *Discovering Diversity Profile*.

### **Team Dimensions Profile®**

The *Team Dimensions Profile* is a unique self-directed learning instrument that helps individuals work from their strengths by identifying their most natural team role. The *Team Dimensions Profile* helps team members understand the importance of each role and furthers their appreciation of each individual's contribution.

**Get it Now:** <http://www.theconsultingteam.com/A-TeamDimensions.htm>

### **Discovering Diversity Profile®**

The *Discovering Diversity Profile* helps employees learn how they respond to workforce diversity issues and where they need to develop increased understanding. It is the foundation on which effective communication, acceptance, and teamwork can be built. This self-directed learning instrument provides a safe, confidential way for employees to explore the complex issues surrounding diversity.

**Get it Now:** <http://www.theconsultingteam.com/A-DiscoveringDiversity.htm>

## ***Complimentary Articles***

Want more tips from Dr. Manning?

Below are just a few of the articles that are available for free at:

<http://www.theconsultingteam.com/Articles.html>.

Are Visions Useful?

Coaching for Change: A Blueprint for Leadership Success

Dealing with Stress in the Face of Change

Seven Difficult Personality Types and How to Deal with Them

Meetings Bloody Meetings

How to Build Customer service from the Inside Out

### ***About Dr. Marilyn Manning***

Dr. Marilyn Manning, CSP, CMC, the founder and CEO of The Consulting Team, LLC, and international author of seven business books, resolves difficult people problems. She specializes in interactive speeches, workshops, and consulting in the areas of Leadership, Teamwork, Conflict Mediation, Executive Coaching, Meeting Facilitation, Strategic Planning, and Communication. 82% of Dr. Manning's work is repeat business. For more information about Dr. Manning and The Consulting Team, LLC go to [www.theconsultingteam.com](http://www.theconsultingteam.com).

### ***Drawing***

Send us an e-mail to [admin@theconsultingteam.com](mailto:admin@theconsultingteam.com), describing your favorite "Leadership Tip" by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 and your name will be entered in a drawing to win a copy of Dr. Manning's latest book, *Developing as a Professional*.

### ***Next Month***

Our next issue will feature tips on Strategic Planning.

### ***About Leadership Tips***

Leadership Tips is a monthly newsletter aimed to help individuals deal with the difficult issues they face in today's busy and often hectic work environment. We deal with topics such as conflict, anger and stress management, team building, change management, how to become a better communicator, and how to developing leadership skills. To view past and present Leadership Tips newsletters go to [www.theconsultingteam.com/Newsletters.htm](http://www.theconsultingteam.com/Newsletters.htm).

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