

Building Teamwork within your Business



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*Let Confident
Communications
help bring the
best out in your
most valuable
asset
- YOUR PEOPLE*

By Ricky Nowak

Effective teamwork within a business can improve your relations with customers, generate higher quality results, and foster a sense of achievement.

Working together as a team in today's competitive business arena is no longer an option but a key factor in sustaining business and keeping customers. The days are numbered for businesses and business owners who believe they can do it alone, that is, without the knowledge, skill, capability and diversity a team brings to a business.

Participation in decision-making, accepting responsibility, and having a strong sense of ownership of tasks and activities are all drivers that motivate and sustain team activity.

To foster team building you need to follow a number of steps:

1. Demonstrate a collaborative collegiate approach. Be sure you're clear on what you're asking or needing from people. Paraphrase and spend time in checking your assumptions whether positive or negative. Encourage them to do likewise.
2. Communicate your message in small, digestible chunks that allow people to process and manage their work. Make sure you acknowledge their contribution personally and then let others know. People value being acknowledged ahead of financial rewards.
3. If you are unsure or feel uneasy about something, or simply don't have the information you need, ask for clarification and updates as often as possible. Encourage everyone to do the same. It opens the door to better dialogue and understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
4. Ensure that you "walk the talk". If you are asking others to lift their game and manage their behaviours and communications clearly, make sure you too demonstrate these skills.

Smart teams recognise the importance of thinking more globally when it comes to who and what they do. A smart team member ensures that their internal and external customers understand who else on the team can help them if they are absent from the workplace due to illness, holiday or meetings. They also ensure that their customers are comfortable in the knowledge that other team members are competent and knowledgeable, and are familiar with and understand their needs and pressures.

Additionally a smart team player knows that if they are too busy to service a client at a certain time, the support from another team member will be valuable and respected. Lastly, a smart team member lets others on their team know if they are experiencing frustration, inconvenience due to lack of information, lack of communication or other areas of responsibility within the team that are not being met.

Smart teams work together with commitment to achieve their purpose. They relate, interact and support each other as a team, as individuals and as a cohesive unit for their clients. They produce excellent results by working efficiently and effectively together and communicate their needs and those of their business.

Sceptics on the other hand, may believe that teamwork is nothing more than hard work. It is important to highlight the advantages of mutual support, collective knowledge, sharing experiences and responsibilities, and growing together from experiences.

A valuable exercise to do with your people is to ask them to identify three instances over the past

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six months when they have counted on each other in ways that clearly enhanced the team's performance.

Discuss those instances and the impact it had on the business. From there look at identifying three instances over the past six months when your people missed opportunities to deliver satisfactory or exceptional customer service because people did not sufficiently count on each other's knowledge or skill to help solve the problems of their client or the business.

Compare the impact of both and how they can use this knowledge in moving forward.

All team members are responsible for looking after the relationships as part of a chain of responsibility and care. Being proactive and managing relationships takes time. Relationships are based on trust - trusting the product, the people, the procedure and the price. All members of the team need to be proactive in managing the client relationship by understanding the complexity of the changing personal and business needs of each client and every team member, whether they work with them directly or indirectly.

It is important to make clients feel supported and that they can trust the team. We can assist this by demonstrating our commitment with many support levels in place, and by demonstrating we all have a common goal to help them achieve their needs.

Ricky Nowak is an author, Professional Speaker and consultant in Communication, Leadership and Presentation Skills for many of Australia's leading companies. Her business Confident Communication specialises in Corporate Training, Conferences Presentations and Executive Coaching. She can be contacted by calling 03 9500 9886, email: ricky@confidentcomms.com.au or visit www.confidentcomms.com.au for more information

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