

The Best Teams Have These Seven Qualities

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As you grow your ministry or business, remember that team health is more important than team size. Healthy teams, even small teams, bear much fruit but if your team is unhealthy, size actually compounds the problem.

Here are seven areas to work on to ensure your team is healthy.

1. Healthy Teams Trust Each Other:

Trust is the one thing that changes everything within teams and relationships. Trust is to teamwork what the foundation is to your home. The health of your team cannot outgrow the foundation of trust on which it is built. Patrick Lencioni has some wonderful wisdom on building vulnerability-based trust in teams.

2. Healthy Teams Identify as a Team:

Not every group of people working together is a team. Some 'teams' are just working groups – an association of individuals that report to the same boss. They meet periodically but getting results requires little or no collaboration. Real teams work together to clarify a singular shared win that is dependent on mutual accountability and – get this – teamwork!

3. Healthy Teams Embrace Shared Values:

Shared values clarify three important things. First, they articulate the uniqueness of their mission. Second, they describe what excellence looks like. And third, they clarify how people are treated in the organization. Shared values are like glue, they hold the team together. They are like a compass they keep you heading in the right direction. They are like a ruler they serve as a measuring stick. They are like a magnet, attracting the right people.

4. Healthy Teams Stay on Mission:

A clear and compelling mission helps teams stay on track by distinguish between good, better and best. Teams that have a sharp mission statement are empowered to say no to distractions because they have a deeper burning yes inside. Ministry and Church teams are not immune from mission creep. In fact, the Church is more vulnerable because needs and opportunities are everywhere.

5. Healthy Teams Insist on Clearly Defined Roles & Responsibilities:

Roles identify who you are within the organization and responsibilities define what you do. Healthy teams assign roles and responsibilities based on sweet spot which is the intersection of three things: gifting from God, passion of the individual and need/opportunity within the organization. When leaders put their people in their sweet spot, management gets easier – just loose them and let them grow the impact of the organization.

6. Healthy Teams Contain a Mix of Personalities:

Different positions on sports teams and various instruments in an orchestra produce positive chemistry. Healthy organizational teams possess the same mosaic. Unique personalities are welcomed and appreciated. Differences are recognized as complimentary not contradictory. In other words, there is relational chemistry – people appreciate each other's uniqueness. Appreciating each other is the foundation for other positive relational dynamics. For example, they enjoy spending time together. Meetings are fun and generate ideological conflict which produces great ideas. There is a high level of empathy, people listen to each other because they sincerely value other perspectives. They share their hearts because they feel free and safe to do so.

7. Healthy Teams have the Ability and the Willingness to Adapt & Change:

Methods are many, principles are few; methods always change but principles never do. Healthy teams never do something because, "we've always done it that way." The best teams are loyal to two principles – preserve the core and stimulate progress. Healthy teams are committed to their mission and values, but they abhor the status quo. They are motivated by the improvement agenda and committed to getting better together. Jim Collins has a short video (45 secs) on this principle here.

Teamwork is the fuel that empowers ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary results when they work together.