

WALL STREET JOURNAL
bestselling author

Success Factors

TY COBB, BABE RUTH

AND SO ON

**Comes
With a 7-DAY**

TEAMWORK CHALLENGE

WES BERRY

keynote speaker | wordsmith

***Business
Quick
Reads***
Series Volume 5

Copyright © 2022 by Green Dragon Services LLC



All rights reserved.

This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

ISBN: 979-8-9871172-0-0 (ebook)

ISBN: 979-8-9875246-0-2 (paperback)

Visit the author's website at
WesBerryGroup.com
for more information.

Printed in the United States of America.

Also by Wes Berry

Motivational Leadership & Business Series

*Big Things Have Small Beginnings: The Motivation
and Mindset that Build a \$750-Million Business
(Book 1)*

*Success Factors: Million-Dollar Concepts that Work
for Everyone (Book 2)*

*Master the Metaverse: Multi-Million Dollar Investment
Opportunities (Book 3)*

Business Quick Reads

The Positive Side of Golf: Motivation (Vol 1)

Ice Cream Therapy: Mindset (Vol 2)

Icons of Success: Leadership (Vol 3)

The Ritz Experience: Growth and Scalability (Vol 4)

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, and So On: Teamwork (Vol 5)

The Right Stuff: Integrity (Vol 6)

The Two Steves: Core Competencies (Vol 7)

FUD Moneyball: Change (Vol 8)

Get On Board: Inclusion (Vol 9)

Stress Is My Superpower (Vol 10)

Outcome Based Sales (Vol 11)

Effective Communication (Vol 12)

WALL STREET JOURNAL
bestselling author

Success Factors

TY COBB, BABE RUTH

AND SO ON

Comes **7-DAY**
With a

TEAMWORK CHALLENGE

WES BERRY

keynote speaker | www.wsberry.com

**Business
Quick
Reads**
Series Volume 5

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

TY COBB, BABE RUTH AND SO ON TEAMWORK

And 7-DAY TEAMWORK CHALLENGE

By: Wes Berry

In the 1987 movie *The Untouchables*, there's a scene where notorious gangster Al Capone, played by the legendary Robert De Niro, has gathered several of his associates together for a private banquet. With everyone seated around a

large round table, Capone begins a speech comparing business to baseball.

Capone, who was a semi-pro ballplayer before turning to a life of crime, emphasized the importance of teamwork over the individual. “Sunny day, stands are full of fans, and what does the player have to say? I’m going out there for myself,” says Capone. “But I get nowhere unless the team wins.”¹

He is talking about teamwork, and he uses the example of baseball players Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth to make his point.

Capone says, "I tell you, boys, that if you're gonna survive in this business, you gotta have heart. You gotta have brains. And you gotta have balls. Now, I know I got the heart and I got the brains. And I got the balls. But what I need is the loyalty. The loyalty of a great team. Like Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth. They were great players, but they were

nothing without their teams. And that's what I need. I need a great team."

Capone's words may seem ironic, given that he is a notorious criminal and hardly a model of teamwork. And he undercuts his point a little bit when he brutally bludgeons one of his associates. However, there is a lesson to be learned from his speech. Teamwork is essential in any field, whether it is sports, business, or law enforcement.

Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth are two of the greatest baseball players of all time. However, they did not achieve their success alone. They had teammates who supported them, encouraged them, and worked together with them to win games. This is true of any successful team. The success of the team depends on the contributions of each member.

In the movie, *Eliot Ness*, the title character, played by Kevin Costner, leads a team of law enforcement agents who are tasked with bringing

down Capone's criminal empire. Ness realizes that he cannot do this alone. He needs a team of skilled and dedicated agents who are willing to work together towards a common goal.

Ness's team includes Jim Malone, played by Sean Connery, a seasoned beat cop who becomes Ness's mentor; George Stone, played by Andy Garcia, a sharpshooter who provides backup for Ness; and Oscar Wallace, played by Charles Martin Smith, a nerdy accountant who provides valuable information about Capone's finances.

Each member of the team has their own strengths and weaknesses. However, they are able to put their differences aside and work together towards their goal. They rely on each other for support and encouragement, and they trust each other to do their part.

In the movie, Ness's team succeeds in bringing down Capone's empire because they work

together. They are able to overcome the obstacles they face because they trust each other and are committed to their goal.

The lesson to be learned from this is that teamwork is essential in any field. Whether you are in sports, business, or law enforcement, or yes, even the head of an organized crime syndicate, success depends on the strength of your team. A team that works together effectively can achieve great things. No one person can achieve success alone.

Teamwork requires trust, communication, and a willingness to put the team's goals ahead of individual goals. It means setting aside personal differences and working towards a shared vision. It also means recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each team member and utilizing them effectively.

I'm not suggesting that we all go out and become crime lords. What I am saying is that it's

important to embrace the power of teamwork in order to reach your goals. When your team can align the skills and abilities of each individual toward a single goal, you'll find that you can not only reach new heights, but that the path there will be much easier to travel, with many hands lightening everyone's workload.

For most of us who play the great game of business, we get into the work because we're confident in our ability to succeed. There are some days when we feel like Superman, completely invincible, ready to outrun speeding bullets and leap tall buildings in a single bound. Even on days when you don't feel you're at your best, you at least feel capable of getting the job done.

But you just can't do everything by yourself. Sure, it might seem easier to simply take care of things on your own, without spending the time describing to someone else what task needs to

be done. But deep down, we all know that we need help. Doing everything yourself isn't sustainable, and you'll quickly find yourself burning out, unable to keep up with the growing demands of your business as more and more work piles up.

Building a team takes that stress off of your shoulders by spreading the workload across several individuals, many of whom have knowledge, skills, and perspectives that can add a lot of value to the final product. And that's where the value really lies. By gathering the many individual talents of your team into one cohesive group, you can accomplish so much more than you could on your own.

Consider the collective community action of an Amish barn-raising. Whenever the need arises, such as after a fire or when starting a new farm, the community bands together to erect a barn, often in a single day. With modern

construction methods, this process would take weeks, if not months. If a single person attempted to build or rebuild a barn? You get the point.

The long tradition of teamwork and sacrifice for the greater good allows Amish communities to build beautiful, structurally sound barns. Yes, there's a great deal of planning and organization that takes place before the first stone is laid, but the actual execution of the barn-raising itself is a wonder to behold.²

When it comes to teamwork, it should be your goal to not only succeed but to reach a level of success that others find unbelievable. With effective team building and a good understanding of how to get the most out of your collaborations, that should be no problem at all.

Defining Teamwork

Coming up with a definition for teamwork seems simple enough. At its most basic level, teamwork is working with someone. This can be as collaborative as sharing information and processes throughout a project, or it can be as limited as coming together at the end of a project to compare results.

But to get the most out of teamwork, we need a better definition—one that really captures

*Choose those close to
you wisely, for your life
will be a reflection of
those choices.*

the added
strength that
a team
provides. It's
best to think

of teamwork as the action of a group of people working together to achieve a shared goal.

This idea of a shared goal is really important—and I mean important. When you have

a group of people working together without a strong sense of what the end result is supposed to be, individuals are actually less likely to work effectively. These unfocused groups have a tendency to become competitive in an unproductive way, as individuals pursue their own agendas without necessarily considering the well-being of the team and the status of the goal achievement.

Instead, having a common goal becomes a rallying point for the team, which helps channel each person's contribution in the most productive way possible. Even more important, it can help your team develop positive synergy, meaning the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Synergy

Michael Jordan is widely considered to be one of the best basketball players of all time—

maybe even the best athlete ever. Over the course of his career, he won six NBA championships, five NBA MVP awards, was a 14-time All-Star, and was voted to the All-NBA First Team ten times. All of this he accomplished even while taking two years off in the middle of his career to pursue a professional baseball career.

Whatever individual honors Jordan received, he would be the first to tell you that championships are what create a legacy. In order to win those championships, Jordan had to be part of a team, and his Chicago Bulls teammates answered the call. Horace Grant, Tony Kukoc, Ron Harper, and Dennis Rodman all contributed to a team that could score at will and played strong defense all over the court.

Then, of course, there's Scottie Pippen, Jordan's fellow Hall of Famer. He was the perfect foil to Jordan's greatness, adding an additional

scoring threat while blocking shots and pulling down rebounds. Jordan and Pippen clicked, and while each of them was a great player in his own right, they created an unstoppable force when working together.

Synergy is the state in which teammates bring out the best in each other, creating a final product that's far greater than the sum of all of their separate parts. Think of synergy like cooking a gourmet dish—you can start with the best ingredients in the world, but it's the right combination that transforms food into cuisine.

Finding synergy through teamwork is a lot like cooking. Each team member is a different ingredient, and building the best team means mixing those people together in a way that highlights the strengths of each individual. As a leader, you have to help select those ingredients and be able to control the variables to ensure they

come together as an entrée, adjusting the heat, adding seasoning, and making last-second additions to unlock the full flavor of the dish.

Each member of the team should be encouraged to grow, to make personal discoveries about themselves and their abilities, and to learn new skills to better contribute to the team. And through a common goal, whether it's an NBA Championship or an increase in sales numbers, your team should feel a shared sense of accomplishment for each and every achievement you reach.

The Importance of Hiring the Right People

In today's business world, teamwork has become one of the most important factors for success. Companies that work in a collaborative environment and have a strong sense of team spirit tend to achieve greater heights of success as

compared to those that do not. This is why hiring the right people with the right skills and personalities is crucial for building a strong team that can work together efficiently and effectively towards achieving the company's goals.

Let's take a look at how Jim Collins' book *Good to Great* highlights the importance of teamwork and getting the right people in the right roles to achieve greatness in business.

In his book, Collins says that great companies have a culture of discipline and use their culture to select the right people for the right jobs. He emphasizes that the most important aspect of building a great team is getting the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus. In other words, it is essential to have the right people in the right roles, and if someone is not a good fit for the team, they should be let go.

The book cites several examples of companies that were able to achieve greatness by getting the right people on board. One such company is Walgreens, a retail pharmacy chain in the United States. In the 1980s, Walgreens was struggling to keep up with its competitors, and its stock price had been stagnant for years. Then, in 1985, Charles Walgreen III became the CEO and started to transform the company. He implemented a new strategy that focused on building a strong team of leaders and managers who were passionate about the company's vision and values.

Walgreen III spent several months interviewing potential candidates for the company's leadership roles. He looked for people who were passionate about the company's mission, had a strong work ethic, and were team players. He also looked for people who were willing to put in the hard work required to achieve success.

With the right people on board, Walgreens started to transform its business. The company introduced several new initiatives, such as its "customer first" policy, which aimed to provide excellent customer service. The company also invested heavily in technology, such as automated prescription refill systems, to make its stores more efficient.

As a result of these initiatives, Walgreens' stock price soared, and the company became one of the most successful retail pharmacy chains in the United States. This success was largely due to the company's culture of discipline and focus on getting the right people on board.

Another example of a company that achieved greatness through teamwork is Southwest Airlines. Southwest is known for its excellent customer service and low fares. The company's success is largely due to its culture of

teamwork and its focus on hiring the right people for the right roles.

Southwest Airlines has a rigorous hiring process that involves multiple interviews and assessments. The company looks for people who are passionate about the company's vision, have a strong work ethic, and are team players.

Southwest also looks for people who have a sense of humor and can bring a positive attitude to the workplace.

With the right people on board, Southwest has been able to achieve remarkable success. The company has consistently been profitable, even during tough economic times, and has become one of the most successful airlines in the world.

Southwest Airlines even overcame their 2022 holiday travel debacle. This success is largely due to the company's culture of teamwork and its focus on hiring the right people for the right roles.

Building a great team is essential for achieving success in business. Bring the right people on board and ensure that everyone is in the right roles. This requires a culture of discipline and a focus on teamwork. By following the examples of companies like Walgreens and Southwest Airlines, businesses can learn how to build a team that can achieve greatness.

The 6 Keys to Effective Teamwork

No matter what kind of team you're working with, there are some common factors that appear in all successful teams. Each of these keys on its own helps increase the efficiency and effectiveness of your team, but striving to encompass all six of these keys will ensure your team finds the synergy that will raise your game to the next level.

1. Communication

By far, the most important aspect of successful teamwork is open and effective communication. Communication is the ability to transmit ideas from one person to another. If you don't have the ability to clearly communicate your ideas to others, you create an impenetrable roadblock, and the detours around that roadblock can be long and confusing. You may lose people along the way. This is true in just about every aspect of life, isn't it?

How many problems could we avoid if we were just better communicators? Politics might be easier, debates would be more productive, and I wouldn't get in trouble with my wife because I forgot to pick up milk at the store.

But as important as communication is for the rest of your life, it's absolutely essential for your team-related efforts. According to a report in

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 400 companies with over 100,000 employees claimed that they lost an average of \$62.4 million every year due to poor communications with employees.³

Can you believe that? \$62.4 million gone, just because companies didn't figure out how to optimize communication with and among their employees.

Well, I can absolutely believe it, without any doubt or hesitation.

Developing clear lines of communication is how teams come to understand each other. It's how they inform one another of their progress and their problems. It's how they contribute ideas or offer constructive suggestions for how something might be improved. In short, everything a team does stems from communication.

There are a number of ways to improve your team's communication skills. It helps to make sure you're using a shared vocabulary, whether it's jargon from within your industry or regular non-specialized language. Maybe you'll need to go over some key terms with your team in order to prevent crossed wires and other misunderstandings.

Another option is to decide which forms of communication work best for your team. Some teams function well during in-person meetings, while others prefer phone calls or email threads. You can determine which medium works best for your current needs and put emphasis on those forms that help your team succeed.

Finally, the best way to encourage communication is to be honest with your team. When something goes wrong, or if you find your team is making unsatisfactory progress toward a

deadline, don't be afraid to let them know. It's critical that you take ownership of the issue and don't deflect. Most teams will respect that honesty and take ownership of their own mistakes moving forward.

2. Share a Common Goal

As I mentioned before, having a common goal is a key part of any team effort—in fact, it's a significant part of how we define teamwork. That's why it's worth taking a moment to dig a bit deeper into the idea of a shared goal.

Setting a goal is both the easiest and hardest part of managing a team. It's easy because you can essentially set the bar anywhere you want, whether you want an easily achieved goal to build confidence or a stretch goal to inspire your team to reach their full potential.

But that's also what makes setting goals difficult. Yes, the world is your oyster when it comes to setting goals, but setting the wrong goal can have long-lasting consequences on your team morale and your business as a whole. If you aim too low, your team may meet the goal, but the end result might not be enough to keep your company competitive. Too high, and you could discourage your team, leaving them frustrated and with feelings of inadequacy.

That's why any goals you set shouldn't be carved into stone. Hey, things happen. A team member gets sick or takes a position with another company. The market takes an unexpected twist. Maybe you get good news and receive an unexpected windfall. In the great game, we know that unexpected things happen, and how you react to them is a lot of what business is about.

One way to ensure your goals stay in tune with the performance of your team is to establish milestones or benchmarks. In other words, checkmarks you can hit as you cross certain thresholds. These milestones hinge entirely on what your goal is. You might set marks for total sales, new subscribers, business growth . . . virtually any metric you use to measure your business can be used to set milestones.

When you hit (or miss) milestones, it's a great time to reevaluate your team's goal. You can look at why your plan either succeeded or failed and adjust your tactics to fine-tune your approach. You can also reset your goals, raising or lowering the target to best suit the performance of your team. No matter what, make your team a part of this goal-setting process, and they'll become full stake-holding participants in the teamwork process.

3. Know Your Role

Believe it or not, you can learn a lot about teamwork from a rock band. Formed in 1962, the Rolling Stones have been rocking around the world for nearly 60 years, an incredible span of time for any group of musicians—let alone rock stars. The Beatles, perhaps the most famous band of all time, were only active for eight years, which is only 13% of the career of the Stones.

What's the secret to the Rolling Stones' continued success after all these years? They still tour the world, playing music for packed stadiums and arenas, with fans from ages nine to 90. How do they pull it all off?

While my old music teacher would love for me to tell you it's practice, in reality, it's something even more important: each band member knows their role in the group. I don't just mean their instruments, of course. What I mean is

each person has a particular function within the band, and because everyone knows and accepts their role, they function as a very cohesive unit.

Now, practice is important, of course, and the band gets together for intensive rehearsals a full two months before going on tour. But during these rehearsals, the band also practices their roles.

Lead singer Mick Jagger is described as the CEO, planning the trajectory of the band's shows, while guitarist Keith Richards is the spiritual engine onstage. Of course, this leads to conflicts; luckily, guitarist Ronnie Wood acts as the peacekeeper, helping negotiate truces at contentious moments. Drummer Charlie Watts, like most drummers, is the steady pillar of the band, keeping everything moving forward.⁴

What does the experience of the Rolling Stones tell us about teamwork? It's important to know your role as part of a team. Each team

member has particular strengths, whether it's hard skills like math, engineering, or statistics or soft skills like leadership or problem-solving.

When each team member's role in the overall project is made clear, it's easier to avoid potential conflicts that might arise. There's an old saying that too many cooks spoil the broth. Each cook has his or her own idea of what the broth should taste like and adds their own touch without asking the other cooks. What you get is a mishmash of flavors that tastes good to no one.

It's the same with teamwork. If roles aren't made clear, you could end up with four different people thinking they're in charge, leaving numerous tasks unfinished. Moreover, it leads to conflicts between the supposed leaders, who might be trying to take the group in totally different directions.

When every member of the team knows, understands, and undertakes their particular role and can communicate that clearly to each other, you'll avoid many of these messy struggles. They may still happen, of course—human nature will almost always see to that. But with a clear structure, you can quickly settle these disputes and keep your team headed forward.

A quick warning, however: while knowing your role in a team is important, some team members may take that idea to extremes. These are the team members who might tell a colleague to “stay in their lane,” implying that the colleague doesn't know what they're talking about.

While the team member may have a point, expressing it this way can quickly poison the atmosphere of the team. This attitude can shut down discussion, create ill will between team

members, and make it all but impossible to be productive.

When this happens, it's best to take both team members aside individually, discuss the issue with them, and make sure everyone understands not only their role, but also how to treat each other appropriately.

4. Accountability

While it's all well and good to make sure every team member knows their role within the group, it doesn't matter if no one holds them accountable. In an ideal world, each person would hold themselves responsible for accomplishing their tasks at a high level, taking pride in their work, knowing that others are depending on them to produce their best work.

But I think we all know, in our heart of hearts, that this isn't always the case. In fact, I'm

willing to bet that every one of us has let ourselves down at least once in the past. Maybe you procrastinated too long on a project, thinking you had enough time to play 18 holes and still meet your deadline, leaving you scrambling. Or perhaps you just forgot about an important task, only remembering during a staff meeting while everyone stares at you expectantly.

Mistakes like this happen, and that's okay. The problem is when it becomes habitual. Human nature being what it is, it's only natural for some of us to try and figure out what we can get away with. If you cut one corner here, what's the harm in trying to cut one over there, too. Eventually, if no one stops you, you run out of corners.

Accountability is a key factor in making sure you work well together as a team. Collaborative work builds on itself, and like a pyramid without a stable base, when a team

member doesn't follow through on their particular role, the entire thing can topple over.

Accountability is about answering to yourself and to your team. My father once gave me some great advice: don't ask anyone to do something you wouldn't do yourself. If you can't hold yourself accountable for getting your work done, then how can you possibly ask someone to hold themselves to a higher standard? Personal responsibility inspires group accountability—and the opposite holds true, too.

5. Creativity

In order for your team to reach its full potential, you have to encourage a creative environment. Now, I'm not suggesting that everyone should sit around writing poetry or painting landscapes. But at every opportunity, you should be encouraging team members to look for

unusual or counterintuitive solutions to problems. Don't just think outside of the box—burn the box.

In April of 1970, the three astronauts of Apollo 13 were on a mission to land on the moon when an oxygen tank on the side of their craft exploded. Over the next several days, the crew scrambled to stay alive, improvising solutions to problems as they arose.

Of course, the astronauts weren't alone. Mission control in Houston was full of staffers trying to solve the problems faced by the crew, including one big one: how to get them home safely. Mission control developed a flight path that would use the gravity of the moon to slingshot them back to the Earth, while devising plans for the crew to conserve energy, fuel, and water.

One of the more challenging problems they faced was carbon dioxide. The crew had been forced to retreat to the lunar landing module, or

LM, but because there were three men instead of two, they soon ran out of carbon dioxide filters. While they still had plenty of filters in the command module (CM), these filters didn't fit in the LM, meaning the astronauts were slowly drowning in excess carbon dioxide.

Down on the ground, NASA technicians improvised a makeshift solution, using only the equipment the astronauts had on board, including plastic bags, pieces of cardboard, and a towel. Communicating the procedure verbally to the Apollo 13 astronauts, the crew was able to fashion a workable carbon dioxide scrubber, and a few days later, they splashed safely into the Pacific Ocean.⁵

During a time of high stress, with the lives of three men on the line, these engineers rose to the challenge. They were encouraged to find creative ways to solve their problems.

While your team likely isn't facing such life-and-death scenarios, you can still take home the lesson of creativity. When you encourage your team to look for creative solutions, you'll find new ways of doing things, and that can give you a distinct advantage.

I want you to try something for me. It's a little artsy, but just bear with me. Grab a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. Then I want you to draw a picture of yourself—without taking your pen or pencil from the paper.

It's not important how gifted an artist you are, since we're not after creating a museum-quality drawing. Whether you're a budding Picasso or you draw like a third grader, what matters is that you try. How do you solve the problem of drawing separate features without lifting your pen from the page? What happens

when you have to connect your eyes, mouth, ears, and head with a single line?

There is no right or wrong solution, just different approaches to the problem. I've seen people backtrack over lines, leaving heavily marked paths where their pencil has been run over and over. I've seen people create simple, evocative drawings that merely suggest a face, while others go entirely overboard, shading the entire picture and leaving the face in relief.

Once you're done, take a look at your picture. How did your approach pan out? How else might you have approached the problem? Are there solutions that you didn't consider in the moment because you felt pressed for time?

In our world, problems arise all the time, and what defines us is our response. Those problems are going to impose restrictions on us, constraining what steps we can take, and we need

to be creative enough to maneuver our way through those restrictions to find possible solutions.

The other thing? Don't impose any extra restrictions on yourself. Did you feel rushed in your drawing? If so, why? My only restriction was to not lift your pen or pencil. Did you impose a time limit on yourself, even unconsciously?

There's an unspoken side to creativity as well, and that's being aware of what you can and can't do. If you either consciously or unconsciously impose restrictions on your creativity, you could be impeding the creative process itself, making life more difficult for your teammates—and yourself.

In a sense, another term for this kind of creativity is openness. Be open to suggestions, new approaches, and mid-course adjustments,

especially when those changes open a window to an otherwise unseen path.

6. Support from All Sides

Throughout all of these keys, the one unspoken factor is trust. Your team needs to feel supported from all directions. Without this sense of support, it's difficult to get your team to fully buy into the common goal and the strategies being used to pursue it.

This is especially true when it comes to creativity and risk-taking. If a team member doesn't feel they can trust the other members of the team, especially the leadership, they're much less likely to be willing to make suggestions or try new methods. Instead, they're usually more inclined to behave in ways that protect their position, and it's difficult to bring them back into the group.

One of the best ways to help your team feel supported is simply to listen to them. The next time you're in a group setting, I want you to try this: ask your team how they feel things are progressing, and encourage them to voice their opinions about progress, methodology, and so on. Then, don't say another word.

Okay, if your team is a little hesitant, you can prompt people to speak. But try to talk as little as possible. Instead, actively listen to each person as they speak, showing a genuine interest in what they're saying. Try not to take notes; just look them in the eye, nodding or smiling, and make sure each person feels heard.

For many leaders, this is the hardest thing in the world. But I promise you, your team will appreciate it. This exercise can create a habit of openness, and you may not have to speak much at

all. In the best cases, the teams start to lead themselves, and the synergy will continue to build.

An Example of Teamwork

It isn't hard to see examples of teamwork all around you. Sports teams rely on teamwork to succeed, and those that don't work well together usually lose night after night. Families use teamwork to ensure that everyone gets fed, that chores get done, and that there's still time for recreation. Even sanitation workers use teamwork, calling out to the driver to let them know they're ready to move to the next house.

However, perhaps nothing better shows the importance of teamwork than the theatre. Consider the 2015 Broadway smash hit, *Hamilton*. The show's writer and original star, Lin-Manuel Miranda, has rightly been hailed as a creative genius, blending hip hop and musical theatre into

a seamless creation that highlights America's diversity while bringing generations together to celebrate U.S. history.

But while Miranda gets the lion's share of the credit, putting on a Broadway show—or any show, for that matter—takes a huge team, putting in a ton of unseen effort behind the scenes. While audiences get to enjoy a two-hour show, it's easy to overlook the thousands of hours that go into making something like *Hamilton* possible.

It all starts with a common goal. Miranda wrote the script after reading a biography of Alexander Hamilton written by historian Ron Chernow. However, until he brought together a group willing to produce the show, it was nothing more than a script. Once Miranda surrounded himself with other creators, the script transformed into the show, and bringing it to Broadway would

be the common goal shared by every team member.

Think of all the people that contribute to a show coming together. You have the actors, of course, from the big-name stars to the members of the chorus, and each cast member adds a vital piece to the performance.

But the cast is just the start. You have set builders, scene painters, costume creators, prop masters, lighting electricians, and sound engineers, creating the physical space for the performers and adding the visual and sound effects necessary to complete the stage picture.

All of these tasks are overseen by designers, who put together their visions, create drawings and schematics, and guide their teams to making that vision a reality.

Then there's the directing team. Headed by the primary director, *Hamilton's* team includes a

choreographer, a music director, stage managers, and production coordinators. All of these people work together to make sure each part of the process is coming together, with the director at the top to guide the overall production to match their vision.

Then there are all the people on the other side of the building. This includes producers raising money, PR people who oversee publicity, and human resources people making sure there are enough staff members.

By the time it's all said and done, you can easily have more than a hundred people working on a single production, taking care of every possible aspect of the show. But the key factor is that everyone knows their role. They understand what is expected of them, and they go about their job knowing that the production won't happen if they don't get their work done.

While each team member is accountable to someone, they also hold themselves accountable. Like most artists, theatre employees hold themselves to a high standard, particularly on Broadway, which is considered to be the standard of American theatre. They hold themselves accountable not just to the theatre, but to their own personal standards of artistic quality. Not only does it reflect well on the production, but it reflects well on them, too.

Of course, the key to making this all come together is good communication. The production team is a hierarchy, with each staff member knowing their place. The director and producer make decisions, then pass them down the chain until they reach the people responsible for

*Mortar unites
bricks into one
structure; find the
mortar that will
give you structure.*

implementing it. Communication is collaborative, and rarely are decisions made without hearing input or without regard for what it means to the show and to the staff.

As you might expect, this can also require a lot of creativity. If a sound engineer wants to put a speaker somewhere on the set, the sound and set teams work together to find an answer that works for everyone. This usually involves finding a creative solution, like installing the speaker under the stage, or creating a box that will hide the speaker without affecting the sound.

Finally, the team is supportive of one another. Putting on a Broadway show is already stressful, and with tight deadlines that never seem to allow enough time to get the job done, tensions can sometimes run high. But the best leaders are those who can sense the temperature of the room, and when things feel a little too tight, they can find

ways to release that pressure by letting each team member know their contributions are important and valued.

Not all shows are as successful as *Hamilton*, which has already grossed over \$1 billion.⁶ There have been some legendary flops, too, and most shows have trouble breaking even.

This isn't always because a production couldn't work together as a team. There can be issues with audience interest, bad reviews, and other problems that can be impossible to predict.

Still, these productions require huge teams to work together towards the singular goal of getting a production up and running on Broadway, even when the productions end up losing money. Just like in baseball, even making it to the big leagues is an accomplishment.

How to Build Your Team

The two important things to remember about building teams are that it takes time, and it's never finished. Making a successful team means building communication and trust among all members, and that trust can only develop over time. You may have some groups that seem to hit it off almost immediately, but even these groups need time to jell as a workforce.

You can help this process along by starting at the very beginning, with the onboarding process. When you hire a new person, you should try and immerse them in a team-based culture. Ideally, this onboarding will extend over several weeks, giving both your new hire and your existing team time to adapt to each other.

When it comes to ways to build your teamwork skills, there are a number of different

methods available. Let me start with one to avoid: the trust fall.

Trust falls have been around for years, and while they can make a group feel more united, the risks far outweigh the benefits. Some teammates miss the arms of their co-workers, while others are too heavy, and nothing breaks trust faster than a failed trust fall. These failures can also lead to injuries—which can lead to lawsuits. Besides, at this point, trust falls are an old-fashioned, played-out bonding activity that's lost a lot of its luster.

So what to do instead? Social activities are a great choice. Have your team gather for bowling, a meal, a bar trip, whatever—anything to get them together outside of the office, where they can develop closer relationships. These tighter bonds will help collaboration in the office, making your team stronger. You might also consider a board game night or even hosting your own game show.

Other, more formal ways to build your team include role switching and cross-training. In role switching, you simply have two employees trade jobs for a short period. This allows them to get a better sense of what the other person does and what goes into their work.

Cross-training, on the other hand, involves training employees for multiple roles. This is especially useful for teams where members might find themselves working on a separate project for a period of time. This way, you'll have multiple people available to fill each role, making sure you stay productive.

Don't forget that team building is a never-ending process. You won't wake up one day and say, "Hey, it really feels like this team is a finished product!" Instead, you'll need to constantly manage your team, adapting to personalities and

shifting circumstances, all in service of keeping your team functioning at its best.

Ready, Set, Go!

In America, we tend to focus a lot on the individual. It's understandable, of course, with our long history of rugged individualism, which stretches back to our nation's founding. As Americans entered the West, they established homesteads, often enduring hardships that are difficult for us to imagine these days . . . cold temperatures, shortages of food and manufactured goods, and long stretches cut off from the rest of the country.

These pioneers stand tall in our history, and even today, we look at these figures as models for overcoming the difficulties they faced and making our current nation a possibility.

Today, we tend to see individuals in this same light. Athletes like Tom Brady and LeBron James, movie stars such as Robert Downey, Jr., and Meryl Streep, and business leaders like Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg all take center stage, and our eyes focus on them.

But as talented as these people are, they would be nowhere if it wasn't for the team of people around them, providing support and giving them the platforms they stand upon. Brady and LeBron need their teammates, just like Downey and Streep need their co-stars. And Jobs, Bezos, and Zuckerberg all headed large companies that were built with the help of countless contributors, each adding their own strengths to make the business a success.

I want you to try something. We all know how important teams are, but it's easy to forget just how many teams we're a part of at any given

moment. For the next three minutes, I want you to sit with a pen and a piece of paper, and write down all of the teams you're a part of.

What kind of teams? Think broadly. You may be on a rec league basketball team or play softball for your company, but that's an easy one. Look a little deeper, into all aspects of your life. What teams are you on at work? What about at home? Do you participate in a church or in a volunteer setting? What about your children—do they have extracurriculars that you're involved in, as well?

After you have your list of teams, I want you to think about how each of the six keys of teamwork applies to each team. You don't have to go into that much detail, but you should be able to see how you fit within each team, knowing your role, how each person is held accountable, and how you support each other on that team.

Remember, teamwork comes in all different forms, and your role can vary widely from team to team. You may be the boss at work, but you might only be responsible for providing snacks at your daughter's soccer game. You could be a mail room clerk who directs plays with the local community theatre. Anyone who is part of a family knows that your role changes constantly: taskmaster at one moment, then laughing jokester the next.

It's amazing, isn't it, how many teams you're already a part of? For all of our focus on individuals, our lives are dominated by teams, working with others to accomplish things we could never achieve on our own. Humans are social creatures, and it's in our nature to build relationships and establish teams, even if that teamwork stays informal.

"No man is an island, entire of itself," says poet John Donne, "every man is a piece of the

continent, a part of the main.”⁷ This is just as true today as it was in the 17th century. No matter how strong our drive to be independent, we rely on teamwork, on collaborating with others, to reach our goals.

Instead of resisting teamwork, embrace it. One person can be strong, but two are stronger, and three even more so. With the right attitude and the willingness to work as part of a whole, you’ll find that there’s pretty much nothing you can’t accomplish. And that’s a good feeling.

**ALMOST THE END! YOU STILL NEED TO
COMPLETE THE 7-DAY CHALLENGE**

7-Day Teamwork Challenge

Why Accept this Challenge?

If you're seeking personal growth and development, you need to commit to consistent effort. One way to jumpstart this journey is by taking the 7-Day Challenge. To succeed in this challenge, you must dedicate a little time each day to contemplation and reflection on the given topic.

The questions provided are only a starting point. If they don't resonate with your personal experiences, modify them to better suit your situation. This flexibility allows for a more

meaningful and authentic exploration of the subject matter.

When you commit to this challenge, you're making a decision to actively engage with your thoughts and emotions. Writing down your reflections is a powerful tool to solidify your insights and gain clarity on your internal landscape. This daily practice can have a profound impact on your overall well-being.

Approach this 7-Day Challenge with an open mind and willingness to explore. You may uncover aspects of yourself that you weren't previously aware of or gain a deeper understanding of your values and priorities. This challenge's benefits extend beyond the initial 7 days, and the act of carving out time for introspection and self-reflection can become a habit.

Ultimately, this challenge is a powerful tool for anyone seeking to enhance their self-awareness

and personal growth. By dedicating a small amount of time each day to contemplation and reflection, you are taking an important step towards a more fulfilling and meaningful life. Upon completion, commit to re-reading and updating this challenge when you find yourself challenged by this concept in the future.

A 7-day Challenge provides a roadmap for achieving your goals by breaking them down into smaller, achievable tasks. By having a clear challenge, you can stay motivated and focused on your goals. Each day's challenge builds upon the previous day's, creating momentum towards the desired outcome. Additionally, having a plan can help you stay organized and prioritize tasks based on their importance and urgency.

A challenge can help you overcome procrastination and stay accountable. By having a clear outline of what needs to be done, you can

avoid feeling overwhelmed and take action towards your goals. Furthermore, having a plan can help you track your progress and make adjustments as needed.

Overall, a 7-day Challenge is a powerful tool to focus on a particular issue and provide greater insight, bringing an area of concern into your comfort zone.

Day 1: Set Clear Goals and Objectives

Start by setting clear goals and objectives that everyone on your team can understand and work towards. When everyone knows what they're working towards, they're more likely to be motivated and work together to achieve those goals.

NOTES: _____

Day 2: Encourage Open Communication

Encourage open communication within the team by creating a safe space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard, and try to avoid interrupting or talking over each other.

NOTES: _____

Day 3: Build Trust

Trust is a key component of successful teamwork. Take the time to build trust within your team by being honest, transparent, and reliable. Show your team that you trust them by delegating tasks and responsibilities and letting them take ownership of their work.

NOTES: _____

Day 4: Foster Collaboration

Foster collaboration by encouraging your team members to work together on projects and tasks. Assign group projects and tasks that require everyone to contribute and work towards a common goal. When team members collaborate, they can learn from each other, share ideas, and work towards a better solution.

NOTES: _____

Day 5: Acknowledge Individual Strengths

Acknowledge individual strengths within your team and make sure everyone is in the right role. It's important to have a diverse team with a variety of skills and strengths. When team members are in roles that suit their strengths, they're more likely to be motivated and productive.

NOTES: _____

Day 6: Celebrate Successes

Celebrate successes as a team to boost morale and encourage teamwork. Recognize and reward team members who have gone above and beyond or contributed significantly to the team's success. Celebrating successes together can help build a sense of camaraderie and encourage team members to continue working together towards common goals.

NOTES: _____

Day 7: Take Time to Reflect and Contemplate

Take time to reflect on the progress your team has made and contemplate how you can continue to improve teamwork. Ask for feedback from team members on what's working and what's not, and use that feedback to make necessary adjustments. Use this day as a time to recharge and prepare for the week ahead.

NOTES: _____

Remember that building and maintaining teamwork is an ongoing process. By taking the time to set clear goals, encourage communication, build trust, foster collaboration, acknowledge individual strengths, celebrate successes, and reflect on progress, you can help create a strong and successful team.

References

1. De Palma, Brian, dir. *The Untouchables*. 1987; Hollywood, CA: Paramount. YouTube (6 October 2011).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHH9EYZHoVU>
2. Hohenadel, Kristin. "Watch the Amish Raise a Barn in Less Than 10 Hours." *Slate* (9 September 2014). <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/09/watch-an-ohio-amish-community-raise-a-barn-in-less-than-10-hours-video.html>
3. Buhler, Patricia M. and Worden, Joel D. "The Cost of Poor Communication." *SHRM* (2013).
<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/communication/pages/the-cost-of-poor-communications.aspx>
4. Mackay, Harvey. "The Essentials of Teamwork in the Business World." *Star Tribune* (20 September 2021).

<https://www.startribune.com/the-essentials-of-teamwork-in-the-business-world/572457472/>

5. “Apollo 13 Infographic: How Did They Make That CO2 Scrubber?” Space Center Houston (10 April 2019).

<https://spacecenter.org/apollo-13-infographic-how-did-they-make-that-co2-scrubber/>

6. Chmielewski, Dawn. “Lin-Manuel Miranda’s ‘Hamilton’ Crashes Broadway’s Billion-Dollar Club.” *Forbes* (8 June 2020).

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dawnchmielewski/2020/06/08/lin-manuel-mirandas-hamilton-crashes-broadways-billion-dollar-club/?sh=181221b5b3cc>

7. Donne, John. “Meditation XVII.” From *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1923.

About The Author

Wes Berry is a Keynote Speaker and Workshop Facilitator with the professional skills and real-life experience to deliver on any stage. He works with Fortune 500 companies like Johnson & Johnson to smaller businesses and associations of all sizes that are seeking a breakthrough experience. Wes changes lives and transforms organizations by delivering a Paradigm Shift. He has written sixteen business and success books and is a *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author and TEDx speaker. As an entrepreneur, he built a \$750 million international company that operated in 130 countries.

His business knowledge and communications skills have made him an expert media contributor on many topics, from

commercial drone applications to the downsizing of Sears, resulting in appearances with various media outlets. His many media appearances include NPR, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The London Times*, *Entrepreneur* and *Time* magazines, Fox News, Neil Cavuto, Geraldo Rivera, and John Stossel, to name just a few.

Visit his website at WesBerryGroup.com to learn more.



