

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

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**TY COBB,
BABE RUTH
AND SO ON
TEAMWORK**

**And 7-DAY TEAMWORK
CHALLENGE**

By: Wes Berry

Part 1

What Is Teamwork?

*“Alone we can do so little. Together we
can do so much.”*

—Helen Keller

Chapter 1

Making the Team

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.”

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 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.

Conclusion

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 of these keys will ensure your team finds the synergy that will raise your game to the next level.

Let's take a closer look at how you can effectively build teams in your organization.

Part 2

Building a Strong Team

*"Coming together is a beginning, staying
together is progress, and working together
is success."*

—Henry Ford

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

Chapter 2

Effective 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.

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.

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. Finally, what communication medium works best for your team members?

Let's take a closer look at how you can use effective communication to help build your teams.

1. Encourage Open and Transparent Communication

One of the best ways 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. Here are a few strategies for fostering a culture where team members feel encouraged to communicate openly.

- *Create a Safe Environment:* Establish a safe and non-judgmental environment where team members feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions. This involves cultivating a culture that values diversity of perspectives and encourages constructive feedback.
- *Lead by Example:* Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the communication culture within a team. By leading with transparency and openness, leaders set a precedent for the entire team. Share information about organizational goals, challenges, and decisions to foster a culture of trust.

- *Encourage Two-Way Communication:* Communication is a two-way street. Encourage team members not only to express their thoughts but also to actively seek and listen to feedback. This fosters a collaborative atmosphere where everyone feels heard and valued.

2. Teach Active Listening Skills to Understand Team Members

Effective communication goes beyond speaking—it involves active listening. 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.

Now, here's how you can cultivate active listening skills within a team.

- *Provide Training Opportunities:* Actively promote training sessions or workshops focused on active listening skills. These

sessions can cover techniques such as paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, and providing feedback. Cultivating a team that actively listens enhances understanding and reduces misunderstandings.

- *Practice Empathetic Listening:* Encourage team members to practice empathetic listening, where they seek to understand the speaker's perspective and emotions. This not only enhances communication but also fosters a supportive team culture where individuals feel valued.
- *Acknowledge and Validate:* Teach team members to acknowledge and validate the thoughts and feelings of their colleagues. This involves expressing understanding, even in disagreement, and recognizing the diversity of opinions within the team.

3. Emphasize Clarity in Conveying Ideas and Expectations

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. Here are some tools to help with that:

- *Use Simple and Direct Language:*
Encourage team members to use simple and direct language to convey their ideas. Complexity and ambiguity can lead to misunderstandings. Clear and concise communication minimizes the risk of misinterpretation.

- *Define Expectations Explicitly:* Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations within the team. This involves providing explicit guidelines on individual and collective tasks, deadlines, and performance expectations. Clarity in expectations reduces confusion and enhances accountability.
- *Seek Clarification:* Cultivate a culture where team members feel comfortable seeking clarification when instructions or information are unclear. Encourage questions and ensure that there is an open channel for resolving doubts.

4. Promote Regular Team Meetings to Share Updates and Insights

Structured communication channels, such as regular team meetings, play a pivotal role in

maintaining cohesion and keeping everyone informed. These practices are helpful for conducting team meetings.

- *Establish a Consistent Schedule:* Regularity is key to the effectiveness of team meetings. Establish a consistent schedule for team meetings, whether they are daily check-ins, weekly updates, or monthly reviews. Consistency helps team members anticipate and prepare for these collaborative sessions.
- *Agenda Setting:* Prioritize agenda setting for team meetings. Share the agenda in advance so that team members can come prepared with updates, questions, or discussion points. An organized agenda ensures that the meeting stays focused and productive.

- *Encourage Active Participation:* Actively encourage all team members to participate in meetings. This involves creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing updates, insights, or concerns. Active participation fosters a sense of ownership and engagement.

5. Use Various Communication Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

In the digital age, leveraging communication tools is crucial for fostering collaboration, especially in remote or distributed teams. You need to decide which forms of communication work best for your team. Some teams function well during in-person meetings, while others prefer phone calls, video 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.

- *Collaborative Platforms:* Utilize collaborative platforms that facilitate real-time communication and document sharing. Platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Asana provide a centralized space for discussions, file sharing, and project updates.
- *Video Conferencing:* In remote or global teams, face-to-face communication may not always be feasible. Video conferencing tools, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, bridge the gap by providing a virtual meeting space. Video interactions enhance connection and understanding among team members.

- *Project Management Tools:* Implement project management tools that integrate communication features. These tools enable teams to track tasks, share progress updates, and discuss project-related matters in a centralized and organized manner.

Conclusion

Teamwork begins with effective communication. By encouraging open and transparent communication, teaching active listening skills, emphasizing clarity in conveying ideas and expectations, promoting regular team meetings, and leveraging various communication tools, organizations can lay the groundwork for a collaborative culture that fuels success.

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

Chapter 3

Clearly Defined Roles

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.

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.

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. You may not be a rock star, but if you follow the example of the Rolling Stones, your organization can learn how to build a team that can achieve greatness.

So how do we do that?

1. Define Roles and Responsibilities for Each Team Member

The foundation of a well-functioning team lies in the clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Team members need to be able to define their roles (like the Rolling Stones members did) in order to define their contributions. Here are some strategies:

- *Role Identification:* Initiate the teamwork journey by identifying the specific roles required within the team. Consider the skill sets, expertise, and functions necessary for the team to achieve its objectives. This may involve conducting a thorough analysis of the project or task at hand.
- *Individual Responsibilities:* Once roles are identified, clearly outline the individual responsibilities associated with each role.

Define the tasks, deliverables, and expectations for every team member. This provides a roadmap for individuals, ensuring clarity on their contributions to the team's overall success.

- *Collaborative Input:* Involve team members in the role definition process. Seek their input on the tasks they feel align with their strengths and expertise. This collaborative approach not only ensures a more accurate alignment of responsibilities but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment.

2. Ensure Alignment Between Roles and Individual Strengths

Optimizing team performance involves aligning roles with the unique strengths of individual team members.

- *Strengths Assessment:* Conduct a strengths assessment for each team member to identify their core competencies and areas of expertise. Tools such as Gallup StrengthsFinder or DISC assessments can provide valuable insights into individual strengths.
- *Strategic Alignment:* Align roles with the identified strengths of team members. Assign tasks and responsibilities that leverage each individual's strongest capabilities. This strategic alignment enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the team by maximizing the collective impact of its members.
- *Skill Diversification:* Ensure that roles are diverse and capitalize on a range of skills within the team. This not only optimizes

task performance but also creates opportunities for skill development and knowledge sharing among team members.

3. Address Ambiguity by Clarifying Roles as Needed

Ambiguity in role definition can lead to confusion, inefficiency, and frustration within a team. Here are some strategies for addressing ambiguity and clarifying roles as needed.

- *Open Communication Channels:* Foster a culture of open communication where team members feel comfortable discussing and clarifying roles. Establish channels for individuals to seek clarification on tasks, expectations, or any uncertainties they may have.

- *Regular Check-Ins:* Schedule regular check-ins to discuss individual roles and responsibilities. Use these sessions to address any emerging ambiguities, provide updates on task progress, and ensure that everyone is on the same page. Regular communication mitigates the risk of misunderstandings.
- *Adaptability:* Recognize that roles may need to adapt and evolve based on changing project dynamics or unforeseen challenges. Embrace a flexible approach to role definition, allowing for adjustments as needed to better align with shifting priorities.

4. Encourage Cross-Functional Understanding of Team Members' Contributions

A holistic understanding of team members' contributions fosters a collaborative environment. It's important to encourage cross-functional understanding within the team.

- *Knowledge Sharing Sessions:* Facilitate knowledge-sharing sessions where team members can showcase their expertise and contributions. This could take the form of presentations, workshops, or informal discussions. Cross-functional understanding enhances appreciation for diverse skill sets and promotes a culture of mutual respect.
- *Job Rotation Opportunities:* 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.

Allowing team members to experience different roles within the team not only broadens their skill sets but also enhances their understanding of the challenges and contributions of their colleagues.

- *Team-building Activities:* Incorporate team-building activities that encourage collaboration and communication. Activities such as group projects, problem-solving challenges, or team outings can strengthen interpersonal relationships and deepen the understanding of each team member's role.

5. Foster a Sense of Ownership and Accountability for Tasks

A sense of ownership and accountability is crucial for individual and collective success within a team. Here are some strategies to encourage team members take ownership of their tasks and feel accountable for the team's objectives.

- *Empowerment:* Empower team members by entrusting them with meaningful

responsibilities. When individuals feel trusted to handle important tasks, they are more likely to take ownership and demonstrate a heightened sense of accountability.

- *Recognition and Rewards:* Acknowledge and reward individual contributions and achievements. Publicly recognize team members who demonstrate exceptional ownership and accountability. Positive reinforcement reinforces the importance of taking responsibility for one's tasks.
- *Clear Performance Metrics:* Establish clear performance metrics tied to individual roles. Clearly articulate expectations and the criteria for success. This clarity not only guides team members in their roles but also provides a transparent framework for evaluating performance.

Conclusion

This chapter underscores the pivotal role of clearly defined roles in the realm of effective teamwork. Like the Rolling Stones, your team members can contribute significantly more to your organization when they know their role, what is expected of them, and what they need to do to get the job done.

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

Chapter 4

Shared Goals and Objectives

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.

In the exploration of effective teamwork, this chapter delves into the critical aspect of shared goals and objectives. Like the above examples, your organization will only get stronger when you have a team behind you. Here's a guide to bring the team together.

1. Establish Clear, Common Goals for the Team

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 of business, we know that unexpected things happen, and how you react to them is a lot of what business is about.

Using effective communication and your clearly defined roles, now it's time to unite the team toward a shared purpose.

- *Collaborative Goal-Setting:* Initiate the teamwork journey by involving team members in the goal-setting process. Facilitate collaborative sessions where individuals contribute their perspectives, insights, and aspirations. This not only ensures a diversity of ideas but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment.
- *Alignment with Organizational Mission:* Align team goals with the broader mission and vision of the organization. When individual and team objectives contribute to the overarching purpose of the organization, team members can better

comprehend the significance of their contributions.

- *Clarity and Simplicity:* Ensure that goals are communicated with clarity and simplicity. Avoid overly complex language or ambiguous phrasing. When team members can easily understand and articulate the shared goals, they are more likely to align their efforts accordingly.

2. Communicate How Individual Efforts Contribute to the Overall Mission

When Cheryl Bachelder took the reins as CEO of Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen in 2007, the restaurant franchise was struggling with declining guest visits and restaurant sales, as well as a dramatic drop in their share price. After several years on board, Bachelder revived the restaurant—sales had increased by 25 percent and profits by 40

percent. The company's share price was even higher than ever. How did she do this? She focused on the employees, working hard to create a "new workplace" where employees felt valued and their ideas appreciated.

"It was time to serve the people who have invested the most in the business," she said.

Understanding the impact of individual efforts on the overall mission is crucial for team cohesion. Here are some ideas:

- *Connect Personal Contributions:* Regularly communicate how each team member's tasks and responsibilities directly contribute to the achievement of team goals. This connection reinforces the idea that every individual's efforts are integral to the overall success of the team.

- *Feedback Loops*: Establish feedback loops where team members can receive input on how their contributions are impacting the team's progress. Constructive feedback reinforces the value of individual efforts and provides insights for improvement.
- *Visualize the Big Picture*: Utilize visual aids, such as charts or diagrams, to illustrate the big picture. Visual representations help team members grasp the interconnectedness of their roles and responsibilities within the broader context of team objectives.

3. Ensure Goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART)

The effectiveness of team goals hinges on their clarity and feasibility. This section explores

the SMART criteria as a framework for setting objectives.

Specific: Clearly define what needs to be achieved. Specific goals provide a clear direction for the team, leaving little room for ambiguity.

Measurable: Establish criteria to measure progress and success. Measurable goals allow the team to track its achievements and assess the impact of its efforts.

Achievable: Set goals that are realistic and attainable. While ambition is commendable, unrealistic goals can demoralize the team. Ensure that objectives align with the team's capabilities and available resources.

Relevant: Align goals with the overall mission and priorities of the team. Relevant goals

contribute directly to the team's purpose and enhance its overall effectiveness.

Time-Bound: Assign specific timeframes for goal achievement. Time-bound goals create a sense of urgency and help the team stay focused and accountable.

4. Regularly Review Progress Toward Goals and Adjust as Needed

Regular reviews provide opportunities to assess achievements, identify challenges, and make informed decisions about the path forward.

- *Scheduled Checkpoints:* Much like a car trip, you need to establish scheduled checkpoints for reviewing progress toward business goals. Are you where you want to be at the designated time you wanted to be there? Did you hit any road bumps?

- *Flexibility in Approach:* Acknowledge that the journey toward goals may require adjustments. Embrace flexibility in the team's approach, allowing for course corrections based on changing circumstances, feedback, or new insights.
- *Iterative Goal Setting:* Consider goal-setting as an iterative process. As the team evolves and gains new insights, revisit and refine goals to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the team's overarching objectives.

5. Celebrate Achievements Collectively to Reinforce Teamwork

Collective celebrations of achievements serve as powerful motivators and reinforce the collaborative spirit of the team. Here are a few

strategies for acknowledging and celebrating successes together.

- *Recognition Rituals:* Establish rituals or ceremonies for recognizing and celebrating team achievements. This could range from regular shout-outs in team meetings to larger-scale events for significant milestones. Consistent recognition fosters a positive and celebratory team culture.
- *Shared Success Stories:* Share success stories that highlight individual and team achievements. These narratives not only inspire team members but also reinforce the idea that collective success is built on the contributions of each individual. I know a physical therapist manager who keeps a “thank you” book of letters from her patients. Her team can look at the book to

remember all of the people they have helped.

- *Inclusive Recognition:* Ensure that recognition is inclusive and acknowledges contributions from all team members. This fosters a sense of equality and unity, reinforcing the notion that every individual's efforts are vital to the team's success.

Conclusion

As the saying goes, there is no “I” in TEAM. With clear, precise, shared goals, everyone will feel the pull help each other succeed, especially if they feel valued and appreciated. Using these examples, you and your organization can create a cohesive and goal-driven environment.

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

But not all people want to play on the team.
Next, let's explore how we can encourage
collaboration.

Chapter 5

Encourage Collaboration

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 and collaboration 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 collaboration on all fronts. 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 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.

You might not be putting on a musical, but you need your whole team on board. Here are some ways to get them to collaborate.

1. Create Opportunities for Collaborative Projects

Collaboration thrives when teams engage in projects that require collective effort. Here's how you can create opportunities that encourage teamwork through collaborative projects.

- *Identify Team Strengths:* Just as not all team members are athletic and would appreciate it if you formed a softball team (some would prefer a book club or a wine-tasting tour), not all team members are cut out for certain projects at work. Keep that in mind. Understand the strengths and expertise of team members. Identify areas where their skills complement each other. This information is crucial for designing

collaborative projects that leverage the collective capabilities of the team.

- *Cross-Functional Collaboration:* Intentionally structure projects to involve members from different functions or departments. Cross-functional collaboration not only broadens perspectives but also encourages the sharing of diverse skills and knowledge.
- *Project Diversity:* Introduce a variety of projects that cater to different aspects of the team's objectives. This could include long-term strategic initiatives, short-term tasks, or problem-solving challenges. Diverse projects provide opportunities for teams to collaborate in various capacities.

2. Assign Tasks that Require the Expertise of Multiple Team Members

Teamwork flourishes when tasks are designed to necessitate the combined expertise of multiple team members. This section explores the benefits of assigning collaborative tasks that showcase the collective strength of the team.

- Identify tasks that are complex and multifaceted. Tasks requiring diverse skill sets and knowledge encourage team members to pool their expertise for a comprehensive and effective solution.
- *Design tasks where team members' roles are interdependent.* This fosters a sense of reliance on each other's contributions, emphasizing the importance of collaboration for task completion.

- *Rotate responsibilities within the team,* allowing each member to take on different roles in collaborative tasks. This not only promotes a deeper understanding of each other's roles but also cultivates a sense of shared ownership.

3. Provide Platforms for Idea Sharing and Brainstorming

Collaboration thrives in environments that encourage open sharing of ideas and brainstorming. Here are some ways to provide platforms that facilitate creative collaboration.

- *Schedule regular idea-sharing sessions* where team members can freely express their thoughts and suggestions. This can be done through meetings, virtual

collaboration platforms, or dedicated brainstorming sessions.

- *Actively seek input from team members with diverse perspectives.* Encourage individuals to share their unique insights and experiences. Diverse perspectives enrich the collaborative process by introducing a range of ideas and approaches.
- *Foster a Non-Judgmental Environment.* Create a culture where team members feel comfortable sharing even unconventional or early-stage ideas without fear of judgment. A non-judgmental environment promotes creativity and innovation within the team.

4. Recognize and Reward Instances of Successful Collaboration

Recognition and rewards serve as powerful motivators for encouraging collaboration within a team. Here are some ways of acknowledging and celebrating successful instances of teamwork.

- *Publicly recognize and celebrate successful collaborative efforts.* This could include shout-outs in team meetings, newsletters, or internal communication channels. Public recognition not only validates individual contributions but also reinforces the value of teamwork.
- *Introduce team-based rewards for successful collaboration.* This could be in the form of team outings, special recognition events, or other collective

experiences that celebrate the team's achievements.

- *Acknowledge individual contributions within the collaborative effort.* While celebrating team success, recognize and highlight the specific contributions of individual team members. This dual acknowledgment reinforces both the collective and individual aspects of collaboration.

5. Model Collaboration by Seeking Input from the Team

Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the collaborative culture within a team. Model leadership by actively seeking input from team members.

- *Demonstrate open communication by regularly seeking input and feedback from the team.* Leaders who actively seek the opinions and ideas of their team members create an inclusive environment that values collaboration.
- *Take the lead in collaborative initiatives.* Actively participate in collaborative projects and demonstrate a willingness to work alongside team members. This not only sets a positive example but also breaks down hierarchical barriers.
- *Establish feedback mechanisms where team members can provide input on collaborative processes.* Act on constructive feedback to continually improve the team's collaborative dynamics.

Conclusion

These methods will help you help your team to want to collaborate more, and hopefully offer less angst. Unity in the workplace reduces stress, lightens competition, and offers individuals a voice in the realm of the team. By creating opportunities for collaboration, you can cultivate a culture of synergy and innovation in your organization.

But it's not always easy to pull everyone on board. Some people have been hurt before, or have come from an organization where their ideas weren't considered worthy to be heard. They can be self-defensive and pull away from collaboration.

In the next chapter, we'll take a closer look at building trust and respect.

Chapter 6

Build Trust and Respect

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.

As we've already said, 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?

1. Cultivate an Environment of Trust and Psychological Safety

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.

Trust is the bedrock of effective teamwork, and creating a psychologically safe environment is paramount for trust to thrive. Here are some

strategies for cultivating an atmosphere where trust and psychological safety can flourish.

- *Foster open and transparent communication within the team.* Encourage team members to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas without fear of reprisal. When communication flows freely, trust naturally follows. For more on this, see Chapter 2 on Effective Communication.
- *Demonstrate consistent support for team members.* This involves actively listening to their needs, providing resources to facilitate their work, and ensuring that their well-being is prioritized. A supportive environment builds trust by showing that the team is invested in each member's success.

- *Consistently deliver on commitments and promises.* Reliability builds trust over time, as team members come to depend on each other to fulfill their responsibilities. Consistency in actions fosters a sense of reliability and predictability within the team.

2. Encourage Team Members to Share Their Opinions Without Fear

A culture that encourages open expression of ideas and opinions without fear of judgment is crucial for team cohesion.

- *Establish safe spaces where team members feel comfortable sharing their opinions.* This could be achieved through regular team meetings, brainstorming sessions, or dedicated forums for idea exchange. Safe

spaces empower individuals to voice their thoughts without fear.

- *Practice active listening as a team.* There's a tribal ritual in Papua New Guinea where everyone sits in a circle and the person who is speaking holds a big stick. If you don't have the stick, it's not your turn to speak. When you have something to say, the stick is passed to you. Then, when you have the stick, everyone should be listening to you. While we may not want to bring a stick to our meetings, we need to ensure that when team members express their opinions, others listen attentively and respectfully. Active listening creates an environment where every voice is valued, contributing to a sense of inclusion and mutual respect.
- *Implement feedback channels that allow team members to share their opinions*

anonymously if needed. Anonymity can encourage those who may feel hesitant to speak up openly, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives is considered.

3. Address Conflicts Constructively and Promptly

Conflicts are inevitable in any team, but how they are addressed can significantly impact the team's dynamics.

- *Establish Conflict Resolution Protocols.* Develop clear protocols for addressing conflicts within the team. These protocols should outline the steps for identifying, discussing, and resolving conflicts. Having a structured approach provides a framework for constructive conflict resolution.

- *Mediation and Facilitation.* When conflicts arise, consider involving a neutral mediator or facilitator to guide the resolution process. This can help ensure that discussions remain constructive and focused on finding solutions rather than escalating tensions.
- *Encourage open dialogue when conflicts arise.* Create an environment where team members feel safe expressing their concerns and perspectives. By addressing conflicts openly, the team can collectively work towards resolutions that benefit everyone.

4. Recognize and Appreciate Diverse Perspectives

Diversity in perspectives is a strength that can propel a team forward. Here's how to appreciate the richness that diverse perspectives bring to the team.

- *Acknowledge and celebrate the unique contributions that each team member brings to the table.* Whether it's different skills, experiences, or cultural backgrounds, recognizing diversity reinforces the value of varied perspectives.
- *Provide training on diversity and inclusion.* Educate team members about the benefits of diverse perspectives and foster an understanding of how individual differences contribute to the overall success of the team.
- *Involve all team members in decision-making processes.* When individuals feel that their opinions are genuinely considered in decision-making, they are more likely to contribute actively and feel valued.

5. Set an Example by Demonstrating Trust and Respect for All Team Members

Leaders play a pivotal role in setting the tone for trust and respect within a team. These strategies help leaders to exemplify and promote trust and respect:

- *Lead by example.* Demonstrate trust and respect in your interactions with team members. Be consistent in your actions, ensuring that your behavior aligns with the values of trust and respect that you aim to cultivate within the team.
- *Acknowledge and learn from mistakes.* When mistakes happen, acknowledge them openly and use them as opportunities for learning and growth. This demonstrates humility and openness, contributing to an environment where team members feel

comfortable admitting their mistakes and learning from them.

- *Practice empowerment and delegation.*
Empower team members by entrusting them with responsibilities and delegating tasks. When individuals feel trusted to take on challenging assignments, it builds confidence and reinforces a sense of respect for their capabilities.

Conclusion

This chapter underscores the pivotal role of building trust and respect in the journey of effective teamwork. You may not be passing around a big stick, or taking everyone out for a trust fall, but you, as the leader, have the power to build trust within your team. Where trust is strong, much can be accomplished.

Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and So On
Teamwork

Wes Berry

Chapter 7

Promote Skill Diversity

In the game of baseball, every player has their position on the team. Sure, sometimes they rotate, but usually their strengths lie in certain places. Many of us who live near Detroit remember [Mark Fidrych](#), also known as “The Bird.” He pitched for the Tigers. He had a great arm, and that was his strength. Likewise, some players are better in the outfield, some are known for their batting, and some make a great first-basemen.

When putting together a baseball team, managers look for a variety of skills. They need good pitchers, like The Bird, but they also need good runners, batters, outfielders, short stops, etc.

You get the picture. And while their skills are diverse, they wouldn't win any games if they didn't work together as a team. Right?

Speaking of teamwork, one afternoon, the Valley High School baseball team was practicing when they heard a scream for help. One of their classmates had been accidentally run over by a car in the school parking lot. The boys ran to help her. They quickly surrounded the car, each taking a different section, and lifted it. Their assistant coach was able to pull her out, and she made a full recovery.

While your team may work well together as a whole like those high school boys did, there is great value in learning from one another. In the exploration of effective teamwork, this chapter delves into the crucial aspect of promoting skill diversity within a team. By building teams with a mix of complementary skills and recognizing and

utilizing each member's unique strengths, organizations can create teams that are versatile, dynamic, and well-equipped to tackle diverse challenges. Let's look at some ways to harness the power of skill diversity for enhanced collaboration and collective success.

1. Build Teams with a Mix of Complementary Skills

The foundation of a high-performing team lies in the intentional composition of diverse skills. Think about this as you hire or put together a project team. Just like a baseball team, you need some people who have a different skill sets. How do you find them?

- *Skill Gap Analysis:* Conduct a thorough analysis of the skills required for a particular project or task. Identify existing

skills within the team and areas where expertise may be lacking. This analysis informs the selection of team members to ensure a balanced mix of skills.

- *Cross-Functional Teams:* Form cross-functional teams that bring together individuals with different specialties. This ensures that a team has a broad range of skills, allowing for comprehensive problem-solving and increased adaptability.
- *Dynamic Skill Mapping:* Recognize that skill requirements may evolve throughout a project or within the organization. Continuously reassess the team's skill composition to adapt to changing needs and challenges.

2. Recognize and Utilize Each Member's Unique Strengths

An effective team acknowledges and leverages the unique strengths of each member.

- *Strengths Assessment:* Conduct strengths assessments for team members to identify their unique capabilities. This could involve self-assessment tools or facilitated sessions. Understanding individual strengths allows for more targeted task assignments and responsibilities.
- *Tailored Roles:* Assign roles and responsibilities based on individual strengths. When team members work in areas where they excel, it not only maximizes their contributions but also fosters a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

- *Strengths Pairing:* Pair team members whose strengths complement each other. This collaborative approach ensures that each task benefits from a combination of diverse strengths, leading to more robust and innovative outcomes.

3. Encourage Skill-Sharing and Cross-Training Among Team Members

A culture of continuous learning and skill-sharing enhances the versatility of a team. This section explores strategies for encouraging skill-sharing and cross-training.

- *Knowledge Exchange Platforms:* Establish platforms for team members to share their expertise with others. This could include workshops, knowledge-sharing sessions, or digital platforms where team members can

contribute tutorials, guides, or best practices.

- *Cross-Training Initiatives:* Implement cross-training initiatives where team members learn skills outside their primary expertise. This not only expands the skill set of each individual but also promotes a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diverse talents within the team.
- *Mentorship Programs:* Facilitate mentorship programs where team members with specific skills mentor others seeking to develop those skills. Mentorship creates a collaborative learning environment and strengthens the bonds between team members.

4. Emphasize How Diversity in Skills Leads to More Innovative Solutions

Diverse skills within a team contribute to a rich pool of perspectives, leading to innovative solutions. Emphasize the connection between skill diversity and innovation through:

- *Innovation Workshops:* Organize workshops or brainstorming sessions that highlight the correlation between diverse skills and innovation. Engage the team in activities that demonstrate how combining different perspectives can lead to creative and groundbreaking solutions.
- *Case Studies and Examples:* Share case studies and real-world examples where diverse skill sets were instrumental in solving complex problems. Concrete examples help team members understand the tangible impact of skill diversity on innovation.

- *Celebrate Innovative Solutions:* Actively celebrate instances where diverse skills result in innovative solutions. Recognition reinforces the value of skill diversity and encourages a culture where team members actively seek to leverage their unique talents.

5. Highlight the Value of Learning from One Another

A team that values continuous learning from one another creates an environment of mutual growth. Here are some strategies:

- *Learning Culture:* Cultivate a culture where learning is seen as a continuous and shared endeavor. Emphasize that every team member, regardless of their level of

expertise, has something valuable to teach and something valuable to learn.

- *Knowledge-Sharing Rituals:* Introduce regular rituals that facilitate knowledge sharing. This could be as simple as a weekly knowledge-sharing session, where team members briefly present a skill, tool, or technique they recently learned or applied. One of the home improvement stores offers workshops on a monthly basis where an employee who is proficient in their department (plumbing, for example) offers some basic training to the rest of the team. This ensure that if an employee is stopped by a customer outside of their department, they have some idea of what is going on.
- *Feedback Loops:* Establish feedback loops where team members provide constructive feedback on each other's skills. This creates

a supportive environment where learning is seen as a collaborative effort for improvement.

Conclusion

This chapter underscores the pivotal role of promoting skill diversity in the journey of effective teamwork. By building teams with a mix of complementary skills, and diverse talents, you can help ensure your organization's success as well as the growth of team members.

But you can't have all work and no play. Next, let's talk about team bonding.

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Chapter 8

Provide Opportunities for Team Bonding

You gotta have some fun in life. Having fun promotes relaxation, diminishes stress, provides a good outlet for creativity, and builds friendships. The better your team gets along and enjoys each other's company, the better are your chances for success in the workplace.

How do you provide some opportunities for team bonding without being cheesy? Let's take a look.

1. Organize Team-Building Activities and Outings

Team-building activities and outings are powerful tools for fostering connections and building a strong team culture. Here are some ideas that won't make eyes roll.

- *Tailored Team-Building:* Design team-building activities that cater to the unique dynamics and preferences of the team. Consider activities that promote collaboration, communication, and problem-solving while aligning with the team's interests.
- *Variety in Outings:* Plan a variety of outings that offer different experiences. This could range from outdoor adventures to cultural outings or even volunteer activities. Variety ensures that team members with diverse preferences can all find value in the experiences.

- *Reflection and Debriefing:* Incorporate reflection sessions after team-building activities. Provide a platform for team members to share their insights, what they learned about themselves and their colleagues, and how they can apply these lessons to their work.

2. Foster a Sense of Camaraderie Through Social Events

Social events play a key role in creating a friendly and supportive team environment. 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.

You don't have to be a big party planner to make fun happen. Here's how:

- *Regular Social Calendar:* Establish a regular calendar of social events, such as monthly lunches, after-work gatherings, or themed events. Consistency in social activities helps build anticipation and ensures that team members can regularly connect outside of work tasks. Give them something to look forward to.
- *Inclusive Events:* Ensure that social events are inclusive and considerate of different preferences. For instance, alternate between casual gatherings, team dinners, and interactive events to cater to various social preferences within the team.
- *Celebrating Milestones:* Use social events as opportunities to celebrate team and

individual milestones. Recognize achievements, work anniversaries, or personal accomplishments to reinforce a positive and supportive team culture.

3. Encourage Informal Interactions During Breaks or Lunchtime

These provide moments for spontaneous connection. Kind of like water cooler talk.

- *Designated Social Spaces:* Create designated social spaces within the workplace where team members can gather during breaks. This could be a lounge area, a shared kitchen, or outdoor seating. Design spaces that encourage casual conversations and relaxation. Put a bunch of plants in an indoor seating area, or create a space for

workout equipment to be used during breaks.

- *Rotating Lunch Groups:* Implement a system of rotating lunch groups, where team members are encouraged to have lunch with different colleagues regularly. This helps break down silos, promotes cross-functional relationships, and ensures that everyone has the chance to interact with various team members.
- *Games and Activities:* Introduce games or activities that can be done during breaks. This could include board games, puzzles, or even quick team challenges. Games provide a light-hearted way to foster connections and inject a sense of fun into the workplace.

4. Create a Supportive Environment That Goes Beyond Work-Related Tasks

A supportive environment that transcends work-related tasks is essential for building strong team bonds. Use these strategies for creating a culture of support within the team.

- *Open Communication Channels:* Establish open channels for communication where team members feel comfortable discussing both work and personal matters. This could include regular check-ins, open-door policies, or dedicated communication platforms for non-work-related discussions.
- *Mentorship and Buddy Systems:* Implement mentorship or buddy systems where more experienced team members support newer members. Mentorship goes beyond professional guidance, fostering a sense of personal connection and support within the team.

- *Shared Values and Goals:* Cultivate a sense of shared values and goals within the team. When team members feel aligned with a common purpose, it creates a foundation for mutual support and collaboration beyond specific tasks.

5. Reinforce the Idea That a Connected Team Is a More Effective Team

Emphasizing the connection between team bonding and effectiveness is crucial. How do we do that?

- *Communication Training:* Provide training on effective communication and collaboration. Help team members understand how their connections with colleagues directly impact the team's overall performance and success.

- *Success Stories:* Share success stories or case studies that highlight the positive outcomes of strong team connections. Real-life examples help team members visualize the tangible benefits of a connected and collaborative team.
- *Performance Recognition:* Recognize and celebrate instances where team collaboration and bonding directly contribute to successful outcomes. Linking performance recognition to collaborative efforts reinforces the idea that a connected team is not only more enjoyable to work with but also more effective.

Conclusion

Have you seen the funny episode of *The Office* where the team has a “Beach Day?” I wouldn’t recommend your team bonding move in

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that direction. But no matter what you choose to do, you'll have happier employees if you provide fun breaks through activities and outings that promote team bonding.

Chapter 9

Celebrate Individual Contributions

For baseball, there's the lifetime achievement award. For film, there are the Oscars. Most fields offer awards for individuals who have risen above and beyond what is expected and caught the attention of others. Yes, it often takes a team to win the big prize, but teams are made up of individuals.

In this book, we've already talked a little bit about the importance of celebrating individual contributions in your organization. Now, let's take a deeper look.

1. Recognize and Appreciate Individual Efforts and Achievements

Recognizing and appreciating individual efforts and achievements is foundational to building a positive team culture. So how do we start?

- *Regular Recognition Rituals:* Establish regular rituals for recognizing individual efforts. This could include weekly shout-outs in team meetings, monthly awards, or public acknowledgments through internal communication channels. Consistency in recognition reinforces its importance.
- *Tailored Recognition:* Customize recognition to align with individual preferences. Some team members may prefer public acknowledgment, while others may appreciate a more private

acknowledgment. Understanding and respecting these preferences enhance the impact of recognition.

- *Specific Feedback:* Provide specific and constructive feedback on individual contributions. Instead of generic praise, highlight the particular skills or efforts that made a difference. Specific feedback not only shows attentiveness but also helps team members understand their unique value.

2. Acknowledge the Unique Skills Each Team Member Brings

Each team member possesses a unique set of skills and strengths that contribute to the overall success of the team. It's important to acknowledge and leverage the diverse skills within the team through:

- *Skills Inventory:* Conduct a skills inventory within the team to identify the unique strengths and expertise of each member. This inventory can serve as a reference for task assignments, mentorship opportunities, and collaborative projects that leverage individual skills.
- *Skills Showcases:* Organize skills showcases or workshops where team members can share their expertise with the rest of the team. This not only enhances team awareness of individual skills but also creates opportunities for skill-sharing and cross-training.
- *Personal Development Plans:* Work with team members to create personal development plans that align with their individual skills and career aspirations.

Recognizing and supporting individual growth contributes to a culture where team members feel valued and invested in.

3. Emphasize that Teamwork Is Built on the Foundation of Individual Excellence

Highlighting the connection between teamwork and individual excellence reinforces the idea that the strength of the team is rooted in the unique contributions of its members. This section explores strategies for emphasizing the interdependence of individual and team success.

- *Team Success Narratives:* Share narratives or case studies that illustrate how individual excellence has directly contributed to team success. This storytelling approach helps team members see the tangible impact of

their individual efforts on broader team outcomes.

- *Collaborative Achievement:* Emphasize that individual excellence is not in conflict with teamwork but rather forms the foundation for it. Showcase examples where a combination of individual strengths led to collaborative achievements. This reinforces the idea that the best teams are built on a mosaic of individual excellence.
- *Joint Recognition:* Introduce joint recognition initiatives where individual excellence is celebrated alongside team achievements. This creates a balanced approach to acknowledging both individual contributions and collective successes.

4. Showcase the Impact of Individual Contributions on Team Outcomes

Demonstrating the tangible impact of individual contributions on team outcomes is crucial for building a sense of purpose and accomplishment. How do you showcase how individual efforts directly influence the team's success?

- *Outcome-Driven Metrics:* Implement metrics that highlight the correlation between individual contributions and team outcomes. This could include performance indicators that track individual project contributions, innovation metrics, or client satisfaction scores linked to individual efforts.
- *Before-and-After Scenarios:* Present before-and-after scenarios that showcase the difference made by individual efforts. Whether it's an improvement in processes, a

successful project completion, or enhanced team dynamics, visually demonstrating the impact reinforces the significance of individual contributions.

- *Success Stories:* Again, here is an opportunity to share success stories, only these are where *individual* contributions played a pivotal role in achieving team goals. Personal narratives resonate deeply and inspire team members by illustrating the positive outcomes that result from their unique contributions.

5. Cultivate a Culture Where Both Teamwork and Individual Growth Are Valued

Balancing the appreciation for teamwork and individual growth is essential for creating a holistic team culture. Cultivate a culture that values

both collaborative efforts and personal development by using these strategies:

- *Encourage team members to create personalized development plans* that align with both team objectives and individual aspirations. This ensures that individual growth contributes positively to the team's overall trajectory.
- *Promote cross-functional collaboration* where team members from different disciplines or departments can collaborate on projects. This allows for the integration of diverse skills while providing opportunities for individual growth through exposure to new challenges.
- *Foster a culture of continuous learning* where individual growth is seen as integral to the team's success. This could involve

supporting further education, providing access to training resources, and creating an environment where learning is celebrated.

Conclusion

While there is no “I” in team, there is also no “team” with the “I”. Okay, maybe that doesn’t quite work out. But you know what I mean.

Our culture understands the importance of celebrating individual contributions in the journey of effective teamwork. By recognizing and appreciating individual efforts and achievements, you can create a dynamic and supportive team culture.

Chapter 10

Provide Clear Feedback

We've discussed a lot about effectively communicating and recognizing individuals and teams. We've even talked about providing feedback. But *how* you provide feedback can be the difference between someone growing and learning from their mistakes, or someone feeling attacked. If they feel attacked, they put up barriers, and there goes the trust and respect, the open communication, and the teambuilding you have worked so hard on. Or, it can make the difference between a project getting finished on time, or the team thinking it was done and quitting before they have really reached the goal.

In this chapter, I want to dig a little deeper into how to provide clear feedback in a constructive and respectful way, so that all individuals are cognizant of the timeline, the project, and the goals they are working on.

1. Regularly Offer Constructive Feedback on Team Performance

Regular and constructive feedback is the cornerstone of a high-functioning team. If you do it on an ongoing basis, people begin to expect it and it doesn't feel so overwhelming, or that "something is wrong" when they get called into the bosses' office.

Also, it's important for everyone on the team to know how the project is going. Here are some ideas:

- *Feedback Cycles:* Establish regular feedback cycles that align with project timelines or team milestones. Consistency in feedback ensures that the team receives timely insights and can make adjustments promptly.
- *Structured Feedback Sessions:* Designate specific times for structured feedback sessions, whether they are part of regular team meetings or separate sessions dedicated to performance review. Structured sessions provide a focused platform for discussing strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- *360-Degree Feedback:* Implement a 360-degree feedback mechanism where team members provide feedback not only to their superiors but also to peers and subordinates. This holistic approach ensures a

comprehensive view of team dynamics and encourages a culture of mutual accountability.

2. Focus on Behaviors and Outcomes Rather Than Personal Attributes

Effective feedback centers on behaviors and outcomes rather than personal attributes.

- *Behavioral Descriptions*: Frame feedback using specific behavioral descriptions. Instead of making general statements, highlight observable behaviors that contribute to or hinder team success. This approach makes feedback more actionable and less personal.
- *Outcome-Based Metrics*: Use outcome-based metrics to assess team performance. This could involve key performance

indicators (KPIs), project milestones, or other quantifiable measures. By tying feedback to specific outcomes, team members can better understand the impact of their actions.

- *Separate the Person from the Behavior:* Emphasize the importance of separating the person from their behavior. When offering feedback, address specific actions or outcomes rather than making judgments about a person's character. This approach promotes a more positive and growth-oriented feedback culture. Simply said, attack the problem, not the person.

3. Encourage Positive Feedback and Recognition Among Team Members

In addition to constructive feedback, positive feedback and recognition are crucial for

reinforcing desired behaviors and fostering a positive team culture. Here are a few strategies:

- *Public Acknowledgment:* Create opportunities for public acknowledgment of team members' successes. This could be done during team meetings, through internal communication channels, or in dedicated recognition ceremonies. Public acknowledgment reinforces positive behaviors and encourages others to emulate them.
- *Peer Recognition Programs:* Establish peer recognition programs where team members can nominate their colleagues for exceptional contributions. Peer recognition fosters a sense of camaraderie and ensures that positive behaviors are celebrated from multiple perspectives.

- *Recognition Rituals:* Integrate recognition rituals into team culture. For example, designate a portion of team meetings specifically for acknowledging achievements, or create a virtual space where team members can share shout-outs and commendations.

4. Offer Guidance for Improvement While Highlighting Strengths

Balancing feedback involves not only addressing areas for improvement but also highlighting strengths. This section explores strategies for offering guidance for improvement while recognizing and leveraging team members' strengths.

- *Strengths-Based Feedback:* Incorporate strengths-based feedback, emphasizing

team members' positive attributes and how these can be leveraged for greater success. This approach instills confidence and motivates individuals to contribute their unique talents.

- *Guided Improvement Plans:* Provide guidance for improvement in a constructive and supportive manner. Instead of focusing solely on what went wrong, offer specific suggestions for improvement and outline actionable steps. Pairing feedback with guidance ensures that team members have a clear path forward.
- *Individual Development Plans:* Collaborate with team members to create individual development plans that align with both their strengths and areas for improvement. This personalized approach to professional

growth emphasizes a commitment to individual success within the team context.

5. Create an Environment Where Feedback Is Seen as a Tool for Growth

It's easier to learn and grow when you aren't feeling criticized. But how do we accomplish this?

- *Feedback Training:* Provide training on giving and receiving feedback. Equip team members with the skills to deliver constructive feedback effectively and encourage a mindset of openness to feedback as a valuable growth tool.
- *Leadership Example:* Leadership sets the tone for how feedback is perceived within a team. Leaders should model the behavior of actively seeking feedback, both giving and

receiving, to demonstrate that it is a natural and essential aspect of professional development.

- *Continuous Improvement Mindset:* Instill a continuous improvement mindset within the team. Emphasize that feedback is not a one-time event but an ongoing process aimed at refining skills, enhancing collaboration, and driving collective success.

Conclusion

Whether parents and children, teachers and students, leaders and employees, we all learn from each other through feedback. By regularly offering constructive feedback on team performance, you can instill a sense of growth in your team, and help them to pursue shared goals in your organization for the growth of both the individual and the whole.

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Now, as with all great leaders, let's look at how your role requires you to be a model to those who look to you for support.

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Chapter 11

Lead by Example

Finally, there is no better way to build a strong team than leading by example. Your actions do indeed speak louder than words.

George Washington was a leader who followed this idiom. He said, "When my country demands sacrifice, personal ease must always be a secondary consideration." And he fought on the frontlines with his soldiers.

Some historians believe that if Washington hadn't been out there in the front with his team, the entire American army would have been captured and the war over.

This chapter serves as a guide for teams and leaders seeking to embody the principles of teamwork, fostering a culture where collaboration is not just a concept but a lived experience.

1. Demonstrate Teamwork Through Your Own Actions

Leadership is not just about articulating principles; it's about embodying them. Like George Washington, you need to get out there on the front lines with your people. Here's how:

- *Active Participation:* Actively participate in team activities, whether they are meetings, projects, or collaborative initiatives. By being present and engaged, leaders signal the importance of teamwork in achieving collective goals.

- *Roll Up Your Sleeves:* Don't hesitate to roll up your sleeves and dive into the work alongside your team. This hands-on approach not only fosters a sense of camaraderie but also communicates that no task is beneath anyone on the team.
- *Collaborative Decision-Making:* Involve team members in decision-making processes. Solicit their input, consider diverse perspectives, and demonstrate that decisions are made collectively. This inclusivity reinforces a culture of teamwork.

2. Collaborate with Team Members and Seek Their Input

Effective collaboration is a cornerstone of successful teamwork. We've talked about collaboration among team members. But leaders

also need to collaborate with team members and actively seek their input.

- *Open Dialogue:* Foster an open dialogue where team members feel comfortable sharing their ideas, concerns, and suggestions. Actively listen to their input and incorporate valuable insights into decision-making processes.
- *Co-Creation Initiatives:* Initiate co-creation initiatives where team members collaboratively contribute to projects or solutions. This not only leverages the collective intelligence of the team but also instills a sense of ownership and pride in the outcomes.

- *Brainstorming Sessions:* Organize brainstorming sessions that encourage free expression of ideas. Create an environment where team members feel empowered to contribute without fear of judgment. This approach promotes a culture of innovation and collaboration.

3. Highlight Instances Where Teamwork Led to Successful Outcomes

As we have learned, sharing success stories is a powerful way to reinforce the importance of teamwork. Let's take a look at some good ways to do that.

- *Case Studies:* Develop case studies that showcase specific projects or initiatives where teamwork played a crucial role in achieving success. Use these stories as

examples during team meetings or training sessions to illustrate the impact of collaboration.

- *Recognition Platforms:* Utilize internal communication platforms to recognize and celebrate instances of successful teamwork. This could include newsletters, emails, or dedicated sections in team meetings where achievements are acknowledged.
- *Team Achievement Awards:* Establish team achievement awards that recognize outstanding collaborative efforts. These awards not only celebrate success but also motivate the team to consistently strive for excellence through teamwork.

4. Model Effective Communication, Respect, and Cooperation

Leaders set the tone for team dynamics through their communication style, level of respect, and approach to cooperation. This section explores strategies for leaders to model effective communication, respect, and cooperation.

- *Clear Communication:* Communicate clearly and transparently with the team. Articulate expectations, provide regular updates, and encourage open communication channels. A leader's communication style sets the standard for the entire team. For a more in-depth look at this, refer to Chapter 2.
- *Respectful Interactions:* Demonstrate respect in all interactions. Acknowledge diverse perspectives, value individual

contributions, and foster an environment where every team member feels heard and appreciated.

- *Collaborative Problem-Solving:* Approach problem-solving collaboratively. Involve the team in finding solutions, encourage brainstorming sessions, and emphasize that challenges are opportunities for collective growth.

5. Showcase That Teamwork Is Integral to the Organization's Culture

For teamwork to thrive, it must be ingrained in the organizational culture. Here's how to show that teamwork is not just a practice but an integral part of the organization's culture.

- *Mission and Values Alignment:* Ensure that the organization's mission and values align

with the principles of teamwork. Clearly communicate how collaboration contributes to achieving the organizational mission and upholds its core values.

- *Training and Development:* Prioritize training and development programs that emphasize teamwork skills. Equip team members with the tools and knowledge needed to collaborate effectively, and demonstrate the organization's commitment to fostering a collaborative culture.
- *Leadership Alignment:* Ensure alignment among leadership regarding the importance of teamwork. When leaders at all levels model and prioritize collaboration, it sends a powerful message that teamwork is fundamental to the organization's success.

Conclusion

It's important to lead by example in the journey of effective teamwork. At the helm, you are in a place where you can inspire and cultivate a collaborative and high-performing team. Go forth and become the leader you were meant to be.

Part 3

Leading the Team to Victory

*“It is literally true that you can succeed
best and quickest by helping others to
succeed.”*

—Napoleon Hill

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Chapter 12

A Few More Thoughts

Southwest Airlines 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. By following the examples of companies like Southwest and others we have mentioned in this book, you can assure your organization's success.

There are a few more thoughts I want to share with you as we wind up this discussion on teamwork.

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.

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.

Ready, Set, Go!

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.

Conclusion

“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.” 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.

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

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

Now, go forth and team build!

**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

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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.

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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.

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