CREATING A SUCCESSFUL TEAM
(Unleashing Employee Power)

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ABSTRACT

Today only successful organisations survive. They contain motivated individuals pulling together as a team. In most unsuccessful organisations communication is poor, motivation is low, there is no teamwork and out-dated ways of working exist. Good leaders can turn unsuccessful organisations into successful ones. They introduce a new culture where communication is open, motivation and involvement is high and new ways of working are introduced. Leaders can create a dynamic team with a clear goal - an essential part of any successful organisation.

INTRODUCTION

Successful organisations, whether in the service or industrial sector, contain motivated individuals all giving their best and pulling together as a team. In contrast, many unsuccessful organisations contain demotivated individuals and groups, often pulling in different directions. The change from an unsuccessful to successful organisation involves creating a cultural change within the work place.

In most unsuccessful organisations the culture will not support any concept of team activities - barriers exist between individuals and departments, communication and information flow is slow and ineffective, and ways of working have remained unchanged for decades. Developing a successful team in such environments requires a change in the total culture.

Good leadership is one of the best ways of introducing the cultural change so essential for creating a successful organisation. A new culture will not appear overnight but will slowly emerge. As the leader creates the vision and a new culture, the old problems will begin to be eliminated. This will lead to the creation of an organisation with individuals all pulling together as a single team with a common goal: a successful organisation.
The removal of barriers is part of the cultural change necessary for success, but the removal of them is no easy matter. Achieving a common vision helps because it reminds everyone that they all have a role in helping the organisation to succeed, whether as machinists, designers, telephonists, accountants, cleaners, lecturers or secretaries. Only by everyone working together will an organisation succeed.

There are two principle types of barriers. One, "departmentalisation", is intrinsic to any structured organisation, while the other, "status", is dependent upon the perception of perks, job titles and similar factors that separate rather than unify individuals. Whatever their origin, barriers prevent the development of teamwork.

Since the Industrial Revolution there has been a gap between manager and employee (factory owner and worker). Today the gap (in the form of status) is less severe than it was 200 years ago, but now gaps exist between many other individuals: barriers are created by these gaps. Barriers between individuals are created in unsuccessful organisations by differing conditions of employment: attendance hours, clocking procedures, car parking, canteen facilities, toilets, holidays, sickness schemes, pension schemes etc. Removing the many different conditions and achieving "single status" can be extremely difficult as individuals who have benefited from them are unhappy about their differential being eroded. For example, where hourly paid have 20 days holiday each year while staff have 25 days holiday a year, to give everyone 25 days holiday may be seen as giving the hourly paid an additional 2% pay rise.

Barriers between different skill groups and departments can be created by "empire building" or the desire to remain a "super elite" with specialist knowledge. Removing this type of barrier is difficult. One solution, breaking up a department and attaching its members directly to other departments, can dilute the expertise too thinly and does not eliminate the likelihood of remaining departments developing barriers.

Removal of barriers caused by issues of status and "departmentalisation" is not easy. Within most organisations there will be a range of status levels and departments. Barriers are reduced by creating a positive and supportive environment where everyone is treated as a valued individual and where the focus is on the success and performance of the company rather than the individual or department.