

THE MAGIC OF TEAMWORK

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Since the dawn of humanity, people have gathered into groups to improve their chances of survival. It could be stated that humans work better as a herd. In companies, it is no different: when efficient work teams are formed, the best results are achieved.

According to Bertha Madrigal (2009), a work team is a group characterized by having very defined features that distinguish it from other types of group structures. Integrated teammates participate more and share their experiences with the others, thereby broadening their vision of the task or the problem. In addition, their recognition of achievements is jointly experienced.

When a group of people is integrated, they communicate efficiently, share ideas and proposals, reach consensus and establish agreements, and the formation of a successful work team has been achieved.

In relation to the benefits which can be derived from teamwork, Bertha Madrigal proposes the following:

- For companies: Increased productivity and improved quality.
- For groups: Reduced conflicts, improved commitment to goals, and increased acceptance of change.
- For the worker: Improved self-esteem, enhanced collaboration with management, and increased job satisfaction.

Teamwork can generate organizational benefits since the sum of coordinated efforts allows them to achieve objectives and optimize resources. Moreover, the positive impact also benefits the teammates, as they receive the support of their peers. Together they can optimize their efforts to achieve goals that, individually, would require more work. The individual, feeling part of a group, feels valued and motivated, which generates a greater satisfaction. Emotional ties are also created with their peers, establishing a feeling of belonging and loyalty to the group. Teamwork creates a pleasant work environment, higher productivity, and organizational competitiveness

For David Whetten and Kim Cameron (2011), some characteristics define effective teams:

- Effective teams have interdependent members. The productivity and efficiency of an entire unit are determined by the coordinated and collaborative efforts of all its members.
- Effective teams help their members to become more efficient working together than alone. The team as a whole performs better than the most prominent member of the group.
- Effective teams work so well that they create their own group magnetism. The members wish to participate given the advantages they receive from joining the team which are greater than those obtained individually.
- Effective teams do not always have the same leader. In an effective team, members often alternate assuming leadership responsibility. As a result, leadership is broadly shared as the team develops over time.
- In effective teams, members care for and support each other. No member is undervalued or unappreciated. Everyone is treated as an integral part of the team.
- Effective teams have members who encourage and inspire the leader, and vice versa. Each member gives and receives encouragement.
- In effective teams, there is great trust among its members. Teammates demonstrate integrity and are just as interested in the success of the others as they are in their own.

To promote teamwork, it would be central to consider the so-called “5 C's”.

- **Complementarity.** The team is made up of people from different disciplines. Each one is a specialist in an area. It is an enriching experience because everyone adds value in a heterogeneous way.
- **Communication.** All members would give their opinion freely. It is a means of communication between all the participants, not just between the leader and each of the workers. Teamwork is a chain in which all pieces have to work correctly. If one fails, it can affect the performance of the whole group.
- **Coordination.** The working group will be organized and led by one finally responsible to control distributing the tasks and creating a work schedule for the processes and goals to be achieved. Each has the right to express their opinion, but the leader makes the decisions.
- **Confidence.** All workers trust the performance of their colleagues. Individuals are willing to put aside personal success and set before the final result, which will be a group achievement, never an individual one.
- **Commitment.** It is based on the principle that everyone will contribute the best of themselves. Only then they will integrate as a group, function as a single entity, and obtain a better result.



Its application will allow team members to have a sense of belonging, feel involved in the project and the company, generate links between themselves, and build both individual and group confidence.

Several companies have been very successful in promoting teamwork, including Google, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Apple, Cirque Du Soleil, Starbucks, among many others.



Apple is one of the most interesting cases. When Steve Jobs started the company, he led a team of five people who worked together perfectly, based on inclusion and teamwork.

The main strategy was collaboration, which allowed for the proper functioning of the company. In general, teams are multidisciplinary. Hence, among meetings, it is agreed that everyone has the same right to participate in an orderly manner, and the priority is to make improvements to the company and the products.

Steve Jobs liked to meet with groups of people to find solutions to problems and improvements to his products.

One of his first strategies was to allow workers to solve problems vertically, a radical paradigm shift in its time which managed to motivate and involve staff in problem-solving. Steve Jobs believed that each member of the team should be able to work without constant supervision and solve problems independently.

The philosophy that Steve Jobs left with Apple can be reflected in the following phrases of his iconic persona:

- "Great things in business are never done by one person. They are done by a team of people."
- "If you wanna hire great people and have them stay working for you, you have to be run by ideas, not hierarchy. The best ideas have to win, otherwise good people don't stay."

Among other important teamwork benefits that should not be ignored:

- Thanks to teamwork, synergies are created. Individuals bear in mind that all parties win when they maintain a unity.
- Generate proactivity and empower workers. When each member of the team assumes their role and performs their tasks, they feel more secure and satisfied within the corporation.
- More horizontal structures are created. Teamwork enhances flexible and less hierarchical structures.
- Foster friendship and interpersonal relationships. Good relationships are vital to create a successful work environment.
- Help in delegating responsibilities and making decisions. Working together as a team, the leader can trust that his colleagues will do their best to get the job done.

The fundamental element for success of a team is the ability for each of its members to be able to carry out their tasks independently, while being aware that true success is achieved by the sum of the efforts of all its members to get the required results.

Thanks to teamwork, companies can strengthen, grow and go much further.

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