


## Teamwork and leadership

*"If any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create. One is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization."*

Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline.


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## Teams...

- Coach Dean Smith to Michael Jordan in his freshman year at UNC  
Michael, if you can't pass, you can't play.
- Casey Stengel  
Getting good players is easy. Getting them to play together is the hard part.
- Robert F. Bales  
Effective teamwork will not take the place of knowing how to do the job or how to manage the work. Poor teamwork, however, can prevent effective final performance.


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## More quotes


- In a real team" Everyone is needed, but no one is necessary."  
Bruce Coslet, Coach, Bengals
- In a real team, the output of the team far exceeds the sum of the outputs of the individuals

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- It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.
- Conflict is inevitable in any team. The goal is not to avoid it, rather to deal with it positively.
- Max DePree  
Without forgiveness, there can be no real freedom to act within a group.
- A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.


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## Teamwork trap

- One man alone can be pretty dumb sometimes, but for real bona fide stupidity, there ain't nothing' can beat teamwork. Edward Abbey (1927-1989)

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## Agenda

- What is a team?
  - Why teamwork in engineering?
  - How to get a team to work?
    - Challenges
    - Ground rules
    - Organization/operation
  - Tips for success

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## 1. What is a team?

A Team is "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable"[1]

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## Team work in action



www.istockphoto.com

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## 2. Why teamwork (Engineering Dimensions May/June 2004)

- CCPE stats: 80% of professional engineers worked in teams
  - 60% are headed by engineers
  - Only 1 in 20 is headed by non technical people
  - 70% of the teams are project based vs ongoing

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## Why teamwork

- Project complexity
  - Redundancy.. Project will not drop if one person leaves
  - Synergy..
  - Individual growth .. Humans learn from each other by osmosis

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## 3. Challenges in team work

- Dilution of responsibility (accountability), dependence on others, taking on too much, overlap
  - Lack of focus
  - Conflicting personalities and styles/Egos
  - Distribution of credit

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## 4. Ground rules

- "Strength lies in differences, not in similarities."**  
- Stephen Covey
- A team should never practice on a field that is not lined. Your players have to become aware of the field's boundaries.**  
- Former NFL Coach John Madden
- The team must agree on the vision, the rules, the quality expected and our individual roles. "I need to be given the responsibility and the authority to go with it. I will agree to the accountability that follows."**

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## Ground rules

- Choose wisely
- Define the goals and the rules
- Define necessary roles
- Choose the right person for the right task.. Competence, compatibility, reliability, impact on others
- Allocate responsibility clearly.. Action driven responsibility
- Allocate accountability to match responsibility
  - Responsibility can be delegated, accountability cannot
  - Generally, authority needs to match responsibility and accountability
- Define the range of tolerance
- Maintain focus.. Follow up

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## A culture of Shared Accountability

[http://www.teambuildinginc.com/article\\_team\\_accountability.htm](http://www.teambuildinginc.com/article_team_accountability.htm)

- **"Accountability means having the responsibility and authority to act and fully accept the natural and logical consequences for the results of those actions."**
- >>>> Following are quotes form the website
- Earn the trust of your co-workers. This means doing what you say and saying what you mean all the time.
- Publicly own up to your own mistakes and accept the natural consequences for them.

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- Be explicit about accountability and expectations. Talk openly (and preferably face-to-face) about responsibilities, performance standards, deadlines, potential consequences or implications of their actions, etc.

- Be supportive. Help people talk about their progress on their commitments, and offer help when they are stuck or unsure. Focus on the future.

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## 5. Up and running...operations

- focus:** [http://www.teambuildinginc.com/article\\_team\\_accountability.htm](http://www.teambuildinginc.com/article_team_accountability.htm)
- Clearly communicate and continually reinforce the team's mission and vision.
  - Require members to explicitly describe their purpose and outputs that link to the team's vision.
  - Assure that members complete a whole piece of work.
  - Have members explicitly define their role and responsibilities.
  - establish clear standards of excellence
  - Have members track and analyze their own performance data.
  - Meet Regularly and ask for specific updates.

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## Managing Conflict

- Acknowledge the conflict
- Assess the personalities of those involved
- Identify the reasons for the conflict
  - Personalities?
  - Expectations?
  - Competency?
  - Accountability?
  - Communication?
  - Mismatched objectives

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## Managing Conflicts

- What is the role you are playing in the conflict?
- What is the price to pay if conflict unresolved? Can you afford to pay it?
- Can you resolve it independently? Are you willing to?
- Have you really heard/understood the other side?
- Is there a win-win solution?
- **If no, do you have the authority to force a win-lose solution? Is it advisable in the long term?**
- If you must have a loser, how can you minimize the magnitude of the loss?

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**Never ignore a conflict..  
You may give it time to resolve  
itself but never let it fester !!**

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## 6. Stages of team Development

### ■ Team contract?

#### ■ 1. Forming..

- Get to know each other
- Identify strengths and where you can contribute
- Specify commitment
- Establish the rules

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### ■ 2. Storming

- Further define goals, roles, responsibilities
  - Power struggles, maneuvering, personality conflicts
- Discuss the sources of potential conflicts and set guidelines
- Engage everyone
- Allow silence people and "read them"

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### ■ 3. Norming

- Team starts to gel.. Managing team dynamics
- Project management plans
- Regular reporting and questioning one another
- Assess progress

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### ■ 4. Performing

- More feedback
- Milestones and action reviews
- Thank in public
- Manage psychology
- Identify weak links and support them

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## 5. Adjourning

- Celebrate success
- Learn form the experience
- Provide closure

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## 7. Tips for team members

- Promise only what you can deliver and then deliver some more (John Kelly)
- Be aware of your biases and limitations
- Acknowledge personality differences, cultural and communication differences
- Ask for help when you need it, help others when they need it
- Listen with open mind
- Express your position clearly
- Learn to be emotionally intelligent

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## Emotional intelligence (John Oesch, ibid)

- An awareness of ones own emotions and recognition of other people's emotions
- EI people are cognizant of their emotions on a conscious level, can track feelings back to their cause and are able ot regulate them
- EI people respond appropriately to the moods and feelings of others.
- Engineers and CS score lower on EI scale
- "EI is a set of skills you can learn about, practice and get better at" Reflection and self-awareness are a first step

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## 8. Tips to team leader

- "Before you can lead, you must learn to follow"
- Leadership is a responsibility not a bonus
- Make sure you all agree on the role and responsibility of the leader
- Earn your team members respect.. They will give you the authority
- Set higher standards for yourself
- Be emotionally very intelligent

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- Respect your team members' opinion,
  - listen to your critics.. Do not follow them blindly but NEVER ignore them
  - Be credible.. Be fair
  - Acknowledge you errors and learn to apologize

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- Use the team's time efficiently
- Provide constructive feedback, never criticize unfairly
- Meetings must have recognized clear follow-up action plan
- Motivate, Motivate, Motivate
- Keep the focus on the goal
- Remind the team of where they are on the road
- Resist temptation to take over
- Resist temptation to let go

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- Lead by example
- Expect to be unpopular
- Learn to deflect negative energy
- Never forget .. it is temporary!!!

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## 9. What motivates people?

- Clear well defined goal with which they identify
- Challenge
- Responsibility/authority
- Sense being valued
- Knowing others depend on you,
- Sense of achievement
- Pride in belonging
- Money?? Fear??

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## Learning from the experience

- Ask yourself
  - Did I listen?
  - Did I learn?
  - Did I accept feedback? Did I provide feedback?
  - Did I present my ideas clearly? Was I as tolerant of them as they were of me?
  - Was I happy to have people stronger than me?
  - Was I supportive of those weaker than me?
  - Do I know my team members any better now after the project is completed?

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## Conclusion

- Teamwork is inevitable
- Teamwork is worth it
- Teamwork skills are learnable
- Must consciously work at building functional teams
- Keep focus on the goal, the plan and progress but never forget the people
- Teams provide opportunities for personal growth alongside better efficiency

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## Teamwork ... is it worth it?

- ***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.***
  - ***Indeed,***
  - ***it is the only thing that ever does."***
- 
- **- Margaret Mead**

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## References

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2. J.R. Katzenbach and D. K. Smith, The Wisdom of Teams, Harper Business, New York, 1993
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4. Engineering Dimensions, Professional Engineers Ontario Magazine, May/June 2004

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