

## This is Why You Need to Build Strong Teams at Work

**Author: Ifeoma Obi . August 2020**

The often use of terms like "power" or "success" to describe a firm will make it easy to imagine a cutthroat environment. A competitive workplace should not, however, operate on the fear of workers, or sound like a real-life Hunger Games. A strong and productive company works best and with the greatest consistency when workers work with a team mindset, each performing a required function and achieving long-term objectives (Johnson, 2016).

A crucial factor for success is [creating good teams](#) that concentrate on teamwork. A team that takes control of their input and how they work together will have a clear mutual vision and will look for ways to grow continuously. Do not underestimate how important it is to create a great team culture (Kothari, 2016). "In studies by the Queen's School of Business and by the Gallup Organization, disengaged workers had 37% higher absenteeism, 49% more accidents, and 60% more errors and defects. In organizations with low employee engagement scores, they experienced 18% lower productivity, 16% lower profitability, 37% lower job growth, and 65% lower share price over time. Importantly, businesses with highly engaged employees enjoyed 100% more job applications." Says Emma Seppala and Kim Cameron.

The team has already been formed sometimes when people step into leadership positions. That means you need to adapt your preconceived ideas to suit the current team's needs and capabilities. Other times, it offers members the ability to form their team. This can happen for several reasons, whether you encounter people in different departments or build a completely new department. High 5 Test(2019) states that having motivated employees is a great competitive advantage that cannot be easily copied. Appreciating the fact and noting huge expenses associated with a high turnover, modern companies do strive to motivate employees using a wide range of team-building techniques. Not all team-building techniques promote staff motivation. Also, some team building activities may, on the contrary, promote competitiveness and the creation of clique groups within a team.

### **How to build a strong team**

First focus on roles. A rigorous screening process for choosing members of your team has significant long-term advantages, even though it means you spend more time recruiting than you would like. Hiring anyone in the room just for getting bodies will affect the team. Companies that do this turn into a revolving ramp, whether because prospective employees see the position as a temporary landing pad and are less interested in learning, or because you decide later on that they aren't the right fit. This winds up costing you more money in the long run. Investing your time and money in people who truly specialize in the role your company needs will have immense payoffs later (Johnson,2016).

According to Johnson (2016), you should value each role as a leader. For every team member bringing something different to the table, it's also important to view every role as an integral part of your project.

The member of the team should feel like their work matters, without ever thinking, "Why am I even here?" It's no secret that a sense of purpose improves the success of any employee. When workers believe their task is undervalued or even redundant, it can become easy to check out mentally as work becomes routine and as soon as the day is done, something they completely disconnect from.

You should communicate. The best way to demonstrate value between team members is through communication. It's difficult to feel like you are part of a team when everybody has information that hasn't been shared with you yet or when team members don't fill each other in on what they're working on. Keep a level of transparency whenever possible with all team members, even if the information doesn't directly pertain to every person on your team. In the area of communication, your team should also give each member a voice. Letting the whole team weigh in on feedback and asking for their opinion also helps them to stay engaged and brings them closer to projects. When every team member takes the time to evaluate a decision and form an opinion, they're attached to the outcome and want to know that their thoughts are considered in the process. Allowing this gives people a feeling of ownership over their work, leading to better performance.

Goals should be set. Setting short and long-term goals with your team should also become the foundation for every task they set out to complete each day. Being enthusiastic about the outcome and motivating each other with positive reinforcement will help your team members to make sure that they work with a sense of the big picture, knowing why every task they do is necessary for achieving a longer-term goal. It's important to note that these goals should be realistic so that you and your team don't feel like you are working for a lost cause. Having milestones and deadlines can give team members opportunities to help each other out and band together for success.

Celebrate successes and failures. Celebrating your successes and milestones also brings your team together and allows everyone to see that when they work together, great things can happen. If someone does a great job at something, give them a shout out in front of the rest of the team so that every effort is seen and appreciated. This also helps each person to feel visible and that what they're doing has an impact. In contrast, if your team fails at something, come together to redirect your efforts or turn it into something positive. Don't throw anyone under the bus or turn a damage-control discussion into a blame game. This never helps anybody. Instead, give your team equal responsibility to put your heads together and figure out the next steps or pivots.

You should know each other as a team. You are, of course, never obligated to become best friends on a personal level with your team members. But having a monthly outing or engaging in some offsite socializing can give team members a chance to appreciate one another for more than just the job they do. Getting to know the people you work with helps you understand their style of work and how to have constructive discussions with them on tough days.

### **Building a team culture**

Kothari (2016) believes an important part of creating a successful team is having a community of people focused on a larger mutual goal than themselves. A crucial factor in building a good team is a persuasive goal. Individuals cannot just be compelled to join a team; they need a desire to participate and to

contribute. Also, every leader's most important task is to clearly express a vision and how the team will achieve it. The team members need to consider how their feedback blends into the bigger picture. Strengthening the team's broader dream is something that needs to be constantly improved. This can't be said once and then forgotten; leaders need to find ways to constantly infuse that sense of intent for the team's continued development and productivity.

Having a regular meeting that takes place weekly will make a big difference in great team culture. Regular meetings will build rapport, encourage productivity, and bring the importance of improving the team to the forefront. The meetings should be scheduled in advance and everyone should be familiar with the agenda before the meeting begins. Have clearly defined roles for meetings; for example, one person can lead the meeting, one can act as a timekeeper, and one can take notes on the discussion. These meetings should focus on discussing problems and coming up with solutions; they should also be an opportunity to build relationships. Be careful not to lose sight of the primary objective of the meeting; don't allow the discussion to be derailed by other interests or topics that are not on the agenda.

Strong team culture is one that emphasizes mentoring over management. Cultivating leadership can play a major role in developing organizational culture. Connect with team leaders and everybody's on the same page. Develop schedules designed to provide flexibility so that everyone can do their job in the way that is most effective for them, but not so flexible that they can become unmanageable. It is important to take the time to get to know the people on your team. It may seem simple, but getting to know your team members will strengthen the team and build a great culture.

This involves doing things like celebrating birthdays, promotions, and holidays with your team. Encourage camaraderie by having occasional potlucks and eating lunch together. By developing relationships and getting to know your team members, you will begin to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and skills yet to be developed. A great leader understands how to draw out the talent around them. Take the time to learn how to motivate your team to go beyond what is expected of them.

Proactive, constructive feedback is one of the best ways to help your team continue to improve. Do not over-complicate this process; feedback is often more impactful when it is informal and a natural part of an ongoing dialogue. No two people are the same and the method for delivering feedback should not be the same for every person either. This is another reason why it is so important to develop relationships with your team members; when the people on your team trust you, they will take your suggestions to heart because they know you have their best interests in mind. Instead of waiting until a problem occurs and then giving feedback, develop a habit of regularly letting your team members know how they are doing and what areas they could improve. Allow this communication to be a two-way street; take the time to listen as well.

Promote a culture of learning where every person is encouraged to continue expanding their skill sets. This can be done by providing access to ongoing training and personal development. The expansion of online learning has made this even easier as people can learn on their own time when it best suits them. Offer access to online courses and create opportunities for team members to take on new responsibilities. Encouraging ongoing learning and goal achievement will help to prevent team members from becoming complacent or bored in their positions. It will also allow them to learn new skills which will add value to

the team and workplace as a whole. When everyone has access to the tools they need to be successful and move forward in their careers, they will be more engaged and will create a stronger work environment. Good team culture is great for business!

A strong team will have a sense of ownership in the planning, problem-solving, and goal-setting for the vision of the team. When a team is focused on the collective vision, they will be better able to fulfil their roles. Developing a great team culture will enable success and attract more talent. It is important to remember that at the heart of every great team are people, so it is necessary to understand the dynamics of how they work. Treat your team members like they matter and are not simply resources for the company to use. Find ways to foster their self-esteem, ambition, independence, and desire for growth. This will lead to a better understanding of decisions, increased participation in meetings, thoughtful contribution in decision making, and a stronger sense of community (Kothari,2016).

### **Team-building techniques**

A strong team is the one where everyone can use their strengths to achieve a common goal. Still, telling your team to use their best strengths is not enough. Firstly, your employees should **know their strengths**. Indeed, people find it very hard to define what kind of personalities they are and what they are unique about. Even if they do, they may wrongly focus on the weaknesses failing to recognize their strengths. Thus, it is better to use a reliable and valid method to [identify the core strengths of everyone on your team](#).

Secondly, the use of varying strengths requires **role flexibility**. The requirement to follow a strictly-defined procedure does not let employees experiment and use their unique strengths to achieve goals their way. Micromanagement and limited flexibility are only recommended in the periods of crises and when introducing an employee to a new role or position. In other situations, a lack of flexibility makes employees unmotivated and even discouraged.

We know companies where HR departments spend several days inventing brand new team building activities and keep to a busy team building schedule. This does not always have a good result(High 5 Test,2019). It is important to think about the quality, not the quantity of your team building activities. Remember, the measure of success is an increase in organizational performance and employee satisfaction rate. Thus, when looking for a motivating team building activity, choose the activity that:

- helps employees reveal their strengths and recognize the strength of their coworkers;
- promotes collaboration, not competitiveness within the team;
- helps to embrace workplace diversity.

Another team-building technique to use for motivation in the workplace is open recognition of the strengths and contributions of each member on the team. It often happens that employees are communicated with their mistakes or omissions. They may even get some fines for not doing their work the right way. At the same time, success is attributed to the team or organisation at large. It is a truly discouraging situation. An old rule, “Correct in private, praise in public” should be the guiding principle of any leader wishing to motivate employees and build a culture of confidence and success.

Thus, organize celebrations of success and communicate wins at your company meetings. Set up a practice to read out customer's feedback to the whole team emphasizing that every member earned it. Issue branded "thank you" notes encouraging employees to give the notes to those who helped them with their work or just showed support and encouragement. This will make employees feel valued and will teach them to communicate appreciation too. Another team-building technique that improves staff motivation is involving employees in decision making.

Often, companies do extensive market research to learn the opinions and pains of their customers forgetting to consult the opinions of their employees, important stakeholders of each organisation.

Of course, do not leave the development of the business strategy to the staff. Still, you may engage employees in the discussion of organizational rules and job-specific goals. Employees assume more responsibility for keeping the rules they have jointly created and working towards the goals they have inspired or at least agreed with. It also makes employees less likely to oppose change. If a decision might not be happily received by the staff but needs to be taken anyway – like moving to another office – still try to launch a discussion of this change. Explain your reasons. Ask the staff what will facilitate the change for them. Make them understand you value their opinion and their emotions even though you cannot change the decisions.

In the context of diverse organizations and organizational cultures, there is no one proven recipe for team building. Yet, the team-building techniques suggested herein have proven results validated by research and experience, so there are no reasons to think they are not for you(High 5 Test,2016). Whatever technique you choose to use, remember that motivating your employees is not a one-day campaign, it is a process, which is as continuous as doing business itself.

## References

1. High 5 Test (2019). 5 Excellent Team Building Techniques to Motivate Employees. [online] HIGH5 TEST. Available at: <https://high5test.com/team-building-techniques-to-motivate-employees/>.
2. Johnson, C. (2016). 6 Steps to Build a Strong Team. [online] Entrepreneur. Available at: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/274001>.
3. Kothari, A. (2016). 6 Ways to Build Great Team Culture. [online] Tallyfy. Available at: <https://tallyfy.com/build-great-team-culture/>.

?

*Ifeoma is a Business Analytics and Research Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a business management and human resources consulting firm.*

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ifeoma-obi-92b4b9121/>

**Phone:** +263 242 481946-48/481950

**Mobile:** +263 775 187 283

**Email:** [ifeoma@ipcconsultants.com](mailto:ifeoma@ipcconsultants.com)

**Main Website:** [www.ipcconsultants.com](http://www.ipcconsultants.com)

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/This-Is-Why-You-Need-To-Build-Strong-Teams-At-Work>