

News Release

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When Teamwork Isn't Working: Fixes for the Teams You Depend Upon

(September 2015). When a team tackles any project, there can be hidden hazards and predictable pitfalls. Yet complex problems are best solved by teams, as researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found. They compared teams of three, four, or five people, to people who tackle the same problems by themselves or with one other person. They learned that when group members combined their abilities and resources, they were able to outperform individuals on a task.¹

Start with Guidelines

What guidelines can teams use to avoid getting bogged down? New York Times bestselling author and Forbes contributor Kevin Kruse says teams can get off to the right start by first agreeing on the purpose or mandate of the team. “This will unify everyone’s action and direction. Second, agree that debating ideas is healthy, but personal attacks are not. Third, go party! The more team members know about each other on a personal basis—the more they relate to each other as people instead of roles—the more positive the interactions. This builds trust.”

Lead by Listening

Kruse, author of “Employee Engagement 2.0: How to Motivate Your Team for High Performance,” says a great group leader is a facilitator. “Even if she thinks she knows what the answer is, she will remain

silent while she listens to others and then builds consensus around the right course of action (whether it was her idea or not)."

Trust and Accountability

"When people work together in an atmosphere of trust and accountability toward a common goal, they put aside turf issues and politics and focus on the tasks to be done," according to the American Management Association's 2014 article "Building a Sense of Teamwork Among Staff Members." This focus "overcomes barriers, helps to identify new opportunities, and builds a momentum that leads to three major bottom-line benefits: better problem solving, greater productivity, and more effective use of resources."

The Benefits of Respect

"In a workplace where people feel respected by peers, by subordinates and by supervisors, they usually respond by taking the initiative," writes Rick Brenner, organizational expert and consultant, Chaco Canyon Consulting, in his online article "Teamwork Myths: I vs. We."

"They seek not only to demonstrate their willingness and ability to contribute, but also to help their co-workers do the same. They do this, in part, because they benefit themselves when they and their co-workers excel. 'I' and 'We' blend together, in a way." But even more importantly, Brenner adds, "these acts of contribution, collaboration, and support do create and sustain a sense of belonging. They make you feel good. Try it."

Resources:

Weekly tips for leadership success (free newsletter by Kevin Kruse)
www.KevinKruse.com

Employee Engagement 2.0: How to Motivate Your Team for High Performance, by Kevin Kruse, The Center for Wholehearted Leadership; 5th edition (July 14, 2014).

101 Tips for Managing Conflict, ebook by Rick Brenner.

<http://www.chacocanyon.com/products/101tipsconflict.shtml>

Teamwork Myths: I vs We, online article by Rick Brenner

<http://www.chacocanyon.com/pointlookout/090701.shtml>

You First: Inspire Your Team to Grow Up, Get Along, and Get Stuff Done, by Liane Davey, Wiley; 1 edition (September 23, 2013).

[Building a Sense of Teamwork Among Staff Members](#), AMA online article, Nov. 6, 2014.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing confidential free professional assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact the EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. And if you are need to develop some team related skills, all you need to do is call your EAP. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with your personal and/or professional needs in dealing with teamwork. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. So, if you are struggling with dealing with a critical incident, help is just a phone call away.

Sometimes dealing with letting go of old patterns can feel overwhelming because we've been responding in the same old way over and over. So if you are struggling with the question of what you need to change or want to change and need some help in accomplishing your goal, help is a phone call away. The EAP can help you find a new path so that change is managed, relationships are

healed, support systems are developed, and expectations are kept realistic.

About Wood & Associates

Wood & Associates is an Employee Assistance Program and behavioral health consulting firm that helps employers maintain productivity, safety and behavioral health in the workplace. Wood & Associates is a pioneer in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) industry and has served employers and employees in the greater Tampa Bay area and nationwide since 1982. The firm's diverse group of clients includes a number of major employers who also contract for its mental health and substance abuse services.

Gary L. Wood, Psy.D., founder of the Wood & Associates consulting practice, is a pioneer in the field of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Since 1979, his practice has centered on providing solutions to employee and organizational problems. Wood is a licensed clinical psychologist, a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and a graduate of Rutgers University, West Georgia College and Mercer University.

Patricia N. Alexander earned a Ph.D. in mental health counseling at the University of Florida. Trained in critical incident stress management through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, she is a Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor and nationally certified counselor. Through her work experience she has addressed all types of critical incident situations, including explosions, multiple homicides, suicides, line-of-duty deaths, serious accidents and robberies. Alexander conducts training on stress management for law enforcement and businesses, and has developed peer support programs for law enforcement and industry. Alexander is an educator and consultant on a wide variety of behavioral health concerns.