# THE INSTITUTE OF LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

**Leadership Essentials**

# Teamworking

A collaborative leader understands the dynamics of all teams including distributed ones

## "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."
Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (1993)

### Effective Teamwork

Effective teamwork is critical for completing tasks, improving motivation, sharing knowledge and resources as well as generating ideas: Even the most creative individuals won't have more ideas than your team as a whole.

Developing and leading a team is a complex undertaking. Team members often have to share resources and manage competing demands on their time.

### John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership Model

Action-Centred Leadership is a simple leadership and management model, which makes it easy to remember and apply and to adapt for your own situation.

Good managers and leaders should have full command of the three main areas of the model and should be able to use each of the elements according to the situation.

Being able to do all these things, and keep the right balance, gets results, builds morale, improves quality, develops teams and productivity, and is the mark of a successful manager and leader

**Team**
- Agree standards of performance and behaviour
- Establish style and culture
- Monitor and maintain discipline and ethics
- Anticipate and resolve team conflict
- Develop morale and team spirit

TM John Adair (1988)

**Task**
- Identify aims and vision
- Identify resources required
- Establish responsibilities
- Set standards
- Monitor performance against plan

**Individual**
- Assist and support individuals
- Agree individual objectives
- Acknowledge effort and good work
- Develop team members
- Utilise each individual's strengths

### The Team Dynamic

Your team will develop through stages which Tuckman ( 1965 ) describes as Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. If the team has a finite task and then disbands, there is a fifth stage, Adjourning (or Mourning as it's sometimes called). This process can help you understand how you need to manage your team as they progress through the different stages of development.

**FORMING**
Acquainting and establishing ground rules

**STORMING**
Conflict and resistance of control, despite increased communication

**NORMING**
Clear roles, sense of belonging and increased acceptance of other's views

**PERFORMING**
Open and trusting culture, less importance on hierarchy and more on flexibility

**ADJOURNING**
Assessment of activity, plan for transitioning roles and recognising contributions

### Team roles

Belbin (2010) has defined nine team roles to explain how individuals behave in the work place. This can be a useful tool in evaluating whether you have the right range of qualities and interpersonal skills for members to operate effectively as a team.

| RESOURCE INVESTIGATOR turns ideas into reality | PLANT generates ideas | SHAPERS gets things moving |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TEAM WORKER ensures all are pulling together | MONITOR EVALUATOR tests out new ideas | IMPLEMENTER gets things done |
| CO-ORDINATOR gets the best out of people | SPECIALIST interested in the working issues | COMPLETER FINISHER gets things finished |

**Once your team is assembled and goals defined, you can support them in being as effective as possible in achieving these goals by:**

- Creating an environment of openness, trust, respect, loyalty and co-operation providing a 'blame free' culture and sharing credit for the team's successes.
- Gaining commitment and motivating team members.
- Ensuring that all members feel their contribution is valued and that there is regular, clear and accurate feedback to the team on its performance.
- Welcoming ideas, input and suggestions for alternative courses of action.
- Being willing to take difficult decisions and explain the basis on which they have been taken.
- Being aware of participants' loyalties to people or organisations outside the team and being a fair and impartial mediator of interpersonal issues.
- Keeping focused on goals and the importance of co-operation in achieving them.

However, not every team works effectively as Patrick Lencioni outlined in his book the 5 Dysfunctions of a Team (2002) and these are the key areas to avoid in your team.

**Lencioni's 5 Dysfunctions of teams:**
- x Inattention to results
- x Avoidance of accountability
- x Lack of commitment
- x Fear of conflict
- x Absence of trust

### A note on Distributed Teams

Geographically dispersed and remote teams are increasingly common. As a leader you may need to adapt your approach to promote a positive team dynamic and ensure all members feel connected.

**Some tips for doing so:**

- Create a clear shared plan – ensure everyone has a clear picture of team objectives, deadlines and how each member will contribute.
- Build a team ethos – focus on creating a collaborative team culture, with regular face-to-face interaction and social time.
- Use the right technologies – set strict guidelines on email usage and replace with chat and video tools wherever appropriate.
- Instil a sense of balance across your team - monitor workloads, watch out for signs of stress or isolation and create an open culture where employees can raise concerns.

# How effective is my team? Questions you can ask yourself:

Do we have a common purpose?

Do we have the mix of team skills?

Do we have a strong identity?

Are tasks personally important to individuals?

Do individuals receive the recognition they deserve?

Does my team have clear and specific performance goals with measurable performance targets?

**References**

Adair, J. (1988), **The Action Centred Leader** Spiro Press

Beeman, R (2014 April). **Building a Winning Financial Services Team** www.wealthmanagement.com/careers/building-winning-financial-services-team

Gratton, L & Erickson, T J (2007 Nov). **Eight ways to build a collaborative team** Harvard Business Review

Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (1993). **The Discipline of Teams** Harvard Business School Press

Knight, R (2015 Feb). **How to Manage Remote Reports** www.hbr.org/2015/02/how-to-manage-remote-direct-reports

Lencioni, P (2002). **The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable** Josey-Bass: San Francisco

Owen, J (2009). **How to Lead** 2nd Ed. Pearson Education Ltd: Harlow

Tuckman, Bruce W. (1965). **Developmental Sequence in Small Groups** Psychological Bulletin 63 ( 6 ) 384-399

Achievement

Vision

Authenticity

Ownership

Collaboration

# Dimensions of Leadership

The Institute of Leadership & Management's Dimensions of Leadership offer, often elusive, insights into great leadership. This is not a static representation but an evolving description of the complex nature of leadership activity.

Find out more at www.InstituteLM.com/learning/dimensions-of-leadership.html