
WORKING IN TEAMS

A team is a group of persons working together, united by a common purpose.

Here are some good definitions of "Team Work"-

a) a group of people united by a common purpose.

b) an energetic group of people committed to achieving common objectives, who work well together and enjoy doing so, and who produce high quality results.

c) 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.

Team work has its benefits and its dangers- but it is through working in teams that we can learn to be effective Christian radio programmers.

Working together in a group is not something that can be learned from a book. Neither does an effective team just happen. Team work skills are learned by working in groups and allowing skills to grow and develop in a positive way.

WHAT MAKES A TEAM A TEAM?

Aims: Any team shares common goals and aims. A team must have a purpose for existing, whether it's for recreation or work purposes. The existence of aims are important because it is these that will pull the group together.

Identity: All teams take on an identity. Your team identity makes you different and separate from the rest of the world.

Membership: For a team to be a team it must have at least two members. They must meet together and have the same aims.

Structures: All groups have at least a minimum of structure(organisation). The whole team is made up of the essential parts of the group. Generally speaking, the larger the group, the more complex its structure will be.

Formal and Informal groups

Formal - are groups which are set up to achieve a defined purpose. Formal groups normally have a degree of permanence.

Informal - are social groups whose aims are usually defined through social interaction. Social and informal groups can and do operate in the workplace and they can become very powerful. Often informal groups have a temporary existence. e.g. Cyclists, dancers, walkers

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEAM-WORK

The Advantages

Can achieve better results - as responsibilities are shared out.

Better allocation of tasks.

Be more flexible.

Take risks - as a group may be more prepared to try out ideas and explore areas that as an individual we may avoid.

Shared ideas - within a team we have the ideal environment for "brainstorming".

Problem solving.

Motivation and encouragement - we can help each other to get the best from ourselves.

Moral and spiritual support.

Conflict resolution.

Growth in skills and confidence - we help each other to recognise skills so that all of us can be used more effectively.

Balance of strengths and weaknesses.

Sharing stress.

Time management.

Encourages commitment to a common goal and purpose.

Talking things through!

Decision making as a group- more committed to decisions.

Evaluation of past work.

Fun / fellowship.

The Disadvantages

Conflict - people do not always get along with each other!

Personality clashes.

Lack of coordination - can lead to unclear roles for team members.

Inhibition - the quieter members stay quiet.

Domination - one strong person can take over the whole show.

Competition - destroys the elements of cooperation and unity.

May stifle individual creativity - people may be afraid to put forward their ideas in case they get laughed down.

Individualism.

Decision making can take longer; sometimes can't come to an united decision.

Sometimes tasks take longer!

STAGES IN TEAM DEVELOPMENT

All teams grow, develop, change and eventually die. They have a life of their own and consequently their own life cycle. When a group of people start working together as a team they can be observed working through four distinct stages.

Forming

The group gets together for the first time. At this stage they are no more than a collection of individuals coming together for a purpose. The group will discuss what their aims are. They are normally very dependant on their leader at this point. A good leader will not allow them to stay at this stage.

Storming

This is a normal stage but many people get worried by it. Members begin to press their own point of view irrespective of others in the team. It may be characterised by a leadership crisis. One of the big dangers is that those who are strong can begin to assert themselves. Arguments and differences of opinions can arise. The storming stage is important for the team development as it tests the loyalty of the members to its aims. To become mature, a team must be able to resolve the conflicts within its ranks.

Norming

Now the group moves on to establish itself with its own set of values, known as norms. These are the practices by which it works and makes decisions. The identity of the group becomes established. It is at this stage that important issues such as the style of leadership and methods of working are established. The main danger at this point is that members will still try to do their own thing. A good team leader will be keeping his eye on this and not allow individuality to take over.

Performing

Finally the group becomes far more cohesive and starts functioning as a team. The mature group undertakes productive tasks. This stage will make up most of the life of the group. Each person should be doing his own job but also be concerned with the tasks of all the others in the team. Team members trust each other and increasingly share their feelings and are open to the views of others. There is a lot more humour, energy and openness. Nothing is too much trouble; no challenge too difficult. People are having fun.

Some groups never reach this stage and collapse because they have failed to establish an identity, goals and a structure.

ACHIEVING TEAM OBJECTIVES

Key points in achieving success:

1. They need to have something worthwhile to aim for.
2. Need to know what they have to achieve, what their goals are, and what their roles are.
3. They need time to develop as a unit.
4. Members support each other.
5. They review how they are doing.
6. They work out a suitable way of working.
7. They have fun.

If a team is to achieve its objectives, a variety of skills is needed. These skills may be found in different team members. An effective team will have a variety of skills. Members of the team need to value these skills in one another. Without the mix of skills you would certainly not have a balanced team. Identifying your own skills and experiences is useful to do, so that you know what is available to your team.

In successful teams you need someone to:

- **Be creative** and come up with imaginative ideas. It is this element within a team that is essential if the team is to work as a creative unit.
- **Coordinate** -This person will be aware of what needs to be done. He will be aware of the objectives of the team, and will be working to ensure that these objectives are achieved. He will take the chair and give structure to the group. This does not have to be the leader but without the co-ordinator's skills the team could go round in circles and make little forward progress.
- **Be the practitioner.** This is the person who can turn the ideas into practical plans, who can take creative thinking and turn it into real, live radio.
- **Worry about schedules,** deadlines and what might go wrong. Although these people might cause frustration with their obsession for detail, they do at least ensure that nothing is overlooked and jobs are delivered on time.
- **Promote unity** among the group by being aware of how people are feeling. Such a person might resolve conflicts within the team, encourage those who find work difficult, and help internal communication within the group.
- **Motivate others** and so reinforce the team.
- **Find out what's needed** by using a range of contacts, often outside the group. These people are the "fix-its" of the team, the source of much information and many ideas.
- **Analyse situations** and information from a variety of sources. Such a person may have an analytical approach to problems and be able to ask questions of the team that will stimulate them to think in evaluating their progress. The great strength of such people is that they stop the group committing themselves to a wrong course of action.
- **Take on the leadership role** and give direction. This is crucial to the health of the group. They will look for ways of pushing the group into making decisions, stop the talking and promoting action! In radio the team leader is the producer

LEADERS

- Make things happen
- Inspire, delegate and trust people
- Express their views
- Take risks
- Trouble shoot
- Use tactical planning
- Negotiate and do deals with people
- Trust their judgement
- Accept responsibility
- Achieve results

***Remember most people have a lot of skills and abilities.
Some people are just waiting for the chance to use them.***