

Business Bullet ~ Lessons from OZ

“Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!”

Does that sound familiar? My grandkids and I had a movie night last night and watched the Wizard of Oz, what a classic! Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion are quaking in fear before the smoky, fire-drenched image of Oz. But then, Dorothy's little dog Toto tugs at a side curtain to reveal the REAL Oz, a stocky little fellow with a bushy mustache and a bit of a stutter. This movie got me thinking, all of the most successful people I know in this business have their own “man behind the curtain”. They also work as a team well, as did Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion.

The people ‘behind my curtain’ are actually those that do the support work for both my consulting business as well as the EOTO Marketing Solutions business. They are excellent at what they do, such as technical support in building and/or maintaining websites, proofreading the many publications we do for clients, etc.

But, to tell you the truth, their ‘support’ has become so essential to the success of these two businesses, that they actually would be more defined as the TEAM. We support one another, help one another, and work together so well with the trust and loyalty we have established, that this relationship is huge in our success.

So, do you have a team? Whether you all work together in an office, or do outsource work together, or do referral work together, the cooperation needed makes you a team. In the past, companies used teams only for special projects. Today, associates often work in teams on a daily basis. The team concept has been around for years.

Teams are usually associated more with scoring points than with improving the efficiency of a business. But the concept of teams in business has been building momentum over the past few decades. Many companies are realizing that a team in the workplace is a great way to get things done. Some of the many benefits of teams in a company environment are:

- There are more ideas to choose from.
- More facets of a problem are considered because of team members' differing background or occupations.
- Team members unfamiliar with a particular process often ask questions that may have been overlooked by experts.
- Fresh approaches can improve a process.
- Large tasks may be accomplished more easily.
- Different people have different strengths.
- New working relationships can boost morale.
- Team members are usually more willing to offer help and suggestions for improvement.
- Employees may care more about what they are doing and take pride in their achievements.
- Productivity and efficiency improve.

Many proponents of teamwork think it offers the best possibility of achieving exceptional results and increasing employees' personal satisfaction. Teams generally take on more risk than individuals, so they can also attempt a higher level of accomplishment than any one person.

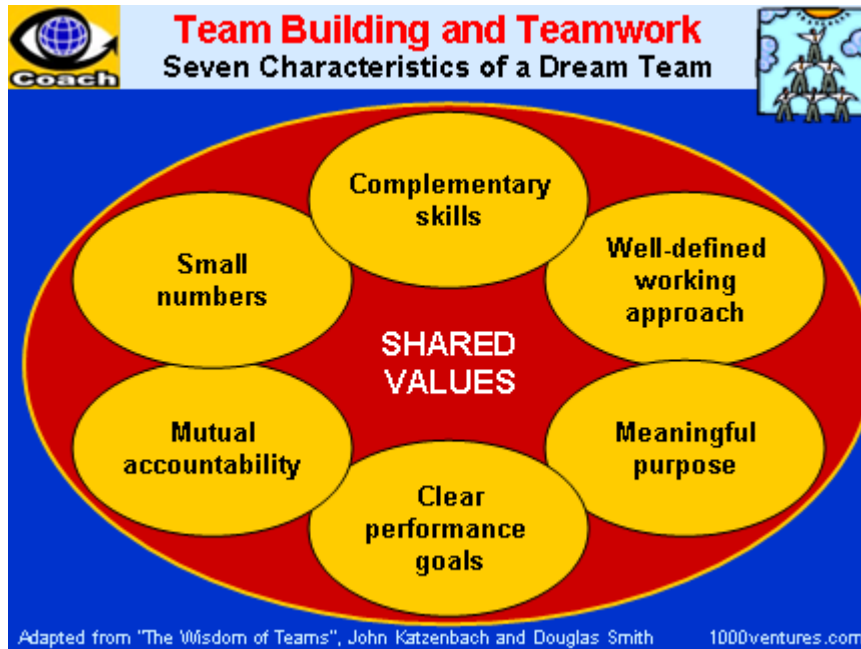
In teamwork, whether you are employees within a company or are subcontract partners on a project, trust is a big issue. Trust forms the foundation for effective communication, associate retention, motivation and contributions of discretionary energy. Webster's dictionary defines trust as the “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”

Not all groups in organizations or companies are teams, but all teams are groups. The difference between a team and a group is that a team is interdependent for overall performance. A group qualifies as a team only if its members focus on helping one another to accomplish objectives. In today's quickly changing business environment, teams have emerged as a requirement for business success.

Individual perfection is not as desirable as a high level of collective performance. In knowledge based enterprises, teams are the norm rather than the exception. A critical feature of these teams is that they have a significant degree of empowerment or decision-making authority. There are many different kinds of teams: top management teams, focused task forces, self-directed teams, concurrent engineering teams, product/service development and/or launch teams, quality improvement teams, and so on. Sometimes a team is just two, a contractor and a client.

Team members are looking for a ‘values fit’ with their team. Without it, they won't give the team their best. Team members should participate in establishing shared values and values-based common goals if you wish them to live these values, be committed to these goals, and have a feeling of interdependence and ownership for their jobs and unit. Shared values

Become also your team's code of behavior as they define what is and isn't acceptable. Basically the characteristics of a winning team, besides shared values, and mutual trust, inspiring vision, complimentary skills and rewards. I thought the graphic below was a good example of team characteristics.



Are you a team or a group working together? A group consists of any number of people who interact with one another, are psychologically aware of one another, and think of themselves as a group. A team is a group whose members influence one another toward the accomplishment of an objective. To face today's complex challenges, you need to incorporate a wide range of styles, skills and perspectives. In the team approach, you facilitate cooperation, involve everyone, trust your group and rely on their judgment.

So, the next time you see a group working together in unity to achieve an end or a solution, think of The Wizard of Oz and the team of Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion, all working together to save Dorothy and Toto, while getting rid of the Wicked Witch of the West.

***"It's possible to achieve almost anything as long as
You are not worried about who gets the credit."***

- Harry S. Truman

