

Taking up the team concept

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The ability to work as a team is the secret to success in financial planning firms; teamwork is vital in any "people" business.

There are three keys to fast tracking to good teamwork; putting communication to work for you, shifting from criticism to praise and learning how to release your creativity.

Putting Communication to Work for You

Better communication builds better teams. Follow some of the simple leads from our most successful corporations; after all, they spend billions refining the art of communication:

- Get to know yourself first, being comfortable with who you are allows other team members to be comfortable too
- Decide who are the people that really matter to you, since you are not an island and do need others; that is, really commit to the team because you need it
- Observe what others think – teams grow when people respect and listen to each other and where perceptions are accurate
- Accept that what you say and how you act should be the same, because teams fall apart if promises are not delivered

Shifting From Criticism to Praise

We criticise an average of 33 times more often than we praise; no wonder few of us are good team players.

The way to overcome this is to create your own collection of "three word positives" that you commit to use a lot. Statements like "I am sorry" and "I need help" are probably the shortest, yet biggest team builders we can use.

Others are "Are you interested", "Can we talk" or "Please help me". Think of your recent communication at work; how often have you said: "Can I help", "You are right", "Please show me", "I trust you" or "You are clever"?

Wouldn't the team feeling be better if we heard more words like "Job well done", "What a team", "You work well" and "I like that"? Words like "I need you", "Is anything wrong" and "No, but thanks" should be in your repertoire.

Releasing Greater Creativity

Teamwork thrives in creative environments. You'll work more creatively if sometimes the team gets out of the office and does something different: follow that with an ideas session and remember not to criticise the stupid idea that is among the gems.

Keep an open mind, challenge yourself by breaking the mold; see a movie you would not normally choose, read different magazines, leave for home earlier or later than normal, have a hot chocolate instead of an instant coffee. Habits make us dull; change is creative.

And asking questions of those around you will reveal surprises; your planning team could be more creative than maybe you think.

We are living in a time that is uncertain yet more people are turning to financial planners; teamwork is the proven way to success. You'll need to develop a positive mindset by focusing on the wonderful opportunities ahead. To develop as a team leader, get out of your seats; talk to someone. Communicate. Good listening and lots of feedback are things we look for in team players. The future awaits; what are you going to do to improve your communication, creativity and teamwork?

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"You Can Communicate", Pearson 2002