7 KEYS TO CREATING A HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE WORK TEAM

Communication: the two-way street

The majority of people will probably agree that a lack of communication or miscommunication is the root of many problems in all aspects of life - professional, personal, and social. What most people do not recognize is that communication is a two-way street made up of effective communication and effective listening.

Be proactive in your communications as an office. Actively think about opportunities for miscommunications and prevent them ahead of time. Similarly, actively think about the possibilities of over-communication. Ensure your message has merit and is important to the task at hand. Time is precious to everyone - value your coworkers time by communicating efficiently and succinctly.

Tips for effective listening

When a coworker is trying to tell you something important, take the following steps in order to truly listen to what they are saying:

- Put down your phone and take your keys off of your keyboard
- Make eye contact with the person talking to you
- Do not assume you know what they are going to say
- Take notes that you may reference later

“Science may never come up with a better office communication system than the coffee break.”

- Earl Wilson

7 Keys to Creating a Highly Productive Work Team

◊ Communication
◊ Trust
◊ Leadership
◊ Teamwork
◊ Learning
◊ Camaraderie
◊ Fun
THE FORMATION OF LEADERS

To develop quality employees, your end goal should truly be to create an army of leaders. To some, that may sound like a case of too many cooks in the kitchen, a recipe for disaster; but first, think about the qualities of a good leader. A good leader should be someone who leads by example, recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of others, sets priorities, delegates appropriate tasks to the most appropriate people, and works hard to help others out.

When leadership is defined as above, your army will not consist of power-jockeying cooks, but professionals who recognize when their talents are most needed and who will take ownership of the tasks assigned to them.

Remember the unexpected leaders

We all know those people who emerge as leaders with loud commands, quick decisions, and broad applications to solve problems - there is a time and place for these leaders. But do not underestimate the importance of the thoughtful and reflective leader. Sometimes it is the most quiet people who are able to make the best decisions because they have thought through all the possible outcomes and chosen the best one.

Leaders make mistakes too

Everyone makes mistakes, and everyone (hopefully) learns from their mistakes. Those can be some of the most beneficial lessons in life. For some, people believe that when they are in leadership positions, they are not allowed to make any mistakes, but recognizing those mistakes, owning up to them, helping yourself and others to learn from them can truly built trust and support within your team.

TRUST

It sounds cliché, but one of the most important elements to be present in your office is trust. Think about it - do you like to work with someone you don’t trust?

The real question, however, is not the importance of trust, but how to build it. This task does not come easily.

Start by setting high standards - when people work for those high standards, they will start to put trust in each other’s work ethic. Trust in each other will soon follow.

Lastly, don’t underestimate the importance of participating in trust building activities.
TEAMWORK: the true definition of the word

Now let’s be honest about teamwork. Everyone says “teamwork” is the answer to success, but what exactly is “teamwork”? Think about it. Teamwork is trusting each other, working together, communicating with each other, setting goals and standards, leading each other, etc, etc.... And all those are excellent things to have in a work setting.

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”
- Michael Jordan

Many would argue that “teamwork” as it is often referred to, is actually cooperation. When people are cooperating with each other, that will naturally lead to all those other qualities mentioned above. When your office cooperates with each other, great things will happen.

Learning, the Life Long Skill

Employees becoming stagnant can be one of the most dangerous situations for an office setting. When employees become stagnant, they get bored; when employees are bored, their work becomes sloppy; when work is sloppy, the entire office suffers.

Help prevent your employees from becoming stagnant by constantly giving them more to learn. You can do this multiple ways:

1. Teach them another side of the business and eventually give them more responsibilities.
2. Let them learn about co-workers by doing a strengths or personality assessment as an office.
3. Participate in a teambuilding workshop. They will learn how they work together and how each co-worker operates. By learning more about how the team works individually and as a whole, employees will have a better understanding of how each individual worker fits into the bigger picture.
Camaraderie!

Most people like to keep their professional lives and personal lives separate - this should not be discouraged, but, employees do need to understand where their fellow co-workers are coming from. Everyone has a personal life, and at some point or another, it is going to effect their professional live; when this happens, co-workers will be more understanding of the situation if they have a little insight into their personal lives.

Now, this is not an encouragement to have your employees spill all their beans and trust everyone in the office with their entire life story. It is, however, a suggestion to create environments and situations to allow for that opportunity. Take everyone out to a baseball game on the office or have a potluck picnic at a local park. By creating these get-togethers every once in awhile, you won’t be requiring employees to be best friends, but you will be giving them the opportunity to see each other in a different light - outside of the work setting. This will build camaraderie.

“The success of the Rat Pack or the Clan was due to the camaraderie, the three guys who work together and kid each other and love each other.”

-Sammy Davis, Jr.

HAVE FUN

Who said work has to be work?
Have fun with your job, your responsibilities, and your employees.

Seems like a difficult task? Think about the service you provide for others. If you buy into the mission of your office and products/services you provide, you will enjoy the work you do.

At Adventure Quest, we provide teambuilding programs for groups of all ages, sizes, and abilities. By participating in our Low Ropes Course, High Ropes Course, and/or Indoor Teambuilding, your team will work on communication, trust, leadership, cooperation, goal-setting, and much more all while having a fun, bonding experience with your fellow co-workers.

Groups we have worked with in the past include John Deere, Stefanini, Parker Hannifin, Target, U.S. Cellular, and many more! Want to learn more? Visit our website or call today - we would be glad to discuss a teambuilding program for your office!