

THE Advisor

Building an Effective Team



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Creating a team that is supportive and empowering will help employees meet and even exceed organizational goals.

Do you worry that your team isn't working together as well as it could be? If your team is struggling to mesh, it may be helpful to take a step back and objectively evaluate how it is functioning. Some questions to consider include:

- Does my team have the appropriate expertise and technical skills to complete assigned tasks?
- Do the individual roles within the team provide the correct mix of skills to support our objectives?

- Have I clearly articulated team goals?
- Does each member of my team understand their specific duties and how they contribute to achieving team objectives?

If your answer to any of these questions is “no,” it may be time to put some energy into building your team. Consider these steps:

- **Get to know your team.** Find out what experience and skills each member of your team brings to the table. If your team includes a mix of newer and more experienced employees, look for mentorship and cross-training opportunities.

Quick Tips:

- **An effective team starts with clear communication from management.**
- **Keep in mind that changes in personnel could alter your team's internal dynamics.**
- **The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can provide suggestions for improving teamwork and morale.**

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Touch base with your team frequently to make sure that everyone understands its goals and objectives.

- **Communicate effectively.** Use clear, specific language when setting team goals and performance expectations. Provide your team with measurable outcomes that they can aspire to when engaging in daily tasks.
- **Schedule regular meetings.** Use these meetings to review goals, refine procedures, and solve problems. Solicit input from team members and other relevant parties.
- **Identify potential blind spots.** When solving a problem, consider if you are missing any perspectives. It may be appropriate to delegate specific projects or tasks to a sub-group with relevant expertise.

- **Encourage respectful behavior.** Remind your team of the benefits of building positive relationships with colleagues, other internal teams, and external vendors. Demonstrate respect in your own behavior as well.
- **Make changes when needed.** If a team member's role does not fit their abilities, adjust their duties to ensure that objectives are being met. Talk to HR before making any changes that would materially affect an employee's role within the organization.

Between shifting goals and staff departures, the work of building a team is never done. Your efforts to create an effective team will pay dividends that benefit your organization, both now and in the future.



The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service is available to assist with any management concern. Call 24/7/365.

How Do I Say That? Addressing Negativity

Is one of your team members complaining frequently or being excessively negative? If a “glass half empty” attitude is creating conflict, damaging morale, or veering into disrespect, these steps may help:



The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can provide guidance on how to address negativity and complaints.

- 1. Document the behavior.** Make note of the dates, times, and details of the person's behavior. Be careful to distinguish negativity and complaints (which are not solution focused) from respectful suggestions for how to improve processes and systems.
- 2. Consult with Human Resources.** Talk to HR about the employee's behavior and review any relevant policies. HR may suggest resources to address the person's behavior or improve collaboration.
- 3. Schedule a private meeting with the employee.** Outline your concerns about the employee's behavior and its impact on your team.

Sample language: “I’ve been hearing a lot of complaints from you lately. These negative comments are affecting team morale.”

Sample language: “I value the ideas you bring to the table. However, when they are expressed as complaints or negativity, it takes the focus off solving problems and may come across as disrespectful.”

- 4. Give the employee time to respond.** Keep in mind that some employees may not realize how their comments are being perceived.

- 5. Refer the employee to LifeMatters.** Remind the employee that LifeMatters can assist with improving communication skills and address any personal issues that could be impacting their behavior.

Sample language: “LifeMatters is available 24/7/365 to assist with work and personal concerns.”



LifeMatters offers 24/7/365 assistance with management concerns. We're here to help.

6. **Follow up.** Observe the employee's behavior in meetings and one-on-one conversations. Acknowledge any improvements and provide additional feedback as needed. (If the behavior continues, contact HR before taking any job action.)

Sample language: "I've noticed a more respectful approach to your interactions with colleagues. It's making a positive difference within our team. Thank you."

Management Consultation

Whenever you need it, as often as you need it. Reasons to call:

- Confronting an employee about performance issues
- An employee's personal problem
- Suspected drug or alcohol use on the job
- Interpersonal conflicts between team members
- Establishing expectations for performance
- Addressing crisis situations, such as a violent incident, the death of an employee, or a natural disaster
- Your own personal concerns
- Any other work-related issue

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