

Do You Know the 6 Keys to a Winning Team?

By Neal Gray, Business Coach, *Action International*

There are all shapes and sizes of teams from sports to business, but no matter what kind of team you have and no matter what arena your team plays in, there are 6 keys that are critical to creating a winning team. These 6 are not the only factors, but if these aren't in place then the other factors will have little long-term meaning in your team's success.

Strong Leadership – Without strong leadership even the best of teams will struggle to stay focused and keep excited about where they are going as a team. A strong leader brings passion and takes responsibility for keeping the team moving in the desired direction. The passion and enthusiasm a leader has makes others want to follow and be a part of something exciting. A strong leader believes that a team's success is because of the team and its lack of success is because they, the leader, didn't do their part well enough. A strong leader looks for team members with heart and spirit before they concern themselves with what skills they have. Without heart and spirit a team member will not perform to their potential. If they lack skills the leader can teach new skills where heart and spirit cannot be taught. A strong leader knows how to focus their time on what is important but not urgent and how to appropriately delegate that which can be handled by someone else on the team.

Common Goal – Without a common goal team members tend to wander in different directions as they see fit. A common goal allows everyone to ask themselves if what they are working on helps to achieve the goal or to distract from the goal. Obviously distractions should be discarded as they are a waste of time and energy (not to mention money). To determine a common goal the first step is to clearly identify (in writing) the vision for the business or team. The vision is not about the team itself nor what the team will do, but is about the ultimate objective for those they serve. This is an objective that is way out on the horizon and may take years or even centuries to accomplish completely. As an example, the *Action International* vision is, "World-wide abundance through business re-education." The Fairfield Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has just recently set a new, more powerful vision for the Chamber. It's ... well, it will be revealed at the Annual Dinner in April. Following the vision a team then needs to state its Mission which has to do with how they expect to achieve the vision. This is not a lengthy statement and should be honed into just a sentence or two that gives guidance to all decisions that will be made in the future. Again, the Chamber will be revealing their new Mission statement at the dinner in April.

Rules of the Game – What would any game be if there weren't rules on how to play it. The question being, what are the rules of the game for playing on your team and meeting the vision and mission of your business? The rules of the game help establish what is referred to as a Loose/Tight Culture. This is where the Rules are set with a degree of specifics around the boundaries but the People are left to move loosely as needed within the boundaries. In a football game the sidelines and end zones are clearly marked – you must not go out of bounds to go forward. Within the lines a Quarterback may choose to run or pass and may choose left or right in doing so. A business rule of the game should be Open Communication. How the team lives up to this rule is up to them (meetings, email, phone calls, etc). Other Rules of the Game might include Honesty, Team Work, Consistency, and Gratitude to name a few.

There are three more keys to a winning team, but we will discuss those in the next article. In the mean time, spend some time reviewing and enhancing or creating you're your common goal and rules of the game.

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