

SIGMA Radius

360 Leadership Assessment



Leadership Series

**Great Leaders
Build Great Teams**



GREAT LEADERS BUILD GREAT TEAMS

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**Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.**

— Henry Ford

Many organizations have implemented teams for tackling new problems, large projects, or major initiatives. However, poorly performing teams are easily surpassed by individuals who work alone only to combine their work together at the end. The highest performing teams experience synergy, where their product is more than the addition of each member's contribution. Luckily, encouraging productive, synergistic teams is within the grasp of the leaders who design and support these teams. A leader's ability to facilitate teams can make or break the team's short-term outcomes and long-term performance.

“Facilitating Teamwork” is the ability to promote teamwork, cooperation, and identification with the work group. Leaders who are skilled in this area are effective at encouraging employees to think of themselves as part of something bigger than their individual roles, and to encourage the extra patience and communication that is often required with teamwork.

Are You A Team Builder?

In assessing your ability to facilitate teamwork, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the task involved require the use of a team?
- Have I clearly explained the goals and expectations of the team?
- Have I outlined the role and responsibilities of each member?
- Am I providing my teams with enough support and resources to complete their tasks?
- Am I monitoring my team for issues or conflicts? Do I address these issues as they arise?
- How do I reward the team as a whole? How do I address the performance of each individual team member?

You are the “I” in “Team”

Consider whether or not teamwork is right for the project at hand: One of the biggest reason that leaders are unable to facilitate productive work from a team is because the team itself does not need to exist. Certain tasks, such as those that involve recalling and expressing information in a formal report, are better left to one talented individual. Teams should be used if a project is too large for one individual to manage, especially if time pressures are at play; the work requires the knowledge and expertise from a number of different specialties; and the tasks are interdependent, that is, the work of Employee A depends on the output of Employee B. If individuals have no need to rely on the expertise or work of others and are only rewarded for their individual contributions, putting these individuals together and calling them a team will not produce the positive outcomes that are seen with high functioning teams.

Don’t be afraid to lead: Often leaders can be afraid to provide much input into teams. Remember, a leaders’ role is to provide employees with direction and support. Teams with more instruction feel more capable of reaching their goals, which have been clearly communicated to them. Don’t be hesitant to act as an authority when teams are struggling. Newly formed teams in particular benefit from a leader who can set clear goals, communicate these goals, and monitor team progress on projects or initiatives. In addition, a leader is instrumental in setting the norms and expectations for behavior in developing teams. Encouraging collaboration and striving for difficult goals can shape a team for success.

Teams require resources: Before forming a new team or giving an existing team a new project, remember that teams require a different set of resources than individual employees do. Teams must have the space to work together, the tools and equipment required to get the task done, and the intellectual resources that can only be obtained by using talented, motivated individuals within teams. Before implementing teams, consider if your organization has the resources to not only form teams, but to ensure the continuation and success of these teams.

How to Build Better Teams

The following steps can help you become better at facilitating teamwork:

1. **Define the roles of each member.** The positive effects of synergistic teams don’t happen on their own, and teams are generally poor at dividing team tasks. Be sure to clearly define the role that each member has within the team, as teams with greater role clarity tend to spend less time analyzing how to do the project, and more time actually working on a solution or output. Remember the roles should be appropriately matched to each members’ knowledge, skills, and experience.
2. **Set both individual and shared goals.** Within any given team setting, there should be an overarching goal that the team as a whole is trying to achieve. This may be the completion of a project, hitting certain targets, or solving specific problems. Within the

larger shared goal, each individual should have a complete piece of the project that they are responsible for. This encourages team members to feel that their contributions matter, and allows them to engage with the task and remain motivated over time. Remember even if each individual has their own task, these tasks should be interdependent with the tasks and outputs of other team members.

3. **Continue to manage individuals within a team.** Having employees working closely together can sometimes result in conflicts, and a leader should not leave interpersonal issues for the team to sort themselves. These issues often result in lower performance and satisfaction with the team. Conflicts are common when teams form, but be aware that they can arise at any point in the teams' lifecycle. Using communication and problem solving skills can aid in resolving conflicts before they affect performance.
4. **Reward team performance.** Not only should teams be working toward a shared goal, but they should be striving to achieve a shared reward. This encourages members to work together and doesn't single out the performance of any one individual. These resources could be monetary, such as a bonus divided between team members, or something less tangible, such as recognition and praise of team successes.

Resources



[How to Build Your Team](#)



[The Secrets of Great Teamwork](#)



Develop your ability to Build Better Teams and other leadership skills by taking advantage of SIGMA's [Coaching Services](#).

Contact SIGMA for coaching on developing your skills as a leader.

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