

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK AT WORK: HOW TO BE A TEAM LEADER



**Summary:** *Why is it important to learn how to work as a team at work? How can you be a team leader? Keep reading to find out the answer to both questions.* Most of us have been a member of a work team at one time or another in our career. With the changes in our workplace, chances are you will be asked to be a team member more often in the future.

Thinking back in your career, you can probably identify several people who were naturals when it came to teamwork. These are the people that no one dreads being paired with, and who commonly are involved in those team projects that succeed. Over the course of the project, they are often regarded as the team leader regardless of whether they were formally identified as one.

The ability to be a strong team member and to eventually lead a team can help to advance your career substantially. If you feel that your team skills aren't as strong as these people, keep in mind that not everyone is born with these skills. Most have learned along the way how to best motivate people.

Here are key characteristics of those people who often act as team leaders.

Team leaders:

- Project energy. These are the people who provide task excitement, motivation and spirit.
- Are involved, involving and empowering of others. Without being obtrusive, they tend to nudge others along, assisting them and asking key questions.
- Assist evolution and change. They help others map out and explore the pathways of opportunity.
- Persuade and persevere. Good leaders identify obstacles, then work to break them down, making room for the team to follow.
- Look beyond the obvious. They look for information and research the best choice among the alternatives.
- Maintain perspective. The big picture and overall direction is crucial in leading a team. Lose perspective and you will lose the team.
- Believe in pyramid learning. They stress the need to understand a situation and the options available and assist others in exploring possibilities.
- Support creativity. They challenge team members to invest their time, talent and resources toward the end goal.
- Take initiative. Great leaders are great doers, people who take a statement and translate it into action.
- Avoid the negative. Team leaders continually challenge themselves and their team members to maintain a work environment where people are glad to participate.
- Are never satisfied. The spirit of team leadership is one of continuous improvement.

Striving to meet all of the above characteristics will help you to move in the right direction toward team leadership. When you demonstrate these key abilities, you'll increase your chances of becoming a team leader in the future. At the very least, behaving in such a manner will make you a happier and more productive team member.

You might still be saying to yourself, "It doesn't matter what I do," my boss is always the team leader in my area. Keep in mind that although that may be the case today, the way you behave now will dictate where you end up tomorrow.