

## Leadership Perspective: Team Building Skills

There's a lot written about team building because it's not easy, no one has all the answers and every group of people is unique. Nothing can be more challenging or satisfying than taking a diverse group of people and developing them into a well-balance, trusting team in pursuit of a common vision. But teamwork may be losing it's value nowadays. Jim Kable, an Australian author wrote in *People, Preferences and Performance*:

"The biggest problems with teams is that they aren't. The biggest nonsense about teamwork is the assumption that teams provide it. For most of the time, in most organisations, teams are made up of bickering, small-minded mean and introverted individuals trying to maximize their own personal influence, whether within the team or outside it."

In fact, silos are more the rule than the exception. Surprisingly, up to 60% of a corporation's energies are spent in internal competition! Perhaps, the concept now of teamwork is an oxymoron, because too frequently staff is driven by "movement" (carrots & sticks) making the compelling model of internal competition stronger than working together. The best illustration of this is this little story:



Two people walking through the bush one afternoon inadvertently stumbled into a clearing where a mother bear and her two cubs were. Now bears are ferocious characters at most times, but when you find a mother bear with cubs you are definitely in trouble.

One may looked over at the other and said, "Let's run!" The other man said, "You can't outrun a bear!" The other man with a twinkle in his eye said, "I don't intend to outrun the bear, but I know I can outrun you!"

The only model of teamwork that can work is one where the leader is wise enough to motivate rather than use "movement" to ensure their team works together. Something difficult to do in the best of times, let alone in times like those we face today with the economy demanding resources be used sparingly. Finding an effective leader with the courage to build and maintain a healthy team, however, is critical in a contact centre.

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