Building Team Spirit

It is widely acknowledged that building team spirit is important. Creating a collegial environment where employees are invested in the overall success of a team is a great way to increase productivity, improve the quality of work, successfully tackle large goals, and heighten staff pride and commitment. However, supervisors often get hung up on how to accomplish this challenging goal. There are several factors supervisors should take into consideration when embarking on a team building project.

Where to Start

- To begin, supervisors must be clear as to what their ultimate goals are. Are you promoting teamwork to create better working relations in a more general sense? Or have you created a team in order to accomplish a specific task?
- Once you have a clear sense of the overall purpose, you should start to think about what you specifically hope to achieve. If your aim is to achieve a more general feeling of team spirit, think about what this means in the context of your department. For example, do you want to improve communication amongst staff? Do you want to change the office climate? If your goal is to put together a team to accomplish a specific project, what are the details of the project and how do you envision a team working together successfully?

Building a Team

Once you have determined what your overall goals are, you must begin thinking about how to implement a plan to effectively build a team. Consider the following steps:

- Put together a solid team. Take into consideration the skill sets and competency necessary to accomplish the designated tasks. It is also important to select members who will be committed to the success of the team and are able to openly communicate their ideas, questions, and concerns.
- Communicate your expectations to your staff. Make sure the team has a clear sense of what their purpose is, as well as how their mission fits into the larger goals of the department and college. The team should also understand the administration’s role in supporting their work, the timelines for project completion, and who they should report to.
- Set aside time for team members to get to know each other. Icebreakers are a great way to facilitate communication and build trust. Holiday parties and staff lunches are also a fun way to encourage your staff members to engage with each other.

MEMBERS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMISSION

James A. Srott, Chair ■ David Iwata ■ Henry Jones ■ Karen Martin, Personnel Director ■ (213) 891-2333

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Solidifying Team Spirit
Once you have put together a team, a supervisor should be proactive in promoting and maintaining team spirit.

- Encourage the group to develop a set of rules for resolving conflict and making decisions.
- One of the best ways to ensure staff members work together as a team is to reward staff members as a team. Avoid singling out individuals.
- Treat all team members fairly and equally.
- Recognize the accomplishments of the team publicly.