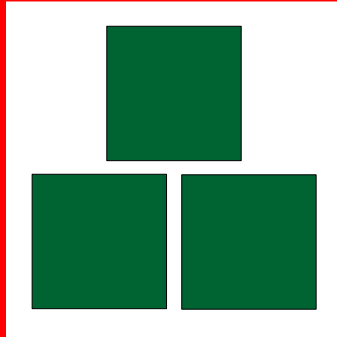


THE CASE FOR TEAMWORK - TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE



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Every enterprise comprises individuals who are assigned to one or more groups. A group becomes a team when the individuals within it share common purpose. Whereas a group comprises independent contributors, a team comprises interdependent contributors. Results can emerge from teams that are broader and deeper than those from the individual members to the benefit of the enterprise and its constituencies.

When organizational units form within an enterprise, the individuals within them become members of one or more groups. Groups form around common work, further organized by shifts and geographical proximity. Common work is determined primarily by function, such as finance, information technology, operations, marketing, and sales.

Groups are loosely coupled because they are heavily dependent upon individual contribution. The work is defined by job descriptions (either oral or written) that list the tasks that must be performed. Each member may perform the same tasks, or a subset of all of the tasks that collectively produce the output from the group. Each member is accountable to a supervisor for their work, who is in turn accountable for the work of the entire group to a higher authority. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the work accomplished by each member, and the group as a whole, meets quality, efficiency, and productivity standards. Camaraderie within and between groups results primarily from personal relationships among the members.

Groups tend to behave in "silos" when there is no motivation for them to work together. Silos are so named because they have distinct vertical structures that stand alone from others. Silos operate to the agendas of the supervisors, which may not necessarily be aligned with those of the enterprise. Communications may be fragmented both within and between silos.

Teams are tightly coupled, which means that the members work together coherently. Whereas the roles and responsibilities of the members may differ, teamwork requires mutual accountability. The members recognize that to get work accomplished successfully, they benefit from the synergistic effects of sharing and building on knowledge, skills, and experience. As a team, the members collectively achieve results that would not be possible individually within budget and schedule constraints.

If management acts as a team, then they will foster an environment for teamwork both within and between organizational units. When management is not behaving as a team, silos are more likely to emerge.

Teams are formed by a higher authority to manage projects and perpetual processes, to create ideas, and to solve problems. However, teams may emerge based upon need despite the behavior of management. This is because individuals believe in responsibility and accountability to enterprise, its constituencies, and themselves. Teams can be either permanent or temporary, formal or informal, broad or narrow, and within one function or cross-functional. An individual can be a member of one or more teams.

Members must share the values, mission, and vision for the enterprise within which they establish the values, mission, vision, objectives, and goals for the team itself in an environment of shared learning. If an individual member does not share the team's purpose, they cannot be committed to its success, and will ultimately either drop out or be pushed out.

Teamwork offers potential for broader and deeper ideas and solutions than those of individual contributors because of the opportunity to leverage diverse backgrounds. The greater the diversity of the team, the greater the breadth and depth of results. Weaknesses in the knowledge, skills, and experience in one member may be offset by those of others. The tighter the fit between the team members collectively and constituent beneficiaries, the more valuable the results are likely to be.

It is important for a team to have a set of guiding principles from which all points of view can be heard and discussed. Without such principles, there is a danger that the majority of team may miss a minority point of view that represents "out-of-the-box" thinking or experience that makes a difference. If the minority point of view is accepted after debate, it can be developed by the interdependent members collectively into something greater that meets or exceeds the wants, needs and expectations of the constituents.

It is the higher order effects of teamwork, through leverage and debate, that create synergistic solutions beyond the reach of the individual members. As a consequence, the team members benefit by learning from each other as opposed to purely from their supervisors alone. Hence, the enterprise and its constituencies benefit collectively and individually - together everyone achieves more.

Teamwork is an enterpriship (entrepreneurship, leadership, and management) competency.

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About Nigel A.L Brooks...

Nigel A.L Brooks is a management consultant to entrepreneurs, business enterprise owners, executives, and managers, and the enterprises they serve. He specializes in developing the entrepreneurial, leadership, and managerial competencies that build sustainable advantage from vision to value. He is an author and a frequent speaker.

He obtained his professional experience as a partner at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture, Ltd.), as a vice president at Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. (now Booz and Company), as a senior vice president at the American Express Company, as president of Javazona Cafes, Inc., and as president of The Business Leadership Development Corporation. He has been a contributing editor for the Bank Administration Institute magazine, and has served on boards of entrepreneurial networks. He was educated at the University of Exeter, Devon, United Kingdom.

His clients are in the financial services, food services, high-tech, manufacturing and distribution, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, professional services, retail and wholesale, transportation, and government industries.

He has experience in North and Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

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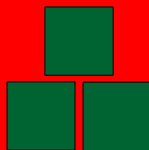
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