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Healthy Teams Collection

Motivating and Developing Your Team

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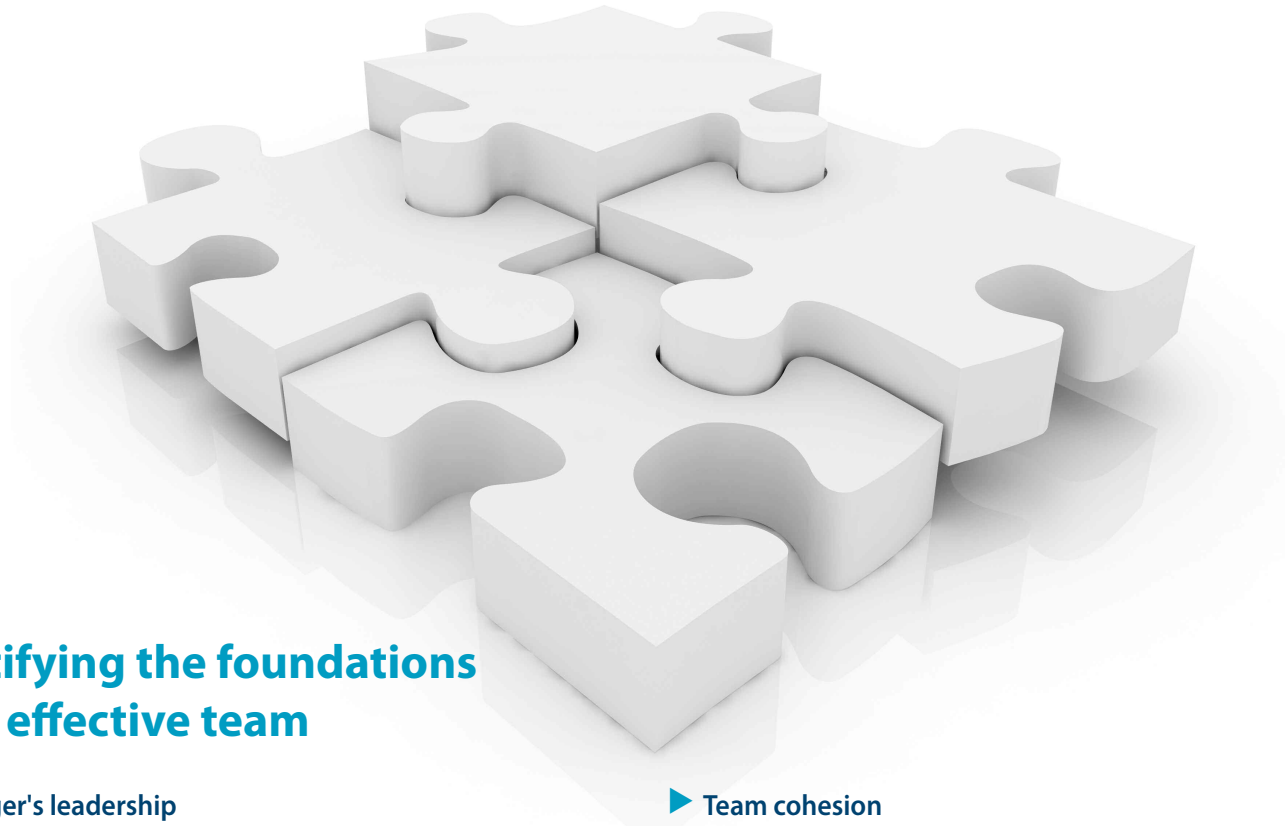
Economic changes, combined with continually evolving client needs, have prompted modern companies to modify their pyramid-shaped hierarchies. This has resulted in the development of more team-oriented structures. These changes have had an impact on the processes and prompted more decisions to be made by individuals at lower levels. Companies that have successfully made these changes have shifted from an airtight management style controlled by one person, to a more flexible style that focuses on training competent teams.

These modern teams need to have the necessary resources to plan their tasks, make decisions and ensure top-quality work. This allows managers to put aside their old role as controller of the work so they can focus on seeking business opportunities, designing quality improvement strategies and pursuing development, cost-cutting and productivity objectives. Today's managers have developed more of a coaching role with their teams. But in order for this to work, they first need a team they can rely on.



Identifying the foundations of an effective team

Manager's leadership

The first key to an effective team is the manager's leadership. Leading a team is quite a challenge, and one that requires specific skills. Being a leader requires a significant amount of commitment, patience and flexibility. **Successful leaders use their skills as a negotiator, facilitator and communicator, to develop their team's full potential**. These leaders are coaches who focus more on employee motivation and professional development, than on methodology and following procedures.

By making the most of your team's strengths, you'll be exercising influence instead of power. To be an effective manager, you need to recognize your employees' qualities and continually encourage them to improve themselves and expand their field of knowledge.

Team cohesion

An effective team consists of a group of individuals with complementary skills who share the same goals, for which they feel mutually responsible. Characteristics that are key to a team's cohesion and performance include critical thinking, problem-solving skills, the ability to make decisions, and good communication and interpersonal skills.

Failure to manage a team's problems can lead to difficult behaviour, poor mental presence at work and increased absenteeism. The sidebar on the next page will help you assess your team's strengths and weaknesses, or in other words, the areas that require coaching from you or training.

Team performance factors

For a team to be effective, each of its members needs to:

- Understand their role and participate in setting objectives;
- Be competent and seek to improve overall team performance;
- Be creative and able to propose action plans that ensure service quality;
- Set their objectives with a constant concern for client needs;
- Use problem-solving techniques and make informed decisions;
- Manage conflict effectively;
- Recognize the importance of change for the development of the team and the company;
- Use communication methods that ensure the transmission of information;
- Help create a healthy work environment by maintaining good interpersonal relationships;
- Be accountable for their work and ensure that objectives are achieved.

People's basic needs

We can't talk about interpersonal relationships and basic needs without looking at Maslow's pyramid, which was created by renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow. According to Maslow, human needs are organized according to a hierarchy. At the bottom of the pyramid are basic physiological needs, and at the top are psychological, emotional and spiritual needs. These are the needs that drive motivation.

The principle of Maslow's pyramid is that when a person's basic needs are not met, there's little chance that they will show an interest in the higher level needs. **Someone who has not fulfilled their needs for self-esteem and recognition (level 4), for example, will have difficulty satisfying their need for self-actualization (level 5)**. As a result, they will have difficulty reaching their full potential, being proactive and taking on challenges. A team can't be expected to do its best work without taking into account the basic needs of each of its members.

An effective team needs to be autonomous and accountable

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Understanding engagement

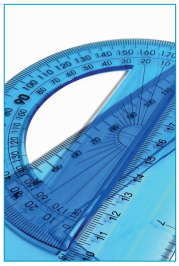
Motivational factors

The difference between a motivated team and an unmotivated team lies in the balance between people's basic needs and their ability to fulfill these needs, both personally and professionally. From a professional standpoint, you can play an important role in motivating your team. For example, someone who has a need for belonging will value team projects. Someone else who has a need for self-actualization will prefer to work on projects that enable them to expand their knowledge. By taking the time to get to know your team members, you'll be able to assess what their needs are and offer them opportunities to fulfil those needs.

Job satisfaction factors

A work environment that promotes personal growth and development, increases an employee's desire to be physically and mentally present at work. **Motivated, satisfied employees are generally individuals in good mental health who are committed to their jobs and enjoy the opportunity for self-actualization in their work.** When employees enjoy their jobs, they have good relationships with their co-workers, are appreciated by their clients, and contribute to the growth of the organization. Although job satisfaction is a subjective thing, that can vary from person to person, the table below will help you identify certain factors that contribute to a person's job satisfaction.

Factors promoting job satisfaction	Factors promoting personal satisfaction	Expression in the workplace
Tasks assigned according to abilities, well-defined roles	Self-actualization, knowledge used to its full potential	A workload adapted to one's capabilities, feeling useful, taking on challenges
Friendly work environment	Open communication, exchange of ideas, frequent use of creativity	Being part of a team, having the support of others, feeling heard and understood, sharing knowledge, being protected from violence and chaos
Option to learn new things	Empowerment, accountability, opportunities for achievement	A feeling of mastering one's job, managing complex projects, achieving success
Availability of necessary resources	Ability to influence the decision-making process and choose working methods	Being autonomous and accountable, able to question procedures and recommend ways of achieving objectives
Respect among co-workers and supervisors, recognition	Good interpersonal relationships	Being accepted by one's peers, getting respect and approval from others, receiving praise for one's achievements



Six keys to an effective team

A productive team is dependent on six key factors: delegation and accountability, conflict management, managing reactions to change, problem-solving, communication methods and employee recognition. Keeping these factors in mind, will help you develop a team that's able to make appropriate decisions and be fully accountable for its work.

Delegation and accountability

To have an effective team, you need to do more than just assign tasks; you need to empower your team. By having confidence in your employees' abilities and giving them the resources, authority and information they need, you'll be making them accountable for their work. You'll then see that your role is to monitor the results (quality, deadlines, impact on service, etc.), not oversee the processes. The challenge is to offer your team your expertise and support without imposing your ideas.

Conflict management

By remaining alert and attentive to signs of dissatisfaction, you'll be promoting increased team effectiveness by encouraging team members to resolve their differences quickly. Conflict is a common obstacle to a team's success. It's often caused by a lack of information, misunderstanding, misinterpretation or confusion, regarding one another's roles, priorities or objectives. By promoting open discussion, you'll be helping people seek and find solutions.

Managing reactions to change

Change can have a positive or negative impact on a team's performance. Even when the change appears minimal or positive, it can be difficult for some people to accept, and can undermine team effectiveness if not properly managed. Any controversy generally pertains to individual roles, objectives, or procedures associated with the change. As a result, you need to make sure the nature of the change is properly understood by all team members and highlight the positive impact on the achievement of objectives.

Problem-solving

Learning problem-solving skills is essential to avoiding frustration and dysfunction. Team members should therefore be able to use a problem-solving process to effectively resolve day-to-day problems. By encouraging the expression of different points of view in order to obtain a consensus, this kind of process is helpful in achieving the desired results. You can help your team in this regard by acting as a coach and facilitator.

Communication methods

To achieve the desired results, a team needs transparency and information. Sharing knowledge, ideas and experiences among team members, is the foundation for improving performance. Regular team meetings coupled with frequent informal discussions can be crucial to team success. Whether it's verbal or written, communication helps to promote cooperation. By frequently providing clear, precise, consistent information, you'll avoid communication breaches that can compromise operations.

Employee recognition

In order for employees to grow and develop and contribute to the achievements of their team, their need for recognition needs to be fulfilled. In the work environment, there are numerous opportunities to make people feel that they're valued, and that their ideas, achievements and talents are appreciated. It's just as important to recognize the team's contribution to the overall success of the company. In short, employee recognition can have a major impact on productivity.

Coaching a team

Team's vision and values

Team cohesion starts with adopting a team mission, vision and values. The **mission** is used to express the team's distinctive role and purpose. The **vision** is used to express what the team wants to become. Lastly, the **values** are used to express what the team wants to convey on a day-to-day basis (competence, excellence, etc.).

The team's vision however, must be achievable, flexible, and in line with company expectations. By using ideas from all members of your team, you'll also ensure that everyone has a common vision, which will promote a feeling of belonging. The following questionnaire will help you identify the mission, vision and values your team wants to adopt.

Team's mission, vision and values

What is your team's mission?

How does this mission relate to the company's mission?

What is your team's vision?

How does this vision relate to the company's vision?

How can the team's vision be transferred to day-to-day activities?

What are the values your team wants to convey?

How can these values be applied on a day-to-day basis?

Coaching

Coaching is fundamental to developing a team's competencies. It helps team members learn and develop skills. **The more autonomous your team, the more your role shifts from managing people to developing your team**. For a lot of managers, this shift can pose some challenges. During the transition, you may find yourself going back to your old habits and trying to "lead" the team. Team members may in turn ask you to resolve problems and make decisions for them. When they ask for your help, you may be flattered, but remember that an autonomous team needs to be able to control its own activities; your role is merely to facilitate the process. The table on the right provides some examples to help you differentiate between a directive and a participative management style.

Examples of a directive style	Examples of a participative style
You should organize your work like this to meet the deadline.	This is the deadline. How do you plan to organize your work to meet it?
You'd be more effective if you did it this way.	How could you be more efficient?
This way of doing things has always had good results for this type of project.	What technique could you use to get better results on this project?
You'll get along better with your co-workers if you change your attitude.	What aspects of your attitude could you change so your co-workers are more comfortable with you?
This mistake is unacceptable. Don't let it happen again.	Have you assessed the consequences of this mistake and determined how to make sure it doesn't happen again?

In order to be effective, a team needs to have clear objectives

Keys to effective leadership

- √ Regularly update the team's common objectives.
- √ Clearly define each person's authority and responsibilities.
- √ Delegate tasks and hold people accountable for completing them.
- √ Encourage the team to focus on client needs.
- √ Facilitate communication, sharing of opinions and respect for others.
- √ Encourage initiative, creativity and autonomy.
- √ Support the development of personal and professional skills.
- √ Recognize the team's achievements and give them credit for their success.

Pursuit of excellence through trust

By clearly defining your expectations and recognizing your team members' contribution, you will increase not only their commitment to their job, but also their participation in achieving the common goal. **To ensure that you have an effective, motivated team, meeting short-term goals is not enough**. Although day-to-day activities are important, the pursuit of excellence is a process that requires a long-term vision.

Trust is one of the key factors at the basis of a team's effectiveness and its harmonious development over time. Trust and mutual respect also promote cooperation and sharing of knowledge. **Your team members must be able to not only resolve problems, but to do so in a cooperative manner**. Since they depend on one another, they need to trust their co-workers in order to carry out their individual roles effectively. In short, by ensuring good interpersonal relationships, you will improve the team's cohesion and long-term effectiveness.

Changes to the work organization brought on by competition and market laws, the demand for flexibility, and the need to bring decision-making processes more in line with client needs, have caused many companies to re-evaluate things. Successful companies are those that have responded to these new requirements, by focusing their efforts on training effective teams.

In this regard, the key for managers is to go beyond delegation and put strategies in place for accountability, training and coaching. This provides employees with the skills they need to manage their resources, make the necessary decisions, and be accountable for the results of their work, which in turn maximizes the performance of your team.

Professional resources for managers

The Posaction® Plus management assistance program is included in your group insurance contract. The program includes training modules, coaching, a post-traumatic counselling service and psychosocial assistance for troubled employees.

Confidential telephone coaching

- Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (ET)

1.877.744.2789

Post-traumatic counselling

- Round-the-clock service for serious incidents

1.800.668.0193

For more details about the program
www.posactionplus.com

Posaction® Plus
Your management assistance program

Psychosocial assistance for troubled employees

By referring employees to professional resources, you'll be helping them take concrete steps to resolve their problems and regain their regular performance at work.

Round-the-clock confidential service

1.800.668.0193

- Work-related problems
- Personal problems
- Family problems
- Dependency problems

No charge for using the services

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Other titles available

- Solving an Absenteeism Problem
- Solving a Presenteeism Problem
- Managing Interpersonal Conflict
- Managing Reactions to Change
- Managing Difficult Behaviour
- Solving a Performance Problem
- Delegating for Efficiency
- Recruiting the Best Candidates for Your Team
- Making the Most of Your Performance Appraisals

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The Healthy Teams collection is part of the Posaction® Plus management assistance program included in your group insurance contract. The program offers tangible solutions designed to improve management practices and prevent absence from work. Additional copies of this module, or copies of other titles in the collection, can be ordered free of charge at **www.posactionplus.com**

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