



So you want to build a "TEAM"read on,

By definition the word *team* can mean "*a number of persons forming a side in a game or contest*" or "*a number of persons associated in some joint action*" or it may be "*two or more draft animals harnessed together*". If it were that simple then all we would have to do would be to bring everyone together, explain what our team had to do, and then let them do it. Unfortunately in order for us to accomplish our objective we need "Teamwork". Now let's see how we define the word "*teamwork*". The dictionary tells us that "teamwork" is "*a cooperative effort by a group of persons acting together as a team*". Now again it would be very easy for us to call our team together explain to them what our objective is and then instruct them that by working together they could reach that objective. Where the problem starts is that sales teams are almost always comprised of a varying range of personalities and skill levels. Because of these differences we find that management's role can be a rewarding challenge or at worst a time consuming ineffectual disaster.

The first thing we must all understand in building a team is the difference between managing and coaching. Managing is taking care of things...Coaching is taking care of people. "*You manage things...you coach people*". Things come with instruction manuals or directions sometimes even warranties. People, thank God, are all different. They have their own attitudes, feelings, beliefs, perceptions, prejudices, emotions, and personalities all of which ultimately affect their behavior. This is why we find people reacting differently to situations. One may find it amusing while another may want to "call the authorities". These are the same people that we have in our employ. As a manager/coach we have to get these people to do what they may not want to do so that they can accomplish what they want to accomplish. Let's take a look at some of the different personalities we may find in a sales force:

- **Seasoned Veterans** These are normally the people who have been with the organization longer than most and have established themselves in your industry as true professionals. They require very little supervision and if left alone will produce above average results. We refer to them as "low maintenance". However they must be protected when there are changes within your organization, such as pay plans, hours, quotas, commissions etc. When they start to feel that "they are being taken for granted" or "unappreciated" they will move-on and you will wonder why. They need to be kept informed and asked for their valued opinions. This is the reassurance they need that they are appreciated.
- **Worrier** These are normally the people that need constant reassurance that they are doing well. They need to be kept informed about the latest and greatest as well as emotional and moral support. We refer to them as "high maintenance". These players can be extremely competitive as well as excellent producers but may have a hard time dealing with the success of other people. These people must be made to feel that they



are part of your team. A simple mistake of not saying "*good morning*" will destroy them for the day. They feel that they have done something wrong and you don't like them.

- **Comedian** These are normally the people that think they are helping everyone's morale by acting like the "class clown". They are very outgoing, friendly and gregarious. Unfortunately they can and in most cases do, lose their focus on what they are trying to accomplish. If they can be monitored without feeling restricted or embarrassed they can and in most cases will become members of the TEAM. These people are not necessarily "high maintenance" but their activities have to be monitored in such a way as to keep them on task but not make them feel "watched"
- **Novice** These are normally the newest people. Some will have absolutely no experience in your industry while others may have limited experience. They are highly motivated but need the confidence that comes with experience. They may appear outwardly as having confidence but you must always recognize that they need constant encouragement when they fail at whatever they are learning. By simplifying their learning and praising every accomplishment they will start to gain the confidence necessary to move them to the next level. These are in the "high maintenance" category.
- **Over-Confident** These are normally the people that have been around your industry or in your organization for a long while and are satisfied with doing just enough to keep themselves out of harms way. Some managers have a hard time dealing with this group because they can be demoralizing. They probably have been around long enough to know everyone including the CEO and they are not afraid to let you know it. If left alone they can instigate employee complaints and turnover. They too are "high maintenance". However they can be made to feel part of the team if they are asked for their opinion and invited to mentor new employees or a difficult situation. They must be constantly challenged with new adventures or they will become complacent and fall back into bad habits.

Will the team approach work with the different types of personalities we employ? Remember sales people are really loners that thrive on their own success. They pride themselves on being able to live in the wild and come out with a sale. They are only happy if they are selling and making money. If we try to alter their approach we may restrict their ability to adapt and overcome their environment thus creating exactly what we are trying to change. We must constantly remember that these are individuals capable of being creative and may not be suited to working in a team environment. They may feel frustrated waiting for "the team" to decide what they already know will work. Remember sometimes working alone will get the results needed while the team approach can get it done elsewhere. The **United States Marine Corps** has created the perfect balance of team and teamwork along with the need for individual growth. As Coach's we need to know when to apply which approach.



Not everyone wants to be part of a "Team". Some may feel that they want to be recognized as individuals for their own accomplishments and rewarded accordingly. This is when our leadership and coaching skills are put to the test. How do we get everyone working together as a team while still allowing them the opportunity to be recognized for their individual contribution without giving the impression that they are prima donnas? Let's face it; everyone can use a pat on the back if it is done sincerely. One way may be to reward individual as well as group efforts. By assigning everyone a specific objective a leader can help his or her team reach its objective without creating a hostile environment. Just remember that individual objectives must be attainable. There is nothing worse than assigning an objective that the individual feels cannot be accomplished. Don't "back into the numbers" because the pressure is on you. If you need to sell 100 widgets this month with the same team that sold 50 last month.... what's changed?

We need to be realistic in whatever we do. Too many times managers dream themselves into situations that may not be possible. They then sell this to their boss who expects them to deliver. Along the way they sell it to the sales team who in turn overstate what they can do on their forecast thus resulting in a disaster. All of the variables must be examined. People, place, product, availability, timing, economy, etc. A true leader has this information readily available and probably has already taken it into account when setting the teams' objective. There is nothing worse than at months end scurrying to put the numbers together for an objective that was never realistic from the start

***A coach's job is to get their players to do what they don't want to do...
so they can accomplish what they want to accomplish***