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**Five Questions to Ask Before Forming a Team**

**By Kevin Eikenberry**

A project or challenge comes up and many people, without thinking, immediately form a team to research, solve the problem and implement the solution. Teams can be a very powerful way to solve problems and implement massive improvements. But teams aren't the right answer to every situation.

To get the best possible results from the resources available, it is important that a leader answer a question they typically don't ask – "Is a team the best way to address this situation?"

Unfortunately when they assume the answer to that first question they jump to "Who should I put on the team?" When they start there, they may have already doomed the organization to less than the perfect solution, before they even get started.

This article poses five questions designed to help you answer this important first question.

Is the goal clear? If the goal isn't crystal clear yet, don't form a team. A team can develop a problem statement and solve a problem, but they can't work successfully (at least not quickly and efficiently) with a goal that isn't clearly articulated. Once the goal is clear (you might want to meet with a couple of people in a one time meeting to get this clarity), you can continue on with the rest of the questions. Until then, don't form a team!

Will the team have the resources they need to succeed? You may be the person who needs to provide those resources, or you may need to negotiate for them. Teams need to know what resources they have in terms of skills, budget, time, support and more. While a lack of resources will challenge people and teams to be creative, there is a limit to this! Teams will falter and struggle without the necessary resources to succeed. Proceed with out them and you risk massive frustration and low productivity.

Does this really require a team? This is perhaps the biggest of the questions. We all value collaboration and teamwork - but they don't have to go together. Collaboration can be achieved without a team. Perhaps what you need to do is assign or find a person to run a project, and encourage others with valuable input and experience to collaborate and help as needed. Remember there is a big difference between putting people on a team and asking them to help on an as-needed

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basis. When you remember that you can foster collaboration without a team you allow yourself to really answer this question successfully.

What is the relative importance? Not all projects or problems are created equal. It is important to consider the relative importance of a situation before dedicating lots of resources to it. Think about your overall plan and your people resources. See where this fits into your big picture before you decide to form a team, versus assigning it to a single person to manage.

Is there time? It takes time to schedule, form, acclimate and help a team get a good start. Is there time for all that, relative to the need for a solution or answer? If not, get someone, get and decision and move on.

If you get yes answers to all of the questions above, congratulations! Form your team and help them succeed.

But if you get one or more no answers – do yourself and those you might put on a team - a favor. Think a bit longer before automatically forming a team.

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### **A Team Building Seminar Can Work For Any Business**

**By Paul Tobey**

It amazes me how popular team building seminars have become. Most major companies and organizations have turned to team building professionals at one time or another to get greater results from their employees. But, team building is not just for large companies, it works just as well for the small business entrepreneur. I'd like to focus on a couple of key points that will help you decide, as a big or small business, if team building seminars are right for you.

One of the first questions I always ask in my own team building seminar is; what's the number one thing you need to do in business to be successful. And, you wouldn't believe the mixed responses I get like; having a good product, having a good marketing strategy or having good management. While

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these things are important they're certainly not number one! The most important thing you need to do as a company, whether you like it or not is; SELL. In fact, if you're not selling is a hobby, not a business.

Learning to sell is by far the most important skill you could ever acquire. That's why I teach it in my team building seminars. Everyone on the team needs to know how to sell, not just the sales people. Why? Because that way, everyone understands, not only how important it is to the success of any business but how learning to sell can increase everyone's awareness of what it takes to be successful.

So, if selling is the most important skill what's the second most important? Team! The team is what gives life and energy to your ideas and what propels your company forward. Imagine how hard it would be to push a car up a hill if you didn't have a team. A team makes everything easier if, and only if, people know how to work together. Which, brings me to the third most important thing; Teach!

As part of a team, your responsibility is to teach everyone around you what you know that can help them do their job better. How do you know when and when not to teach? When you've done something and had success doing it, then it's time to pass on that information. So often when people learn something that's worked for them they keep it to themselves because somehow they think it gives them an advantage within the company. That's what you don't want. You don't want a bunch of individuals all competing with each other. That's not a team, that's a contest!

Finally, the glue that holds Sell, Team and Teach together is; Accountability. When you become accountable for the success of others then you realize that your responsibility is to share the information you've learned that can help them. Then, and only then, can you be truly successful as a team. Becoming accountable for each other is truly the magic potion of successful businesses.

So, how can this work for a small business person that doesn't have a team? Exactly the same way! If you're in small business you still need a team in order to sell a lot of products and services. If you can't afford to hire a big team then all you need to do is offer to teach what you know that will help others. In the process, a team will form around you and the energy that you put into teaching will bring you greater success than you ever thought possible.

The cornerstone of Paul Tobey's

team building seminar

is focusing on results through collective

energy. To learn more about what this involves please visit

team building seminars

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