

CAPIP News

A newsletter for and about Carl Albert Public Internship Program Executive Fellows, Senior Undergraduate and Undergraduate Interns

Mastering the Art of Teams and Team-Building: 10 Tips for Top-Quality Teamwork

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A Publication of
the State of
Oklahoma
Office of
Personnel
Management

Volume 13, Issue 4

December 2009

Working in teams is inevitable. For years now, organizational leaders have recognized the added value that comes from having employees work in formal or informal teams, but over the last two decades even greater emphasis has been placed on work teams. Several studies indicate that more than 80 percent of organizations employ multiple types of workplace teams.

Team-building and teamwork skills are essential in the workplace and highly desirable skills to possess when seeking a new job or promotion. Teams working at their potential generate more productivity and better solutions than if all the individual members had worked independently.

How can you be a better team member? How can you get your team to work more effectively as a team? How can you lead your team to success? Here are 10 tips for creating better teams.

1. Foster Open Communications. The best teams are those in which every member shares their thoughts and opinions with the group, and where decision-making is based on dialogue and not dictatorship. But open communication is not just about having an atmosphere in which people can talk freely -- it's also about team members listening to each other and valuing each other's opinions. If your team lacks open communica-

tions, bring it up at your next team meeting.

2. Build Trust. Trust is the cornerstone of all effective teams. Without trust, there really is no team, just a collection of individuals working together. Teams need to develop to a point where every member trusts that every other member will do the work required and be an active member of the team. One of the trendy methods of trust-building is having team participate in a ropes-challenge course, where teams work together to solve problems.

3. Set Clear Goals. A team without specific goals will not nearly be as effective as a team with goals. Goals should be specific, including a deadline for completion. But goals should not necessarily always come from the leader of the team; all goals should be discussed by the entire team, especially in situations in which deadlines will be tight.

4. Review Progress. Once goals have been set, the team frequently goes off to complete all the tasks to achieve its goal. This scenario is perfectly fine, except that in too many instances, new information or actions can affect the goal's completion. Thus, teams benefit from conducting regular check-ins with all team members -- perhaps something as often as weekly -- to review progress and iron out any wrinkles or overcome obstacles that have arisen.

5. Encourage Cooperation, not Competition. Despite being placed in teams with co-workers competing with you for your next promotion, you must find a way to collaborate with every member of the team. One of the worst labels in the workplace is that of "not being a team player." You will be plenty of time to showcase your personal accomplishments, but without your cooperation, your team may not succeed. Collaboration is a must.

6. Focus on Professionalism. The reality of life is that we all have certain types of personalities that clash with our own, but for teams to work, you have to put aside these petty differences and focus on the positive aspects of all team members. Remember that you are not forging lifelong friendships with your team, you simply need to work together to achieve your goals. Downplay people's negative traits and focus on their positives -- just as they will yours.

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CAPIP Spotlight

CAPIP Interns Appointed Since August 2009

Executive Fellows

Lizhi (Kevin) Yuan

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission

Leann Cain-Hobson

James Gottman

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

Senior Undergraduates

Jeannie Partaka

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

The **Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services** has the distinct honor of hiring the CAPIP's first Senior Undergraduate Intern. **Jeannie Partaka** became an eligible Senior Undergraduate in November and received her appointment to the Department of Rehabilitation Services in December. She is currently working in the Muskogee office, providing vocational rehabilitation services to consumers in Eastern Oklahoma. Jeannie has been trained to work on several assistive technology devices to assist her customers. She can also read and write Braille proficiently. Some of Jeannie's hobbies include singing, writing poetry and swimming. With the additional skills and experience that she will acquire during her internship, Jeannie hopes to eventually become a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Congratulations to the
Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
and
Jeannie Partaka!

COMING SOON TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU!!!



THE CAPIP ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM
www.capip.ok.gov

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7. Celebrate Differences/Diversity. One of the best trends in society, as well as the workplace, has been a growing diversity of people -- by race, ethnicity, gender, and age. Diversity introduces new ways of thinking and leads to new ideas and better decisions. Rather than feeling uncomfortable that most of the team does not look or act like you, celebrate their individual differences and the value that each brings to the team.

8. Be Enthusiastic. Even if you generally prefer to work by yourself, the reality you are face is that teams in the workplace are here to stay. One way to make the best of the situation is to jump into the team experience with as much enthusiasm as possible. Enthusiasm is contagious, so not only will your enthusiasm help you feel better about being a team member, it will lead other team members to also become more enthusiastic.

9. Share the Work/Do the Work. The best teams are those in which each member plays a vital part in work that

results in superior performance; thus it is imperative that each member not only feels he or she plays a vital role, but actually does so. But sharing the work is only part of the equation. The other part is that once the work has been assigned, each team member must be accountable to complete the tasks. Much as been written about the "free-rider" problem within teams, but with individual accountability within the team, people cannot hide from their team responsibilities.

10. Clarify Responsibilities to the Team. Often one of the main causes of team members not completing their work is not because they are "slackers," but because they simply do not understand their role on the team -- or the importance that their work will lend to the team. The key here is that each team member must totally understand his or her role on the team and responsibility to the team so the team can succeed.

Final Thoughts

Your work life will include individual and team projects and assignments, and as you move up the organization, the importance of working well in teams -- and leading teams to success -- will

gain more and more value. If you take these 10 tips to heart, your satisfaction with teamwork and your performance on the team will improve greatly.

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Dr. Randall S. Hansen is founder of [Quintessential Careers](http://www.quintcareers.com), one of the oldest and most comprehensive career development sites on the Web, as well CEO of [EmpoweringJobs.com](http://www.empoweringjobs.com). He is also founder of [MyCollegeSuccessStory.com](http://www.collegesuccessstory.com) and [Enhance My Vocabulary.com](http://www.enhancemyvocabulary.com). He is publisher of [Quintessential Careers Press](http://www.quintessentialcareers.com), including the Quintessential Careers electronic newsletter, [QuintZine](http://www.quintzine.com). Dr. Hansen is also a published author, with several books, chapters in books, and hundreds of articles. He's often quoted in the media and conducts empowering workshops around the country. Finally, Dr. Hansen is also an educator, having taught at the college level for more than 15 years. Visit his [personal Website](http://www.quintcareers.com) or reach him by email

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Gen Y in the Workplace: Part II

By Heather Kerrigan



Visit the website below to read her full article.

<http://www.governing.com/eletters/publicworkforce/pwlet.htm>

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