

Teamwork is what makes a team work! Part Two



Dr. Ali Qassem

www.aliqasseminternational.com

In the previous article, I mentioned that the team's leader should possess the knowledge and the skills that are imperative to create and maintain a positive working environment. He also should be able to create a high level of morale, motivate and inspire the team members to take a positive approach to work and be highly committed, and make them feel supported and valued.

Another imperative necessity for an effective leader is to gain the essence of leadership; that is the trust of his team members. Trust is a primary attribute associated with, and inseparable from leadership, because it is impossible for a leader to lead people who do not trust him. People will not sincerely follow someone whom they believe untrustworthy, dishonest or takes advantage of them.

Dr. Stephen Robbins is the world's best-selling author of textbooks on management and organizational behavior; his books have sold more than two million copies, are currently used by students at more than one thousand U.S. colleges and universities, and are widely read worldwide.

In this regard, he said, "Part of the leaders' task is working with people to find and solve problems. How much knowledge and creative thinking they gain, depends on how much their people trust them." (*Center for Creative Leadership and Organisational Behaviour, 4th Ed, Stephen Robbins, Bruce Millet & Terry Waters-Marsh, pp 213*)

Moreover, when there are difficulties and instability in any situation, people make their judgments and decisions based on personal relationships, and the quality of the relationship relies on the level of trust.

There are dimensions, capacities, or qualities that one should have in order to gain trust. They are, in addition to the character traits mentioned earlier, integrity, credibility, competence, loyalty, unquestionable self-confidence, courage, accountability, respect, consistency, and openness.

I have read a book titled, "The Speed of Trust" by Stephen M. R. Covey that has a commendable statement regarding the importance of trust, which I would like to share with you.

He said, "There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization, nation, economy, and civilization throughout the world. This one thing, which if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, and the deepest love.

On the other hand, if developed and leveraged, that one thing has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life. Yet, it is the least understood, the most neglected, and the most underestimated possibility of our time; that one thing is trust".

In addition to the aforementioned, the team leader should show his gratitude and praise the good work publicly, and communicate his dissatisfaction and correct mistakes privately. He also should focus on the positives of his team members, not the negative, and should believe that people have the capacity to learn, adapt, and grow.

Many team leaders seem to enjoy looking for their team members' faults as if there are rewards for them. However, if the team leader looks for the positives of his team members, guide and correct them, their negatives will eventually disappear.

Andrew Carnegie said, "When you work with people it is a lot like mining for gold. When you mine for gold, you must literally move tons of dirt to find one single ounce of gold. However, you do not look for the dirt, you look for the gold."

The other key factors of effective teamwork, besides effective leadership, are effective communication, understanding and adapting to the diverse cultures and backgrounds of each other, resolving conflicts, and having sense of motivation among all team members.

Effective communication is the ability to make people understand what has been said. It is the most important key of understanding, building relationships, and developing mutual respect between people. Moreover, no matter how good is the idea, the thought,

the need, the plan, the information, or the instructions for a certain task; they will be fruitless unless the team members understand them.

Teams are people, who may be from different, races, cultures, and backgrounds, which may present challenges and opportunities. Hence, understanding and adapting to these diverse cultures and backgrounds is important for avoiding misunderstanding and creating an effective teamwork.

Conflict is a natural part of life. It is a normal outcome of human interaction, and is unavoidable. Conflicts inevitably occur in most situations when people work together. Nevertheless, they can be resolved in many ways and even result in a win-win situation. Individuals react and respond to conflict in a variety of ways; some avoid it, some confront it, and others may let their emotions drive their reaction.

However, the team members must use systematic, effective, and consistent approach for conflict resolution. If not, the reaction that they would take may result in making the situation worse.

Motivation is the fuel that spurs and inspires the team members for innovation, actions, performance, persistence, and perseverance.

Moreover, being motivated has been an essential component in the success process of any kind. Being motivated is to be determined, focused, committed, and full of passion to achieve the team's desired goals. (*An article on motivation was published previously in New Sabah Times, and is available at www.aliqassem.com*).