



Team Excellence: (A Definition)

Excellence in Team Performance is a highly interactive process that is accomplished through collaboration in order to make a team more effective and *achieve unity of purpose*. A mutually understood mission, clarity of goals and successful results through group effort are the trademarks of a highly effective team. Individually, the ability to contribute one's best talent in the spirit of cooperation and consensus are the key qualities that identify highly successful team members. In short, Team Excellence is: "the *ongoing utilization of skills, tools and methods* that promote improved results in areas that are vital to the teams' long term success".

Ideal Team:

A strong team is one in which the atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable and relaxed; there is considerable discussion on important topics in which virtually everyone participates. The goals, outcomes, norms and tasks of the group are well understood and accepted by each team member. Each group member actively listens to one another and although there is occasional disagreement – even occasional conflict – issues are worked on through collaboration and negotiation toward a spirit of agreement. *There is frequent and honest feedback amongst team members*. Team performance is openly evaluated and people are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas. There are no hidden agendas. *Roles & responsibilities are clearly established* and work assignments are accepted with enthusiasm & focus. Clearly defined leadership is often the hallmark of the group's effectiveness, although informal leadership on the team shifts as needed to draw forth and utilize the resources, talents and diversity within the group. There is little or no struggle for power and control because the main concern is to get the job done consistent with the team's core values and those of the organization. And finally, the team *regularly and consciously* examines how well it is doing in two key areas: 1) As a group of people *working together* in accomplishing its collective and individual goals, and 2) How the *behaviors* of team members are contributing to (or hindering to) the group's successful performance.

Summary:

Quite simply, team development attempts to move a group forward in all the areas mentioned above. It is based on the clear realization that the highest commitment to shared goals is necessary for success; and that achieving those goals requires unique kinds of interaction which can occur only in a highly cooperative group setting.

The Image

Ornithology (the study of birds), provides a tremendous example of teamwork: "A flock of geese flying together reaches their destination 70% faster than one goose flying alone!" What makes this statement a *statistically valid scientific fact* that can be proven?

