Barriers To Team Success

- When plans are inadequate
- Leaders without leadership skills
- When members have poor attitudes
- Training that doesn’t train
- Communications breakdowns
- Team members don’t get along
- Rewards and recognition programmes that don’t work

The team

• Can be a great boon to an organization
• Can revitalize organizations that are going downhill
• Stimulate employees to become more creative and more creative
• Can develop leaders for the future

But, Teams don’t always work!
Why Should This Happen?

- This is due to many barriers that impede team success.
- Understanding the reasons for failures and learning how to avoid them will keep you from repeating the mistakes others have made.
Barriers

1. Poor Planning
2. Poor Leadership
3. Poor Training
4. Poor Attitude
5. Poor Rapport Among Team Members
6. Poor Recognition and Rewards Programmes
Poor Planning

• You just don’t shift from work groups to teams by an edict from top management “Effective to this date you are a team”.

• You have to take the time to plan exactly what you want to do and how you intend to do it.
Planting Your Goalposts

• Specific goals and objectives give you a standard against which to measure your progress.
• The goals and objectives for the team must be in line with goals and objectives of the organization.
• In most organization the overall goals and objectives are established by top management and filtered down to departments and teams.
• Setting goals and objectives takes time, energy and effort.
Before setting goals and objectives for the team, you have to diagnose the “as-is” situation.

This involves not only the “hard” statistics, but also the “soft” information such as attitudes and morale, willingness to cooperate, commitment, etc.

You must go deeper.

You must get to know the people with whom you interrelate.

You must learn their strengths and weaknesses.
“The manager who comes up with the right solution to the wrong problem is more dangerous than the manager who comes with the wrong solution to the right problem”

Peter Drucker
Flying by the seat of the Pants

- Some leaders run their departments without real planning.
- They make decisions based on their experience and intuition, like pioneer aviators.
- The technology and the complexities of running a team have made “seat of the pants” management obsolete.
Poorly Conceived Organization

• To make teams work, the traditional hierarchial organizational structure must be modified.
• Rigid adherence to the structure can impede the work of teams.
• Teams often cross structural lines.
• Flexibility is a key factor when organizing a team.
• Unless members have highly specialized skills that are unique to them, avoid giving each member a permanent function.
• Every member should be able and willing to perform every job activity.
Poor Leadership

• Blame it on the boss!
• And often the boss is to blame.
• No matter how competent the team may be, unless they are guided by a knowledgeable, dedicated, inspiring leader, it will be tough for them to achieve their goals.
Confusion in the Ranks

• If the leader doesn’t lead, the team cannot follow.
• Worse, if the leader leads badly, the team will perform badly.
• Without leadership, there is total confusion.
The hierarchial organizational structure is a carryover from the time when business used the military as an example of the ideal organization.

But today, even military units have modified, and in some cases eliminated this rigid organization.
Poor Training

- A team is like a rocket.
- The rocket is made up of many components, and each must work.
- Each team member is a component of the team.
- Unless all are able to perform their functions, the team will never be able to move ahead.
- This involves individual training as well as training as a team.
Poor Attitudes

Many members have about the team process, the team leader and often their teammates.
• All the team members are expected to do any work that will propel the team toward its goals.
• Yet, there are still members who look upon their jobs as being limited to their job descriptions.
• Team members must do whatever has to be done to accomplish the job.
• This includes doing work you don’t enjoy, helping slower members catch up, and putting aside per projects to keep the team on target for higher priority assignments.
Lack of Trust

- When team members do not trust their leader or one or more of their teammates, the team will fail.
- It is very easy for a person to lose trust in another.
- For e.g., when promises made are not kept, when withholding needed information
“My teammates don’t pull their loads.”

• It is human nature for a person to resent others who, in their opinions are not contributing as much to the team effort as they are.

• No team can succeed unless every member does his or her share.

If you are the team member who is not pulling your load, determine the reason.
If you need to improve your skills, seek help from the leader or your teammates.
If you lack self-confidence, seek out a programme that can help you.
“I’m not paid to make decisions.”

- Employees who have been conditioned to taking orders, will feel uncomfortable, when as team members, are asked to participate in decision-making.
- They feel that supervisors and managers are paid more to take decisions.
- It is logical for them to feel that making decisions is not their job.
Poor Communications

You’ve heard it over and over again. The reason (or maybe an excuse for a failure) is a breakdown in communications. You say one thing and some else hears something quite different.
What Did He Say?

• Whether you are a team leader or a team member expressing your views, you have to be alert to how you come across to others.
• Get feedback from others, ask them to critique.
The Leader Who Doesn’t Listen

- Unless you keep your ears and your mind open, you will not benefit from the many ideas your team members can contribute.
- You will also miss cues of team discontent or impending problems.
Meetings That Waste Time

• Got a problem? Call a meeting.
• One of the big complaints about teams is that too much time is wasted in meetings
• Three major reasons meetings are time wasters:
  1. There is not need for the meeting
  2. The meeting got out of control
  3. The meeting was poorly planned or not at all
Poor Rapport Among Team Members

Instead of “One for all and all for one,” it is “Every man for himself, or every woman for herself.” If team members do not get along, the team dissolves into chaos.
Conflicting Agendas

• When different team members push their own agendas ahead of the team’s, there is no way the team’s goals will be achieved.

• The purpose of a team is to work in an coordinated manner to accomplish the team’s objectives.
Jealousies and Rivalries

• People envy those who are smarter, who are more attractive, who have more money, who they believe have been given better breaks than they have.

• A team leader cannot entirely eliminate this but can keep it from interfering with the team’s performance

It began with Cain and Abel!
Personality Conflicts

- You’ve probably met people with whom you just couldn’t get along in your work.
- You may disagree about how to do a job.
- You may have conflicting ideas on goals.
- You may just not like each other.
Carrying Poor Performers

- Team members often complain about teammates who don’t do their share of work.
- Whatever the reasons, the better workers have to make up the work.
- As a team leader, your responsibility is to develop and maintain a successful group of team members.
- If a member is not productive and you have exhausted all your options to make that person succeed, you have no choice but to let go.
People expect that when they perform well, they will be rewarded. It can be as simple as a pat on the back or may be in the form of financial reward or other forms of tangible recognition.
Individual Accomplishments

- In the past, organizations based their recognition programmes on individual accomplishments.
- It is still important that superior individual accomplishments are rewarded.
- Some high-achieving members want to be recognized for their performance and resent sharing the rewards with less productive members.
Team Accomplishments

- With the increased emphasis on team building, rewards for individual accomplishments have been supplemented, and sometimes replaced by, rewards for team achievement.
- But, they are relatively new and much has still to be learned from the experiences of organizations that are experimenting with this.
Team Quiz

Do barriers exist that may impede your team’s success?

This quiz will help you identify some of them
Circle the answers that apply to your team?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>1. Members complain that they are not getting information they need when they need it.</td>
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<td>2. Team meetings bog down in interminable discussions and arguments over petty matters.</td>
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<td>3. Some members tend to dominate the team.</td>
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<td>4. Team members don’t listen to one another.</td>
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<td>5. Some members never participate in discussions about team projects.</td>
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<td>6. Poor performance of some team members slows down the work of the entire team.</td>
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<td>7. The amount of training in the soft skills is almost negligible.</td>
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<td>8. The team leader micromanages most of the team’s work.</td>
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<td>9. Team goals are not clearly understood or accepted by some team members.</td>
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<td>10. Individual achievement rather than team accomplishment is the basis of the organization’s reward and recognition programme.</td>
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A “yes” answer to any of these questions is an indicator of the barrier you team must overcome if the team is to succeed.
The Least You Need To Know!

- You don’t shift from work groups to teams by an edict from top management.
- Take “sounding” of your team to uncover hidden problems.
- If the team leader doesn’t lead, the team cannot follow. Worse, if the leader leads badly, the team will perform badly.
- The effective leader does not micromanage the team. It stifles creative & independent thinking.
- The concept of the team is based on the principle that all its members work together to achieve the desired results.
- The basis for any relationship, on or off the job, is trust. If it is lacking the team cannot succeed.
- Whether you are the team leader or a team member expressing your views, you have to be alert to how you come across to others. Successful team leaders make it a point to listen to their members.
- It is important to reward individual performance, but equally important to supplement, and sometimes replace it, with rewards for team achievement.