

October 2013 Working with Teams

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” ~ Helen Keller

What's this all about, working with teams? Don't we have enough responsibilities and activities to do? Aren't we besieged by multiple top priorities knocking on our door each and every day? How can we afford to take time to work with teams? When will we find the time to get the work done?

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.” ~ Michael Jordan

Modern business research analyzing the characteristics of high performing organizations indicates that we cannot afford to not take the time. Getting the work done and producing the best possible outcomes takes teamwork. And teamwork requires an investment of time. Teamwork provides many benefits:

- Shared responsibility and commitment
- Greater flexibility
- More buy-in
- More variety of thought, leading to more creativity and innovation
- More precise identification of problems
- Better targeted solutions that take into account the impact of their implementation
- Increased job satisfaction and morale
- Better understanding of the organization's mission and objectives
- Increased communication
- Team unity

Building and maintaining an effective team is an integral part of each and every leader's role. Without a coherent team, the work either does not get done or it's poorly executed. Without an effective team, a lot of resources, including valuable time, are wasted. The investment of time taken to work on resolving problems, setting goals, and making decisions with teams pays off in multiples in the long run.

“The greater the loyalty of a group toward the group, the greater is the motivation among the members to achieve the goals of the group, and the greater the probability that the group will achieve its goals.” ~ Rensis Likert

Working with teams demands a different set of skills and behaviors than the traditional hierarchical approach to management. Pinellas County has developed and identified several resources to help guide us. The Innovation Academy Pilot Project, Don't FRET (Forming Running and Ending Teams) has a [web site](#) dedicated to resources for running effective teams. This includes a [Tool Kit of Resources for Work Teams](#) that presents a variety of tools for working effectively with teams based on desired objectives. In each case, the Tool Kit provides a source for step-by-step instructions through the process. It can be used as a guide to accomplish objectives when working with teams.

***“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.” ~ Henry Ford***

Effective teamwork leads to better outcomes, increased commitment, and successful organizations.