The fun and easy way™ to build and manage a successful team

Managing Teams

FOR DUMMIES®

Marty Brounstein
Author of Coaching & Mentoring
For Dummies

A Reference for the Rest of Us!™

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build and manage a successful team

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Managing Teams For Dummies

by Marty Brounstein

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Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

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Dedication

To the first team that I was a part of, from a very young age. Over the years we've grown busy with our lives and families and moved miles apart so that we seldom all get together. Sadly we've lost our wonderful team leaders, Goldie and Cyril, to whom I dedicated my previous two books For Dummies. But despite the years and distance, my original team remains intact and in touch — in fact, our chain letter has lived on for at least 25 years. I am eternally grateful to this original team — my siblings. So with much love, I dedicate this book to my brother Rick and my sisters Sheri and Julie.

Author's Acknowledgments

I want to pass on my thanks to a few people who helped make this book become a reality. First, I want to thank Norm Crampton, my project editor, who provided seamless guidance and support in the writing of this book. Despite changes at the publishing company through the year, Norm was the constant and someone easy to work with. I want to acknowledge as well Tere Drenth. She provided great assistance to me in my first two projects For Dummies and taught me the style that made this book go smoothly.

I also want to thank Holly McGuire, the editor who has gotten to know me and my work, for providing my third opportunity to be an author in the For Dummies series. She signed me up for this book. Holly has moved on from Wiley, but I know her talents and down-to-earth style and care are greatly missed.

My appreciation also goes out to Carl Welte, a fellow management consultant and colleague. Carl once again played the role of technical reviewer for my book. His experience and expertise in my business make his involvement in this project a must. Thanks again for all your help.

About the Author

Marty Brounstein is the Principal of the Practical Solutions Group, a training and consulting firm based in the San Francisco Bay area that specializes in management and organizational effectiveness. Marty's consulting work includes one-on-one coaching with managers and executives, assistance to groups working to become productive teams, and guidance and direction for organizations establishing practices for high performance and employee retention. His training programs target management as well as employee-development issues including leadership, team development, customer service, and effective communications.

As a consultant, speaker, and trainer since 1991, Marty has served a wide variety of organizations from high tech to government, for-profit to not-for-profit. He has a bachelor's degree in education and history and a master's degree in industrial relations. Prior to beginning his consulting career, he spent a couple of years as a human resources executive.

This is Marty's fifth book and third For Dummies book. He is the author of *Coaching and Mentoring For Dummies* ; *Communicating Effectively For Dummies* ; and *Handling the Difficult Employee: Solving Performance Problems* . He is the coauthor of *Effective Recruiting Strategies: A Marketing Approach.*

To contact Marty regarding consulting, speaking, or training services, call 650-341-8001 or e-mail him at mabruns@earthlink.net.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

Layout and Graphics: Scott M. Bristol, Sean Decker, Kelly Hardesty, Joyce Haughey, Jackie Nicholas, Stephanie D. Jumper, Jacque Schneider

Proofreaders: TECHBOOKS Production Services, John Greenough, Andy Hollandbeck, Carl Pierce, Linda Quigley

Indexer: Aptara

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Introduction

In the ever-changing world of work, the idea of spending some or all your time working in teams is becoming more and more common. From solving problems, to tackling projects, to providing organizational leadership, the roles and importance of teams continue to grow.

Leading a team — a collection of individuals — is no easy job, however. Teams are a means for getting work done but they're not a guarantee of success. They produce far better results when team members work well together than when they don't. Getting your team members to work well together is no small feat.

But when teams gel, they can far outperform traditional work groups. Teams make it possible to bring together the variety of skills, perspectives, and talents that you need in the contemporary workplace. In fact, teams are becoming more and more vital for helping business organizations to achieve their objectives. Leading people to work together effectively in teams is the topic of this book.

About This Book

This book is written for you — managers at all levels who have some form of work group that you're trying to lead

as a team. In many cases, this group o people reports directly to you. They may be nonmanagement employees, supervisors, or managers who report to you as part of your department, or executives who report to you as part of senior management for the whole organization. They're your staff and you're their boss. If you have the need and desire for them to work together as a team, *Managing Teams For Dummies* is your reference and guide.

This book also is written for anyone, manager or not, who is asked to take on the role of team leader. Your team members don't report to you — you're not their supervisor. But for some work reason, such as a project, you're spending time together and you are the person designated to make the team run and produce good results. So although you don't have direct supervisory authority over the team members, you still bear all management responsi- bility for the team.

Managing Teams For Dummies also applies to senior level management people who sponsor teams. Although you may not run a team directly yourself, you're spearheading the efforts of your managers who are leading teams, and you need to be able to coach and support them.

Even team members who don't have a leadership role can benefit from this book. Many of the strategies and skills you find here can help you to perform well as a team member and to support your manager. In short, this

book is a practical guide for everyone with a role to play in making teams produce good results — your resource for meeting this major challenge.

Conventions Used in This Book

Throughout this book, the word *team* has a particular meaning. Though many people refer to their work groups as teams, I do not use *team* to denote just any kind of work group. In this book, team means a group organized to work together that shares an overall common purpose or role and shares responsibility for the outcomes of the whole group. A team is an interdependent, coordinated group of people. Unlike regular work groups in which people take responsibility primarily for their own area of work, *team* denotes people relying on one another for organizing and carrying out all the team's work and producing the outcomes expected by the whole group.

Team building as used in this book is different from the way that many people use the term. In the broad sense of this book, team building means the whole effort and campaign to lead a team to perform well together — an ongoing responsibility for the life of a team. In a more limited sense, team building is one strategy among a large package of team development efforts that enhance working relationships for strengthening team cohesiveness. But I do not use *team building* in this book

to refer to those group activities of play and fun — often done off the work site — that are meant to transform everyone into one big happy unit. There's nothing wrong with big happy units, but they're not necessarily teams.

The terms *manager* and *team leader* are often used interchangeably in this book. They refer to the role of the person who's running and leading the team.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into six main parts. Here's an overview of what you can find in each part:

Part I: Getting Into Teams

Part I contains the first two chapters of the book — the conceptual foundation of the whole book. I talk about what teams are and the common types of teams that exist in business organizations, and I distinguish between ordinary work groups and genuine teams, pointing out the key differences. Part I also reminds you why teams flounder and why simply wishing a team into existence is not enough to help make it perform productively. No magic wands or special pills exist for turning a team into a productive unit. But your leadership in building a team structure on the three cornerstones — focus, cohesiveness, and accountability — can produce success, and I show you how.

Part II: Leadership for Team Success

This part defines your leadership role in running teams effectively. Chapter 3 introduces the concept of leading your teams as a coach, which is a critical theme for the whole book. I explain what leading as a coach means and how it's different from being the boss or supervisor who's a good worker or doer.

In Chapter 4, you gain tips and strategies for helping lead a team through its early stages of development. It's naïve to expect every transition into a team structure to go smoothly, and this part prepares you to handle the challenge. Chapter 4 contains coaching tips for dealing with the team member behavior and performance problems that sometimes arise as teams take shape.

Part III: Strategies for Building Productive Teams

This third part of the book takes the model of the three cornerstones for team success — focus, cohesiveness, and accountability — and develops them one chapter at a time. You gain a depth of practical knowledge and tools for applying the strategies associated with each cornerstone. You can pick and choose the tools you think best fit your teams, but the idea here is to build upon all three cornerstones. Teams that have a high level of focus, cohesiveness, and accountability work well together and produce strong results.

Part IV: Developing Tools for Productive Team Players

Teams need members who can work well together to accomplish the team's work — otherwise known as good team players. But the skills of a good team player are seldom taught to most people in grade school or high school. School kids are often well conditioned to work independently but aren't necessarily equipped to work collaboratively, the way they must work as team members.

Part IV focuses on giving you these essential team skills — effective interpersonal communication, planning, problem-solving, conflict resolution, shared decision making, and organizing and running meetings. The chapters are written like instructional guides. If you want to, you can discover the skills right along with your team members.

Part V: Managing Some Tougher Team Matters

Part V explores three of the more challenging team management situations: self-directed teams, project teams/task teams, and alternative team-compensation systems.

As the name implies, a self-directed team has no manager in charge. A project team or task team often is cross-functional and exists only until its project or task is complete. The compensation topic can be just as challenging as the other two, involving incentives, bonuses, and skill-based pay, not to mention rewarding good team performance through noncash means. Part V offers you many tips and strategies on all these topics.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

This last part of the book consists of three short chapters containing useful tips and insights on other team-related issues: leading a management team, getting a team back on track when its performance slips, and recognizing effective team members when you see them.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book you may notice small graphics in the margins, called *icons.* These symbols are meant to grab your attention in particular ways, as I explain:

This icon signifies practical ideas and points that help you put into practice what you're reading.

This icon identifies a thought worth keeping in mind as you manage your teams.

A red flag about what not to do in running teams.

An "aha" idea or insight meant to stimulate your thoughts about managing teams.

A how-to skill that can help your team members on the job.

A teaching tip to help you translate team management theory into understandable information

Where to Go from Here

This book is written so that each chapter stands on its own. So if you like to skip around and explore team topics as they come to mind, you can easily do so without being out of place. Sometimes I refer to points, terms, and skills covered in other chapters, making it easy for you to fill in information when you need to. One suggestion: You may want to start by reading Chapters 1 and 2 because they lay the foundation for the rest of the book. Enjoy your journey!