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# Assessing Team Effectiveness: A Key to Enhancing Productivity and Profitability

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To remain competitive, businesses today need staff members who take leadership initiative and are stellar in carrying out the managerial and other responsibilities related to the functions and tasks of their positions. As an owner or leader, you need and deserve a good functioning team of people. They can help you keep the "company ship on course" and your company's operations in good health and balance.

A key question you need to ask and answer for yourself is, "Do you sincerely think you need and want a peak performing team of people to collaboratively help you lead and manage your company?" If so, you can benefit from what has been learned over the last 30 years from the mixed results of organization development programs, activities, and research.

Over this time, many useful techniques and concepts proved their value in enhancing people's performance and organizational functioning. One of the most significant findings was that management, leadership and work teams could be deliberately and methodically developed into powerful problem solving groups that produced excellent results. Over and over again, effectively developed teams demonstrate the ability to collaborate, cooperate, establish a top quality work environment and ensure the production of excellent products and services.

Eight research based attributes of team effectiveness can be measured and enhanced in any company: clear aims; assertive leadership; effective leadership and managerial practices; positive climate; appropriate structure; balanced power relationships; and effective teamwork.

Teams that are mature and effective have been painstakingly built over a period of time. Problems have been successfully worked through, relationships deepened, and roles clarified. When peak performing teams are examined, they are found to have achieved these attributes. The items in this survey have been developed from the classic on my book shelf: *Improving Work Groups: A Practical Manual for Team Building* by Dave Francis and Don Young.

Survey your management team members who see you in action and who are those you serve. Also other staff members and work groups which observe your team in action. Determine how different people view the relative degree to which your management team has achieved each attribute.

Ask them, "To what degree, 1 being low and 5 being high, does our management team possess the attributes below.

**APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP** - The manager of the team has the skills and intention to develop a team approach and allocates time to team building activities. Leadership of the team

is seen as a function shared by all members.

**SUITABLE MEMBERSHIP** - Team members are individually qualified and capable of contributing the "mix" of skills and characteristics that provide an appropriate balance.

**COMMITMENT TO THE TEAM** - Team members feel a sense of individual commitment to the aims and purposes of the team. They are willing to devote personal energy to building the team and supporting other team members.

**CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE** - The team has developed a climate in which people feel relaxed, able to be direct and open, and prepared to take risks.

**CONCERN TO ACHIEVE RESULTS** - The team is clear about its objectives, which are felt to be worthwhile. It sets targets for performance that are felt to be stretching but achievable. Energy is mainly devoted to the achievement of results, and team performance is reviewed frequently to see where enhancements can be made.

**CLEAR ORGANIZATION ROLE** - The team has contributed to the company's planning in a distinct and productive way.

**EFFECTIVE WORK METHODS** - The team has developed energetic, systematic, and effective ways to solve problems together.

**WELL-ORGANIZED TEAM PROCEDURES** - Roles are clearly defined, communication patterns are well developed, and all procedures support a team approach.

**CRITIQUE WITHOUT RANCOR** - Team and individual errors and weaknesses are examined, without personal attack, so the group can learn from its experiences.

**WELL-DEVELOPED INDIVIDUALS** - Team members are deliberately developed and the team can cope with strong individual contributions.

**CREATIVE STRENGTH** - The team has the capacity to create new ideas through the interactions of its members. Some innovative risk taking is rewarded, and the team will support new ideas from individual members or from outside. Good ideas are put into action.

**POSITIVE INTERGROUP RELATIONS** - Relationships with other groups have been systematically developed to provide open personal contact and identify where joint working together may give maximum pay off. There is regular contact and review of joint or collective priorities with other groups.

If your team averages 4-5 across the board from all the different perspectives, you are doing great! If you average 3 on any item, it would be a worthwhile investment to have a business consultant or coach help you investigate what it would take to strengthen it and then facilitate you through doing it. If you average 2 or less on any attribute, it is critical to make the

investment of time and money in professional help to strengthen it. If you don't, it will negatively impact your team's strengths and cause your team to function far below its potential. This leads to poor morale, lost time and frustration. It negatively impacts the individual levels of performance necessary for the efficient and timely achievement of your company's vision, mission and goals. It will thwart the optimum productivity of your people and the maximum profitability of your company.

If you need help in mastering and implementing any of the skills and tactics mentioned, I'm here for you! Please visit the Call-A-Coach section of my web site for more information.

### About the author:

Dr. Mac shares with business owners the practical knowledge and insights he gained as a small company CEO. He founded Sycamore Ranch, Inc. when 27 and as CEO led his partners and a staff of 100 for 16 years in developing and operating the 50 acre recreational facility. Years later, he integrated what he learned from his Doctoral program at USC with his practical business experiences and began consulting. For four decades Mac's coached business owners in mastering and applying "how to" leadership and managerial skills for: Hiring and retaining only the top ten percent producers; Optimally deploying and supervising staff to maximize their personal motivation; Developing high integrity leadership teams; Facilitating mutual performance accountability and peer coaching processes; and, Integrating his Intentional Business Integrity Process into their company operations. Mac has served leaders in manufacturing and high tech companies; accounting, banking and insurance enterprises; medical and health care organizations; service and retail oriented businesses; as well as educational, governmental and non profit organizations. Q&A ProActive Leadership 888-648-5552 or MacAdam@PALConsulting

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