

# TEAMWORK: AN INDISPENSABLE VALUE IN THE WORKPLACE

*Dr. Eddie R. Babor, LL.B.  
Holy Name University  
Tagbilaran City*

## **Introduction**

I am never convinced that the strength, essence, scope, depth, and value of success is solitary or individualistic. By its very nature, success is always social. One can never reach the height of success without the help of others. One can never savor the taste of success without the assistance of others who are definitely important in one's attainment of success. Thus, success readily debunks phrases like: "I did it;" "I made it happen;" "I was the one who put it to life." No, success always accounts for collective efforts.

Yes, it is indubitably true that only one person may earn the conquest of success. But the winner is always aware that without others, he is nothing but nothing at all.

Nature per se teaches us of interdependence. Nothing is only all by itself. Everything is related. Everything is interconnected. In the words of Martin Heidegger: "Everything has each place in the world." Nothing can exist on his own. Collaboration can never be defeated by mere individual isolation. In the spirit of collaboration, greater amount of success and achievement is guaranteed. In the thinking of Stephen Covey, this is synergy. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And in order to account for the whole, teamwork is indispensable.

This paper deals with the undeniable necessity of teamwork in the workplace. It attempts to answer the following questions: (1) What is the essence of teamwork? (2) What are the issues involved in order to attain teamwork? (3) When can a team achieve the quality of being good?

## **ESSENCE OF TEAMWORK**

The seat of teamwork is the deliberate surrender and giving up of a member's personal interest for the benefit of the whole team. Teamwork always demands an active willingness of a member to pay more value to the team. As every member shows earnest interest to collectively partake in the giving up of their respective personal interests the team will eventually gain its force and strength. This means that the capability and power of the team grossly rest on how sincere and authentic the contribution of each member is. Naturally, if the members are weak, the team will never be its opposite. Simply stated, weak members yield weak team. But if the members are strong, the team will also be strong. For this, an adage is suited: "The strength of the chain lies in its weakest point."

Yes, it may be said that in a team, some members display their weaknesses instead of their strengths, or it could be the other way around. This is a fact that cannot be

undermined. So, what is important in a team is that every member should try his best to foster and nourish his strengths rather than his weaknesses. Only in this manner can the team nourish its true strength and power.

True enough, uniqueness, individual differences, variations of behaviors and attitudes are always there because they are part of human nature. But uniqueness per se is an asset for the team to grow. A well-crafted one-liner maxim fits for this. It goes: “It is because we are so different from each other that is why we have so much to share.” Here lies the beauty of individual differences. But as stated earlier, the issue of uniqueness can only be beneficial to the team if the individual unique members are willing to give up their respective idiosyncrasies and uniqueness in favor of the team. This is why self-surrender is necessary for the team to grow. Interests that are only meant to amplify the respective egos of the members should be placed under the rug. Simply put, the respective member’s failure to shatter their personal interests will be a grave debacle for the team to succeed. Hence, only when the members are well-positioned to uphold the interest of the team can they claim that they are actively engaged in a teamwork. As this is achieved, only then can each team player say: “This is our game;” “This is what we do;” “We did it.”

As the level of self-surrender is attained, each member should guarantee cooperation, faith, trust, dedication, and endurance. Without these factors, doubts, mistrusts, and ambiguities may ensue. Consequently, the quality of service and output will be grossly affected. Confidence is missing.

## **ISSUES INVOLVED TO ATTAIN TEAMWORK**

After all of the members have sanitized their individual interests – or have slaughtered their individual interests, or have slaughtered already their egos – then they are now ready to undertake some steps for them to forge teamwork.

The following are essential aspects of teamwork:

(1) Setting the Team’s Goal. This requires all members in a team to have a clear understanding and acceptance of the goals of the team and the organization. This means that the team members must set their goals and must also clarify their priorities.

(2) Establishing the Roles of the Members. Here, the team members must analyze and determine the quantum of work they have to do based on what others – like the whole organization – expect from them. This is necessary in order to avoid ambiguity relative to issues like: “who must do what?” When the roles are duly identified, stress, burn-out, and misunderstanding can be avoided. Expressed differently, in role setting clear expectations regarding the performance of the team and their expected output are well understood or communicated upon all members.

In order that the team players can fully appreciate their roles, it is always good that they understand why they are in the team, how the strategy that they will use as a

team can offer help to the whole organization, and how important they are for the accomplishment of the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. This once again demands commitment on the part of the team members. So, their personal realization that they have to participate in the team, that their contributions are important for the organization, and that they are convinced that their service is valuable enough for the organization and for their careers to develop are substantial factors that are necessary to strengthen the bonds of the team members.

(3) Clarity of Procedures. This is another aspect that needs to be thoroughly understood. In this item, all the members of the team must know and learn on how to accomplish their tasks or assigned duties and responsibilities. Here, the members must examine the method and manner of accomplishing their work specifically in the context of principles, norms, decision-making (as a team), problem solving, time management, grievance procedures or conflict management, among others.

(4) Impact of Relationships. This is the aspect where the issue of respect finds its solace. Respect in the workplace is a value that affects the quality and quantity of the output of the team members. Obviously, if respect is starving in the team the members can never further their work, much less attain quality output. This is because relationship plays a vital role in the quality of work the team members will dispense. Undeniably, if the team members respect each other, there is no doubt that they can also work together effectively and efficiently.

### **WHEN CAN A TEAM ACHIEVE QUALITY TEAMWORK?**

The merits and blessings of a quality teamwork are innumerable. However, experts in the field are ready to delimit them as follows:

- (1) Quality teamwork offers improvement of working relationships at all levels in the whole organization.
- (2) It enhances a smoother running section, department, or the whole organization.
- (3) It heightens resource productivity since members are free to harness their capabilities and creativity.
- (4) It guarantees the achievement of the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. This implies that the success rate will be much higher.
- (5) All the members are given the opportunity to develop ideas and concepts relative to the organization's objectives.
- (6) It guarantees a balance between the task (what) to be done and process (how) involved.

- (7) It provides a supportive working environment. Every member is given the chance to express his feelings, insights, and opinions.
- (8) It sets clear facts that teamwork programs or teambuilding measures are only 10 per cent technical and 90 per cent psychological.
- (9) Thus, quality teamwork puts more value on the worker than work per se.

## **References**

Andres, Tomas. *Understanding Values*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Negotiating Filipino Values*. Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. et al. *Making Filipino Values Work for You*. Philippines: Saint Paul Publications, 1988.

Banzon, Priciliano. *Essentials of Values Education*. Manila: National Book Store, 2002.

McFadden, Charles. *The Dignity of Life: Moral Values in a Changing Society*. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996.

Moga, Michael. *Toward Authentic Morality*. Manila: National Book Store, 1993.