

TEAMWORK IN THE WORKPLACE

Teamwork is important because it involves the process of collaboration. Collaboration offers the best way to make forward-looking decisions on difficult issues and to complete complex projects. It is a way to blend the talents, skills, and creativity of diverse people. It is people combining their collective knowledge so that the sum total of the collaboration is greater than what could have been achieved individually.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEAM MOTIVATION

1. **A Clear Purpose and Mission** - After all, who wants to work on a team where you might just end up spinning your wheels for no particular good? If the team is working on long-term goals, then it is also important that the purpose or mission be one that aligns with the personal needs of the members so that motivation will not diminish over time. A good strategy to help improve the motivation of the team is to check in with members to see how they view the purpose of the team's work.
2. **Challenge and the Opportunity for Reward and Success** - Even those who are busy, enjoy challenge in their jobs. If your team is lagging in spirit, see if the members perceive the work as a challenge or if challenge is occurring at frequent enough intervals. Be careful that the challenge is not too difficult or members will become discouraged and want to quit.
3. **Good Team Relationships** - Team members are a lot more motivated to get things done and to continue to press on when they have good relationships with each other. When relationships are good, communication is improved, energy is high and collaboration is encouraged. If your team members seem to dislike each other, remember that in most cases this stems from not understanding others. Address this by offering training in diversity. First Sun EAP offers excellent training which can help employees to understand and respect each other's differences. Your team can also participate in some fun off-site activities together. Playing together is a powerful way to build relationships.
4. **Responsibility to Make Things Happen** - When teams are given responsibility, they take on a life of their own. Motivation can be spurred by a sense of responsibility as long as it comes with the appropriate authority to make changes and decisions that contribute to success. Responsibility can be de-motivating, however, if the company environment is one in which mistakes or failures are punished. Management that encourages learning from mistakes will help foster motivation.
5. **Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth** - When team members feel they are learning new concepts, adding to their skill base, and stretching their minds, motivation tends to remain high. Accordingly, team leaders and members should seek opportunities that help add knowledge and skills.
6. **Good Leadership** - The teams with the greatest motivation are often under good leaders. The best leaders work to help each team member realize his or her fullest potential by highlighting their strengths and encouraging them to grow through weaknesses. Good leaders also work to foster the elements mentioned above to create a positive environment for team growth.

First Sun organizational consultants are available to assist with this and many other subjects that could affect your workplace. Just give us a call, toll free **800-968-8143** or in Greater Columbia **803-376-2668**. For more information on this and other topics, please see our website at: www.firstsuneap.com.