

Rallying the Troops – *Keeping Your Partners Engaged!*



Building and Maintaining a Team

The moment you start doing anything with another person, you've established a team! Good leadership understands the potential gains and losses, risks and rewards of a team and focuses on opportunities to strengthen relationships between partners for better teamwork. The following are some tips that will help you not only **build a team**, but **maintain a strong team**.

Assess your ability to relate other others

- Everything you do, from taking part in a meeting to talking with a parent hinges upon ability to relate to others. Being able to work well with others is the first step team building. Being able to relate with others generates energy that will help bring people together.

Develop a common and shared goal

- Together discuss what you would like to jointly accomplish – in should be challenging, reflect values, and make a measurable difference. The goal should be something that can become a powerful vision. To visualize the goal, ask yourselves – what will it look like when we get there? What will success be like, feel like? How will others recognize it?

Commit to accomplish shared goals

- Teams commit easily when they have been involved in development of the goals. Be sure to define expectations and measures of success clearly.
- Never 'assume' that everyone is committed, get it in writing. When people are willing to commit there is an almost 100% likelihood of success. When people are not willing to commit this is a sure sign of failure.
- Visit your charter often to assess whether you are still on the right path or whether adjustments are needed to achieve your goals.

Establish trust in one another

- Trust is earned not given. Through workgroup assignments and tasks, partners can develop rapport and over time build trust with one another.
- When your LPA encounters difficult decisions or program changes, if partners trust one another, they are more willing to go through difficult times together.

Include partners in decision making

- Getting stakeholder 'buy in' with regards to decisions is very important. If partners are going to commit resources and support accomplishing the LPA goals, they need to have some say in decisions.

- Ask partners open-ended questions – what do you think? Can you tell me what is missing?
- Listen with an open mind.
- Answer questions directly and quickly.
- Address concerns.

Use tasks and assignments to hold partners accountable

- Develop a strategy for reaching goals. The strategy should consist of all the tasks and resources necessary to realize team goals.
- Find ways to get consensus.
- Share outcomes and develop next steps jointly.
- Address performance issues and celebrate success.

Maintaining a strong “team” takes practice

- Teams need to practice to be good at something. Remind your partners to be good listeners and to respect each others perspective even if it differs from their own.
- Share the role of leading the meeting and be sure that all partners are actively involved in developing the agenda.
- Cultivate new partners to meet ever changing goals.
- Be willing to adjust to changing needs and program demands.