

Quick Guide: Be a Successful Team Leader

Successful teams all have several things in common, whatever their remit. They may have drive and motivation, be well organised and have strategies that work. But without an effective, supportive guide and leader, it will all soon disintegrate. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you be a successful team leader:

- 1. Keep on the move.** Don't become complacent about how well the team functions. Be on the lookout for change in the company and its working practices and how it will affect your team.
- 2. Don't hope things will happen.** Define the commitment you want from your team at regular team briefings and the part each must play to achieve it. Unless they know what is expected of them, it is unlikely to happen.
- 3. Motivate others** to do it rather than do it all yourself. (Motivating others means encouraging people to WANT to do what YOU want them to do!)
- 4. Use 'tight controls'** about vital goals eg initiate and monitor deadlines and make yourself visible by walking the job to manage those controls.
- 5. Use 'loose controls'** over small issues eg use one-to-ones and informal chats to motivate and manage.
- 6. Develop a tolerance for errors.** Everyone has the potential to make an error, so expect and plan for them.
- 7. Develop specialists among your team** - mini 'centres of excellence' - by giving them as many opportunities as possible to develop and share their specialist knowledge and skills with others, whether in your team or elsewhere.
- 8. Don't develop loners though** - encourage everyone in the team to think ahead to "what happens next?" so they can help out when deadlines are close.
- 9. Make sure not all the decisions fall to you.** Encourage the team to suggest solutions rather than simply bring you the problems! And also to identify if they feel they need training or other learning to help them implement the solutions.
- 10. Communicate** and invite communication - so you keep the information flowing both ways.

Compiled by Des Whitehorn