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## ***Creating Harmony Through Teamwork***

Understanding personality and managing conflict are essential skills and abilities for success and productivity in team-based activities and work. Teamwork, today's favorite buzzword, is used to describe the group-focused, versus individual-focused, efforts of the business world. It is on the mind of many and the subject of much conversation. Unfortunately, the word is spoken more than teamwork is present. However, everyone seems to agree the concept is a good one – a group of people working together to achieve a common goal. Although few have perfected a system for the productive and successful application of teamwork, the goal is a worthy one.

The most successful teams have people with differing strengths and weaknesses managing to work cooperatively together and not competitively. It is quite possible, and in fact preferable, for individuals with very diverse interests and experiences to combine their collective abilities to accomplish a shared goal. In fact, when a team has too many people with the same or similar strengths and interests, what often happens is, at one extreme, there's a struggle for power, and at the other, so much agreement that creativity is lacking.

In order for a team of people with different abilities and interests to achieve the same goal, the team must be united by sharing the same vision, values, and intent, and by employing good systems of communication.

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## ***Timely, Targeted Information***

Timely, targeted information, not information overload or data dump, is most important in the communication age of today. The amount of available data is overwhelming. It is impossible for any of us to evaluate all the data at our disposal, and it is not necessary to even try to do so. People in management positions have, as one of their responsibilities, to provide information when it is needed – timely – and that is relevant to the receiver – targeted. Timely information is especially important in personnel issues. Participants in my programs comment on "people dropping into a black hole," when co-workers are no longer at work (fired) and an explanation is not imminent. The suspicion and unnecessary fear created by these situations can be avoided if management keeps people updated and informed of transitions in key positions. Targeted information should include, at a minimum, overall company progress (profitability, sales, stability), and expected changes before they are implemented.

Granted, it is sometimes difficult to evaluate how much information is enough. I have developed two standards that help to evaluate information and to determine if it should be passed on. First, is the information something the people need to know to do their jobs effectively? Second, is it something they would like to know or need to know so that they are informed on what is going on overall in the company? Most people really do have an interest in what is happening within their companies. Upper management can get more support from people in positions of less authority if they would build trust in them simply by sharing relevant information.