CEJ: Series 3, Vol. 6, No. 2

Leading Ministry Teams, Part II: Research on Effective Teams with Implications for Ministry Team Leadership

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Abstract: To date, the major research efforts on teams and teamwork are found solely in the publications of Larson and LaFasto (1989, 2001) as well as those of Katzenbach and Smith (1993, 2001). This article reviews their major findings and continued research in the last 20 years. Research on effective ministry teams in Christian ministry contexts shows a number of common elements that affirmed both Larson and LaFasto's eight characteristics of effective teams and Katzenbach and Smith's description of effective group fundamentals. Implications for church and parachurch ministries are considered in light of the biblical and theological review in part I, as well as the two major research efforts reviewed in this part II.

Introduction

In the first article, we presented both biblical examples and theological themes that provide perspective on the compatibility of recent writings on teams and teamwork with the church's ministry efforts. This article provides a review of some of the recent major research efforts exploring what makes teams effective, and how to tell when you should try to work as a team and when other approaches may be better. It also examines the results of a few case studies of church ministry teams and closes with discussion of 13 implications for those in ministry leadership roles who are considering a team approach to their ministry efforts.

Review of Major Research Efforts

Larson and LaFasto: Studying Teams and Teamwork

In their pioneering study, Carl Larson, a communications professor at the University of Denver, and Frank LaFasto, a vice-president at Baxter

Healthcare Corporation, spent 3 years carrying out a grounded theory study of high-performing teams of various kinds to answer two questions: "What are the characteristics, features, and attributes of effectively functioning teams?" and "What explains or accounts for teams that function ineffectively?" They interviewed leaders and team members from a number of diverse kinds of effective teams, identified common factors influencing team effectiveness, and tested their "grounded theory" with several business executive management and project teams. Finally, to fine-tune their theory and reach theoretical saturation, they identified more unusual kinds of effective teams for additional interviews. Data collection was mostly by interviews, but in some cases included written materials and observation as well.

In 1989, Larson and LaFasto published their findings in *Teamwork: What Must Go Right, What Can Go Wrong,* summarizing eight critical aspects of effective teams. This work has become a classic in this field and has remained in print since its publication 20 years ago. In 2001, after following up on their original study with additional data from approximately 600 more teams, they published *When Teams Work Best.* This new report, extending the concepts of the first book, focused on the integration of five key dynamics for team success.

Major Findings

Larson and LaFasto (1989) defined teams as follows:

> A team has two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective. (p. 19)

With this as their focus, they identified eight characteristics or properties of effectively functioning teams that transcend the various fields or contexts in which they may be used.

1. A Clear and Elevating Goal

Teams function best when the team's goal is clearly understood by all involved. It must be seen as worthwhile, inspiring action, and personally challenging. There is a sense of urgency about it. It must be concrete enough so achievement can be recognized. Team members take this goal as their own, and they develop a sense of excitement about it. When this clear, elevating goal is lost, personal agendas, power and politics, and personal preservation divert energy from the group's work.

2. A Results Driven Structure

There are many ways to organize teams. The way in which it is done, however, must make sense to the members and help move the team toward their goal. Three kinds of teams—problem solving, creative, and tactical—each need their own structure to maximize group effectiveness. Four critical design features for effective team structures include the following: clear roles and accountability, effective communication, feedback on individual performance, and unbiased decision making.

3. Competent Members

Selecting team members needs to be done objectively, looking for two kinds of competencies: technical (critical knowledge and skills) and personal (interpersonal qualities and skills, ability to resolve issues). The first ensures that the tasks can be done; the second allows people to function together to achieve the goals. One kind of competency without the other hinders group functioning.

4. Unified Commitment

Teams work best when there is a sense of loyalty and dedication to the team. This comes from a period of intense identification with a group of people and involves to some degree a loss of "self." This involves a serious investment of time and energy. Building unified commitment is helped by clear and worthwhile goals, an opportunity for participation in the planning of strategy, and balancing unity with individuality (not groupthink).

5. A Collaborative Climate

Working well together requires trust. Trust is developed by experiencing honesty, openness, consistency, and respect within the group. If any of these is breached, trust is compromised or lost and team effectiveness suffers. Trust helps by allowing team members to stay focused on the task or common problem. It promotes more efficient communication and coordination, and improves the quality of collaborative outcomes. It allows people to take risks, be open with negative information, and encourages team members to help each other, building confidence in the team.

6. Standards of Excellence

High-performing teams feel a pressure to perform that comes from within the team. An individual within the team with high personal standards,

not necessarily the team leader, can motivate other team members to perform better. Team leaders can encourage this through vision casting and the kinds of demands they place on their team members. This grows when goals are concrete and easy to measure, when there is mutual accountability within the team, and when the team is always looking for ways to improve and not rest on its past performance.

7. External Support and Recognition

Effective teams are given the resources they need to do the job and are supported by those outside the team who are capable of helping it. They are sufficiently recognized for both their success and effort, and the incentive and reward systems are clear, appropriate, and tied to the performance of the team as a whole, not just individual achievements (though these can be recognized as well). Lack of support conveys lack of importance and can lower morale and commitment. Support can be intangible as well as tangible.

8. Principled Leadership

Effective team leaders establish a vision of the future that is worthwhile to the team members. They create change and influence movement away from the status quo, planning for ways to make things happen and then carrying out these plans. They also unleash the energy and talents of team members, motivating them to take action toward the goal. These leaders create expectations and establish and lead by guiding principles. They suppress their own ego and encourage other team members to do the same so that the goals of the team may be met. This helps bring out the leadership skills of others on the team without raising feelings of jealousy. Confidence rises and mutual support develops.

Of these eight characteristics, Larson and LaFasto identify three as interrelated and critical to the team's effectiveness: the clear and elevating goal, the selection of qualified people for the team (with both technical and personal competencies), and fostering high standards of excellence. Team leaders help most when their personal commitment to the team's goals is clearly understood by the team members and they give enough autonomy to team members to achieve the results desired, encouraging team members to stretch a bit and even risk failing in the attempt.

Over the next 15 years, Larson and LaFasto carried out research and consulting work with approximately 600 teams and 6,000 team members (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). They were able to probe more deeply into how the eight characteristics worked together and identify five critical components of what helps teams work best. These five areas include the following:

1. What Makes a Good Team Member

Building on their earlier discussion of the importance of both technical and personal competencies, LaFasto and Larson identify the relevant working knowledge factors team members need, including both experience in the task and problem-solving ability. Good team members also have a number of "teamwork" factors present, including openness in communication, supportiveness of others on the team, action orientation that rises to the challenge, and a positive personal style that is energetic, optimistic, engaging, confident, and fun to work with. Some people are better potential team members than others, but all can develop greater competencies to some degree.

2. Good Team Relationships

Good team relationships are constructive, promoting mutual understanding, and are self-corrective. That is, team members are able to give and receive feedback well without defensiveness, counterattack, or withdrawal. Good work relationships are critical to team functioning, and the ability of team members to be open and supportive of each other helps create the kinds of work relationships that can work through conflicts and tensions. This can be a very difficult process at times, and LaFasto and Larson develop and explain a detailed process for building and sustaining team relationships (called "Connect"; see LaFasto & Larson, 2001, pp. 50ff).

3. Effective Team Problem-Solving

Effective teams are able to solve problems by doing three things well: (a) focus on the goals of the team and subordinate individual goals; (b) interact in a climate that is relaxed, comfortable, informal, fun, warm, and accepting; and (c) have open communication to discuss the issues. When a goal is compelling and clear enough, it helps focus the energy of the group and minimizes defensiveness and diverted energy. It promotes the development of synergy that births solutions that no one individual could have come up with. When something else is elevated above the team goal, group problem solving suffers.

4. The Influence of the Team Leader

As a result of this continued study, LaFasto and Larson identified six dimensions of team leadership that promote team effectiveness. These include the following:

1. Team leaders help their teams focus on the goal by keeping it clear and avoiding politics. Leaders help team members see their relevance to the accomplishment of the goal and renew the goal over time.
2. Team leaders ensure a collaborative climate by fostering safe communication and not tolerating when this is violated. They reward collaborative behavior, guide problem-solving efforts, and suppress their own ego to help the team achieve its goal.
3. Team leaders build confidence by their positive attitude, getting small results and affirming them, keeping the team informed of progress, showing trust in delegation to others, and accentuating the positive within the group.
4. Team leaders demonstrate sufficient technical know-how and get help where they need it.
5. Team leaders set priorities and do not dilute the group's energy with too many efforts. They update the team members on changes in priorities as needed.
6. Team leaders manage performance of team members and address problems when someone is not doing his or her job. They set specific objectives, give constructive feedback, help with personal and professional development, and reward results.

5. The Impact of Organizational Climate

A primary finding was that "the extent to which there was clarity in the organization—about the goal, priorities, key issues, core business values, rewards, standards, and so forth—influences the confidence people feel in their ability to exercise good judgment on the organization's behalf . . . Clarity drives confidence; confidence drives commitment" (2001, p. 159). Management practices that set clear direction and focus priorities, that balance resources and demands, and that establish clear operating principles are critical. The structure and processes the organizations utilize keep people connected (time together, common location, time off task together) and help build trust and understanding. The organizational systems need to ensure reliable information is shared, people receive rewards for results, and employees are treated with consistency and fairness.

Katzenbach and Smith: Workgroups, Teams, and High-Performing Teams

A second major research effort regarding effective teams and teamwork was first published in 1993 by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, both working with the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. For their first book, *The Wisdom of Teams,* they talked with hundreds of people

from over 50 different teams in 30 companies to learn where and how teams work best and how to increase their effectiveness. Their writings are the result of a qualitative research effort, but with less rigor than Larson and LaFasto. Though not a "grounded theory," it is still helpful research for understanding aspects of effective team functioning. This initial publication was followed up in 2001 with their second major work, *The Discipline of Teams*, where they develop their insights on six basic disciplines that can foster greater effectiveness for all kinds of small work groups and two critical disciplines for different kinds of small group settings: *Single-Leader* and *Real Team.*

Major Findings:

> Katzenbach and Smith (1993) define teams as follows:
>
> A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. (p. 45)

While similar to Larson and LaFasto's definition, there is a stronger emphasis on complementary skills and mutual accountability. One of the major contributions of their writings is their help in distinguishing the difference between common elements of effective group work for all kinds of groups and those that are more critical for "Single-Leader" groups and for "Real Teams." Each of these latter two groups has its own discipline that promotes effectiveness. To try to lead one using the discipline for the other invites problems and failure.

Effective Group Fundamentals

All groups, whether they are "teams" or not, benefit from certain fundamentals. These include the following:

1. "The group has or develops *an understandable charter* that provides the group with a reason and purpose for working together," though it may be focused on performance.
2. "Members of the group *communicate and coordinate effectively* to allow constructive interactions involving all of the members.
3. "Members of the group establish *clear roles and areas of responsibility,* which allow them to work individually or collectively."
4. "Members create *a time-efficient process*, minimizing wandering discussions and wasted time."

5. "The group develops *a sense of accountability* helping each member understand individual contributions to the success of the group; hence, progress can be monitored and evaluated accordingly." (Katzenbach & Smith, 2001, p. 3.)

These effective group fundamentals echo several of the items in Larson and LaFasto's list. Katzenbach and Smith contend that these are basics for all groups, whether they try to function as teams or not. From their perspective, the decision to function as a team brings some new demands on the group, requiring a distinctive "team discipline." However, not all groups should strive to be or function as teams. There is a place for both "Single-Leader" directed groups and "Real Teams." Some groups that try to become teams end up as "pseudo-teams," where group interactions detract from individual performance without providing any group benefit. "In pseudo-teams, the sum of the whole is less than the potential of the individual parts" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 91). Instead of trying to be a team, it would be better to be content to be a "working group," where members interact to share information, identify best practices, and make decisions to help each do his or her part best. Working groups call for a "Single-Leader Discipline."

The Single-Leader Discipline

Some groups function well as they follow the lead of one individual. This person, often in consultation with his or her group, determines the group's purpose, makes key decisions, specifies what each person needs to contribute to the group's work, sets up and oversees communication, and measures the success of the group. In this "single-leader discipline," the leader:

1. "Makes and communicates decisions for the group." He or she has formal authority, recognized experience, and the required knowledge. Group members expect the leader to make the decisions.
2. "Sets the performance goals and determines individual responsibilities." While open communication may be carried out, the leader makes the final decisions in these areas.
3. "Sets the pace and determines the working approach." The leader monitors progress, motivates individuals and the group, sets the structure and assignments.
4. "Evaluates the results." The leader evaluates both individual and group performance, rewards contributions, and makes necessary adjustments.
5. "Establishes benchmarks and standards." The leader fosters sharing, identifies best practices, establishes good communication systems, and determines the standards for the group.

6. "Maintains control of the group effort by clarifying individual accountability and emphasizes consequence management." Everyone knows their role, their goals, the expected results, how they are to work with others, and any deadlines. The leader is in control, and group members expect him or her to exercise it. (2001, pp. 5, 6)

These six elements allow a group of people to follow the lead of someone with formal authority and responsibility for the group's efforts. Each person is able to contribute his or her part to the process, knows the standards for a job well done, and knows that the group leader will guide the group toward the successful completion of their goal. These groups need all of the "effective group fundamentals" described above to do their work together well. However, it would not be accurate to characterize this kind of group as a "team." Real teams require a different kind of discipline to function well.

The Real Team Discipline

Some small group work settings need more of a shared leadership approach and mutual accountability. Contrasting with the "Single-Leader Discipline," in real teams, the group functions as follows:

1. "In the team discipline, decisions are made by the appropriate people," not always the designated team leader. This may be the entire group or it may be one or more persons who have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address that particular issue. Team leaders do not step in unless the group members cannot reach a decision, but consensus is not expected or desired. Group members recognize each other's areas of expertise and defer accordingly.
2. "Goals of groups using the team discipline are set and affirmed individually and collectively by the group." The leader may have strong opinions and share them, but the group members must wrestle together with the issues and implications and develop a shared understanding and commitment.
3. "The pace and working approach are set by the group, making the approach a matter of shared commitment." These may shift as the group encounters different situations, unlike the "Single-Leader Discipline," which tends to stay more fixed.
4. "The group rigorously and consistently evaluates its own results." Because they share their commitment to the task, they assess progress together in an open way. Their sense of accountability is strong, at times making them harder on themselves than a "single-leader" might be.
5. "Members of the group set high standards." Because of their shared

commitment they set high standards, often higher than any other group in their organization. Group goals may exceed goals mandated by their organizations, and the group takes pride in the accomplishment.

6. Group members "hold themselves individually and mutually accountable." Real teams tend not to have individual members who fail. If there is failure, it will be the group that fails. Team members adapt and help each other so they can accomplish their goal. Katzenbach and Smith note, "Indeed, mutual accountability for shared purpose and goals may be *the* hallmark of the team discipline." (2001, pp. 8–10)

Like the "single-leader" working groups, "real teams" also need all of the effective group fundamentals described above. However, because of their collaborative efforts, common goals, mutual accountability, and joint end-product, these additional elements are critical as well. When a team carries these elements out well, they can rise to become a "high-performance team." Katzenbach and Smith (1993) describe these kinds of teams as outperforming all other similar teams and outperforming all reasonable expectations given to them by their organizations. "This is a group that meets all the conditions of real teams, and has *members who are also deeply committed to one another's personal growth and success*" (p. 92). This strong interpersonal element will be discussed later in this article.

To Team or Not to Team, That is the Question

From Katzenbach and Smith's perspective, the key issue is the need for group leaders (and groups) to make a conscious decision regarding which discipline will work best for a particular performance challenge. Once this decision is made, the main issue is to implement the appropriate discipline well. Work demands change over time and groups that need a "Single-Leader Discipline" in one context may need to be able to shift to a "Real Team Discipline" in another context. Where collective work products are *required* to achieve the group's goals, then the "Real Team Discipline" ought to be implemented. This allows the group members to bring their particular strengths to the common effort in a collaborative way. Where individual work products can be combined to achieve the group's goals, the "Single-Leader Discipline" would be better. This allows the group to work quickly and efficiently, coordinating their efforts under the guidance of the team leader. Being a "team" is not better than being a "working group." Both are needed under different circumstances, and both require not only the fundamentals of all effective groups, but also their own unique discipline for effectiveness.

Lessons from Case Studies with Five Effective Ministry Teams

Over the last 10 years, we have each taught doctoral courses on team development and leadership with particular application to ministry contexts. In these courses, we have led our students through a review of contemporary theory and social science research on teams and teamwork and carried out biblical and theological reflection on issues from this area of study. In addition, in each course we have identified an "effective ministry team" in a local church or Christian higher education setting for field study. Our goal has been to develop an "emic" (insider's) perspective on what characterizes effective ministry teams and then compare what we learned with the research we have read, looking both for common ground and different or unique elements. Five ministry teams have been studied in all, including a pastoral staff, a children's ministry staff, a children and youth ministry staff, a board of elders, and a Christian university Deans' Council.

In each case, the course instructor approached the team leader requesting permission for students to observe the team in their regular meetings, interview team members individually, review written materials about the team and its work (job descriptions, handbooks, minutes of meetings), and have the team leader and members fill out the Team Excellence instrument, designed by Larson and LaFasto. Some of the courses were taught during the semester, allowing several weeks of observation and data collection. Others were taught in modular format, allowing one week of intensive field research as a class. In each case, we debriefed the ministry team on what we learned from them and provided feedback on selected aspects of team functioning.

Over the years, as we have carried out these case studies, a number of common elements have been noted. First, we found much that affirmed both Larson and LaFasto's eight characteristics of effective teams and Katzenbach and Smith's description of effective group fundamentals. These basic concepts are indeed present in ministry teams that function well together and are effective in their ministry efforts. Nothing was found that contradicted these models. However, there were some additional elements of group functioning that these ministry teams exhibited that we have noted and discussed together, and we offer these as observations that should be followed up on with additional research.

Ministry Team Element One: Some Teams are not "Real Teams"

Using Katzenbach and Smith's (2001) model, it might be better to identify some of the ministry teams we studied as "Single-Leader" groups instead of "Real Teams." While the elder's board, children and youth ministry team, and the children's ministry staff team had common work products and

needed collaborative effort to achieve many of their goals, the pastoral staff and Deans' Council seemed to function more as "Single-Leader" groups. For the pastoral staff and deans, there were some common tasks and commitment to some larger objectives, but each member spent most of their time working in their own area, exercising their own leadership over others. While all of these groups needed and exhibited "effective group fundamentals," they did not all need the "Real Team" discipline described by Katzenbach and Smith. This is okay; in fact, it is critical to understand when to try to function as a real team and when to allow the group to function well as a single-leader group. We must not allow our current climate of valuing everything that is "team" to interfere with effective "Single-Leader" group functioning.

Ministry Team Element Two: Impact of Spiritual Connection with God and Each Other

Among these ministry teams, we saw that those that experienced a deep spiritual connection rooted in their relationship with Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit found that this unified them and energized their collaboration and their lives in powerful, sacrificial, and fruitful ways. These ministry teams saw themselves as joining their efforts in service to God, their ultimate leader and support system. Seeking guidance together in prayer, praying for one another, bringing their individual and corporate needs to God, and prayers of thanksgiving were powerful experiences for these group members. It appears that these kinds of experiences can renew vision and commitment, build mutual support, and help team members weather the stresses and strains of ministry. We found that these effective ministry teams had a rich spiritual life together and a strong unity and mutual support as they carried out their efforts.

Discussion and Implications for Team Leadership in the Church

This review of these two major research efforts on team effectiveness and the biblical themes that resonate with this research has great implications for church and parachurch ministry contexts. Most of our ministry efforts involve groups of people working together toward common goals. In some cases, they may fit the definitions of teams offered above. In other cases, they may not fit the definition but still benefit from some of what has been learned from this research. Using Katzenbach and Smith's (2001) perspective on types of work groups and Lafasto and Larson's (2001) discussion of effective team leaders as a beginning foundation, we offer these reflections and suggestions for improving ministry team effectiveness.

1. *Know When To Be a Team and When Not To:* Those in church ministry need to resist "team-fever" and consider the best ways to struc-

ture their ministry groups. While all groups need effective group fundamentals, it is not always necessary to try to function as a team. Rather than worrying about being a "team" or team building, more attention should be given to clarifying goals, priorities, responsibilities, standards of performance, and how a group will work together toward their goals. This helps build confidence and commitment within the group, whether they are a "true team" or not.

2. *Goal Maintenance and the Fostering of Unified Commitment:* One of the critical tasks of a ministry group leader is to help their group members maintain a clear focus on the goals over time by keeping them clear and avoiding contextual political issues that can divert attention and energy from the main task. Leaders need to help group members see the relevance of their efforts to the accomplishment of the goals. They also need to find ways to revisit and renew the goals with group members, helping to renew a unified commitment. This can be done through rewards and affirmation for work that contributes to goal accomplishment, revisiting the needs you are addressing, and celebrating small successes on the way toward the ultimate goal.
3. *Developing a Collaborative Climate:* Team leaders build a collaborative climate by fostering safe communication within the group and not tolerating when this is violated. Private conversations with those who violate this kind of communication standard allow the values of the group to be reviewed, reaffirmed, and warnings given regarding further violation. Group members must not undermine the collaborative climate by their behaviors, whether in group settings or when they are apart. Good leaders reward collaborative behavior, guide problem-solving efforts, and suppress their own ego to help the team achieve its goal. They model what it means to deny oneself for the good of the group, to put kingdom goals ahead of personal ones, and to lead with humility and grace.
4. *Team Morale Maintenance:* Team leaders build confidence by their positive attitude, helping the group achieve small results and affirming them, keeping the team informed of progress, showing trust by delegating important tasks to others, and accentuating the positive within the group. Morale maintenance is not just the leader's responsibility, but it is one that must be modeled by the leader. Group members will at times be discouraged, have doubts about the ability of the group to achieve their goals, and see the problems more clearly than the opportunities. Team leaders help renew hope, focus on God's grace and provision, and help group members see what has been accomplished, not just what remains to be done.
5. *Drawing on Others' Strengths:* Team leaders demonstrate sufficient

technical know-how for their own responsibilities, but also get help from others on the team when they need it. They are able to shift from a "Single-Leader Discipline" to a "Real Team Discipline" when needed and are not threatened by the change. A commitment to God's glory and His kingdom goals, and recognizing God's gifting of others, allows a leader to not always be in charge or in control of all aspects of the work of the group. This requires humility and a passion for the achievement of the goals of the group, no matter who gets the credit. When this is modeled by the leader, it encourages others in the group to give of themselves and to use their strengths to their fullest.

6. *Priority Setting:* Team leaders set priorities and do not dilute their group's energy with too many efforts. As situations change, they update their team members on changes in priorities as needed. This helps focus energy and clarify the critical goals that need to be achieved, allowing group members to determine what they need to do now and what can wait until later. When leaders allow too many goals to accumulate without differentiating their priority, they create a situation in which group members may feel overwhelmed, drained because there is no sense of accomplishment or progress. Group members can also feel frustrated, that they are never sure if they are working on the right tasks. Setting priorities allows group members to focus their efforts, see progress, and have a sense of achievement as projects are completed. Time should also be taken to celebrate significant achievements, affirming the work of the group and the importance of what has been accomplished.
7. *Team Member Assessment and Development:* Team leaders need to oversee and assess the performance of team members and address problems when someone is not doing his or her job. They help team members by setting specific objectives, giving constructive feedback, helping create support for personal and professional development, and rewarding results. When team members know that the leader is doing this well, it allows each of them to focus on his or her own efforts, trusting that challenges in other areas will be addressed and others will be prepared to do their part as needed. Leaders must recognize that there will always be a need to help team members develop on the job, learn new skills, try out new responsibilities, and receive feedback on how they handle new challenges. Supervision and support are two sides of the leadership coin, and formative assessment is an ongoing process that can lead to a stronger team over time.
8. *Foster External Support—in the Church and from God:* Mutual support among group members is critical to accomplish the goals.

However, in the context of Christian community, team leaders need to promote external support from the church as a community that cares for its members. Team leaders also need to identify the resources that group members need to get things done, and to provide them with such resources, for example: a place to meet and to work, equipment, financial resources, and people in positions of authority who will support their decision-making. Celebration of team accomplishments ought to take place when church members get together by creatively recognizing specific achievements by the team as part of the church's big plan. But above all, Christian leaders need to lead their teams to look for God's support as the ultimate source of power and authority. It is He who approves and prospers the work in His kingdom, and who can say "Well done, good and faithful slave."

9. *Selecting Team Members Carefully:* Being good at what you do is not good enough to succeed as a team. Team leaders need to keep in mind that a careful selection of group members will add to the team those components that go beyond technical skills, as important as they are. Leaders need to select group members based on their skills and competencies, such as the ability to solve problems, but they also need to pay close attention to the attitudes and behaviors that those who join the team will bring to it and their impact on the work that the team does together to succeed. Closely related to these ingredients is Christian character, that until just recently has begun to receive more attention in the corporate world. Christian character has to do with the spiritual qualifications of group members, which need to be expressed in practical ways in day-to-day activities in order to be able to support each other, to create an environment of openness where God's grace is manifested, and to have the courage to do what needs to be done to solve a problem or to encourage others to act.
10. *Setting and Using Standards of Excellence:* Standards of excellence require mutual accountability, team assessment, and celebration. Team leaders need to help the team to clearly define the performance that is expected of each member. When group members know and are committed to work on their specific tasks and responsibilities, each of them will contribute to foster high performance among the team. Mutual accountability requires trusting each other and having confidence in each group member's abilities and power to make decisions. Leaders need to keep in mind that teams may not continue to be together when they accomplish the goal or specific project that brought them together; however, during the time they are working together, group members who are encouraged by their leaders become able to move from individual to mutual accountability. It is

mutual accountability that makes possible team assessment, where no individual fails or succeeds, but the team as a whole. Therefore, rewards and celebration for accomplishments are focused on team accomplishments, not on individual accomplishments.

11. *Evaluation:* Team leaders need to evaluate on a regular basis the performance of group members and progress against the goal and standards of excellence set individually and as a team. Consistent evaluation is a way to keep group members accountable to each other and to take action when group members are falling behind on their responsibilities in order to make things happen. Leader and group members need to discuss at the very beginning the purpose of evaluation and the evaluation systems to be utilized. The purpose of evaluation should contribute to making decisions about merit, worth, value, etc.
12. *Communication and Coordination*: An environment where open communication flourishes is essential for group members working together. Team leaders need to set the example by being good communicators and by fostering an environment where group members feel safe and will not get defensive when they need to be accountable to each other and to acknowledge that they are not meeting the team expectations. On the contrary, when open communication is encouraged, team members will support one another, help a team member to act, and complement one another, especially in the areas of weaknesses. Communication is expected from the leader to his team but also among group members, especially when they need to work together to define steps and actions to solve problems. Guidance, monitoring, and control of the group effort are still the team leader's responsibility.
13. *Fostering Spiritual Growth of Team Members:* Findings from case studies revealed spiritual dynamics that each group has developed through the time they have been working together carrying out the goals of the team. Team leaders need to be intentional in seeking for opportunities to foster the spiritual growth of the team individually and as a group. Praying together, praying for each other, reflecting on a passage from Scripture, knowing each other's story, searching together to understand God's will in specific matters, serving one other, serving together, and encouraging one another on a one-to-one basis, among others, are fundamental disciplines that unite the group and foster spiritual growth among the group. The image of the body presented earlier, with all its members working together in the building up of the body, clearly illustrates how a team needs to support each other in order to continue to grow united in the bond of love.

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