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Secrets of Successful Teams

These nine principles, when implemented on a regular basis, can turn any lackluster team into an outstanding one!

by **Chris Widener**

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To be a success is not always to be a success individually. In fact, most of the time we achieve our successes as part of a team.

We are all part of teams. Our family is a team. Our place of work is a team. The community groups we belong to are teams. Sometimes we are the team leader or "coach," while other times we fulfill the role of follower, or "player." It is so important then for us to understand teams and how they work, especially those who achieve success - the achievement of their desired goal.

In my life I have been on some successful teams, and some not so successful teams. This includes both athletically as well as professionally. When I was growing up, I worked for seven years with the Seattle Supersonics, our local National Basketball Association team. They were at times unsuccessful, and, in 1979, my second year working there, the most successful team in the league, winning the World Championship. I have been able to see firsthand what makes the difference between the unsuccessful teams and the successful ones.

Here are some principles that I know, when implemented on a regular basis, can turn any lackluster team into an outstanding one! These principles can be applied to your family, your business, your organization, and yes, your sports team.

Communication/Leader

The leader needs to communicate the vision. If they are setting the pace, they need to let people know where they are going so that the team can follow. The coach always does a pre-game talk, laying out the vision.

The leader communicates the vision frequently, so as to always be updating the team as to where they are at and what changes need to be made.

> ***The coach doesn't relegate the direction he gives to the pre-game; he coaches and communicates all the way through the game.***

Team

Watch a good basketball team. They are talking to each other all of the time. Helping one another out, encouraging one another, praising one another, and telling each other how they can make changes so the same mistakes aren't made again. The same is true of successful teams in the professional world and in life in general.

Excellence

The truly great teams are teams that are committed to excellence. In everything they do, their goal is to achieve at the highest level. And this commitment is held throughout the team and at every level. A successful team cannot have members who are not committed to excellence because in the end they will become the weak link.

Followership

If you want a fascinating read, pick up The Power of Followership, by Robert Kelley. The author basically makes the point that the secret to getting things done lies not only in great leadership, but in how well the rest of the people, 99% of the team, follows the leadership. Good teams are filled with people who are committed to following and getting the job done.

Understanding Roles

Pardon the Chicago Bulls analogy, but it is so clear. When the game was on the line, with only one shot left, everyone, the coaches, the players, the 20,000 people watching in the stadium, and millions watching on TV, knew who would shoot the last shot. That was Michael Jordan's role.

Every team works best when the members of the team have clearly defined and understood roles. Some do one thing, others do another. One isn't better or more important than the other, just different.

> ***When teams operate out of their strengths and their roles, they win.***

Strengths and Weaknesses

This brings me to strengths and weaknesses. Every team member has strengths and weaknesses. The successful teams are those who on a regular and consistent basis enable the members to operate out of their strengths and not out of their weaknesses. And what is one person's strength will cover another's weakness. This is teamwork, enabling all of the bases to be covered.

Fun

The team that plays together stays together. Is your team all work and no play? If you're smart, that will change. Get your team out of the office once a month and go have some fun. Enjoy one another. Enjoy life. It will bring a sense of bonding that can't be made even in "winning."

Common Goals and Vision

I have found that these need to have three aspects. Short, simple and clear. Can you say it in less than 30 seconds? Is it simple? Can you and others understand it? Does the team all know what they are working together for?

Appreciation

All through the "game," successful teams appreciate one another and show it in a variety of ways. The coach shows it to the players, the players show it to the coach, and the players show it to one another.

Here is a "Successful Teams" Checklist for you to evaluate with.

- Is there communication between coach and players and from player to player?
- Is your team committed to excellence?
- Do those on the team know what it means to follow?
- Does everyone on my team know their specific role?
- Do the individuals on our team regularly operate out of their strengths as opposed to their weaknesses?
- Does our team take a break from time to time to just have fun together?
- Do we understand our common goals and vision? Can we all state it (them)?
- Is there a sense of and communication of genuine appreciation among my team?

Chris Widener is an example of how anyone can overcome any odds to achieve a successful life and help others achieve the same. Chris has overcome many obstacles... living through his father dying suddenly when he was four, being sent away from his family to live with relatives at age nine and becoming involved with drugs and alcohol by the age of twelve. Chris overcame those obstacles and has for the last ten years

worked with some of the most financially successful families in America, helping them to achieve both personally and professionally. Now he can do the same for you!

Consulting Services
Chris Widener is proud to offer his consulting services to you. The following three areas are his specialty areas. If you have been considering the help of an outside source to help you in business or life issues, you'll want to read the following information.

Personal Growth
As a person who has worked for 10 years with people from all sorts of backgrounds, Chris Widener is an expert in personal growth. Our lives aren't just all business. We have intellectual pursuits, spiritual lives, families, hobbies, and recreation to think about too. For the best advice on how to maintain a balance in all of the areas of your life, Chris can be your own personal growth coach.

Business
Starting a new business or just want a boost for an existing one? Chris Widener is the resource you are looking for. Chris has a knack for taking complex issues and boiling them down to a step by step plan of action to help you achieve your business goals. Drawing from his own experience and a network of successful contacts, Chris can help guide you down the path of success.
Got problems? From small problems to large ones, Chris can help you get solutions! He will help you determine the problem, and then get you on your way to solving the problem in no time.
Sometimes you need an outside source to take a look at what you are doing and provide smart, creative advice. Email Chris today!

Speech Coaching
As a professional speaker, Chris is one of the best. Now, he can help you become your best whether you speak every day or simply have a once a year speech coming up. Chris has both on-site coaching and video assessments available. Email Chris today to find out how you can reach your peak as a speaker.
For strategy, advice, encouragement and an honest appraisal, give Chris a call. 425-444-GOAL