

**Building the right team** ultimately affects the chances of company's success. Cohesive groups perform better, as their members cultivate close relationships and focus on common goals. However, the nature of the objectives determines the level of group cohesiveness required. In building teams, leaders should consider four elements:

- ✓ Size of the group
- ✓ Its composition
- ✓ The functions and roles of the members
- ✓ Group success

### Gaining the leading edge with high-performing teams

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**The size** of the team depends on the objectives to achieve and the time available. Also, the type of resources required to best accomplish the tasks should be carefully analyzed. Usually small groups of 5 to 10 people are more flexible and better suited to create an attractive working atmosphere: members know each other, understand each member's task, work closely, communicate easily and support each other.

**The composition** of the group is essential, since it directly impacts the outcome. Selected members should fulfill two prerequisites:

- ✓ Possess the capabilities and skills to do the job;
- ✓ Be team-oriented and fit well with the rest of the team.

The challenge is to find the right balance between diversity and similarity. A diversified group performs better when tasks require creativity. Conversely, members sharing common values, and thereby minimizing the potential of conflicts perform tasks better that require strong interaction.

**Functions and roles** must be well understood by all members. It is essential that participants understand how and to which

extend their specific task affects the success of the team. Over time, the group will start exploit synergies to further improve their performance. If necessary, a mentor should be assigned to support weaker or new members. Also, by emphasizing the importance of teamwork, the leader encourages members to support each other. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each involved member is crucial: when an individual's task matches what she does best, then high performance is the reward.

**Success** is strongly influenced by members' motivation. Therefore, it is important to underline how each member's performance impacts the success of the team and of the entire organization. Rewards that are primarily based on group performance will significantly increase cohesiveness and minimize loafing attitude. Successful teams who have obtained recognition in the organization have a tendency to develop and nurture a cocoon-like work environment.

Puzzling together a cohesive team with different personalities becomes the major challenge of the team leader. The right size, the right composition, well-defined functions and roles are factors that ensure group success. Together, members of cohesive teams feel strong and prepared for future ventures. As a consequence, the wheel of success runs by itself: success triggers performance that triggers success, and so on.

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