



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Is That Team Really A Team?

I suspect that most 'collections of people' that are called a team are not, in fact, a team.

I suspect that many 'teams' are labelled incorrectly – it may be called a 'team' but more likely it is a much looser 'grouping'.

I also suspect that a team structure may be inappropriate or unnecessary – some groups of individuals may be better suited to a looser working arrangement. Does that 'senior leadership team' really behave as a team, or are they in fact simply a group of individuals who are cooperating - when it suits them?

We could be side-lined into a debate about what is a team, what is not a team, what is a group etc. For the purposes of discussion here, a working definition, subject to later revision etc is something like...

A team is a small number of people, working together in harmony, with common purpose, with relationships that are based upon mutual trust, where there is accepted leadership and cooperation, where tasks are performed with growing knowledge and skill, where values, attitudes and behaviours are supportive of the fellow members of the team. There will be cohesion, commonality of mood and humour, sensitivity to and awareness of others and a shared valuing of their inclusion in the team.

A group has some of the qualities noted above – but it is 'looser' - perhaps a collection of individuals, each person in contact with and acknowledging the other group members, having some shared purpose, location or reason to be together. There is a significant level of individuality, autonomy and difference, perhaps leading to occasional conflict.

Key points to observe in the determination of a team will be the quality of trust, cooperation and common purpose, the nature of respect, communication and individuality.

From a coaching perspective, working with a team or loose group would require different approaches.

7 August 2013

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Registered in England No: 4401635