

## Welcome to Stellar Leadership podcast No.4

**Welcome to the Stellar Leadership Podcast – today we will be introducing the subject of team working by asking, what is a team? And, what makes one successful?**

When I think of a team, I think of a group of people who have come together to work cohesively towards a common purpose. I think of energy and synergy. Ideally this means that two or more people can achieve more by working together than they could by working separately.

Not all work groups are teams nor, depending on the circumstances, do they need to be. Equally, not all teams are effective. Effective teams are something that have to be developed, monitored and sustained.

So, what is a team?

A team is a group of people who work together to achieve common objectives. An Effective team is one in which members communicate well and they work collaboratively, balancing both individual and common goals.

Professor John Adair talks about three interlocking circles of factors – task, team and individual. By paying attention to these three factors, you can build a high performing team.

The first important characteristic of a successful team is the clarity with which it works to achieve agreed objectives – what Adair calls ‘task’. Indeed, a primary function of all team leaders, is to ensure that the team is constantly made aware of how and where their efforts dovetail into wider organisational goals. Few sports teams are successful if the vital element of teamwork is missing. At one extreme, you can see how just one person working against the team can destroy its chances of success.

The quality of working relationships is a critical success factor in all teams. This does not simply mean that people need to ‘get on well’ together, but implies a much deeper understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and contributions of individual members to the team’s overall effectiveness. This requires support and encouragement of individuals as well as building a collective team spirit.

**From experience, we can say then that successful teams need the following:**

- Strong, effective leadership
- Clear objectives at individual and team levels
- Clear milestones and targets
- Good processes for meeting, communicating and reporting on progress
- Resources and development support to tackle the jobs in hand
- The right mix of people and skills
- An energetic culture built on recognition and achievement.

It is important to bear in mind that teams need time to develop. All teams seem to go

through a number of stages. Most teams begin as a group – as a collection of individuals who do not know how to work together. As a result of good leadership and some team building a close and effective working group should develop.

This process of moving from a group of individuals to a high performing team is described in stages from forming, through storming, to norming and performing. At the stage of performing the team has established its identity and an agreed way of working intensively together. At this point it looks, feels and acts like a high performing team that gets results.

**If you would like more information on Team Working, or any of the topics discussed in this podcast, visit [www.stellarleadership.com](http://www.stellarleadership.com), where there is a wide range of downloadable materials on the practical application of leadership techniques.**