

Is Your Team Fun or Effective?

- James Terrell

Is your team fun, or effective...or BOTH? Why settle for less than great relationships and great performance on your team? These two are not mutually exclusive; in fact they are directly related to each other!

One of the seven ingredients that emotionally intelligent teams maintain is a comprehensive sense of positive mood. Our assessment instrument, the Team Emotional and Social Intelligence inventory, or TESI, is designed to measure your team's level of functioning in team identity, motivation, and positive mood along with four other critical variables. Once you have the data on your team's strengths and weaknesses you can all focus on developing the specific behaviors needed to enhance your performance and productivity.

Teams work best in an atmosphere of positive mood. Optimism and a good sense of humor help to lubricate the potential sticking points and keep anyone from taking themselves too seriously. It's when teammates feel a lack of self-confidence and don't get a sense of acceptance from their fellow teammates at the destructive kinds of competition can begin to be a problem.

While some forms of competition within the team are definitely stimulating and increase productivity, when it comes out of feeling anxious, like someone is going to get or take something you deserve or get control in your turf, and then it quickly becomes counterproductive. Making sure there is plenty of acknowledgement to go around helps prevent this and increases optimism.

When team members feel as if they constantly focus on measuring daily productivity and have to do better than someone else on the team in order to be good enough, it can easily create a vicious cycle. What needs to happen instead is to shift the attention from focusing on individual contributions to measuring, tracking, and rewarding team results. When individuals feel valuable because of their membership on the team and because of who they are, it gives them sufficient emotional room to relax and pull back enough to see the big picture. It is from this more general view of our teams challenges that we can see how the whole process fits together. Consequently we are freed up to do some of our most innovative problem solving.

The reason we need teams today is because the challenges we face are far too big for any one person to resolve on their own. When team members encourage each other and offer both emotional and technical support a sense of care begins to develop that promotes an atmosphere of positive mood where everyone can do their best work...together!