

# How to Foster More Teamwork in Your Office

By Rick Goodman

You may have an office full of people who are working hard—but are they working *together*? Has workplace competition choked out all sense of collaboration? Has the layout and structure of your workforce lent itself to true cohesion and shared vision, or just to seclusion and individualism?

You accomplish *more* when you work *together*, uniting to form a team that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. This begs the question: How can you foster a spirit of teamwork in your workplace?

- **Make collaboration one of your department's values.** As you communicate your expectations to team members, make sure that those expectations include collaboration. Express to your employees that collaboration and teamwork aren't just optimal, but that they are an *expected* part of your daily work culture.
- **Define roles in terms of the team.** As you lay out the responsibilities for each employee, make sure to define them not just in terms of tasks but also in terms of people. Instead of telling an employee *do XYZ*, tell the employee to *work together with Bob and Sarah on XYZ*.
- **Assign tasks to teams.** Rather than assign a task to one person, assign a project to a full group; they may wish to break down the project into smaller, individual pieces, but even this is a step toward better collaboration!
- **Set team goals.** You regularly observe and assess the performance of each team member; make sure you do likewise for the team unit as a whole!
- **Make your office environment a creative one.** Allow for team discussions in which everyone vocally brainstorms and grasps for new ideas, without any judgment or negativity. A creative team is a collaborative one.
- **Leverage the strengths of each team member.** Teamwork doesn't mean everyone does the same thing; it means everyone uses his or her unique gifts to propel the group forward. Make sure you know the areas in which your team members shine, and give them projects and roles that play to their strengths.

Teamwork doesn't happen by accident. You have to grow it. You have to work at it—and you have to do *so together!*

And let's get real: EVERY business can benefit from better teamwork, from more unity, from greater focus and drive.