

# Ease and Do

A publication of E & D Associates©

Facilitating Success through Project Management and Business/Executive Coaching

Spring 2006

Volume 2 Issue 1

## Teamwork... Biz Buzz or Biz Bust?

### What Is a Team Anyway?

One of the most popular of business buzz concepts for many years now has been teamwork. We are always looking to be part of a team, seeking leaders who can develop teams and hunting for employees who aspire to be team players. Team is derived from the use of oxen or bullocks shackled together to create a focused, shared force, for transporting heavy materials. I like to think of a team in a different way. A team is made up of individual stories; it is more than a group of people who have willingly set aside their egos; it is about not having or being a boss. A team is a collective of individuals each of whom contributes to the working of the whole. A team is in fact a living entity.



### It's Up to You to Decide If and When Teamwork is Right

Teamwork is such a warm, fuzzy concept; how could we not like the idea? After all, everything is better when we work together and promote togetherness. Right? Well, yes and then again, not always. We are bombarded with new and proven ideas to enhance, improve, reduce, grow, reshape, replenish and create just about anything. In our personal lives we can readily accept or dismiss these notions. In business however, we tend to view new ideas as part of the masses. Maybe we're concerned we'll appear different from the main-stream or the competition. Whatever the reason, in business we

are far more likely to implement concepts without consideration of our own unique circumstances. Though teamwork is a profoundly valuable concept, when and how to use it does not abide by the one size fits all approach. It requires some decision making on our part.

Teamwork is most likely to succeed (and thus of greatest value) when the task is complex and requires a variety of input and action; individual effort required to complete the task exceeds the break-even point; time does not preclude the effort needed to assemble and deploy a team; team members understand their

roles and are willing participants. Perhaps the most critical teamwork success factors are that leadership understands and supports the team and the concept of teamwork, and that goals are clear and resources are consistent with the achievement of goals. Teamwork is least likely to succeed (nor is it of considerable value) when time is of the essence and outcomes and decisions hold serious consequences; the task is too simple and of course when the non-teamwork approach is working just fine. In those cases where the leadership is autocratic or the work environment is chaotic, teamwork may be of value, but it is unlikely it will succeed.

Teamwork is a great idea. All businesses require a certain amount of teamwork, it is essential. But it is not the answer for all situations. Whether or not to employ teamwork in a particular situation requires consideration and an understanding of both the task and the team. Teamwork requires voluntary participation; goals must be clear; resources must be adequate to achieve goals and above all leadership must be committed to the team, its' efforts and goals.

