

Building Relationships

Objectives:

- To promote an awareness of the need for teamwork and of building relationships as a component of team building
- To provide district governors with suggestions and tools to facilitate teamwork and relationship building within their district
- To promote problem-avoidance methods to replace dealing with critical incidents

Organization:

This document is organized into several sub-topics. For each sub-topic there is:

- An overview explaining the sub-topic in some detail
- One or more suggestions or tips for introducing the sub-topic within the district/club
- (If applicable) A resource or resources to existing documentation that supports the material presented

Overview:

The important work that we all do as Lions is rarely done alone. Each of us is called on to interact with other Lions in our clubs and districts to achieve our goals. This interaction requires teamwork if it is to be successful.

Teamwork is an elusive concept. Sometimes it flows naturally, but more often it takes a concerted effort on the part of all involved. One of the most important elements of making that effort successful is building relationships with the Lions with whom you interact.

As district governors, you have the opportunity to initiate relationship building to reduce the need for conflict resolution methods in your clubs and districts. Instead of interceding where lack of teamwork may already be negatively impacting the work being done in your district, you can strive for understanding and cooperation to maintain harmony on your teams.

This component of your toolbox is designed to give you some guidelines on teamwork and on how to build the relationships that will eliminate the existing problems.

Sub-topics:

1. Definition of a Team
2. Characteristics of Effective Teams
3. Characteristics of Ineffective Teams
4. Building Relationships to Improve Team Performance

Common Questions Related to the Topic:

- What is a team?
- What makes a team effective?
- Why are teams sometimes ineffective?
- What can you do to build relationships?

Definition of a Team

“A team is a group of people working toward a common goal.”

Tips to help your district:

1. Discuss the definition:
 - Present definition
 - Emphasize keywords: GROUP, WORKING, COMMON GOAL
 - Ask whether their group works toward a common goal and whether everyone understands and agrees upon those goals

Characteristics of Effective Teams

Effective teams are built on:

- Communication
- Trust
- Shared decision-making
- Positive reinforcement
- Cooperation
- Flexibility
- Focus on common goals
- Synergy

Tips to help your district:

1. Discuss the characteristics of effective teams:
 - Explain that some teams are effective and some are not
 - Ask for input on what makes a team effective (make sure the items listed above are included)
 - Remind that groups that are effective can achieve more together than they would as individuals all working alone
2. Discuss the facts and lessons from Milton Olson’s “Lessons From Geese” below:
 - **Fact 1:** As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson 1: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of each other.

- **Fact 2:** When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson 2: If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

- **Fact 3:** When the lead bird tires, it rotates back into the formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson 3: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other.

- **Fact 4:** The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson 4: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater.

- **Fact 5:** When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson 5: If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we're strong.

Characteristics of Ineffective Teams

Ineffective teams may display the following qualities:

- Lack trust
- Lack understanding
- Don't care about each other
- Don't live up to promises/responsibilities
- Aren't truthful
- Motivated by personal power or ego
- Some members want to dominate/direct

Tips to help your district:

- Discuss the characteristics of ineffective teams
- Explain that ineffective teams are usually weak in interpersonal communication
- Ask people to think about weak teams in which they have been involved or observed and what made the team ineffective (make sure the items listed above are included)
- Remind that we cannot focus entirely on the task, but must consider the people and their own needs to ensure that a team operates effectively. We must build relationships.

Building Relationships to Improve Team Performance

Build relationships by creating an Emotional Bank Account, consisting of “deposits” to offset “withdrawals.”

- Understand the individual
- Attend to little things
- Keep commitments
- Clarify expectations
- Show personal integrity
- Apologize sincerely when you make a withdrawal

Tips to help your district:

1. Discuss the idea of an Emotional Bank Account:
 - Explain that by making “deposits” to the emotional bank account, you can build up a reserve of things like trust, kindness, honesty, and communication. When you need to rely on that person, or make a “withdrawal”, it will be easier because your account has reserves.
 - Introduce the six major deposits as stated by Stephen Covey in “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”:
 - Understand the individual
 - Attend to little things
 - Keep commitments
 - Clarify expectations
 - Show personal integrity
 - Apologize sincerely when you make a withdrawal
2. Ask people to consider someone with whom they have had difficulty working and think about the deposits and withdrawals they have made or could have made.
3. Allow people to share their experiences using these points to stimulate discussion:
 - **Understand the Individual**
 - Key to every other deposit
 - What might be a deposit for you could be a withdrawal for someone else
 - Make what is important to another person important to you
 - Don’t assume you know what others desire or need
 - **Attend to the Little Things**
 - In relationships, the little things are the big things
 - Don’t forget things like courtesy, honesty, respect, kindness
 - Even the toughest individuals have feelings and emotions

- **Keep Commitments**
 - ❑ Keeping a commitment is a major deposit, breaking one is a major withdrawal
 - ❑ Don't make promises you can't keep, but keep the ones you make
 - ❑ If you can't keep a promise, ask to be released from it
 - ❑ Keeping promises can build bridges of trust
- **Clarify Expectations**
 - ❑ Define roles, expectations, goals, and outcomes
 - ❑ Most relationship difficulties are because roles and goals are conflicting or ambiguous
 - ❑ Get everything on the table
 - ❑ Only hold people accountable for what you have clearly defined
- **Show Personal Integrity**
 - ❑ Lack of integrity promotes lack of trust
 - ❑ You build the trust of those who are present by being loyal to those who are not
 - ❑ Treat everyone by the same set of principles
- **Apologize When You Make a Withdrawal**
 - ❑ A sincere apology can make a deposit out of a withdrawal
 - ❑ It is one thing to make a mistake, another not to admit it

Resource:

Encourage people to read Covey's book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People."