



Leaders: What You Should Know About Your Team

PHIL COOKE

Whenever I consult with a church, ministry, or non-profit; I always begin by looking closely at the team. The employees are the ones that make an organization work, so learning as much as we can about them is critical – and I'm often surprised at how little pastors and other leaders actually know about the personal side of their team. If you're not taking the time to know your people well, you're shortchanging your vision. Having studied teams over the years, here's a starting list of issues leaders need to know about their teams:

1) Purpose is just as important as talent. Talent is important, but know why your people are there in the first place. Find out who's there just for a paycheck, and who's there to change the world. Knowing motivations is critical for team chemistry to work.

2) Make sure they're in the right seats on the bus. You know the Jim Collins concept – get the right employees on the bus, make sure they're in the right seats, and then get the wrong ones off the bus. Brilliantly simple, and yet you'd be amazed at the number of organizations that make serious mistakes in all three areas. The church and ministry world abounds with employees in positions that conflict with their talent and gifts. That disconnect damages morale, because everyone else knows that employee is failing and everyone else becomes more frustrated by the day.

3) Know which ones are locked into the rules and which are more flexible. I've worked at organizations who are crippled because employees are so bound by the rules that they can't think outside the box. Rules and policies are important, but you also need a team that knows when to step outside the rules for a bigger purpose.

4) Be careful of employees who are building their own empire inside your organization. These are team members who will do anything to protect their turf. You want a team that is generous with their ideas, time, and talent, and knows how to work with others in the organization.

5) Finally, of all your tasks as a leader, developing your team is one of the most important. You can't do everything yourself, but when you hand off responsibilities, you need to make sure it's handed to a capable, talented, and motivated employee. Taking the time every day to teach, encourage, and inspire your team will reap more benefits than you can possibly imagine.

And the opposite? One of these days I'll write a post about the number of organizations who have crashed because of a renegade, bitter, angry team and the leaders who let it happen...