

The 8 Most Common Myths About Teamwork
It's time to debunk them and get your team on the right track.

Myth: Individuals aren't responsible for the quality of their team experience because teamwork is a group skill.

Truth: This is a popular belief that causes even the smartest and most highly skilled individuals to excuse their poor performance by saying, "I got put on a bad team" Individuals make a vast difference on teams and should act on all of their personal abilities to affect their entire team's performance.

Myth: Managers and consultants are responsible for building teams.

Truth: Teambuilding is a series of specific communications or conversations that occur between people who share responsibility to get something done. Team members can and must learn to have these conversations on their own, particularly since a manager or consultant isn't always there.

Myth: Team members' skills are more important than their motivation.

Truth: When teamwork is important, skills should come *after* factors like drive, energy, interest, motivation, and enthusiasm because it's shared desire—not talent—that creates teamwork. It's also true that low motivation is more infectious on teams than high motivation. And while skilled individuals act within their roles, committed team members improvise to get the job done.

Myth: For a team to be really successful, its team members must like one another.

Truth: Teams that encourage affinity for a shared task—not for one another—create the strongest group cohesion. Rather than using exercises and techniques to promote friendships, they work together to adopt a common focus so that team members see good reasons to work with one another.

Myth: Team members must subordinate their self-interests for the good of the team.

Truth: Responsible team members retain their personal power. They find a way to align their self-interests with the team assignment, knowing that "going along" without passion or commitment can take the team to where no member wants to go.

Myth: Team members must choose or compromise between getting the job done and treating one another humanely.

Truth: The best teams believe that the task can get done *and* that team members can have an extraordinary experience.

Myth: Teambuilding means taking time away from "real work" at offsite events.

Truth: Teambuilding happens in the course of work.

Myth: A team that starts on the right track stays on the right trade

Truth: A number of events can occur during the life of a team to break the team's healthy dynamics. To stay "built," team members should pinpoint problems as they arise and address them immediately.