SECURITY
MANAGEMENT

Team Building

A collection of best practice articles on building, managing, and empowering diverse security teams.

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Introduction

*This ebook offers security managers a deep dive into the process of building
and managing teams, with each article addressing different facets of this crucial subject.*

By Mark Tarallo

*T*eambuilding is a crucial skill for virtually all security managers. A productive, unified, and supportive integrated team will be a real force in what it can accomplish. The best team integrates the ideas, skill, and perspectives of its members into a well-functioning whole that exceeds the sum of its parts. For as leadership expert Ken Blanchard says, "None of us is as smart as all of us."

But the complexities of the 21st century workplace can lead to challenges in leading teams. Team members may have widely different backgrounds, personalities, and experience levels, and respond to different management styles. This ebook offers managers (and aspiring managers) a deep dive into the team-building process. Each of the three articles focuses on different aspects of team building and team leading.

In "How to Lead a Diverse Security Workforce," author Yan Byalik offers guidance on how security managers lead a diverse workforce in today's chaotic business environment and evolving workplace.

In "Empowered International Teams," author Caroline Wong offers best practices on how security managers can apply the principles of business empowerment to building and leading international teams.

And in "The Two-Way Manager," author William Cottringer explores how cutting-edge management practices that move organizations away from the unproductive paradigm of employers versus employees and toward a more supportive dynamic of unified teams moving forward with the security mission.

As a special bonus, *Security Management* interviewed Cottringer and explored the team building successes and failures he has seen in his long career as a manager in both the private and public sector. ◪
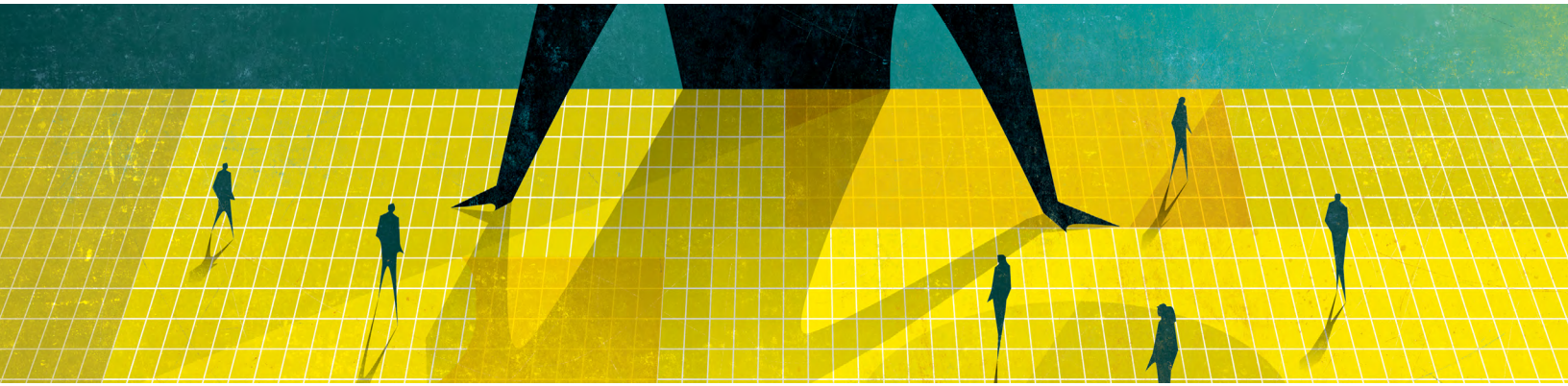

MARK TARALLO IS SENIOR CONTENT MANAGER FOR *SECURITY MANAGEMENT*.

How to Lead a Diverse Workforce

*Increasing diversity, especially in the current societal environment
of polarization and conflict, can lead to fraught situations in the workplace.*

By Yan Byalik, CPP

W e live in a time of increasing conflict and tension. The clash of civilizations, a frequent topic in college classrooms, seems to be playing out in vivid high definition on news channels across the globe. In nations around the world, citizens are verbally squaring off against friends and neighbors over political, racial, and social differences.

Security and public safety organizations are tasked with keeping the peace in our tumultuous societies. And these organizations are becoming as diverse as the communities they represent. As a result, many of these organizations' leaders—such as security managers—find themselves in the challenging situation of motivating and leading teams comprising individuals from an array of different racial, cultural, and ideological backgrounds.

This type of leadership is difficult. It often takes place in an environment unsettled by nearly constant and instantaneous

communication. And in many workplaces, tension and the potential for conflict are increasing, for several reasons.

For one, the country's changing demographics and economic challenges mean that there are four generations of workers sharing offices today. This leads to a diverse pool of employees with widely varying generational morals, behaviors, and values.

In addition, nearly half of all Millennials come from ethnic minority groups. Given their diverse cultural backgrounds, these younger individuals may have differing views on sensitive workplace issues compared to their older and more traditional Baby Boomer colleagues, or even members of Generation X.

To some extent, each member of the team will view these issues through their own cultural identity. And so, issues involving whether or not they support or oppose recent shifts in societal norms can spur differences in opinion, which may create tension. Even worse, the manager may inadvertently trigger a conflict by taking a side. After

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all, managers too belong to a specific culture, ethnicity, or generational identity.

With that in mind, what follows are some suggested best practices to help security managers lead a diverse workforce in today's chaotic environment. Of course, when sensitive issues arise in the workplace, there are no magic solutions or actions that guarantee successful resolution. However, keeping these principles in mind will help managers maintain self-awareness, fairness, and diplomacy. They will also

help managers to be mindful of common human biases that can creep into actions and how to steer clear of them through honest self-examination.

RESPECT DIFFERENCES

I've known my best friend since we were freshmen in college, and we agree on most issues. Furthermore, when we do disagree, we've never fought over it. That has held true in the almost two decades we have known each other.

However, soon after last year's controversial rally in Charlottesville ended in the death of a civilian and two police officers, we found ourselves in a debate over the preservation of Civil War monuments and the broader national crisis between law enforcement and communities of color.

Prior to that debate, the racially related differences between us had ranged from invisible to comical. But as the discussion heated up, I found that even two close friends who stood as best men at each other's weddings could still stumble into a perilous debate over their own cultural identities. I found that a Russian-Jewish immigrant and an African-American Jew could have widely divergent perspectives on the same events, despite significant similarities in our affinities, beliefs, and value systems.

My experience is applicable to workplace relationships. The viewpoint of your employees is as real to them as yours is to you; ignoring or demeaning their perspective can lead to deteriorating relationships. My best friend and I pushed through our disagreement in a few days, due to the history of trust and mutual respect that we had built together. Imagine the damage that could be done between people who barely know each other, or between managers and new team members who are complete strangers.

Thus, security leaders should be careful in these situations. When potentially sensitive cultural or political mat-

ters arise, managers should be mindful not to express opinions in a way that implies that those with differing opinions are stupid or lazy. Conversely, managers who find ways to express that they respect differing views, and find them legitimate, are often rewarded with stronger and more respectful relationships with staff.

We can learn a lot about how to respect differing viewpoints from good security educators. Students will often interject personal feelings into discussions, especially on use-of-force topics, and these feelings may vary from student to student, which presents a challenging situation for the instructor. A good security educator might respond by accepting the feeling of the student, and then providing additional information about an alternate explanation.

Thus, the teacher may respond as follows. "Sure, I can see how it may seem that the officer's actions were inappropriate in this incident. However, if you consider legal precedence for cases like this, the officer's actions, while perhaps not ideal, were nonetheless legal."

FOCUS ON ACTIONS

We must accept that the world is changing, and that our workplace employs a variety of people from a multitude of backgrounds. We will encounter people in the workplace who are different from us—different formative experiences, different cultural mores, different outlooks and perspectives on what is happening around them.

Being different is neither good nor bad, it just is. Managers should not prejudge their employees based on how they look or dress, where they came from, or what they seem to value in life. All that is important is their performance in the workplace and whether they are a productive member of the team.

Don't think of someone as a bad employee or a good employee. Focus on their actions and whether the actions are

productive or disruptive to the organization. Keep evaluating these actions fairly, and do not allow yourself to fall back on lazy stereotyping.

Here is an illustrative example. In my work as a security manager in the public sector, we worked with a community center that had some gang violence issues, such as fights on the basketball court, and similar altercations. As a result, we began looking for an athletic young man to hire as

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a security officer for the facility, because everyone assumed that's what it would take to control those patrons.

As it happened, our most effective security officer was an older female, who acted like a compassionate parental figure to the teens and young adults in the facility. She earned their respect, and they followed her instructions without question.

FOIL FAVORITISM

Allowing emotions to cloud your judgment is a dangerous trap for any manager. Managers may believe that a team member is underperforming when the underlying issue is not poor performance, but disagreement on certain issues. Conversely, I have watched poorly performing team members receive red carpet treatment because of their friendship with the boss.

This can be especially troubling when the manager shares demographic characteristics with the favored team member— whether that be religion, race, or cultural background—or shows favoritism to an employee who is of the opposite sex.

Even if there is no tangible preferential treatment, the perception of special treatment may be damaging to a manager's credibility. The recent spike in media attention to matters of

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race and gender relations has made this an even more sensitive, and potentially fraught, issue. And any actual discrimination based on a protected class could violate company policies and federal Title IX laws in the United States.

Management decisions must be made with the clarity of rational reasoning and unbiased performance evaluations. This is impossible to achieve when emotions are clouding judgment. Good managers try to combat this in themselves. They assign work based on the strengths of the employees and judge their employees based on the results that they have produced.

Equal access. Everyone wants to be "cool with their boss," and it is almost a status symbol when someone can say that they get regular time with the boss to pitch their ideas. It takes patience and an open mind to maintain an open-door policy, but the benefits can be tremendous. As a security manager, I have avoided potentially catastrophic employee relations issues because someone walked into my office and said, "hey sir, I just wanted to talk to you about something that kind of bothers me…"

However, it is only human for people to prefer spending time with people like themselves. Security managers are not immune to these biases, and some employees may get more and longer meetings with the boss than others. This can cause resentment and discord among staff. Thus, its

important for managers to remember that, no matter how enjoyable it is to talk to particular employees, everyone on the team is unique and they all bring valuable perspectives to the organization.

Opinion sharing. With generational and cultural diversity comes a greater diversity of opinion. Members of your team may have varying views on prominent issues in the news, be it immigration, gun rights, gay marriage, and performance evaluations of political leaders. In general, the security workplace should not be a venue for discussing, arguing, or advocating these opinions.

An employee's right to have an opinion about cultural or political topics conflicts with another employee's right not

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to have to listen to it while at work. Managers who want to avoid confrontations over these sensitive topics should refrain from discussing them at work and strive to maintain a comfortable atmosphere in the workplace. This can occasionally require some sort of intervening action.

I remember coming into our security dispatch center the morning after Barack Obama was elected U.S. president to find two of my dispatchers in a debate over whether the country was now better or worse. One officer, a former union boss from New York, was expressing his view that he could now die peacefully because he had lived to see the first black president of the United States. The other officer was terrified that his world as he had known it was over, and that the country was on the verge of collapse.

Quickly, their disagreement spiraled into a heated argument on the issue of racism—whether it had contributed

to the election result or whether it would now spike given the victor. Because the conversation potentially affected not only the relationship of the two officers but also the safety of our operations, I decided to move one officer to another part of the facility for the rest of the shift, to ensure a cool-down period.

The broader lesson from that experience was the need for clear HR policies that discourage employees from engaging in potentially volatile nonwork-related conversations. Such policies should not focus on topics of conversation as much as on the potential for disruption, reduced performance, or discriminatory behavior.

For example, the policy should not prohibit discussions of a specific issue or election, but should prohibit any behavior that leads to disruption and loss of employee productivity. Thus, two coworkers can have a polite conversation about a political topic and not violate policy, but should their conversation dissolve into rude or inappropriate behavior, management has the policy to support shutting it down.

TOGGLE THE FUN SWITCH

Security can be a stressful and emotionally draining profession. Officers in the field may deal with hours of boredom interrupted by moments of potentially life-threatening terror. Those based in the office may stress over risk management, scheduling snafus, and broken contracts. In any workplace, there must be an opportunity for people to blow off stress, recharge, and to get back to work.

This can include interactions when it is okay to be silly and activities that let people have fun. Managers should be able to flip that switch in a way that is recognizable and comfortable for employees. That also means that managers can allow lighter discussions and playful arguments, as

long as it is clear they are respectful and that sensitivities are not being trampled. Security managers must also know when to stop such interactions if they become inappropriate or contested.

For example, allowing employees to banter about their favorite sports teams and last night's game, or the merits of recent movies and performers, can be a natural way to build comradery and make collaboration in the workplace more natural. The manager can participate in the fun, but at the same time be ready to stop the discussion if conversations dissolve into anger or otherwise become unprofessional. For example, a manager should never allow friendly bantering to turn to conversations that include name-calling, racial slurs, sexist expressions, or other language that may be offensive to any team member. Employees may have different standards of offensiveness, so the manager should ensure that the language is appropriate for all.

Sometimes, employees try to encourage their manager to offer opinions in debates. This can be an attempt to seek validation by the boss. This can be a tricky situation that

The manager can participate in the fun, but at the same time be ready to stop the discussion if conversations dissolve into anger or otherwise become unprofessional.

should be approached cautiously. No matter which side you pick, you may alienate someone. In a friendly debate over favorite sports teams or favorite foods, this is not a big deal. But in a civil, experience-based discussion that involves issues like discrimination, taking a side could have lasting consequences on your relationship with those on the other side. Sometimes, it is wisest to defer, based on the sensitivity of the issue.

Finally, a small percentage of employees are drawn to conflict and drama and politics in the workplace for different reasons. In these cases, the manager should be careful of being lured into a debate by an employee with an agenda, such as a desire to undermine the supervisor's credibility with the rest of the team.

CONSIDER GENDER ISSUES

Accepting responsibility is a key tenet of leadership. A good manager remains humble and accepts that no one is perfect and all make mistakes. Mistakes that involve office diversity and inclusion can be costly, and the longer they are allowed to fester, the worse the consequences will be.

For example, when I was an ROTC unit commander, I was conducting a uniform inspection on a unit of about a dozen cadets. I stopped in front of the third or fourth cadet in the line, and, as always, I inspected from top to bottom. Although I was standing in front of the cadet, I called out the chin hair that needed to be shaved off. The cadet then punched me in chest and stormed out of formation.

Accepting responsibility is a key tenet of leadership. A good manager remains humble and accepts that no one is perfect and all make mistakes.

I had not realized the cadet was a female until after I made the comment; I was so focused on avoiding favoritism that I was deliberately not paying attention to the gender of the cadet I was inspecting. My immediate reaction was indignation that she had punched me, and then had left my formation. It took several hours for me to come to the realization that her actions were the result of mine. I had insulted a cadet in front of her peers.

It took the better part of a week for me to apologize and receive forgiveness from her. The damage that I incurred with the rest of her unit lasted much longer. Some of her peers who thought I had done this on purpose started losing respect for me altogether.

The possibility for similar unintentional mistakes exists in the security workplace setting.

Consider what would happen if a manager who routinely referred to their employees by Mr. and Ms., or sir and ma'am, was assigned an employee who identified as gender neutral, or was undergoing gender reassignment at the time of employment. Would that employee feel discriminated against if they were the only one who was referred to by their name only? How would the team feel if the manager started referring to everyone by their first name, due to the arrival of that one new employee?

The solution to scenarios like these often lies in cutting through any miscommunications and going directly to the source. In my case, I had to accept responsibility for my mistake, and when I approached the cadet I both apologized and explained what had happened. Once she forgave me, she became the person that helped others understand that this was an honest mistake. In the workplace, as part of the onboarding process, the manager should consult the employee on how they would like to be addressed. The employee's validation of the manager's approach will be visible to the other employees in the office, and miscommunication may be avoided.

CATCH UP TO THE FUTURE

Societal norms are being reevaluated and changed so rapidly that some people have not had time to realize that their actions or words in the workplace might not be appropriate. Moreover, the widespread availability of video-capable

technology and the speed with which video can be spread have created an environment where management's actions or inactions can be immediately evaluated and judged by their own employees and the media, leading to more serious consequences for those who cannot find a way to work together with their diverse team.

Diversity, while challenging, is the source of a great team's strength, because it provides multiple unique perspectives, skill sets, and strengths to the organization at large. Those managers who can accept and encourage diversity, and are willing to make the effort to maintain an environment in which all team members can comfortably thrive, will find their units to be stronger and more successful than their competition. ◪


YAN BYALIK, CPP, IS THE SECURITY ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, AND HAS BEEN WORKING IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS SINCE 2001.

Empowered International Teams

Localized authority, information access, a guiding vision, and mission alignment can all be persuasive empowerment tools for teams with global scope.

By Caroline Wong
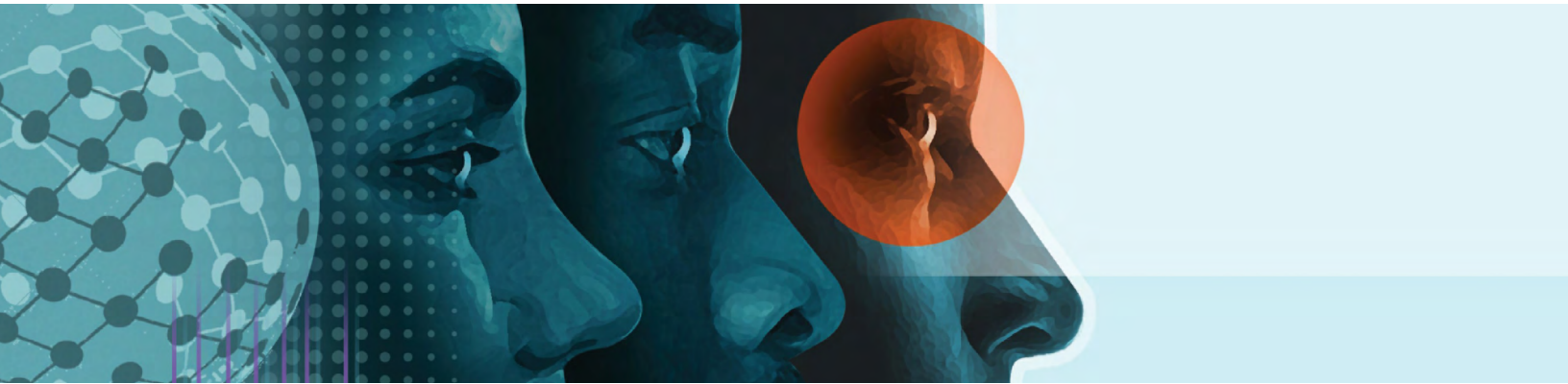
Diverse work teams are smarter than homogenous ones, according to a recent *Harvard Business Review* study. In "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter," authors David Rock and Heidi Grant found that such teams are smarter for three main reasons: they focus more on the facts, they process those facts more carefully, and they are more innovative. Working with people who are different from you, the authors found, challenges your brain to overcome rote ways of thinking and sharpens its performance.

I know these findings to be true, based on my own experience managing international teams in the information security field. I've also learned that teams are most effective when they are managed in a way that empowers each individual member.

Empowerment is a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees, so that they can take initiative and improve their services and

performance. It is based on the idea that developing employees' skills; giving them resources, authority, opportunity, and motivation. and holding them responsible and accountable for their actions will all contribute to their competence and satisfaction.

But empowering international teams is not always easy. Language barriers, cultural differences, and inconvenient time zones can interfere with even the most capable of teams. It is literally impossible to stop by someone's desk to ask a question or clarify a decision if team members are stationed around the world.

Given these challenges, this article offers some guidance and best practices on how security managers can lead efficiently and effectively by applying the principles of business empowerment to international teams. Much of this guidance is based on my management experiences in the field, with companies such as eBay and Symantec. This guidance applies right from the beginning, when the team is first being established, and continues through the different stages of the team's operations.

LOCAL MANAGERS

Sometimes security managers are tasked with building a team from scratch. Other times, a manager is charged with working with an existing team. Either way, the first step toward effectively empowering a team is to ensure that the team's structure matches the team's business objectives. A structure–objectives match will serve as the foundation for empowerment, because it will make for efficient and effective use of resources.

In the case of international teams, common drivers for members at different locations around the globe are cost, time-zone coverage, around-the-clock service availability, and skill sets that need to be divided by geographic loca-

tions. For example, when we were building the Global Information Security team at eBay, we carefully crafted our strategy for offshore and outsourced work by evaluating how potential team members' skills should align with the company's business and security objectives.

For example, it was critical that we demonstrate the value of information security activities to the business. We gathered data from a variety of different security tools and populated a dashboard that we shared with company executives. When we were staffing our security metrics team, we looked for individuals with coding and statistics skills. It

"Follow the sun" basically means that when team members in one area of the world are finishing their workday, team members in another are just waking up and going into the office.

didn't matter where in the world this person was located, as long as he or she had the right background to perform the function. Other issues that we considered in this process were cost and cultural factors.

After interviewing candidates in more than five countries, we decided to focus our international hiring in Israel, Romania, and China. Our core team was based on the west coast of the United States, so having international team members in these three countries gave us adequate "follow the sun" capabilities.

"Follow the sun" basically means that when team members in one area of the world are finishing their workday, team members in another are just waking up and going into the office. You can go home after work and when you wake up in the morning, several tasks may have been completed by team members in a different time zone. Then you can pick up where they left off. In this way, the overall team can

function around the clock, as long as information is effectively handed off between team members. This model is particularly useful for urgent items that must be completed quickly, or when an organization needs to support customers or a service in many different time zones. It also allowed us to staff all functions.

In each offshore region, a local manager was assigned, and then empowered in several ways. He or she was given authority to make decisions as needed to run the local team. These managers were also empowered with information and clear objectives to focus their work. The local managers were included in management meetings to ensure they would have access to the same information that was being shared within the core team at headquarters. The local managers were also held responsible and accountable for their actions, which increased both their impact and their professional satisfaction.

Once established, the Global Information Security team continued to grow. During my tenure at eBay, we built out the team from around 24 to around 60 members in about

During this growth, it was critical for everyone to stay on the same page when it came to our team's mission and vision.

a year. As the team grew, it also changed in nature, going from a relatively small group of generalists to a much larger group of specialists.

During this growth, it was critical for everyone to stay on the same page when it came to our team's mission and vision. So, the CISO led our management team in a formal exercise to define these factors for the team. This method is often referred to by business leaders as identifying

a North Star. This common mission set the tone and gave the team purpose.

With a clear purpose and vision, every individual on the team was empowered to take the initiative and make decisions to solve day-to-day problems without having to come together and rehash the team's overall objectives time and time again. This shared information prevented specialized teams from organically splitting away from the overall team goals.

This alignment and prioritizing is key, because security, and especially information security, is a complex function in most organizations. There are countless dimensions to the field—from physical and network security to host and application security, and from governance and risk and compliance to technical assessment and incident response. Additionally, there is always so much work to do. The harsh reality of limited time, budgets, and resources requires teams to make tough decisions about what activities to prioritize. Whether they do this explicitly or not—deciding not to make a decision is a decision itself—they must live with the outcome. It's an amateur mistake to rank every issue as critical.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Virtually every team finds clarity of process empowering. When roles and responsibilities are clear, and the step-by-step work flow is understood, a team can work efficiently and maximize its potential.

Effective managers have a key role to play in this regard. Depending on the situation, they may decide to develop new processes with clear roles and responsibilities. Or, they may decide to conduct a process evaluation that breaks down an existing process into discrete steps, with defined criteria for when work should be handed off to another team member to advance the process.

In evaluating a process, defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities for team members is often a valuable exercise. For example, asking different team members to enumerate the actual steps in a process, and to name who is responsible for what at different phases along the

The RACI model maps out who is Responsible, who is Accountable, who must be Consulted, and who shall stay Informed.

way, can be illuminating. Sometimes, the accounts of different team members do not match.

One particularly useful tool that we leveraged during my time at both eBay and Zynga was the RACI model, or the Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RACI Matrix). The RACI model maps out who is Responsible, who is Accountable, who must be Consulted, and who shall stay Informed. For management, it illustrates clearly and concisely the individual roles within a team.

Moreover, the A in the RACI Matrix—accountability—deserves special mention here, given its effectiveness as an empowerment tool. As mentioned above, at eBay local managers around the world were empowered with authority to make decisions as needed. Outside of my eBay experience, I have seen the effectiveness of this throughout my career. This is particularly important when it comes to international teams. If a team's managers are in location A and the team members executing the work are in location B, misinterpretations of risks and requirements are more likely to happen. But in these situations, I have observed greater success where a team located far away from headquarters includes a decisionmaking leader who understands the immediate reality of what the executing team is facing, and

can facilitate communication between leadership at head-quarters and the local team performing the work. Teams are more likely to engage fully in their work and put in that extra bit of energy and effort when they feel that they have a real seat at the table.

COMMUNICATION

"Communicate, communicate, communicate" is an appropriate message for most team managers. For managers of international teams, a corollary could be added: "communicate some more."

Sometimes, a management decision is made that affects multiple members of an international team. If word of

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If word of the decision reaches only some team members, it's likely that the uninformed members will unwittingly steer in the wrong direction.

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the decision reaches only some team members, it's likely that the uninformed members will unwittingly steer in the wrong direction. A few errant steps can be easily corrected, but if this behavior continues without any means for correction, the results may be wasteful at best and devastating at worst.

One of the most effective and empowering communication practices used by our product management team at Symantec was a biweekly cross-functional team call. This call included many different stakeholder groups related to, but not limited to, my international team of direct reports. In addition to product management team members, it included representatives from sales, marketing, support, and engineering.

I led these calls in a structured but flexible manner; each team was allowed to share recent accomplishments, next

steps, issues, and risks. We briefly reviewed each team's status, leaving enough time to dive deep into one or two issue areas. These deep dive sessions might be initiated by a team member's question or presenting a problem to the larger team. They always resulted in engaging dialogue, because

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Get in the habit of writing down and sharing any information on issues, risks, roadblocks, or anything else that may affect a team member's work.

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different individuals offered different ways of thinking and different perspectives.

Together, we would share information and brainstorm approaches to gather more information, perform analysis, make decisions, and execute on solutions. Management decisions were clearly communicated and discussed, enhancing transparency and trust across the international team and empowering individuals with the information that would affect their daily work. The result was aligned improvements to the team's products and services.

To mitigate any information lost in translation due to different levels of mastery of the English language, meeting participants documented their status in a PowerPoint deck that was shared with the cross-functional team before and during the meeting. Additionally, we ran an ongoing Skype chat so that if anyone missed or misunderstood something on the call, they could type a question and receive a written answer to clarify exactly what was being said.

One final communication tip for team managers: get in the habit of writing down and sharing any information on issues, risks, roadblocks, or anything else that may affect a team member's work, even if the information seems obvious. What is obvious to you may be clarifying to team mem-

bers, and it may keep incorrect information from spreading. Disinformation is disempowering.

BUILDING TRUST

In 2012, Google launched an initiative to study hundreds of the company's teams and assess the differences between high-performing teams and the rest. In his book Smarter Faster Better: The Secrets of Being Productive in Life and Business, Charles Duhigg writes about the key scenario comparison that illuminated the initiative's main finding—psychological safety, more than anything else, is critical to making a team work.

What it all came down to, Duhigg found, is trust. Work is a part of life, which is highly imperfect and impossible to control. Managers who purposefully create an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing information

What happens in our personal lives matters in the workplace to the extent that our work is affected.

about what's going on in their lives build important if invisible communication channels that can break down walls created by secrecy and anxiety.

And what happens in our personal lives matters in the workplace to the extent that our work is affected. Building trust builds an empowering environment, because the comfort level team members feel with each other will rub off and help create a high level of comfort in sharing and honestly discussing work-related ideas.

Teams and the human conditions that affect their work are somewhat analogous to software and their security vulnerabilities. The imperfections will always be there, whether we acknowledge them or not. If you look for security

vulnerabilities in software, then you will find out what they are, and can proceed accordingly.

Similarly, if you create space for people to be real in the workplace, then you will find out their imperfections, which you can also work with. It's the difference between accepting imperfection and asking for perfection and then facing the consequences when it is inevitably not delivered.

Finally, one-to-one meetings are important. There are things that are more easily expressed in a private setting than a public one, and effective leaders know how to create a safe space and connect with their direct reports in a way that cultivates trust.

Make time for face time, if possible. There's nothing like sharing a meal with a colleague that you talk to all the time on the phone and by email. It's not always financially feasible to bring everyone together often, but if a manager can take the time to visit his or her international teams once a quarter or even once a year, it can make a huge difference. If you absolutely can't meet in person, conduct video conference calls.

FORECAST FULFILLED

In 2005, Thomas Friedman published his bestselling book The World is Flat. In it, he described the technological, cultural, and economic forces that would lead to an abundance of international teams.

More than 10 years later, his forecast has been fulfilled, it's easy to see the tremendous benefits of diverse, geographically dispersed teams working together. This continues to shift as the gig economy evolves the workforce to a point where the most efficient and often most effective workforce strategy in certain markets may be to hire freelancers as needed—wherever they may be located—based on their skills, performance, and reputation.

Success in today's work environment often requires a thorough understanding of how to best empower an international team. While it might sound intimidating at first, it's been done before and can be learned again, with the benefits replicated. It's a worthwhile investment. ◪

CAROLINE WONG, VICE PRESIDENT OF SECURITY STRATEGY FOR COBALT, WAS DIRECTOR OF SECURITY INITIATIVES AT CIGITAL, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL PRODUCT MANAGEMENT FOR SYMANTEC, SENIOR MANAGER OF ZYNGA'S SECURITY PROGRAM, AND GLOBAL INFORMATION SECUR-ITY CHIEF OF STAFF AND MANAGER AT EBAY.

The Two-Way Manager

Two-way management allows security managers to make best use of crucial assets—the ideas, opinions, ues, and skill sets of employees.

By William Cottringer

A common problem plagues many organizations— the rift pitting employers against employees. This perspective of us versus them is not new; it has been around since the beginning of business. But in the current age of rising income inequality and corporate mergers and acquisitions, the dynamic remains in many firms, even if the situational details have changed.

This problem is relevant to security organizations of all types—whether they be private sector companies, public agencies, in-house departments, or contract security firms. That's because the disruptive conflicts resulting from the employer versus employee cleft can easily distract from the critical mission of offering quality security services.

Sometimes, the rift is worsened by the prevalent forces shaping today's workplace. These forces include growing diversity and the values revolution that accompanies it; exponentially exploding information, to the degree that

everyone seems to be an expert on everything; and the rapid pace of change, which taxes even the most adaptable, forward-looking managers.

The challenge for security managers, then, is how to move away from the unproductive paradigm of employers versus employees to a more mission-supportive dynamic of unified team versus obstacles to the security mission.

Smart security managers who are acutely sensitive to this challenge understand how they can help close this

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The growth of diversity in the workplace has prompted a values revolution —values are no longer imposed on employees from above.

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rift: by shifting from the traditional one-way management system—in which managers give directives to employees under a command-and-control model—to a two-way management, communication, and decision-making approach.

The heart and soul of two-way management is that it recognizes the importance of listening to, learning about, and assimilating competing values and ideas from all members of the organization. When management consistently demonstrates that the views and perspectives of employees are valued and sought after, staffers feel enfranchised and empowered, rather than disengaged and alienated.

Two-way management allows the organization to make best use of some of its most valuable resources—the ideas, opinions, and skill sets of its employees. It also leads to a greater professional understanding of employees' capabilities and concerns, which goes a long way toward retaining talent. With resources used wisely and talent engaged, the two-way organization can go from merely surviving to thriving.

The following are case studies showing how security leaders have successfully used two-way management methods to resolve workplace conflicts. These true-to-life examples of security professionals we'll call Jones, Smith, Hamilton, and Roberts can serve as a roadmap and best practice guide for those security managers who are interested in exploring two-way management practices.

SOLICITING STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Under the traditional management model, the leaders of an organization determined its core values, and then it was up to the employees to support or not support those values.

Similarly, leaders determined the "what" of work, while the employees determined the "how" of work. The growth of diversity in the workplace has prompted a values revolution—values are no longer imposed on employees from above.

Security Manager Jones, who works in a government agency, is a two-way manager who understands how this dissemination of values has changed. She understands the importance of listening to all members of her organization, learning about their competing values, and accepting ideas from employees on all levels.

One important project Jones initiated was to form a team to find out the most important success factors in meeting her agency's operational and financial goals. Under Jones's leadership, the team took an active listening approach, and solicited information and perspective from all corners of the agency.

Employees were glad to provide such information and perspective, and it facilitated their sense of progress and accomplishment in contributing to the agency's operational and financial success. This included the security officers in Jones's division, who were successfully doing their jobs.

Equally important, the two-way communication allowed Jones to discover how employees wanted to be rewarded for their contributions in different ways. Some wanted salary increases or bonuses; others valued things like more time off, greater flextime, and wellness benefit reimbursements. Some desired more personal involvement in arranging their schedules, duties, and performance reviews. A few simply wanted sincere private recognition.

This last discovery highlights one of the key advantages of two-way management. Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all system onto employees from above, the perspective solicited from individual employees allows managers to tailor rewards to staff members in meaningful ways. Such a practice pays greats dividends for organizations interested in keeping employees engaged, and in retaining talent, management experts say.

And so it went in the case of Jones. Not only did the information gained in the process help Jones improve the sustainability of successful operations processes, but it also turned out to be instrumental in a spinoff effort to reorganize and improve the hiring process, reducing costly turnover through better retention efforts.

IMPROVING FEEDBACK

As the previous example illustrates, soliciting feedback is a crucial component to successful two-way management. Jones realized this, and it led her to undertake another, somewhat related, project: improving the methods by which her organization received and processed feedback.

Jones's effort involved a program her organization had in place in which stakeholders provided feedback on security performance report cards. When the report cards were returned, Jones had employees review the completed cards and recommend potential action by management.

This new practice had several benefits. It further opened the door for obtaining and using honest feedback from team members so that a wide range of work processes could be improved. It also allowed Jones to find out about, and then mitigate, any concerns employees had that could potentially pollute the employee-employer relationship.

With the door to more honest feedback now open, Jones pressed on with creative solutions, and another exercise in two-way communication. She organized a team of supervisors and tasked them with gathering an accurate assessment of the quality of the organization's workplace culture, which would take into account both employees' perceptions and management's intentions.

The feedback solicited in the culture assessment revealed an incongruence—management's intentions and actions

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to sustain a strong workplace culture were not succeeding based on employee perceptions of the culture, which were often negative. The team of supervisors then served as a neutral party in delivering this "bad news" assessment to agency leadership.

Once delivered and processed, the assessment led to positive changes. Management took various actions to improve the quality of the organization's culture.

For example, one important solution was to reinvent the organization's training initiative, so that it functioned as an open-ended, interactive, online platform through the website. In addition, the job application form was streamlined so that it was more user-friendly.

Finally, certain worksites were criticized as being unsafe, so a system was started that would ensure monthly safety inspections completed by security personnel, with inspection results turned over to the safety committee so identified hazards could be mitigated.

In light of the disconnect between management's intentions and employee perceptions, these actions included an effort to sustain better two-way communication and be more responsive to employee issues.

CLOSING THE GAP

Traditionally, there has been a knowledge and performance gap between highly skilled, experienced security managers and their much less experienced employees.

However, the staggering amount of information that is now available to anyone with Internet access is in some cases quickly closing the information gap, and sometimes the performance gap as well. This may present credibility issues for security managers.

And so, savvy two-way security managers like Smith, an operations manager for a large contract security firm in the Midwest, do not ponder how wide this gap might be. Instead, they roll-up their sleeves, jump in, and get their hands dirty to find out from first-hand experience.

While working in the trenches with their staff, they learn about employee capabilities and knowledge levels by asking questions, actively listening, and observing—in short, by maintaining two-way communication.

In Smith's case, one of the key conclusions he learned from this approach is that sometimes performance baselines, and compliance with the firm's day-to-day work rules, can turn out to be much lower or higher than expected.

Résumés and interviews during the hiring process may not accurately reflect working knowledge or actual skill

levels. A prize hire may have some working knowledge deficiencies; conversely, an employee may have a certain skill that managers are unaware of. When this happens, seasoned two-way managers, like Smith, are able to accept the fact that all they thought they knew about an employee may not necessarily be so.

Smith's active approach also taught him another lesson: not all gaps can be closed, and some may not even need closing, given the particular position and staff member. As a result, Smith learned that it is crucial to identify which particular gaps will have the highest return on investment if they are closed.

For example, in one particular case Smith worked with an employee who broke one of the firm's conduct rules involving the documentation of real-time area patrols, and who had problems in providing detailed answers to basic questions when writing up security reports.

Smith ascertained that the conduct violation represented a temporary gap in office behavior—it was not part of a pattern—so he decided against disciplining the employee for misconduct. However, Smith did decide to send the employee for remedial training in report writing, which later paid off in improved performance in an important component of the employee's job.

THE FIRST DEADLY SIN

Sometimes, being a two-way manager does not come easy for seasoned leaders. Take the case of Hamilton, a veteran security executive with 40 years of experience who has worked in both contract and in-house security.

Hamilton was a traditional, one-way security manager who was reluctant to concede that some of his hard-earned knowledge and experience was in danger of becoming obsolete.

He was not completely cut off from contemporary ideas on managing; he had read Marshall Goldsmith's seminal management work What Got You Here Won't Get You There, as well as other books that advocated for continual professional self-improvement.

Still, he took much professional pride in his previous success with traditional command-and-control management practices. As a result, he was emotionally invested in the old system and highly conflicted about change.

But Hamilton's traditional view became more and more dissonant with his growing awareness that each of his younger employees possessed a base of knowledge and a skill set that were impressively deep.

He also realized that these employees wanted their professional attributes to be respected and valued. In that way,

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they reminded Hamilton of himself; he remembered being in their shoes early on in his career. This empathetic identification led to an epiphany, and he decided to explore two-way management practices.

He then began to investigate how to work with employees to reshape his traditional one-way management process into a true two-way practice that incorporated the perspectives and ideas of all employees, ultimately leading to better results.

The most effective changes he made involved what he called "P" Points. The name came from the engineering term perturbation point, which Hamilton translated into small, well-placed, and well-timed interventions that yielded significant results.

Here are some of Hamilton's small actions: At weekly meetings, he moved from the head of the table to a seat at the side, like any other team member. He also changed the meetings from Monday to Tuesday, which was easier on employees because it allowed them to recover from the weekend's work problems.

Before setting the agenda on weekly project goals and evaluations, he asked for input from the team. It then became the team's agenda, not just his.

Although it was difficult at first, he stopped doing most of the talking in meetings and listened more. He also made an effort to ask good questions, rather than assuming he knew the answer.

He worked to control his impatience when he did not get quick problem descriptions and solutions from staff. He listened patiently to the detailed perspectives that sometimes accompanied them.

Finally, he realized that he was expecting excellent work from his employees as the norm, so he wasn't acknowledging or thanking them for their excellent contributions. He implemented a program to recognize exemplary performance.

THE 360-SYSTEM

Unlike Hamilton, security manager Roberts was a longtime believer in two-way management. She led a Fortune 100 company's security program into a two-way reorganization which has now been adopted by the rest of the company.

The first thing Roberts decided to do was to assess the degree of confidence the security officers had in the organization's integrity and trustworthiness and the necessary transparency they thought they enjoyed to prove these things. She used a 360-degree feedback system, involving all the department's stakeholders, to do this.

She found out that the status quo was far from ideal.

So Roberts then established a project team to conduct a survey, recommend ways to improve trust and integrity, and then implement the most cost-effective solutions from their recommendations.

The survey results showed that the organization had a defensive climate, not an open culture, which caused all sides to revert to one-way communication, which only aggravated the us-versus-them rift.

From here, the challenge Roberts had was to create a non-defensive climate with open, two-way communication from all directions, including herself. This required her to listen to what her team members had to say about their conversations with employees.

This process of relaying relevant points from the field was a positive one; it helped relieve the intimidation fac-

The organization had a defensive climate, not an open culture, which caused all sides to revert to one-way communication.

tor of "meeting with the boss," and discussions brought more depth to the information. Roberts and the team then hashed out the aspects of the organization that most needed to be changed.

These changes included some common sense basic behavioral guidelines, such as treating all workers equally, fairly, and respectfully; allowing everyone a reasonable degree of freedom to have a say in organizational matters; and having more sensitivity to competing values and perspectives among employees.

Also on the list was better "two-eared" listening to what is being said and how it is said; greater attention to nonverbal communication, more frequent helpful feedback; more

help in dealing with complex problems; and less blaming and fault-finding.

To establish this kind of nondefensive communication, some advance work needed to be done. Thus, Roberts made a focused effort to rebuild rapport, which required her to get to know all of her employees better so that she could deal with them more positively and productively.

To build more honesty and integrity in her department, Roberts followed an important principle: be honest with yourself, own at least part of the responsibility for the way the organization is, and then look to change it from the inside out.

This introspection was not easy; often, managers do not like to accept responsibility for the uncomfortable places in which they find their organizations. But it led to valuable changes for Roberts. She learned how to better control her own bad habits, such as expecting certain outcomes; how to be more mentally flexible in seeing how something that doesn't seem to fit can fit; and how to take action without being completely certain of the results.

MANAGERS: AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?

Of course, most security managers know from experience that even the best management strategies are not a cure-all for dealing with all employer-employee conflicts. Two-way management is not exempt from this caveat.

For example, two-way management will not work in cases where employers or employees are unwilling or unable to engage in true two-way communication. Unmanageable obstacles may involve a lack of communication practices, poor listening skills, immutable resistance to change in general, or hidden or competing agendas and values.

Thus, a few failed applications of two-way management may be an inevitable side effect of using this method of

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managing. But these speedbumps do not negate its overall usefulness. Moreover, for some, two-way management may also ultimately serve as the best transition to what may be on the horizon: the end of management as we know it.

The practice of two-way management is in line with the evolution of management away from hierarchy and toward teams of equals. For example, in Smith's two-way management of a medium-sized private security company in California, several employees worked as equals to improve an obsolete access control system. Each team member visited a frequent user of the access system; members then compiled the information and used it to inform improvements to the system.

Overall, two-way management maximizes a security manager's chances of keeping up with change, as managing itself is progressively redefined. Two-way management is an effective way for a security manager to organize his or her tool box—to deal with the existing conflicts inherent in the employer-employee rift, and with the risk of failure that can come from a lack of focus on the security mission. ◩

WILLIAM COTTRINGER, PHD, CERTIFIED HOMELAND SECURITY (CHS) LEVEL III, IS EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS FOR PUGET SOUND SECURITY PATROL, INC., IN BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY. HE IS AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BUSINESS AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT BOOKS, INCLUDING *YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CHEESE & EAT IT TOO, THE BOW-WOW SECRETS, DO WHAT MATTERS MOST, 'P' POINT MANAGEMENT, REALITY REPAIR RX,* AND *IF PICTURES COULD TALK, COMING SOON.*

Q & A: Team Building

William Cottringer, author of the "The Two-Way Manager" article, has been a manager in many settings–private sector security, law enforcement, professional sports, the military, and in academia. In a recent interview, he offered his insights on team building in action.

Q. As a security manager, have you found that close listening to ideas, feedback, and perspective of each team member individually leads to a more unified team, and if so, how?

A. I have always felt that ideas were discovered rather than created per se. For example, once a team member has the courage to speak out loud about something problematic, the problem becomes more visible to all the other team members, encouraging a consensus solution.

Each team member brings to the table skills, knowledge, and values. From there, the best ideas of each member need to be integrated, so the team can apply its best collective ideas. Sometimes, various circumstances can block a team member's contributions from being properly recognized, but the team-building process often removes such roadblocks to success. And we know from sound research that

creative group problem-solving is usually more productive than individuals working alone.

Q. In your private security career, you have experience with 5 different security firms, both large and small. What are some "teambuilding fails" you have witnessed managers commit during your tenure?

A. In one situation, we built what we felt was a highly successful organizational culture, based on common mission, goals and values. But it was constructed without input and buy-in from employees, and then imposed on teams from above. Given that, the culture was not sustainable.

One important mistake I made in my earlier team-building efforts was to only focus on the positive aspects of team members, while overlooking the importance of removing the most frequent obstacles first. Negative behaviors like cynicism, egocentricity, anger and aggression, and misplaced fears can greatly harm the team. Even otherwise stellar team members may have these ghost dark sides, and those behaviors need to be managed.

Q. In reference to the above question, how could those managers have avoided that teambuilding fail?

A. Leadership must realize that great ideas should come internally to the team, not externally. This means taking a risk in affording the team great freedom in determining both what to do and how to do it. This is a major management paradigm change that is currently in transition and not necessarily the norm today, at least as much as it needs to be.

Smart managers know how to plant important idea seeds and assist in their cultivation, like expert gardeners. But

sometimes, team-building efforts have to fail to reveal the secrets for success the next time.

Q. Earlier on in your professional career, you worked in law enforcement. What team-building knowledge and skills did you learn from that experience?

A. During that time, I applied the idea that, to be productive, employees have five critical questions that their employers need to answer. These questions are the same ones that team-members need answered during the team-building process.

They are: What am I supposed to be doing here? How am I supposed to be doing it? How do I know if I am doing it right? Where do I go if I need help? What's in it for me?

Of course, the glue that holds all this together is trust. Team-members have to trust that the answers they get to these questions are correct and complete. Otherwise, underlying conflict may impede team-building efforts.

Q. And what did you learn from your experience as a sport psychologist working with an Australian football team that won a championship?

A. My success in sport psychology taught me that the team must collectively understand and be committed to the Gestalt Principle—the team is greater and can be more successful working together than any of the individual players can do alone.

The Chicago Bulls basketball team followed this principle to be the most successful NBA team ever and the Golden State Warriors aren't far behind. Even with Michael Jordan and Steph Curry, respectively, both are superstar teams rather than teams of superstars.

Smart coaches must understand and deal with both individual differences and commonalities of players, especially in motivation and performance, to get winning outcomes. They weave these together in a complementary, cooperative manner rather than a competitive one. This is what produces win-win outcomes.

Q. ...and from your experience working in private security with five different companies?

A. In private security, I developed a very useful strategy for difficult conflict resolution that proved critical to team building. I identified the one team member compromise that resulted in the most gains for the team with the least losses, based on what outcome was best for the team as a whole.

This became a standard regarding what a security officer should or shouldn't do or say in a situation. In answer to the question, "Will what I say or do, help or hurt the company provide a quality security service?," the guideline was: "Do what is most likely to get the quickest, easiest, and best results, with the least negative side effects." Translating that into practice is what security team building is all about.

Q. Does team building start with recruiting, or with a focus on how any potential new hires will complement the existing members of the team?

A. Yes, and the one attribute I have discovered to be a critical success factor in predicting an effective team is each potential member's coachability, or openness to learning and continual improvement.

Potential team members who think they already know most of the answers, even from a wealth of experience and

training, will always present avoidable and unnecessary conflicts in the team-building process. The challenge is to fit in first, and then contribute to improving what you have fit in to from the inside-out.

Q. Any closing thoughts on teambuilding?

A. During my studies in counselor education in graduate school, we studied a very useful model of group development, with four stages of growth. This model is relevant to team building and being aware of these developmental stages helps team members understand better what is going on and why.

These four stages of group development or team-building are: a positive warming up period for members facilitated by casual conversation; the beginnings of negative communication about problems, fears, and concerns; an eruption of seemingly unsolvable conflicts of values and approaches to problem solving; and emerging assertiveness to resolve the conflicts, and reach peak communication effectives, which opens the door to a winning work culture.

It often takes peak communication to uncover the smartest compromises and remove the obstacles to forward progress. But before that happens, we need to get away from the idea that compromising is a sign of weakness and giving in. It's actually a sign of courage and of the strength of an open mind, instead of a know-it-all closed one. After all, this is the basis of coachability, one of the best predictors of team-building success. ◪

SECURITY
MANAGEMENT

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