

Introduction

While there are many important aspects that influence a great team such as; quality of leadership, processes, systems, organizational structure, communications, what I’ve discovered is that it ultimately comes down to the quality and unique characteristics of each team member. In meeting with many great and not-so-great teams, there are always core attributes that, when combined together within one team, make for a powerful and effective unit. In creative teams, I’ve uncovered six core attributes that are particularly important when you have right and left brain personalities working together. These attributes include:.

Source: <http://www.howdesign.com/in-house-designer-blog/the-cohen-miller-report-the-6-core-attributes-that-make-a-team-click/>

Cheerleader

The cheerleader is the person that makes people laugh or is the great storyteller (you know who they are!). They bring energy to the team, keeping everyone creative and excited about their jobs. I’ve seen creative environments that are unusually quiet and lack energy and passion. This type of culture often is an indicator that the team is missing that one vibrant, dynamic and engaging personality that enlivens a work environment with their presence.

The industry activist

The industry activist loves to stay current with the latest design trends and attends industry events and disseminates this knowledge and passion to the entire team. They inspire the team by bringing in outside influences, demonstrating genuine passion for design and understanding that inspiration is what will ensure that the creative work developed is both fresh and relevant.

The tech guru

The tech guru hits the technology conferences and devours websites and publications dedicated to the latest software and hardware updates and offerings. They can’t help themselves as they troubleshoot departmental issues – often, before IT is even called in. Because most of our industry is dominated by Macs in a PC culture, this role is even more critical since internal IT’s are primarily skilled in PC issues.

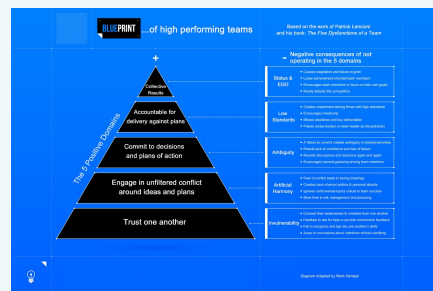
The emotional quarterback

The emotional quarterback diffuses the drama associated with managing creative personalities and minimizes internal conflicts. Similar to the qualities of a good therapist, this person is genuine, empathetic and conveys warmth and mutual trust.

The emotional quarterback (cont)

Most importantly, they are comfortable providing feedback and are not afraid to confront, challenge and, if possible, resolve the current emotional crisis. This critical and often challenging role is uniquely suited to the needs of a creative environment. In this environment right-brained creatives are often driven by their emotions and need some degree of hand-holding and patience..

Team Blueprint



The enforcer

The enforcer (or “bad guy”) doesn’t mind making the tough decisions and enforcing policies and processes that ultimately benefit the team as a whole. They are uniquely able to push back without becoming a divisive force, understand that following procedures is critical to successful client and creative relationships, and ensure a seamless cost-effective process.

The political navigator

The political navigator has strengths for working and even embracing corporate culture and internal politics in ways that benefit the team overall (not themselves individually). They have unique skills in balancing the needs of the creative team with the needs of the corporation as a whole and build strong internal advocacy for their team at the highest level.

Conclusion

While most of the above attributes are not always aligned with specific roles, the roles of enforcer and political navigator are best suited to those in leadership and management roles. These positions interact with corporate management, clients and decision makers, where the ability to embrace and navigate corporate politics and “saying no” gracefully are highly valued. It’s the people that make the culture and often it’s the subtler things that make a team work together. In this case the not-so-subtle issue that makes a team great is the interaction and balancing of each person’s unique characteristics.