



Are You a Corporate Team Player?

In *Red Rabbit* Tom Clancy said it best, "Bad money drives out good.' That means poor performance will take over if good performance isn't recognized." But according to Ronald Alsop of *The Wall Street Journal*, a survey of recruiters rated MBA schools "on a variety of attributes, and then rated the attributes in terms of how important they are in a job candidate. Topping the list of 24 attributes are communication and interpersonal skills and *the ability to work well in teams.*" [italics added] Leadership potential ranked #6.

"Team player" is now the buzz word for corporate employees at all levels and in all fields. Harmony in, achievement out. Mediocrity rewarded, individual success condemned. This is corporate America today. The outstanding results of high achievers underscore the poor results of low achievers. High achievers are scorned; they are not team players.

The term "team player" was lifted from the professional sports world and misapplied to the corporate world. Misapplied? In professional sports, only the very best make the team. They are few in number and a minuscule percentage of college players make it there. And if professional players cannot cut it in the big time, they are either let go or traded. Team player, my behind. They have to perform better in their position than any other aspirant on the bench or waiting in the wings.

In corporations, team player means joining with other low achievers to hide and protect poor results. Worse, "you are not a team player" is a verbal whip to keep in line those with high needs for achievement, those who produce outstanding results.

Non-team players do appear in corporations, most evident in sales personnel. Invariably, when sales results differ widely between the top producers and the average and below average sales people, trouble begins. Those with few or mediocre sales results join with mediocre management to rid themselves of the troublemakers, the top sales people. Accusations fly, "not a team player," "brings too many problems to management." Management, concerning itself with pacifying near worthless sales people, makes life miserable for the best, its top producers. Everyone is happy when the company succeeds in ridding itself of the best. Harmony returns and remains until new high achievers produce outstanding results. Then the game begins anew.

Summary: Management places a halo on low achieving team players. The not being a team player accusation is an early warning to seek out a company where individual performance is rewarded. Better yet, go into business for yourself and hire only people who are not team players.

Ross Perot was not an IBM team player and look what happened. Politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, are team players. Even President Bush is a team player. And look what is happening.

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