



Congratulations! You got the job!

The Four Steps to Successful Team Integration

Now, the tough part begins. What will be expected of you and your team? Who will you be working with? How will you get along with them?

People get- and take – jobs based on skills (like experience, education and talent) and specifics (salaries, location, job title). But most Human Resource professionals will tell you that most people lose – and leave – jobs based on personalities and relationships. How well you get along with your team – supervisors, subordinates, peers and clients will be critical to your success in your new job. In the immortal words of John Donne, “No man (or woman) is an island.” Behind every success story are countless examples of effective relationships and teamwork. And, well, behind every failure lies tales of conflict, distrust, indecision, disorder, misalignment...you get the picture.

So, what do you need to know about the people you’ll be working with? And what do they need to know about you? What information do you need to share to become an integrated, high-performing team as quickly as possible?

Before you take the first step, you should consider how many teams you’ll be working with – and in. Your first concern may be the Leadership Team, but look further. Each worker serves some role in an average of four to five teams, whether it includes manager/subordinate groups, project teams, client-supplier relationships, sales teams, committees, customer-service teams, peer groups, manufacturing teams, strategic planning alliances, client-agency teams, service groups and many others. Each functioning group has its own team dynamic, and you’ll need a strategy to integrate yourself into each one.

First: Assess. A team assessment, like the DrawSuccess Team Development Assessment¹, should measure the team’s level of development on several criteria, including Goals and Objectives, Results Measurement, Meeting Participation and Productivity, Innovation and Problem-Solving, Decision-Making, Diversity, Collaboration & Synergy, Fun, Unity, Opinions and Honesty, Harmony and Conflict Resolution, Procedures, Efficiency and Accomplishment, Individual Alignment, Motivation and Commitment, and more.

Second: Listen & Share. The number one concern the members of your team will have is fear. Fear of change. Fear of *lack* of change. Bottled-up fear and the inability to express concerns and share ideas is often a precursor of dissension and animosity. Therefore, it’s important create a safe way for everyone to share and open up. New teams – or teams bringing in a new member – tend to be formal and reserved. Asking and answering questions is a good start, but what’s even more important is to do it in a safe and relaxed environment.

¹ For a free trial of the DrawSuccess Team Development Assessment for your team, contact Brownell Landrum at Brownell@DrawSuccess.com

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Brainstorming new concepts and solutions to existing challenges can be a great way to show you care. But be careful: if you aren't willing to follow up and make plans to move forward, you could be quickly classified as another "manager who is all talk and no action."

Your team will want to know about you, too. People need to know more about you than your basic stats: experience, education and number of kids. Be prepared to honestly and openly share specific personal information. Remember the infamous underwear political question? We're not saying you should share something *that* personal, but I'd be willing to bet you remember the question – and answer! But

Third: Unite. Next, create a team spirit. This is accomplished in several ways. Uniting toward a collective goal is a powerful way to bring people together. Competitive challenges, as long as they're against another team and not between individuals of a team, can fuse people together.

Fun and laughter is super-glue for integrating people and personalities. It builds unity, reduces turnover, increases energy and productivity and enhances creativity. By starting your new job with an injection of fun, you'll help your team renew their commitment and loyalty to the company (and put off a job search they may have considered due to fear of new management).

When injecting fun into the workplace, look for activities that are entertaining and generate joy and unity. Make sure, however, that the team-building you pursue is inclusive and appealing to every member of the team. The last thing you want is to cause divisiveness and cliques.

Finally: Focus. To create your plans, get everyone involved! Then make sure your team has defined plans with clear results measurement and a focus on rewards which are meaningful to everyone involved.

- Brownell Landrum

Brownell Landrum is the CEO and creator of DrawSuccess – a company dedicated to providing innovative, fun and transformative programs to help people around the world learn to recognize and appreciate diversity of thought – and the DrawSuccess Program: a program that unites and transforms teams. The DrawSuccess Program offers the ideal quick one-stop solution to implement all four steps in this article. For more information, visit our website: www.DrawSuccess.com or contact Brownell at Brownell@DrawSuccess.com.