



In my three decades of working with teams of all shapes, sizes, and levels, I've noticed the best team players work hard to build an extraordinarily cohesive team. They constantly share the spotlight, collaborating so that everyone has the opportunity to shine. They pay attention to others before focusing on themselves. They offer help without being asked. They do things because they need to be done, even if it isn't their "job." So, what are you doing to encourage this type of behavior and facilitate this type of working environment? Check out these articles for some strategies.

Kristin

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TECHNIQUES TO BUILD AN EXTRAORDINARILY COHESIVE TEAM

In my three decades of working with teams of all shapes, sizes, and levels, I've noticed the best team players work hard to build an extraordinarily cohesive team. They constantly share the spotlight, making sure everyone has the opportunity to shine. They pay attention to others before focusing on themselves. They offer help without being asked. They do things because they need to be done, even if it isn't their "job."

In my experience, these kinds of teams are truly extraordinary. They enjoy working together to achieve success. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration of others.

This type of teamwork doesn't happen overnight. It starts with a few people who set the standard and ground rules for team cooperation. Over time, other team members adopt these behavioral norms until they become second nature for the team.

Try these techniques to build an extraordinarily cohesive team:

Praise Works Wonders. Look for the good in each team member and recognize his or her contributions to the team. Compliment their efforts, achievements, and good qualities. Recognize the simple things they do, such as being on time, completing assignments, and other tasks that may be considered "just part of the job."

Be a Cheerleader. Constantly encourage others to do their best work. Support them through the good and not-so-great times. Even when they don't succeed, note that they tried their best. When ready, help them try again.

Be Considerate. Think of the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You can see this principle in action in the little things they do: asking others for

their opinions, being attentive, actively listening, validating what others have said, not interrupting or having side conversations.

Focus on Others First. Truly care about others and how you can help them be successful. You'll be amazed that what goes around, comes around.

Think Win/Win. You have to believe that there are enough "wins" to go around. If you think there are enough wins, you don't have to compete with your fellow team members! By working together, everybody succeeds.

Share the Glory. When the team achieves a critical milestone or goal, give credit to each team member. Recognize that one person couldn't have accomplished the task alone and that the team is greater than the sum of its parts.

When you make sure others succeed, the group will become a more cohesive team, you'll succeed too!

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MODERATING AND FACILITATING AN EVENT

A client recently thanked me for moderating an event, and in all truthfulness, I was facilitating that meeting – not moderating.

I realize many people use those two terms interchangeably but, in my mind, moderating a panel discussion is a subset of facilitating a meeting. And this is where my two worlds collide.

For close to 30 years, I have been facilitating "high-stakes meetings" – those events you can't afford to screw up – so it makes sense to hire a professional facilitator to guide the conversation. Most of the events are around facilitating the discussion of a group of people to achieve the desired result – typically an agreement on the best path forward.

Back in 2014, I decided to hyper-niche my facilitation skillset into the panel moderation world. Moderating a panel is, quite simply, a very specific type of facilitation.

So, what's the difference between moderating and facilitating an event? According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a moderator is one who "makes certain that a formal discussion happens without problems and follows the rules." (See my further discussion of the role of the moderator). The panel discussion typically follows a defined format and centers around a conversation amongst the panelists with some audience involvement.

In my Extraordinary Team blog, I state that "the goal of all facilitators is to make things easier. They help guide the team process, enabling people to understand the issues, reach agreements and plan next steps. Whether the team is planning for the future, solving a problem, improving a process, resolving a conflict, or deciding a course of action, our high-stakes meeting facilitators® help the team achieve their desired results efficiently, effectively, and in the least amount of time required." (See my further discussion of the role of the facilitator).

A moderator certainly facilitates the discussion – no doubt about that. However, the conversation generally does NOT involve the entire room – the primary discussion is between the panelists. Nor is the conversation aimed at making agreements and creating a path forward action plan.

I might be quibbling about the nuances between the two definitions, but hopefully, this sheds a little light on the difference between moderating and facilitating an event.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: TOGETHER WE DECIDE: AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MAKING GROUP DECISIONS

As a process consultant, I was expecting Craig Freshley's latest book: *Together We Decide: An Essential Guide for Making Group Decisions* to be a cookbook that informs the reader on how to get people together to make good decisions.

While not a cookbook, it is a unique bodega with all the ingredients you'll need to create good group decisions. Chock full of practical examples, Freshley describes the mindset needed to move from our US deeply ingrained competitive mindset into a more collaborative situation.

As I read this book, I kept thinking that the very best application would be for a team to read a section and then talk about it. Rate themselves currently, and then talk about how they might evolve or grow into Craig's aspirational view of teamwork. Well worth the read, and better for the team to talk about it!