Teams are becoming a popular way to manage business. And in most of the responsibilities we have we are working in teams or groups to accomplish tasks. Families, civic groups and schools all depend on groups of people to work together. Rarely are organizational goals achieved by individuals working in isolation.

Being a good team member is just as important as being a good team leader. One must know his or her own strengths, and recognize those of others, to work efficiently and effectively in teams. There are certain elements that make us successful, but there are also natural roles that we fit into. Everyone can learn to be a better team member by developing certain technical skills and personal characteristics.

Technical skills. Team members should have the knowledge and skills required for accomplishing the team's objectives.

Personal characteristics. Team members should be willing to contribute to the work of the team and allow others to do so.

The key to building effective groups is to have a good mixture of the appropriate technical skills and personal characteristics.

Those who are likely to be effective team members have:
- intellectual ability
- results orientation
- good interpersonal skills
- team orientation
- planning and organizing skills
- maturity
- presence

There are three basic types of teams:
- problem resolution
- creative
- tactical

Problem resolution teams typically rely on trust. General characteristics of problem resolution teams include intelligence, “street smarts,” sensitivity to interpersonal needs, and a high degree of integrity.

Creative teams must have some autonomy. In general, team members must be intelligent (but they must be able to abandon normative thinking), be self-starters, and have lots of confidence and tenacity.

Tactical teams rely on clarity for success. General characteristics include high responsiveness, ac-
tion-orientation coupled with a sense of urgency, and the desire for a strong team identification and a strong sense of commitment.

Team success can be measured by productivity and cohesion.

- **Productivity** measures whether the group accomplishes what it should in a timely manner and whether it achieves its goals.
- **Cohesion** measures how well the group works by enhancing its capacity, sticking together, and working well together.

You can not just throw people together and expect them to be productive. Work groups must be carefully planned so that they can be successful. All members must understand and embrace their roles as members of the group.