

Are you a team player?

Have you noticed that when a sports team wins a championship game, both the players and the coaches talk in terms of a "team victory" and appear to truly enjoy sharing the accomplishment? While on the other hand, teams who are going through a losing streak tend to make excuses and point fingers.

 By [John Boe](#) 23 Jan 2012

The success of any high-performance team is in direct proportion to the number of "team players" within the group. It's not difficult to spot a team player in any group of people because they tend to stand out from the crowd. Team players radiate a positive attitude, cooperative spirit and encourage their co-workers to excel. Team players are self-motivated individuals who are focused on the attainment of team goals. They are driven to perform at a high level and will do almost anything to keep from letting their teammates down. Team players share achievement and jointly shoulder criticism and defeat.

Nature rewards mutual cooperation and there are great examples of teamwork everywhere you look. Why do you think a goose prefers to fly together with other geese in a V formation rather than winging it on their own? The answer is simple, because even a goose has the good sense to appreciate the power of team cooperation and the importance of mutual support.

Geese fly together in a V formation for the same aerodynamic benefits that bicycle teams and NASCAR drivers understand. When a goose flaps its wings, it creates a partial vacuum effect, which benefits the goose directly behind it. In fact, researchers estimate that the aerodynamic efficiency of the V formation allows the geese to fly 70% further as a group than any individual goose trying to go it alone.

If you watch a formation of geese long enough, you will notice that the leadership is shared and they take turns fighting the headwinds. The geese at the rear of the formation add their contribution by continuously honking encouragement to the leaders up front. If a goose gets sick or injured and is forced to leave the formation, two other geese will also drop out to stay with their teammate and render support.

Peak-performing teams generate positive group synergism, because each team member is aligned with the shared values and mission of the group. This does not mean that the individual is no longer important; however, it does mean that being a true team player goes beyond individual accomplishments and personal gain. Teamwork isn't a part-time activity; it's a full-time commitment. If you want to be a member of a high-performance team and reap the benefits, you need to learn to fly in formation!

ABOUT JOHN BOE

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