

7 C's of Championship Team Building

There are seven primary areas that go into building your team's chemistry.

1. Common Goal Championship teams have a singular, common focus. The team is most often focused on winning a championship. This is their primary, specified, overt goal and all other goals revolve around it. This goal is firmly embraced by all members of the team, coaching staff, and support staff. Everyone understands that this is the direction and destination that the team is moving toward. Additionally, the goal that the team is striving for typically is so challenging that the only way it can be accomplished is through a unified effort.

2. Commitment While seasons may start with the entire team focused on a common goal, rarely do they end up that way. Commitment is probably the single most important factor that differentiates championship teams, coaches, athletes, businesses, schools, marriages (you name it) from the mediocre. It's much too easy to say you want to win the championship and its a whole other thing to put in the blood, sweat, and tears necessary to pursue a championship - especially when obstacles and adversity strikes. Continual commitment to the team's common goal is one of the toughest areas of team building.

Championship teams buy into the mission at every level and make the mission their own. They work hard and pay their dues because they want to, not because they have to. In addition to their commitment, the team members feel a sense of personal and group accountability. The players have a clear understanding of how their individual choices and decisions influence the collective psyche and success of the team. There is a true sense that if an individual is slacking off, he is not just hurting himself but his entire team. The players feel a sense of responsibility and obligation to give it their best.

3. Complementary Roles Championship teams are comprised of several individuals who willingly take pride in playing a variety of roles. These roles, when played in concert and harmony lead to team success. Thus, each player is assigned specific responsibilities and tasks that help determine the entire team's success. While individually they are not solely responsible for the team's success or failure, collectively each role forms a synergistic whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The major difficulty in developing complementary roles is that some roles get more attention and praise thereby making them seem more important. Championship teams however realize that all roles are critical to the overall team's success and willingly accept and value their individual roles.

4. Clear Communication A fourth characteristic of championship teams is clear communication. Successful teams communicate successfully both on and off the field/court. The on field communication helps them to perform more efficiently on the field and the off field communication allows them to monitor the team's effectiveness, modify things when necessary, and celebrate successes.

5. Constructive Conflict Along with effective communication, championship teams have the ability to keep conflict under control and often are able to use conflict constructively to further develop and strengthen the team. It is not that championship teams never experience conflict, because this is impossible. Instead they are able to handle the conflict they experience and do not let it interfere with the team's common goal.

6. Cohesion A sixth characteristic shared by many championship teams is that they genuinely like and respect each other. The players like to hang out with each other outside of scheduled practice and game times. Many championship teams will also spend a great deal of time socializing together in larger groups. The players genuinely like to spend a lot of time together outside of actual practices and games. They find reasons to stay together like going to the movies, studying, hanging out, etc. This is not to say that every single player is a part of the group, but that a majority of players tend to socialize together. Cohesion is a factor that often will help your team perform at a higher level.

7. Credible Leadership Finally, it takes a credible coach and team captains to develop, orchestrate, and monitor all the other C's. The team must have leaders who they believe in and have the skills necessary to get the most from the team. Credible leaders create an environment that allows the team to perform to their full potential.