How Important is Your Team?
Designing Your Team
The team you have now and the teams you will develop in the future will either do great things or not! As the acronym outlines, TEAM means “Together Everyone Achieves More!”

It all starts with you, how you lead or do not, and what you are willing to do to create greatness or not. Take some time, read, review, contemplate, and apply a few of the thoughts and ideas below for greater and sustainable outcomes for you and your people.

When and How
Establishing any team starts with understanding what, where, when, why, whom and how. The less complex projects, demands, needs, and product/service requests require less of a need for a team.

For understanding how complex the project will be, it starts with the data you gather from the person (s) asking for the project, product, and/or service. Once this is determined, you can then decide whether a team is needed or not.

No: Project Team Example
An example of not needing a team would be a simple need for office supplies for a single location to a few locations.

Yes: Project Team Example
What happens if the request is changed to more than three hundred locations with more than seventy current office suppliers? We will need to dig a little deeper and find out if there is buy-in across the organization. How do we involve key staff for this need to reduce cost, reduce the number of suppliers, and increase quality? A team will need to be selected. In this real case, this is where we would involve regional management who provide input about their need, specifications, challenges, and desired outcomes.

Team Questions
There are several questions to ask to see if a team should be established.

They are:
- How complex is the project?
- What type of organizational politics do you have to work through for change management / change leadership?

- How many locations are involved?
- What are the products and/or services?
- How critical is the project to your organizations core competency?
- Do you have a plant that manufactures the product, where sourcing and procurement is located at another location?
- Are there many nations / cultures / offices involved?
- Do the products and/or services involve more than one department?
- What is the deadline for the project?
- Do you have internal data about all these items, or do you need to find out what the organization has been purchasing? (Many times, organizations do not have detailed information about brand, item, manufacturer number, quantity ordered over a period, current price, etc.).

Needing a Team Example

An example of needing a team, involved a complex project to implement a paperless team for a multi-hundred-million-dollar organization, with many divisions, several departments, and tens of millions of paper documents per year.
- Review the file titled “33.07 Tribe Hospitality Case Study Story” for more understanding of this project (see below).

As we go through this case study, you will observe the following:

- We discussed who the team would be.
- We selected the team (it grew as the project developed – IT Director; Controller; Chief Financial Officer; Director VGD; Human Resources Director; Purchasing; Logistics / Warehouse / Distribution; Director of Facilities; Imaging Manager (recruited into the organization later); Consultant – Imagining Engineer; Compliance Manager; and Programming Manager).
- We started by outlining this organizations needs and desires for going paperless.
- From these guidelines, we developed each weekly meeting each new area, guidelines, steps, needs, requirements, and other areas. Over time, a Scope of Work and RFP was outlined.

Team Project Results

This entire project involved millions of dollars, almost two years of work, and several people in the team. Some of the team players came from internal staff, some from consulting and others from those suppliers that won the award for this Request for Proposal for equipment, engineering, and some software.

If a team works together, the outcomes can be rewarding on all fronts. This project brought about tens of millions of documents becoming paperless each year, reduced cost management, greater compliance, available real time data, disaster recovery for all departments, off site electronic record storage, and interconnection of data for all enterprises of this organization.

When and How

The most important step for any project and whether a team is needed or not, are the questions you ask yourself and the person (group) asking you to provide the needed product and services. Once you have identified the specific needs, you then can determine complexity, organizational politics, importance to core competencies, and Executive Management priority.

This is what we call "the when".

If a team is needed, "the how" will be identified by the needs you and the requestor have outlined. Many times, an organization will approach internal staff, involve them, and identify responsibilities, accountability, and start the meetings for the next step. From this, external team members can develop all the necessary steps based on the project.

Team Building Tips

There are many elements that one should consider when establishing an effective team, as listed by "12 Tips for Team Building", How to Build Successful Work Teams. 2012.

- Clear Expectations.
- Context.
- Commitment.
- Competence.
- Charter.
- Control.
- Collaboration.
- Communication.
- Creative Innovation.
- Consequences.
- Coordination.
- Cultural Change.

33.07 Tribe Hospitality Case Study Story (Example Team Building Outcomes)

Initial Needs

Develop, Implement, and Centralize a NEW Procurement Department for a large Native Casino.

On our initial visit with this organization, we listened to their need, what they wanted to do, their status, they asked us questions, and we asked them about their pain, challenges, and where they wanted to go.

From our assessment of their 12-month spend and probing questions about how they wanted to centralize procurement, we concluded that their need was greater than what they shared with us. We designed an outlined needs assessment and submitted this to them sharing some of our potential solutions based on what they shared and what we saw.

<u>Some of these Areas Included:</u>

1) The organization had no purchasing department.
2) Staff were buying from vendors with no guidelines.
3) Their Purchase Requisitions and Purchase Orders were being done manually.
4) They did not have any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for finance, procurement, and shipping/receiving.
5) They did not have a proactive department communicating with all the many department directors about goods and services supply.
6) There was no compliance and vendor evaluation taking place to ensure vendor accountability.
7) There were no contracts in place.
8) Their software licenses and contracts were not properly being managed.
9) No meetings were taking place to progressively improve their procurement and financial systems (finance, purchasing, and shipping/receiving).
10) A host of many other things.

We proposed solutions to all the areas to centralize procurement for them so that they could understand how a centralized, compliant, proactive, and engaged procurement department would benefit their organization.

This several hundred-million-dollar organization decided to go forward, and we went to work.

Initial Need

Centralize Procurement.

Additional Projects Conducted

From the initial project conducted, we found that the organization was not organized. Some examples were: No meetings for purchase and finance close out, software not licensed properly, purchasing folders were not centralized (they had to be gathered from more than 20 departments, all purchasing files were not complete, there was no vendor list besides for payment purposes only in finance, they had no understanding of cost reduction, the purchasing staff did not understand Request for Proposals and bidding processes, and the several million Lawson software package contained the purchasing module and it was not being utilized).

Again, to summarize, the company did not have any compliance or best practices in place. They were not conducting any Request for Proposals and bids. And, the company was creating Purchase Orders by hand, and did other manual processes.

Important Solutions Step

As stated above, the company knew they needed help, but after our assessment with them, they realized that so much more could be accomplished through centralized procurement. Consensus was reached by both us and the company to observe the company's day-to-day operations and methodologies that were being used to conduct business.

We observed the following in the day-to-day operations:

- We researched their vendors and began noting different correlations (lack of data, no compliance, evaluation not taking place, supply chain disruption high risk, files and contracts missing, and no centralization).
- Researched company manual purchasing process from PR through PO.
- Attended director and upper management meetings.
- A weekly meeting started between finance, those buying, shipping, and receiving for proactive solutions and ideas.
- Interacted with users for Lawson software in finance, IT, and HR, and documented what was most important – the company's steps, habits, and ways.

It was from all this that we understood the company's culture, processes, and steps so that a customized solution would be delivered providing the solution that fit their organization.

Because of observing the day-to-day operations, we implemented the following actions immediately:

- Created and implemented Standard Operating Procedures.
- Vendor analysis, which resulted in vendor management and evaluation – The finance department provided an Excel spreadsheet for all the companies vendors (company

name, address, phone, fax, contact person, etc.); We found many companies did not have all the information (even phone and fax); We called every vendor with a phone number and gathered all the specified requirements the company set up with us (vendor name, address, phone, fax, email address, website, contact / representative, tax number, DUNS number, product / service they provide, and any notes); From the more than 3,000 vendors the company had, we cut out almost 1,000 that were not in business; For those vendors that did not have a phone number, we had to research to find a phone number so that the data completion could be conducted; After completing the entire vendor list, we now had a centralized list that the entire company could use by knowing what vendor provides what, be able to get contact information muck quicker; We worked with the company on a vendor requirements best practice form – this was faxed or emailed to each contact person at each vendor – each vendor had to sign off on this and this form was placed in their folder – this form included such things as W9, Delivery, Purchase Order requirements, Pricing, Compliance, and many other areas; and This centralized list was placed internally in their intranet so that all authorized company staff could view real time all vendors for their sourcing needs.

- Data retrieval for spend history, needs, and planning was conducted from a tracking spreadsheet – later this was automated once the procurement software Lawson system and programmed system was implemented.
- Provided Staff development and training for procurement and finance. We discussed the methodologies and best practices that would be used in the new state-of-the-art purchasing department that would be rolled out throughout the company soon.
- The charter, specifications, methodologies, and goals of the new procurement department were outlined. This strategic plan was routed to all senior leaders, project sponsors, and departments for comments and feedback.
- The associates were empowered to construct a procurement department with the proposed outcomes. Each department contributed and as a result, everyone held the new procurement department in high esteem. The strategic plan was implemented. The tactical pieces started falling into place by having procurement staff hired and daily operations started.
- Weekly status and performance meetings were conducted with all department managers and directors. We established a standalone best practices and lessons learned from all acquisitions and procurement department projects.
- The organization was utilizing Lawson. A manual was created for the procurement department about how to use this software (step by step manual). This reduced the amount of time purchasing staff and all Purchase Request users were taking to create the Purchase Requisitions and Purchase Orders. The impact was felt by more than 50

system users that had to do the ordering of any product and service, which reduced their labor time by more than 50%.
- Then the system was automated for approvals within Outlook for easier management of orders, approvals, disapprovals, compliance, budget control, and forecasting. This system was generated through Lawson, the forms were routed to Outlook, and the approver could either authorize or reject electronically. This organization had more than 3,000 employees, almost 70 approved requisition staff, 19 department directors, and other authorized staff. This approval system alone reduced labor by more than 2,420 hours per year, increased compliance, greater control resulted in reducing orders of items not approved, and directors were more engaged and proactive with their department budgets.

**Our next step was the implementation of cost reduction in more than 300 areas.
The total profit improvement was more than $100 Million over the term of each good, service, and contract area.**

After the cost reduction projects listed above, we embarked on automating the entire system. This meant that we would take tens of millions of paper documents per year and implement an electronic delivery system. The major departments impacted included Finance, IT, HR, Procurement, Admin, Safety, and all other departments. This project involved an IT project manager, programmers, an outside partner (where we conducted an extensive several months RFP process), the head of IT for this organization, and several others.

Paperless System Project Details

One of the most important things that took place before anything else happened was identifying what this system would do, why, the purpose, was upper management behind this, and were the financial, company staff, and time resources available to make this happen.

Once this was determined, ATS and the company designated several important tools. Some of these were:

- Weekly meetings where all stakeholders would discuss the project, next steps, challenges, feedback, etc. – communication is KEY.
- Responsibilities were outlined – IT Director covered all software development, specifications, programming, etc.; ATS oversaw bidding out the imaging organization that would provide the equipment and software systems for integration; Finance setup specifications, input, and project management with anything that had to do with finance (A/P, A/R, Invoices, etc.); A new person would be hired to fill the position to head up this new paperless, imaging, and compliant department; and so forth.

From these initial meetings of all stakeholders, ATS and the company designed the specifications from all angles to include:

- IT, support, risk management, disaster recovery, and document volume (tens of millions per year).
- Understanding of the engineering of this custom system, roles, responsibilities, timelines.
- The initial Request for Proposal.
- Sourcing of those vendors that could work with this project to bid to.
- Company budget for this project.
- Hiring of internal programmers, integration of documents into Lawson, data security, and many other areas.

The Request for Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) Request for Proposal (RFP) was outlined and agreed upon. It was determined that we needed to have a software engineer develop a separate requirement that relates to the main EDMS RFP, because of the complexity to this project.

ATS conducted the EDMS bid, the project was awarded, and the work continued for 11 more months. ATS, the company, and the awarded vendor met every week, continued developing, one IT project manager who oversaw programming, along with two other programmers, restructured some of Lawson (they had to work through more than 50,000 bugs), the company IT Director managed his responsibilities, an EDMS manager was hired and started to integrate into this new department, all other stakeholders stayed on task and completed their projects, and the project was completed with great success.

Final Sustainable Outcomes

Over a five-year period, the company realized savings of more than $100M for hard cost, soft cost, cost avoidance, human capital labor (the overall percentage was 27%), all with sustainable measures.

This approach, as conducted for all clients, resulted in customized solutions to the company's environment, challenges, and needs. The result not only stopped after we completed these projects, but continued through the education ATS brought, turnkey and automated software systems, data intelligence for vendor sourcing, and up to date licenses, contracts, and agreements.

The most significant impact to this company was the teamwork that started occurring because of the recommendations being implemented within the company. From the involvement came ideas, which resulted in applied actions and solutions, and actual ownership. This entire management process helped the teams in this company to sustain the savings, efficiencies, compliance, vendor management and evaluation, continued best practice and SOPs changes as the company continued to excel in growth, more than doubling in revenues, additions of new enterprises, and the trainer model.

What TEAM are you going to start and continue with!?

30+ years growing people, procurement, and projects!