



Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

Episode 10 Transcript

Groups, Mobs, Teams

You are a leader, entrusted by your organization with the responsibility of creating, developing, directing and supporting the cooperative efforts of those individuals under your influence. Your job description clearly states that you are in charge. But, are you really? If you are in charge, why is it often so difficult to know for sure how to begin the process of building and leading teams?

Recognizing leadership responsibility can be a sobering experience. I suggest all leaders begin their work by taking inventory of the people they will be leading. An honest, clear-eyed evaluation of individuals is a critical first step to building cohesive, long-term working relationships. There are three general categories of employees of which all leaders need to be aware. The following are Van Hooser's unabridged definitions of each.

Groups: A collection of individuals with no unified purpose.

Mobs: A collection of individuals with a unified, albeit negative, purpose.

Teams: A collection of individuals with a unified, positive purpose.

Let's begin by considering the most common category of employees – **groups**. Groups can be found almost anywhere two or more people interact or coexist. Many people mistakenly expect that simply working or living in close proximity to another is enough to allow an effective team to emerge. Not so. Though individuals may be close physically, it would be foolish to generally assume they are together in their thought processes or their levels of commitment. We have all encountered individuals who work simply for a paycheck. Their lack of concern for the organization, its activities, its mission, and its people, are obvious to even the most casual observer. These individuals do just enough to get by but not enough to make a difference.

Mobs on the other hand are distinctly different. Mob members are not disengaged in their efforts and activities. They are purposeful. Many people generally think of mobs as being chaotic, disorganized and unstructured. I encourage you, however, to remember that the Mafia (a.k.a. the Mob) is also referred to as "organized crime." Mobs of employees (two or more) often form with the focused intent to challenge, malign, and even sabotage the established order of things. They do so, having rationalized that their negative, even destructive actions are in some way a solution to the normal problems experienced by every organization.

Finally, **teams**. As elusive as truly effective teams can be, they are worthy of being wished for, prayed for, and most importantly, worked for. Building an effective team requires a leader to establish an organizational environment in which individual team members can reflect on and analyze relationships with other team members. It requires leaders to not only allow, but to encourage the resolution of conflicts through healthy, professional confrontation. It requires a leader to willingly and opening negotiate necessary changes in their professional expectations of each team member; changes that may affect roles, responsibilities, authority and even work allocation.

As leaders, we are obligated to engage those who prefer to be disengaged; to work with those committed to working against us; to support those who grant us support. Henry Ford said it best, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."