

Let's Talk: Teamwork – a lesson from geese

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Hi everybody, my name is Erica Hanlon. Now, as a manager, you know how important teamwork is to getting stuff done. Well today, we're gonna look in an unlikely place to learn about how you can help build a healthy and dynamic team. Where are we gonna look? To geese.

Visual Cue: Learn how to build a healthy and dynamic team

The 'V' formation

So there are actually five different lessons that you, as a manager, can learn from geese. The first one is that geese fly in a V formation. The reason they do that is because as each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplifting effect for those behind it. Geese who fly in a V formation can go 70% further than those who fly alone.

Visual Cue: Health teamwork: Get more done, use less energy

So the takeaway is that healthy teams lift each other up so that they can get more done as a team with less energy than they do just trying to work alone.

Visual Cue: Health teamwork: Get more done, use less energy

Energy and support

Now, and the second thing we can learn from geese is that they provide each other with energy and support. When a goose falls out of formation, it automatically feels the resistance of trying to fly alone. Now, you might occasionally have an employee who's disconnected from the rest of the team. But when they become disconnected, they also miss out on the energy and support of the rest of your employees.

Visual Cue: Stay connected – a disconnected employee can impact the team

Leadership rotation

So lesson number three is about leadership, and helping each other out. Now, the geese who fly towards the front of the V formation have to work harder than those in the back. So when they get

tired, they actually rotate their formation so that they take turns being in the lead, and letting others get a little bit of rest in the back. So encourage members of your team to take turns with leadership. Maybe they do it based on expertise, or just based on how much time they have available.

Visual Cue: Leadership – encourages development, provides a break for others

Encouraging “honks”

Lesson number four. Now, you've probably noticed that geese sometimes honk at each other. Now, scientists think that this is their way of communicating. Healthy teams make communication a priority. And they don't just make any communication a priority, they make sure that their honking is encouraging, not discouraging.

Visual Cue: Communication – promote constructive feedback, encourage recognition

Offering support

Now, our final lesson is about offering support. A lot of people don't know this, but when a goose can no longer fly, maybe it becomes sick or ill or wounded, two other geese actually fly with it down to the ground and stay with it until either it dies or it can return to the rest of the flock. So the takeaway is that healthy team members aren't just focused on the task at hand, they also look out for each other's well-being and provide support when it's needed.

Visual Cue: Recognize the need for help, provide extra support when needed

Learn from the geese

So as a manager, try to utilize these five lessons of the geese to create a healthy and productive team.

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