team opportunities. One designer described being involved with a long-term hospital design project and discovering that she was the only person in the group who had read the project strategy brief which described the design objectives and goals. The brief had been prepared at the start of the project with a great deal of input from the client management group, but the vital information had not been passed to new group members as they joined the project. This was an impediment to potential creation of a team. The challenge to understanding and building teams is more demanding than simply making team implementers understand the compelling arguments of why teams make a difference or even producing a clearer distinction between a team and a nonteam. Team performance requires mastery of a simple discipline that differs from normal group and managerial behaviors.

Real teams, not just groups of people labeled teams, are a basic unit of performance. In any situation that requires the real-time combination of multiple skills, experiences, and judgments, a disciplined team will invariably achieve better results than a collection of individuals operating in confined job roles and responsibilities. Teams can be quickly assembled, deployed, refocused, and disbanded and are more productive than groups with no clear performance objectives, as members are committed to deliver tangible, agreed upon results. At the same time, teams are not the only way for a small group to function as a performance unit. The single-leader unit or working group is an equally useful performance unit when "the leader really knows best," and most of the work is best accomplished by individuals rather than groups.

Performance Challenges Are Essential

Significant performance challenges energize teams. A team will face an uphill struggle to develop without a performance challenge that is meaningful to all involved. Companies with strong performance standards spawn more "real teams" than companies that simply encourage "more teams and team-work" through company-wide initiatives that often lead only to frustration. Personal chemistry and a desire to become a team may lead to teamwork values; however, it is critical to understand that *teamwork is not the same thing as a team.* Colleagues can exhibit teamwork by looking out for one another and being considerate in the workplace, but this does not enable them to perform as a team. A common set of performance goals that the group recognizes as important, and holds one another mutually accountable for, is what

leads to a real team effort. The differentiating factor is that collective performance is the primary objective, not "becoming (or behaving as) a team." Promoting teams for the sake of teams will seldom lead to team performance. Real teams are much more likely to flourish if leaders aim their sights on group performance results that balance the needs of customers or clients, employees, and shareholders. Clarity of purpose and goals has tremendous impact in our rapidly changing world. For example, one architect expressed the importance of understanding early on the growth intentions in a specific client situation. The client, a management consulting firm, required a new office design. At the start of the design phase the client employed only 12 people but wanted the design to reflect a working space for 20—exploiting the luxury of working space rather than the maximum capacity for the office. However, an important part of creating the design was understanding that the client had plans to grow quickly to 30-plus employees, and that therefore, after a period of time, constant change to accommodate each additional employee would be required. The architect and the client worked as a team in making these accommodations.

Individualism Need Not Impede Teams

Throughout our development, we are instilled with a strong sense of individual responsibility through our parents, teachers, and coaches. It is therefore not surprising that these values follow through in our working lives, where all advancement and reward are based on individual evaluations. Left unattended, self-preservation and individual accountability will hinder potential teams, and this often happens in design. Frank Lloyd Wright was an American individualist who did not use his ego for the advancement of teams. The motto, "Truth against the world," was carved into the wall of his childhood home and became a symbol of his resistance to compromise. When the Chicago school of architecture developed the steel frame to generate space previously unimaginable, Wright, as an accomplished architect, refused to embrace the innovation, preferring to continue using his own techniques. To Wright, architecture was not a collective effort; it was a highly individual artistic form of expression, and he took much pride in the finished product. Wright worked with only a few contractors, and most relationships were difficult. Wright did not even collaborate well with clients. After inviting Wright to spend the night in houses he designed, hosts would awake to