

paid to the team leader. How the leader handles this initial interaction is critical to the team's success in moving forward, and a poor start may never be recovered. Meetings away from the work site may promote less inhibited interactions, which will help to get the team off to a good start. Interruptions will be fewer and no party will have the advantage of "home turf." The financial and time investment in an off-site meeting may help to convince more skeptical members of the importance of the project.

4. ***Set some clear rules of behavior.*** The most critical early rules pertain to attendance, not limiting discussion topics, confidentiality, fact-based analytical approach, end-product orientation, constructive confrontation, and everyone doing real work. Working with these rules may seem a little odd at the outset, but their conception and adherence to them test the group's credibility.
5. ***Set and seize upon a few immediate performance-oriented tasks and goals.*** Most teams, as they reflect on their success, can trace their advancement to key performance-oriented events that molded them together. Potential teams can set such events in motion by immediately establishing a few challenging and yet achievable goals that can be reached early on. Some early wins in the design project will give the team a boost and help to build confidence as it tackles more challenging problems.
6. ***Challenge the group regularly with fresh facts and information.*** New information causes the potential team to redefine and enrich its understanding of the performance challenge, thereby helping the team shape its common purpose, set goals, and define a common approach. Potential teams err when they assume that all the information needed exists in the collective experience and knowledge of the group. It is hard to imagine a design project without regularly changing facts—delivery times, availability, and regulations.
7. ***Spend lots of time together.*** This seems like common sense, but it is often not the case. Time spent together must be both scheduled and unscheduled. Creative insights as well as personal bonding require impromptu and casual interactions. Fortunately for design teams, this time spent together need not all be face to face and teams can take advantage of technological advances in telecommunications to bring them together "virtually." However, even the most "technologically advanced" virtual teams require face-to-face (synchronous) time together at critical points throughout the process. You cannot do it entirely "virtually"!

8. *Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition, and reward.*

Positive reinforcement works as well in a team context as elsewhere. When someone risks bringing up a sensitive issue, perhaps challenging design individualism, other team members can use positive reinforcement to signal openness to similar challenges. This positive reinforcement will have more bearing if the leader shows his or her receptiveness to open discussion.

With these approaches in mind, consider this real team example in California. A home furnishings company abandoned its plans to move into a San Francisco office building, and a rising Internet company wanted to acquire the space. The building developer, who had planned to house the home furnishings company and had financing based on this plan, gave the prospective client a small window of opportunity—the Internet company could occupy the building, but it had only one month to make changes to the current plan. Clearly, the Internet company had very different design requirements from the intended user. As a result, there was much work to be done, and the client hired a global design firm. That firm quickly mobilized a highly qualified team consisting of architects, engineers, the building developer, property owner, other design specialists—plus the client. The assembled team was briefed on the task and spent the next month working closely together toward a solution that would meet this demanding performance challenge. Each member of the team provided valuable input and solved important parts of the problem. The project required mutual accountability and shared work-products building on the complementary skills of each team member. Hence, it is highly unlikely that the incremental performance required could have been met through the working group model.

THE ROLE OF A LEADER

Real Team Leaders

While leaders are essential to both working groups and real teams, the leader's role clearly differs between the two models. In a real team the leadership role will *shift to different members* of the team depending on the situation faced by the team at a particular time. The good news is that most people can learn the skills required to be an effective team leader. Getting people to work as a team depends more on the leader's attitudes than the