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The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
Building Rapport with your new Team



BUILDING RAPPORT WITH YOUR NEW TEAM

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Summary

As an Entrepreneur or New CEO, it's quite likely that you'll inherit or build a new management team. This is the team that may make-or-break your agenda in the first 100 days. It's vital to establish rapport and to learn everything you can from them. Here are the 10 key questions that have shown to be most useful to quickly size-up a new team.

Building Credibility, Trust and Coalitions in Support of your new Role

1. First, learn everybody's full names, and know something about them. Their kid's names, their hobbies, their backgrounds. Find out what they do and why their job is important. Be sure to call them by name and recognize their efforts in helping build the company, service customers or just make it a better place to work.
2. When interviewing the team for the first time and trying to get to know them, ask them some of these kinds of questions: How would you describe success in your current role? Can you measure it? What do you actually do that makes you as good as you are? What are your natural talents and skills? Are you using those skills in your current role, or is there another role that may be more suited to your natural skills and style? Where are you struggling in your current role? What don't you like about your current role? What would be the perfect role for you at the company?
3. Leaders should often ask the following: How can I help you and how can I make your job easier? What am I doing that is making your job difficult, and what is it about my style or decisions that really bothers you? Do you feel that I am being consistent in supporting the priorities which I have established, or am I constantly confusing and frustrating you with new agendas and initiatives?
4. What aspects of the company do you like the most? What issues around here concern you the most? What are your ideas for improving the company?
5. In your judgment, regardless of title or rank, who are the most innovative, helpful, and cooperative people in the company? Who in the company can be counted upon to be totally candid about our issues and problems? Who is the least political of the bunch?
6. What three things cause you to waste your time the most? How can I help?
7. Ask, "By what means do new ideas bubble-up to the top in the company? What major innovations or initiatives are currently underway?"
8. Leaders should ask: How can I help you? How can I make your job easier? What impediments has the company put in your way of doing a good job? What policies, programs, procedures, people or rules stand in your way?
9. What are you shooting for in your current role? Where do you see your career heading? What personal goals would you feel comfortable sharing with me? How often do you want to meet to talk about your progress?
10. "What do you want to accomplish in the next few months?" "What tools will we use to measure and report results?" "What is your most efficient route toward those goals? How can I help?" (NOTE: Great leaders give performance reviews that focus on the future rather than simply harping on the past. They discuss what could be, rather than allowing the conversation to descend into the past.)