

## Do Your Employees Spell Team with M-E? Reasons Why Teamwork Isn't Always a Pleasant Experience

Teamwork is the foundation of success for many companies. Creative ideas are more easily generated, large workloads can be shared, and it's always great to have others to turn to for help. For many people though, teamwork rarely works like a well-oiled machine - more likely, they see it as a rusty set of gears that creak and squeak at each other. And there's always that one gear that doesn't work well with the rest.

After collecting data from over 18,000 test-takers for their Team vs. Individual Orientation Test, PsychTests learned a great deal about why teamwork isn't always high-fives and pats on the back. Their statistics reveal that the top three concerns that their sample had about teamwork were unclear team roles, unfair workloads, and concerns about being held up (taking longer to reach decisions, slow workers, etc.).

In terms of gender differences, men were more frustrated with having to constantly consult with team members and not having full control over the outcome of a project, while women were slightly more concerned about being criticized by team members and having to speak up in front of others.



"Our data show that the majority of people don't mind having a mix of solo and group projects, but of course, teamwork doesn't come without reservations," points out Dr. Jerabek, president of the company. "Even sports teams may look good out on the field, but the locker room will tell a different story. Almost every team, in sports and business, has its 'divas', or the ones who refuse to listen to others, the ones who don't want to pull their own weight, or the ones who want to keep all the good ideas to themselves. The bottom line is, if you don't have a strong team leader pulling everyone together - and this is often a



management issue - you'll have a whole bunch of "I's" rather than "We's".

PsychTests' data also revealed that younger age groups (24 and under) tend to have more teamwork concerns than their older counterparts, particularly in terms of being held back by team members, unfair workloads, and the idea of having to depend on others. In fact, 40% of people in this age group agreed with the statement "if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself!"

Even if a person hates working on a team, would he or she go as far as to decline teamwork opportunities? Sixteen percent of PsychTests' test-takers have done so. Top concerns for this group indicated that once again, the main concerns were being held up, unclear work roles, and an unfair workload. Even level of popularity at work seemed to impact views on teamwork, with less popular employees hating the idea of getting stuck with someone else's workload, of being held up by their team (50% feel that they could work much faster on their own), and having to depend on others. PsychTests' data also reveal that 44% of people worry about whether other people like to work with them, 45% have worked with at least one difficult person, and 36% feel that working in a group means receiving less praise and credit.

"Teamwork concerns are an important issue that management should not overlook," emphasizes Dr. Jerabek. "It's been said that a team is only as strong as its weakest member. So if you have someone who just doesn't jive with the rest or who is difficult to work with, it affects everyone involved.

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This isn't to say that a group made up of people from different backgrounds, views, and strengths won't work - on the contrary...they have a lot to offer. But management needs to accept the fact that team building is such an essential process for functioning teams - and that perhaps some people are at their best when they can work on their own. These are facts that one cannot change; what we can do is to make the best of it by managing team and solo work accordingly."



PsychTests' **Team vs. Individual Orientation Test** and **Team Roles Test** available in **ARCH Profile** for hiring and other HR purposes. ☘

### Contact:

**PsychTests AIM Inc.**

Tel : 1-888-855-6975

Fax : (514) 745-6242

[sales@psychtests.com](mailto:sales@psychtests.com)

<http://archprofile.com/corporate>

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