

**SUCCESS IN THE MARKETPLACE IS A TEAM SPORT****By Robert J. Tamasy**

To find a template for success in today's workplace, we need look no farther than the human body. Illness and disease are often the result of one part of the body not functioning as it should, or not functioning at all. Imagine an otherwise healthy body without a beating heart, or a brain directing the systems of the body. Even if all the other organs were fully functional, life without even one of the major organs would not be possible.

In a similar way, success in the marketplace – individually and corporately – results from many people possessing different strengths, gifts and levels of experience, sharing a common mission.

Recently I had the opportunity to meet with members of a small firm, one-to-one and then as a group, to review their respective traits, strengths, needs for working effectively with others, and their stress behavior when needs are not met. Through the use of an assessment tool called the Birkman Method, they learned a lot about themselves and one another.

One of the greatest benefits of this kind of interaction is learning to value and appreciate each other's capabilities and differences, and how to work together most effectively, understanding how they can complement one another as they engage in various projects and tasks. Members of this firm learned, as is often the case, the whole can and should be greater than the sum of the parts.

We clearly see this demonstrated in team sports as well, athletes playing their positions and carrying out their assignments, whether on a soccer or football field, basketball court or hockey rink. They all play different roles, but for the team to win they must all do their jobs well.

The team concept is also often presented in the Bible, even though a growing relationship with God is a very personal, individual matter. Here are some principles it cites:

**The value of creative friction.** Metal rubbing against metal is a time-tested way of sharpening a blade. In like manner, our interaction with one another, even when conflict and seeming chaos result, serves as one of the best ways of planning, evaluating alternatives and discovering new solutions to problems. *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another"* (Proverbs 27:17).

**The benefit of mutual support.** At times, we might feel determined to do things our own way and resist the involvement of others. However, the combined strength, capacity and abilities of two or more people working together invariably proves to be most effective and productive. *"Two are better than one, because they have a great return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!... A cord of three strands is hard to break"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

**The importance of shared learning.** "Not one of us is as smart as all of us," the adage tells us. One of the best ways of being an effective team is sharing the insights, wisdom and understanding we have attained and gained from others. *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others"* (2 Timothy 2:2).

© 2017. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is [www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com](http://www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com), and his biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Have you – or someone you know well – ever suffered from having a major part of the body not functioning properly? What were the symptoms, and how did the remainder of the body attempt to rally in support of the ailing organ or member?

When you approach your work most days, do you typically view it as an individual or as a part of a team of people working toward a commonly accepted goal or objective? Explain your answer.

From your experience, what are some of the greatest benefits or assets of taking a team approach to workplace opportunities and challenges? Looking at the question a little differently, how can taking a team perspective enhance spiritual growth and fruitfulness?

What are some of the greatest obstacles or hindrances to working effectively as a team in the marketplace?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:*

Romans 12:4-8; 1  
Corinthians 12:12-26; 2  
Corinthians 3:5; 2  
Timothy 1:13