



# Enterprising Rural Families™

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## TIP OF THE MONTH:

According to Fran Rees in *How to Lead Work Teams*, businesses need to move from the old paradigm of traditional management to team management, which is based on the following principles:

- Employees are experts possessing unique technical knowledge and skills.
- Employees are the natural ones to make some decisions.
- Controls are minimized or set collectively.
- Employees participate in defining how work is done.
- Employees participate in setting and interpreting group goals.
- People are resources to be developed and use fully.
- Jobs are defined broadly and require multiple skills.
- Employees focus on applying special knowledge to larger problems.
- The organization is concerned with members' and society's purposes as well as its own.
- "Partnership" relationships are fostered between managers and employees.
- Teamwork is structured into the organization.
- Creative and productive outcomes result from the synergy of teamwork.
- Teams take over some of the work of managers.
- Organization structures are flatter.
- The organization is customer/market driven.

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## A NEW VIEW OF TEAMS AND TEAMWORK

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Conduct an Internet search for books on teams and teamwork and about 270 books will be identified. Not surprisingly, the majority are written by authors of one generation...Boomers. And this generation is the ultimate process fanatic. They can talk an issue to death before making a decision; if they make one at all. This is much to the chagrin of Generation X, whose mantra is "tell me what to do, get out of my way, and let me do it."

Given that over 70 percent of today's workforce belongs to these two generations, what kind of organizational structure can support the needs of these two very different groups of employees? How will leaders be able to manage organizations and businesses for the next 25 years with these two groups predominant in the workforce?

Hank Karp, Connie Fuller, and Danilo Sirias, in their book, *Bridging the Boomer Xer Gap* call for creating **Authentic Teams** for high performance at work. The Traditional Model of teams is community based; it holds that effective teams are based on common ground and similar interests. The Authentic Model of teams, on the other hand, is based on personal growth, holds that cohesion is a by-product of individual identity and openness, and that trust is strengthened by honest differences of opinion. "Collective individualism" is the means by which teams achieve high performance.

They use a sports analogy to compare the two teams. The traditional model, preferred by Boomers, resembles the National Football League:

- Players almost anonymous
- Dressed alike, wearing masks
- Each knows his role
- Sacrifice for the good of the team
- Collaboration = Scoring



The Authentic Model, espoused by Generation X, resembles the National Basketball Association:

- Spirit of rebelliousness
- Promotes superstars
- Self-sacrifice not a norm
- Recognizes and celebrates individuality (tattoos, head bands, hair styles)
- Do what it takes to win

The authors list several distinctions between the traditional model of teams and the authentic model.

1. **Traditional:** Interdependence is the key value.  
**Authentic:** Individual autonomy is the key value.
2. **Traditional:** Good work is the result of good working relationships.  
**Authentic:** Good working relationships are result of doing good work together.
3. **Traditional:** Appropriate behavior is determined by adherence to team norms.  
**Authentic:** Appropriate behavior is determined by individual choice in each situation.
4. **Traditional:** Responsibility and rewards are viewed in terms of team effort.  
**Authentic:** Responsibility and rewards are viewed in terms of individual effort.
5. **Traditional:** Values conflict resolution.  
**Authentic:** Values conflict management.
6. **Traditional:** Values being “open”  
**Authentic:** Values being “up-front”
7. **Traditional:** Seeks to empower others.  
**Authentic:** Seeks self-empowerment.



*How do you view your team?*

The authors call their teams “authentic” because, rather than urging everyone to be alike, and as a result no one being truly ‘honest,’ they encourage members of their teams to be different – the more different they are, the better they like it because they’ve come to know that strong individuals make strong teams.

However, not all authorities on teams agree with the authors. Sheryl and Don Grimme, owners of GHR Training Solutions, would consider the Authentic Team Model as a **working group**.

*“In business, a working group often is mistaken for a “team”. A working group is any number of people who work in the same setting and share – or profess to share – a common set of concerns. Much of what distinguishes a mere working group from a “team” relates to **accountability** – working group members are individually accountable for specific goals, but there is **no** joint effort or mutual accountability.*

*Their output is the sum of the individual contributions. Not bad...but not “all that they can be”. Examples include most organizations and departments. An example in sports would be the U.S. figure skating “team” – whose members train and compete as **individuals...or pairs.**”*

On the other hand, a team:

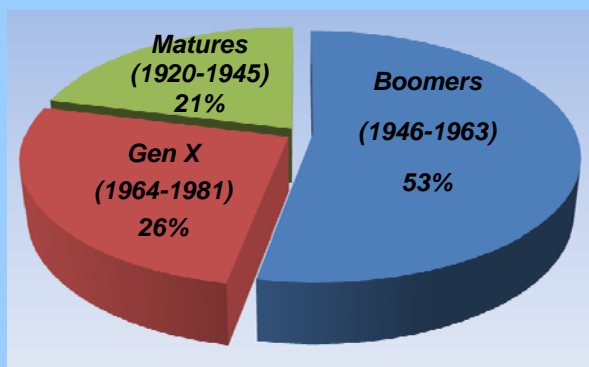
*“Is a **small** number of people (ideally 5 – 10) who take the risks of joint action and work product. They have specific goals and a common approach – for which they hold themselves individually and mutually **accountable**. Real Team members also possess complementary skills – functional, problem solving and interpersonal. They are committed to a meaningful purpose – focused on performance. Their output is more than the sum of individual contributions. The 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team is an example of a high-performing team.”*

Whichever view you take, for the next several years there will be both Boomers and Gen Xers in the workplace. Karp, Fuller, and Sirias argue that a new organizational structure must emerge that will allow employees from different generations to work together effectively. Ideally it will be a structure that accommodates the needs of all involved without damaging the rights and values of any; a structure that allows people to be both fulfilled and productive.

#### References:

Karp, H., Fuller, C., & Sirias, D. (2002). *Bridging the boomer xer gap: Creating authentic teams for high performance at work*. Palo Alto, CA: Davis-Black Publishing.

Grimme, S., & Grimme, D. *Why teams don't work (but how they can)*. Retrieved 2/10/10 from: [www.ghr-training.com/Documents/WhyTeamDon'tWorkArticle.doc](http://www.ghr-training.com/Documents/WhyTeamDon'tWorkArticle.doc).



**As Matures retire,  
they will be  
replaced by  
Generation X  
employees**

