



A well functioning organic team is the strongest type of team. It displays *synergy* - the results produced by the team are greater than the sum produced by each individual team member. Synergy occurs because the team uses the strengths of each member while minimizing the weaknesses of each. However, to be successful, this type of team requires substantial self-discipline. It also requires each team member to make his or her ego subservient to the welfare of the team.

The organic team is often used in situations where all of the team members know how to carry out the responsibilities of each of the team members. This type of team involves an intimate knowledge of the other team members. Family members who have worked together for a long time often work as an organic team. However, if one person persists in being in charge, or if teammates will not support each other, an organic team will not function properly.

### Elements of Successful Teams

To have a successful team, certain elements must be present. Examine the elements listed below to see if they are present in business teams you are participating in. The extent to which these elements are present increases the chances of having a successful team outcome.

- **Team Goals** - Team goals must be clearly specified. This provides the focus around which team activities are organized. For example, the goals of a team designed to harvest the crop may be to do so in a timely manner, minimize field loss, prevent accidents to team members, etc. If team goals are not specified and agreed upon by all team members, the team will tend to wander without direction.
- **Commitment** - All team members must be committed to achieving the goals of the team. Team members who don't take responsibility for

team activities will undermine the commitment of other team members. Also, a team will be weakened if its members bring *personal agendas* of what they want to achieve into team activities.

### Shared Rewards

To get commitment, team members must be involved in identifying team goals and sharing the rewards of the team. If members do not share in team rewards, they have no reason to participate in team activities.

### Defined Roles

To successfully carry out the activities of the team, the role of each team member must be defined. This is more important in functional and hierarchy teams and less important in organic teams. Without clearly defined roles, members will become frustrated because they won't know what activities they are responsible for. As a result, many team activities will not be carried out.

### Trust

Successful teams are made up of members who trust each other. Lack of trust among team members will shift the member's focus away from team goals to protecting their individual positions.

### Mutual Respect

For trust to exist among team members, they must have respect for each other. This includes respect for the views and activities of other team members. But it also includes respect for the goals of the team itself and the responsibility to work towards these goals.

### Communications

Without communications, little teamwork will occur. Good communications among team members is important to successfully implement the elements discussed above.

Additional resources on **Transition and Estate Planning** can be found by visiting the Ag Decision Maker website, [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wdbusiness.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wdbusiness.html).