

The four essential elements of a high-performing team

Law is a business. To stay ahead of the competition you need to manage your legal team with cutting edge management systems and techniques. "Working With Teams and Managing People," part of the Graduate Diploma in Legal Services Management, was built to teach the most up-to-date human capital management practices and how you can apply them to your law firm or legal department.

Whether you're a managing partner, director, general counsel or practice group chair – leadership techniques and style *matter*. Lawyers work with teams – students, clerks, administrative staff, other lawyers. Our course was built to teach you how to build and run the right teams for any mandate – and we're going to get you off on the right foot by sharing the four essential elements of any high-functioning team.

#1 Know your why

This seems obvious, right? But think back – how often have you been on a team that, in retrospect, didn't seem to know what it was *for*?

Knowing what a team's mandate is when it is formed is essential not only to keep you on task, but also to give you vital information on when to dissolve the team... something that's ultimately as productive as forming it in the first place.

#2 Chocolate and peanut butter (and bananas)

Having your best people on a team is great. Having people whose skills and insights complement each other is even better. Once you know your purpose, consider the elements that will go into achieving your goal.

Is there a team member that can champion or provide expertise on every element of that purpose?

Working With Teams and Managing People, LSM 840, is one of the flagship courses of the Queen's Graduate Diploma in Legal Services Management, Canada's only online program delivering business excellence training to legal professionals. Developed by and for legal professionals, it will help you stand out in the practice of law and equip you with the skills you need to future-proof your legal career.



#3 Ownership is essential

You've got a purpose, and you've got your experts: but are they willing to be accountable for their ends of the bargain? Inspiring team members to take ownership over their portfolio – and knowing how and when to acknowledge and reward that ownership – is the living heart of delegation, and one of the most powerful tools in any management toolbox.

We'll teach you empower, and provide you with tools to ensure team members clearly understand their mandates and responsibilities in the context of your greater goal.

#4 Safety first

Psychological safety is critical: are your members speaking to, and connecting with, each other?

It takes skill, and training, to develop the kinds of aptitudes that let you observe and identify when things are going well (and not so well), and how to ensure your team is communicating clearly and effectively... the essential element to making sure everyone is pulling in the same direction.

About the authors



Dr. Erika Abner received her LLB and LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School, and her MEd and PhD from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. She has curriculum, teaching and research experience in health professions education and legal education. Her teaching experience includes graduate courses in the Health Professions Teacher Education program, continuing professional development programs for lawyers, faculty development in legal education, and law school courses in legal writing and drafting. She has published original research on expertise in legal writing and on learning professionalism in the practice of law. Her continuing research interests include learning professionalism and ethics, transitions from school to work, and workplace learning.

Deborah Glatter is a legal educator and management consultant.

After practicing law for a decade, Deborah joined the Law Society of Ontario's Department of Education where she co-designed courses and licensing examinations for the Bar Admission Course. She then joined a national law firm where she was a partner and responsible for the professional development and management of its associates.

Deborah's professional qualifications include a diploma in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University, two Harvard Law School Mediation Certificates, a Certificate in Solution Focused Counselling from the University of Toronto, a yellow belt in Legal Lean Sigma, and most recently, a certificate from Harvard Business School in "Teaching with Cases Online".

