

5 keys to create group harmony



Andrew Field, president and CEO of PrintingForLess.com, fosters a collaborative work environment that minimizes political squabbles. Field, who founded the commercial printing firm in 1999, has articulated five principles that guide his leadership:

- 1. Give everyone the authority to do what's best for customers.** Field and his management team communicate their expectations to the team—and hold everyone accountable for follow-through.

“Our employees, from sales through manufacturing, have the power to stop any order to ensure accuracy and quality,” he says. When everyone is equally responsible for pleasing the customer, then there’s less need to subvert each other’s success.
- 2. Set group goals.** Field devises easy-to-understand, measurable goals for teams to pursue. After each quarter, he tracks outcomes and distributes the results to the workforce. The collective urge to achieve group objectives prevents individuals from placing their interests above the team.
- 3. Encourage free exchange of information.** Office politics often goes hand-in-hand with withholding information from certain employees. Field encourages employees to give and receive well-intentioned criticism.
- 4. Include teams in decision-making.** Field shares data with staffers and involves them in important decisions. This increases cohesion and collective buy-in.
- 5. Learning from each other.** In the best teams, individuals apply their strengths and join forces with peers who possess complementary skills. Field says he wants employees to “openly discuss likes and dislikes with regard to communication, tasks and personal focus.”

— Adapted from *Seven Disciplines of a Leader*, Jeff Wolf and Ken Shelton, John Wiley & Sons.