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Synergy is what happens when two or more people working together achieve what none of them could accomplish alone.

It happens, for instance, when kids from across America work together--

      SNEAK JET NOISE UNDER "WORK TOGETHER"; BRING UP FULL BRIEFLY
DURING   PAUSE; BACK DOWN UNDER NARRATION

and become the 82nd Airborne Division.

It happens when four individual musicians--

      SNEAK MUSIC UNDER STARTING WITH "FOUR"; BRING UP FULL BRIEFLY
      DURING PAUSE; BACK DOWN UNDER NARRATION

become the Juilliard Quartet...

... and it happens when some talented, tall athletes--

      SNEAK CROWD CHEERS UNDER STARTING WITH "HAPPENS"; BRING UP FULL
      BRIEFLY DURING PAUSE; BACK DOWN UNDER NARRATION

become the Olympic gold-medalist basketball team.

      CHEERING UP FULL AGAIN VERY BRIEFLY; SEGUE TO MUSIC TO BE USED
      UNDER THE PIECE (BASICALLY, MUSIC SHOULD BE UNDER ENTIRE PIECE)

In workplaces around the world, *work*teams are achieving synergy. They're reaching new heights of productivity and performance, often overcoming obstacles along the way.

How do they do it? While every team is different, most *successful* teams have a lot in common. This is the story of one of them.

      PRESS NOISE UP FULL BRIEFLY; THEN DROP UNDER NARRATION

      JEFF: "Last year we were extremely busy, and we were sending an enormous amount
      of work (over $300,000 worth) that we couldn't produce in the house."

      SOME JEFF NON-NEEDED SOUND UNDER NARRATIVE BRIDGE?

Jeff is the leader of the press team in the printing department of a large company. The team wanted to bring the outside work back into the house. They thought they knew how.

JEFF: "We had looked into a new full-color press. We got a trip to Detroit. We saw the equipment. We were very excited."
JEFF: "We did the justification, and we thought this was a shoe-in."

It wasn't. In a budget crunch, the company turned down the new press-- while making it clear that the team *still* had to bring the *outside* work back *in*. Of course the team was demoralized-- but they had good leadership, from Jeff *and* from *his* boss, Steve. Steve decided to let the team do its *own* problem-solving.

STEVE: "Really what I said... It's part of coaching. This is the problem. This is what we need to do. This is the goal. We need to add the additional capacity to the machine. It doesn't matter to me necessarily how we get to that goal."

That's *not* how some *other* bosses would have handled things, says Jeff.

JEFF: "They would have plotted out a strategy and figured out what each person would have worked. Then they would have come in and said, 'OK, you're going to work this, and you're going to work this, and that's the way we're going to do it."
JEFF: "I think when people aren't given an option, you don't have their commitment."

But this team *had* options, commitment-- and ability. They had received training in decision-making and problem-solving, and they soon began to explore solutions.

JEFF: "We were already working from 5 on Monday morning to 5 on Friday afternoon straight through. The only thing we could do at this point without getting a new piece of equipment was go from 5 Friday afternoon through 5 Monday morning and basically become 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Creating a round-the-clock schedule that's both fair and productive isn't easy. The team went through several versions, with one team member volunteering to test each version on his home computer. Along the path to the solution, Jeff and Steve played different but complimentary roles.

JEFF: "One of the trainings I had gone through as a leader is meeting leadership. So when we would get into these meetings that were not just a normal team meeting but specifically geared toward this process about what can we do to increase this capabity, my role was like holding the reins."
STEVE: "My role is to help ask questions, make people think, play devil's advocate, try to spur that thinking, you know."

As a manager, Steve says what he *didn't* do was as important as what he *did*.

STEVE: "Try to stay out of taking over the problem and running it for them or running the meeting for them, or doing it for them, and coming up with the answers myself."

While the team had plenty of support and information, it had something else at least as important.

JEFF: "I think there was a lot of trust."