

"It is said about geese that if one is shot or has to fall out of formation, another goose will follow and stay with him until he is OK or until he is dead. Good team members look after each other this way."

—Robert McNeish

DID YOU *Know?*



DITH PRAN was born in 1942, in Cambodia. He learned English and French and worked for the U.S. Government as a translator, then on a British film

crew, and as a hotel receptionist. In 1975, after meeting a *New York Times* reporter, he taught himself how to take pictures.

After U.S. forces left Cambodia, he stayed behind to cover the fall of Phnom Penh to the communist Khmer Rouge. Having stayed behind, he was forced to stay when foreign reporters were allowed to leave. From this point, Dith witnessed many atrocities and had to hide the fact that he was educated or knew any Americans. He pretended to be a taxicab driver.

Cambodians were forced to work in labor camps and Dith was not exempt. He endured four years of starvation and torture before Vietnam overthrew the Khmer Rouge and he escaped the camp. He coined the term "the killing fields" because of the number of dead bodies he encountered during his escape. He later learned that his three brothers and fifty members of his family were killed during the genocide.

Dith escaped to Thailand in 1979, fearing for his life because of his association with Americans and his knowledge of what had happened. He moved to America in 1980. In 1984, the movie, *"The Killing Fields,"* was released detailing the horrors and triumphs of his life. He died of pancreatic cancer in 2008.

BECOMING A GREAT TEAM MEMBER

How Can I Work with Different Types of People?

Teams are created for the purpose of providing a framework in which individuals can work together to be more productive, to make better decisions, and to reach common goals. Usually, team members take ownership of decisions and planning, and they share the workload. Highly effective teams take pride in each other and in their collective team.

Perhaps Maxwell (2002) described a team best: "A team is one voice with many hearts." A team is a small number of people who work together to achieve a common mission, who appreciate and celebrate diverse talents and skills, and who hold each other accountable for the end result. Teams need a clear purpose and carefully delineated goals and objectives in order for all members to get on the same page and to move in the same direction. Teams work best when everyone carries his or her load; there is no place for freeloaders on a good team. Members of strong teams are free to disagree and respectfully express their opinions without fearing repercussions. Leadership of effective teams changes according to the task or goal at hand; sometimes a member leads, and other times, he or she follows. This will be true in your study groups, in class project teams, and in campus organizations in which you are involved.

Types of Teams

Teams are typically formed to meet a certain goal and to perform a particular purpose. While there are many types of teams, several are fairly typical:

- **Problem-solving teams** are usually assigned the responsibility of improving quality, the work environment, and work processes.
- **Cross-functional teams in many organizations** are typically comprised of members from diverse areas who are charged with the responsibility of developing new ideas, managing complex projects, and spearheading innovation. In college classrooms, students from different majors with different skill sets are often assigned to the same team and must capitalize on the diversity of skills and knowledge.
- **Virtual teams function in ways that are similar** to face-to-face teams except they are physically located apart from each other; they must, therefore, rely on technology to communicate and to share workloads. They might suffer from the lack of social interaction and the absence of body language. In some cases, they must overcome time and space constraints brought about by problems such as working in different time zones.

Effective teams don't just happen; to be effective, team members must be carefully chosen and brought together to accomplish a particular goal or mission. Team members must be carefully prepared if a team is going to function as a well-oiled machine. If you are assigned to a pre-existing team (a biology study group already working) and have no choice in the team's make-up, you can still follow the tips and advice in Figure 13.10 to **establish positive relationships and useful teams**.