What am I doing wrong as a manager?

By Brenda R. Haughney

Does it feel like the whole organization is on your shoulders? Do you feel like you are the only person whose job is on the line?

If so, you just possibly may be doing something wrong. How about sitting down with your team and:

1. Explain why the team exists and how it affects the rest of the organization.
2. Tell the team what your specific expectations of them are as a whole.
3. Talk about each person's role and critical tasks.
4. Outline some of the policies, procedures, resources, and guidelines they have available to them.
5. Ask team members to collaborate with each other rather than rely on just their individual brainpower, creativity, and experience.
6. Ask for support in moving forward.

You may wish to ask the team some of these questions:

- Are we having fun yet?
- What's wrong with this picture?
- Are the expectations of the team truly realistic?
- Can we accomplish these miracles if we work together in the time allotted?
- What barriers exist which could keep us from accomplishing our goals?
- What suggestions do you have to make it (reaching the goals) happen?
- What are some milestone goals that are achievable?
- How should we celebrate the milestones when we get there?
- How can we make sure we are not sabotaging our mission along the way?

Listen, listen, and listen to what your team members have to say. Capture the information on flip charts, white board, or laptop. Agree on next steps. Make specific individual or small group assignments with target dates. Document and distribute a copy of the agreed upon plan to each team member. Post the plan where everyone can see it.

Most importantly, follow-up by getting the group back together periodically. If one person is not carrying their weight, acknowledge it, and hold them accountable. If they continue to not measure up, get them off the team or out of the organization as quickly as possible.

Oh yeah! Do not have a meeting for meeting's sake! But that is a topic for another day...