



# Shadowmatch<sup>®</sup>

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**TEAM CONFLICT IDENTIFIED  
AND FIXED**

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*By Pieter de Villiers*

## Article: Newsletter May 2010

### Team Conflict Identified and Fixed – *by Pieter de Villiers*

From time to time the Shadowmatch team is requested to help with all kinds of team related challenges in the workplace. Our approach is to get all the Shadowmatch results and then, with the assistance of the client, identify the top performers. Top performers are those who are the hardest workers, most productive, deliver the best quality of work with a positive spirit in the workplace. We then compare the rest of the team to the consolidated profile of the top performers to see if there are any serious mismatches. If this doesn't provide us with an answer, we match the team individually to that of the manager. If that doesn't provide an answer, we match the manager with the consolidated profile of the team. If that also doesn't give us a conclusive answer to the challenge, we have a problem. This is exactly what happened a few weeks ago. A group of teachers working together at a primary school developed serious conflict in the team. The problem became so obvious that some of the parents helping out with certain school activities, became aware of it.

We did all the above without any conclusive answer to the problem. We studied the results to try and identify sub groupings with distinct habits that are different between the sub groups. Some very interesting trends were observed. The one group had an attitude of extreme unaggressive involvement towards their world and the people they work with. The second group was aggressive but uninvolved and two teachers were unaggressive and uninvolved towards the world and the people around them. These two teachers (unaggressive and uninvolved) didn't participate in any activities. In fact, they were always together ignoring the events and everything that was happening around them. They were aloof and always left any event as early as possible. The six teachers with an aggressive uninvolved attitude always voiced their frustrations about the two discussed above but they never took it up with them. In fact, their attitude turned them to become very vocal about the situation. This escalated to a point where the unaggressive involved group (nine of them) became fed-up with the group that were frustrated with the uninvolved unaggressive group. This became such a negative spiral that the majority of the team couldn't function properly.

What now? We discussed the findings with the Head Master and we all decided to handle the situation in an open forum in the form of a team building event. The fact that everybody became aware of the situation was in fact enough to change all the dynamics of the team and the three-way split amongst them. The two unaggressive uninvolved teachers made an active effort to participate as and when they can. The fact that all involved were relatively mature and intelligent turned the entire team dynamics into a positive one. Not because one or two individual have changed their behaviour, but because all of them could do something very small to address the situation. The result of all the mini efforts was enough to change the school.

Productivity can suffer seriously if you are not on top of the team and individual dynamics of the people in your business.