

Knowing the end goal increases productivity

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Working in a team is not always easy, and achieving our aims often turns out to be much harder than we thought it would be. What can we do to increase our chances of gaining ultimate success? A new study from Aarhus University's transdisciplinary Interacting Minds Centre (IMC) provides insight into how to improve productivity when members of a group share a clearly identifiable goal.

"Our study focused on how to improve levels of cooperation. What we found was that when people know exactly what they're supposed to be doing as members of a team, they are more willing to trust each other and cooperate more in the future," says Panos Mitkidis, a post-doc scholar at Aarhus University, Denmark.

He is behind a study published recently in the scientific journal *PLOS ONE*, and he suggests that levels of cooperation improve when we know exactly what our goals are – instead of just following a process without really knowing where we are going.

Sharing clear, identifiable goals

The study provides a clue about how science can help us to become more cooperative and productive by switching the focus to goals instead of focusing on processes. Successful cooperation depends on knowing more than just the rules and processes in which we are involved.

"Knowing exactly what our goals are actually appears to increase our [perception](#) of cooperation, trust and shared expectations. In fact, the

study showed that when the people involved could see the end product they felt they were sharing a collective goal and were therefore more willing to trust and cooperate with their colleagues," says Mitkidis

It's a matter of trust

Trust and clear goals are indeed important ingredients in successful cooperation between people in all types of settings.

"Cooperation is a prerequisite for most types of [human relations](#) from love to business, and from everyday interactions to more complicated activities. For instance, making dinner with your partner is easier when you know exactly what to cook and have a clear goal. And running a business or an experiment at CERN is also easier if you know precisely what you're trying to achieve," says Mitkidis.

Useful knowledge for business leaders

In a world where [productivity](#) is at the centre of discussion, the study provides a clue about how science can help us to be more productive. The study provides insight for managers in the worlds of business and administration, where [cooperation](#) and productivity are always important.

"The study develops an insight into the benefits and consequences of rationalising administrative processes in modern states and formal institutions. In business corporations some important questions are: how can we make sure that all employees have a clear goal for the work they do, and how can we build trust on a business level?" explains Mitkidis.

Panos Mitkidis has just submitted his PhD at Aarhus University. He works at the Interacting Minds Centre (IMC), which provides a

transdisciplinary platform to study human interaction. It involves researchers from the humanities, social sciences, cognitive sciences, biology and clinical research.

Provided by Aarhus University

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