7 Keys to Building Great Workteams
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The information in the training module was found at Teambuildinginc.com, A Division of Team Builders Plus. Please go to this link and find several more terrific articles on this subject.

Objectives:	➢ Participants will be able to identify the link between agency priorities and personal goals.
	➢ Participants will be able to describe the roles of inclusion, confidence and empowerment as critical to a tem member's contribution.
	➢ Participants will be able to distinguish between communications that energizes and communications that demoralizes.
	➢ Participants will be able to describe the **F.A.C.T.S.** model.
	➢ Participants will be able to define the three techniques that help members shift obstructing paradigms (mind sets).

Fostering teamwork is a top priority for many leaders. The benefits are clear: increased productivity, improved customer service, more flexible systems, employee empowerment. But is the vision clear? To effectively implement teams, leaders need a clear picture of the seven elements high-performance teams have in common.

1. COMMITMENT

Commitment to the purpose and values of an organization provides a clear sense of direction. Team members understand how their work fits into corporate objectives and they agree that their team's goals are achievable and aligned with corporate mission and values. Commitment is the foundation for synergy in groups. Individuals are willing to put aside personal needs for the benefit of the work team or the company. When there is a meeting of the minds on the big picture this shared purpose provides a backdrop against which all team decisions can be viewed. Goals are developed with corporate priorities in mind. Team ground rules are set with consideration for both company and individual values. When conflict arises, the team uses alignment with purpose, values, and goals as important criteria for acceptable solutions.

To enhance team commitment leaders might consider inviting each work team to develop team mission, vision, and values statements that are in alignment with those of the corporation but reflect the individuality of each team. These statements should be visible and "walked" every day. Once a shared purpose is agreed upon, each team can develop goals and measures, focus on continuous improvement, and celebrate team success at important milestones. The time spent up front getting all team members on the same track will greatly reduce the number of derailments or emergency rerouting later.

2. CONTRIBUTION

The power of an effective team is in direct proportion to the skills members possess and the initiative members expend. Work teams need people who have strong technical and interpersonal skills and are willing to learn. Teams also need self-leaders who take responsibility for getting things done. But if a few team members shoulder most of the burden, the team runs the risk of member burnout, or worse -- member turn-off.

To enhance balanced participation on a work team, leaders should consider three factors that affect the level of individual contribution: inclusion, confidence, and empowerment. The more individuals feel like part of a team, the more they contribute; and, the more members contribute, the more they feel like part of the team. To enhance feelings of inclusion, leaders need to keep work team members informed, solicit their input, and support an atmosphere of collegiality. If employees are not offering suggestions at meetings, invite them to do so. If team members miss meetings, let them know they were missed. When ideas -- even wild ideas -- are offered, show appreciation for the initiative.

Confidence in self and team affects the amount of energy a team member invests in an endeavor. If it appears that the investment of hard work is likely to end in success employees are more likely to contribute. If, on the other hand, success seems unlikely, investment of energy will wane. To breed confidence on a work team, leaders can highlight the talent, experience, and accomplishments represented on the team, as well as keep past team successes visible. The confidence of team members can be bolstered by providing feedback, coaching, assessment and professional development opportunities.

Another way to balance contribution on a work team is to enhance employee empowerment. When workers are involved in decisions, given the right training, and respected for their experience, they feel enabled and invest more. It is also important to have team members evaluate how well they support the contribution of others.

3. COMMUNICATION
For a work group to reach its full potential, members must be able to say what

they think , ask for help, share new or unpopular ideas, and risk making mistakes. This can only happen in an atmosphere where team members show concern, trust one another, and focus on solutions, not problems. Communication --when it is friendly, open, and positive --plays a vital role in creating such cohesiveness.

Friendly communications are more likely when individuals know and respect one another. Team members show caring by asking about each other's lives outside of work, respecting individual differences, joking, and generally making all feel welcome.

Open communication is equally important to a team's success. To assess work performance, members must provide honest feedback, accept constructive criticism, and address issues head-on. To do so requires a trust level supported by direct, honest communication.

Positive communication impacts the energy of a work team. When members talk about what they like, need, or want, it is quite different from wailing about what annoys or frustrates them. The former energizes; the latter demoralizes.

To enhance team communication, leaders can provide skill training in listening, responding, and the use of language as well as in meeting management, feedback and consensus building.

4. COOPERATION

Most challenges in the workplace today require much more than good solo performance. In increasingly complex organizations, success depends upon the degree of interdependence recognized within the team. Leaders can facilitate cooperation by highlighting the impact of individual members on team productivity and clarifying valued team member behaviors. The following **F.A.C.T.S. model** of effective team member behaviors (follow-through, accuracy, timeliness, creativity, and spirit) may serve as a guide for helping teams identify behaviors that support synergy within the work team.

Follow-through
One of the most common phrases heard in groups that work well together is "You can count on it." Members trust that when a colleague agrees to return a telephone call, read a report, talk to a customer, attend a meeting, or change a behavior, the job will be done. There will be follow-through. Team members are keenly aware that as part of a team,

everything that they do --or don't do---impacts someone else.

Accuracy
Another common phrase heard in effective work groups is "We do it right the first time." Accuracy, clearly a reflection of personal pride, also demonstrates a commitment to uphold the standards of the team, thus generating team pride.

Creativity
Innovation flourishes on a team when individuals feel supported by colleagues. Although taking the lead in a new order of things is risky business, such risk is greatly reduced in a cooperative environment where members forgive mistakes, respect individual differences, and shift their thinking from a point of view to a viewing point.

Timeliness
When work team members are truly cooperating they respect the time of others by turning team priorities into personal priorities, arriving for meetings on time, sharing information promptly, clustering questions for people, communicating succinctly, and asking "Is this a good time?" before initiating interactions.

Spirit
Being on a work team is a bit like being part of a family. You can't have your way all of the time, and - to add value - you must develop a generous spirit. Leaders can help work teams by addressing these "rules" of team spirit: value the individual; develop team trust; communicate openly; manage differences; share successes; welcome new members.

Test Questions

1. ☐ **True** ☐ **False** Commitment would include that team ground rules are set with consideration for both company and individual values.

2. ☐ **True** ☐ **False** Time spent up front getting all team members on the same track could lead to a number of derailments or emergency rerouting later.

3. ☐ **True** ☐ **False** Leaders should consider three factors that affect the level of individual contribution: inclusion, experience, and empowerment.

4.	☐	**True**	☐	**False**	To breed confidence on a work team, leaders can highlight the talent, experience, and accomplishments represented on the team
5.	☐	**True**	☐	**False**	For a work group to reach its full potential, members must be able to say whatever they like.
6.	☐	**True**	☐	**False**	The **F** in the **F.A.C.T.S.** model stands for "follow directions".

5. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

It is inevitable that teams of bright, diverse thinkers will experience conflict from time to time. The problem is not that differences exist, but in how they are managed. If people believe that conflict never occurs in "good" groups, they may sweep conflict under the rug. Of course, no rug is large enough to cover misperception, ill feelings, old hurts, and misunderstandings for very long. Soon the differences reappear. They take on the form of tension, hidden agendas, and stubborn positions. On the other hand, if leaders help work teams to manage conflict effectively, the team will be able to maintain trust and tap the collective power of the team. Work teams manage conflict better when members learn to shift their paradigms (mindsets) about conflict in general, about other parties involved, and about their own ability to manage conflict. Three techniques that help members shift obstructing paradigms are reframing, shifting shoes, and affirmations.

Reframing is looking at the glass half-full, instead of half-empty. Instead of thinking "If I address this issue, it'll slow down the meeting," consider this thought: "If we negotiate this difference, trust and creativity will all increase."

Shifting Shoes is a technique used to practice empathy by mentally "walking in the shoes" of another person. You answer questions such as "How would I feel if I were that person being criticized in front of the group?" "What would motivate me to say what that person just said?"

Affirmations are positive statements about something you want to be true. For example, instead of saying to yourself right before a negotiating session, " I know I'm going to blow up", force yourself to say, "I am calm, comfortable, and prepared." If team members can learn to shift any negative mental tapes to more positive ones, they will be able to shift obstructing paradigms and manage conflict more effectively.

6. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Tom Peters, in Thriving On Chaos, writes "The surviving companies will, above all, be flexible responders that create market initiatives. This has to happen through people." It is no longer a luxury to have work teams that can perform effectively within a turbulent environment. It is a necessity. Teams must not only respond to change, but actually initiate it. To assist teams in the management of change, leaders should acknowledge any perceived danger in the change and then help teams to see any inherent opportunities. They can provide the security necessary for teams to take risks and the tools for them to innovate; they can also reduce resistance to change by providing vision and information, and by modeling a positive attitude themselves.

7. CONNECTIONS

A cohesive work team can only add value if it pays attention to the ongoing development of three important connections: to the larger work organization, to team members, and to other work teams.

When a work team is connected to the organization, members discuss team performance in relationship to corporate priorities, customer feedback, and quality measures. They consider team needs in light of what's good for the whole organization and what will best serve joint objectives. Leaders can encourage such connection by keeping communication lines open. Management priorities, successes, and headaches should flow one way; team needs, successes, and questions should flow in the other direction.

When a work team has developed strong connections among its own members, peer support manifests itself in many ways. Colleagues volunteer to help without being asked, cover for each other in a pinch, congratulate each other publicly, share resources, offer suggestions for improvement, and find ways to celebrate together. A few ideas for developing and maintaining such connections are: allow time before and after meetings for brief socialization, schedule team lunches, create occasional team projects outside of work, circulate member profiles, take training together, and provide feedback to one another on development.

Teams that connect well with other work groups typically think of those groups as "internal customers". They treat requests from these colleagues with the same respect shown to external customers. They ask for feedback on how they can better serve them. They engage in win/win negotiating to resolve differences, and they share resources such as training materials, videos, books, equipment, or even improvement ideas. To build stronger connections with other groups, work teams might consider: scheduling monthly cross-departmental meetings, inviting representatives to their own team meeting, "lending" personnel during flu season, and combining efforts on a corporate or community project.

To compete effectively, leaders must fashion a network of skilled employees who

support each other in the achievement of corporate goals and the delivery of seamless service.

Test Questions

7. *The problem is not that differences exist, but*

a. ☐   what is the source of the differences.

b. ☐   what caused these differences.

c. ☐   in how they are managed.

d. ☐   in how we can make them go away.

8. *Leaders can also reduce resistance to change by*

a. ☐   getting rid of resistant team members, and modeling a positive attitude themselves.

b. ☐   providing vision and giving clear directives.

c. ☐   having individuals outside the team initiate the change.

d. ☐   providing vision and information, and by modeling a positive attitude themselves.

9. *When a work team has developed strong connections among its own members*

a. ☐   they would cover for each other in a pinch, and share resources.

b. ☐   they would avoid dealing with others outside their team.

c. ☐   they would cover for each other in a pinch, and then work out how to be repaid.

d. ☐   they would wait to be asked before assisting someone else on the team.

Name _____, Date _____