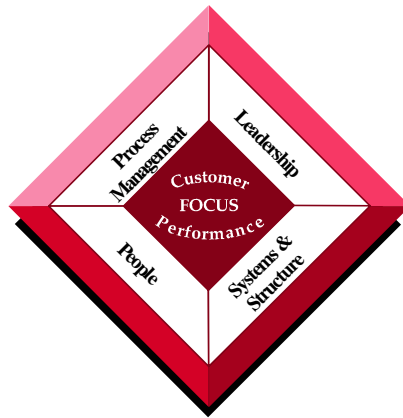# Understanding and Improving Teamwork

Learning Objectives

As a result of participating in this module, you will be able to:

- ◆ **Identify factors influencing team effectiveness**

- ◆ **List the stages of team development**

- ◆ **Describe skills required for effective teamwork**
  - ➨ **Meeting management**
  - ➨ **Consensus decision making**
  - ➨ **Communications**
    - – **Giving and receiving feedback**

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Notes

Team Exercise

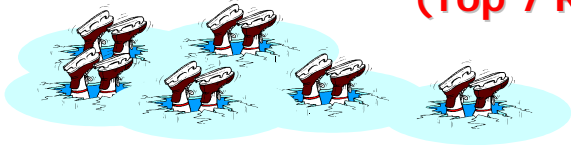Reflect on your past experiences with teams. Answer your team's assigned statement.

1. **What is a team?**
2. **What are the benefits of using teams?**
3. **Describe what teams do?**
4. **Describe a successful team experience.**
5. **Describe an unsuccessful team experience.**

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Notes

Why Teams Fail?

(Top 7 Reasons)

Managers say teams fail to meet expectations because:

Reason	Percentage
Goals unclear	55%
Changing objectives	55%
Lack of accountability	51%
Lack of management support	49%
Lack of role clarity	47%
Ineffective leadership	45%
Low priority of team	40%

Source: The Hay Group

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Notes

Factors Influencing Team Effectiveness

Organizational & Situational Context

Type of tasks

Characteristics of team members & the leader

Team dynamics
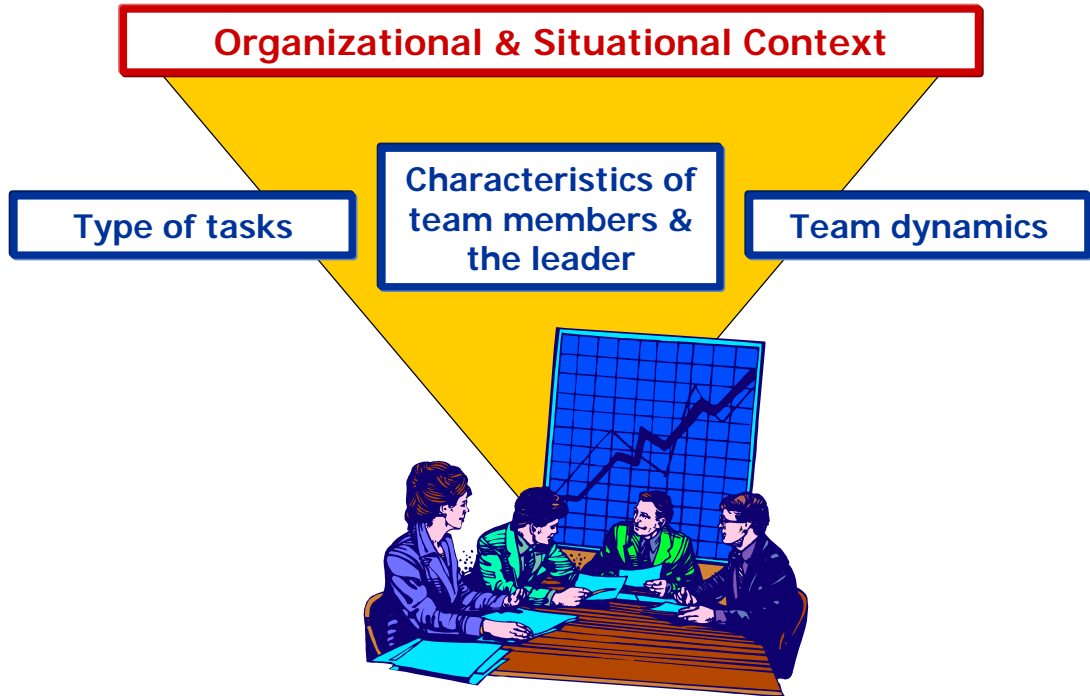
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Notes

What is a Team?

A group of individuals who are -

◆ **Committed to achieving common organizational objectives**

◆ **Meet regularly**

◆ **Identify and solve problems and improve processes**

◆ **Interact openly and effectively together**

◆ **Produce desired economical, motivational and business results**

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Notes

Benefits of Teamwork

- ◆ **Synergy of diverse ideas and experience**
- ◆ **Better quality of decisions**
- ◆ **Builds organizational knowledge**
- ◆ **Strengthens work relationships**
- ◆ **Involves people in change (people don't resist change, they resist getting changed)**
- ◆ **Moves decisions to the level closest to the work being done**
- ◆ **Develops leadership at all levels in the organization**

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Notes

Characteristics of an Effective Team
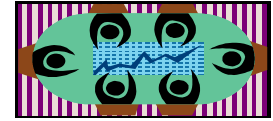
Shared Purpose And Goals:

Team members have a strong commitment to a shared purpose and the achievement of team goals. Team members are willing to work toward achieving these goals. If there is confusion, issues are resolved. Getting the job done, whatever it is, has top priority. Tasks are clearly understood and accepted by all. A sense of urgency, excitement, and purpose permeates the working atmosphere.

Open Communication:

Team members communicate openly and frankly with each other. Each is skilled in giving and receiving constructive feedback.

Trust:

A climate of trust and understanding has been developed. Team members actively and sincerely listen to each other.

Full Participation:

All members of the team participate in the problem-solving and decision-making processes. Members use facilitating skills to ensure the involvement of the whole team.

Confrontation And Differences:

Team members confront each other's assumptions in ways that do not close off further contributions. They are wary of reaching agreement prematurely. Differences are regarded as a healthy and necessary part of the problem-solving process. They are resolved through negotiation and collaboration.

Conditions for Normal Team Development

Teams need a supportive environment and proper "diet" to develop normally. Prerequisites for team development include:

- **Size:** An ideal size for most teams is five to seven. Larger teams have difficulty meeting, coordinating activities, and regulating "air-time" in discussions

- **Clear charter** from the manager to whom the team reports, including expectations about specific results to be attained, the time frame for the work, the method of measuring team performance, and the team's authority to use resources and take action

- **Defined reporting relationship,** in which the team is accountable to a specific manager who reviews the team's progress against agreed-upon milestones and provides resources and support needed for team tasks

- **Access to a meeting room** with table and chairs, quiet enough for conversation, with appropriate meeting aids such as flip chart and/or overhead projector

- **Location:** Ideally, working areas of members are close together in the same building

- **Team composition:** Members' knowledge, skills, ability, and experience appropriate for the team assignment, preferably diverse

- **Mechanism for reward and recognition of team accomplishments** within the organization and for individual contributions to teamwork. (Ideally, teamwork is part of every individual's job)
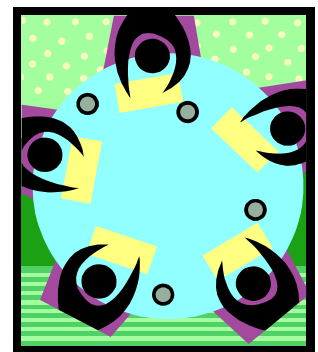
Types of Teams

- ◆ **Project Teams**
  - ➤ **Temporary, disband when finished**
  - ➤ **Cross-functional**
  - ➤ **Work to accomplish a specific task (charter)**
- ◆ **Natural Work Teams**
  - ➤ **On-going**
  - ➤ **Operate a set of processes in assigned work area**
- ◆ **Natural Management Teams**
  - ➤ **On-going, cross-functional**
  - ➤ **Manage departmental processes and resources**
  - ➤ **Manager reporting to a higher manager**
- ◆ **Steering Team**
  - ➤ **On-going, cross-functional**
  - ➤ **Provides vision and strategic direction for the organization**

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Notes

Team Development

Teamwork takes time and practice to develop. Before a group of individuals can become a productive team, they must successfully meet a series of challenges. Ideally a team gradually progresses through a regular sequence of development stages, becoming more and more effective with time.

In practice, teams rarely follow a smooth developmental sequence. Instead they proceed in fits and starts, sometimes making rapid progress, other times going backwards. In the long run, however, most teams confront a more or less predictable series of developmental issues and eventually gain effectiveness.

- Teams develop differently, with ups and downs
- Team development may cycle back or stall
- In the long run, teams tend to get more effective over time
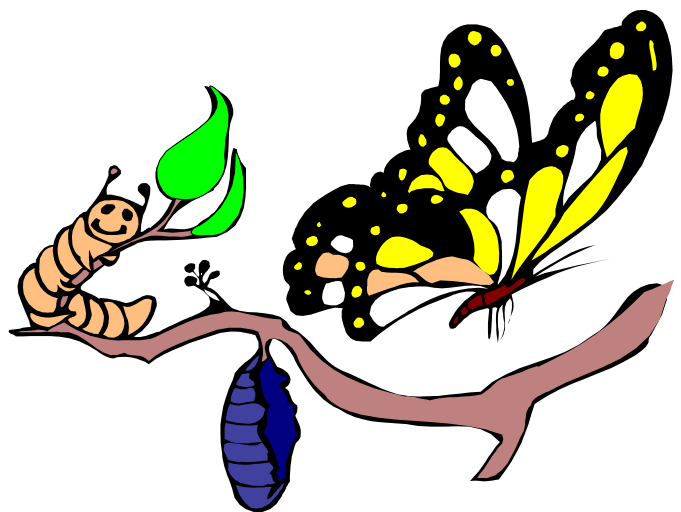- Teams face predictable issues in development
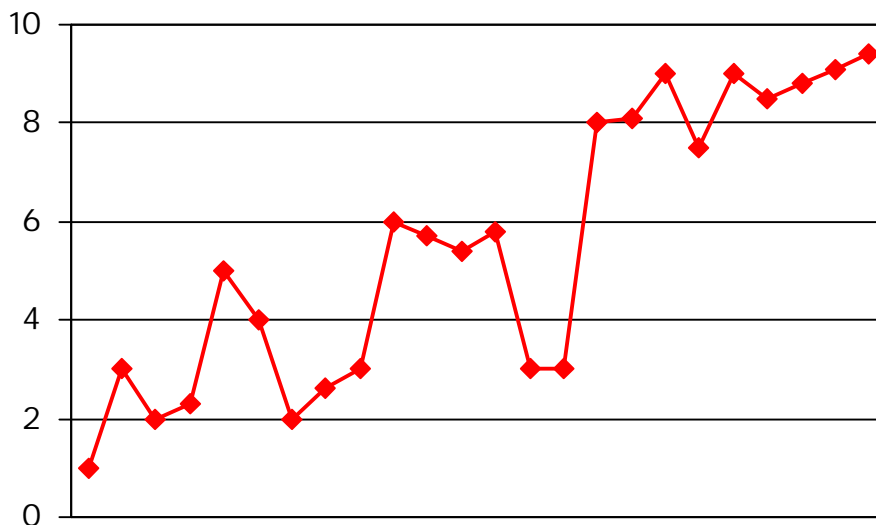
Predictable Stages of Team Development

As a team develops, certain issues inevitably arise and need to be resolved sooner or later. If they are not resolved, development stalls. No one team is typical, but many teams confront the basic developmental issues in a regular sequence of stages first described by Tuckman (1968):

- Forming: First steps, basic survival
- Storming: Energetic trial and error, ups and downs, fast learning
- Norming: Finding skill and discipline
- Performing: Maturity, peak performance
- Renewal: Applying team expertise in new situations

Each stage brings more or less predictable differences in:

- Issues for teamwork
- Individual experiences
- Team interaction
- Milestones in teambuilding
- Distress symptoms

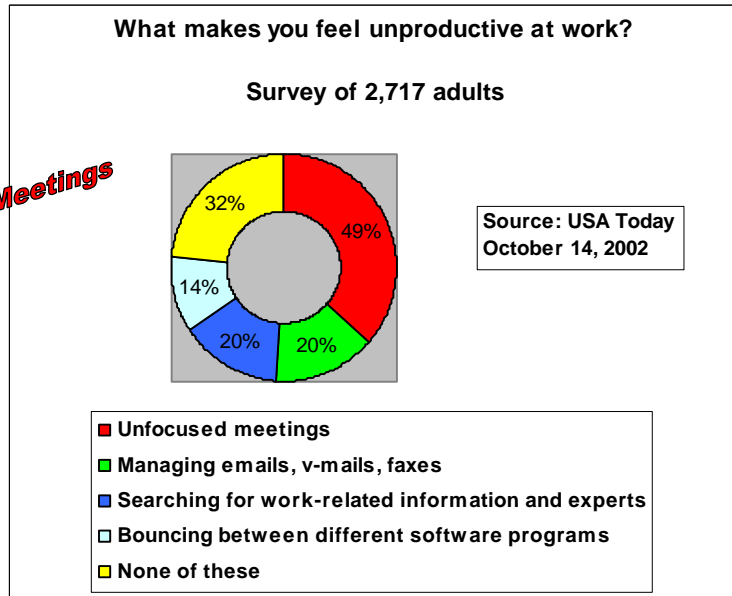# Skills for Effective Teamwork

Roles & Responsibilities

Members Knowledge, skill and ability

Improvement Tools

Facilitative Behaviors

Team Operating Procedures

Meeting Management

Decision Making

Team Mgmt Tools

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Notes

Feeling Unproductive at Work?

What makes you feel unproductive at work?

Survey of 2,717 adults

#1 Unfocused Meetings

49%
32%
14%
20%
20%

Source: USA Today
October 14, 2002

- ■ Unfocused meetings
- ■ Managing emails, v-mails, faxes
- ■ Searching for work-related information and experts
- □ Bouncing between different software programs
- □ None of these

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Notes

Meeting Management

Process	Tools
Planning	Agenda
Conducting	Roles & Responsibilities Operating Procedures Tools for Teamwork
Assuring Follow-up	Action Register Decision Log
Evaluating	Process Check
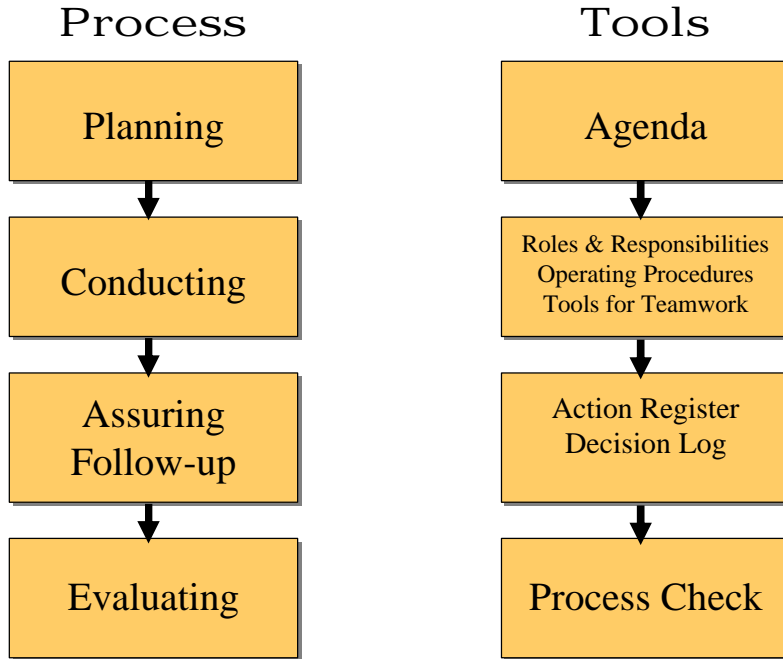
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Notes

Agenda

Team _____		**Date** _____	
Meeting Location _____		**Time** _____	
Leader _____		**Recorder** _____	
Timekeeper _____		**Facilitator** _____	

Agenda Item	Desired Outcome	Time	Person
Review/Revise Agenda			
Review CI List			
Plan Next Meeting (Review Parking Lot)			
Process Check			

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Example Agenda

Agenda Item	Desired Outcome	Time	Person
Review/Revise Agenda	Agreement	2 min.	TM
Review CI List	Remind team of commitments	2 min.	EC
Customer Visit	Pre-planning ◆ Customer: which one, when & why ◆ List of key concerns (customer & ours) ◆ Plan future meeting(s) to resolve & prepare	45 min.	Sales rep.
Capital Project (CPR-123)	Inform team and list open issues	40 min.	RR
New Computer System (follow up)	Decision on which alternative	25 min.	AP
Plan Next Meeting (Review Parking Lot)	List of key topics	3 min.	TM
Action Register	Clarify actions and responsibilities	5 min.	TM
Process Check	Feedback on the meeting	10 min.	KB

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Team Roles

Team Role	Focus	Duties
Leader	◆ Balance ◆ Progress on task ◆ Attention to process	◆ Use facilitative behaviors ◆ Check for consensus ◆ Guide without dominating ◆ Monitor the process
Facilitator	◆ Team interaction process	◆ Use facilitative behaviors ◆ Call attention to process ◆ Negotiate role ◆ Stay out of content ◆ Do not do what team can
Recorder	◆ Accurate display of team consensus	◆ Capture key words ◆ Write legibly ◆ Check for accuracy
Timekeeper	◆ Remind team of time	◆ Clarify expectations ◆ Give advance notice ◆ Call times
Member	◆ Constructive participation	◆ Use facilitative behaviors ◆ Contribute and listen ◆ Share the leadership

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Notes

Team Operating Procedures

Team operating procedures are rules that everyone on the team agrees to follow in dealing with one another. Some teams need complex operating procedures, while others need just a few ground rules. To be effective, however, any team needs at least some shared expectations. The process of developing them may be as important to the team as the procedures themselves.

Team operating procedures usually address at least some of the following issues:

Agenda: Who prepares the agenda? When? Circulated how far in advance? When are contributions due?

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Decisions: Under what conditions will the team make decisions other than by consensus? What if the team is unable to reach consensus in the time allotted?

Process check: Can anyone call for a process check at any time? Who leads the process check? Using what rating scales? How are team process improvements made?

Brainstorming

1. **Clearly state the issue: Write on flip chart**
2. **Individuals write ideas (allow quite time)**
3. **Collect ideas: Poll the group, one idea at a time per person until time is up or no more ideas**
4. **Clarify ideas**
5. **Priority rank ideas**

Discuss

Defend

Debate

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Notes

Priority Ranking

*Purpose***:**

To put a list of alternatives into order of preference.

Applications:

This procedure applies whenever a team needs to select from a list of ideas, alternative approaches, next steps, or actions. Priority ranking routinely follows brainstorming.

Procedure:

1. Review the purpose of setting priorities so everyone understands what the team is about to do and why.

2. Number the listed items on the flip chart so they will be easy to discuss, and be sure all items are clear to everyone.

3. Choose a ranking procedure. The idea is for each person to select and mark a few items from the list, so all can see the team favorites. The team can select from two ranking procedures:

    ◆   Mark four favorites. (In a short list, mark three. In a longer list, mark up to eight.) This is unweighted selection, the fastest way.

    ◆   Use numbers to indicate preference: 4 = first choice; 3 = second choice; 2 = third; and so on. (Weighted selection, gives more precision.)

4. Silently review and choose. Decide how much time to allow; then all members quietly write down their choices.

5. Swarm and tally. Everyone uses a flip chart marker to put up their marks. (This is more efficient than having the recorder do it.)

6. Summarize. Have the recorder write total points by each item: the total number of marks is the number of points. Identify all items selected by anyone.

7. Consensus. Agree on the favorites; give everyone a chance to sell the team on personal favorites before making a team decision.

Action Register

Team _____   **Date** _____

Leader _____   **Recorder** _____

Who	Is Going To Do What	When	Completed

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Notes

Decision Log

Team _____ **Date** _____

Leader _____ **Recorder** _____

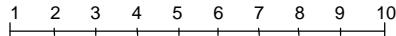| Decision	Responsibilities

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Notes

Process Check Rating Form

For each of the following rating scales, silently rate your team's process as you experienced it during the meeting.
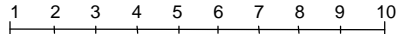
On-Track

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

The meeting lacked focus, wandered from one topic to another, dwelled on trivia.

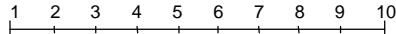The meeting showed orderly progress on the task and followed an agenda.

Participation

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

A few members dominated, while others stayed quiet.

Everyone contributed ideas and took part in team decisions.

Listening

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Two or more people often talked at once; team members failed to listen to one another.

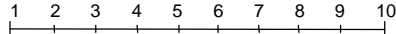One person talked at a time; team members listened respectfully.

Shared Leadership

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Few people besides the designated leader did anything to keep us on task.

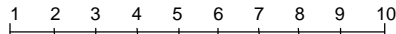We shared leadership; everyone took responsibility for staying on task.

Results

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

We could have achieved better results by working independently.

We achieved better results by working together than independently.

Other

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

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Notes

Process Check

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Poor   **Outstanding**

What worked well?

1.

2.

3.

How could the meeting have been better?

1.

2.

3.

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Notes

Decision Making Approaches

Directive . . . Consultative . . . Democratic . . . Consensus

Power

closely held

Power

shared
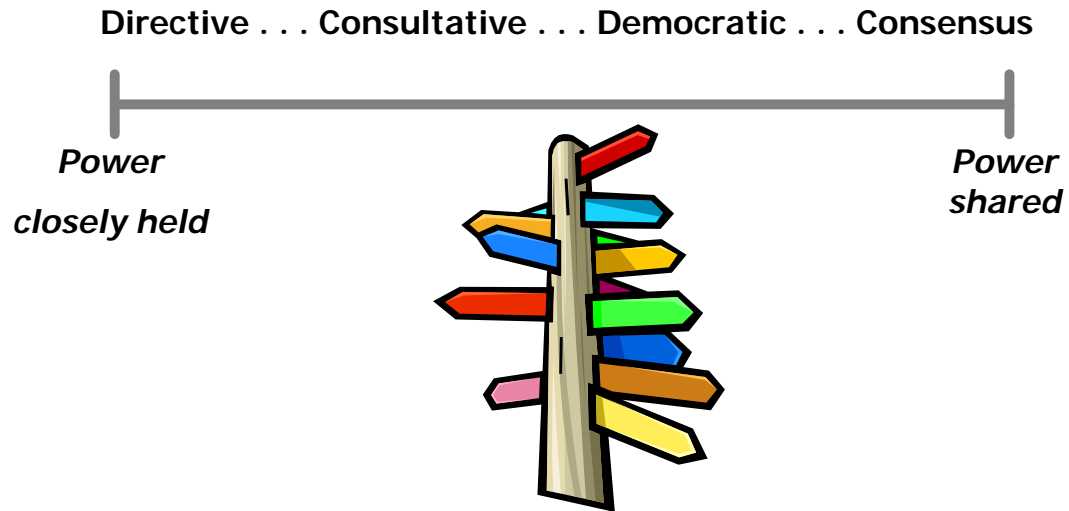
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Notes

Types of Decisions

Decision Making Approach	Best Application	Primary Dangers
DIRECTIVE Team leaders decides alone and announces the decision	◆ Emergency ◆ Confidential information	◆ Discourages involvement ◆ Fosters dependence
CONSULTATIVE Leader gets ideas from members, then decides	◆ Time deadline ◆ Stalemate ◆ Entrenched conflict	◆ Stifles initiative ◆ Discourages critical thinking
DEMOCRATIC Team members vote and majority wins	◆ Routine issues ◆ Very large group ◆ Commitment not needed	◆ Win-lose situation ◆ Apathy or sabotage
CONSENSUS All members participate in reaching a decision that all will support	◆ Commitment needed ◆ Synergy ◆ Coordination required ◆ Interdependence	◆ Takes time ◆ Requires skill

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Notes

What Is Consensus?

◆ **Consensus does not equate to 100% agreement**

◆ **Consensus does equate to 100% commitment to decisions**

◆ **Consensus occurs when each person on the team can say that he or she has had a chance to speak, has spoken, and has been sincerely heard**

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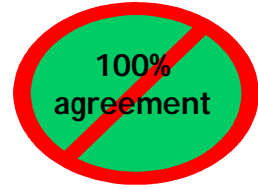
Notes

How To Reach Consensus

✓ **Contribute, don't defend**

✓ **Seek a win-win**

✓ **Actively listen to others' views**

✓ **Find out the reasons for others' positions**

✓ **Don't agree for the sake of agreement**

✓ **Avoid voting or averaging**

✓ **Confront your differences politely**

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Notes

Recognizing Consensus

Consensus has been reached when all members can answer *yes* **to 4 questions:**

> **Have I honestly listened?**

> **Have I been heard and understood?**

> **Will I support the decision?**

> **Will every member say** *we* **?**

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Notes

Communication is…
The vehicle that drives success!

The goals of effective communication are:

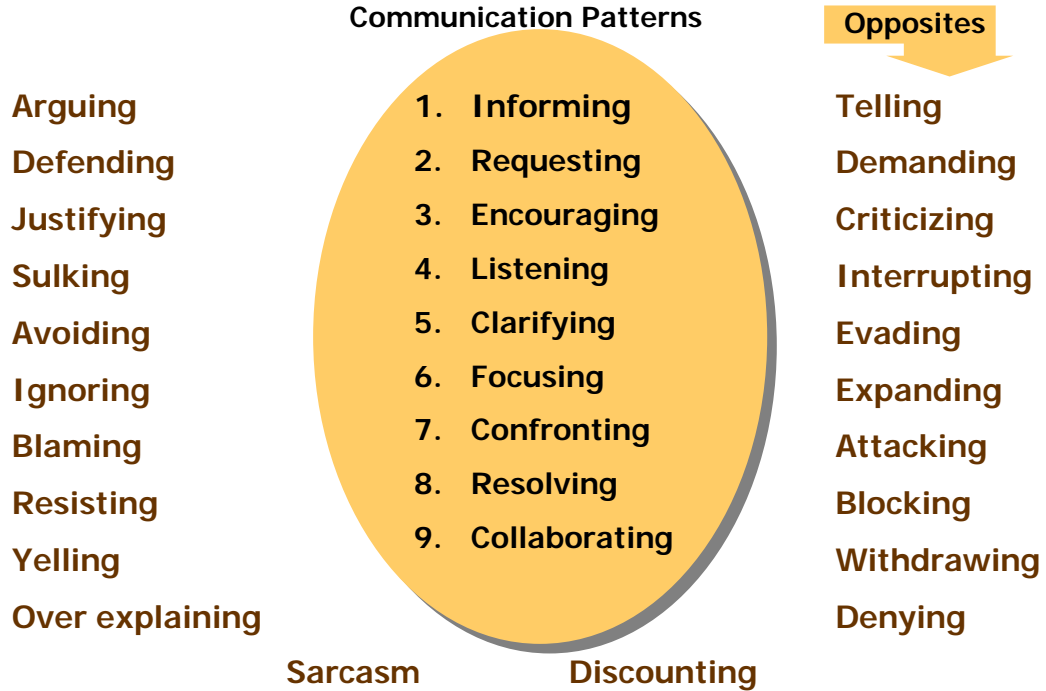1. **Send the right message…at the right time…in the right way**
2. **Receive the message as it is intended**

- **Listen for congruence between the "head" and the "heart"**
- **Clarify the received message as necessary**
- **Arrive at understanding and comprehension**
- **Display "self mastery" in difficult and highly charged situations**

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Notes

A Communication Model: *Staying in the Circle*

Communication Patterns

Opposites

Arguing		Telling
Defending	1. **Informing**	Demanding
Justifying	2. **Requesting**	Criticizing
Sulking	3. **Encouraging**	Interrupting
Avoiding	4. **Listening**	Evading
Ignoring	5. **Clarifying**	Expanding
Blaming	6. **Focusing**	Attacking
Resisting	7. **Confronting**	Blocking
Yelling	8. **Resolving**	Withdrawing
Over explaining	9. **Collaborating**	Denying

Sarcasm   **Discounting**

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Notes

10 Commandments of Feedback

1. Ask whether the person would like feedback

2. Offer on observed behavior, not perceived attitudes, general feelings

3. Offer a description of what you saw/heard, rather than a judgment

4. Choose aspects of job performance that are most important

5. Set the ground rules in advance

6. Separate reinforcers from feedback for improvement

7. Focus on behavior that can be changed

8. Reinforcers should be SSIP: sincere, specific, immediate, personal

9. Give as close to the time of the observed behavior as possible

10. Before offering, consider its value to the person

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Notes

Receiving Feedback

- ◆ **Say "thank you for the feedback"**

- ◆ **Don't explain, justify, or discount the feedback**

- ◆ **Ask for specifics if feedback is vague**

- ◆ **Accept the feedback as a valid perception of at least one person**

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Notes

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Team Performance

Return to Tools Page

How it's done:

- Meeting management skills, knowledge of group dynamics, a balance of flexibility and steadfastness, and communication skills
- Develop the means of identifying sources of conflict and seeking resolutions
- Creating an environment that encourages and rewards teamwork
- Techniques to involve all members in planning and decision making, and giving and receiving feedback

Examples of our tools:

- Building Blocks for Team Performance
- Team Member Preference Type
- Team Process Check
- Decision Making Models and Tools
- Meeting Tools and Logs
- Just-in-Time Team Training