Teams:

Making Them Effective
Achieving Outstanding Results

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Today’s Topics

• Teams: Overview
• Team-Related Concepts
• Facilitating Effective Meetings
• Assessing Team Effectiveness
Check-in

What curiosities /questions about team effectiveness do you bring to this session?
Teams: Overview
Team

... a collection of people with a common commitment to the team’s purpose and each other.

“A group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”

(Katzenbach & Smith, 1993)
Teams vs. Groups

**Group** - a collection of people who interact with one another, influence one another, & primarily perform work as individuals.

- Focus is on individual sub-area goals & performance
- Communication is primarily focused on information sharing & coordination of activities
- Group comes to joint agreements / decisions and delegates follow-up
- The whole *is* the sum of the parts
Ineffective Teams

- Individually think of an ineffective team you have worked with or observed:
  - What characteristics / patterns / behaviors made the team ineffective?

- In pairs/triads:
  - Share the above with each other
  - What characteristics did these teams have in common?
Effective Teams

- Individually think of an effective team you have worked with or observed:
  - What was this team’s purpose?
  - What made it effective in achieving its purpose?
    - Write down 3+ characteristics that contributed to this team’s success.

- In pairs/triads:
  - Share the above with each other
  - What characteristics did these teams have in common?
Types of Teams

- **Natural Work Teams**
  - Functional, departmental, or operational (provides particular product / service)
  - Designated supervisor / manager
  - Permanent / ongoing

- **Formal Project or Action Teams**
  - Specific project, problem, or initiative
  - Designated leader / sponsor
  - Can be cross-functional
  - Temporary

- **Leadership Teams**
  - Usually cross-functional or cross-departmental
  - Designated manager leader
  - Permanent / ongoing

- **Self-managed**
  - Often operational and / or informal
  - No designated leader
  - Permanent or temporary
High Functioning Teams

- Do real work together
  - Have shared work products
- Tasks are interdependent
  - Work could not be accomplished by people working independently
- Shared responsibility / leadership
  - For output & team process
- Make and carry out key decisions together
- Solve problems as a group
- Members hold each other accountable
- Members feel ownership for team’s success *in addition* to their individual success
- Whole is *more* than the sum of the parts
Team-Related Concepts

- Start with Why
- Task, Process, Relationship
- Team Storming
Start with WHY

WHY
WHAT
HOW
WHY

- What is our Purpose?
- Why do we Exist?
- How does our work link to the Organization’s mission, vision, values?
- What Difference are we going to make?
- Why us?
- Should this be a team effort?
The Work of a Team

- Task
- Relationship
- Process
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What work we need to accomplish</td>
<td>How we accomplish our work</td>
<td>How we relate to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific outcomes, products, or services</td>
<td>• Roles – task and process</td>
<td>• Shared expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job to be done for internal / external customer(s)</td>
<td>• How meetings are organized / structured / facilitated</td>
<td>• Ground rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goals and measures</td>
<td>• Decision-making rules, processes</td>
<td>• Understanding each other’s styles and preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How we will know we are successful</td>
<td>• How we will organize / accomplish our work</td>
<td>• Ways we give each other feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How we will communicate</td>
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Team Storming

- Task conflict can be creative
- “Personality conflict” ➔ Often destructive
  - Fundamentally, a Violation of Expectations
- Expectations are always present
  - Usually implicitly held
  - Unstated
- Successful teams articulate, understand, and agree to shared expectations
  - Explicitly stated & understood
  - Specific
  - Behavior-based

“No mind-reading expected”
“Silence is consent”
# How Expectations are Violated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Leader</th>
<th>By Team</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micromanaging</td>
<td>Missing / late to meetings</td>
<td>Talking too much or too little in meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not giving feedback when team members negatively impact team</td>
<td>Not outwardly demonstrating commitment to team’s work</td>
<td>Not sharing credit and / or support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making decisions w/o input</td>
<td>Late or incomplete assignments</td>
<td>Not responding to emails / voicemails in a timely manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not praising/rewarding good work</td>
<td>Not dealing directly with other team members about issues / concerns</td>
<td>Talking negatively about team outside of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not valuing input</td>
<td>Not valuing input</td>
<td>Being negatively contagious in meetings</td>
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Emotions running high
Destructive interaction / outcome
Extremely confusing
Feel anxious about a relationship
Hold a poor opinion of a person
One more nudge: you may explode, withdraw, or say something you’ll regret?

Feel misunderstood
Misinterpret: question motives or intent
Make inferences

Something happens that leaves you feeling upset or irritated.

“Gut” feeling: things just aren’t right.
Effective Conflict Resolution

• Explicitly state and understand expectations
  • What they look like in action (behavior-based)

• Deal with unmet expectations (“undiscussables”) as conflict is brewing (vs. waiting for eruptions or team dysfunction)

• Give individual feedback to team members, as needed

• Discuss disagreements / misunderstandings
  • Use team ground rules for conversation
  • Don’t attack / DTIP
  • Focus on concerns, not positions

• Do team effectiveness assessment (more later)
Facilitating Effective Meetings

- Macro – Build the Team
- Micro – Manage Meetings
Build the Team

- **DON’T** just start with:

  “What’s the right solution to the project / problem / initiative?”

- **DO** start with:

  “How will we work together?”
Forming

Describe general team purpose / outcome (Charter, if project team) and then ----

Build Relationships

Get to know each other’s:

- Expectations for effective teamwork
- Personality / style preferences
- Strengths
- Foibles
Relationship-Building Strategies

- **Effective teamwork’ norms:** “What would this look like in action?”
- **Team Effectiveness Contribution assessment**
- **Team Blockers:** Individual habits that get in the way; what they and others can do to minimize
- **MBTI:** Individual personality preferences assessment
- **FIRO – B:** Individual interpersonal preferences assessment
- **Strengthsfinders:** Individual talents / strength assessment
- **Others?**
Clarify Team Process

Agree to:

- Expectations
- Ground Rules
- Team Roles
- Team Contract
Team Process Strategies

- Review Schwartz’s / CAM’s Ground Rules
- Establish team Ground Rules
- Determine team leadership role(s); assign or rotate
- Identify team process roles; assign or rotate
- Create Team Contract
- Discuss RACIS – responsible, accountable, consulted, informed, supports
- Define decision making processes
- 10 Measures of an Effectiveness Team assessment
Managing Meetings

**L. facilis**
- “To make easy or easier”

**Facilitation**
- “The process of orchestrating group dynamics toward achieving some specific outcome” (Guila Muir)
- “The process of improving a group’s problem solving & decision making effectiveness” (Roger Schwartz)
- “A set of conscious, practiced skills that can be developed & expanded” (Schwartz)
- The pathway to efficient team meetings & effective team outcomes (McHugh)
Good Facilitation
Prevents . . .

. . . meetings lacking clear direction
. . . out-of-control discussions
. . . overly lengthy (or brief) meetings
. . . avoidance of real issues / conflict
. . . meetings where nothing is decided
. . . unnecessary interpersonal & team nightmares!
Good Facilitation Supports . . .

- Increased group productivity
  - Decision & problem-solving quality
  - Time required
- Increased focus
  - Targeted discussions & depth
- Increased participation
  - Everyone engages
- Increased individual accountability
  - Personal awareness & choice
- Enjoyable process & meeting
  - Meetings *can* be fun
Facilitator Role

- Team *process* expert & advocate
- Content neutral
- Develops & maintains a safe environment for group communication
- Stimulates dialogue & interaction
- Provides clarification when appropriate
- Diagnoses the group’s process and intervenes as necessary
- Summarizes discussions & decisions
**Participant Role**

- Comes prepared
- Starts on time & is fully present
- Fills team meeting roles
- **In discussions:**
  - Shares all relevant information
  - Uses specific examples & agree on what important words mean
  - Explains reasoning & intent
  - Tests assumptions & inferences
  - Asks meaningful questions
  - Focuses on interests, not positions
  - Combines advocacy & inquiry
  - Discusses un-discussable issues
- Helps improve the meeting process
Remember . . .

. . . facilitation is a role & skill
. . . facilitation is *not just something* the Team Leader *does*
. . . successful teams share leadership, e.g. they *share facilitation* tasks
. . . team members are likely to function as *both ‘facilitators’ and ‘participants’* in
a single meeting
The path of Successful Team Meetings . . .

- **An entry point**
  - Clear purpose, objectives, agenda
  - Check-in: prepared / present participants
- **Core of meeting**
  - Full participation
  - Constructive discussion
  - Evaluating alternatives & decision-making
- **Exit point**
  - Firm action plan, responsibilities, timeline
  - Next meeting objectives / agenda / plan for pre-work
  - Follow-up communication clarified
  - Meeting debrief
Meeting Entry

- Start on time
- Clarify meeting purpose & outcomes
  - Information sharing, brainstorming, decision making
- Review & agree to agenda topics & time slots
- Review meeting ground rules (next)
- Develop & clarify meeting roles (next)
- Set enthusiastic & optimistic climate
  - Emotions & attitudes are contagious
- Help participants “arrive”
  - Check-in activity
Ground Rules Examples

- Start/end on time
- Come to the meeting prepared
- Share openly & constructively
- One voice at a time
- Listen for understanding
- Maintain confidentiality
- No interrupting
- No monopolizing air time
- Electronic sabbatical: no electronic work distractions
Potential Role Assignments

- Time keeper
- Note taker
- Scribe
- Gatekeeper – notes participation levels
- Consensus tester – ensures true consensus is reached
- Devil’s advocate – elicits different points of view
- Harmonizer – maintains team harmony
- Mediator - negotiates conflict & disagreement
Core of Meeting

- Cover one idea at a time
- Maintain focus & pace
- Manage phases of discussions (next)
- Utilize discussion tools in order to: (next)
  - Encourage thorough discussion of ideas – including minority views, quieter folks
  - Encourage brainstorming & creative approaches
  - Intervene to ensure group process & interactions remain positive
    - Constructive & amicable conflict resolution
  - Summarize key points & decisions as they occur
  - Remain supportive & enthusiastic
  - If appropriately off-topic, re-negotiate agenda & timeline
Team Discussion Phases

1. Explore Ideas
   - Open exchange
   - Different perspectives
   - Brainstorming

2. Narrow Ideas
   - Organize & cluster ideas
   - Compare
   - Winnow down to top options

3. Decide Action
   - Choose best option
Discussion Tools

- Capture ideas & discussions on flipcharts or whiteboards
- Use the think time and the “sticky process” to solicit ideas & involve everyone
- Call on people by name or poll the entire group
- Use “parking lot list” to capture relevant but tangential thoughts for future consideration
- Use evaluation criteria to narrow (matrix, top 3, voting, etc.)
- Make sure people are on the same page throughout
- Take a break / move around when the group is stuck
- Celebrate: “We’ve decided something!”
Meeting Exit

- Ensure decisions & commitments are understood
- Summarize next steps, responsibilities, & timing
- Assign follow-up administrative tasks (publishing notes, transcribing charts, etc.)
- Discuss/schedule the next meeting
  - Agenda topics, topic owners, required preparation, meeting logistics
- Debrief the meeting process (next)
Meeting Debrief Guidelines

• Debrief EVERY meeting
• Evaluate PROCESS & CONTENT
• Use evaluation criteria: round-robin or popcorn
  • Thumbs up, sideways, down & why
  • “One word of phrase” that describes what I feel now
  • Rate the process – How well did we stay on the agenda? Did everyone participate? How well did we follow ground rules and/or norms?
  • Rate the content – Did we achieve our meeting purpose? How relevant was the content?
  • “What I most appreciate about today’s meeting . . .”
• Decide what you’ll change next time!
Assessing Team Effectiveness
Team Effectiveness Debriefs

- Less frequent
  - Quarterly, monthly
- Assess the team’s process over time
- Invite reflection
- Measured against team’s Ground Rules
- A separate agenda item or meeting
- Perhaps get an outside facilitator
- Modify / create new Ground Rules & meeting strategies, if needed
Team Effectiveness Questions

- Is everyone participating fully?
- Are members using active listening skills?
- Does everyone take responsibility for how the team functions (shared leadership)?
- Is the team making decisions together?
- Are meetings on track and productive?
- Is everyone contributing to the team’s work & output?
- Are disagreements managed effectively?
- Is everyone comfortable raising difficult issues?
- Does the team make good decisions?
- Are team members supporting one another and helping out?
- Is there a shared sense of direction?
- Do we effectively navigate ‘exploring, narrowing, and deciding’ phases of discussion?
- Do we have fun?
- What should we Start / Stop / Continue?
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