

Building Effective Teams Handout

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

The following list summarizes the key characteristics of effective teams.

Cooperation

Teams demonstrate cooperation by:

- Working together to achieve goals rather than through competition.
- Integrating new team members easily and quickly.

Communication

Effective teams demonstrate communication by:

- Sharing information.
- Establishing a good rapport between team members.
- Communicating frequently and clearly with one another.

Competence

Effective teams display competence by:

- Demonstrating technical expertise.
- Meeting team goals and expectations.
- Adapting to changing circumstances.
- Learning new skills or approaches as needed.

Self-Correction

In effective teams, the team members self-correct by:

- Admitting and learning from individual and group mistakes and using this information to adjust their course of action.
- Showing willingness to adapt to be more effective.
- Developing goals and tasks to help everyone succeed and get ahead.
- Resolving interpersonal conflict between team members, without escalating the conflict to the leader.

DIAGNOSING AND MITIGATING TEAM DYSFUNCTIONS

This table summarizes the signs and symptoms of dysfunctional teams and strategies you can use to mitigate them.

Dysfunction	How It is Exhibited	Mitigation Strategies
Lack of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealing weaknesses and mistakes. • Failing to provide help or support to peers. • Failing to go above and beyond performance expectations. • Having conflicts with team members and/or the team leader. • Hoarding resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage information sharing. • Ensure fairness. • Be supportive.
Lack of Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to seek out new responsibilities or take on new tasks. • Making mistakes on routine or easy tasks. • Making excuses for their performance. • Failing to suggest changes or improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage team responsibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hold individuals responsible for their successes and failures if it was clearly their sole responsibility. ○ Hold the team responsible for mistakes if all team members contributed to the mistake. ○ Empower team members to take initiative. ○ Reward all team members for group successes. • Set team goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differentiate between team goals and individual goals when communicating expectations. ○ Set a standard for evaluating goals. • Assess and correct. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call out problems due to a lack of teamwork. ○ Encourage team members to self-correct.
Lack of Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to go above and beyond. • Questioning underlying reasons for an action or decision. • Failing to contribute to the team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set milestones. • Reiterate goals. • Reward cooperation. • Encourage team cohesion. • Give responsibility.
Lack of Internal Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking faith in their abilities. • Relying heavily on their leader to make decisions and resolve conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit feedback. • Assign appropriate roles. • Provide more information.