Building Effective Teams handout

Strong teams are the products of strong leadership. This does not mean taking on the position of the omniscient, working 24/7, in charge of all things large and small. It means, instead, developing a team that is strong and autonomous, with the knowledge and capacity to achieve the Team's objectives. The essential nature of strong teams is the same, whatever your business, whatever your industry. Do your words and mindsets inspire team behavior? Never underestimate the strength of your words. Do you inspire? Do you ask the right questions? Does your team have the freedom to be creative? Do they have the tools to achieve your desired goals? You, as team members, must ask yourself these questions as you continue to working with your colleagues.

This handout is to support you continue building and enhancing a strong team spirit and achieve your objectives together. The team mindsets and phrases proposed here are not exhaustive to build strong and effective teams, but these have been proposed, as we feel they might help you reinforce your sense of belonging to a team and achieving together.

The Team Positive Mindset
One negative team member can hurt the whole operation. Some negative people can be affected by a positive atmosphere.
- Maintain your positive posture, even in difficult times._ Use positive language.
- When things are going smoothly, it is easy to take a team's good work for granted. People want their hard work to be recognized even if—*especially* if—it looks easy.
- Praise your colleagues for their positive outlooks; encourage positive behavior.

- In difficult situations, you do not have to smile or cover up; be honest but maintain the team's ability to look forward and find solutions.

Phrases you can say to one another.
_ "We have no problems, only challenges."
_ "Let's problem-solve together."
_ "I know the timing is tight, but we can do it.

The Maturity mindset
Personality clashes, at some point, are inevitable. Clashes stem from any work styles, habits, speaking styles, types of humor, beliefs, or habits that differ. among teammates.

- Different personalities can spur new directions, but ongoing conflict is counterproductive.
- Consultants who can work with personality clashes are well worth the investment.
- Some personality clashes can exist as a mild undercurrent without damaging the team.
- More often than not, interpersonal issues hurt the team, and most can be resolved.
- Serious issues and rivalries require professional intervention.
- Make every effort to have team members resolve interpersonal issues before they poison the team.
- People rarely change, but communication styles are habits that can be practiced and developed.
- A team member who is ahead of the curve in an essential area can be an asset and an inspiration, *if* he or she is able to share knowledge without demeaning others.

Phrases

"Different styles bring new perspectives."
"Everyone here is an important part of this team and deserves our respect."

The Listening Mindset
- The team cannot function optimally if they do not have strong listening skills.
- Do not let your personal biases interfere with listening.
- Do not interrupt. Do not finish someone else's sentences.
- Pay attention when team members speak to you.
- Minimize distractions so that you can focus.
- Encourage notes where it will aid listening and retention.

Phrases to improve your listening skills.

"Let's go around the table and give everyone a chance to speak."
"I am in a hurry now, but I want to hear what you have to say. Can we talk this afternoon when I get back from my meeting?"
"What do you think?"

The Creative thinking Mindset

Not everyone has the same creative process. Allow for a variety of creative process styles.
- Put out an issue and give people time to think about it.
- Ideas often pop up at the oddest times, usually when we have stopped concentrating.
- Suggest that people take a brief break to recharge.
- Offer recharging suggestions, such as meditation, creative imagery, walking, or stretching.
- Hold meetings with the sole purpose of generating creative ideas. Be clear that implementation may not be immediate, but do not let good ideas disappear.

- Keep track of creative notions that arise during these meetings.
- Allow people to express their own creative styles in the workspace and in the work itself.

Phrases to encourage the creating thinking mindset.

"Even the most innovative improvements can be built upon."
"Never be afraid to speak out with a 'crazy' idea.
This team favors nonconformity over conformity."
"Do not be held back by fear of failure. Even failed experiments teach us something. At the very least, they teach us what will not work."
"As much as we know, there is an infinite amount that we do not, and curiosity leads to creativity."
"Even if something is working, new levels may be achieved by new thinking."
"Let's take a ten-minute break to recharge."

The Action plans Mindset

A team that develops action plans will be more invested in the process than a team that has action plans handed to them.
- Restate the goal, in writing, for your team to see as they develop action plans.
- The team must determine who is responsible for which actions.
- Established time frames are essential for solid action plans.
- Team members must come to some consensus about priorities in order to create and carry out action plans.
- Ensure that the action plan is clear to everyone.
- "As a result of our brainstorming, we have established new goals. We need to develop action plans and put those goals into the context of the rest of our work."

Questions to ask when drafting actions plans.

"Of those which we decided to pursue, which is the most important?"
"What needs to be done?"
"Who, on the team, will take these actions?"
"What resistance might we encounter in carrying out this action plan?"
"What can we do to minimize obstacles?"
"Who else needs to know about the plan?"
"Is this action plan clear to everyone?"

Implementation

- Your team should refer to its action plans throughout the implementation process. Plans should not be kept in a drawer or posted in a forgotten place with phone messages scrawled on them.
- Team members should work the plan, but not be so attached that they are unwilling or unable to change directions if necessary.
- Once a decision has been made, the team needs to move beyond debate and come together as a team to move forward with the plan.

Phrases to ask one another as a team.

"Are we on schedule?"
"What challenges are we facing as we go forward.
we have anyone have any questions, now that we've begun the process?"
"It is time to reevaluate. Are we heading in the right direction?"