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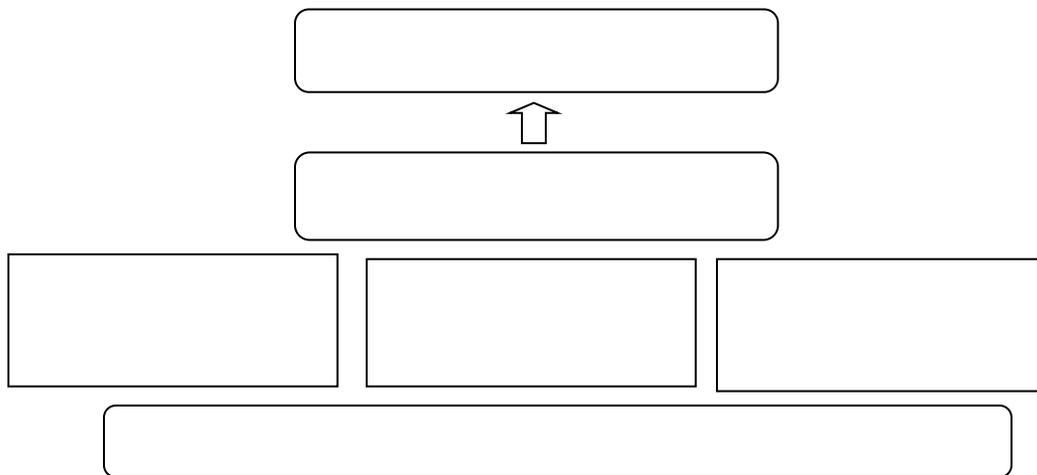
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PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF GROUP DYNAMICS

Talking Points

- Refresher – what is a team
- Your specific team issues
- Major barriers to effective team dynamic
- Team exercises for improving the dynamics

WHAT IS A TEAM



Teamwork is:

TOP 5 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

	Barrier.....Not
<p>1. Can't take in what others are saying because they say it differently.</p> <p>Have team members practice actively listening, where they repeat back what they heard. The individual who is communicating the original idea can correct the understanding and both members and those observing can see where the differences originate and have a deeper understanding of how to communicate more effectively.</p>	
<p>2. Individuals approach things differently so they don't know where their team mates are coming from so they don't develop trust.</p> <p>Have team members work through a simple problem and document the steps they would take to solve the problem. Then have each member review with the group how and why they approached it in their unique way. The group should see there are many ways to work through things and gain an appreciation for different approaches.</p>	
<p>3. The process by which they make decisions is different so they can't make consensus decision.</p> <p>Decisions shouldn't always be made through consensus but there are times when all team members need to have a say to buy in and carry the decision through. So if the team is having trouble making decisions look into why that is, challenge the team to identify why they are having trouble and brain storm on suggestions on how to improve.</p>	
<p>4. The group is highly interdependent but they don't understand what the rest of the teams roles are, they just know they need something from them to do their role.</p> <p>If time and skills permits, allowing the group to swap roles for a day or an hour. Often we think we know what someone else does until we are actually challenged with doing it ourselves. If time or skills don't permit, take time out of each team meeting to have individuals give a little review of their role and how they go about it.</p>	
<p>5. The common goal is not clearly defined or bought into by all team members.</p> <p>Some people enjoy the social interaction of team so naturally adjust well to working in a team, others however would prefer to be individual contributors. If individuals do not understand the common goal they are less likely to stretch themselves to work together as a team to accomplish. Ensure the group understands the goal they are trying to achieve as a team and the benefits of working together as a team.</p>	

EXERCISE # 1

Each team member decides what level of risk each of these behaviors entails for me personally:

1. Asking help from others in addressing a work-based problem
2. Asking for feedback from group members regarding something I have done
3. Making a statement that might anger someone else in the group
4. Expressing a difference of opinion or a conflict I have with another group member
5. Giving another member critical feedback
6. Being the center of attention of the group
7. Expressing confusion or uncertainty in front of other group members
8. Expressing dissatisfaction with the group leader
9. Admitting I was wrong about something I said or did
10. Admitting to the group I was wrong about an idea I had or an initiative I promoted

EXERCISE #2

A team discussion:

- If we were asked to identify the three key factors that led to our team success this year, we would select the following...
- If asked to capture the essence of our team in one clear and meaningful statement, it would be the following...
- We understand that our team is rooted in meaningful values. If asked to summarize what this means we would offer the following statement...

EXERCISE # 3

Choosing the Best Options W.Marty Marzolf.

Objective (s): To help a team or organization evaluate alternatives.

Activity Description: After clarifying the problem or issue under consideration, I give the team time to brainstorm openly for ideas. After they have generated an unedited list I tell them to narrow down their choices and focus on only a few. I then introduce a pre-established set of focusing filters created by the design team.

Groups then use these filters as a way to evaluate and narrow the brainstorming ideas.

The filters that I use are typically like those listed below. Note, however, there are many that can apply, depending on the organization or team:

- Cost---is it too high or within our budget?
- Time---can we complete the project by the target date?
- Availability---do we have the resources in house?
- Practicality---is it reasonable approach?

Options: It can be very helpful to have handouts made up with the criteria, including a scoring method for each (one to five). Each group can report results based on the total scoring for each option being considered.

EXERCISE # 4

STOP DOING LIST

Author: W. Marty Marzolf

Objective (s): To apply the martial arts strategy of “best use of energy” to help team prioritize activities.

How the author has used this exercise: I often find that organizations simply take on too much...or as in the words of one CEO I was working with, “we put too much on our plates.” This exercise helps a team or organization consider how time and effort (thus energy) is being used; to consider whether they are in the words of Peter Drucker “focusing on the right things rather than placing too much emphasis on doing things right.” The point is to eliminate activities that no longer add value.

Activity Description: Whether working with teams or an organization, I almost always use a design team to help insure that any tool I implement is “tailored” to best fit their needs. Generally I introduce the Stop Doing List in the following way: “Undoubtedly you have made hundreds of ‘to do’ lists. Perhaps it is time to generate a ‘stop doing’ list; a list of outmoded procedures to discard.”

The questions developed by the design team are then introduced. A partial list created by one operations team is listed below:

- What tasks could we simplify or eliminate without affecting quality?
- What activities do we justify with the phrase, “That’s how we’ve always done it.”
- What methods do we currently use that don’t work well at all?

I close the exercise by writing the responses on a flip chart and asking the group to create a list of “inaction” items. Make sure to specify what the team or organization will stop doing, who will stop doing it, and when they will stop.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEAM DYNAMICS

Silent Starts. Before starting a major discussion, ask each member to write down the response to a prompt or the most important question at hand. Collect and redistribute the responses and have them read out. Begin the discussion.

Counterpoints. Randomly assign two or three members to make the most powerful arguments *against* the recommendation under consideration.

Breakouts. Divide the team into small groups and have each group brainstorm questions, identify key issues, or propose alternatives to the issue at hand. Then, have each group present its conclusions to the team.

One-Minute Memos

At the conclusion of a major discussion, reserve two to three minutes for members to write, anonymously or not, what they would have said next had there been time to continue the discussion. Collect the cards for review by the team leader. .

Future Perfect History

In breakout groups, develop a narrative that explains in the future perfect tense how the team moved from its current state to an envisioned state. For example, five years from now the team will have achieved...

Role Plays

Ask subsets of the team to assume the perspective of different constituent groups likely to be affected by the issue at hand. How would these stakeholders frame the issue and define a successful outcome? What would each group regard as a worst-case scenario?

Adapted from Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards by Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor. BoardSource and John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005.

WHAT QUESTIONS REVEAL ABOUT A LEADER'S MINDSET

In this *Wharton Leadership Digest* article, Marilee Adams (American University) distinguishes between “judger” and “learner” questions and says they make a significant difference to the quality of a meeting. Here are some judger questions:

- Who is to blame? Why can't they perform?
- How can I prove I'm right?
- How can I protect my turf?
- Why aren't we winning?
- What could we lose?
- Why bother

And here are some learner questions:

- What are my goals? What am I responsible for?
- What are the facts and what am I assuming?
- How can I help?
- What do our stakeholders want?
- What steps can we take to improve the situation?
- What's possible?

“Teams that operate with a Learner mindset are more productive, motivated, and engaged,” says Adams. By changing the questions we ask, we focus on achieving goals in specific areas, change the tone of meetings, and produce markedly better results.

“Shifting Mindsets: Questions That Lead to Results” by Marilee Adams in *Wharton Leadership Digest*, October 16, 2012,

Additional resource: http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocol/a_z.html#B

http://www.workshopexercises.com/team_building_continued.htm