

APPENDIX III - SUSTAINING THE TEAM

This appendix provides additional suggestions on how to sustain a partnering team after the initial partnering workshop.

Experience shows that many people, when they are just beginning partnering, think that once the partnering workshop has been concluded successfully, partnering just takes care of itself. During the preparation of this guide, a number of interviews were conducted with teams who were using partnering. One major conclusion from these interviews is that sustaining the team is just as important as the partnering workshop, and requires considerable effort and regular maintenance. There are significant differences in performance between those teams who work hard at sustaining the team, and those who think team spirit will just take care of itself.

This is entirely consistent with the books and guides written by people experienced at working with teams. Virtually all guides stress the need for “team hygiene,” that is, the regular maintenance of team agreements, norms, and relationships. One team of management consultants¹ says there are “creating” and “sustaining” stages of team performance, as shown below:

¹ Taken from the Drexler/Sibbet/Forrester Team Performance Inventory,

Creating Stages

Stage 1: Orientation - Why a team

Stage 2: Trust-building - Who are you

Stage 3: Goal/Role Clarification - What we must do

Stage 4: Commitment - How to proceed

Sustaining Stages

Stage 5: Implementation - Who does what, when

Stage 6: High Performance - WOWS!

Stage 7: Renewal - Why continue

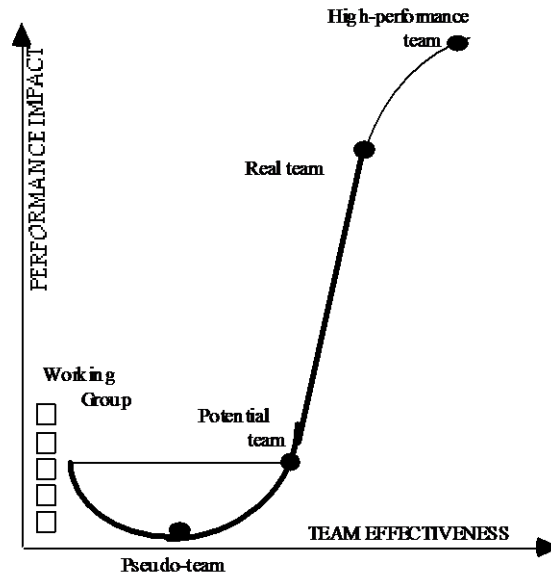
If all goes very well, the work leading up to the partnering workshop, and the workshop itself, will carry a team through the four “creating” stages. But all the “sustaining” stages occur after the partnering workshop. These stages include developing a detailed team implementation plan, carrying out that plan in such a way that the team impresses even itself with what it can accomplish, and then from time to time, recommitting to the team and the goals of the team.

WHEN IS A TEAM NOT A TEAM?

As partnering becomes an established practice, one of the considerable dangers is that people will talk a great deal about partnering and teamwork, but not really do the homework necessary to create a “real” team. In particular, the term “teamwork” is often used for any cooperative behavior in working together,

whether or not it describes the behavior of real teams. This can create cynicism if people hear all the rhetoric but don't see any real differences in behavior.

Figure _: DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEAMS



A team is not just any group working together. Management consultants Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith have described different types of teams, as shown in Figure ².

Katzenbach and Smith argue that many groups that are called “teams” are, in fact, working groups. Using their terminology, in a working group the participants share information and perspectives and make decisions necessary for individuals to do their jobs better, but the emphasis remains on individual

² Katzenbach, Jon R. and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*, New York: Harper Business, 1993.

performance and accountability. The distinguishing characteristic of a real team is that the members of a real team are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

This doesn't mean a team is inherently better. It takes a lot of work and a significant commitment of time to build a real team. If a working group can meet the performance challenge, then it may be quite satisfactory. Working groups are preferable when the work to be performed does not require collective work products or real-time integration of multiple-person skills, and when the sum of the individual results is all you need.

One of the downsides of claiming to be a team, without putting in the effort necessary to be a real team, is that you may create a "pseudo-team." A pseudo-team is a group that recognizes the value of being a team, may even use the rhetoric of acting as a team, but takes no collective responsibility for performance and doesn't share an equal commitment to accomplishing the purposes of the team.

The problem with a pseudo-team is that all the talk of acting as a team may disrupt the effectiveness of the individuals in the team. Prior to talking about being a team, individuals were getting things done although perhaps not as effectively as a team could do them. The claim that people are a team may

remove the freedom that individuals have to act, without substituting effective collective performance. So a working group may be a more effective way of getting the job done, unless the group's members make the commitment needed to move all the way to being a real team.

Katzenbach and Smith believe that the distinguishing characteristic of teams that perform exceptionally -- High Performance Teams -- is that in addition to all the attributes of a real team, all team members are deeply committed to each other's personal growth and success.

Under some circumstances, partnering could be accomplished using a working group. But in most cases, partnering is substantially enhanced by a real team, that is, a team that produces joint work products and accepts collective responsibility for performance. For example: If the goal is to sharply reduce the permit process time, getting to actual cleanup sooner, this will almost surely require that people act collectively rather than individually. This requires a real team. A good team is better than just good teamwork.

THE PERFORMANCE ETHIC

The need for a partnering team is driven by what it takes to get the job done.

The goal is not to be a team. The goal is to face the performance challenge

facing the partnering organizations as effectively as possible. Building a team is very often the best way to do that. A team is just the means to get there.

It's the chance to perform important, meaningful tasks -- to do something outside the ordinary -- that energizes teams, not just the opportunity to be a team.

Groups organized for the purpose of being a team, rather than to perform a challenging task, rarely become a real team. Over time, teams need to feel they really produce. It's not just a matter of feeling good about each other. It's a matter of feeling good about what the team has accomplished. The members of teams that don't produce ultimately don't end up feeling good about each other. The failure to produce typically leads to bad feelings between team members, and ultimately, to charges of bad faith between the partnering organizations.

BACK TO BASICS

The coach of a losing football team is often quoted as saying "we didn't execute" or "we've got to get back to basics." Many problems with partnering occur the same way: people forget or don't take the time to take care of basics. Here's a review of some of the basics of building an effective team:

Team Size

Research indicates that teams are more effective when the number of team members is under 10. Recent research at DuPont shows that group performance begins to drop off significantly when team size exceeds 12-14 members.

The size of a work group can be somewhat larger, since the purpose of group meetings is more to inform each other than to actually perform work. The key limiting factors on the size of a team are the ability to actually perform joint work, plus the need to communicate with all members freely and easily.

On occasion, it takes more than 10 members to accomplish your goals. When this is the case, it may be possible to gain the advantages of team performance by going to subteams.

Skills

Many management theorists stress the importance of having the full mix of skills within the team from the beginning. Others say they've never seen a team that had all the skills it needed from the beginning, and point out that

highly motivated teams are very good at acquiring the skills they need to succeed.

It is clear that one of the strengths of an effective team is that team members have complementary skills. Teams are less effective when all team members have about the same mix of skills. Teams need at least three kinds of skills:

Technical or Functional Expertise: Teams may need engineering or environmental expertise. They may also need knowledge and background about laws and the permit process. They may need expertise on procurement and contracting. The mix of expertise required depends on the nature of the project.

Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills: Teams need skills on how approach problems and generate solutions, how to organize for implementation, how to seek out and use needed information, and how to generate creative solutions within the team. Typically, teams need strong project management skills, since partnering requires a style of leadership where normal functional controls are not particularly useful in guiding performance.

Interpersonal Skills: Team members need basic skills of listening, communicating feelings, performing as team members, and group facilitation.

Common Purpose

Ultimately, the real adhesive that binds a partnering team together is a sense of common purpose. Team members need to believe the task they are working on really matters to their organizations, or to society at large.

This common purpose is particularly powerful if team members see their goal as more than just a short-term organization need. The common purpose needs to be a goal about which team members feel excited.

Team members may be motivated by the environmental cleanup they'll accomplish, by the chance to prove they can do things cheaper or better, by the chance to work on something that's cutting-edge or innovative. The incentive could also be political, such as a policy or program question where the political visibility is so high that if it doesn't work, very powerful people will be very unhappy, with consequences for the entire organization, or where success can mean a significant boost to the organization.

When team members are excited you'll hear phrases like:

- “We’re going to be the first team to ever solve this problem.”
- “No one else has ever used this particular technology to solve this kind of problem.”
- “If we can figure this out, it will be a model for ...”
- “This is a real make-or-break issue for the organization...”
- “It’s nice to feel that we’re making a contribution beyond just doing our immediate jobs.”

One indicator that team members are really committed to the common purpose is whether they describe the team and its purpose enthusiastically to friends and family or other co-workers outside the team, and defend them vigorously to anyone who questions them. Teams work best when there is “a little fire in the belly.”

Clear Management Direction AND Flexibility on Approach

When terms like “empowerment” are used, there’s a tendency to view this as the removal of constraints or controls. That may be helpful, but it’s rarely enough. When you are working for a highly directive boss, it’s often easy to see the problem as getting free from all the rigid controls. But if you’ve ever worked for a truly laissez-faire boss, you’ve found that it usually meant you were free from controls, but powerless to act.

Psychologist Erich Fromm talked about two kinds of freedom: “freedom from” and “freedom to.” When Fromm talked about the “freedom from” he was talking about whether individuals, once constraints are removed, feel strong and secure enough to use that freedom to take action. This is a very real issue in teams. If everybody in the team has worked for years in a management culture that emphasizes control, even when management removes those controls, the team still may not feel free to act. The limitation may be fear, a lack of confidence, and little practice at taking risks.

But in organizations, it’s not enough that teams feel they have “permission” to act, they also need support and the authority to deal with very tangible problems. Teams may need budgets to pursue their program. They may need others in the organization to know they have the right to ask for services, information and support. They need, what in diplomatic terms, is referred to as “a portfolio” that gives them the right to challenge, raise questions, and cast doubts on the way things are done. They may need assistance in getting other parts of the organization to change rules or procedures that block the team’s ability to get the job done.

High performance teams often look more like trouble-makers to people in procurement, finance, the general counsel’s office, etc. -- all people who

have been given roles that require them to maintain the “systems” of the organization. People who want to disrupt those systems are rarely appreciated, and are sometimes seen as a threat to the organization, rather than its salvation. This is particularly true with partnering teams, because many of the team’s members come from “alien” organizations. As a result, there may be push-back from system-maintaining organizations. Effective partnering teams learn how to draw others from their own organizations into the spirit of partnering. But occasionally, the team needs help before it can both remove impediments to performance, and have the resources and role which allows it to act. Often this must come from management.

This means that it’s not an “either/or” proposition with the team either given the freedom to act, or not. A more useful concept is to talk about “the solution space”³ that management provides. Management must define the boundaries and scope of authority clearly enough to indicate direction. Teams need to know where their organizations are going, and why, and what performance is required of the team.

But there needs to be plenty of room for the team to generate specific goals, timing and approach. The reason is that real team commitment to performance is developed by participation in creating the approach. If

³ ” Peters, Thomas J., and Robert H. Waterman, Jr. *In Search of Excellence*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

management is too involved in “how” the program is implemented, not “what” the program is about, management will have a highly level of commitment to the approach, but the team will not. More than that, the team will not have the freedom it needs to find an implementation approach that makes sense given the different organizational cultures that must be satisfied. The challenge is that if the “solution space” is too large, the team just wanders around feeling lost. If the solution space is too small, the team feels no commitment and no enthusiasm.

Management consultants Katzenbach and Smith suggest that the categories in Figure __ are the primary areas in which management needs to set limits. Within these limits, the team should be expected to generate the plan for how the task is to be accomplished.

Management will normally benefit from consulting with the team on many of these issues. But however it happens, management must ensure that definition occurs on these issues.

Figure __: AREAS IN WHICH MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE MAY BE NEEDED

LIMITS SET BY MANAGEMENT	EXAMPLES
Mission	Clean-up storage tanks and polluted soil in Area XYZ
Why is this mission a priority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup must occur before leaking liquids reach groundwater • Delays and cost overruns on prior projects have undermined Congressional confidence
What's driving the schedule?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanup before material reaches groundwater • EPA regulations require cleanup by xx/xx/xx
Standards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA or state regulations • Budget constraints
Key challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty regarding contents of tanks • Incineration currently unacceptable to local community
Members of team/Skills Mix	Names of team members or skills required within the team

**Shared sense of responsibility for the success of the project,
program or policy**

Winston Churchill once said: "The one sure way to failure is for everyone in a bureaucracy to do their job perfectly." While the comment was made with tongue in cheek, it captured an awful truth, which is that bureaucracy permits people to avoid feeling responsible for their ultimate product or accomplishment.

The same problem holds true between organizations: it's all too easy to protect the interests of your own organization, even if it means that the problem goes unsolved. When this occurs, a regulator can feel all right because it looked tough, even though the project cost the taxpayer twice as much as it needed to. A DoD agency can feel satisfied it met the letter of the law, even though the overall situation may be getting worse.

In a real team, that sense of shared responsibility comes out not only in fulfilling your commitments to the team, but in trying to ensure the success of all members of the team. If someone needs help, other team member dig in and help. If someone consistently fails to perform or doesn't keep the norms that have been established by the team, you confront this openly and directly, without waiting for management to intervene. It's this

shared responsibility that is one of the defining characteristics of a real team.

Of course shared responsibility works only if all team members are clear what their individual responsibilities and joint responsibilities are. In a functional organization, assignments are often automatic, because everybody knows what their function is. In partnering, it's not always obvious who should be doing the work, so there's greater danger that "things can fall through the cracks." This means that partnering teams must exert extra effort to clarify work responsibilities.

This includes clarifying performance standards. Functional organizations have numerous mechanisms for ensuring quality control. But these standards may be different from organization to organization. A team member may perform work to a standard that's acceptable in his/her own organization, only to find that others in the team feel the product is not acceptable. So when giving assignments, the team now only needs to discuss who will do the work, but the standards to which it will be done.

Clearly Defined Performance Goals

When performance goals are set by management, they are sometime "demotivating," that is, the team may feel resentful or cynical rather than inspired. But in a team, setting performance goals is actually a primary

way to enhance team commitment. People in the team make a commitment to each other that often significantly exceeds the commitment made to organizational goals. It's very human not to want to let down other people you care about, and to whom you've made a personal commitment.

Everybody knows horror stories about workers setting unofficial quotas and attacking any other worker who exceeds those quotas. This is most likely to occur when there is an adversarial relationship between workers and management. The secret of success of any team is that this same potent peer pressure can be used to drive the team to excel. Nobody wants to let the others down. Performance goals, set by the team itself, are a way of mobilizing the team to exceed even its own expectations. Trust is built by working together and achieving real results.

There are several criteria for success in setting performance goals:

Does the team “own” the goals?

“Ownership” requires emotional commitment, not just acquiescence. If members of the team have just gone along with performance goals suggested by others in the team, there will be uneven commitment to the goals, and a high likelihood that performance itself will be equally uneven. This could be caused by dominant personalities, failure to listen to doubts or questions

raised by team members, or a team environment in which it is risky to disagree with prevailing opinion. If you support a goal, you do it no service by simply overriding objections. You may get assent to the goal, but never reach the goal because other team members are not really committed. Similarly, you owe it to the team to speak up if you are not committed.

Does the team agree on the importance or priority of the goals?

As discussed earlier, teams need to feel that the task they are performing really means something to their organizations, to society, to some larger purpose. The goals that really matter are the goals that energize this sense of purpose and challenge. If a team is facing a significant challenge, setting a goal that the team does not believe will make a difference in meeting that challenge is not going to inspire the team. The team has to believe the goal matters, and will make a difference.

Can the achievement of the goals be determined?

If the goal is vague and amorphous, a “do better” goal, the team will not develop the same sense of commitment, nor get the sense of satisfaction that comes from meeting a goal. “Improve customer satisfaction,” for example, is a worthy goal. But how can you tell

when you've done that? This is why it is important for the team to agree on ways to assess whether the goal has been met.

More intangible qualities like customer satisfaction might be assessed by sending out a regular customer questionnaire, by conducting interviews with customers, by counting complaints (although that's at best only a partial measure), or a number of other techniques. The results don't have to be numerical, but they do have to be sufficiently objective that the team can agree on whether they did, or did not, meet the goal.

Are the goals realistic yet ambitious?

Teams can defeat themselves by setting goals that are grossly unrealistic. On the other hand, meeting goals that required little effort is not going to energize the team. Goals should be a "stretch," meaning that they require performance beyond that which the team has achieved in the past, yet be sufficiently attainable that the team does not give up hope. This is why it matters that the team believes the goals are very important and a real priority. People won't commit to a "stretch" unless the goal itself justifies the risk and extra effort required.

Have you provided for small steps along the way?

If performance goals are significant enough that they require a stretch, they can also be overwhelming. One way to reduce this anxiety is to define smaller steps along the way that give the team a sense of satisfaction when those intermediate goals are met, and encourage the belief that the larger goal can be reached.

Clear and Well-Understood Approach

Once performance goals are defined, the team needs to lay out an approach for how to reach those goals. This approach needs to be concrete, clear, and understood by everybody in the team. It should also focus on joint products, rather than jobs. If people define their work in terms of completing a job, they may complete that job even at the expense of the mission. Jobs provide a focus on the individual, while mission or product-orientation focuses on the team performance.

Research also suggests that the approach should require that all members contribute a roughly equivalent amount of work. It doesn't work for some people in a team to work hard, while others who do not work as hard enjoy all the same rights of team membership. This quickly breeds resentment. It is not important that everybody's work match hour for hour. It is important that everybody make a significant contribution, as viewed by the team, and that status or rank not give permission to avoid work.

Finally, no approach ever anticipates all contingencies. The best way to ensure that the approach adapts to actual conditions is to create a team culture that allows for open interaction, fact-based problem solving, and results-based evaluation.

GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Here's a quick summary of some of the things teams need to do to get back to basics:

- Check to be sure the team isn't too large (above 10-12). If a larger team is needed, consider the use of sub-teams.
- Periodically assess the skills within the team -- technical/functional, problem solving/decision making, and interpersonal -- and develop a team plan for how to improve the mix of skills in the team.
- Create a sense of urgency and larger purpose which reinforces the common purpose of the team.
- Work with management to define a "solution space" which provides the team a sense of direction, but leaves the team free to decide how to get there.
- Set performance goals that are both realistic and "stretch" the team's expectations about what it can accomplish.
- Set up ways to measure success, so the team can tell when it achieves it. The emphasis should be on team, not individual, performance.
- Check to be sure that the approach is concrete, clear, and understood by everyone in the team.

Building Team Performance

Here are some suggestions for how to build and sustain a team:

Substitute Agreed-Upon Norms for Unconscious Expectations

Marshall McLuhan once said; "Culture is like a glass dome; as long as you are inside you don't know you are enclosed." Organizational culture is much the same. The norms and behaviors of an organization are usually learned by a kind of osmosis. People just assume that's the way "normal" people act. Because these expectations are unconscious, they're not even aware they exist. These expectations are like the "default settings" on your computer; they kick in automatically unless you make a conscious choice to change them.

Everybody in the partnering team brings unconscious expectations to the partnering, based on his/her organization's assumptions about what constitutes normal behavior, and interprets other team member's behavior in light of those expectations. This can lead to substantial misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

The only way to minimize these risks is to substitute conscious expectations for unconscious ones. This is why it is important for the

partnering team to talk about group norms, critique how it communicates, and agree on how it will handle disputes. Each of the new agreements replaces unconscious attitudes that can harm the effectiveness of the team.

The partnering workshop begins the process of establishing team agreements, but it is normally not possible to cover all the areas that require agreements. Furthermore, these agreements need regular maintenance. Some agreements may have to be modified or amplified. Agreements may need to be hammered out in entirely new areas.

Many of the key areas for group agreements are identified in the main text of this guide. They include:

Group norms, such as:

- openness
- disclosure
- listening
- mutual respect
- communicate problems

Decision making process, such as:

- decisions made by mutual agreement
- which decisions must be made by the team
- which decisions can be made by individuals or single organizations
- emergency decisions

Dispute resolution process, such as

- how disagreements are flagged as “disputes”
- time limits on resolution of disputes
- process for consultation within agencies
- which dispute resolution mechanisms will be used

Other areas where team agreements are needed include meeting procedures, meeting facilitation, and problem solving process. They are discussed further in the following pages.

Spend lots of time together

While a partnering workshop can “jump-start” the process of building trust, in the long run nothing completely substitutes for spending a lot of time

together. Research shows that most of the best teams “work hard, play hard,” but do both together. Obviously this isn’t always possible. But make choices to increase the amount of interaction whenever possible.

Schedule periodic refresher sessions

Teams that will be working together over a number of months should schedule periodic refresher sessions. Very few teams succeed at partnering unless they do something periodically to reaffirm the partnering relationship. The key characteristic of these refresher sessions is that they include a discussion -- without the usual time pressures -- of how the partnering relationship itself is doing, as distinct from whether tasks are being performed.

Often these sessions are one-day in length, preferably off-site. They may include joint training for the group, a presentation on a stimulating topic, and social activities.

Challenge the group regularly with fresh facts and information

One way to keep the team energized is to keep the group stimulated with new ideas and information. This might be information about new technologies, new approaches to permitting, techniques for working together effectively. Even if the team does not use the information on a

particular project, it's important to create an atmosphere where new ideas are valued and sought out.

Agree on meeting procedures and critique how well you are doing

Working as a team means that you are likely to spend a lot of time in meetings. If the team is going to be effective, it needs to know how to use meetings effectively.

Team members should not just “assume” that partnering team meetings will look exactly like normal meetings back in their own organization. First of all, each organization has a different interpretation of what constitutes “normal.” More important, many organizations use meeting styles that are appropriate for centralized decision-making, but not appropriate for developing mutual agreements. So teams need to identify and adopt procedures that will do the best job for a genuine team, as distinct from a functional organization.

Just as important as agreeing on meeting procedures is to develop a process for critiquing how well you are doing at working together. This should be an item for periodic follow-up workshops. In addition, some teams find it very helpful to spend 5-10 minutes at the end of each meeting to talk about what they did well, and what they need to improve.

One suggestion: when you're giving feedback to other team members it's often more effective to comment on how much you like the behavior of team members engaging in useful team member behaviors than it is to focus critique on team members who need to sharpen their skills.

Some teams find it very helpful to have a facilitator for team meetings, but most teams use an outside consultant only occasionally. Team members can serve as facilitator, so long as the issue being discussed doesn't involve him or her so closely that it's impossible to stay neutral.

Some teams rotate facilitation responsibility, with every team member serving as facilitator periodically. There are many advantages to this. It shows that meeting leadership is not a matter of rank or status, but an important function required by the team. It sharpens the facilitation skills of team members (which can be very useful both in project management and in dealing with the public on controversial issues). Finally, serving as facilitator often sharpens awareness of the behaviors that individual team members need to engage in for the team to be effective.

The most important behaviors of a facilitator are:

ASSIST WITH DESIGNING THE MEETING: Helping to define the purpose of the meeting, setting up a proposed agenda, suggesting

appropriate meeting formats or group process techniques to use to accomplish tasks,

HELP KEEP THE MEETING ON TRACK, FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC: Pointing out when the discussion has drifted, restating the purpose of an activity, putting limits on behavior such as accusations or emotional tirades.

CLARIFY AND ACCEPT COMMUNICATION: Providing a verbal summary of what was said, relating one participant's ideas to another, inviting expansion of a comment, asking clarifying questions, writing a summary of comments on a flip chart.

ACCEPT AND ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS: Structure a situation in which it is safe to express feelings, acknowledge feelings so that they don't continue to build in intensity.

STATE A PROBLEM IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY: Restating comments so they do not blame any party, defining the problem without implying there is only one possible solution.

SUGGEST A PROCEDURE OR PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH: Suggesting a procedure such as brainstorming or a

structured sequence of problem-solving steps to help the group work more effectively, suggesting alternative ways of addressing the issue, suggesting a break.

SUMMARIZE AND CLARIFY DIRECTION: Restating the purpose of the meeting, clarifying its direction, (e.g. "we've completed the first two issues, now we're ready to start talking about alternatives for").

CONSENSUS-TESTING: Sensing when participants are coming to agreement and verifying that agreement has been reached by stating the potential basis for agreement and checking to see whether it has support from the participants.

Because the facilitator needs to remain neutral on the outcome of the meeting, and wants to create a climate for collaborative problem solving, there are also certain behaviors a facilitator should avoid. Facilitators should avoid:

- Judging or criticizing the ideas of participants.
- Using the role of facilitator to push his or her own ideas.
- Making significant procedural decisions without consulting the participants.
- Taking up the group's time with lengthy comments.

There are a number of manuals or guides available on facilitation.

In a normal bureaucratic organization, the meeting leader feels responsible for the success of the meeting, but the participants often do not. In team meetings, everybody is responsible for successful meetings, not just the facilitator. There are “team member behaviors” that need to be learned and practiced. These include:⁴

Task Oriented (Content) Functions

- **INITIATING-INNOVATING:** Suggesting a new idea, a new way of looking at a problem, or a new activity.
- **SEEKING INFORMATION OR FACTS;** Requesting facts, asking about feelings, asking for ideas or values.
- **GIVING USEFUL INFORMATION OR FACTS:** Offering facts, stating a belief, making suggestions.
- **CLARIFYING AND SUMMARIZING:** Probing for meaning, defining terms, enlarging or restating issues, bringing related ideas together, restating suggestions of others.
- **CONSENSUS TESTING:** Checking to see if the group is ready to decide, sending up trial balloons, verifying group consensus.

Process Oriented Functions

⁴ Adapted from Benne, Frank and P. Sheats, “Functional Roles of Group Members,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 1948 4 (2).

- HARMONIZING: Attempting to reconcile disagreements, mediating differences, initiating a compromise.
- GATE KEEPING OR EXPEDITING: Inviting others to talk, suggesting time limits or other procedures to permit wide participation, keeping talk flowing.
- ENCOURAGING: Indicating acceptance and understanding of other points of view, being friendly and responsive to others.
- FOLLOWING: When appropriate, accepting the direction of the group, indicating understanding without intruding.
- STANDARD SETTING: Expressing standards for the group to achieve, testing group attitudes towards procedures, reminding the team of underlying values.

As can be seen, many useful team member behaviors overlap with the behaviors of a facilitator. This is why serving as a facilitator is also a way to sharpen skills as a team member.

Use visual recording

Research on effective teams show that they work together more effectively when important comments or conclusions are recorded -- on flip chart pads, butcher paper, or the newer "post-it" or electrostatic cling sheets -- and posted on the wall where everyone can see them.

Sometimes this recording role is played by the facilitator. This is often effective in small teams. In large teams it is often helpful to have a second person, the “recorder,” who keeps a visible summary and posts it up on the walls, while the facilitator stays focused on the team. The recorder can be a team member. Again, it’s more difficult to be a recorder if the subject being discussed is one in which the recorder is very involved.

There are professional recorders, trained in the arts or graphic design, who will record meetings in such a way that similar ideas are grouped together, or visual connections are made between ideas. Some even combine graphic elements or simple cartoon figures.

Agree on problem-solving process

When team members participate in problem solving, they often use very different styles and approaches. Each organization has different expectations for how problems are addressed. As a result, it’s very useful to agree on a series of steps -- a template -- for how the team will approach problem solving.

There are a number of problem-solving approaches described in the management literature. Most are some variation on the steps show below:

Define the Problem

Agree on the Criteria for a Satisfactory Solution

Generate Alternative Solutions

Evaluate Alternative Solutions

Choose Among the Alternatives

Agree on an Implementation Plan

There's considerable rationale for each step in this process, and the sequence of the steps. Teams may want to read materials describing the rationale for various problem-solving processes, or go through joint training. If there's a room in which the team meets regularly, the problem-solving steps should be posted on the wall, so that they can be used as a reference point during team meetings.

Use exercises to stimulate creativity

There are numerous books or guides that describes exercises or other techniques that can be used to stimulate creativity during problem solving.

Some of the most useful of these techniques include:

Brainstorming

In brainstorming, everyone in the group is encouraged to come up with as many ideas as possible, including "way-out" ones. Usually these ideas are recorded on a flip-chart or blackboard. No evaluation is permitted until everybody is completely out of ideas.

Brainstorming provides a “psychologically safe” climate in which people feel free to participate without fear of being judged, and this helps groups “break out” of the obvious solutions and push for more creative ones.

Snowball

Another variation of brainstorming is to have everybody write their ideas on post-its or 3x5 cards that can be put on the wall. The same “no evaluation” rule applies. Then similar ideas can be grouped together on the wall, for further group discussion.

Creative Analogies

Additional options can be generated by using analogies to force different ways of thinking about a problem. For example, if a problem is being thought about in hierarchical terms, try thinking about it using organic or physiological analogies. Or, ask people to create visions of how they would solve the problem “if there were no limits” or “if I were President.” Once again, “way out” ideas may lead back to more creative solutions that are implementable.

Nominal Group Process

Nominal Group Process is a technique based on research suggesting that people generate more ideas working by

themselves, but in the presence of others. Participants generate ideas during a silent period, then share their ideas going around the room, one idea per person each time. These “rounds” continue until everybody is out of ideas. Then the group discusses the ideas to be sure they are clear, but does not debate them. The participants select their top five ideas (or three, or seven), giving five points to their first choice, four to their second, etc. Then the group develops a composite score sheet, showing the points from everyone in the team.

Techniques such as these can be very helpful in getting teams to think about problems in new ways, encouraging innovation.

Celebrate successes

Teams need a sense of accomplishment. Teams need to believe they are doing something that matters, and when they succeed, that success needs to be celebrated. Hold victory parties. Make announcements over loud-speakers. Put up celebratory banners. Buy each other little trophies or momentos (keeping in mind appropriate ethics requirements). Do almost anything to reinforce the performance success of the team.

Develop a team training plan (including joint training)

In most organizations, training is focused on individuals. When building a team, the crucial consideration is whether there are skills needed in the

team. Some of these skills might be acquired by individual members.

Other skills may be needed by all team members.

Developing a team training plan accomplishes several things: (1) It says that the team thinks skills training is important; (2) It establishes a priority for team members to get the training they need; (3) It provides the support of the team in getting funding for training from the various partnering organizations.

For those skills needed by all team members, some form of joint training is particularly effective. Everybody gets the training at the same time, and the team as a whole builds commitment to using the skills. If you do schedule joint training, be sure to allow time in the schedule for open discussion of how the skills will be used in the team.

Consider having a team room

Depending on the project, it may be appropriate for a partnering team to have a room dedicated to its activities. Having a team room strongly reinforces the team identity.

This room may simply be a meeting room where the team is able to leave up all its charts and flip chart sheets. A more ideal arrangement is a large enough space so there can be workstations clustered around an open

meeting space that can be reconfigured, as needed, for different kinds of meetings. A dedicated work space would probably be appropriate only if team members are going to work together frequently, or are housed at a project site.

Hook up electronically

Many partnering teams find it very helpful to be connected electronically. As a minimum, being connected by e-mail is a very useful way of exchanging information in a timely manner. One of the advantages of e-mail is that people can pick up and respond to the information when it is convenient for them. Many people find they get much faster responses to by e-mail than to phone messages. Also, most e-mail software let's you "copy" the message to a whole group of people, so you only have to sent the message once and the whole team gets the same message.

If the team has access to a computer network, it can also use groupware that allows the team to work together on tasks, sharing computer files. For example, a team can work together on a report, even though physically distant. Desktop teleconferencing (teleconferencing using small cameras mounted on PCs, rather than a centralized teleconferencing facility) is now possible, and soon will be able to accommodate full teams.

Teams that are hooked together electronically have discovered that while electronic communication is very useful for exchanging information, it doesn't by itself build trust. Trust-building is something that needs to take place in person. It is still necessary to hold a partnering workshop, and have periodic refresher sessions, on a face-to-face basis. Once the relationship is built, then electronic communication is a distinct benefit.

In evaluating groupware, be cautious about software that is designed so that you have to use a decision making approach dictated by the software. That approach may not be suitable; some software, for example, is far more suitable for centralized decision making than working in teams. Also, don't oversell yourself on the benefits of electronic communication. It's a valuable tool, but it doesn't solve all the problems.

Plan for how to incorporate new members in the team

Even though it is strongly advantageous to have continuity of membership in the team, in partnering it is virtually inevitable that there will be turnover. Based on team research, adding new members to a fully-functioning team is a very significant issue. If the team has previously "bonded," the new team member may feel somewhat excluded, a bit like a second-class citizen. The team will have developed a number of agreements. Even if the individual is fully informed of them, he/she is unlikely to have the same

commitment to the agreements, not having been a participant in the discussions.

The team as a whole should plan for how to incorporate the new team member. The addition of one or more new members might be a good time for a refresher workshop. The team training plan might be altered to include training for the new member. Some teams have even developed a brief ceremony to acknowledge the change, a bit of ritual to acknowledge the significance of the change being made.

When Teams Get Stale

Every now and then every team needs to be reinvigorated.

Here are a few suggestions for how to accomplish this:

- Revisit the basics
- Go for small wins - something that create a sense of success
- inject new information and approaches
- Use third-party facilitators or go through joint training
- Change the team's membership

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