



## Team building / team working

Learning guide

# Team building/team working

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## Introduction

A team is a group of people with a common focus. It may be to achieve common or complementary objectives, and it may be trying for some balance of technical roles, or personality mix. The aim is for the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts.

This learning guide includes team building, team working, team leadership and some references to high performing teams.

Teams exist in various forms and sizes, and some people hold that there is an ideal number for a team. These estimates have ranged between five and a dozen, but even for the same team task, it seems clear that an experienced team might manage with fewer members than an inexperienced team.

Teams can be on the same site, in the same building, same floor, same office, or apart to a greater or lesser degree. Some research shows that once team members are more than 80 feet apart, even on the same floor of the same building, communication difficulties start.

Some people hold that certain roles have to be played in most groups. The most famous model is the Meredith Belbin Team Roles model. He started by stating that there were seven essential team roles, but later this grew to nine.

## Where to start?

If you have less than an hour, browse the development activities and read the overview. If you have longer, pick an article or a video which looks to be relevant to your interest listed in the resources section.

## Resources

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### Videos/Interactive CD-i

*Motivating the Team* (1995), Melrose, 32 mins.

An alternative to watching a straightforward video, compact disc interactive gives the user the flexibility to watch segments of film, focus in on key issues, answer questions that appear on the screen and receive audio visual feedback. This programme conveys the message that for people to be motivated they must be in control of and responsible for what they do, find their work is purposeful in terms of the organisation as a whole and feel that what they are doing is for value and received reward – be it money, companionship, excitement or security.

*High Performing Teams: Lessons from the Red Arrows*, (1996), The Industrial Society, 25 mins.

This video package is designed to show teams in organisations how to improve their performance and see how one such team does this year after year. It shows that a team constantly works to maintain this but also finds rewards and fun in working together. The RAF Red Arrows are a world class team and the lessons they demonstrate are summed in the synergy chain process – a new step by step approach to developing a high performing team.

*Building the Perfect Team*, (1991), Video Arts, 29 mins.

Dr Meredith Belbin explores the functional and team roles of individuals, showing how different types emerge, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. The video demonstrates that a well composed and constructed team can perform a variety of tasks impossible for one single person to achieve.

***Team Building: A Question of Balance***, (1990), Fenman Training, 30 mins.

This video illustrates the important differences between team roles and team functions. It does so by showing a project team at work and uses the mnemonic BEST to help clarify the key skills of team leadership: **B**alance the team to **E**xploit diversity, **S**hare the goal, **T**rust the team.

***Building the Transnational Team***, (1993), Transnational Management Associates, 25 mins.

Focuses on cultural differences for global managers showing how the role of the boss, the conducting of meetings, decision making and employee motivation are all important factors to consider when working with colleagues of different nationalities. Even more important is the ability to recognise strengths that different nationalities can bring to the transnational team.

## **Audio cassettes**

***The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams***, (1992), Harper Collins Audio Books, 2 hours.

In this programme the one minute manager explains the stages through which all groups pass on their way to becoming high performing teams, and shows how a manager can help any group with which he works to become fully effective sooner and with less stress.

***Team Building: How to Motivate and Manage People***, (1991), Careertrack.

Mark Sanborn presents this audio programme, showing how teamwork can lead to greater productivity and creativity and increased employee self-esteem. He also explores finding the best team members and ways of motivating a team to achieve objectives.

## Journal articles

Anonymous (1995), *Teamworking – An idea ahead of its reward?*  
Management Services, Vol 39(7), July, p6.

Cofsky, Barbara (1996), *A journey toward excellence*, Management Accounting,  
Vol 77(7), p14.

Murakami, Thomas (1995), *Introducing team working – A motor industry case study from Germany*, Industrial Relations Journal, Vol 26(4), p293–305.

Petrini, Catherine and Thomas, Rebecca (1995), *A brighter shade of team building*, Training & Development, Vol 49(1), November, p9.

Statham-Fletcher, Esther (1995), *This Sporting Life*, Accountancy, Vol 116(1226),  
October, p46.

Totterdill, Peter (1995), *Markets, technology and skills: Teamworking and competitive advantage in the apparel industry*, International Journal of Clothing Science & Technology, Vol 7(2, 3), p24–34.

## Information files

There are information files containing a number of newspaper and journal articles on the following subject areas:

- teamworking
- empowerment
- motivation

## Books

\*\* Books marked with asterisks are available for sale from the LRC Bookshop.  
Mail order service available. Tel: 01442 841159. Fax: +44 (0)1442 841211.  
Email: [celia.tucker@ashridge.org.uk](mailto:celia.tucker@ashridge.org.uk)

Blanchard, Kenneth et al (1990), *The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams*, Harper Collins.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (BLA) \*\***

Never before has the concept of teamwork been more important to the functioning of successful organisations. Most managers spend over half their time working with a team, and the One Minute Manager's practical advice shows how any team can work better and more effectively. The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams explains the four stages on the way to building a high performing team Orientation, Dissatisfaction, Resolution and Production and reveals how to tap the creativity and potential of people at all levels in order to become an effective group leader.

Canney Davison, Sue and Ward, Karen (1999), *Leading International Teams*, McGraw-Hill.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AKC (CAN)\*\***

Leading International Teams provides practical knowledge and guidance to global team leaders and members. Based on in-depth research, this book first examines the impact of cultural diversity on individuals, teams and organisations.

Critchley, Bill and Casey, David (1994), *Team Building (Chapter in Gower Handbook of Training and Development)*, Gower.

Ashridge shelf reference: **JMB (PRI)**.

This new edition aids training professionals in facing up to the organisational challenges presented to them. All 38 chapters are new.

Fraser, Alastair and Neville, Suzanne (1993), *Teambuilding: A Practical Guide*, Industrial Society.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (FRA)**.

Teambuilding reviews the process and shows how team working has helped organisations to greater effectiveness. This succinct review of modern teamwork and theory uses particle examples to show the outcome of 'stop and think'

techniques and provides a framework to: Understand the culture of your organisation. Discover the difference between team role and team function. Identify your own preferences. Develop your own team. Handle conflict.

Hastings, Colin et al (1994), *Superteams; Building Organisational Success through High-Performing Teams*, Harper Collins.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (HAS) \*\***

The authors of this book use real-life examples and describe how the leaders and members of outstanding teams operate. They also tell senior managers how to create the climate in which teamworking can thrive.

Johnson, Ron (1995), *Perfect Teamwork: All You Need to Get it Right First Time*, Arrow Books.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (JOH) \*\***

This book describes the practical steps by which you can achieve the best teamwork in your organisation and get your people to be receptive to new ideas, to help each other, and to take responsibility for their own quality and productivity.

Katzenbach, Jon R and Smith, Douglas (1993), *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating High-Performance Organisation*, Harvard Business School Press.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (KAT).**

Including stories and case examples involving real people and situations, this text seeks to demonstrate why teams will be the primary building blocks of company performance in the 21st century.

Owen, Hilarie (1996), *Creating Top Flight Teams*, Kogan Page.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (OWE).**

This book provides a radical new approach to forming & running a team. The author spent two years with the Red Arrows, the epitome of teamwork to find out what it is they have that management teams are lacking. The author shows

how the Red Arrow's approach to team work can be applied to the workplace with astonishing results.

Tjosvold, Dean (1991), *Team Organisation: An Enduring Competitive Advantage*, John Wiley & Sons (see p.121).

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (TJO)**.

Explores group processes in organisations and demonstrates how well-structured teams promote organisational effectiveness. The author uses group research to develop a model which identifies the nature of productive teams. The advantages of productive teamwork are then explored.

Townsend, John (1994), *The Team-builder's Pocketfile of Ready-to-Copy Exercises*.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (TOW)**.

The team builder's pocketfile provides a great set of ready made exercises which help training participants capture the power of teams.

Wellins, Richard S et al (1991), *Empowered Teams: Creating Self-Directed Work Groups that Improve Quality, Production and Participation*, Jossey Bass.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AJB (WEL)**.

Contents include: how teams work, preparing for teams, building stronger teams.

## Useful websites

*Teamworks: the Virtual Team Assistant*

[www.urban.uiuc.edu/Courses/Varkki/teamwork/Default.html](http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/Courses/Varkki/teamwork/Default.html)

This site, from the University of Illinois, offers nine modules on various aspects of team working, including team building, team problem-solving, team conflict and teaching with teams. Each module contains "background information, instruments for self-assessment, lessons to develop team work skills, and links to helpful resources". A few modules are still in development.

## Overview

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### What is a team?

The label is often used interchangeably with 'GROUP' and yet TEAM as we understand it has a very specific meaning. The difference very largely lies in the direction of action. A group can exist and yet not achieve much. A team, on the other hand, is ACTION ORIENTATED. It has a clear purpose and it is a purpose which is shared by its members.

There are a number of features of a team which make it different from a group:

1. In an effective team, members share a high level of commitment to achieving the common objective.
2. Members of an effective team experience a high level of satisfaction from being part of and working with the team.
3. In an effective team, members work well together in an integrated way, with a high level of awareness and appreciation of each other's strengths.
4. An effective team shows a high capability for solving its own problems. The skills exist and there is a willingness to act.
5. Most important from the organisation's point of view is that an effective team is one producing high quality results. High quality results, it could be reasonably argued, are the outcome from the other characteristics of the effective team.

The qualities of an effective work team are, therefore, identifiable, quite specific and measurable. Although any 'group' can possess any or all these characteristics, an effective team must display them all.

## What conditions make a team effective?

**Clear objectives:** the team's overall objective needs to be identified and defined in terms which allow each member to understand the same goal. The leader has an important role in communicating a clear picture of what the organisation expects from the team. A style which encourages a questioning approach is likely to reveal any members' doubts, misunderstandings or resistances which need to be positively managed.

**Appropriate leadership:** leadership is a shared function based on the need of the task rather than through consideration of formal role or position-based power. This requires considerable flexibility in recognising and allowing other team members to exercise real leadership when a member's skills are more appropriate to the team at that time. There is an important leadership function. It is one of using skills to develop the team and making sure that time is allocated appropriately for team-building activities.

**Suitable membership:** for a team to be able to work productively, its members must display the range of skills, knowledge and experience and the right 'mix' of these for the task it is undertaking. Members are valued for what they can contribute and are encouraged to develop. Little time is wasted on considerations of what members cannot do. The emphasis is on strengths, on the positive.

**Commitment to the team:** team members experience real strength from their membership and the sharing of goals. They are willing to invest considerable energy in the interests of the team. Membership is highly valued and member behaviour is strongly influenced by considerations of team success. This is very different from the rather simple and (from the work effectiveness point of view) rather unproductive 'WE' feeling that is part of the experience of simply being with a group of people who get on well together and enjoy each other's company.

***A supportive team climate:*** the order of the day is participation and personal responsibility. Members are trusted to contribute in a mature fashion. Self-control replaces imposed control. Responsibility is widely shared throughout the team on a rational basis, given the skills and other strengths among members. Members are encouraged to contribute ideas, take risks and question the team and its activities openly without fear of censorship, disapproval or reprimand. The only condition is that the members' behaviour is with the best interest of the team and its performance at heart.

***Getting things done:*** the successful team not only knows where it is going, it knows when it has arrived. It sets performance targets and milestones and establishes ways in which the team's movement toward achieving the targets can be measured. It is important that performance targets are ones that represent something of a challenge to the team and its members without being unrealistic and consequently demoralising. When the right performance standards are set, the team's energy is directed towards achieving results. Team performance is constantly being appraised in order to identify any problems in the team's path or being experienced by members. This is an important responsibility for the team leader.

***Working techniques:*** The team needs to invest time and effort into developing working techniques, methods, procedures and ground rules to move the team toward its goal in the most efficient way consistent with preserving those other qualities associated with effective teams. These include techniques for making decisions, solving problems and generally coping with anything which gets in the way of progress.

***Learning:*** the team and its members learn from their experiences, including their mistakes. Mistakes made in good faith do not lead to heavy penalties, but are incorporated into expectations about the team and its members maturing over time. Problems are analysed for what they can contribute to the individual and collective maturing process. Constructive criticism, based on logic and rationality and intended to help the team and its members grow in competence is welcomed. This places a premium on face-to-face skills associated with coaching and giving feedback. They will be particularly highly valued skills when used effectively by the team leader.

*New members:* new team members are quickly integrated into the team, their strengths identified, and contribution defined. Every effort is made to help the new member prove his/her value to the team quickly.

*Managing the group:* an effective work team recognises the importance of monitoring the team itself and the way in which it is working. Understanding something of 'group dynamics' is an area of knowledge and skills which is highly developed in effective teams. Allocating time and energy to understanding and managing relationships is an important investment. The team leader should be able to display considerable competence in this respect. Responsibility for monitoring events is not invested in the team leader alone. It is shared among members, although some will be more competent than others and show preferences in the direction of 'team maintenance'.

*Relationships with other teams:* an effective team also invests time and energy into developing ground rules for managing its relationships with other teams in a positive and productive way. This includes identifying areas of work where collaboration would clearly help one or both teams achieve results more efficiently or effectively. It includes maintaining open contact and frequently reviewing tasks priorities. Resources are shared where this will help progress toward a broader, but understood and shared, organisational objective. Joint problem solving is widely adopted and the tendency to 'blame others' is replaced in effective teamworking with a direction of effort toward understanding problems and finding solutions.

*Success:* the effectiveness of a team grows. All the conditions set out above develop more extensively and readily to the extent that the team meets with early, continued and acknowledged success. The cliché, "Nothing succeeds like success," is entirely applicable to the development of effective teams and in the process of developing and reinforcing the conditions underpinning demonstrated effectiveness. Two possible problems exist for very successful teams. First, they may be seen as so competent that they attract more work than they are able to handle, resulting in overload and decline in performance. They may have to learn to say 'no'. Even if they attract more resources of money and people to handle the extra work, they may suffer from problems of 'bigness' and

will almost certainly need to restructure into smaller satellites if they are to continue successfully.

The second problem for the successful group is one of complacency. They can become fat cats. Their very success and cohesion becomes their own worst enemy, and they find it difficult to respond to new circumstances. Some groups guard against this by ensuring that they get a fairly regular turnover of people to keep them on their toes.

## Team leadership

Although it is likely that the leadership role will shift one team member to another, determined by task demands on skills and other resources, the fact remains that there is normally a team leader designated by the organisation and considered responsible for the outcomes from his/her team's performance.

### What makes an effective team leader?

*Setting values:* the effective team leader is instrumental in establishing a set of values from which standards of performance, acceptable methods and member behaviour emerge in a consistent way.

*Clarifying objectives:* the team leader is in a crucial listening role and one of communicating between the organisation and the rest of the team. An important factor in the link man role is that of helping team members understand expectations held by the organisation concerning the team's goals. This will often require the translation of ideas into operationally useful information.

*Provide a model:* in many respects, especially in managing relationships and setting the kind of group climate conducive to meeting many of the conditions already discussed, members will regard the leader's own behaviour as an appropriate model. The effective team leader is a trend setter in relation to many of those behaviours which effective team members display.

***Identifying members' strengths:*** the effective team leader has considerable responsibility for ensuring optimum use of resources. This includes knowledge of individual member's strengths, and ensuring opportunities are made available for their use.

***Delegation:*** a key characteristic of the effective team leader is a willingness to genuinely delegate. The delegator trusts the people he is delegating to and encourages team members to push existing skills on further and to take reasonable risks in doing so. The team leader is a front runner in providing a supportive, positive, building climate within which team members can experience maximum personal achievement, growth and contribution to the team.

***Getting help:*** the leader knows when the team needs help from outside and communicates the group's needs to those who can provide the appropriate resources. This means being aware of realistic limits to existing team competences and recognising that seeking help under the right conditions is a sign of strength rather than weakness.

***Flexibility of approach:*** different styles suit different task conditions. Given an atmosphere of participation and personal responsibility, team members will look for a leadership style that 'fits' the prevailing circumstances. It is perfectly reasonable for an effective team leader to be highly controlling and autocratic under difficult or critical circumstances where a quick response is essential. Team members will not only accept it but expect it.

***Represent the team:*** in managing its affairs with other teams and other parts of the organisation, the team leader is a front runner. The team leader operates in this respect from a consideration of the team's objectives, standards, resources and the importance of maintaining a mutual respect and collaborative climate between teams, protects team members against unjustified or irrational attack, ensures that outside influences do not impose unreasonable or excessive demands on the team or its members, negotiates with outside bodies on behalf of the team and with the interest of performance paramount. The team leader also develops and encourages his/her members to develop a wide network of useful contacts both within and without the organisation.

***Develops team members:*** makes sure that team members experience opportunities for achievement through personal growth. This requires special skills from the team leader, especially in coaching (identifying performance-related and development needs, and helping team members identify means of satisfying them). Counselling skills to deal with performance related problems is another crucial skill area.

***Feedback:*** the team leader is one of the most important and credible sources of feedback to the team and its members on performance. The emphasis should be on positive feedback. Even when performance-related problems occur, the emphasis is on seeking solutions rather than witch hunting.

***Is available:*** the team leader is there to collect ideas and information and to sell ideas and influence people. He is also there to involve people, where realistic, in decision making, especially that relating to decisions likely to influence the team's goals, methods or performance targets/standards. The effective leader also encourages feedback from the team as the basis for monitoring personal effectiveness.

## **Team roles**

The characteristics of team roles have been the subject of Dr Meredith Belbin's research for many years (see Belbin M, *Management Teams: Why they Succeed or Fail*, 1981 Heinemann)

He has attempted to identify and isolate the characteristics of a number of roles. These at present number nine. Since the original research with teams of managers, continuous revision has taken place ensuring a remarkable study of teams with evidence to support the findings.

As well as providing information on team roles, Belbin and his colleagues used a range of psychometric tests to determine if a personality type was allied to certain roles. There was strong evidence that this was so.

Their record of predicting a successful balance of the roles in teams is impressive, although he indicates it is far easier to forecast correctly teams that will fail than teams sure to succeed. Many managers will attempt to pick a team of all the cleverest and most talented people from their organisation. Unfortunately it has been found that the most disaster-prone team is just such a one, exclusively composed of clever individuals.

Over the years of research, first at Henley and subsequently in business extending from Britain to Australia, Belbin and his colleagues learned to recognise individuals who made a critical difference to team effectiveness. These team types were identified by descriptive names. The original names of some of the roles have been amended in recent years to be more compatible with the descriptions accompanying them. For example, resistance to the name 'company worker' was often expressed by managers. They perceived the title as diminishing their team contribution to that of a good-natured dogsbody. Another title amended is 'chairman' to 'co-ordinator'.

Not everyone tested is going to fall into any one category; 30% of his research samples did not clearly belong to just one of the nine types. Certain pairings of roles were also evident.

While everyone has a preferred natural team role (or pair of roles) most people have a secondary team role they assume if no one else in the team is fitted to it and if, say, some other team member has a stronger score and plays their natural team role better.

### **The team types finally identified are as follows:**

Implementer, co-ordinator, shaper, plant, resource investigator, monitor-evaluator, team worker, completer finisher, specialist. A brief description of each role is as follows:

**Co-ordinator** (was chairman) - critical thinking only just above average. A relaxed but fairly strong and dominant character who is non-aggressive, but can assert himself. Has a good deal of trust and belief in people. Sees their talents as resources rather than as a competitive threat to himself. Outwardly enthusiastic,

but inwardly more reserved and objective. More concerned with practicalities than creativity. Does not over-react to pressure. High concern for duty and doing things properly.

**Shaper** – leads from front with 'all guns blazing'. Likes action, quick results and willing followers. Pushes himself and others to get the job done as the main priority. Not always popular, but more often than not, gets results. Usually very assertive, can be aggressive. High degree of nervous energy and relentless tension rather than self-assurance. Hates to be constrained by rules and regulations. Often a sceptic and quick to criticise and judge. Unduly sensitive to criticism and can be impatient. Invariably competitive, intolerant and probably compulsive about work and other things of importance to him.

**Plant** (ideas man) - advances new thoughts very often independent of his own specialism. Usually high intelligence. Has self-confidence but often with uninhibited self expression. Ideas often come before people. Radical views may override pragmatic considerations. Can opt out if ideas not accepted. May find routine of organisational life hard to take.

(**Innovator** – sometimes referred to as **plant**)

**Monitor evaluator** – good critical thinker and evaluator of ideas. Serious attitude, cautious, usually objective and very perceptive. A strategist who may require input of ideas and knowledge from others before he shows his best. Very self-critical and may be seen as negative with low persuasive and motivational powers. Enjoys knocking others' ideas down. He identifies key issues that could and would go wrong with a project. May feel intellectually superior to group and show it. Can stifle debate if he does not control over zealous, if correct, criticism.

**Implementer** (was company worker) - usually accepts rules and conventions of the organisation. Works to do a good job within the system. They make things happen by translating general concepts and plans into practical working brief. Thorough, determined and full of common-sense working on practical level. Dislike too much theory and ideas. Unhappy in situations requiring lots of flexibility, adaptability and expediency where quick changes required. Scores high on sincerity, integrity, self-discipline, conscientiousness and strength of

character. Often likes leadership position, but may have problems in unstable situations requiring vision. Basically conservative, solid, reliable completer of tasks requiring a logical approach.

*Team worker* – perceives feelings, needs and concerns of the people in the group. Observant of people's strengths and weaknesses. Can hold team together in a quiet way with his concern for others. Usually stable but not over-competitive. May be seen as low in decisiveness and toughness. He puts emphasis on understanding others, situations and himself. Can delegate well if given a senior position. Develops staff well. Often behind the scenes helper. May not get credit for good results. May go for cosy atmosphere rather than face conflict. Overall, seeks harmony and co-operation.

*Resource investigator* – people orientated team member. Usually restless, enquiring attitude to life. A driving force and always going out to find new things and ideas – has a wide range of contacts. Within team, helps people, encourages, and is a positive influence for developing others. Usually cheerful, but may lack self-discipline, being somewhat impulsive. Will drop one task in favour of another if it interests him more. Needs constant variety, challenge, stimulation. Does not raise ideas himself so much as raise them in others. Helps team look outwards, but needs to be focused, otherwise he wastes his time on too many things.

*Completer/finisher* – often tense, sometimes anxious and has a compulsive concern to finish. High nervous energy, put to productive use. Translates worries and fears into energy for getting jobs done on time to a standard. Good on detail. Known to nag colleagues. Brings sense of urgency to the team. Has sense of purpose, is self-controlled. Often hard to live with. May get bogged down in detail. Can irritate people with his rigour. Does not allow procrastination, carelessness, over-confidence or slackness.

*Specialist* – typically dedicated individuals who pride themselves on acquiring technical skills and specialised knowledge. Show great pride in their own subject but often lack interest in other people's. Mainly interested in furthering their own field. Usually self starters who are quite single minded. However, will usually only contribute on a very narrow front.

## Team development

Groups go through various stages as they develop to effective team working. A common model used to track the development of groups was suggested by B W Tuckman and outlines four stages of team development:

*Forming* – characterised by polite and mannerable greeting. Members also check out their feelings regarding membership of the group, what roles they may take and what the purpose of the group is.

*Storming* – typically this can be an uncomfortable time for groups where members are often testing the limits and exploring what is possible. rebelliousness, competition and the setting up of cliques are all features of this stage.

*Norming* – at this stage the group is beginning to work through its conflicts and agree on ways of functioning towards effective performance.

*Performing* – now the team is working together towards a common goal.

All teams will develop at different speeds and some may get stuck in one of the phases. The important thing is to be aware of the subtle and intricate dynamics of the group development process.

## Task and relationship functions

When working in a team certain functions or behaviours contribute to either the task in hand or the relationship between the team members. A balanced mix of both task and relationship functions are necessary for effective team performance.

## Task functions

- Agenda setting
- establishing goals
- giving direction
- initiating discussion
- setting time limits
- giving/seeking information
- summarising

## Relationship functions

- listening
- encouraging participation
- conflict management
- recognition
- relationship building

## High performing teams

In their book, *The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams*, Blanchard, Carew and Carew suggest that effective teams must have certain important characteristics. These are:

### *Purpose*

- clear, challenging and relevant goals
- clear strategies for achieving goals
- role clarity
- commitment to a common purpose.

### *Empowerment*

- personal and collective sense of power
- access to skills and resources
- team objectives supported by policies and practices

- mutual respect
- willingness to help each other.

#### *Relationships and communication*

- open and honest expression
- expression of acceptance
- active listening
- different perspectives and opinion valued.

#### *Flexibility*

- ability to perform different roles
- shared responsibility for leadership
- adaptable to change
- ideas are explored.

#### *Optimal productivity*

- output high
- excellent quality
- effective decision making
- clear problem solving process.

#### *Recognition and appreciation*

- contributions are recognised and appreciated
- team accomplishments are recognised
- respect for group members
- organisation values the team.

### *Morale*

- members feel good about their team
- members are confident and motivated
- members are proud and satisfied
- good team spirit.

So the acronym **PERFORM** is used by them to describe high performing teams.

## Development activities

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The following development activities are designed to help you think about the role you currently play in teams and to give ideas for developing and building teams. Not all the activities will appeal to everyone, select the ones which appeal to you or perhaps adapt them to suit your own particular needs.

### Building a team

*Invite feedback from your team by:*

- setting aside some time for them to come and see you with problems and ideas and make sure they know that you have done this
- setting up specific meetings with individual team members and encouraging them to comment on the things you do and make suggestions about how things could be improved.

*Share information with all members of the team by:*

- circulating relevant memos, articles and documents regularly
- spending some time each day walking around talking to team members asking questions and passing on information that may interest them
- asking yourself who else may benefit from having a copy of any correspondence you send out and making sure they get it
- calling meetings to discuss ideas and solve problems collectively where appropriate.

*Involve all members of the team by:*

- 'actively' listening to the contributions made by everyone
- asking a quieter member of the team to chair the next meeting you have
- listing the strengths and weaknesses of each member of the team and thinking of ways to utilise their strengths

- thinking about the last big decision you made. How many members of your team did you involve? If the answer is none or not many, would increasing participation in future decision making make team members feel more involved?

*Get to know your team better by:*

- chatting informally with them at lunch or coffee breaks and taking an interest in their lives outside the work environment
- arranging a social event away from the work environment where people are more likely to chat about non-work related issues.

*Motivate your team by:*

- expressing your thanks for people's contributions on a regular basis either at team meetings or on a one to one basis
- use an internal newsletter to acknowledge people's efforts
- keeping them up to date with progress by sharing information
- organising a social event to celebrate successes collectively.

## **Working effectively in a team**

*Understand the role you play in teams by:*

- seeking feedback from your peers or boss as to how they perceive your effectiveness in team situations
- completing the self perception inventory for team members and reading the summaries of team roles based on the work of Meredith Belbin (see recommended books list)
- getting involved in more teams, particularly projects that run across the organisation and involve a cross section of people
- taking part in a social club or committee outside of work where you can experiment with different ways of interacting in a group
- keeping a log book of your contributions to team situations over a period of one month and using this to gain a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses.

*Develop effective relationships by:*

- making a list of the people in your team and writing down how good a working relationship you have with each of them (on a scale of say 1:10). Try to work out what the problems are and list the ways you may be able to overcome them. Then put your ideas into action.

*This learning guide was written by Fiona Dent, a client and programme director at Ashridge.*