
Contents

Before you begin	vii
Topic 1: Establish team performance plan	1
1A Establish a common understanding of team purpose, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities	2
1B Develop performance plans for the work team	10
1C Support team members in meeting expected performance outcomes	15
Summary	20
Learning checkpoint 1: Establish team performance plan	21
Topic 2: Develop and facilitate team cohesion	27
2A Develop strategies to ensure team members have input into planning, decision-making and operational aspects of work team	28
2B Develop policies and procedures to ensure team members take responsibility for own work and assist others to undertake required roles and responsibilities	34
2C Provide feedback to team members to encourage, value and reward individual and team efforts and contributions	38
2D Develop processes to ensure that issues, concerns and problems identified by team members are recognised and addressed	43
Summary	51
Learning checkpoint 2: Develop and facilitate team cohesion	52
Topic 3: Facilitate teamwork	59
3A Encourage team members and individuals to participate in team activities	60
3B Support the team in identifying and resolving work performance problems	65
3C Serve as a role model for the work team and enhance the organisation's image	69
Summary	72
Learning checkpoint 3: Facilitate teamwork	73
Topic 4 : Liaise with stakeholders	79
4A Establish and maintain open communication processes with all stakeholders	80
4B Communicate information from line manager/management to the team	83
4C Communicate unresolved issues, concerns and problems raised by team members and follow up with stakeholders	86
4D Evaluate and take necessary corrective action regarding unresolved issues, concerns and problems	89
Summary	93
Learning checkpoint 4 : Liaise with stakeholders	94

1A

Establish a common understanding of team purpose, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

In work teams, having a common purpose and a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and individual goals within the team dynamic is essential to ensuring a quality outcome. In this case, quality refers to more than just a positive outcome in relation to the prescribed goals; it also means the cohesion of individuals within the team environment and the lasting impressions of the success (or otherwise) of the group project.

As a leader, aligning the focus of the team helps to enable the team members to achieve goals. Important issues to consider include facilitating a shared understanding of:

- the purpose of the organisation, who its customers are and the team's role with the customers
- what the organisations goals are, and how your team will help achieve them.

Skills required to effectively lead teams

In order to get the most out of their teams, managers and team leaders should firstly have an understanding of the skills required to lead teams, and what constitutes a team.

The skills you require to effectively lead teams include:

- planning and organising skills
- training skills
- communication and consultation skills
- conflict resolution skills.



What constitutes a team

It is important to understand that a group of people does not necessarily make a team. There are a number of critical factors that make a group of people a team, such as the size of the team, appropriate knowledge/skill mix, defined purpose and goals, a common approach and joint accountability.

Teams are created for many reasons. The following table is a short list of the various types of teams. Does your team fit one of these categories?

Adapted from: *Leading teams: expert solutions to everyday challenges* 2006, Harvard Business School Press.

Functional team

An organisational group that reports to a single point and may or may not have to work together to meet group goals.

Cross-functional team

Team members from different functions across the organisation whose time is dedicated partially to the team's efforts and partially to other functional duties.

Feedback and consultation methods

Mechanisms such as scheduled meetings, bulletin boards, text messaging, shared computer network spaces, blogs, and even tweets and other social media can be used to provide feedback to the work team in relation to outcomes of any particular consultation.

The process of consultation can be achieved through the methods detailed here.

Ways of consulting with others and getting feedback in the workplace



Meetings

Formal, scheduled meetings and informal, ad hoc gatherings between team members contribute to a better understanding of tasks, responsibilities and roles



Interviews

Creating a list of questions to establish knowledge, skills and understanding of the task can help you identify individual needs and attributes



Brainstorming sessions

The group as a whole considers a number of possible perspectives. Successful brainstorming requires commitment, contribution and cooperation by all team members



Email/intranet communication

If a team is geographically dispersed, a system of electronic communication can aid understanding and contribution by all team members

Team charters

A team charter documents the purpose, structure, processes and expectations of the group or organisation. A team charter is usually drawn up in negotiation with a team sponsor, team leader and the relevant team members. Team charters should be established when the team is formed or when a team is in trouble and people need to regain their view of the big picture. There is no specific format to a team charter, as they should be created to suit the specific team environment.

The following components provide guidelines for you to use when creating a charter for your own team.

Context

The context is the situation and environment in which the team will operate. This can include information about the workplace or specifics about the project environment.

Mission and objectives

The mission and objectives are statements that help you establish what will be achieved by setting measurable goals and objectives. The mission is an overarching statement covering the project scope; for example, 'to create a new manufacturing process for the widget division'. Following the mission, the objectives should be stated clearly and concisely. Detail of specific goals should be written by ensuring the objectives are numbered and time frames or deadlines are assigned to each.

Composition and roles

Once your mission and objectives are framed, select team members that can contribute to the achievement of these objectives. Consider:

- selecting individuals with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to do the job
- selecting individuals from diverse backgrounds and from different departments within the organisation
- previous experience working together
- size and location of the team.

Support framework

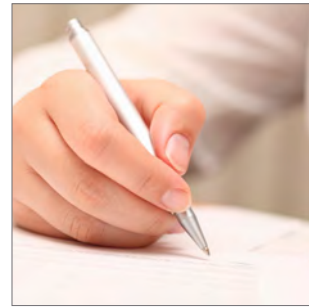
Once the roles have been assigned, develop the support framework to ensure each member has the information, resources and psychological support to begin the work. As part of this process you will ensure the tasks are matched to team member skills and assess any skills and/or knowledge gaps that exist in order to plan for training.

... continued

3. Composition and roles

The team will consist of:

- Jemma Ward: Production team supervisor. Tasked to interview team members and offer insight into the physical requirements of the production process
- Jim Williams: Plant supervisor. Tasked to provide technical information regarding the production machinery and machine operators
- Floyd Stein: Production manager. Tasked to consider financial and corporate implications of the team's recommendations. Assigned as group leader
- Bridget Chivers: Production administrator. Tasked to liaise with production staff and arrange times, materials and other resources for interviews and training room access.



4. Resources and support

The team will need access to the production floor and training room for four days. Other resources include:

- laptop, printer, photocopier and project in the training room
- passes and high-visibility safety gear for the production floor
- observation and interview documentation
- stationery supplies.

5. Operations

- The team will meet on Monday morning to formally assign roles, and receive their passes and safety equipment for the production floor.
- The interviews and observations will take place immediately using the provided proformas.
- The team will gather together in the training room on day 2 to analyse the data and brainstorm recommendations. Floyd Stein will ensure contingencies are considered. The team must reach agreement on recommendation by the end of day 2. Failure to do so will affect the arrangements to meet with the senior management team.
- Bridget Chivers will create the presentation once agreement has been reached.
- The team will jointly present their recommendations to the senior management team and present themselves for questioning after the presentation.

6. Agreement

This charter and its contents have been agreed to by:

Name: _____ Date _____

Practice task 1

1. Describe the methods you would use to consult with your team to establish a clear team purpose, and well-defined roles and responsibilities.

continued ...

Performance plans

The first stage of managing an effective team is the planning stage. As a team leader you will be required to administer performance plans for your team members.

Performance plans for individuals or teams generally contain:

- performance measures such as KPIs
- specific goals to be achieved by each team member, or the entire group
- the actions required to achieve those goals
- a schedule outlining how long it should take to achieve each goal
- the methods that will be used to monitor, evaluate and reward performance.



Incorporate input from stakeholders

It may seem counter-intuitive to negotiate a KPI, but this process has several benefits. Negotiation can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of individual employees or the team as a whole. As a manager, you can allocate the right work to the right team member based on the outcomes of this process.

The benefits of collaborating in the development of KPIs include an increased level of personal commitment and a better level of understanding of team member perspectives by the manager. It allows for feedback and critical analysis of the role and the performance measures applied to it.

The following steps provide a guideline for developing an effective performance plan using input and agreement with your team.

Developing a performance plan

1

Define expectations

Provide and clearly explain the list of expectations regarding conduct, behaviour, and performance of individuals within the team environment. Gather feedback and gain agreement on these expectations before moving on to the next step.

2

Determine milestones

Break down the performance goals into smaller milestones to assist you in monitoring progress toward the end goal. You don't want a surprise when it's time to evaluate a person's overall performance, so build in checkpoints to stay on top of performance before it gets too far off track.

3

Agree on terms

In a consultative process, create an agreed set of terms that outline the specific performance of each team member. It is generally established that performance improves when the terms are mutually agreed.

Write clear KPIs for the team

Once a performance outcome is agreed to and is in line with organisational needs, it must be worded so the team members and the manager are clear on the objectives to be achieved. To be clear and unambiguous, KPIs need to be written as ‘SMART’ objectives. That is, they should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-framed. For example: ‘Attain \$1 million in sales of widgets per quarter’. Assuming that \$1 million in sales is achievable and supported by production capacity, marketing, competitive pricing and so on, the KPI is realistic and achievable. Keep the KPIs concise: concise KPIs are less likely to be misunderstood.

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Realistic	Time framed
Target and clearly define a specific area that you want to improve.	Suggest an indicator of progress; quantify if possible. Determine how you will know the goal has been achieved.	Agree what the goals should be and keep them achievable in the time frame.	Identify what results can realistically be achieved given the available resources, knowledge and time.	Specify when the result can be achieved; make sure there is enough time to achieve the goal, but not too much time.

Example: team performance plan for a call centre

Here is an example of a team performance plan for a call centre. Information that would have been negotiated and discussed with the team, such as the goal and action required has been included.

Goal	Increase number of new customers on business phone plans by 15 per cent over six-month period.
KPIs	Call centre operators are to make 50 outbound calls per day, with an average of five new sign-ups per day.
Action required	Team training in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • product features and benefits • overcoming objections • closing techniques. Team training to be followed up with individual support from team leader when making sales calls.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team leader • Manager • Training department
Completed by	28/10/16
Evaluation of performance	Team leader to monitor at least four outbound sales calls made by each operator. Results of call monitoring to be compared with monitoring results taken prior to training.

Do 'real work'

Team leaders should lead from the front. They should do roughly the same amount of 'real' work as other team members. The role of team leader should not be used to just make decisions. Rather, the team leader should volunteer for work that is high-risk or difficult.

Take responsibility for team guidance, monitoring and control

Team leaders must take responsibility for the team's guidance, monitoring and control. Teams often lose sight of the bigger picture, and the team leader needs to demonstrate their willingness to control and guide the team as it works towards its goals. It is the team leader's responsibility to ensure measures and milestones are in place, and to produce reports required by the team and the rest of the organisation.

Positive coaching

If you have established a performance plan, and supported your team in progress towards goals, then you are well on your way to achieving successful results. However, things don't always go smoothly, and at some stage, you are likely to experience decreases in team and individual productivity, team morale and satisfaction. It is important to be aware of issues affecting your team and ensure development of their knowledge, skills and attitudes to keep individuals motivated, interested and productive.

Positive coaching is a method adopted in many successful teams and organisations in Australia and around the world. The following steps provide an outline of positive coaching.

Use praise**Praise rather than punishment**

Developing a proactive, high-performance team is best achieved by setting high (but achievable) goals and providing encouragement, rather than by pointing out poor performance and chastising those responsible.

If poor performance becomes an issue with one of your team members, consider handling it in a constructive manner, and in a private setting. Challenge your team member to rise to a set of new goals that are challenging and motivating and work out a plan together of how to achieve those goals.

Reasons for praise**Find reasons to praise them**

When a member of your team demonstrates exemplary behaviour, acknowledge them individually and in front of the team. Allow team members the opportunity to acknowledge their teammates' positive contributions. As you help people feel good about themselves, improved performance will follow.

Respond to performance deficiencies

The key to dealing with problem performance is to act swiftly. Don't let the problem become bigger or affect other areas of teamwork or interpersonal relationships. Having an effective performance plan in place allows you to separate your feelings from the performance issue, and to deal with the problem without allowing emotion to negatively affect you or other team members.

Here are the steps to consider when dealing with performance deficiencies.

1. Gather information

Gather the information regarding the deficient performance from as many perspectives as required. For example, if there is a customer-related issue, collect information from and about the customer as well as other witnesses, prior to confronting the team member.

2. Meet with team member

Meet with the relevant team member to discuss the performance issue. Ensure you set aside adequate time to collect the facts and the view of the team member. It is usually worth having a copy of the performance plan or job requirements with you to make notes of specific performance breaches or areas for improvement.

3. Develop a performance improvement plan

Develop a performance improvement plan in consultation with the team member. Identify and document clear steps to rectify the issue and gain agreement from the team member so all parties know what is required.

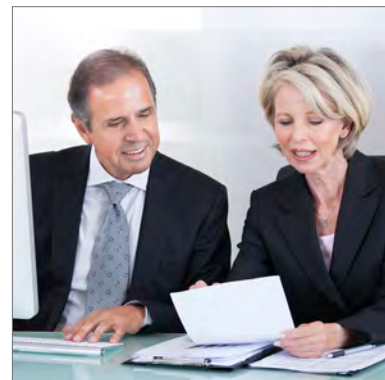
4. Monitor performance

Follow up the consultation with a scheduled meeting to discuss improvements and performance with regard to the agreed improvement plan. Depending on the project, this should be done no later than one week after the improvement plan has been initiated.

Performance improvement plan

An effective performance improvement plan should convey:

- the particular performance area that requires improvement or development
- the actions that are to be taken by the team member and team leader
- identification of any support services such as training, coaching or peer support that have been decided upon
- a schedule for follow-up by the team leader
- a deadline for demonstrable improvement
- how and when the performance improvement will be assessed.



Topic 2

Develop and facilitate team cohesion

Effective teamwork requires all members contribute equally in a sustained manner over a period of time. Teamwork requires members to share information and consider different viewpoints to find solutions and make decisions. In some cases, it requires individuals to put aside personal beliefs for the benefit of the entire team. Because the human element is vital to the success of the team, you will need to allocate time to work on team building and team cohesion.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Develop strategies to ensure team members have input into planning, decision-making and operational aspects of work team
- 2B Develop policies and procedures to ensure team members take responsibility for own work and assist others to undertake required roles and responsibilities
- 2C Provide feedback to team members to encourage, value and reward individual and team efforts and contributions
- 2D Develop processes to ensure that issues, concerns and problems identified by team members are recognised and addressed

Stage 2: Storming

This stage involves conflict and competition surrounding interpersonal relationships, as team members attempt to organise their roles and responsibilities within the group environment. Individuals should seek compromise between feelings and ideas. This commonly leads to exposing social differences where some members may become more dominant and others more withdrawn from the process. A good facilitator must move the team through this stage by focusing individual attention on the task and team purpose.

Stage 3: Norming

This stage can be identified by the extent of cohesion shown by group members. As roles are allocated and positions are clarified, people naturally become less focused on their personal needs and more focused on the team's purpose. At this stage, the team begins to work in synergy and differences are put aside while tasks are planned and personal work schedules are considered.

Stage 4: Performing

The performance of the task, project or activity occurs when members of the team contribute to the goals and desired outcomes. Measuring, monitoring and controlling (at least to some extent) this performance becomes the focus of the team leader during this stage. Individual differences, conflict and motivation are quickly dealt with to maintain a high performance level. Teams may cycle through the performing, storming and norming stages throughout the implementation of the project or task.

Stage 5: Adjourning

This is the final stage of group dynamics where the task is completed or otherwise terminated and the group disbands. Managing this stage requires good communication skills in order to explain the reasons and effectively facilitate the movement of individuals to other roles. These may include their previous roles or new roles resulting from task completion.

This final stage can also include mourning. This suggests the mental withdrawal that people often display when a group disbands and can include symptoms such as feelings of isolation, sadness, sorrow, and regret. While this is not technically a stage of group dynamics in and of itself, as it occurs after the group has separated, monitoring and support of individuals who may feel these effects after the task is completed is needed.

Strategies for gaining consensus

A consensus decision results from full input of all stakeholders. It's important that the process operates with good faith efforts to meet all stakeholders' interests by all involved. Everyone in the group must be given a chance to be heard and must feel comfortable speaking. True consensus is achieved by teams working together to arrive at decisions that everyone believes are feasible. Ensure that you identify all key stakeholders and invite them to participate.

Here are some strategies for consensus decision-making.



Strategies for reaching consensus

1

Clarify the issue

Share relevant information and make sure that everyone fully understands the issue or problem.

2

Explore the issue and discuss alternative solutions

- Gather initial ideas and reactions; identify all the issues and explore all stakeholders' understandings.
- Collect alternative solutions and discuss the pros and cons of each.
- Narrow down the alternatives: eliminate some, short list others.

3

Look for developing ideas and common agreements

Try to identify proposals that consolidate the best elements of the ideas presented and look for a solution that satisfies stakeholders' main concerns.

4

Clarify and amend the chosen proposal

Ensure that all remaining concerns are voiced and considered. Look for possible amendments that make the idea more acceptable.

5

Check for and reach agreement on the outcome

Ask if anyone disagrees. During the final stages it may be difficult to get everyone to agree. Explain that consenting to a plan doesn't always mean it's a person's first choice. If agreement is not reached you may need to return to strategy 3.

6

Implement

Develop an action plan for the tasks: nominate who, when and how they will be achieved. Set deadlines for each task.

discrimination and environmental protection. An SOP is a procedural document that can be a contractually binding component of a job role or team activity. Consistency requires discipline and the reliance on contractual obligations is one effective method of achieving discipline.

Consult with specialists within your organisation such as payroll, accounts and human resources advisers regarding any organisational standard operating procedures, legislation or guidelines that need to be followed by team members.

Example: team ground rules

Here is an example of team ground rules.

Culture and behaviour

In the customer support team we:

- listen to the ideas and suggestions of others without prejudice
- respect the personal information of others
- respect the need for others to feel included
- foster diversity of culture, ideas and perspectives.

Communication

In the customer support team we:

- communicate in English through the established lines of authority
- meet each Monday morning at 8 am to discuss issues, results and new ideas
- do not talk over another team member
- allow time for all team members to be heard (within the constraints of operational needs)
- do not gossip or spread rumours regarding team members or team decisions.

Tone of voice

Your attitude, perspectives and emotions are partly conveyed by tone of voice. Tone includes pitch, intonation, volume and tempo. When used improperly the listener can become confused, or you send an unintended message.

Body language

Body language is a powerful tool for communicating messages. Body language includes all nonverbal cues such as posture, facial expression, eye contact and gestures.

Active listening

Focus carefully on the words said to you. Make eye contact and nod to indicate you understand, or ask questions once the speaker has finished, if there are things you are not clear about. Don't interrupt, and avoid outside distractions that shift your attention away from the person speaking.

Questioning techniques to confirm understanding

Use open questions, probing questions and closed questions to confirm that both parties share the same understanding. If in doubt, restate what the other person has said using your own words to check that you have understood.

Example: encourage improved performance

A small work team of four young street marketers was tasked with delivering 1000 signed contracts for a service over a one-month period. The team leader assigned marketing areas and targets to each sales person and monitored their efforts during daily meetings prior to the start of each working day. To encourage better performance, the team leader focused on the benefits that their service provided to customers and that the efforts made by each salesperson was improving the lives of each customer they signed up. Additionally, she encouraged each team member to specify a daily target that suited their areas and abilities as long as they met the monthly target by the end of the period. She congratulated those who achieved their daily targets, and encouraged those who didn't to find new ways of approaching potential customers by brainstorming with the group.

She laid down one simple ground rule—no team member could blame anybody else for their results, and achieving their targets meant that they were absolutely responsible for their own success.



Conflict-resolution skills

Conflict situations are common in teams and, if managed effectively, can actually have positive benefits in the form of increased knowledge sharing, idea generation and innovation. However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflicting goals can quickly turn into personal dislike. Teamwork breaks down and people disengage from their work.

You will need to respond quickly and effectively to conflict situations in order to get the most out of your team. Specifically, you should have the ability to:

- contain and manage strong emotions displayed by individuals
- facilitate diverse expression of ideas
- empathise with others
- assist team members in identifying solutions to problems
- negotiate win-win outcomes.

Brainstorms

Brainstorming is a useful technique to promote ideas and discussion among team members and to identify solutions to problems. It allows each participant to state their opinions in a non-threatening environment. An effective brainstorming session should be free of conflict and encourage the participation of all team members. This is achieved by maintaining an open communication between participants and the session facilitator. The facilitator can assign a scribe to take down the ideas as they arise and should maintain the flow of new ideas by moving away from old strings of thought once they have reached a conclusion.



Discussions with individuals

There are some issues and problems that are best discussed in private on an individual basis. If you are unsure of the appropriate forum to discuss an issue, consider using the following questions as a guide.

- Does the issue involve one or a number of team members?
- Is the issue relevant to the ability of the team to meet its goals and targets?
- Is the issue of a sensitive or personal nature?

When using this approach to resolve issues, you should:

- keep people and problems separate
- listen first, talk second
- pay attention to body language and other nonverbal cues
- clarify ambiguities or mixed messages
- establish the facts
- explore options together
- develop a set of actions.

As the team leader, you will need to respond quickly and effectively to conflict situations in order to get the most out of your team and minimise any negative impacts. The web article 'Resolving conflict in work teams' provides information on how to effectively manage team conflict: www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/pages/articles/conflicts.htm.

Conflict may arise due to:

- miscommunication
- misunderstanding
- difference in perspectives, ideology, or values
- a heightened sense of pressure
- emotional boil-overs
- physical or psychological issues.

Remove workplace conflict

In all cases, the conflict must be removed as quickly as possible so as not to negatively affect others including clients, customers, workmates or observers. This demonstrates effective leadership, gains the trust and respect of those around you and ensures time and space required to resolve the conflict properly. In the 1970s, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. They also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations. Read each of the conflict resolution styles shown here and consider how you might adjust your current approach.

Competitive style

People who use a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. If used consistently, it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful.

When to use:

- The decision needs to be made fast.
- The decision is unpopular.
- When defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly.

Collaborative style

People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important.

When to use:

- You require a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution.
- There have been previous conflicts in the group.
- The situation is too important for a simple trade-off.

Group dynamics affect team performance

If you have responsibility for managing the performance of a team or an organisation, you need to be aware of the way in which the individuals within it interact and the effects this has on other team members and the team as a whole. This is often referred to as group dynamics. Group dynamics are unconscious, psychological forces, or undercurrents, that influence behaviour and performance. Often people in groups adopt distinct roles and behaviours.

Dynamics are created by the nature of the work, personalities within the team, their working relationships with others and the team's work environment. Group dynamics can support team performance through positive behaviours, or hinder it through negative behaviours that result in unproductive conflict, mistrust and demotivation, for example.



Teams or groups with positive dynamics trust one another, make decisions collectively, take responsibility for their individual and team performance and hold one another accountable. People's behaviours in groups with poor dynamics can disrupt work, impede decision-making and lead to poor choices.

Common behaviours that affect group dynamics

Some behaviours that commonly affect group dynamics are listed here.

Negative behaviours	Positive behaviours
Giving too much advice or instruction	Promoting teamwork and shared problem-solving
Belittling or undermining team members	Accepting and welcoming diverse opinions
Attempting to persuade (without listening); the 'hard sell'	Employing and encouraging active listening
Censoring ideas and giving precedence to only one opinion	Conveying empathy and welcoming objective assessment of each idea
Talking too much or dominating discussion	Letting others speak and gently interrupting dominators to call on other individuals to present their views.
Remaining silent and impassive	Contributing whenever possible and encouraging contributions by asking questions, boosting confidence and giving credit
Displaying negativity or disinterest	Taking on more challenging and active tasks such as gathering information, taking notes or making presentations
Continually arguing against others	Encouraging positive attitudes, remaining calm, allowing everyone to contribute to discussion

Summary

1. The stages of a team's development include: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. Each stage of the process helps to evolve the team from dependence to interdependence in personal relations and problem-solving.
2. There are two main ways to make decisions as teams: consensus or voting. Consensus occurs when all participants agree to a team decision. Voting adopts the classic democratic approach in which the majority rules.
3. Team ground rules are a great way to improve team cohesion and ensure all team members are working toward a common goal. Team ground rules are a set of standards that address how individuals treat each other, communicate, participate, cooperate, support each other and coordinate joint activity.
4. Managers and team leaders play their most important role when they set the stage for good performance. One way to do this is to establish policies and procedures. Policies create expectations for action and procedures provide the means by which the actions can be carried out. Once responsibilities have been assigned, policies and procedures provide guidance about how to carry out assigned tasks within the system.
5. Motivating people should come down to three things: effort, by encouraging the belief that making more effort will improve performance; performance, by encouraging the belief that a high level of performance will bring a good reward; and outcome, by making sure the reward is attractive.
6. Giving feedback is a key responsibility of managers and team leaders. Research strongly suggests that job satisfaction, morale, and retention are closely related to the ability of a manager or supervisor to provide feedback to team members.
7. Team leaders can use a variety of techniques to identify and resolve issues amongst team members including: brainstorming, discussing matters with individuals, distributing ideas for comment and improving the team's skills and knowledge base.

Groupthink and poor decisions

According to psychologist Irving Janis, groupthink occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because of group pressures. When considered from the context of solving work problems, this group pressure can result in group members holding back personal viewpoints and ignoring alternatives.

The problems that can arise from groupthink are summarised here.

Eight symptoms of groupthink and their effects

1

Illusion of invulnerability

Creates excessive optimism that encourages taking extreme risks.

2

Collective rationalisation

Members discount warnings and do not reconsider their assumptions.

3

Belief in inherent morality

Members believe in the rightness of their cause and therefore ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.

4

Stereotyped views of out-groups

Negative views of 'enemy' make effective responses to conflict seem unnecessary.

5

Direct pressure on dissenters

Members are under pressure not to express arguments against any of the group's views.

6

Self-censorship

Doubts and deviations from the perceived group consensus are not expressed.

7

Illusion of unanimity

The majority view and judgments are assumed to be unanimous.

8

Self-appointed 'mind guards'

Members protect the group and the leader from information that is problematic or contradictory to the group's cohesiveness, view, and/or decisions.

4C

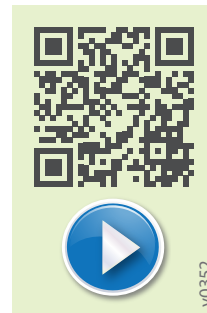
Communicate unresolved issues, concerns and problems raised by team members and follow up with stakeholders

There will be times when issues arise that cannot be dealt with within the team context. In these situations, issues are most often forwarded to senior management. The most important part of communication is listening. Unfortunately, this is something that many people struggle with due to their attitude or unwillingness to be patient.

Effective listening

Management scholar Peter F. Drucker explains effective listening this way:

It is the recipient who communicates. The so-called communicator, the person who emits the communication, does not communicate. He utters. Unless there is someone who hears, there is no communication.



Hearing and listening are different concepts. In the context of effective communication, listening is a combination of the behaviours outlined here.

Be attentive

Attentiveness can be demonstrated by looking at the person speaking with you, acknowledging their input by nodding and avoiding distracted body language, such as fiddling with a pen or typing on a computer.

Repeat information

Repeat key information by paraphrasing the information that has been passed onto you; clarify what you have heard and demonstrate to the speaker that you are listening to what they are saying and have understood their meaning (this can also be reflected in effective email communication).

Revise and question

If there is anything you are not clear about, make sure you seek understanding during the communication event so you do not waste time following up later; ensure the person you are communicating with understands the key points you have imparted by asking direct, non-ambiguous questions.