



TEAM RESOURCE GUIDE

This resource guide was prepared by Professor Lawrence C. Minks as a basis for review and application in team activities for BAd 510-Management and Organizational Policy and Practice, Master of Science in Management Program, Division of Business, Brescia College.

INTRODUCTION

This resource guide has been designed to be used in conjunction with the team activities of this course combined with the guidance and direction you will receive from the instructor. It was designed in such a way so that you will be able to understand and grasp the various frameworks, models, methods, and action sequences relatively quickly and determine the appropriateness for team meetings considering the materials assigned for the class session.

Educators have increasingly become concerned with new and innovative approaches, particularly those aimed at communicating academic knowledge in a way that is helpful and meaningful to pragmatically oriented professional managers and management students. The two dominant traditions in this respect have been the development of the case method (or discussion method) and the experiential learning approaches that have grown from Kurt Lewins' work on group dynamics. Today, most management programs offer a mix of approaches and with new new methods have begun to raise their expectations from awareness and understanding to actually improving skills in interpersonal relations, problem solving, decision making, communication, leadership, managing change, and other key managerial functions. However, the rapid growth of knowledge and increasing rates of change are making specific skill training more vulnerable to obsolescence. The answer seems to lie not in merely learning new skills, but in learning how to learn and adapt throughout one's lifelong career process. An emerging concern in educating managers for the future and one which permeates this entire course is, therefore, how individuals, teams, and organizations learn; that is, the basic processes and competencies that will facilitate effective adaptation and learning in the rapidly changing world we face.

The fundamental unit or building block in this course, as well as in any organization, will be the natural work group, which consists of members who share a common leader (facilitator) and a clear concept of mission or purpose that requires a degree of interaction born of interdependence. Within the larger organizational context, a major system consists of connected work groups that share a common mission or purpose.

Because member interaction is the key to a natural work group's level of effectiveness, the resources in the guide relate primarily to the dynamics and factors associated with such interaction: initiative, inquiry, problem solving, decision making, planning and establishing priorities, communicating, team building, role development/clarification, organizing, resolving conflicts, and evaluation/critique. The basic rationale for the designs and methods offered in this guide are based on group ownership and commitment. The best answers to questions regarding a group's effectiveness generally lie within the group itself. This rationale evolves from the premise that, given a problem or a situation, a system, or a process for analysis/evaluation and some process tools, the members of the group are collectively capable of analyzing and solving their own relationship and task problems. The process tools are required as vehicles for accomplishing the following: gathering valid and relevant data and information, identifying priorities reflected in the information, and focusing group energy on the task at hand.

One of the commonalities in the approaches described in this guide is the objectives-method-action sequence process. In most instances this is designed to bring attention to pre-session preparation on the part of the individual team members and the facilitator of the session, the overall objectives (goals) of the design and what it is supposed to accomplish, and the action sequence of the session to reach closure and produce a tangible product (or products). There should be enough flexibility in the designs for modifications if the team so desires. At any rate, the designs are intended to provide process tools and generate commitment to specific actions as deemed appropriate by the team.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITATION GUIDELINES

- A. TEAM DEVELOPMENT--represents a process a group goes through for the purpose of improving its operating effectiveness.
 - 1. The FOCUS includes these major issues:
 - Mission, goals and objectives
 - Key effectiveness areas for the team
 - Individual roles and mutual support
 - Group processes such as communication, problem identification and solving, and priority setting
 - Group member relationships
 - Priority clarification
 - Planning
 - Team self evaluation
- B. Some Practical Observations About Team Self-Development
 - 1. It is self-determined: the team leader (facilitator) and team members define the team they need and want to be a part of.
 - 2. No standard formula or recipe is best for each team--they are custom-shaped.
 - 3. The team behavior now in place has been influenced by past experiences, reward systems in the larger organization, and total system culture and its behavioral norms.
 - 4. Teams learn certain processes to enable them to build a team.
 - 5. Teams have more than enough talent to best deal with their own issues.
 - 6. Team development is a learning and discovery process.
 - 7. Team development is done best by working on real team problems and issues (goals, priorities, & specific projects) and analyzing the approaches being used--and desired changes that are produced.
 - 8. Since team development is a "process" and not a recipe, these things can be expected:
 - You must trust the process, even though it may not be explainable
 - Teams don't (can't) know what they most need to make the team most effective until they are deep in the development process
 - 9. Teams must nurture and re-invent themselves regularly or they can revert quickly to old methods and habits.
 - 10. Trust, openness and candor are only a few prerequisites for team self-development. A key indicator of a team that has moved well toward a high level of development is responsiveness and quality output.
- C. The Critical Importance of Teams (Work Groups)
 - 1. The group or team level is the prime point of focus for an organization--it is here that interfacing and the process of coping with situations through dialogue, confrontation, and search takes place most effectively.
 - 2. The interrelationship between followership and leadership is rooted in group (team) effectiveness. In the overlapping group concept (as part of the organization), a person involved in the management of a human system will be a leader in a group of subordinates and a follower in a group of superiors. This enables the person to develop concurrently the skills of membership and leadership in order to contribute to a group or team.

- D. Three Models of Team Development--as distinct applications of the group development process.
1. The Goal-Setting Model-members are involved in the process of developing individual and group goals that are used to obtain agreement on direction and specific goals.
 2. The Interpersonal Model-members meet to exchange their perception of each other and their relationship; the assumption underlying this model is that an interpersonally competent group is more effective than one that is not.
 3. The Role Model-members discuss their roles and use a process in which roles are adjusted to satisfy both individual needs and task requirements. Responsibility charting has been found to be useful in helping teams sort out who has primary responsibility for initiating an action and who must be consulted for review and approval.
- E. Stages of Team Development
1. Orientation
 - Establishment of structure and communication network
 - Clarification of relations and interdependencies among group members
 - Identification of leadership (facilitation) roles and authority and responsibility relationships
 - Development of a plan for goal accomplishment
 2. Internal Problem Solving
 - Identification and resolution of conflict
 - Further clarification of goals and structure
 - Development of participative climate
 3. Growth and Productivity
 - Group activity directed toward goal accomplishment
 - Development of data flow and feedback systems for task performance
 - Growing cohesion among members of the group
 4. Evaluation and Control
 - Leadership role emphasizes facilitation, rotation, development, feedback, and evaluation
 - Roles and group interdependencies are renewed, revised, and strengthened
 - Group exhibits an even stronger motivation toward goal accomplishment
- F. Effective Teams Are Dependent Upon The Development of Dynamic Balance Being Achieved On Four Levels:
1. Organizational expectation level (performance criteria)--the governing variables of the organization for the group such as productivity goals, quality, creativity, innovation, etc.
 2. Group task level--most groups confront a task and exist primarily to carry out that task.
 3. Group maintenance level--growing awareness of itself, networks established, and maintenance within itself of relationships appropriate to the task.
 4. Individual needs level--each member of the group brings a particular set of needs and qualities to both the group and its task.

G. Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Team Behaviors

1. Effective Problem Solving

- Members try out new ideas on each other
- Members listen to understand
- A willingness to change positions
- All members participate
- People find stimulation in disagreement
- Interaction and striving for consensus for best solution

2. Ineffective Persuasion

- Trying to sell preformed opinions
- Not listening or listening to refute
- Defend a position without understanding other views
- Few members dominate
- People react unfavorably to disagreement
- Attempts to convert others through one-to-one interaction

H. A Managerial Model For Analyzing A Work Group

1. Context

- Purpose
- Physical Setting
- The Organization
- Influences of External/Internal Environments

2. Design Factors

People

- Skills and Interests
- Learning Styles
- Values, Assumptions
- Preference for variety

The Formal Organization

- Structure and formal reporting relationships
- Control and measurement systems
- Reward systems
- Recruitment and selection systems

Task Requirements

- Required Activities and Interactions
- Variety and Novelty
- Time Span
- Interdependence

3. Group Culture

- Emergent activities and interactions
- Norms, roles, and perceived social status
- Sentiments
- Rituals, stories, sagas, and language conventions
- Shared mapping (mental process by which members of the group interactively comprehend and deal with the world around them)

4. Outcomes

- Productivity/Quality
- Satisfaction
- Individual Growth

I. Characteristics of High Performing Teams

1. Directions: Clear instructions for carrying out responsibilities are provided with opportunity available to clarify unclear areas; everyone understands what is to be done and why it is important.
2. Meetings: Action steps are reached by utilizing the resources of everyone who has something to contribute.
3. Conflict: Points of disagreement are made explicit and reasons for them are identified to resolve underlying causes.
4. Objectives: Members are involved in setting, reviewing, and evaluating those objectives on which their performance can have an impact.
5. Innovation: Creativity and innovation are stimulated by the readiness to experiment.
6. Communication (candor): Members are well-informed and participate in problem analysis and decision making; differences are openly discussed and worked through for sound understanding.
7. Roles: Responsibilities are designed around the nature of tasks and qualifications of members in ways that maximize interaction between those who share the action.
8. Delegation: Degree of autonomy in completing assignments is matched to individual capacity for exercising responsible interdependence.
9. Quality: High quality standards receive full commitment from team members; outstanding performance is achieved and maintained because members are motivated to excel.
10. Performance evaluation: Performance evaluations are based on previously agreed upon criteria with realistic review of strengths and weaknesses on a two-way feedback basis.
11. Team spirit: Cohesion and team loyalty lead to mutual assistance when it is needed.
12. Commitment: Commitment comes from members having a common stake in teamwide success; personal gratification is from making needed contributions.

- A. FACILITATION--involves leadership skills that cover a range of behaviors relating to influencing, guiding, directing, and coordinating the activities of the team.

** Leadership skills consist of the following component behaviors:

1. Initiating and Maintaining Action
 - Know what is to be accomplished
 - Be aware of the objective of the action
 - Identify possible actions that will lead to the objective
 - Involve others
 - Work with others in clearly outlining expectations
 - Take steps to avert possible problems that can block action
2. Directing and Coordinating
 - Clarify role responsibilities
 - Determine assignments and instructions
 - Coordinate activities
 - Link performance to rewards
3. Motivating and Stimulating Others
 - Reinforce past accomplishments
 - Identify and clarify individual goals
 - Emphasize the need for timely action
 - Link personal, team, and organizational goals
 - Arouse team spirit
 - Promote collaboration and interdependence
4. Assigning and Delegating Tasks
 - Encourage team members to use initiative and creativity
 - Enlarge members' responsibilities if necessary
 - Note the importance & relationships of assignments
 - Consider combined experiences and capabilities of subsets of the group
 - Inform members of timing & preparation of pre-assignments for session
5. Monitoring and Feedback
 - Require team members to accept responsibility for assigned task despite changing circumstances (flexibility and versatility)
 - Provide avenues for follow-up and feedback
 - Monitor and critique performance

- B. Assigning and Delegating Tasks Accomplishes The Following Goals:

1. Establishes goals and clarifies objectives
2. Defines role responsibilities and accountability
3. Establishes control mechanisms
4. Provides for continuous improvement and development
5. Provides for feedback, incentives, and rewards

- C. Guidelines in Building a Meeting Agenda

1. Sequence items so they build on one another if possible
2. Sequence topics from easiest to most difficult/or controversial
3. Keep the number of topics within reasonable limits
4. Avoid items that could be better handled by subsets of the group or individuals
5. Separate information exchange from problem solving/decision making
6. Define a finishing time as well as a starting time
7. Depending on meeting length, schedule breaks at specific times where they will not disrupt important elements of the session