# **Practices for Building Successful Teams**

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Presentation: <u>Building Successful Teams</u> Handouts: <u>Team Brainstorm</u>, <u>Individual Map</u>

### **Framework**

Patrick Lencioni, <u>The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team</u> (Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, Results) - also called the Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Absence of trust, Fear of conflict, Lack of commitment, Avoidance of accountability, Inattention to results)

## **Practices that Build Trust**

- Take time to set group expectations for how you will work together
  - One helpful model for this activity is the Container Building exercise in Brené Brown's <u>Dare to Lead workbook</u> (p5)
- Sit in a circle where everyone can see everyone else (<u>circles</u> are a core component of restorative practices, an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities.)
- Create an opportunity for the group to have a shared experience (social, professional development, etc.)
- Ask for help when needed, offer help when possible
- Try a collaborative activity or game (there are some great collaborative tools from <u>Liberating Structures</u>)
- Provide an opportunity to share strengths and weaknesses
- Create a no-judgement zone in team meetings
- Use transparent processes for decision-making and make sure everyone has the chance to give input (the <u>Fair Process</u> model in restorative practices is a helpful framework)
- Include everyone in discussions, make sure people who need time to think individually have a moment to do so (one structure is that you can give everyone

- a minute to think individually and then have someone start and go in order around the circle and make sure everyone has the chance to share)
- Be punctual and follow through on your commitments
- Build connections by learning about group members beyond the context of your
  work together (values, hobbies, interests, etc.) The key practice here is asking
  questions, again the <u>restorative practices proactive circle</u> model can be helpful –
  prepare a question for the start of the meeting and give everyone a chance to
  respond around the circle before you dig into the task at hand)
- Bring someone's favorite treat to a group meeting
- Draft a shared group mission statement
- Practice good listening, listen to understand, rather than preparing to respond
- Remember information that your group members share with you
- Celebrate small victories
- Say thank you, and take moments as a group to appreciate what's going well
- Assume that everyone is doing the best that they can (another powerful tip from Brene Brown)

# **Practices that Encourage Conflict**

- Establish a safe zone in your group where it is ok to disagree and voice your opinion
- Practice using open-ended questions to gather input and feedback on ideas
- Openly invite different opinions, and acknowledge team members who share a different perspective
- Develop guidelines for sharing constructive criticism
- Use Brené Brown's technique of <u>Turn and Learn</u> (where everyone writes down their ideas/opinions and shares them at the same time)
- Assign a devil's advocate in the group, take turns
- Agree on guidelines for brainstorming (examples: encourage wild, even "bad" ideas, go for quantity, use "yes and" to build on the ideas of others, defer judgement – no blocking)
- Conduct a <u>SWOT analysis</u> as a group (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) where everyone considers each category together
- Create a pro/con list as a group
- Have the group stress test an idea using the Red Team technique
- Seek to understand a team member's perspective by asking questions about their reasoning and supporting information
- Assign viewpoints for debates to ensure multiple perspectives are represented

- The word conflict can be uncomfortable for some people, find a word that works for your group
- Notice if a conflict has stepped into the destructive side and step back, apologize, and take a break if needed
- Say thank you when a team member shares their different perspective with you
- Take a moment to appreciate when the group is engaging conflict, even constructive conflict can raise the tension in a group – taking a moment to acknowledge that the group is on the right track by leaning in to this work can help people stay engaged!

### **Practices that Ensure Commitment**

- Keep a spreadsheet of decisions that the group reviews after each meeting.
- <u>Paint Done</u>: Make sure everyone knows the desired end result and how it will contribute to the big picture.
- <u>Clear is Kind:</u> When a decision is made by the group, restate the decision, pause for questions, and check for any remaining concerns/reservations.
- Use the <u>SMART framework</u> to set clear goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
- For larger or more complex tasks, set up milestones that the group can use as moments to check-in and make sure everyone is still clear on their roles and assignments. (short term/long term goals)
- <u>TASC Approach</u>: Make sure each task has an owner, and that they have the authority and ability to succeed.
- Create opportunities for the group to check in on how decision-making and direction-setting are going and discuss how to improve.
- Use a project management system/platform for delivering assignments and tracking progress (<u>Trello</u>, <u>Asana</u>, etc.).
- Discuss the consequences that the group or individuals might experience if the goals aren't met.
- Develop incentives for the group to stay on track and remain committed to the work. (Group shout-outs, treats, appreciation, celebration, etc.)
- Meet on a regular schedule and keep a routine as a group to support operating clarity and expectations.

## **Practices that Promote Accountability & Achieve Results**

• Agree on a system for how your group will check in on assignments

- Create a shared timeline for the project so that everyone can see what is due at what time. (Project management tools like <u>Trello</u>, <u>Asana</u>, etc.)
- Be proactive about asking to adjust deadlines if needed and demonstrate accountability and ownership if you miss a commitment.
- Acknowledge and celebrate contributions and follow-through for individuals and for the group.
- Use a clear checklist of responsibilities and check accomplishments off as a group during meetings.
- Create check-points where the group can reassess goals and have an open conversation about progress.
- Brainstorm fun rewards and penalties as a group to make accountability a little more lighthearted.
  - Sample penalties: Run a lap, bring coffee to the next meeting, take a less desirable task, etc.
  - Sample rewards: Pick your favorite chair, earn a piece of candy, avoid an undesirable task, etc.
- Use an accountability buddy system where each team member has a partner that they check in with on progress.
- Make sure accountability is added to the expectations set at the beginning of the group work.
- Develop motivators that will help the group reach milestones: invite a guest to the meeting to view progress, send a draft to stakeholders for review, schedule an open meeting to discuss your progress, etc.
- Discuss the idea of "team success" as a group, and check in on what it means for each member.
- Find opportunities for team members to "level up" together through their work build skills, receive recognition, etc.
- Assess the final product from a big picture perspective and ensure it meets the goals of the project.
- Celebrate team success!
  - Lunch, coffee, walk, team gift, thank you cards, etc