Strengthening Team Management Skills Course

Purpose

To build the knowledge and skills needed for CIAT leaders and managers that strengthen team-based research and assist with the transition from working in commodity teams to fluid project based teams.

Objectives

At the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Use information gained from Leadership and Management Skills Assessment Inventory to strengthen leadership and managerial effectiveness.
2. Use essential communication skills - feedback and facilitating the involvement of others - to enhance the effectiveness of project teams.
3. Build and sustain effective project team performance.
4. Constructively manage conflict among team members or among project teams.
5. Develop strategies to influence and build alliances both inside CIAT and externally.
6. Apply course skills, knowledge, and tools to real work challenges.

TAB 6

TAB 7 - Optional Reading

TAB 8

Journal

Strengthening Team Management

CIAT Skills Training Course

November 4 - 8, 1996

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Opening & Welcome Getting Started Sharing What We Heard Goals, Objectives, Schedule	Role of Project Manager * Leadership * Management Self Assessment Results	Introduction to Teams * What is a team? * Why teams? Starting & Sustaining Teams	Team Feedback	Team Performance & Feedback Case Situation: Multitasked Team Assignment
		LUNCH		
Understanding and Managing the Impact of Change	Foundation Skills * Facilitation * Feedback	Team Challenges	Managing Conflict	Aligning and Influencing People Applying this in CIAT Evaluation Closing

Days begin at 8:30 and end at 5:30
Lunch will be 1 hour
There will be breaks in the morning and afternoon

Training Resources Group, Inc. Corporate Profile

General Background

Founded in 1973, Training Resources Group, Inc., (TRG) is an employee-owned business that provides management consulting, training, organization development, team building, and project planning services to clients in the U.S. and throughout the world. The firm has provided these services to public and private sector clients in the U.S. and over 60 countries throughout Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and the NIS. Many of TRG's full-time staff routinely provide services in French and Spanish.

Experience

With 20 years of experience designing management development activities in the public, private, and international sectors, TRG brings to each new job vast experience and an in-depth understanding of what makes a successful program. We take pride in the fact that our products achieve practical results. Our goal is always to provide services which will have an *impact*, and make a *positive difference* for our clients.

TRG is working with CGIAR on several initiatives. We design and deliver the 7-day Women's Leadership and Management course. This course was given in Mexico for staff from CIMMYT, CIAT and CIP in 1996 and will be given again in 1997, at CIFOR. We worked with the CIMMYT 30th Anniversary NARS/Donor Consultative Forum and the CIMMYT Change Catalyst Committee Retreat. For IFPRI and IMI we have planned and facilitated several problem solving and planning meetings.

We work for a number of non-profit organizations throughout the world: World Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development, Asian Development Bank, U.S. Department of Agriculture, UNDP, PLAN International and the International Monetary Fund. Our work is often within these organizations themselves and with development projects they fund. Examples of projects we are involved with are a privatization project in Cairo, a worldwide environmental health project, a conflict resolution project in the Middle East, and a worldwide project to provide environment and urban development technical assistance to municipal governments.

The TRG headquarters is located in Alexandria, Virginia. We are a small company - there are 26 of us. TRG uses its own organization as a laboratory for experimenting with various organizational assessment and improvement efforts, working hard to use the approaches, tools, and techniques about which we advise others. Both Wilma Gormley and Linda Spink have a number of years of experience managing and leading others as well as working as facilitators and trainers in various human resources development activities.

Reading/Homework Assignments for the Week

Sunday

- Review the prework articles, "What Leaders Really Do" and "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail
- Total your assessment inventories and write on score sheets

Monday

- Feedback article behind Tab 2

Tuesday

- Read pages 32 through 42 on teams behind Tab 3
- Collaborative Work Organization: A Key to Achieving Empowerment and Accountability, page 76 behind Tab 7 (optional)

Wednesday

- WhatTeam Leaders Do and Don't Do, page 63 behindTab 7
- Using Teams Effectively: Making Meetings Work Better, page 62 behind Tab 7 (optional)
- Using the Flipchart as an Effective Facilitation Tool, page 66 behind Tab 7 (optional)
- Building Consensus, page 70 behind Tab 7 (optional)

Thursday

- Review the Feedback article behind Tab 2
- Making Performance Appraisals Work For Teams (handout to be distributed)
- The Power of Peer Review (handout to be distributed)
- Other readings you have not yet had time to complete

Understanding the Four Phases of Transition[1]

Phase One: Denial

The first response to a significant or unexpected change is often shock - a general refusal to recognize the information. In this way we protect ourselves from being overwhelmed. Common responses include:

Denying:	"This can't be happening."
Ignoring:	"Wait till it blows over."
Minimizing:	"It just needs a few minor adjustments."

The stage of **Denial** can be prolonged if employees are not encouraged to register their reaction, or if management acts like employees should just move directly into the new ways. Denial is harmful because it impedes the natural progression of healing from loss to moving forward. Employees stay focused on the way things were, thus not exploring how they can or need to change.

Actions that help during this phase are: giving people information, letting them know what to expect, give them time to let things sink in, and then move to planning.

Phase Two: Resistance

Resistance occurs when people move through the numbness of denial and begin to experience self-doubt, anger, depression, anxiety, frustrations, fear or uncertainty. In this phase things often seem to get worse, productivity dips drastically and personal distress levels rise. People may get physically ill, feel depressed, or be absent more in this phase. In this phase people are mourning loss at many levels:

* security
* relationships
* territory
* sense of competence
* sense of direction

Allowing people to express their feelings and share their experience makes this phase pass faster. People need a way to say goodbye before moving forward.

Actions that help in this phase are: listening to people, acknowledging feelings, encouraging support, accepting people's feelings without trying to talk them out of their feelings, being empathic.

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[1]adapted from Managing Personal Change: A Primer for Today's World and Managing Organizational Change: A Practical Guide for Managers; by C. Scott and D. Jaffe.

Phase Three: Exploration

After a period of struggle, individuals and organizations usually emerge from their negativity and shift into more positive future-focused phase. New directions do not emerge all at once, rather what emerges is a search to look at options. During this phase people are exploring "how do I fit in," they want to clarify goals, directions, resources and may learn new skills needed for the future.

Actions that help in this phase are: focusing on priorities, set short-term goals, brainstorm options for doing things, providing needed training.

Phase Four: Commitment

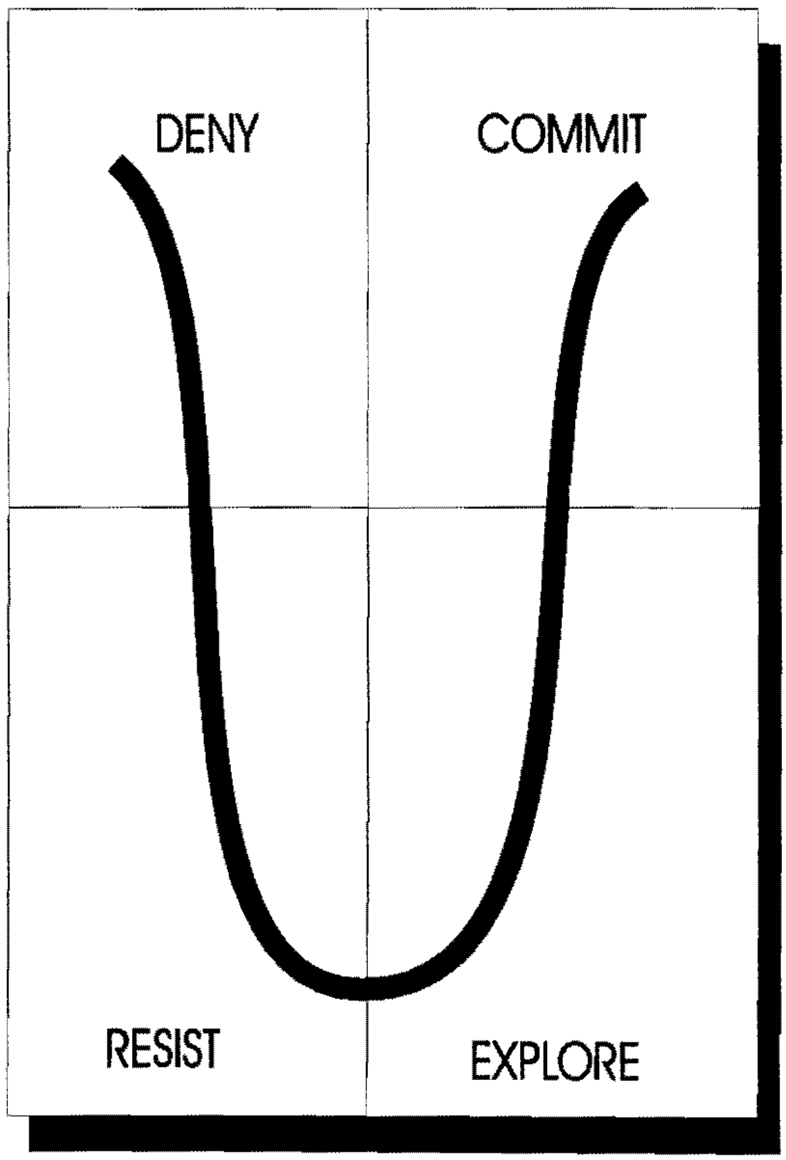
Finally, people break through the problems, discover new ways of doing things and/or adapt to the new situation. The commitment phase begins when people focus on a plan of action. They are prepared to learn new ways to work together, and have re-negotiated roles and expectations. The values and actions needed to commit to a new phase of productivity are in place. Employees are willing to solidly identify with a set of goals and be clear about how to reach them. There is a shared vision, increased teamwork, cooperation and balance.

Actions that help in this phase are: setting long-term goals, concentrating on team building, validating and rewarding people's accomplishments, looking ahead.

PHASES OF TRANSITION [2]

EXTERNAL / ENVIRONMENT

PAST



FUTURE

INTERNAL / SELF

[2] From Managing Personal Change: A Primer for Today's World by Cynthia Scott, PH.D., M.P.H. and Dennis Jaffe, PH.D.

Leadership and Management Functions

Leadership Function: to produce adaptive change - move people to a place in which they are genuinely better off.	**Management Function:** to keep a complex organization accurate, on time, and on budget.
Both managers and leaders are responsible for the following: 1. Creating an agenda of what needs to be done 2. Creating networks for achieving the agenda 3. Execution of the agenda 4. Outcomes They use different processes for addressing these responsibilities.	
Leadership Processes: Establishing Direction Aligning People Motivating and Inspiring	**Management Processes:** Planning and Budgeting Organizing and Staffing Controlling and Problem- Solving

Leadership

Setting Direction is commonly done through the development and communication of a vision of what the desired future could be - something that points toward where people ought to go in the future.

Aligning people is getting people to understand and believe the vision by communicating the vision repeatedly to all involved.

Motivating and Inspiring is to energize people to overcome major obstacles toward achieving a vision and producing the change by a) communicating, b) involving others in how to achieve the vision, c) supporting through feedback, coaching, modeling and enthusiasm, and d) recognizing and rewarding all successes.

Management

Planning and Budgeting sets targets or goals for the future, establishes detailed steps for achieving the targets, and then allocates resources to accomplish the plans.

Organizing and Staffing establishes structure and jobs necessary to accomplish the plans, staffs the jobs, communicates the plan, delegates, and monitors.

Controlling and Problem Solving monitors results against plans and analyzes problems preventing the achievement of the plans.

KEY PROJECT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Sustaining Team Performance

Serves as team leader and/or team member. Helps develop and sustain effective, high performing teams where individuals work productively together. Ensures team members understand and agree on the overall purpose/mandate of the team and are active in developing vision and direction for the future. Makes certain that individual team member are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Helps team develop a work plan and monitor the quality and progress of team activities against this work plan. Helps the team build and sustain a sense of mutual accountability for results. Helps make meetings work; optimizes participation while getting job done without wasting time. Helps team see how their results connect to the larger CIAT goals and objectives. Makes sure team values the importance of not only **what** they are trying to achieve, but also **how** they are working together to achieve results. Encourages systematic learning within the team on how to work together effectively.

Aligning People

Works with others to create a vision and set direction for the future. Communicates this vision and direction to those whose cooperation is needed to achieve results. Provides on-going help in focusing attention on strategy and goals. Encourages participation of others and listens attentively to understand their perspectives. Articulates views, beliefs and values in compelling ways that engender support. Negotiates different points of view to reach mutually acceptable agreements. Demonstrates appropriate level of persistence in persuading and influencing others. Creates an environment where people feel empowered and committed to CIAT and project team goals and strategy.

Motivating and Inspiring

Understands that the organization is "grieving" over recent losses, listens and expresses empathy; however, is able to demonstrate a positive attitude and keep people moving in the right direction despite resource constraints, downsizing, and uncertainty. Within this environment works with team to create a commonly-shared vision and direction. Speaks about the value of the work the Center is doing and the significant contribution the team and individual team members are making. Focuses the team on getting work accomplished and celebrates and encourages this achievement. Demonstrates fairness and transparency in dealing with others and insists that team members do the same.

Problem Analysis and Decision Making

Monitors, helps team monitor, work progress against the agreed-upon outputs or work plan, recognizes emerging problems and/or deviations from work plan, marshals appropriate people and resources to address difficulties and explore potential solutions. Due to the interconnectedness of CIAT project teams (multitasking of staff), takes a systemic approach when analyzing problems, involves other people appropriately, asks questions about broader implications. Exhibits skill in synthesizing information and developing options from which to make decisions. Involves team members appropriately in decisions - listens, consults, and either makes decisions or sees that decisions are made in a timely manner. Responds to both successes and mistakes as learning opportunities to increase skill in analysis and future decision making.

Demonstrating Interpersonal Competence

Understands that interpersonal competence is critical for success in team based organizations. Works to develop productive relations with team members, other CIAT staff, beneficiaries, donors, and partners based on trust, support, and mutual respect. Mobilizes the full participation of people of diverse backgrounds disciplines, and perspectives. Able to give and receive feedback both positive and corrective. Listens to others and considers their thoughts and feelings. Able to express own points of view without dominating other team members, is flexible and open to different approaches. Able to express his/her own emotions productively. Demonstrates a commitment to working collaboratively to resolve conflicts, confronts areas of disagreement openly, and finds win-win solutions whenever possible. Able to use humor to add a sense of enjoyment to working relationships.

Accountability

Understands and is committed to building a team environment of mutual accountability. Helps team define structure, gain agreement on tasks to be done, create work plans, and set performance standards so that all staff know what is expected of them. Delivers on his/her own promises and commitments and expects others to do the same. Offers help to others when they are experiencing problems. Takes responsibility when things go wrong. Gives clear and direct feedback when others have not delivered on their promises and commitments.

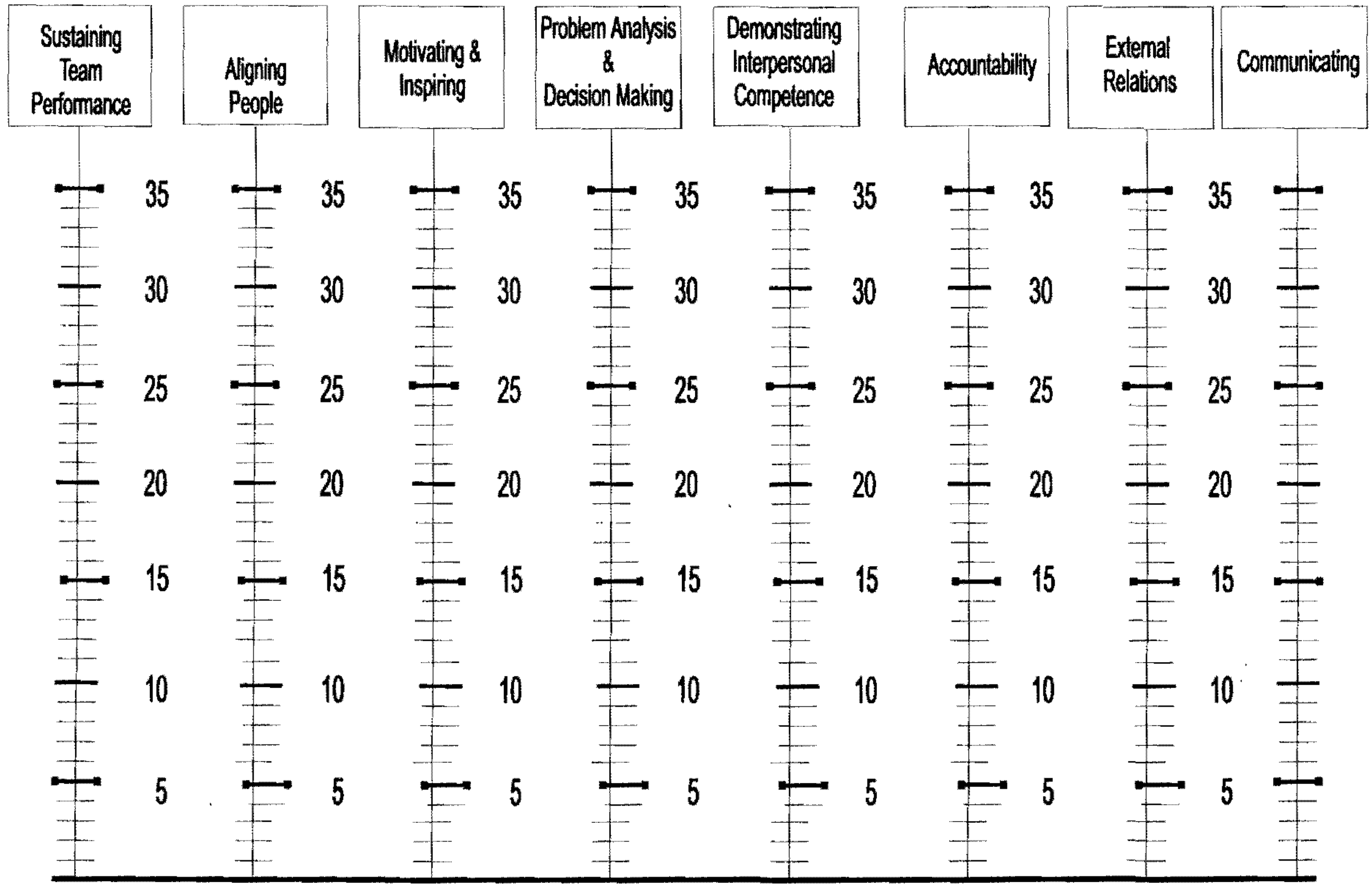
External Relations

Takes initiative to represent the team to the external world. Finds ways to authentically speak of current CIAT operations in positive ways. Develops productive relationships with beneficiaries, partners, and donors - seeks their opinions and feedback. Works with team to develop an outreach approach or strategy that effectively presents project purpose, accomplishments, and value added. Able to articulate this - "tell the project's story" - in interesting and compelling ways. Energetic about finding resources. Represents the team effectively within the Center, including other project teams and the senior management team.

Communicating

Recognizes that access to needed information enables team members to do their work more productively. Supports patterns of communication that emphasizes participation, trust, and openness. Creates a climate where information is shared widely and in a timely way, and where people feel free to state views which are different from each others'. Effectively facilitates information sharing forums including staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, and written communication. Builds networks of people who are eager to share information. Practices good individual communication skills, particularly by demonstrating an ability to ask questions which involve people and by actively listening.

Functions Scoring Grid



Sustaining Team Performance

Serves as team leader and/or team member. Helps develop and sustain effective, high performing teams where individuals work productively together. Ensures team members understand and agree on the overall purpose/mandate of the team and are active in developing vision and direction for the future. Makes certain that individual team members are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Helps team develop a work plan and monitor the quality and progress of team activities against this work plan. Helps the team build and sustain a sense of mutual accountability for results. Helps make meetings work; optimizes participation while getting job done without wasting time. Helps team see how their results connect to the larger CIAT goals and objectives. Makes sure team values the importance of not only **what** they are trying to achieve, but also **how** they are working together to achieve results. Encourages systematic learning within the team on how to work together effectively.

	Self						
1. Creating a commonly-understood and agreed-upon project team purpose/mandate and work agenda.							
9. Making certain that individual team members are clear and in agreement with their roles and responsibilities.							
17. Helping set team and individual performance goals or outputs.							
25. Holding team and yourself mutually accountable for performance.							
33. Helping team monitor the quality and progress of team's work against the work plans.							
41. Helping the team define and agree on norms for how team members will work together to accomplish goals.							
49. Creating the environment for systematic learning within the team on how to work together effectively.							

Aligning People

Works with others to create a vision and set direction for the future. Communicates this vision and direction to those whose cooperation is needed to achieve results. Provides on-going help in focusing attention on strategy and goals. Encourages participation of others and listens attentively to understand their perspectives. Articulates views, beliefs and values in compelling ways that engender support. Negotiates different points of view to reach mutually acceptable agreements. Demonstrates appropriate level of persistence in persuading and influencing others. Creates an environment where people feel empowered and committed to CIAT and project team goals and strategy.

	Self						
2. Working with others to create vision and direction for the project.							
10. Building alliances with others (both CIAT staff and appropriate beneficiaries and partners) to get work results.							
18. Carrying out planning processes so that others are committed to implementing the plans.							
26. Listening attentively to understand the perspectives of others.							
34. Articulating your views, beliefs, and values in compelling ways that engender support..							
42. Negotiating different points of view to reach mutually acceptable agreements.							
50. Establishing collegial working relationships with individuals across the entire organization.							

Motivating and Inspiring

Understands that the organization is "grieving" over recent losses, listens and expresses empathy; however, is able to demonstrate a positive attitude and keep people moving in the right direction despite resource constraints, downsizing, and uncertainty. Within this environment works with team to create a commonly-shared vision and direction. Speaks about the value of the work the Center is doing and the significant contribution the team and individual team members are making. Focuses the team on getting work accomplished and celebrates and encourages this achievement. Demonstrates fairness and transparency in dealing with others and insists that team members do the same.

	Self						
3. Working collaboratively to establish a vision and work agenda that inspires staff commitment.							
11. Demonstrating a positive attitude and keeping people moving in the right direction despite resource constraints and uncertainty.							
19. Building confidence, skills, and self esteem of team members to function productively within a new CIAT reality.							
27. Demonstrating enthusiasm by taking actions which convey a high level of energy and determination over time in order to accomplish results.							
35. Acknowledging and showing appreciation for others' contributions and accomplishments.							
43. Demonstrating fairness and transparency in dealing with others.							
51. Helping team members focus on the value of the work they are doing so they can gain energy and sense of accomplishment from their work.							

Problem Analysis and Decision Making

Monitors, helps team monitor, work progress against the agreed-upon outputs or work plan, recognizes emerging problems and/or deviations from work plan, marshals appropriate people and resources to address difficulties and explore potential solutions. Due to the interconnectedness of CIAT project teams (multitasking of staff), takes a systemic approach when analyzing problems, involves other people appropriately, asks questions about broader implications. Exhibits skill in synthesizing information and developing options from which to make decisions. Involves team members appropriately in decisions - listens, consults, and either makes decisions or sees that decisions are made in a timely manner. Responds to both successes and mistakes as learning opportunities to increase skill in analysis and future decision making.

	Self						
4. Looking for and recognizing emerging problems before they become insurmountable.							
12. Creating ways for the team to work together to identify and resolve problems hindering team performance.							
20. Asking questions and stimulating discussions to foster greater understanding and analysis of the problem.							
28. Getting appropriate people to develop and evaluate alternative solutions.							
36. Helping decide which problems are most important to solve to reach agreed upon outcomes.							
44. Getting appropriate input and then deciding or seeing that decisions are made in a timely manner.							
52. Helping team members reflect on work processes in order to learn from mistakes and maximize successes.							

Demonstrating Interpersonal Competence

Understands that interpersonal competence is critical for success in team-based organizations. Works to develop productive relations with team members, other CIAT staff, beneficiaries, donors, and partners based on trust, support, and mutual respect. Mobilizes the full participation of people of diverse backgrounds disciplines, and perspectives. Able to give and receive feedback both positive and corrective. Listens to others and considers their thoughts and feelings. Able to express own points of view without dominating other team members, is flexible and open to different approaches. Able to express his/her own emotions productively. Demonstrates a commitment to working collaboratively to resolve conflicts, confronts areas of disagreement openly, and finds win-win solutions whenever possible. Able to use humor to add a sense of enjoyment to working relationships.

	Self						
5. Identifying and resolving conflicts among team members or across teams.							
13. Responding to criticism without getting defensive.							
21. Treating others fairly.							
29. Expressing yourself without irritating others.							
37. Giving timely and specific feedback, positive or corrective, when appropriate.							
45. Willing to give and take; don't have to have your own way all the time.							
53. Mobilizing the full participation of people of diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and perspectives							

Accountability

Understands and is committed to building a team environment of mutual accountability. Helps team define structure, gain agreement on tasks to be done, create work plans, and set performance standards so that all staff know what is expected of them. Delivers on his/her own promises and commitments and expects others to do the same. Offers help to others when they are experiencing problems. Takes responsibility when things go wrong. Gives clear and direct feedback when others have not delivered on their promises and commitments.

	Self						
6. Helping to define clear team member roles and responsibilities so each team member knows his/her area of responsibility.							
14. Collaborating with others to set standards of expected performance and time frames.							
22. Gaining agreement on tasks to be done and steps to be taken.							
30. Delivering on promises and commitments.							
38. Motivating others to deliver on promises and commitments and finding constructive ways to address the issue when they do not.							
46. Offering help to others when they are experiencing problems.							
54. Taking responsibility when things go wrong and not blaming others.							

External Relations

Takes initiative to represent the team to the external world. Finds ways to authentically speak of current CIAT operations in positive ways. Develops productive relationships with beneficiaries, partners, and donors - seeks their opinions and feedback. Works with team to develop an outreach approach or strategy that effectively presents project purpose, accomplishments, and value-added. Able to articulate this - "tell the project's story" - in interesting and compelling ways. Energetic about finding resources. Represents the team effectively within the Center, including other project teams and the senior management team.

	Self						
7. Actively developing productive relationships with donors, partners, and beneficiaries, seeking their opinions and feedback.							
15. Working with team members to develop outreach approach or strategy that ensures the team purpose, accomplishments, and value added are communicated to appropriate internal and external constituents.							
23. Articulating the team's work to others in interesting and compelling ways - creative and energetic about finding opportunities to tell the team's story.							
31. Working with and using all available CIAT resources to be certain the team is being innovative in communicating the positive messages about its work.							
39. Energetic and innovative about finding resources, including funding.							
47. Representing the team's best interests to the senior management team and communicating senior management position and reactions to the project team.							
55. Representing the team's best interests to other project teams within CIAT and working with them in collaborative and synergistic ways.							

Communicating

Recognizes that access to needed information enables team members to do their work more productively. Supports patterns of communication that emphasizes participation, trust, and openness. Creates a climate where information is shared widely and in a timely way, and where people feel free to state views which are different from each others'. Effectively facilitates information sharing forums including staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, and written communication. Builds networks of people who are eager to share information. Practices good individual communication skills, particularly by demonstrating an ability to ask questions which involve people and by actively listening.

	Self					
8. Communicating to others a clear vision and direction for the project.						
16. Creating a work environment where people trust each other and share information openly.						
24. Ensuring that team members are informed of all information relevant to their work.						
32. Regularly taking time to seek out and listen to others' ideas, reactions and opinions.						
40. Creating an atmosphere where people feel free to state views which are different from yours.						
48. Encouraging participation by asking good questions and listening more than talking.						
56. Conducting meetings where participants feel that their ideas are being considered.						

Effective Facilitation Skills

Effective listening skills are basic facilitation skills required of all leaders and managers.

Effective listening skills include the following:

Paraphrasing - The listener, using his/her own words, reflects what the speaker is saying and how the speaker is feeling. The purpose of paraphrasing is to determine if the listener understands what the speaker is trying to get across, and also, the affective (emotional) aspect of what is being shared. This gives the speaker the opportunity to acknowledge the listener's understanding, or to correct it. This skill is extremely useful when clarifying and understanding a problem or situation.

Questioning - The listener asks open-ended, clarifying and, occasionally, closed questions to expand both the listener's and the speaker's understanding of the situation. Open-ended questions usually begin with "what," "how," "when," "where," and are posed in a way in which the speaker cannot answer "yes" or "no," but must expand the base of information. Clarifying questions are posed in order for the listener to become more clear about the situation and often begin with "which," "why," "do you mean to say...," etc. Closed questions can be answered with a "yes" or "no" and are asked to get specific information.

Encouraging - The listener, through facial expressions, body language, and comments, encourages the speaker to say more about the situation. When encouraging another to speak, the listener should be aware of behaviors which are actually encouraging to the other, as well as those which may be discouraging.

Summarizing - The listener, when appropriate during the course of the conversation, identifies and verbalizes the key elements or details of the conversation up to that point. The purpose of summarizing is to end one phase of the conversation and either terminate or move on to the next phase. Summarizing is valuable in controlling the pace and amount of time spent listening and conversing.

Suggested Open-Ended Questions – Clarifying And Exploring

1. **Background**
- What led up to ________?
- What have you tried so far?
- Can you remember how it happened?
- What do you make of it all?

2. **Identification of Problems**
- What seems to be the trouble?
- What seems to be the main obstacle?
- What worries you the most about ______ ?
- What do you consider the most troublesome part?

3. **Example**
- Can you give an example?
- For instance?
- Like what?
- Will you give me an illustration?

4. **Description**
- What was it like?
- Tell me about it.
- What happened?
- Can you describe it in your own words?

5. **Appraisal**
- How do you feel about it?
- How does it look to you?
- What do you make of it all?
- What do you think is best?

6. **Clarification**
- What if this doesn't make sense to you?
- What seems to confuse you?
- Can you explain what you mean by _____?
- What do you make of it all?

7. **Alternatives**
- What are the possibilities?
- If you had your choice what would you do?
- What are the possible solutions?
- What if you do and what if you don't?

8. **Exploration**
- How about going into that a little deeper?
- Are there any other angles you can think of?
- What were your reactions to these things?

9. **Extension**
- Can you tell me more about it?
- Anything else?
- Is there anything more you would like to discuss?
- What other ideas do you have about it?

10. **Planning**
- How could you improve the situation?
- What do you plan to do about it?
- What could you do in a case like this?
- What plans will you need to make?

11. **Predictions and Outcomes**
- How do you suppose it will all work out?
- Where will this lead?
- What if you do – or what if you don't?
- What are the chances of success?

12. **Reasons**
- Why do you suppose you feel this way?
- How do you account for this?
- What reasons have you come up with?
- What is the logical solution to this?

13. **Failures, Preparation for**
- What if it doesn't work out the way you wish?
- What if that doesn't work?
- And if that fails, what will you do?
- What are some alternate plans?

14. **Relation**
- How does this fit in with your plans?
- How does this affect your work?
- How does this stack up with your picture of yourself?
- How do the two plans relate?

15. **Evaluation**
- Is this good or bad or in-between?
- According to your own standards, how does it look?

Feedback

Feedback is giving someone information about their behavior and its impact on you -- both positive and corrective.

Describe the action/behavior -- what the person did (i.e., "When you ignored my idea...")

Explain the impact it had on you -- how you felt (i.e., "I felt excluded...")

Tell the result/consequence of behavior and its impact (i.e., "I am hesitant to share my ideas and thoughts.")

How to Use Feedback to Improve Performance and Enhance Motivation[3]

by **James A. McCaffery**

"You know, you have to take the bones with the gravy," said the manager.

"Ah, I'm not sure ... ah ... the bones with the gravy?" stammered the assistant in this simulated feedback situation, during a management training workshop.

"Oh yes," said the manager with finality. "You just have to take the bones with the gravy."

The assistant, with furrowed brow and puzzled look, said "Ah, okay."

The scene above is from a management training workshop facilitated by the author. At first, when asked what the feedback meant, workshop participants watching the role play said that if this were a real situation, the "assistant" would have "gotten the message." When pressed, however, they couldn't define the meaning of the feedback and decided that maybe it wasn't that effective after all. The "assistant" admitted he had no idea what action to take as a result of the conversation.

Although the words were interesting because of their somewhat mystical tone, the "feedback" had little practical value. Our experience working with managers in our workshops and in their workplace suggests that this is not an unusual situation. We find managers are often not very effective at telling their people on a continuing basis how well or poorly they are doing.

This paucity of effective feedback has serious negative results. People often don't know how others in their organization regard their work. People unknowingly perform their tasks in ways that colleagues regard as "bad." Staff development suffers, positive performance and negative habits are not identified, and the motivational power of positive feedback is lost.

When feedback is provided, it's often done under stress, in a crisis, or after a mistake, and sometimes delivered in abrasive and less than helpful ways. In a worst case scenario, an employee is demoted or even fired for something that no one has ever seriously discussed. And s/he quite legitimately asks, "Why wasn't I ever told this before." These are important results that affect every corner of organizational life. They seriously inhibit production, and they have a powerful — if sometimes indirect — impact on morale and turnover.

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[2] Revised December 1994. The "giving feedback" guidelines were adapted from some of those published by National Training Lab many years ago. Because the original NTL feedback guidelines were developed for use in personal growth groups or in other non-organizational settings, some changes and additions were made so they fit organizational contexts.

Defining Feedback

Before looking in depth at feedback as a management tool, we need to be clear about the way we use the term **feedback** in this article. **Feedback means letting someone know on a timely and ongoing basis how they are performing**, and it includes both positive and corrective observations. This feedback is meant to be given independent of any formal performance review process.

A manager who limits feedback to performance appraisal time is seriously under-utilizing this management tool. The premise of this article is that managers should be skillful enough to make feedback a normal, natural, non-threatening part of everyday organizational life. And the climate should be such that the feedback isn't just between managers and subordinates, but between peers on a work team, or between people who must work together even though they work for different divisions.

Feedback -- An Unnatural Act

When managers are asked about the lack of feedback effectiveness, they provide certain typical responses: there's not enough time to do it right; the organization's culture doesn't support people using feedback as a management tool; good people know how they're doing, they don't need to be told by others; and positive feedback "will be seen as insincere."

Comments like these are interesting, but they don't fully explain why many managers choose not to give feedback. We think there are two general reasons for this tendency. First, giving feedback is almost an unnatural act and, related closely to the first, most people lack the skills to give feedback effectively.

Feedback is unnatural because (at least in the U.S.) our culture teaches us some rather ineffective ways to give feedback. When people don't perform up to our expectations, we learn to either yell at them or scold them, or we learn to suffer in silence and complain behind their backs to others. When someone does something good, we often don't tell them because "they might get a big head," or because it would embarrass them. These cultural patterns, learned in childhood, stick with us as adults, and form the basis for ineffective feedback patterns in organizations.

As a corollary to this "unnaturalness," most people don't have the skills to give feedback to others effectively. Effective feedback skills aren't learned in college or business school, and although many management training events include some feedback training, it appears to be insufficient to change behavior.

It's also clear that most people aren't good at receiving feedback. They'll get defensive and try to "explain away" their behavior by stating the reasons behind their actions; they don't listen well; or they attack the messenger. All of these responses are likely to result in the giver being less willing to give them feedback in the future.

This situation can be changed by modifying the company's cultural climate around feedback. We have adapted and developed some guidelines for giving and receiving feedback which are simple and practical, and what's more, they work.

Guidelines For Giving Feedback

1. **Make specific statements; support general statements with specific examples.**

   Precise and specific statements are valuable to the receiver for both positive behavior ("Exactly what did I do right?" or "What should I be sure to continue doing?") and negative behavior ("What precisely should I change?"). To be told that "you did well on that project" may be satisfying to both parties, but it's not nearly as effective as saying "you came in on time and under budget on that project." The latter clearly describes exactly what the feedback giver sees as positive in the receiver's performance. To be told that "you dominate meetings" won't be useful unless it's followed up by specifics: "For example, in yesterday's meeting, you talked so much I stopped listening; you may have said some good things toward the end, but I didn't hear them."

2. **Use descriptive rather than judgmental language.**

   By avoiding judgmental language, you reduce the need for a defensive response. For example, regardless of merit, saying that some action was "terrible" or "stupid" or "utterly inappropriate" generally evokes anger, return accusations or passive-aggressive behavior in the listener. The feedback message rarely gets through this kind of verbal clutter.

   On the other hand, describing the impact of the receiver's behavior on the performance of another makes it easier for the receiver to understand the meaning and importance of the feedback. Also, it tends to focus the discussion on behavior and not personal characteristics.

   People are more open to listening about the results of their behavior than they are about the worth of their person. An example is the following: "When you get angry and use abrasive language, I'm afraid to tell you the truth — so I just tell you what I think you want to hear." In this example, the results of the person's behavior are made clear.

3. **Be direct, clear and to the point.**

   No matter how well motivated one might be, certain actions ("beating around the bush," using lots of modifiers, talking in general terms in hopes that the person will "get the message") create misunderstanding and discomfort. The objective is to communicate directly, not leave someone guessing.

4. **Direct feedback toward behavior that the receiver can control.**

   Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of shortcomings over which s/he has no control.

5. **Encourage others to solicit feedback, rather than imposing it on them.**

   Feedback is most useful when the receiver has asked for it. If someone's performance is having a negative impact, others are responsible for providing that person with feedback. The ideal is for the organization to create an environment in which people feel comfortable soliciting feedback — since that clearly increases its effectiveness.

6. **Consider the timing of feedback.**

   In general, feedback is most useful when communicated at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, the support available from others, etc.). We are talking here about reasonable time periods -- the same day, a day later, within a week, maybe even within a month.

   However, when it goes longer than a month, people generally end up arguing about history, about what really happened. Moreover, badly- timed feedback also lends itself to the comment, "Well, if that was so important, then why did you wait all this time to tell me?"

   Feedback that's given in small pieces, in a timely manner, is much easier and more effective than saving things up for the "right time." The more natural and ongoing the process, the better it will be for all.

7. **Make sure feedback takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver.**

   Feedback can be destructive when it serves only one's own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end. This is especially true when the giver is angry and wants to "unload" on the receiver. There may be a certain psychological satisfaction for one of the parties in this instance, but it generally results in ineffective feedback and a strained relationship.

8. **Make sure feedback is well planned.**

   It takes time to plan for a feedback conference. What to say, in what order, how much — all these need careful thought. If, however, feedback is given on a more regular basis, then feedback conferences will grow to be much easier.

Helping Others Give You Feedback

Feedback from another person is important information about how your actions are affecting others. Even if you disagree with the feedback, it's important to hear it clearly and understand it.

Feedback tells you how another person sees your actions and gives you the choice of trying to change behavior. People act on their perceptions of your actions; you may be coming across in unintended ways and not know it — there is probably nothing worse than being ineffective in ways that are clear to others but not clear or apparent to you. Feedback gives you information about your impact on others. Such knowledge is invaluable for individual performance in organizations. People who are interested in enhancing their performance should do everything possible to make it easier for others to give them feedback.

Getting the feedback is sometimes difficult; it's especially difficult if you are trying to get feedback from a subordinate. The following guidelines make it easier for others to give you useful feedback. Keep in mind that these guidelines are meant to be used for both positive and negative feedback. It's often as hard (or harder) for people to hear positive feedback as it is for them to hear negative feedback.

Guidelines for Receiving Feedback:

1. **Solicit feedback in clear and specific areas.**

   It's always easier to give feedback if one is asked. It's made even easier when a specific question is asked — "Could you let me know what you think of my current speed and quality of turning out widgets?"

2. **Make it a point to understand the feedback; paraphrase major points; ask clarifying questions.**

   Active listening helps insure that real understanding has happened. Ask clarifying questions in order to understand the feedback. Doing so helps the giver know that you are indeed interested and trying hard to understand.

3. **Help the giver use the criteria for giving useful feedback.**

   For example, if the feedback is too general, ask "Could you give me a specific example of what you mean?"

4. **Avoid making it more difficult for the giver of feedback than it already is.**

   Reacting defensively or angrily, or arguing with negative feedback, or saying, "Oh it was nothing, anyone could have done as well," in response to positive feedback are all ways of turning off the feedback spigot.

5. **Don't give explanations.**

   This particular guideline is perhaps the most important, yet it's the one that most people have trouble with. It's natural to want an explanation for the immediate feedback you're receiving. Unfortunately, in almost all cases, explanations can seem defensive and often end up in an argument. As a result, the giver backs off, thinking, "Hey, this is simply not worth the trouble," and is discouraged from giving effective feedback in the future. The giver isn't discouraged from seeing negative behavior or assessing your performance; the person simply becomes unwilling to provide the feedback. Focus instead on understanding the behavior and its impact.

6. **Show appreciation for the person's effort to give you feedback.**

   Saying "thank you" or "I'm grateful for the effort you took to tell me" is a clear message that you appreciate receiving feedback, whether or not agreement is reached. This action invites feedback in the future. In some ways, feedback is like a gift, because one has to care enough to give it; if the signals are wrong, one simply will not give the "gift."

7. **In response to key points in the feedback, you should say what you intend to do as a result.**

   A response may be "Thanks, I need to think about it" or "Let me check it out with others" or "That makes sense, I'll try in the future to..." If you just listen — even politely — and walk away, it may give a message that you don't take what the giver said very seriously (of course, that may be the case in some instances!).

8. **Remember that feedback is one person's perceptions of another's actions, not universal truth.**

   Keeping this in mind helps one be less defensive about feedback. Check it out with others to determine the presence of patterns of behavior. If two or three people provide similar feedback, there may be a pattern reflected which needs to be considered.

These guidelines for giving and receiving feedback work. If all people in a particular work setting understand and use the guidelines, the feedback will be extremely useful and become an integral part of everyday activities. The more people who are skilled in giving feedback the better. This, of course, is why we recommend that the guidelines be "installed" on a system-wide basis. If, however, even one person in a feedback situation uses the guidelines, the effectiveness of the feedback will still be very high.

It's vital for general managers to understand that increasing the level of feedback skills within organizations enhances performance and produces better results. We aren't stressing the importance of feedback because it's "nice to do," or because it will make the workplace more humane – although it may indeed have those effects. **Getting people to talk routinely about performance in a more acceptable, clear and precise way simply increases work output.**

If people learn how they are doing from different sources (including themselves), they will work to correct their deficiencies and capitalize on their strengths. Everyone will reduce the amount of unproductive time they spend complaining to others about the performance of a third party. Individuals will feel that managers value high-quality performance and communicate about it in ways that give everyone a chance to perform at their optimum levels. Everyone wins.

This, of course, sounds easier than it is. Practically speaking, how can you as a manager increase feedback skills within your office?

Making Feedback a More Effective Tool in Your Organization

There are several specific actions that you can take:

- You can publish the feedback guidelines throughout your organization or office at *all levels* so that everyone is aware of the "rules of the game." This will also indicate that feedback is a two-way process, and that everybody bears responsibility for the success or failure of the feedback process. It establishes standards for everyday talk about performance to which all have access.

- You can run (or arrange for) focused training sessions so people can get practice at both giving and receiving feedback. Everyone should be included in the sessions. They can be short (2 or 3 hours) and be totally skill-focused. A trainer or skilled manager can explain the guidelines and perhaps model an effective feedback conversation. Then, people can be divided into groups of three to practice giving *and* receiving feedback given typical situations that might exist in your work context. The third person is an observer, and gives feedback about how well the guidelines are followed.

- Once everyone is reasonably clear about the guidelines, you should then reinforce the act of giving feedback. People should be encouraged to try, even if they feel they will not get it "exactly right." After all, if the feedback process isn't exactly correct, the receiver can ask questions which will get the conversation back on target.

- If you're a manager, you're very visible. You can serve as a role model for using feedback effectively by showing you understand and use the guidelines.

- Take some time to give unsolicited, "no-strings-attached," clear, specific, positive feedback. This will have a powerful impact on people. It will also help set a clear and well-listened to example of how to give feedback.

- In terms of receiving feedback, you can make a visible contribution by asking for it, and expressing appreciation when it's received.

Each one of these suggestions for action is seemingly small; yet they will create incremental -- but significant -- change. This will have the effect of changing the norms about feedback in your organization. Since everybody "knows the rules," they can help one another be effective with feedback.

This will make feedback more a part of everyday life. As was mentioned earlier, the impact of *feedback is optimized when it is a normal, routine part of the work environment.* If it's rarely given, or only given at performance appraisal time, feedback becomes strained and imbued with a sense of trauma which makes it almost impossible to do well. When given in small, "chewable chunks" in a timely fashion, it's much easier to do and much more effective.

Motivating Power of Authentic Positive Feedback

There is one aspect of feedback that deserves a special note. Positive feedback by itself, when authentic, is a superb tool to motivate people. And it's a tool that is grossly under-used. People don't provide sufficient positive feedback; it's often used to soften the blow of negative feedback, as a way to pave the way for the "bad news." Organizational life has conditioned us to see positive feedback that way. Yet, when no-strings-attached positive feedback is given, the results are immediately clear.

There's much that goes on every day that's positive. We all should make it a point to give one or two people some positive feedback each day -- without any negative feedback attached to it. That's not to say we should ignore the negative; rather it's to point out that a great number of positive things often get no verbal notice.

In an age when we're trying to locate the magic formula for motivation, the power that communicating positive feedback has for motivating people is manifest. It's simple to do, and it doesn't cost anything. It's a waste not to use it.

Teams [4]

Team	A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Expanding on each part of the team definition.....

- ***...small number of people*** – Most successful teams are small in size...between two and twenty but mostly centering at six to ten.
- ***...complementary skills*** – Teams must have or develop the right mix of skills, and they include the following categories:
    - technical or functional expertise
    - problem-solving and decision-making skills
    - interpersonal skills
- ***...committed to a common purpose, goals and approach*** -- Teams must be committed to a common purpose and appropriate goals
    - a common, meaningful purpose sets the tone and helps develop and maintain aspirations.
    - specific goals are an integral part of the purpose...this means transforming broad directives into specific and measurable goals. The specificity of the goals facilitates clear communication about team direction. Goals should allow small wins which are invaluable to building commitment.
    - defining the team work product that is different from both an organization-wide mission and the summation of individual job objectives. Team work products require roughly equivalent contributions from all the people on the team.

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4 Adapted from J. Katzenbach and D. Smith, The Wisdom of Teams.

- ♦ in terms of common approach, teams must agree on who will do particular jobs, how schedules will be set and adhered to, what skills need to be added or developed, how the team will make decisions, how new members will be added, how and when modification of approach to the job will take place, and so on. Agreeing on an approach to the specifics of the work, how it all fits, and how people are integrated lies at the heart of building a common approach.

- ***...hold themselves mutually accountable*** – At its core, team accountability is about the sincere promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin two critical aspects of teams: commitment and trust. These tend to grow as a natural counterpart to the development of team purpose, performance goals, and approach. When people do real work together toward a common objective, trust and commitment follow.

Characteristics of Effective Teams

A team is a small number of individuals with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Effective teams tend to have the following characteristics:

I. Clear, commonly-agreed upon, and meaningful purpose.

There is a clear understanding and agreement among team members about why this team exists and what it is expected to accomplish. This purpose and mandate is also understood throughout the rest of the organization.

2. Roles and responsibilities of team members, including the team leader or manager are clear.

The team has taken the time to sort out the roles and responsibilities of each team member - understanding and taking into account other work assignments or teams on which individuals might also be working. They have discussed the role of the team manager/leader and agreed on the leadership approach that will work best for the team. The leader or manager carries out this role as the team has defined it.

3. Specific performance goals and work plan or approach to accomplishing these goals.

The team has developed specific goals - products or services that it is responsible for producing. There is an agreed-upon approach to completing this work and a work plan for doing so.

4. Formal or informal agreement on how the team will work together.

Team members have worked out how they will share information and keep one another informed; how they will resolve conflicts; how they will handle performance problems; when and how often they will have meetings, etc. When there are "issues" between team members, it gets addressed and dealt with, and the team moves on. Team members seem to accept one another's strengths and weaknesses and there is not much talking or complaining behind one another's backs.

5. Team has or can access the right mix of skills and knowledge to do their work.

Team members possess the technical skills to do their work or know how to access this either inside or outside the organization. The team has effective problem solving skills and interpersonal skills.

6. Appropriate participation in decision making.

There is an appropriate level of team member participation in decision making - not so much that decisions take too long to make but enough so there is sufficient team member input to insure the quality of decisions and the commitment of team members to implementing the decision that is made. Team members tend to be very supportive of decisions that were made by others on the team; however, they are quick to voice their opinion if they feel a serious error is being made.

7. Team leadership/management is more facilitative than it is directive.

Team leaders focus on providing leadership that helps the team get its work done rather than directing or monitoring individual team member performance. Examples of this are: working to remove obstacles that block getting the work done, getting resources needed, resolving priority conflicts with other teams, coaching or training team members, helping solve problems, and doing real work.

8. Team is concerned with both task accomplishment and how team works together.

Team members know that in order for the work to get done over the long run, that the team must work well together. Team is conscious of both how it is doing the work and how team members are working together. There is a concern for both team accomplishment and individual accomplishment.

9. Powerful sense of mutual accountability.

There is a well-developed sense of mutuality - team members know that for the team to succeed everyone has to succeed. Team members are quick to help one another if someone has problems. At the same time the team does not tolerate poor performance or individuals who don't carry their share of the load.

10. Team has fun doing their work.

There is a sense of enjoyment and fulfillment coming from being a part of a team. Team members enjoy and have fun with one another. This creates energy and motivation that is important for sustained high performance.

Building and Maintaining Effective Teams[5]

Please consider these six basic elements of teams when you assess your group's current situation:

1. Are you small enough in number?

2. Do you have adequate levels of complementary skills and skill potential in all three categories necessary for team performance?

3. Do you have a broader, meaningful purpose that all members aspire to?

4. Do you have a specific set of performance goals agreed upon by all?

5. Is the working approach clearly understood and commonly agreed upon?

6. Do you hold yourselves individually and mutually accountable for the group's results?

While these questions are relatively straightforward, it is probably worthwhile to probe each one further to obtain practical and actionable insights for improvement. Specifically:

1. Small enough in number:

a. Can you convene easily and frequently?
b. Can you communicate with all members easily and frequently?
c. Are your discussions open and interactive for all members?
d. Does each member understand the others' roles and skills?
e. Do you need more people to achieve your ends?
f. Are sub-teams possible or necessary?

2. Adequate levels of complementary skills:

a. Are all three categories of skills either actually or potentially represented across the membership (functional/technical, problem-solving/decision-making, and interpersonal)?
b. Are any skill areas that are critical to team performance missing or under-represented?
c. Are the members, individually and collectively, willing to spend the time to help themselves and others learn and develop skills?
d. Can you introduce new or supplemental skills as needed?

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[5] Adapted from J. Katzenbach and D. Smith, The Wisdom of Teams.

3. Truly meaningful purpose:

a. Does it constitute a broader, deeper aspiration than just near-term goals?
b. Is it a team purpose as opposed to a broader organizational purpose or just one individual's purpose (e.g., the leader's)?
c. Do all members understand and articulate it the same way? And do they do so without relying on ambiguous abstractions?
d. Do members define it vigorously in discussions with outsiders?
e. Do members frequently refer to it and explore its implications?
f. Does it contain themes that are particularly meaningful and memorable?
g. Do members feel it is important, if not exciting?

4. Specific goal or goals:

a. Are they team goals versus broader organizational goals or just one individuals' goals (e.g., the leader's)?
b. Are they clear, simple, and measurable? If not measurable, can their achievement be determined?
c. Are they realistic as well as ambitious? Do they allow small wins along the way?
d. Do they call for a concrete set of team work-products?
e. Is their relative importance and priority clear to all members?
f. Do members agree with the goals, their relative importance, and the way in which their achievement will be measured?
g. Do all members articulate the goals in the same way?

5. Clear working approach:

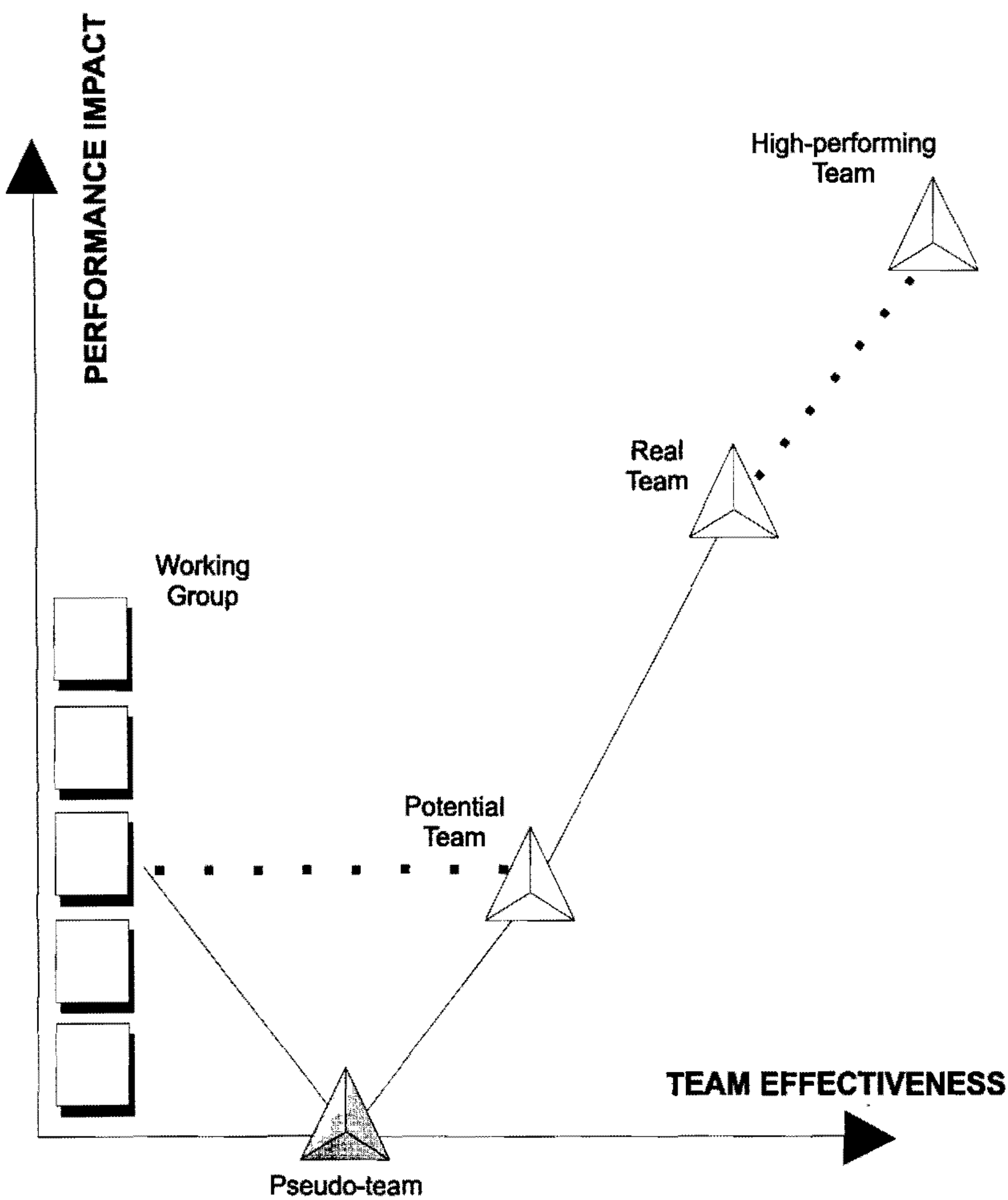
a. Is the approach concrete, clear and really understood and agreed to by everybody? Will it result in achievement of the objectives?
b. Will it capitalize on and enhance the skills of all members? Is it consistent with other demands on the members?
c. Does it require all members to contribute reasonably equivalent amounts of real work?
d. Does it provide for open interaction, fact-based problem solving, and results-based evaluation?
e. Do all members articulate the approach in the same way?
f. Does it provide for modification and improvement over time?
g. Are fresh input and perspectives systemically sought and added, for example, through information and analysis, new members, and senior sponsors?

6. Sense of mutual accountability:

a. Are you individually and jointly accountable for the team's purpose, goals, approach and work products?
b. Can you and do you measure progress against specific goals?
c. Do all members feel responsible for all measures?
d. How well do the members keep their "promises" to each other in terms of doing what they say they will do?
e. Is there a sense that "only the team can fail?"

Answering the preceding questions can establish the degree to which your group functions as a real team, as well as help pinpoint how you can strengthen your efforts to increase performance. They set tough standards, and answering them candidly may reveal a harder challenge than you may have expected. At the same time, facing up to the answers can accelerate your progress in achieving the full potential of your team.

The Team Performance Curve



Getting Teams Started on the "Right Foot"

There are many questions that need to be addressed as a team forms itself and begins its operations – What is our purpose? What are we supposed to do? Who will do what? What is my role? How will we work together? What do we mean by mutual accountability? The list goes on. TRG believes that teams will be more successful if they address these issues as they form themselves before they begin "doing their work."

The following is intended to provide guidance for teams to help them engage in planning and agenda setting discussions that will build a strong foundation from which the team can move toward performing their work successfully.

We believe teams that are getting started should have meetings in which they;

1. Review their mandate, discuss and agree upon the purpose of the team

2. Clarify and agree upon the role and responsibilities of each team member, including the team leader

3. Develop operating guidelines or norms which describe how the team will work together

4. Develop specific team goals or outputs and a work plan for how the team will meet these goals

Below are guidelines for how the team might have a series of meetings or discussions to reach agreement on the above four points.

1. REACHING AGREEMENT AND COMMON UNDERSTANDING ON THE MANDATE OR PURPOSE OF THE TEAM

The intent of this meeting or discussion is for the team members to develop a common understanding of the purpose of the team and how it fits into the broader picture of the entire organization. If team members already share a common understanding of their purpose, then this discussion will only take a few minutes; however, if there are differences, the discussions will take longer.

A team purpose makes clear why the team exists, the boundaries within which it operates, and its principal role and responsibilities within the larger context. In a discussion on team purpose do the following:

a. Each team member should share what they believe the purpose of the team to be. Look for commonality. Explore differences. Talk it through until sufficient agreement is reached. You might want to ask a team member to draft a purpose statement for the team that reflects the agreements reached in these discussions.

b. Team members should describe what the team is accountable for. Make a list. Use the flipchart. Reach agreement. You might want to add this to the purpose statement.

c. Team should identify any boundary issues it feels are not clear. For example, one team's work may integrate or exist side-by-side with another team. Are the boundaries - who is responsible for what - clear? If something needs clarifying, the team should take steps to talk this through with appropriate "others" so the boundary issue does not become a problem.

2. CLARIFYING INDIVIDUAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of these discussions is to help the team members develop a common understanding of individual team member roles and responsibilities, including that of the team leader/manager. In a discussion on roles and responsibilities, do the following:

a. Each team members lists their role/responsibilities as they see them. Write these down. It is especially effective if each member writes on a piece of flipchart paper so it can be posted around the room. Then take each team member, one at a time, and ask the group to respond to how that person described their role/responsibilities. Check for agreement. When there are differences of opinion, talk about it. Seek agreement.

b. Engage in discussions about the role of the team leader. One way to do this would be, using the flipchart, have the team generate a list of responsibilities of the team leader. Put each contribution on the flipchart as it is given. Then go back to each item and discuss. Work to reach agreement. Discuss differences. Involve the team leader, but s/he should not dominate. Try for general agreement on the principle responsibilities.

   Some teams have found it useful to write up these team leader responsibilities as a kind of "informal" agreement between the team and its leader about what is expected from the leadership role.

3. CREATING TEAM OPERATING GUIDELINES (NORMS) FOR HOW MEMBERS WILL WORK TOGETHER

The purpose of this effort is to work out the agreements or norms that the team wants to use in working together. These agreements will drive the day-to-day operations of the team. Operating guidelines are agreements on how work will be done and how the team will work together. These guidelines should cover issues such as how decisions will be made, how work assignments are determined, what the team means by mutual accountability, how differences or conflicts will be resolved, attendance at meetings, how to deal with disappointing performance from a team members, etc.

One way to organize discussions around these agreements would be to ask the team to discuss and reach agreement on these questions:

- What are the kinds of decisions that ought to involve all or most of the team members? How do we want to make these decisions? What will be the role of the team leader?
- What kinds of conflicts or differences might we have as we work together? How will we resolve conflicts among the team members? With other teams?
- If or when we are disappointed with or concerned about a team member's performance, how will we handle it?
- What do we mean by mutual accountability? What does this mean operationally?
- How often will we have meetings? For what purposes? Who plans and conducts these meetings?

Ask a couple of team members to write up these agreements. It will be important to review them in 4 to 6 months to see how you are doing and to see if there are additions or changes that should be made.

4. BUILDING A TEAM WORK PLAN

The purpose of this meeting or discussion is to have the team focus on the results or outputs for which it is accountable over the next several months. Some teams in their initial stages of working together prefer to plan for the next 3 months and others prefer a longer time frame, 6 or 9 months. Don't make the time frame too long. If you want to build a team that tracks progress, offers help to one another when there are problems, and works in a team culture of mutual responsibility, it will be important that they plan, monitor progress and resolve problems as a team. Engage in discussions that will do the following:

a. Identify the things that need to get done within the time frame you have chosen. Concentrate on the major tasks. Remember it is a team work plan, not a work plan for each individual on the team.

b. Clarify who will be working on each of these major tasks. You may want to do some specific planning for how each major task will be accomplished. Or you may want team members working on these tasks to develop a work plan and bring it back to a team meeting.

   Write up the plans. Be brief - this is just a record of your agreed upon plan. You can refer back to it as you monitor progress.

c. Plan how and when you will monitor progress. Schedule the first progress review meeting. Clarify the role and responsibility of the team leader in this monitoring and tracking process.

   Remember, by creating a team work plan and laying the ground work for the team to monitor progress against this plan, you are building the foundation for teamwork and full team accountability for delivering the products, outputs, or commitments the team has promised.

The Nature Of Conflict

- Conflict is neither positive nor negative; it is a normal element of life.
- Conflict is a collusion of energy patterns.
- Nature uses conflict as its primary motivator for change creating beaches, canyons, mountains, and pearls through the interaction of opposing forces.
- The fact that you have conflict in your life matters less than what you do with that conflict.
- Conflict is not a contest.
- Winning and losing are goals for games, not conflict.
- To resolve conflict one must have the goals of learning, growing and cooperating.
- Conflict can be seen as a gift of energy in which neither side loses and a new dance is created.
- Resolving conflicts effectively rarely involves a determination of who is "right," instead it emphasizes appreciation of differences.
- Conflict begins from within. As we unhitch the burden of belief systems and heighten our perceptions, however, we begin to operate more fully and more freely.

Skills for Managing Conflict

Assertiveness Skills

- Be clear to others about what you need and want.
- Organize and present facts and logic.
- Make forceful proposals.
- Analyze and evaluate positions of others...be prepared to give reasons why their position won't work as well as yours.
- Present positive incentives and negative pressure to influence others.
- Be prepared to repeat your position and the reasons why it is the correct one -- several times if necessary.

Cooperative Skills

- Actively listen to others' position.
- Clarify and paraphrase others' position and feelings.
- Ask open-ended questions to get information.
- Acknowledge one's own vulnerability.
- Get involved in others' problem and "give" freely.
- Look for ways to "give in," places to say "I'll cooperate," "I agree."

The Five Conflict Handling Modes[6]

Conflict situations are situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. In such situations, we can describe a person's behavior along two basic dimensions: (1) assertiveness, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and (2) cooperativeness, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns. These two basic dimensions of behavior can be used to define five specific methods of dealing with conflict. These five "conflict handling modes" are shown below:

Competing is assertive and uncooperative -- an individual pursues her or his own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode, in which one uses whatever power seems appropriate to win one's own position -- one's ability to argue, one's rank, economic sanctions. Competing might mean "standing up for one's rights," defending a position which you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

Accommodating is unassertive and cooperative -- the opposite of competing. When accommodating, an individual neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view.

Avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative -- the individual does not immediately pursue his or her own concerns or those of the other person. The conflict is not addressed. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.

Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative -- the opposite of avoiding. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with the other person to find some solution which fully satisfies the concerns of both persons. It means digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and to find any alternative which meets both sets of concerns.

[6] This two dimensional model of conflict handling behavior is adapted from "Conflict and Conflict Management" by Kenneth Thomas in Volume II of the *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, edited by Marvin Dunnette (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1975). II:27 7/86

Collaborating between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights, concluding to resolve some conditions which would otherwise have them competing for resources, or confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

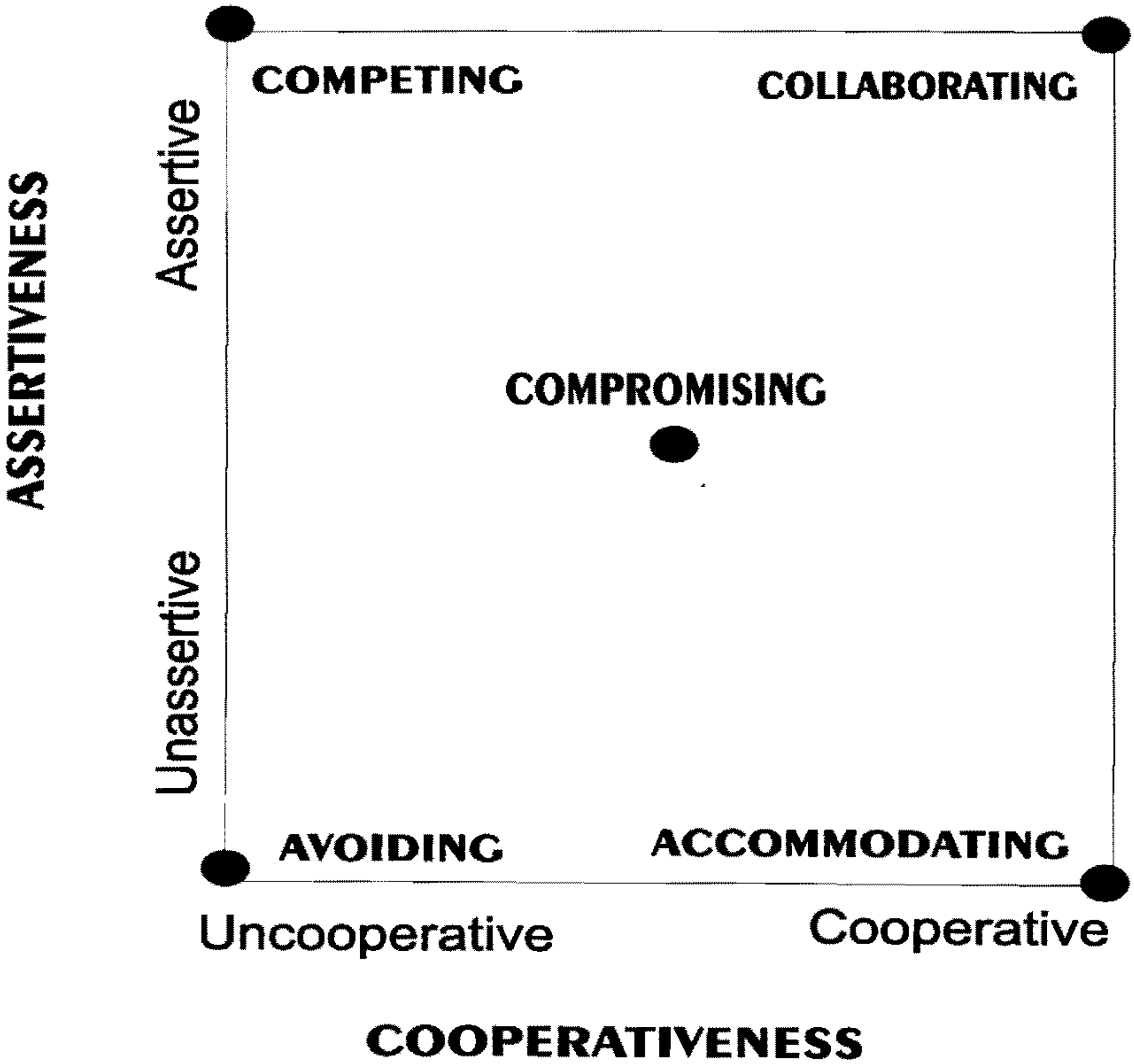
Compromising is intermediate to both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfied both parties. It falls on a middle ground between competing and accommodating. Compromising gives up more than competing, but less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but doesn't explore it in as much depth as collaborating. Compromising might mean "splitting the difference," exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground position.

Choosing A Mode

In case of conflict handling behavior, there are no universal right answers. All five modes are useful in some situations; each represents a set of useful social skills. Conventional wisdom recognizes, for example, that often "two heads are better than one" (collaborating). But it also says, "kill your enemies with kindness" (accommodating), "split the difference" (compromising)' "leave well enough alone" (avoiding), and "might makes right" (competing). The effectiveness of a given conflict handling mode depends upon the requirements of the specific conflict situation and the skills with which the mode is used.

Each of us is capable of using all five conflict handling modes; none of us can be characterized as having a single, rigid style of dealing with conflict. However, any given individual uses some modes better than others, either because of temperament or practice.

Thomas - Kilmann
Five Conflict Handlling Modes



Conflict in Perspective[7]

Properly managing conflict requires that you never lose sight of a fundamental point: conflict itself is neither good nor bad. Whether conflict enhances critical thinking and productivity or undercuts it will depend on how you facilitate the differences at hand.

Conflict occurs when two or more parties discover that what each wants is incompatible with what the other wants. A want that is incompatible with another is one that interferes with, or in some manner hinders the achievement of, the second.

Conflict falls into two categories:

> *Substantive conflict* occurs when participants are in opposition relative to the content, or substance, of the issues under discussion.
>
> *Personal conflict* derives from the emotional clashes that occur during the struggle to resolve the issues at hand.

Constructive Conflict is present when

* there is high team spirit and a commitment to the desired outcomes,
* task behaviors of testing comprehension and summarizing are used to ensure that each other's view points are understood - even though they may not be supported,
* participants respond to what others are saying, not to what they think others are saying,
* discussion stays on the topic and contributes to the attainment of the desired outcome(s), and
* members see the time and energy spent discussing and modifying differing ideas and alternatives as worthwhile because it produces a result that is better than any one individual's initial proposal.

Destructive Conflict is present when

* members start resorting to personal attacks instead of keeping a focus on the facts and issues,
* generation of attack/defend/counter-attack spirals by group members,
* same negative statements being presented again and again by the same people,
* members not listening to what others are saying but reacting to what they think others are saying,
* member dig in with unyielding attachment to their own ideas, and
* there is emotionally charged one-upmanship.

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[7] Adapted from Thomas A. Kayser's book, Building Team Power: How to Unleash the Collaborative Genius of Work Teams, Irwin Professional Publishing, Burr Ridge, Illinois, New York, New York

Collaborative Approach to Managing Conflict: Five Steps to Success[8]

Phase 1- Differentiation: Understand the Nature of the Conflict

Parties in conflict describe the issues that divide them and ventilate their feelings about the issues and each other. Each person is allowed to state his or her views and receive some indication that these views are understood by the other principals.

Step 1

Clarify and understand the existing positions and identify the interests associated with the position e.g., what people would like to have happen and why.

↓

Step 2

Identify the areas of agreement or the shared interests.

↓

Step 3

Identify the differences or points of contention. Summarize these points into a newly stated problem.

[8] Adapted from Thomas A. Kayser's book, Building Team Power: How to Unleash the Collaborative Genius of Work Teams, Irwin Professional Publishing, Burr Ridge, Illinois, New York, New York

Phase 2 - Integration: Orient the Group and Resolve

In this phase, the parties need to acknowledge their common goals, own up to positive aspects of the ambivalences, express warmth and respect, or engage in other positive actions to manage their conflict.

Step 4
Orient the group to view areas of differences and points of contention as a shared problem that can be solved by working together

↓

Step 5
Take measures to resolve the areas of difference * brainstorm alternative solutions * develop criteria of successful outcome * review options against criteria and select one acceptable to all parties.

Table of Contents

Guidelines for Collaboratively Managing Conflict

To successfully manage conflict all parties involved need to:

1. Agree on a desired outcome(s) linked to the resolution of the dispute. State what the result will be of resolving the dispute.

2. Recognize that all feelings are to be accepted as legitimate and real; they need to be understood, rather than evaluated. Identify the feelings and state them.

3. State issues and problems as facts not judgements.

4. Seek information and opinions to increase understanding.

5. Test for comprehension by using paraphrasing and summarizing skills.

6. Use maintenance skills such as encouraging, harmonizing, and relieving of tension.

7. Address disagreements swiftly to prevent escalation of the issues.

8. Identify which common area of conflict the current issue fits into and how best to approach it:

    * Goals: the end results or what you are trying to accomplish
    * Roles: who can and or should do what
    * Procedures: methods, strategies or tactics
    * Relationships: how people will relate to each other
    * Limits: what is or is not possible or what is the authority
    * Timing: when things should be done
    * Information: fact, figures, data
    * Values: right, wrong, fair, ethical, moral

Performance Feedback

Guidelines for Giving:

1. Make specific statements; support general statements with specific examples.
2. Use descriptive rather than judgmental language.
3. It is direct, clear and to the point.
4. It is directed toward behavior which the receiver can do something about.
5. It is well-timed.
6. It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback.
7. It is well-planned.

Guidelines for Receiving:

1. Solicit feedback in clear and specific areas.
2. Make it a point to understand the feedback; paraphrase major points; ask clarifying questions.
3. Help the giver use the guidelines for giving useful feedback.
4. Avoid making it more difficult for the giver of feedback than it already is.
5. Avoid explanations of "why I did that," unless asked.
6. Show appreciation for the effort it took for the other person to give you feedback.
7. Remember that feedback is one person's perceptions of another's actions, not universal truth.

Steps for Planning and Conducting a Performance Feedback Discussion

Before the Discussion

1. Review agreements that have been made with this person in the earlier work planning conversations.

2. Identify and list specific examples of where agreements have been kept and where they have not been kept. Make sure that you consider both "positive" and "negative" feedback. Be clear in your own mind about any performance issues you want to address.

3. Plan what you want to say, for example, what will you say first? Will you discuss positive feedback first or negative? Make notes if necessary.

During the Feedback Discussion

1. Set the climate.

2. Review agreement(s) that have been made in the earlier work planning conversations about work to be done.

3. Give specific examples - how performance looked when compared to what was agreed to.

4. Check for understanding.

5. Develop new agreements for how work should be done in the future, if necessary.

6. Summarize key points.

Strategic Considerations

Agreement and Trust

When trying to gain agreement from different categories of people consider the two dimensions of influence-- agreement and trust. Two variables are important when we define our relationship to others and when we influence them:

✷ **Level of agreement:**
- ✔ Goals
- ✔ Direction
- ✔ (Big) Issues

✷ **Level of trust (Behavior)**
- ✔ Credibility (do they do what they say they will do?)
- ✔ Predictability (will they behave the same way?)
- ✔ Reliability (can they be counted on to do what they say?)

Categories of people

❑ **Ally**: Hi Agreement/ Hi Trust
- Satisfied clients, colleagues, staff
- Supportive
- Trust them to talk honestly about vision, goals etc.
- Can get advice from them to guide your decisions
- Can do for you what you can't do for yourself--deal with an adversary.

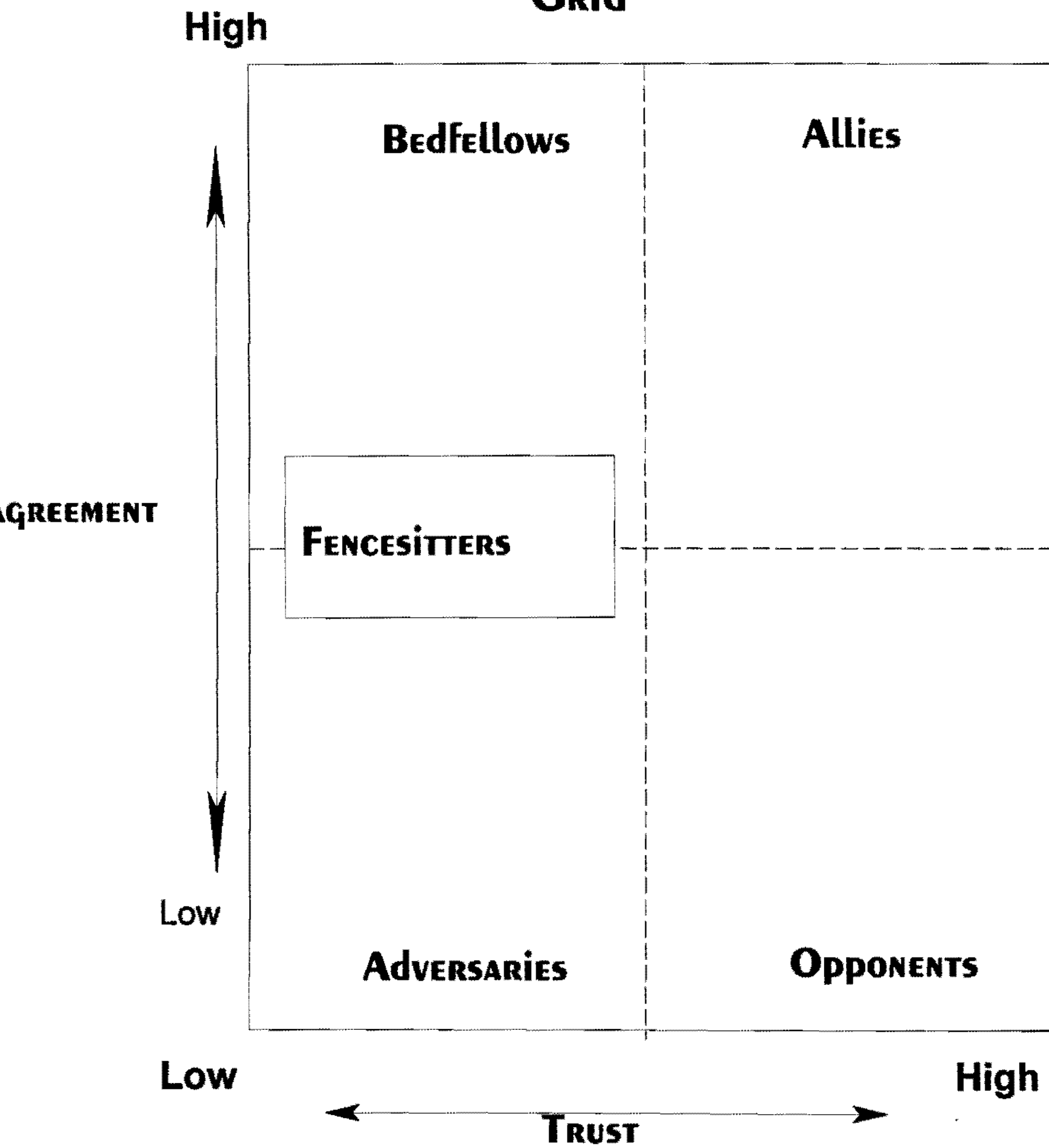
❑ **Bedfellow**: Hi Agreement/ Lo Trust
- Hidden agenda
- Will agree with you, but may not be able to commit for political reasons
- Never sure if she/he will follow through

❑ **Fence sitter**: ? Agreement ? Trust
- Never sure where she/he stands
- Riddled with doubt
- No evident agenda--yet they won't commit

❑ **Opponent**: Lo Agreement / Hi Trust
- Brings out the best in us
- Help provide honesty to problem solving
- What we need to do to build support
- Dialogue with those who trust us but are dissatisfied

❑ **Adversary**: Lo Agreement/ Lo Trust
- Not to be confused with opponents
- When negotiations and attempts to influence them have failed.

Strategic Influencing Grid



Excerpted from : The Empowered Manager, Peter Block.

Skills for Strategic Influencing[9]

Allies

Use them as sounding boards, ask for advice.
Seek their support in dealing with adversaries, either by helping you approach or intervien themselves .
Acknowledge your good relationship and the trust that exists between you.
Be open...share your plans, doubts, fears, and needs.

Opponents

Tell them that the reason you value them is you know they will tell you the truth.
Be clear about your position and what you want; state your understanding of their position and what they want, recognize where you disagree.
State your intention to work together to resolve problems, reach agreements.
Work together to look at alternatives, their consequences, and attempt to negotiate a resolution.
Ask what it would take for them to agree/support your goals.

Bedfellows

Identify shared goals.
Acknowledge the strain in your relationship and the lack of trust without getting into specifics.
Tell your hopes for an improved working relationship and any changes you plan to make in your behavior/actions.
Ask them what they think would establish a better working relationship.

Fencesitters

Tell them your position and ask where they stand.
State what you want in the way of support from them.
If they continue to be non-committal, express your disappointment about not knowing where they stand.
Ask what it would take for them to support your ideas.

Adversaries

Acknowledge the strain in the relationship and the lack of trust.
Tell your concern about what is going on and invite them to do the same.
Tell them if you have contributed to the problem.
Express your hopes for an improved relationship.
Make no demands on them; do not try to change them.
If you have plans to pursue your agenda despite their opposition, say so.

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[9] Adapted from Peter Block, *The Empowered Manager*

Types of Support

A key step in building a powerful support network is knowing what you want. Your priorities for support will, of course, vary widely depending on the challenges you are currently facing. A list of types of support is offered below to stimulate your thinking.

- Information: facts needed for decision making; technical expertise from those experienced in the challenge area.
- Creative stimuli: opportunity to brainstorm with others on alternative courses of action
- Mentoring: counsel from others who've been down a similar road
- Space: quiet, uninterrupted reflection time
- Sounding board: skillful listeners who ask questions that help me clarify my thinking
- Feedback: non-judgmental assessment of the impact of my actions
- Skill development: opportunity to learn and practice skills
- Positive expectations: contact with people who understand my goals and share my standards for myself
- Encouragement/affirmation: reminders of my competence and value
- Perspective: people, places, activities that help me see a larger picture and put my challenges in perspective
- Humor: people who take me seriously, but help me laugh at myself
- Spiritual touchstones: sources of spiritual grounding and connection with my values
- Rest/respite: time and ways to relax
- Release: chance to complain, blow off steam
- Play: sources of lighthearted fun and laughter
- Physical nourishment: exercise, message, good food, etc.
- Love: acceptance, affection, contact
- Recognition: acknowledgment of my effort and achievements
- Celebration: shared celebration of my successes

Using Teams Effectively: Making Meetings Work Better

Prior to the meeting, remember to...

- Make sure the meeting is really needed, and that the appropriate people are coming. Reduce unnecessary meetings whenever possible.
- Check desired outcomes; make sure they are specific rather than vague.
- Develop an agenda – involve others appropriately (e.g., circulate the draft agenda beforehand, and track it); prioritize the agenda items.

Once the meeting begins...

- Start the meeting by quickly sharing the desired outcomes and agenda; allow for any final input.
- Run the meeting in order of priority of agenda items – unless there is a compelling reason to start with a less important item (you want to tackle an easy item first to get going, such as announcing a special event).
- Decide how long the meeting should be – monitor the time – keep moving – begin and end on time, unless you work out new agreements with the group.
- Lead the group appropriately between creative, expansive efforts, focused discussions and decisions. Effective groups tap all resources to be creative and non-judgmental at times in order to evoke extraordinary thinking. At other times, they focus, judge, make decisions, agree on decisions, and move on.
- Summarize decisions and outcomes at points during the meeting when they are reached. Keep a running record of decisions and outcomes, either in your notes or on a piece of flipchart paper that everyone can see.
- At the end of the meeting, review decisions, outcomes, and agreements. As appropriate, designate time frames and people responsible for carrying out tasks.
- Finally, check to see if everyone thought the meeting was productive. If not, check to see what could be done next time to make it better.

What Team Leaders Do and Don't Do

1. **Keep the purpose, goals, and approach relevant and meaningful.**

   All teams must shape their own common purpose, performance goals, and approach. While a leader must be a full working member of the team who can and should contribute to these, he or she also stands apart from the team by virtue of his or her selection as leader. Teams expect their leaders to use that perspective and distance to help the teams clarify and commit to their mission, goals, and approach.

   Teams usually do not want leaders to go beyond this. As one of the regular members of the team, of course, a leader can make any and all specific suggestions. But when he or she wears the "leader's" mantle, comments intended as suggestions may be interpreted as mandates. This is especially likely to happen in business contexts where most people are conditioned to hear "orders" when their managers speak. But if leaders specify too much about purpose, goals, and approach, they will, in effect, have used their distance from the team in a normal hierarchical as opposed to team fashion. By doing so, they may gain compliance to "their" purpose. But they are likely to lose commitment to a team purpose. This is especially true at the beginning of a potential team's efforts when all eyes and ears are so keenly tuned to how the leader will use authority to build a team.

2. **Build commitment and confidence.**

   Team leaders should work to build the commitment and confidence of each individual as well as the team as a whole. As we discussed earlier, there is an important difference between individual commitment and accountability versus mutual accountability. Both are needed for any group to become a real team. Thus, the leader must keep both the individual and the team in mind as he or she tries to provide positive, constructive reinforcement while avoiding intimidation.

   Unfortunately, it is all too easy to coerce people in organizational settings, including small groups. People overtime will lose their enthusiasm and initiative when dealing with an intimidating leader. Certainly, they do not coalesce into a team. Either they never take the risks needed to build mutual trust and interdependence, or, if they do, they are not rewarded for it. Executives who rely on intimidation can get things done better in a hierarchy than in teams. Positive and constructive reinforcement fuels the mutual accountability and confidence so critical to team performance.

3. **Strengthen the mix and level of skills.**

Effective team leaders are vigilant about skills. Their goal is clear: ultimately, the most flexible and top-performing teams consist of people with all the technical, functional, problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal, and teamwork skills the team needs to perform. To get there, team leaders encourage people to take the risks needed for growth and development. They also continually challenge team members by shifting assignment and role patterns.

This effort can involve tough choices. No team reaches its goal with a chronic skill gap relative to its performance objective.

4. **Manage relationships with outsiders, including removing obstacles.**

Team leaders are expected, by people outside as well as inside the team, to manage much of the team's contacts and relationships with the rest of the organization. This calls on team leaders to communicate effectively the team's purpose, goals, and approach to anyone who might help or hinder it. They also must have the courage to intercede on the team's behalf when obstacles that might cripple or demoralize the team get placed in their way.

Almost always the mutual trust so critical to a team begins with the leader who must show that the team can depend on him or her to promote team performance.

5. **Create opportunities for others.**

Team performance is not possible if the leader grabs all the best opportunities, assignments, and credit for himself or herself. Indeed, the crux of the leader's challenge is to provide performance opportunities to the team and the people on it.

6. **Do real work.**

Everyone on a real team, including the leader, does real work in roughly equivalent amounts. Team leaders do have a certain distance from the team by virtue of their position, but they do not use that distance "just to sit back and make decisions." Team leaders must contribute in whatever way the team needs, just like any other member. Moreover, team leaders do not delegate the nasty jobs to others. Where personal risks are high or "dirty work" is required, the team leader should step forward.

There are, however, two critical things real team leaders never do: they do not blame or allow specific individuals to fail, and they never excuse away shortfalls in team performance. This, again, is behavior that most of us admire and can practice. But organizations built on individual instead of mutual accountability often foster the reverse. Too often, when expected results do not materialize, individuals get singled out for blame, or outside forces like the economy, the government, or the weather get identified as the cause. By contrast, real team leaders honestly believe that success or failure is a team event. No outside obstacle is an excuse for team failure, and no individuals fail. Only the team can fail. The leader assumes that the team's task includes overcoming whatever obstacles get in its way.

Adapted from J. Katzenbach and D. Smith, The Wisdom of Teams.

Using the Flipchart as an Effective Facilitation Tool

by Steve Joyce

Why Use the Flipchart?

The flipchart is an important facilitator tool, not only for making presentations, but also for recording relevant information as it is generated. The most important advantage that flipcharts have over chalkboards and overhead projectors is that flipcharts facilitate *group memory.*

The concept of *group memory* involves two elements:

1. **Retention and Reference:** When participants are able to see a presentation's key points listed on a flipchart, and then have visual access to these flipcharts throughout the meeting or discussion, the repeated exposure ensures greater retention of the information.

   Taping flipcharts to the walls allows participants to refer back to key points - reinforcing these points with their own examples, and building them with new ideas. Participants become more engaged, and there is greater group synergy and interaction.

2. **Visual Record of Outcomes:** When the facilitator records ideas and suggestions on a flipchart as they are generated, participants have a visual "memory" of key points as the session progresses. Communication is clearer, because of the visual record that the flipcharts provide. And, at the meeting's conclusion, participants have a collective memory of agreements and outcomes, whether these are decisions, next steps, or new ideas.

Chalkboards, overhead projectors, and even the new electronic recording books with photocopy capability cannot match the flipchart for generating group memory. You can leave flipcharts hanging on the walls *for days*, allowing participants a chance to stay after a session - or to return early the next day - to review them. Chalkboards, on the other hand, are erased as the session continues, and overheads flashed onto the wall quickly disappear into the darkness.

What You Should Chart

Flipcharts can serve as a useful tool in most situations, but not everything that goes on in a session must be charted. Outlined below are components that in most cases should be charted.

1. The Agenda

Whether the agenda is predetermined or developed at the beginning of a session, it should be recorded on a flipchart. Doing so encourages shared responsibility in achieving the agenda, as well as ongoing assessment of progress.

2. Key Presentation Points

Preparing flipcharts to accompany a presentation, as noted earlier, increases the likelihood that participants will retain more, and build on the information as a group. The flipcharts, which can be prepared in advance, should only highlight key points as clearly and succinctly as possible. In determining key points, the session leader should ask himself or herself, "What are the most important messages that I want people to grasp?"

3. Proposals/New Ideas

Record on the flipchart new ideas and proposals that are generated during brainstorming sessions or participant presentations. This visual record captures the ideas and proposals so that they are not lost, and it also lets people know that their ideas have been heard.

Meetings often end up stalled (or, worse yet, result in conflict) when participants repeat suggestions and proposals they think haven't been heard or accepted. Recording ideas on flipcharts acknowledges them, without necessarily requiring any further action.

4. Alternate Issues

Issues often surface that are not part of the planned agenda. It is beneficial to capture these issues on the flipchart to acknowledge them (for the same reasons stated before), and, if appropriate, to develop strategies for resolving them.

5. Action Items/Next Steps

Although participants may leave sessions agreeing on what needs to be done, they often are not sure about who will do what, by when. Flipcharts help consolidate a group's agreement on next steps. It is also helpful to type all action items and next steps from the flipcharts and hand them out as a written reminder to participants.

Tips for Charting

Using flipcharts as an effective facilitation tool is not always as easy as it might seem. How you prepare flipcharts and how you record ideas and important points can have an impact upon effective communication. Listed below are some tips for producing flipcharts that enhance communication.

- Words recorded on a flipchart should be large enough for all participants to read comfortably. Use the flat edge of the marker, as opposed to the tip, so that letters have some thickness to them.

- Use words sparingly on a flipchart. Only record major points and key phrases. Ask yourself when preparing flipcharts, "What is essential for participants to remember?"

- When recording participant responses and ideas on a flipchart during a meeting, capture the essence of what the speaker is saying in as few words as possible. Use the speaker's own words if they are clear and appropriate. If not, paraphrase back what you believe the speaker intended to say, and, if you are correct, then record those phrases.

- After chatting, read information back to the group, and ask if any clarification is necessary. It is important that the words recorded on the flipchart reflect what the participants intended to say.

- When preparing flipcharts before a session, use different colored markers to write and highlight words (however, don't use more than three colors on any one flipchart). Flipcharts thus become more attractive visual aids. Color also helps draw attention to a particular keyword or phrase.

- Don't use light-colored markers (red, yellow, pink, etc.). Although these colors highlight words well, participants who are more than a few feet away will have difficulty reading words written on them.

- Be creative with your flipcharts. Box in key words, use arrows, and draw figures that illustrate important points.

The Flipchart and Facilitator Style

Finally, a few words should be mentioned about the flipchart and facilitator style. The flipchart is a facilitation tool, not a crutch. It's not intended to take the place of your lecture notes. The "talking points" on your flipchart serve to focus the group's attention, and assist you in keeping your thoughts organized. When referring to points on the flipchart, don't hide behind the flipchart stand. Move to the side or off to the front as you speak. Touch key words on the flipchart once in a while to give them emphasis.

One way to keep people from reading ahead and losing focus is to place a small strip of masking tape at the bottom center of the page, and bring the bottom of the page up to cover the flipchart to the point on which the current discussion is based.

Organize multiple flipcharts on a given topic from right to left on easels or across a wall. If you hang your flipcharts up on the wall prior to the session, keep them covered, and rehearse their location to avoid a frantic search in the middle of your presentation. For flipcharts layered on one easel, a small piece of masking tape makes a good tab.

Keep any task instructions displayed on a flipchart throughout the task so participants can refer to them as needed. If you are using flipcharts to help the group record its thoughts or actions, you can display the charts on the wall as they are developed.

Building Consensus

"Someone else has decided that something needs to be done -- I've received a "mandate" that a particular requirement needs to be met by my team. How do we meet that mandate in the best possible way?"

"My team has considered a range of ideas and agreed on a larger vision. They are feeling very positive about this longer-term direction. The team needs to decide how we want to carry that vision out. How do we make that vision a reality?"

"There's an organizational problem which could be solved in a number of ways. What's the best solution to this problem? How do we make sure that people will be committed to carrying out necessary actions?"

Each of these situations are examples of where it may be important to build consensus among team members. Consensus building is a process that:

- results in true agreement about a plan, approach or steps to be taken
- actively engages people in the process
- results in people saying "my view has been accurately heard" and "I will support the decision even though it may not be my first preference."

The ability to build group consensus is essential in situations when other people's active commitment is necessary to implement a decision or plan, when people have strong differences about an issue, or when you need a core of support for an approach or position you want to advocate to a larger group like the entire office or a community.

To help groups achieve consensus, you will need basic facilitation skills like paraphrasing, summarizing and question asking, and some more refined facilitation skills. In this article, we will describe these skills and discuss how you can prepare for and effectively use these skills to help build group consensus.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS

Are the right people going to be at the meeting? -- When preparing for a meeting where building consensus is important, one question to ask is "who should be involved in this discussion?" One way of answering this question is to examine the impact of the decisions to be made by the group, and to include in discussions participants who represent those affected by the decision, those implementing the decision and those whose support is necessary for implementation.

Is everyone prepared to achieve the purpose of the meeting? – Everyone coming to the meeting should have a clear idea why this group is coming together. What are we trying to get done? This does not mean that the exact solutions or agreements are determined in advance, but it does mean that the person facilitating the discussion and other participants need to be clear about the issues the group is facing and the outcomes that you and the group want to achieve. Group members may need to prepare by thinking through the issues and preparing their own alternatives or suggestions based on available information.

During the meeting, a clear understanding of the issues will enable the person facilitating the meeting to check whether the group's discussion is generally on target or whether it is focused too much on less important issues. When you see something important, it is critical to push the group to make certain they have truly examined all aspects of the issue, and to test rigorously for agreement. When something is less important, you will need to help the group move on. Your ability to make these choices about how to facilitate rests on how well you have thought through the issues and the key decisions which must be made.

BUILDING CONSENSUS DURING THE MEETING

Follow a plan for how the discussion will be organized – Typically discussions that truly involve people, give them an opportunity to share their views, and build commitment to a particular approach include eight steps:

1. <u>Be clear about "what it is we're trying to get done</u>"– When working toward consensus, the first requirement is to keep the common purpose clearly in front of the group. Start the meeting by stating or reaffirming the purpose of the meeting. Give people a chance to ask questions so that they can be clear about it. Verify agreement that "this is what we are trying to get done." Give people an opportunity to share their perspective on the problem or issues and to ask questions like:

   - What are the key elements of the mandate? Why do we need to take action?

   - How did this vision come about? Who was involved? Does it reflect where people are today?

   - What are the elements of the problem? Here's how I see it. How do others see it?

2. <u>Ask for ideas about how the issue or problem could be addressed</u> – Use open-ended questions to get ideas out. In some situations, people may have alternative proposals prepared before the meeting. Sometimes a single proposal will be the focus of discussion, but quite often ideas and thoughts building on earlier ideas come out quickly and spontaneously. It is very important to keep track of the different proposals. Use a flipchart or white board. Use summarizing skills to go over the different ideas.

3. Provide an opportunity for clarification -- After there are a number of approaches in front of the group, give the group an opportunity to ask clarifying questions before "arguing" about any particular proposal. "Is there anything that anyone does not understand about any of the proposals?" This is not a time to debate, but to make sure that all are clear about what each person's ideas are. This is a good time for the facilitator to summarize each of the proposals and for all participants to use paraphrasing skills.

4. Check to see if there is agreement on any of the proposals -- Review the purpose of the meeting, and ask "Are there any of the proposals we all agree on?" If you all agree at this point, summarize the agreement and adjourn the meeting. Usually consensus will not come this easily and people will want to air their concerns about different proposals!

5. Identify and discuss concerns with proposals -- Give the group an opportunity to discuss "Why I have trouble agreeing with or selecting this proposal as the one I'm willing to go with." As the person facilitating the discussion, you will need to actively summarize points, help clarify differences, and keep all of the proposals in front of the group. You may want to list concerns on a flipchart or whiteboard and focus discussion on each.

   You will also need to make judgments about when to ask the group "Are we at a point where we can make a decision about this issue (or recommendation, or action item)?" If so, record a clear statement of that decision. If not, ask, "Keeping aware of our time limits, what do we have to do to arrive at a decision?"

6. Combine parts of proposals and/or develop new proposals to meet concerns -- This can be the most creative part of the discussion. "Given our concerns, what combination of ideas will best achieve the outcome we're looking for?" "Are there changes in any of the proposals which will address your concerns?"

7. Test for agreement/work to resolve disagreements -- As the discussion proceeds, look for places to test for agreement:

   - Summarize what you see as the "evolving" decision. "Here is the decision I hear us moving towards. Correct me if I've misstated it or left something out." Ask the group members if they all agree with this decision. Look around to see if every person has nodded or said yes.

   - When reaching consensus is getting a little tougher, take actions to help people move their position enough to achieve what might be called a "real world" consensus. Here are some examples of what you might say in these instances:

- "Do you agree that this is the best solution that we can develop collectively?" Or...

- "Based on this discussion and our need to take action, can you agree to this as a practical solution - perhaps one that is not ideal and not exactly what you want, but nonetheless achievable." Or...

- "Remembering that we all have to keep our common purposes in mind, do you agree that this is the best action we can jointly take?"

There will be times when you will need to work to resolve disagreements. If people simply disagree, what can you do? As a facilitator, you need to manage disagreement openly and positively. Out of disagreement will often emerge creative solutions, and agreements that people will carry out with energy. However, this cannot happen if disagreements are pushed under the table or if they get out of hand and dominate the group proceedings. Here are some things you as a facilitator can do to be a positive force in facilitating disagreements.

- Summarize major points of disagreement or key alternatives. Ask if everyone has been able to contribute his or her views and query the group to see if all major points have been discussed.

- Go around and ask each person to state what decision they would recommend if it were up to them alone. If five or eight people agree, address the three who did not agree and ask them questions like the following:

  - "What would it take to change your mind?"
  - "What are the areas of disagreement and are they resolvable?"
  - "Now that we have clearly heard each of our positions, what would it take to get consensus on this problem?"

  Whatever questions you use, you may then need to facilitate a discussion to sort out the answer.

- Another approach is to ask people to consider the main reason that's keeping them from agreeing. Allow some discussion and then ask these participants what can be done. Then test for consensus again.

- At a certain point, you may decide to have the group vote. Ask how many people would vote for something, and how many would vote against it. If it is not a clear-cut vote, you can simply go with the majority, or you can table the issue and agree not to decide. As a facilitator, when do you decide to push for consensus as opposed to going with a simple (and quick) vote? This is a judgement call, and it is made based on three factors:

  - the importance of the issue,
  - the degree to which each person's or each unit's support is really needed for success, and
  - whether a decision has to be made about a particular issue during the meeting.

  When making this kind of judgement, you are trying to strike a balance between pushing participants to make a decision by voting, which doesn't insure everyone's commitment to the action, and taking too much time to reach consensus, which risks developing a sense of wasted time, heightened disagreement, and failure to achieve results.

8. <u>Make sure you summarize agreements</u> -- These steps will help the group achieve consensus. When you get agreement, acknowledge it, summarize key points, identify actions, record the results, and move on. In many cases, it is important that this agreement is written and distributed after the conclusion of the meeting.

As you go through these steps, keep discussion focused on the common purpose --When you see the group drift off target, bring them back to the central purpose. (For example, say "What we are talking about now is [x] and our purpose here today is [y]; let's make sure [x] is related to [y], or move back to the main topic.") Relate key points and summaries to the purpose. (For example, you could say, "We have explored these two aspects of the problem. If we can agree on an approach to dealing with these aspects, we'll achieve one of the purposes here today - [x].") Restate the purpose to help two individuals who are having a prolonged disagreement. (For example, you could say, "Let me interrupt here for a second - we all need to remember that we are here to address [this purpose], which is affecting all of us.")

Gauge when the group has talked about something "just enough." -- Too much discussion causes the group to lose interest, and feel that they are not using their time productively. With too little, the solution may be inadequate, or the group may lack the necessary commitment to carry out the solution successfully.

Determining when a group has reached the "just enough" point is not an exact science. However, there are some signs that will indicate to you that it's time to push the group towards a decision.

- Points or arguments begin to get repeated without any new knowledge or ideas being developed. You get the sense that people are trying to convince each other by talking louder or being repetitive. Often summarizing points that have been made will help people realize that they have been heard and will allow the group to move on.

- Individuals in the groups have all had the opportunity to give a "reasonable" amount of input into the discussion. If you have any doubts, ask someone who has been silent if they have anything to add.

- While discussing an issue with good participation from all at the outset, you notice that only two or three people appear to be still interested in the point under discussion. The best way to find out what's happening is to ask, "Have we finished examining this issue?" Or, you could ask, "It seems like most of us are ready to move on. Does anyone have a concluding point before we do so?"

Any of the actions suggested above will work well, no matter what happens. If the group is ready to move on, they will breathe a sigh of relief and plunge ahead. If the group is not, they will recognize it, and make a conscious decision to continue deliberating about an issue.

Collaborative Work Organization: A Key to Achieving Empowerment and Accountability[10]

Results Orientation, and Empowerment and Accountability. Results Orientation means managing for the achievement of results by setting clear objectives and targets, collecting adequate information to judge progress and adjusting strategies and tactics as required. Empowerment involves investing others with authority to make and implement decisions, and implies accountability for decisions which are made.

These values are important because they provide guidance for the development of new agency systems and the impetus for institutional change. Perhaps more importantly, by articulating these values the Agency is saying that it expects its managers and staff to behave in certain ways. This raises a number of questions -- what are the everyday behaviors that managers and staff should engage in that support a "results orientation?" What can an individual manager, team leader or staff member do that will bring about "empowerment and accountability?" What does someone need to do to invest others with appropriate authority, to set clear work objectives and targets, to judge individual and team progress, and to ensure accountability for results?

Over the past several years, there has been a growing interest in these kinds of questions. Both public and private sector organizations are seeking to involve a wider range of people in problem solving. In many organizations, there is a lessened reliance on hierarchy and greater interest in teams. Participation and collaboration are being emphasized and, at the same time, resources are shrinking and staff need to get work tasks done "right" more quickly. All these factors are placing a renewed emphasis on getting work done through and with others, and on the everyday process of how work gets assigned.

Stories abound in many organizations about the work assignment process gone awry -- from both directions, the person giving the assignment, and the person receiving the work. For example, one person described the process of receiving an assignment from her boss:

> *"I go into the office, we have a discussion about a topic, and I think there is an assignment in there somewhere. But I only know it was there when, some days later, my boss asks me how I am coming with such-and-such."*

Model excerpted from Coaching For Performance, by John Whitemore

From a manager's perspective, the following anecdote is not atypical:

> *"I am having trouble with [X]. Just the other day, we had a discussion about a specific piece of work, and I thought we agreed on what he would do, and when he would finish. I didn't get the assignment when he promised, so I asked him about it. He said, 'Oh, I didn't know that you really wanted me to do that, and I wasn't clear that it was important -- and I do have a number of other high priority things on my plate'. I was frankly astounded by this -- I mean, I thought we had a clear agreement."*

Although these are two separate examples, it is ironic to note that they could have been describing the same incident. The point is that there are many opportunities for things to go wrong in the work assignment process.

What happens when the work assignment process doesn't work?

When the work assignment process is not done effectively, the negative results are real, concrete, and they often become apparent quickly. Some examples of the more serious problems which can occur include the following: tasks are simply not done or products are not produced, the quality of work is inferior, time is lost as tasks have to be redone or bad work is thrown out, deadlines are missed, and the work often has to be "done over." All of this costs time and money. Everyone who has worked in an organization for any period of time has seen problems created by ineffective work assignments such as:

- "reverse delegation" where the task is actually redelegated to the manager
- work is delegated merely to avoid unpleasant tasks
- responsibilities are delegated to the same people which can lead to resentment by those not chosen for greater responsibility, and to over-work for those who are selected

Ineffective work assignments can cause problems for both parties involved, and reflect on the competency of the person giving the work assignment as well as the person who is receiving it. It is clear that there are many pitfalls to the work assignment process -- what is an apparently simple process is much more difficult than it originally seems.

What makes assigning work such a troublesome process?

There are a variety of things that can make the work assignment process work badly. A common problem is that some people believe that only they can do a particular job well; they have a "desire for perfectionism," or a belief in the "superiority of one's own work." A variation of this problem is that some people believe they can simply do it faster than others and do not want to take the time to "get the other person up to speed just yet."

Others simply like to do the work they did before they were promoted. Ironically, in some cases, managers see their staff as being deficient or not competent to do the task, while in others, they fear that the staff may be too competent and do the job too well. In either instance, the person is reluctant to give the job to someone else.

Finally, getting clear agreements about work that is to be done requires that all parties are skillful communicators, and sometimes this skill is not as finely honed as it might be!

The Benefits

After considering all the problems that can take place with the work assignment process, it is helpful to recall the benefits that can happen when people do it effectively. Most important, it gets the job done well, by the person who is closest to the work, the one who knows the most about it and who should be doing it. In supervisory situations, it frees the supervisor up to do the work that is appropriate for that role, and serves as a very practical and effective path for employee motivation and development. In situations like the one which USAID is facing -- doing more things with fewer people -- getting agreement and clarity around work assignments means that people's time, their scarcest resource, will get used wisely, and that there is a greater likelihood that "right" tasks will be done in a high quality way.

What will make it work -- an approach to collaborative work organization

Traditionally, the term "delegation" has been used to describe the situation where one person assigns work to another. However, in addition to the issues depicted above with the work assignment process, we have come to believe that the word "delegation" is in fact problematic. Both in concept and in practice, it all too often seems to imply to people a sense of "dumping" tasks on others through some kind of one-way communication. Even the very term "delegate" reinforces this image -- it derives from the Latin word *delegare*, which means "to send away.".

As a precursor to improving the actual practice of assigning work, we thought it was absolutely critical to transform the concept, so we changed the name to "collaborative work organization" (CWO). By this, we mean a recognizable conversation about a work assignment between two or more parties. Although the term "collaborative work organization" is a mouthful, we think it captures the two-way, active, participative nature that needs to characterize work assignment conversations now.

On a general level, most everyone agrees that doing CWO is a good thing. However, what we have found is that it is one of those simple concepts that is hard to carry out in practice. The specifics often elude people involved in the process. Therefore, we offer a number of explicit suggestions below that will help people improve their skills at CWO and make it into a very powerful tool that can be used to insure increased work quality and productivity.

What happens before the CWO conversation....

There are certain planning decisions one needs to make before engaging in a CWO conversation. It does not necessarily take a great amount of time to think about the CWO effort and to do the required planning, but it does call for rigorous thought. Here are some of the decision points:

1. **What is the task?**

   This is a good place to start. The manager/team leader needs to reflect on what is it that is to be done or to be accomplished? What is the goal? How does it fit in to the larger agenda for the unit? Or is this in response to a crisis or a problem? If this is the case, then the problem needs to be clearly thought out. In general, the key questions here are the following: What is the task? How does this fit into broader strategies? Why is it important?

2. **Who should do the task?**

   Questions to consider here are the following: What are the strengths and weaknesses of various people that might do this task? Who is the most appropriate person to do it? How does the workload look? Are there any staff development considerations in deciding who should get this particular task? Is this a task that could be more productively done by pairing people up, or putting together a team to work on it? Would this multi-person approach increase quality?

3. **When does the task need to be done?**

   About how much time will this task take? Over what period? What are important deadlines? What might be some contingencies in this situation, things that could go wrong, or delay meeting deadlines? How might these be handled? What is the priority of this task relative to other things the individual or team is working on?

4. **How do I involve this person in the discussion of the task?**

   In taking a collaborative approach to assigning work, the manager/team leader must consider how to create a climate for a two-way discussion. What questions should be explored? How should the manager overcome any tendency to do most of the talking? What should be done ahead of time to allow the other person to prepare their thoughts for the discussion? It may be important to make explicit the expectation that they will contribute their ideas and views, especially if the person is not used to giving input into work assignments.

In addition to thinking about how to make the conversation interactive, the manager/team leader has three other factors to consider in planning how to involve this person in the discussion of the task. In order to support productive work, managers "have to make sure that participation is worthwhile and will make a difference to employees (the motivation), that people's knowledge and skills are assessed and upgraded (the ability), and that people have sufficient resources and authority to participate (the permission)."

As a manager/team leader approaches a CWO conversation with particular individual, he or she will want to consider how to discuss:

- **Motivation** – As people do work, they need to feel that their efforts are making an important contribution, that they are appreciated and that there is "something in it for them." What should be said about benefits of this person doing this task? How should someone who is not highly motivated be approached around this task?

- **Ability** – Managers/team leaders need to help employees gain the knowledge and skills necessary to do a particular task. What assumptions are being made about this person's ability to do this task? A person who is new, or lacks skills may require more structure and support than someone who has demonstrated in the past that they are able to carry out a particular task. How should issues like needs for coaching or other support be raised during this discussion?

- **Permission** -- If someone is given a job to do without the authority to do it, motivation dies and knowledge and skills are not put to use for the good of the organization. Employees must be given the support and resources to participate in a meaningful way. For many tasks, the difficult part for the manager is determining what it means to "share" decision making. Am I seeking input, but reserving the right to make final decisions? Are we agreeing that decisions will be made only after we both agree? Is this person expected to make certain kinds of decisions about this task without consulting me?

To a certain extent, exactly how much the manager/team leader needs to think through and answer these questions depends on the person who is being given the work assignment and the task involved. In any case, the manager needs to give some conscious thought as to how to make this conversation one where listening, asking questions, coaching, shared goal setting, and consensus building are primary elements.

This kind of planning doesn't need to take an extraordinary amount of time, and it can be done informally, (e.g., in the shower, driving to work). However, it is critical that thought be given to these issues at some point, or the manager runs the risk of having a sloppy, ambiguous and unproductive CWO session. Now what about the CWO session itself?

Six Elements of a Collaborative Work Organization Conversation

In order to carry out an effective CWO conversation, the following elements must be included. They are numbered, but we are not suggesting that they need to be carried out in any particular sequence. The key to a successful CWO conversation is ensuring that this is a two-way conversation throughout.

1. Set a climate for two way conversation

To set the tone for participation, be explicit about the desire to engage in a two-way conversation. Often, this is an assumption held but never articulated, saying, "I want to talk with you about this task, and I'd like to get your input as much as possible so we can work together and get agreement on how you will proceed." It is also important to state what is expected in the way of input. "I want you to share your ideas and ask questions so we are both clear about the work to be done and the necessary support and resources to make it happen."

Ensure that your actions are consistent with your stated desire to have input and participation. As you go through each of the steps, allow or solicit questions. Make it a two-way conversation. Provide an opportunity for the individual to share ideas about the task, to discuss alternative approaches, and to consider the impact of this new task on other assigned work.

2. State what the task is

After the normal opening pleasantries, the manager should begin by clearly describing what the task is and what you expect the person to do – "I want you to...". Make sure you let the person know what you have already decided and what is open for discussion. Depending on the particular person and the task, it might involve saying the following: "I want you to do this particular task – let me begin by describing exactly what we need as a written product, and than I will suggest how I want you to start....". On the other hand, it might begin as follows: "Here is this task, I know you have done something like this with high quality many times in the past, and I want you to run with this one...we can discuss together some of the new aspects....".

3. Background, reasons for the task, and its priority

Share any important background information you think would help the person understand the task so that he or she could do it more completely and accurately. In cases where the task comes as a result of a front office decision or mandate from AID/Washington, say so. Be clear about the amount of control at the local level over the implementation of the task. Put the task in the perspective of overall unit goals, priorities, and other work being done by this individual.

4. Benefits of this individual doing this task

Share what you perceive to be the benefits of this person doing this task. These could be benefits in terms of extra quality the person could bring to a particularly important task for the unit; it could involve a benefit in terms of staff development for that person, or something that is an important part of the employees work plan for this year. It could simply be a benefit for the unit if this person does the work. Avoid overselling – spending a lot of time trying to convince the person that he or she ought to do this particular task. Above all, do not try to falsify the importance of a task, or inflate something, or create a substantive reason when none exists. Finally, avoid talking about the benefits of the job before you have clearly stated what the task is.

5. Reaching Agreement on quality, level of effort and timeline

It is essential in this conversation to reach clear understanding and agreement about the quality of the service or product expected. For example, what would be an acceptable product? What would be an extraordinary product? What are we shooting for in this instance? What level of effort will it take to achieve the quality we're aiming for? Are we all committed to that standard of quality and level of effort? What's the real timeline you're aiming for?

6. Clarity on next steps and agreement on an approach to monitoring

Confirm agreement on steps to be taken to accomplish the task. These could be intermediate steps – "so could you have a draft plan describing how you would approach this project to me by next Tuesday," or they might be all the steps necessary to complete the task – "OK, you'll check with Bill in the Controller's Office, and get the figures back to me by COB tomorrow." Insure that the individual understands the task and that there is agreement about what is expected in the way of an output – intermediate and final. Confirm the extent of authority and decision making that will be carried out by the employee.

Finally, discuss how and when monitoring will occur. Make a distinction here between the kind of monitoring you need to feel comfortable about levels of progress and quality, and the information you may want in order to deal with queries from others about progress on this task.

How to have a CWO Conversation -- CWO from the perspective of the other party

So far we've looked at these six elements from the standpoint of the person who has something that needs to be done, but as we said it's critical to make this interaction a two way street. It's not simply a matter of the supervisor "giving" the staff member something to do. Both bring a lot to the conversation and it's critical to be able to take advantage of what both bring. With this model, the emphasis is on the interests of both people. We are talking about an approach that requires both parties to respond to each other in ways that are different from what we might see in a more "traditional" interaction where work is "assigned." When you look at a CWO conversation from the perspective of the "other" person, it is again important to think about two elements -- preparation and the work plan conversation itself.

Preparation - Quite often we do not think of the "other" person needing too much time to prepare for a work plan conversation, and assume that it is up to the person initiating the conversation to have thought through what should happen. If you know ahead of time that you will be taking part in a work planning conversation, it can be very helpful to take a few minutes to think through several questions:

- What do I know about the task we will be discussing? What additional information should I seek about the task before the conversation? What do I want to make sure I ask about during the conversation?
- What ideas do I have about how to approach doing this task?
- Who do I need to help me with the task? What support or authority do I need from the person initiating this conversation?
- What other work am I doing now and how does this new task fit into current deadlines? How interested am I in this task? How much ownership do I feel?
- What do I need to be doing with this person in this conversation to be making it a two way interaction?

Typically those on the receiving end of CWO conversations see themselves as playing a passive role. For most people, being a "partner" in a CWO conversation requires a change in view of how they are supposed to behave in these kind of conversations. Thinking through these kinds of questions helps to prepare the "other person" to play a more active role in this interaction.

Work Plan Conversation - Once you have given some thought to preparing, you're ready to have the conversation itself. Some of the actions you might want to take include:

1. **Be part of a two-way conversation**. Let the other person know that you are interested and ready to contribute to the discussion about this task. Look for opportunities to demonstrate that you can actively contribute.
2. **Confirm your understanding of the task and what you are supposed to do.** Repeat your understanding of the task in your own words. Share your ideas about the task and how it might be approached. Be prepared to talk about <u>how</u> you would see the task being accomplished.

3. **As the conversation proceeds, ask questions, give input and summarize agreements**. Ask questions to clarify your own understanding of the task. If you don't understand something that is being said, paraphrase what you do understand. Contribute your ideas to make the result of this conversation even better. Look for places to summarize agreements that have been made as the conversation continues.

4. **Be sure you understand the background and priority of this task.** Ask questions that would give you information to do the task more completely and accurately. Think about the other work that you are currently doing. If necessary, ask "how does this task fit into other priorities?" If you have concerns about your interest in or ability to do the job (e.g., Is it possible to meet this deadline? Are the necessary resources available? Do I have the skills that are needed? Do I feel committed to doing this task?), you should express them clearly to the other person.

5. **Reach agreement on quality, level of effort and timeline.** You may need to take the initiative to clarify -- what are we aiming for in this instance, an "acceptable" product or an "extraordinary product?"

6. **Get clarity on next steps and reach an agreement on how your performance of this task will be monitored.** Confirm what steps you both have agreed to take to accomplish the task. Discuss how you will be monitored. When will you talk to this person again about this task? What is expected at that time? Don't let the conversation end if the next steps that you and the other person will be taking are not clear to you!

Having trouble devising an appraisal system that measures both team and individual performance? Here's help.

MAKING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL WORK FOR TEAMS

BY JACK ZIGON

Do you hear comments like these in your organization?

"Our performance-appraisal system gets in the way of using teams more effectively. We still reward only individuals, and that's undermining teamwork."

"I know we're supposed to pay for team performance, but I can't figure out how to measure that. It's too subjective. And if you can't measure it, you can't manage it, right?"

"These 360° peer reviews are just popularity contests. What I want to know is, how well is this team performing?"

"Why aren't I busting my butt for the team objectives? Well, let's see. First, my raise depends entirely on meeting my *personal* objectives. Second, my supervisor doesn't really know what I'm doing on the team, let alone how well I'm doing it. Any more questions?"

These are some of the symptoms of a problem that has grown in direct proportion to the spread of the team concept throughout the American workplace: the team-hostile performance-appraisal system.

Teams are becoming an integral way of life for American companies. In the Autumn 1992 issue of the *American Compensation Journal*, Edward Lawler and Susan Cohen summarized surveys that showed that teams of various types are in use in nearly all of the *Fortune* 1,000 companies:

- Eighty-seven percent of these large companies are using parallel teams—groups of individuals working outside and parallel to the existing organizational structure, usually with the purpose of improving quality. Quality circles and all sorts of temporary problem-solving teams fall into this category.
- Almost all large companies are using project teams—usually cross-functional teams brought together to complete a project lasting several months to several years. After the project is completed, the team disbands. Examples include product-development teams or teams charged with opening a new plant.
- Nearly half of these companies now are using permanent work teams to accomplish their everyday business. These teams are not outside the organizational structure, they *are* the organizational structure.

If we're going to use teams to do a great deal of the thinking, the planning and the working that goes on in our organizations, it stands to reason that our human-resource systems—performance appraisal in particular—ought to support team performance. But they generally don't. And if those comments above sounded disturbingly familiar, you've got problems at your company.

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?

An appraisal system is supposed to be useful for communicating expectations, for providing feedback that helps people improve their performance, and for dispensing pay and other rewards. Why don't our traditional appraisal systems support teams as well as they need to? There are several reasons.

- Most performance-appraisal systems were developed with only individual performers in mind. The ideas of self-managing, cross-functional and other work-team structures were too new or were used too infrequently to take into account when today's systems were designed.
- Measuring team performance is difficult. Cross-functional teams are often made up of well-educated, creative and specialized "knowledge workers." It's hard enough to measure the performance of research scientists, graphic artists and design engineers as individuals. Put them on a cross-functional team to develop a new product, and the difficulty soars. In addition to the problem of devising objective performance measures for white-collar work, it is often difficult to decide where the team leaves off and the individuals begin.
- Different types of teams require different approaches to measurement. Many appraisal systems use one common set of evaluation factors. One obvious problem is

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It's hard enough to measure the performance of research scientists as individuals. Put them on a cross-functional team, and the difficulty soars.

that a "needs improvement" rating on the "team player" scale just doesn't give a person the sort of specific feedback needed to improve performance. Another problem is that a project team that comes together for a one-shot product rollout needs to be measured differently than a permanent work team assigned to troubleshoot and install computer systems. The project team will derive its measures entirely from the quality of its deliverables (for instance, the product specifications, packaging and training materials it produces) and from the eventual success of the product on the market. For the permanent work team, on the other hand, performance measures will spring at least in part from the ongoing work *processes* the team uses to meet its customers' needs.

Further complicating the matter is that cross-functional teams are much harder to measure than homogeneous teams. A homogeneous team is made up of many people doing the same job—10 customer-service reps in 10 regions, for instance. Once you've developed measures for one rep, the other reps will be able to use them unchanged. This sharing of individual measures won't apply to a cross-functional team that is made up of five players with different jobs and expertise.

• The quality movement has downplayed the potential contribution of appraisal systems. The late quality guru W. Edwards Deming went so far as to declare that appraisals should be abolished as they are inherently destructive systems that actually defeat the purpose of improving performance.

But American companies have not abandoned performance appraisals, and for good reason. Deming was only partly right: *Poorly designed* systems should be thrown out. On the other hand, the payoff from a well-designed appraisal system can be enormous. For instance, Yellow Freight System Inc., a trucking company based in Overland Park, KS, documented $20.8 million in performance improvements after installing a new appraisal system.

FIVE KEYS

Appraisal systems don't have to be hostile to teams. Here are five keys to designing a system that supports and improves the performance of teams—and also the individuals who compose them.

1. *Tie the team's results to the organization's goals.* To appraise the performance of teams, we need to find measurements that apply to important goals that the team is supposed to accomplish. The results we want to measure share two characteristics: The team must control the thing, and the thing must contribute to the organization's success.

To do this, obviously, we first have to understand exactly what it is that the team is supposed to do, and how that fits with what the organization as a whole is trying to do. A helpful place to begin is to look at the organizational level on which the team is operating.

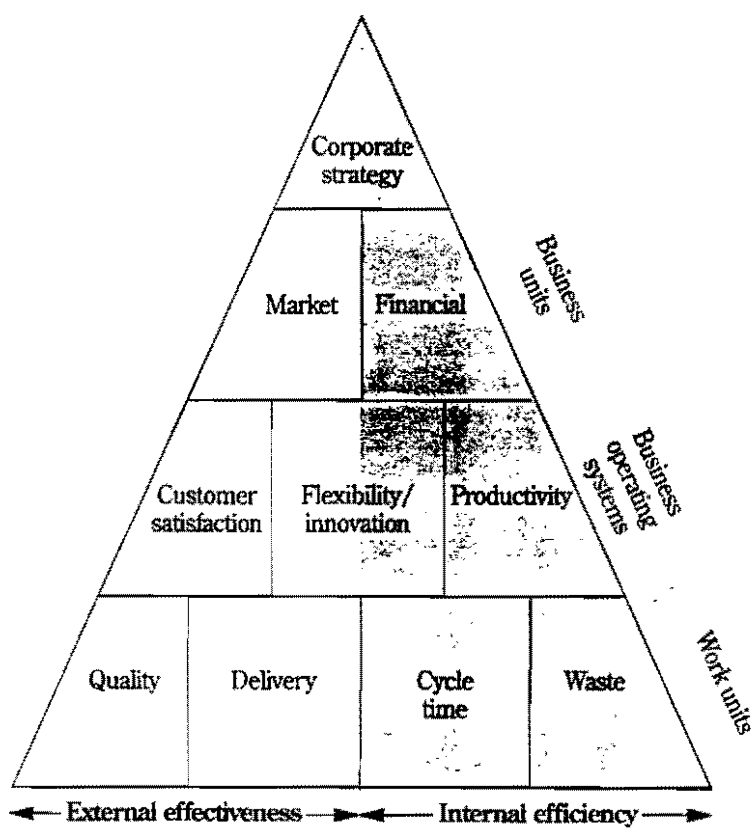
The way you measure performance should vary with the different jobs and levels in your organization. Measures that make sense in the executive suite can cause all sorts of dysfunctional behavior if applied indiscriminately at lower levels. A performance-pyramid model devised by Cambridge, MA, consultant Kelvin Cross (see Figure 1) is useful for identifying the right kind of measures for different levels of an organization.

At the highest level of the pyramid, Cross proposes, strategy is key. To rate the performance of executives (or an executive team), therefore, the measures that most concern us should be those that evaluate the success of the overall business strategy: How many sales dollars have we generated from our entry into the maternity-fashions market? How many new outlets have we opened this year?

A business unit (division, profit center, etc.) is interested in two general kinds of measures—financial and market-related. Financial measures of a business unit's performance include things like sales dollars, ROI and stock value. Market measures include growth in market share, changes in market share relative to the nearest competitor and so on. If a team is responsible for guiding a business unit—and has substantial control over the whole unit—those are the kinds of measures by which we want to judge its performance.

Moving down the pyramid, the work has to get done inside the business units using some operating system or business process—some sequence of steps that

FIGURE 1
CROSS' MODEL FOR IDENTIFYING PERFORMANCE MEASURES AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION



Deming was only partly right: Poorly designed appraisal systems should be thrown out.

starts with, say, a customer order and ends up with a satisfied customer. In most companies, this sequence of steps cuts across the organization's hierarchical structure. To achieve the financial and market goals, the business operating system must improve performance in three general areas: customer satisfaction (measured, perhaps, via surveys, focus groups and repeat business); flexibility/innovation (number of new products introduced, reductions in product cycle times); and productivity (measured in terms of volume, cost reduction and so on).

For a team working at the department or work-unit level, customer satisfaction boils down to questions of quality and delivery: meeting the customer's quality requirements and delivering when you say you will. Measuring these factors might include counting customer complaints and tracking delivery dates or the milestones in a product-development process. Other major concerns at the work-unit level include cycle time and waste. Waste might be measured, for example, by counting the number of production delays due to botched "handoffs" from one unit to another.

Those are the kinds of goals and measurements we ought to be looking for when we set out to appraise the performance of teams.

2. *Begin with the team's customers and the work process the team follows to satisfy their needs.* Creating team measures progresses more quickly if you start with the team's customers. Using process mapping, a technique from the "re-engineering" tool kit, you can create a graphic picture of the work process the team uses to meet its customers' requirements: all of the steps and handoffs that occur on the way to producing the team's final product. The technique works especially well if the team is responsible for an ongoing process such as order fulfillment.

A process map will show you three potential measuring points. First, the final product the customer receives can be evaluated in terms of the customer's requirements. Second, the handoffs between teams can be evaluated based on delivery and quality. Third, the process steps can be evaluated based on waste and cycle time.

If the team is responsible for a one-time project such as developing and launching a new product, a better starting point than the process map may be the final product and the list of project "deliverables"—the concrete tasks or accomplishments that have to be completed on the way to the final product. A project team at Louisville, KY-based Kentucky Fried Chicken Corp. that is responsible for a new rotisserie-chicken product has its final results measured using sales, operations and financial metrics. As part of the project, the same team produced nine deliverables, each of which also could be measured: restaurant modifications, product specifications, a marketing plan, a training package, computer-system modifications and so on.

3. *Measure both team and individual performance.* Understanding the team's objectives is only the first step toward building an effective appraisal system. Each team member also needs a clear understanding

TABLE 1
PARTIAL ROLE-RESULT MATRIX FOR AN OIL EXPLORATION TEAM

Tasks→ ↓Players	1. Geological Mapping	2. Reservoir Analysis	3. Well History and Performance
Exploitation Geologist	• Subsurface interpretation	• Log analysis • Volumetric maps	• Log correlation • Zone identification
Geophysicist	• Seismic interpretation • New exploitation and exploration prospects • Subsurface interpretation	• Amplitude and attribute studies • Volumetric maps	
Exploration Geologist	• New trends • New exploration prospects	• Recognition of depositional environment • Log analysis • Volumetric maps	• Log correlation • Zone identification
Reservoir Engineer	• Reservoir parameters which affect mapping	• Reservoir characterization • Material balance evaluation	• Production and performance anomalies • Volume forecasts • Analogies identified
Production Engineer			• Descriptions of well mechanics • Production and performance anomalies • Volume forecasts • Analogies identified

Some work can't be meaningfully measured with numbers. This is often mistaken for an enormous problem.

of the individual objectives he must meet to support the team's common objectives. One way to clarify these individual objectives is to define the roles of each team member in terms of accomplishments that support the team's work process.

A convenient way to do this is to create a matrix like the one shown in Table 1. Along the top of the matrix, list the key tasks the team must accomplish—the ones you identified while mapping the team's work process. Down the left side, list the players on the team. Inside each cell are the valuable accomplishments each member contributes to the team.

The role-result matrix shown in Table 1 is a piece of a larger matrix (the original had 12 process steps and 10 team members) developed for a cross-functional oil-exploration team at the American Exploration Co. in Houston. As you can see, each member of a team could look at such a chart and be reminded of the key things she is supposed to contribute. And the manager or appraisal-system designer could look at the chart and find plenty of opportunities for measuring performance.

4. *Shoot for verifiability. Don't try to measure everything using numbers.* Some work can't be meaningfully measured with numbers. This is often mistaken for an enormous problem. Work *can* always be described using words. The key is verifiability: Can we verify that the performance standard has been met or exceeded? If so, the standard will be useful as a tool for communicating expectations, offering feedback and dispensing rewards.

While numbers are easy to verify, descriptive performance standards can be just as useful if they have three components: a judge, factors the judge looks for, and a verifiable description of what represents meeting expectations.

TABLE 2
VERIFIABLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR A GRAPHIC ARTIST

Accomplishment	Performance Measures & Standards
Product logos	1. All agreed-upon deadlines are met. 2. Vendor costs are within the agreed-upon budget. 3. Designer's hours are within ± 10% of the agreed-upon budget. 4. Supervisor is satisfied that the logo: a. Reproduces well in various sizes and in three dimensions. b. Can be used as one color, line art and half-tone versions. c. Conveys the function of the product. d. Has a strong identity and reads well. e. Uses type in a unique manner. f. Has high-quality art. 5. Client is satisfied that the: a. Image conveyed to the public is the image the client wants to convey. b. Message is clear. c. Logo is easily recognizable. d. Typeface matches the personality of product/program. 6. Exceeding expectations = The logo design wins an award; customers say they are excited about using the logo; the logo is used for 10 years; the logo graphic gets public recognition without the accompanying text.

R.L. Polk & Co., a direct-mail publisher based in Detroit, employs graphic artists who create logos for new products. Table 2 shows an example of the verifiable performance measures Polk has created, using both numbers and descriptions to define what a good job of logo design looks like at this company.

While each factor in the table requires a subjective judgment, the graphic artist knows who is making the judgment and what the judge will see if the logo is a good one. A logo that can't be read at both half-inch and 12-foot sizes doesn't meet Standard 4-a. One that can't work in black and white as well as in four colors doesn't meet Standard 4-b. And note that Standard 6 describes what would have to occur for the logo to be considered exceptionally good.

5. *Train the team to create its own measures.* The process of defining common team objectives plus individual roles and objectives accomplishes two things. First, it helps the team develop into a more cohesive unit. Second, it gives the team the measurement system it needs to be self-managing.

The skills and knowledge needed to create such a measurement system can be taught using self-paced training materials, sample performance objectives, and a trained facilitator to answer questions and give feedback. While the first draft of the team's objectives can be created very early in the team-development process, the team needs to know how to refine the objectives as time passes and changes occur.

UPGRADING YOUR SYSTEM

You don't necessarily need to junk your present appraisal system and start anew in order to apply the above principles. You may be able to upgrade the one you've already got. Here's how to go about it:

1. *Review the system's objectives.* Does the system still fit the organization's business needs? What are the system's goals? How do executives, managers and workers rate the system in terms of usefulness, fairness and accuracy? Goals that aren't being met or low ratings of usefulness, fairness and accuracy may point to the need for a more extensive redesign.

2. *Decide the link to the pay system.* Do you want to pay for individual as well as team performance? What will be the relative weights of the two? How will the dollars be allocated across business units that perform at different levels? How much will pay decisions depend on the supervisor's judgment vs. a defined pay scale?

Instead of arbitrarily assigning weights to team and individual objectives, consider allowing the supervisor and employee to negotiate.

3. *Build the link to teams into the system.* If your appraisal form depends on written explanations of objectives and actual progress, leave space on it for team objectives. If categories are used (such as "quality" or "customer service"), add one or more for team performance and add a page that defines the team's common objectives.

Instead of arbitrarily assigning weights to team and individual objectives, consider allowing the supervisor and employee to negotiate and agree on the relative priorities of the different objectives. Define ways to gather feedback from multiple sources, including customers inside and outside the team.

4. *Create examples of team and individual objectives.* Nothing helps employees write useful performance objectives more than examples of good measures from actual company positions. Choose a successful team as a model and develop performance measures and objectives for the team and each individual member.

Consider including examples of 10 or 15 other jobs that are either difficult to measure or that turn up frequently throughout the company in similar or identical guises (secretary, supervisor, sales rep). Provide this collection of examples to everyone who creates performance objectives. Create a similar collection of end-of-year appraisal examples to improve the quality of the feedback given to the employees.

5. *Train everybody to use the system.* Create a job aid that provides step-by-step instructions for how to create performance measures. Write a self-paced module that explains how to do each step, and provides examples, work sheets and feedback. Teach local trainers to provide feedback and answer questions while the team is working through the self-paced training module.

6. *Evaluate and refine the system.* No appraisal system works perfectly the first time. Evaluate it to determine how well it is achieving its goals and where it needs to improve. Monitor employee and supervisor opinions to track the usual dip in satisfaction and ensure that the new system is indeed better than the previous one.

TEAM-FRIENDLY

Team-hostile appraisal systems are usually the result of poor design and a lack of effective measurement models. We can make appraisal systems more team-friendly by revising them to align organizational goals with team goals early in the team-development process. Deciding how pay will link to both individual and team performance will help us figure out the kinds of information we'll need to make these pay decisions.

Concentrating on verifiability rather than exclusively numeric measures allows us to set performance objectives for many more teams and individual team members. Providing examples and step-by-step instructions will help new and old teams create the tailored performance measures they'll need to communicate clear expectations and to provide themselves with lots of useful feedback.

Measuring team performance is difficult but not impossible. And it can pay off in better quality, shorter cycle times, and improved customer satisfaction. T

IN THIS ARTICLE
Self-Directed Teams, Peer Review
Performance Management and Appraisal

The Power of Peer Review

BY MARTIN L. RAMSAY AND HOWARD LEHTO

Peer reviews are a way for teams to support each member in improving both individual and organization performance. The team facilitator plays a crucial role.

Our organization was coming to the end of another peer-performance review session. A team of engineers had just reviewed a team member's performance. A veteran engineer known for his gruff outlook said, "I thought that peer reviews were a way for managers to shirk their duty. But I'm impressed. This has great potential."

What makes peer-performance reviews so powerful? In our case, the answer goes back to 1987, when Clark Material Handling Company—then headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky—faced a tough marketplace. CMH had closed two plants. At the same time, it was building a new factory in Lexington to produce electric forklift trucks.

The new factory would operate in a new way—through self-directed work teams. CMH's preemployment assessment center would focus on people's abilities to work in teams. Training programs would be designed to create group competencies. And a performance-review system would be developed to reinforce the competencies and other standards of excellence.

From the outset, a major goal was to move from supervisor-led performance reviews to peer-based performance reviews.

By 1992, that goal seemed feasible. Work teams were functioning well in the Lexington factory and in a newer plant in Danville, Kentucky. Team members were expected to manage their own work schedules, to engage in group problem solving, and to interact effectively with each other and other teams. To those ends, the company had provided training in interpersonal skills, effective meetings, problem solving, and business processes.

Now, the teams seemed mature enough to start conducting peer-performance appraisals. But first, they needed the appropriate training.

Advisory committees were established at each of the Kentucky plants and at corporate offices. The committees—composed of managers at each facility—were responsible for assessing their locations' training needs and for ensuring training delivery. Many of the identified training needs were technical; others were behavioral. One need was to correct and improve others' performance.

Getting started

The first order of business was to select a model for peer-performance reviews. In one model, teams could provide input into supervisors' reviews. An alternative was for the teams to conduct reviews without involving supervisors. The advisory committee at the Danville plant chose a model in which reviews are conducted both by an employee's work-team members and his or her supervisor. In many instances, employees' supervisors or managers are members of their work teams.

A facilitator would provide training to teams on conducting peer-based reviews, guide team members through the appraisal process, and facilitate the actual reviews.

Next, the plant's teams were trained in conducting an actual peer-performance appraisal. Managers insisted on being first to be reviewed by their peers. Plant manager David Rhodius said, "We can't expect other teams to submit to peer reviews if the management team doesn't."

Overall, the results of the trial run were positive. Managers gained an increased appreciation of their colleagues' jobs. Said one manager to another. "I had no idea that's what you did." Another manager pointed out that the team had a responsibility to help improve the performance of team members who got low ratings on their reviews. In effect, the team took ownership of its members' ratings and their individual improvement.

The managers decided to implement peer-performance reviews throughout the Danville plant. The Lexington plant followed suit. And a department at corporate headquarters also began implementing peer reviews.

The new system

The new appraisal system consists of two phases: review and feedback. During the review phase, the team—in the absence of the member being reviewed—discusses the teammate's performance, agrees on a rating, and produces a written review. In the feedback session, team members discuss the rating with the review subject and encourage him or her to respond. The facilitator participates in each phase.

Each work team receives training immediately before it is about to conduct its first peer-based review. When several people leave a team, the training is repeated for the new members. Most of the training focuses on the review phase, in which team members examine the criteria for rating their peers. Typically, team members are already familiar with giving and receiving feedback and with group dynamics, because of past work-team training in interpersonal and other relevant skills.

Some of the training takes the form of a simulated peer review. During training, a temporary employee agrees to be the review subject, to make the training as experiential as possible. Participants have the advantage of training with a "live" subject whom they know. Generally, temporary employees at CMH aren't reviewed on a regular basis. The training is thought of as an actual review that doesn't count. About 40 percent of CMH's workforce is made up of temporary employees, so finding review subjects for the training hasn't been a problem.

In the first step in the actual appraisal process, team members familiarize themselves with the company's 10 standards of excellence:

- quality of work
- job knowledge and skills
- work performance
- adaptability and flexibility
- customer relations
- safety and housekeeping
- dependability and reliability
- initiative
- stewardship
- interpersonal relations and teamwork.

Team members also look over the scoring system:

- 0—Needs much improvement. Performance does not meet requirements: substantial progress is needed.
- 1—Needs improvement. Performance often does not meet requirements: visible room for improvement exists.
- 2—Good and competent. Performance normally meets basic requirements and may exceed expected levels in some cases.
- 3—Highly effective. Performance usually exceeds requirements and may far exceed expected levels in some areas.
- 4—Outstanding. Performance consistently far exceeds requirements and is visibly superior to that of most others.

> ONE PERSON GAVE A TEAMMATE A LOW RATING BECAUSE HE "DIDN'T LIKE THE S.O.B." THE RATING WAS RAISED

The maximum total possible is 40 points. At this stage, team members generally initiate a discussion about expectations. What are the team's expectations of the team member being reviewed? What are the team's expectations of itself? In terms of the peer review, each team member has to have the same expectations of others and him- or herself. Otherwise, the 10 standards of excellence aren't equitable. Through the actual appraisal process, the expectations are communicated in specific terms to the review subject and to the team.

Some team members may realize that they aren't knowledgeable about each other's jobs. That is especially true among employees with diverse responsibilities. The facilitator instructs any team member who is unsure about a review subject's job to give average ratings at first, and then to adjust the ratings as other team members provide observations and documentation.

A critical aspect of the peer-review process is observable behavior. The facilitator's toughest task is to make team members understand that evaluations must be based on actual observations. Opinions and feelings don't count. Peer reviews can't turn into team hugs or opportunities for revenge.

Consider the case of a team member who gave one of his teammates a total rating of 10 (out of a possible 40) because he "didn't like the S.O.B." The facilitator asked for observable behavior to support the rating, and the rater couldn't provide it. The rating was raised. And the rater learned that figures have to be backed by facts.

The observations must be made throughout the 12 months before the review, to eliminate the "halo effect"—the tendency to allow an employee's recent behavior to color a rater's opinion of the employee's actions over a longer period. In addition, ratings should be based on behavior that is the norm, not the exception—whether the behavior is good or bad.

Team members are required to provide specific information on a peer's performance. "She does good work" or "He lets us down a lot" is not an acceptable statement to support a rating. Team members must give actual examples or statistics—such as, "Quality assurance has logged only two defects against her all year," or "He has been absent 12 days this year."

People may find that managers on the team have more specific input than do other members. For example, an engineering manager, who asked to be last to give a rating, gave the review subject a much lower

Points for the Facilitator/ Trainer

Here are several important factors in building an effective, team-based peer-performance review system:

- Select and review a model of a peer-performance review system.
- Review your organization's standards of excellence.
- Review the rating system and criteria for each score.
- Establish expectations for teams as a whole and for each member.
- Ensure that ratings are based on observable behavior.
- Define good documentation and how to produce it.
- Help participants overcome a lack of knowledge about other team members' jobs.
- Incorporate supervisors' and managers' input as peer input.
- Determine the meaning of consensus and ways to achieve it.
- Commit to "no surprises." Require team members to be continuously supportive of each other.

score than had nonmanagerial team members. In discussing the disparity, the team found that the manager had sole access to data that indicated the employee wasn't performing well. In response to the manager's documentation, the team lowered its rating. In the process, team members became aware of the manager's expectations and realized that their teammate needed their help to improve.

One role of the facilitator is to help team members reach consensus. Despite training in that area, teams can have difficulty agreeing on the rating given to a team member. Sometimes, team members will quibble over tenths of a point, even when the final total score won't be affected. The facilitator shows the team that consensus means coming to a decision each member can support, even when the final decision may not be everyone's first choice. What is important is that each team member has a sufficient opportunity to influence the final outcome.

Last, the facilitator emphasizes that there should be no surprises during a review. Teams shouldn't collect negative data all year and then dump criticism on an employee at review time. Instead, team members have a responsibility to help each other perform well, once they know the performance expectations. Unfortunately, some people resort to finger pointing in peer reviews. Instead of accusing the review subject, the team should examine its own failure to communicate expectations clearly and to help team members meet goals.

Peer reviews in action

Once teams are trained in conducting peer reviews, the actual reviews can begin, typically around the yearly anniversary of an employee's first day on the job.

The employee prepares documentation on his or her performance during the past year, to remind the team of strengths and accomplishments. The employee may present the documentation to the team before the review. Many employees prefer to hand over the documentation and leave, letting it speak for itself. The team compares the employee's own documentation with the company's standards of excellence. Team members discuss and agree on a rating for the employee on each standard. One member records salient comments. The entire process can take from 90 minutes to four hours.

After the review session, the recorder's notes are transcribed to produce a written review. Team members look over the notes, make corrections, and sign the review. That can take up to a week. Then team members ask their teammate to join them for the feedback session.

During feedback, the team tries to make the team member feel comfortable. It doesn't force the review subject to sit at the head of the table or across from the rest of the group. A designated team member reads the comments and rating for each standard. Team members encourage their teammate to ask for clarification, and they frequently interject to explain the team's thinking on each rating.

Despite the best intentions, feedback sessions can be difficult. But they also can clarify the team's performance expectations and lead greater commitment from team r bers to help each other work be

In one instance, a team disi one member's housekeeping h at his workstation on the asse line. The team's expectation was the area should be kept neat. Ye sloppy employee received a hig ing on productivity. The team him that it admired his ability to plete tasks efficiently, but it exp him to keep his work area tidy.

A team member said, "I know don't like the criticism, but it's We all agree. You'll have to work 15 minutes before the e the shift to clean up. Or, we'll down the assembly line to help

In such situations, the facilit job is critical. If he or she has tered a supportive atmosphere ensured that review comment based on observable behavio review subject can benefit from ative feedback, rather than fe attacked.

"There are no negatives i feedback session," says one fa tor. "There are only opportuniti improve."

Interestingly, teams often hav ficulty evaluating new emplo who are first reviewed afte

"I KNOW YOU DO
LIKE THE CRITICIS
BUT IT'S TRUE.
WE ALL AGREE"

months on the job. New employe CMH tend to be self-motivated players, due mainly to a highly tive preemployment assessmen tem. Consequently, teams tend t new employees as "highly effec based largely on the new emplo apparent eagerness to learn. But employees aren't likely to exceeded expectations by the ti their first reviews. It falls to the tator to help team members re that high ratings may not be appr ate for new employees.

Many of CMH's managers.

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Three Keys to Peer Review

- Screen job applicants for team compatibility and desire to improve.
- Support a team culture, which includes the belief that everyone wants to improve, the commitment of teams to helping members improve, and management's support of self-directed teams.
- Ensure that teams are ready for peer reviews, by doing extensive training in team skills and by allowing teams the time to develop.

showed their commitment to peer reviews early by being "guinea pigs." now serve as facilitators. The teams' performance expectations have become part of the company's culture. Careful implementation of the reviews has created a work environment that is supportive but demanding of high performance. And team expectations are continuously improving. This year's expectations won't be good enough next year. Employees who continue to perform at the same levels can expect to see their ratings erode.

As an offshoot of the new system, CMH decided to let the Kentucky plants produce a product that previously was being built overseas. The key factors in that decision were the teams' productivity, skills, and dedication to quality.

At the last review session with the engineering team, the manager said, "All of my people are happy, getting along, and coming up with ideas. I don't know what happened, but I like it." ■

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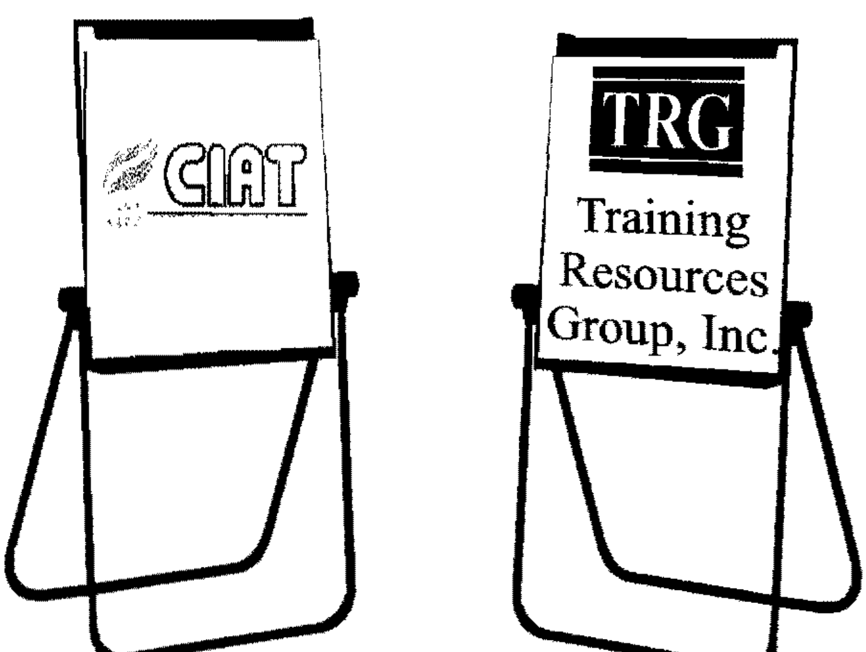
SKILLS TRAINING COURSE

Strengthening Team Management

Personal Learning Journal



Personal Learning Journal

This course is an opportunity for you to learn about leadership, management, change, and most of all about yourself. Throughout the week we will be giving you time to reflect on your own personal learning and how you can apply the course materials to your work situation.

This journal has been designed to give you a way of capturing the insights you are gaining about yourself as a leader and manager; the feedback you get from others; and the new ideas and strategies you discover about how to be an effective leader and manager in CIAT.

We have structured questions that will focus your thoughts on the course content, and we have included a number of blank pages in the journal for your use if you want to take some quiet time at the end of each day to reflect on what you have learned.

Use this journal in whatever way will enhance your learning this week and enjoy getting to know yourself better.

Your Experience as a Leader/Manager

Think for a moment about the last couple of weeks as you have gone about your work in the Center or wherever you were. How would you describe your experience.

What's it like to work in your organization?

What are your thoughts and feelings as you go through the day?

Building a Learning Community

If these five days are to go extraordinarily well, what do the...

TRAINERS need to do?

PARTICIPANTS need to do?

Impact of Change

1. After our conversations on the impact of change, what do you want to remember?

2. Specifically, what actions could you take to help others with the transitions through change?

Personal Learning Goals for Leadership and Managerial Effectiveness

1. Looking over your inventory graphs, what are the areas of your greatest strength?

2. Which area(s) did you want to focus on improving?

3. This week will be a chance for you to practice new skills, take some risks with different behaviors and receive feedback on your participation and contribution to team work and the course. With this in mind what is one personal learning goal to which you are committing yourself this week?

4. Who, in the course, could you enlist to support you in your learning goal?

Conversations with Others: Thanks for the Inventory

People who completed your inventories really invested time, energy, and trust in you. Hopefully you've gained some new insights about your self-perception and others perception of you as a leader and manager.

When you return they will be interested and possibly anxious about your reactions and what you learned. So you need to be thoughtful and reciprocate their goodwill by doing the following:

* show appreciation for their help in learning about your effectiveness
* share overall patterns and tell how the information was helpful to you
* don't ask for explanations like "why did you give me a 2 on this one"
* talk about the messages you took from the inventories "I'm doing well in these areas and can improve in these areas...and am curious to know more about how you see me......

Now think about and plan the conversations you want to have with people when you return.

1. Who do you want to talk with? Alone or in a group?

2. What are the key messages you want to communicate to them?

3. What specifically did you learn from the information and what are you planning to do as a result of this learning?

Effective Facilitation Skills

Using the range of facilitation skills you have just practiced will enable you to become a very effective listener. As Stephen Covey said in his book, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, "First, seek to understand".

Think about our facilitation practice rounds and answer the following:

1. Which of the facilitation skills is easiest for you? Paraphrasing, Summarizing, Asking Questions, or Encouraging?

2. Which of these skills are you the least comfortable with or use the least?

3. What did you learn as you watched others facilitate the discussions?

4. Specifically what do you want to practice during this week?

Giving Feedback

In our discussions we said that feedback is giving someone information about her/his behavior and its impact on you -- both positive and negative.

The way to give feedback is to:

1. Describe action/behavior -- what the person did (i.e. "When you ignored my idea...")
2. Tell the impact this had on you -- how it made you feel (i.e."It made me feel excluded...")
3. Describe the result/consequence of the behavior and its impact (i.e. "I am hesitant to share my ideas and thoughts.")

Using these guidelines prepare a positive feedback message you will give someone in the course. Look around the room and identify a person to whom you could give positive feedback. Write your feedback to her in the spaces below.

What did he/she do?

How did you feel when he/she did it?

What was the result or consequence of his/her action?

Now, find the time to share this feedback with the person before the end of the day tomorrow.

After you have given the feedback answer the following:

1. How did you feel giving the feedback? Afterwards?

2. What was the reaction of the person to whom you gave the feedback?

(continue on next page) ☞

Asking for Feedback

Lastly, think about how your own behavior since the beginning of this course. Select and write down something about which you would like more information. Pick two people from whom you will seek feedback before the end of the course.

Area in which I would like to receive feedback:

People I'm Going to Ask:

1.

2.

After receiving the feedback answer the following:

1. What were your thoughts and feelings while receiving the feedback?

2. What was the message you received?

Team Challenges

Think about your participation in the Blind Pentagon and answer the following:

1. What are your thoughts and feelings concerning your participation and contribution to the team's performance?

2. What did you do that you felt good about?

3. What do you wish you had done (but didn't) during the activity?

4. What prevented you from doing whatever you wrote under #3?

Review your inventory results under Sustaining Team Performance. Then consider what you've written above regarding your participation today and complete the following questions:

1. What are your strengths?

2. Where could you improve?

3. What do you want to do differently or practice tomorrow and during the rest of the course?

Reflecting on Team Challenges

1. What do you see as your major contributions to today's challenges and how do you feel about them?

2. What have you learned about what it takes to be a productive team?

3. What parallels can you draw from these experiences to your team situations at the Center?

4. Identify two actions you want to take to improve your team's performance back at work?

Reflection on Collaboratively Managing Conflict

1.. What do you like and dislike about using the Collaborative Model for Managing Conflict?

2.. What was most difficult about using the model?

3. As you think about the discussions, practice and models and skills covered, what will you do differently regarding conflicts you face back at the office?

Team Performance and Feedback

What do you want to remember for the next time you have to give or participate in giving team performance feedback?

Strategic Influencing

Using the descriptions of the different categories, identify several key individuals in your center/system/external organizations who have a "stake" in the outcomes of your work. Concentrate on people who can potentially support or block your achievements. Write their names in the appropriate category.

Allies

Opponents

Bedfellows

Fence sitters

Adversaries

Practicing Strategic Influencing

Individually, review your strategic influencing inventory and pick one person from one of the categories: someone you are curious about, someone you find difficult to deal with, or someone with whom you want to improve or change the relationship.

Think about outstanding issues and particularly your own "vision" of your work situation.

Consider the category in which you placed this person and review skills for Strategic Influencing. Pay particular attention to the issues of trust and agreement.

Plan a conversation with this person.

You have 10 minutes.

1. Who is this person?

2. How did you categorize the person?

❒ Ally ❒ Opponent ❒ Bedfellow ❒ Fence sitter ❒ Adversary

3. What is your desired outcome from the conversation?

4. How will you approach it? How will you say it? What will you ask the other person?

Reflections on Strategic Influencing

After practicing influencing skills and watching others, what stands out for you as important to remember?

Introduction to Creating a Development and Application Plan

Before creating your Development and Application Plan (DAP) review the following:

- ✓ journal entries you have made throughout the course.
- ✓ course readings and conversations you have had.
- ✓ feedback you received during the course and the feedback you received from others on the inventories.
- ✓ your strengths and areas needing improvement.

With this in mind complete the next pages.

Development and Application Plan (DAP)

Step One Specific Skill (s) I Want To Apply	**Step Two** Action Plan & "Progress Measures"	**Step Three** Coaching / Support From Others	**Step Four** Time Frame
	Actions I will take:		
Potential Obstacles	Things I want to read:		

Development and Application Plan (DAP)

Step One **Specific Skill (s) I Want To Apply**	**Step Two** **Action Plan & "Progress Measures"**	**Step Three** **Coaching / Support From Others**	**Step Four** **Time Frame**
	Actions I will take:		
Potential Obstacles	Things I want to read:		

Development and Application Plan (DAP)

Step One **Specific Skill (s)** **I Want To Apply**	**Step Two** **Action Plan &** **"Progress Measures"**	**Step Three** **Coaching /** **Support** **From Others**	**Step Four** **Time Frame**
	Actions I will take:		
Potential Obstacles	Things I want to read:		

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes

Personal Notes