Working Together:

Personal Skills for Productive Teams

Foreword

Developing leadership and team skills is an important part of one's college education. Learning is enhanced by practicing and applying skills through a team experience. While many structured team experiences occur outside of the class, the role of teams in collaborative learning in the classroom is being increasingly recognized and utilized at the University of Michigan.

Although many educational institutions are recognizing the value of team learning, this team building manual represents a pioneering attempt to systematically establish such learning across the University of Michigan. The Michigan Team System is designed to provide a uniform, (nearly) risk-free method to guide you in learning to be a productive member of an effective team. In addition to the introduction to the Michigan Team System, this manual contains four units on personal skills, which will help you enrich your growth as well as your collaborative learning experience.

Michigan Leadership Initiatives' vision to infuse leadership education throughout a student's experience, combined with the efforts already underway in the College of Engineering, led to the conceptualization and design of this manual. The College of Engineering has been at the forefront of Michigan's efforts to provide meaningful materials for students to learn about and gain experience through teams in class.

Consider this the first draft of the team building manual. Your feedback, comments, suggestions and ideas will greatly improve future versions and are welcomed.

This team building manual is the result of a campus-wide collaboration and the hard work of a dedicated team to provide materials for students to enhance their knowledge and experience in working with teams. The members of the "Summer Team" included: Pyrra Alnot, Halima Cherif, Andy Crawford, Jack Fishstrom, Katie Foley, Rod Johnson, Jessica Kastran, Tina Marzo, Deb Moriarty, Sri Mukherjee, Melita Pope Mitchell, John Naheedy, Melissa Peet, Mike Robison, Neha Shah, and Deanne Taylor.

We encourage students to participate actively in this pioneering work: challenge yourself and each other with these materials, and have fun in the process. The time you take now to read your team building manual will be repaid many times over as you become a successful, high-performing person in all your academic, professional, and social endeavors.

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Introduction

The Michigan Team System

Effective teamwork can generate some of the most enriching experiences of your life: it enables you to become a stronger learner, a more productive worker, and a better citizen. Not surprisingly, academic institutions are increasingly encouraging collaborative learning strategies. At the University of Michigan, you will have the opportunity to participate in various kinds of teamwork, both in and out of class.

When you are assigned to a team for a class project, you may want to jump in and start getting the project done. It is important to realize, however, that working in teams involves a set of skills and knowledge separate from the academic field within which you are doing teamwork. You can master all the theories, formulas, and techniques of your particular course but still have a hard time getting your teamwork completed in a productive manner. Thus, you need to devote additional time to the teamwork component, learning about it and practicing it. In other instances, the course material may not come to you as easily as you would like, and you have a good chance that the team experience will help bring that material into focus. Research demonstrates that learning to work together in groups is not only valuable for your future success working on professional teams, but also useful in helping you master your field, through the stimulation and encouragement that comes when individuals put their heads together to attack a problem or create a product.

This team building manual is intended to help you get started with team work and to enable you to master a set of personal skills that you can bring to bear in any teamwork situation. The introduction, which elaborates on the Michigan Team System (MTS), gives you a set of guidelines to facilitate team success. This system provides a model for team development, not a definitive or universally accepted one, but one that will prove useful for your team. The body of the manual aims at guiding you in developing personal skills that will help you contribute effectively to your team.

You will find these skills grouped into four units. Unit One covers a wide range of knowledge and techniques that foster team building; Unit Two elaborates on effective collaboration skills — self-awareness, the ability to use multiple perspectives, and accountability — that foster respect for self and others; Unit Three discusses setting goals, being proactive, and time management, skills that maximize productivity; and Unit Four addresses interpersonal skills — sharing information, active listening, and feedback — that are crucial to working with others. As you read about the Michigan Team System in this introduction, you will be referred to particular skill areas: exploring the referenced skills will help you to achieve a level of productiveness in following the Michigan Team System Guidelines.

The Michigan Team System

The goal of the Michigan Team System is to ensure that every team at the University of Michigan has the same healthy approach to getting the work done. This system is easy to learn, accommodates all types of teams, and can be used again and again. Ideally, the Michigan Team System will be introduced to all University of Michigan students, so that as you move from class to class, and even major to major, you will be working with team members who are familiar with the same system.

Eight basic guidelines--all of which are introduced and explained below--constitute the common core of the Michigan Team System. These guidelines are not fancy or complicated: you won't find anything very controversial here. Rather, they are a set of common-sense suggestions and operating conditions for creating and maintaining a healthy, well-functioning team. Thus, you might approach the guidelines as checkpoints for team health. In order to enhance your team's effectiveness, you also need to work on the companion skills that are suggested in parentheses alongside each guideline, and that are elaborated on in the four following units of this team building manual.

THE MTS GUIDELINES

1. Team members will take the time to get to know one another and will include all members in activities.

When you begin to work on a team, each member of that new team is potentially a new friend. Naturally, this is an opportunity to get to know them and see if you can strike up a friendship. At a minimum, you will need to work together in a collegial manner, so you will need to know each others' names, phone numbers, study time preferences, and so on. Furthermore, you have a lot of work to do together, so you will want to ensure that each member does his/her share. That's important to all members who depend on one another; it's also fair to the member getting an opportunity to do a share of work—that's the only way to learn and get something out of the class. Some individuals may be more passive than others and may not pipe up when tasks are being divvied up. The team's meeting facilitators and assertive students have to ensure that all students, even the reticent and passive ones, come to play an active role in the team's success.

(Related skills: self-awareness, sharing information, active listening, team building, building trust)

2. Meetings will have assigned facilitators, written agendas, and notes that include action steps.

Meetings are necessary if a group of people need to organize, communicate, and work together. They have been the glue that's held professional organizations together for decades. Today, students working in teams are much more similar to professionals working on a long-term business project than solitary scholars sitting in a wood-paneled library reading dusty books. Running a meeting requires an understanding of the basic elements that make it effective: an assigned facilitator, a written agenda, and minutes/notes that include action steps. This basic meeting approach should become habit each time you start up with a new team here at the University of Michigan.

(Related skills: time management, team building, effective meetings)

3. Teams will agree on a written purpose and set of group goals.

A team needs to know its final destination just as someone taking a road trip usually has a final destination, so that a route can be charted. A written purpose and set of group goals can keep the team on task, help the team focus, and give the team an indication when they have accomplished what they set out to do so they can celebrate and disband. If members are not certain of the purpose and goals of the team, efforts may be wasted on non-essential tasks, people may flounder for days uncertain as to what to do, and confusion may reign near project end when a smooth completion would be preferred.

(Related skills: setting goals, ability to view ideas from multiple perspectives)

4. Teams will establish norms of behavior among members and then follow these norms.

A team will never be a single organism, with one heart and one mind. By definition, it is a conglomerate made up of two or more individuals, each with his/her own style, habits, and preferences. Someone may like to chew gum when she's thinking; someone else may always like to have a transistor radio playing the top 40. In order to be productive when you come together, you have to agree upon a set of norms of behavior that are acceptable to everyone and conducive to productive work.
(Related skill: team building)

5. Project teams will create an action plan to achieve group goals that identifies tasks, assigns roles to members, and establishes timelines for completion.

This part of the team building phase is detail-oriented. Once you've initially identified tasks and the person responsible for its completion, and developed a time line for evenly spreading out the workload over the full project time period, no one person should get stuck with an excessive burden of work and no one person should be short of time. The team should be able to look over the entire list of assigned tasks and responsible persons, and see that work is divided evenly, or at least appropriately, among members.
(Relative skills: time management, accountability, setting goals)

6. Teams will encourage controversy in solving problems, will work at resolving conflict, and will try to make decisions by consensus.

Inevitably, in every team situation, internal problems will arise. You may experience a heated argument at a team meeting; or the problem may be lying just below the surface, such as when one person isn't really pulling his fair share of the load but no one has yet bothered to bring it up in conversation. Either way, you have to solve these problems and move forward so they don't fester and blow up into an uncomfortable situation that brings team progress to a complete halt. Conflicts do not typically go away or solve themselves; usually some active measures must be taken by the team to turn conflict into productive controversy and consensus. Controversy is a difference in opinions that can help a group of people see an issue from multiple perspectives. When issues are complex, a multiple perspective approach may yield the overall best answer, one that satisfies the most stakeholders. The team with controversy simply has to recognize it as such and reach consensus as to how to best take advantage of their broad, and seemingly divergent, approaches to the subject.
(Related skills: sharing information, active listening, feedback, ability to view ideas from multiple perspectives, self-awareness, accountability, proactivity, building trust)

7. Teams will periodically assess the quality of the team's process and progress towards group goals. Behavior will be changed or modified when problems are identified.

You need to evaluate your team process and progress throughout the project life. Even if the team seems to be progressing smashingly, you should assess on occasion to ensure no unspoken problems are present. At times, assessments can motivate you further by revealing team strengths you hadn't formally acknowledged. If team difficulties come out in the assessment, corrective measures may be in order. Difficulties can range from being just a bit behind schedule and requiring some makeup effort to significant problems or disputes that are preventing progress or creating inequities among individuals. The assessment is critical to identifying and correcting problems while you still can do something about them and salvage the project. Subsequent sections of this team building manual will address how you and your team members can assess yourselves in various ways and using various tools in order to maximize your team's productivity.
(Related skills: self-awareness, feedback, time management, setting goals, proactivity)

8. Group guidelines can be changed with the consensus of the team.

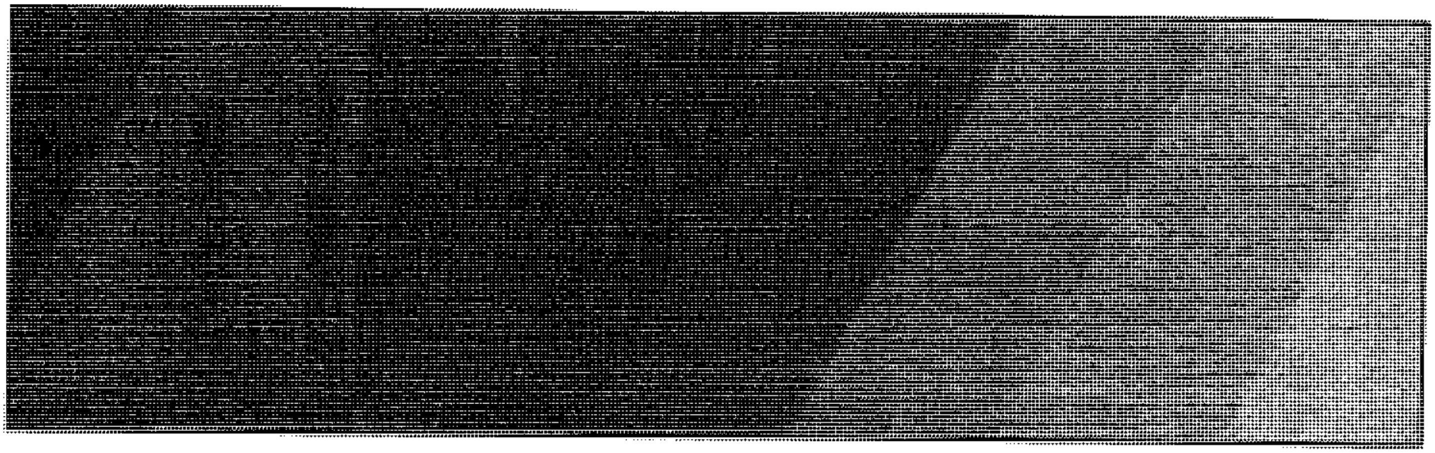
All teams are unique. A trick that works for one may be a trial for another. Although all of the MTS guidelines are non-controversial, you should not feel constrained by them if some other approach would be more effective in making your team excel. If you can agree that the team can follow innovative guidelines to operate to everyone's satisfaction, follow a plan, and attain your overall goals, go ahead and do so. The Michigan Team System acknowledges that on any given team, an individual or group of individuals may be particularly advanced or creative when it comes to team building. If a team recognizes this within itself, the members should follow the momentum and go beyond the MTS basic guidelines. But this may only apply to a small number of teams.
(Related skills: sharing information, self-awareness, proactivity, active listening)

Working in teams

Team building

Effective meetings

Building trust



A successful team is not guaranteed by simply having team members who possess talent, skill, or even great motivation and interest. Productive and effective teams develop through conscious efforts that are aimed at facilitating team members in learning how to work together. If Lloyd Carr, Michigan's Football Coach, had only the top high school recruits, but they never practiced together, the team could not win a national championship. "Team Building" is a set of principles, guidelines, and actions that we follow in order to create the best possible team experiences. Once an effective team is created and nurtured, the team's end products will be outstanding and the team experience will be satisfying, effective, and fun!

This unit has three sections. The first outlines several important principles of team building: stages of team development, various roles and behaviors that occur in teams, differences between conflict and controversy, and the elements of effective teams. Although each of these principles will be explained in the pages that follow, knowledge of them is not enough. These principles must be integrated into the team experience through participation in activities that follow the text. The benefits of participating in these activities are immeasurable. The second section explains effective meetings and the third section is focused on building trust. Creativity, collaboration, trusting relationships, and productive results are just some of the rewards of an effective team building experience. Or, as was the case for Michigan's 1997–1998 Football Team, a national championship!

Team building

When you come together as a team to perform a task or achieve a goal, you may assume that you will be able to work together well automatically. However, like most relationships, team relationships must be built and nurtured if they are to be successful. Successful teams make a conscious effort to facilitate effective team development and participation. This effort is what we will call *team building*.

In the team building process, you first assess the strengths of and ways to improve a team, and then prepare and implement specific plans to increase the effectiveness of the team. Going through this process develops a sense of membership and accountability among all team members. Effective teams commonly have certain characteristics, stages of development, and behaviors that enhance team interactions. In this section, you will learn about some factors that can help make your team experiences productive and enjoyable.

HOW TO BUILD EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Even though all teams function differently, there are some common characteristics of successful, effective, and satisfying teams. You should strive to make sure that your team has these characteristics. Some of these include:

1. A clear, challenging goal
2. Clear roles and responsibilities for everyone
3. Reasonable and efficient operating procedures
4. Constructive interpersonal relationships
5. Active reinforcement systems
6. Constructive external relationships

(adapted from Huszczo, 1996).

1. A clear, challenging goal

A goal is often given, at least in its broad outlines, to the team by an outside source (for example a teacher or manager), but it's the team's responsibility to define the goal in their own terms. How you do this can be a key factor in your success.

There are a few well-known characteristics of good goals. The goal must first of all be clear, so that each member understands why they are a team and what their purpose is. This must be the collaborative effort of all members, letting the team feel more committed to the project and the team as a whole. Second, it should be challenging: too easy and team members never see it as worth any real commitment; too difficult and team members tend to give up or give it some minimum effort, just enough to get by. For your team to really perform, you must see your task as one that's both possible and worth doing, one that makes you feel as if you've achieved something at the end. Finally, there has to be some measure of performance. There may be pressure to meet some extrinsic target (such as getting an "A" in a class); there may be real-world consequences for your project (people are waiting for your design for a water-filtration device); or there may be the pure "intrinsic" motivation of living up to your own standards or your team's.

2. Clear roles and responsibilities

You need to be able to trust your teammates and count on their commitment to the task. Few things are worse than giving your all to a project and then seeing it fail because a teammate failed to hold up his or her end of the job. To make sure this doesn't happen, team members need to know where they fit into the team and what their responsibilities are. All members should participate in the team's overall task, but each member has different talents and interests, and the team needs to work to establish a role for all members early in the development stage. When this happens, members will feel more accountable, and trust will become a strong force within the group.

3. Reasonable and efficient operating procedures

Teams need to know how things will be working, and these procedures must be discussed and agreed upon by all members of the team early in the development stages. Work teams need some structure as they approach tasks, such as running meetings, making decisions, generating plans, evaluating progress, etc. A good place to start in establishing this structure is the Michigan Team System Guidelines, as outlined in the Introduction to this manual.

4. Constructive interpersonal relationships

While team members do not need to be best friends for a team to be effective, the team will be much less effective if members cannot interact well. Some elements of "good" relationships that you can work to achieve are trust, mutual respect, empathy, open and honest communication, efforts to resolve controversy constructively, and a sense of fairness. Any team is more likely to be successful if all members desire good relationships with each other and try to make it feel like a team.

5. Active reinforcement systems

Individuals need to recognize how their actions contribute, and they need to be recognized for their contributions to the team. The team as a whole is responsible for making sure that adequate evaluation and reward systems are in place. Even little things like saying "thank you" can make people feel appreciated for the work they have done. Such positive feedback is necessary for fulfillment of responsibilities and positive team behaviors.

6. Constructive external relationships

Effective teams must also build good relationships with other teams and key people in the organization or class who are not members of their team. Teams need help from many other people to be successful— technicians, managers, experts, and peers, or anyone with ideas or skills that they might need. You should look for help or support to your teachers, classmates, friends and others.

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

All teams go through a development process. This process can be an emotional roller coaster of excitement, boredom, exhilaration, frustration and panic. Throughout, however, there is a steady process of team members learning about what it takes for them to function as a team, and this process is necessary for a team to develop to the fullest.

A number of researchers have tried to develop models of how effective teams develop (and, as a corollary, how teams can fail). One of the best known describes the process as happening in five stages, known as **forming, storming, norming, performing** and **adjourning**. This model is rather generalized: not all teams exhibit exactly this sequence, so don't be alarmed if your team deviates from the program. This model can serve as a useful yardstick and may give you some insight into what is happening in your own team.

Stage 1: Forming

In this stage, team members are getting to know each other. We are usually polite and reserved in our speaking and have a strong desire to be accepted by the group. Feelings of excitement, anticipation, and optimism are common. We seldom voice our opinions, and personal agenda items are kept hidden. The team may accomplish very little actual project work because of the time it takes to get oriented, but this is normal. You've most likely experienced this stage many times—in a new class, club, team, or job.

During this stage your team can do several important things to lay the foundation for later team development. These include:

1. Making efforts to get to know each other
2. Becoming familiar with each other's strengths and interests
3. Discussing your expectations for team and individual work

Getting to know your team members and starting to develop trust in each other is critical to the success of the team. Teams that fail to do this almost always pay a price later in loss of efficiency, in conflict, and in bad feeling. Therefore, anything that helps the team members get acquainted is a wise investment of time and will benefit your team in later stages, and particularly during times of conflict. Even taking the time to talk about other

TRY THIS:
Team exercises for the forming stage

- Pair up with a member of your team and interview each other. Decide in advance what you would like to know about each other. Then, introduce your partner to the rest of the team.
- As a team, set aside some time to discuss your expectations of each other. What kinds of interactions do you expect to have with your fellow team members? What do you hope to accomplish as a team? What do you foresee as your contribution to the team?
- As a team, review the Michigan Team System guidelines in the introduction to this manual.

classes or lives before starting the team's "work" will help. Knowing and appreciating the different skills that individual team members bring to the team will lay the foundation for future work, as will discussing and clarifying your expectations.

As your team goes through the forming stage, you may find it helpful to read the **self-awareness** and **multiple perspectives** sections later in this manual, and to do exercises that develop your capacities in these two areas. These sections will help you to better articulate your own assets, and to develop an appreciation for the diverse experiences and perspectives that your team members will bring to your task.

Stage 2: Storming

This second stage is usually considered the most difficult in a team's development. Team members are still new to the team process, but there are decisions to be made and expectations to be met, and doing this smoothly may still be beyond the team's capabilities. Getting through this can lead to defensiveness, a new (and sometimes uncomfortable) awareness of personal differences, tension, conflict, competition, and risk taking. You may find yourself taking sides, forming cliques, or jockeying for position within the team. You may also find that the team's sense of politeness and need for acceptance give way as members voice commitment to their own opinions. Team members engage in self-oriented behaviors rather than cooperating, trusting, and working with other team members. As a result, some team members will withdraw from team activities, while others will attempt to dominate the team. All of these emotions can be poisonous to a growing team if unchecked.

TRY THIS:
Team exercises for the storming stage

- As a team, brainstorm responses to "Our Mission is…" Generate several responses to this statement. After ideas have been generated, the team creates their mission statement. Once this mission statement is written, the team then creates specific goals for how their mission will be accomplished.
- As a team, develop a list of behaviors, "ground rules" or "process rules" for how your team will interact with each other. Read and use the Michigan Team System as a beginning to this discussion. (For example, "We will actively respect and honor all members' views and opinions; we will resolve conflicts and disputes directly with team member" etc.)
- As a team, develop an agreement for how meetings will proceed. Use the Effective Meetings section of the manual as a starting point. Generate clear expectations for how meetings will proceed (For example, "We will start meetings on time; we will follow an agenda" etc.)

Processes that will help team members get through this stage including:

1. Develop a Team Mission and team goals
2. Establishing ground rules for team interactions
3. Discussing the roles and behaviors that facilitate effective team development

Although the high level of competition and conflict can be uncomfortable, it is often accompanied by an outpouring of project visions, hopes, ideas, and approaches that will serve the team well in later stages. Even if many of these ideas are discarded, they represent the team's beginning to really explore the problems facing them. And although much of the chaos and conflict can be attributed to the team's lack of experience working together and lack of effective processes and procedures, the passion invested is a good thing if it comes from commitment to the project.

Many teams get "stuck" at this difficult stage, but storming is a natural and necessary process. Groups that don't undergo it may find themselves to be pseudo-teams, made up of pleasant but essentially separate individuals, without the synergy and excitement that comes from really functioning as a team. So recognizing the storming stage for what it is can allow you to consciously lay the groundwork for meaningful relationships and effective performance. Your main concern in this stage, then, should be using it to work out ground rules for behavior and adequate expectations for working together, so that you can move through the storming stage into the norming stage.

There are several tools for accomplishing this. It may helpful for your team to read and do the individual exercises in the **Sharing Information, Active Listening**, and **Setting Goals** sections of this manual. These sections will help prepare you to better participate in the process of developing a team mission, team goals, and in dealing with controversy productively. A team mission statement and set of goals can be a useful tool for getting team members to focus on issues that are greater than individual concerns or power struggles. As you thoroughly develop the team mission statement and become committed to team goals, you get a sense of the roles and responsibilities that are required to accomplish them. You can work on resolving conflict over power and authority issues by making sure that all team members' contributions are equally heard and that members feel like their contributions are being considered.

Stage 3: Norming

As your team emerges from the storming stage, it should reach agreement on some basic operating preferences. Not much project-specific work will get done until you settle on some general procedures and plans for meeting, communicating, delegating tasks, dividing the work, reporting results, and so on, and until people start to feel comfortable with their contributions and responsibilities. As you begin working in this emerging team style, your team has entered the norming stage. The norming stage is a time when your team "settles in" and focuses on the tasks at hand. Encouragement and acknowledgment of individual and team successes will bring clarity and commitment to the team action plan. Your team's identity is also strengthened through reviewing team goals and norms to make sure that the team as a whole is on the right track.

In this stage, team members develop a higher level of trust in one another, and this encourages a more collaborative attitude as the team begins to realize the benefits of working together. This collaborative attitude allows members to engage in more constructive team behaviors— active listening, effectively sharing information, feedback, and conflict management. Ideally, an environment will develop that allows all team members to contribute equally and feel a commitment to both the team goals and their own roles and responsibilities.

Up to this point, most of your energy has gone into the process of developing as a team; your team is probably just beginning to be very productive on the *task* level, and becoming more focused directly on project goals and tasks. It is helpful for all of you to formally agree on the tasks through an action plan or operating agreement. The more operating procedures and norms that can be agreed upon up front, the more prepared a team will be for unexpected events and setbacks that occur in the future. The unexpected inevitably happens, and a team can plan for emergency events, problem resolution, and other complications.

TRY THIS:
Team exercises for the norming stage:

- As a team, spend some time acknowledging each team member's contributions thus far. What has each team member brought to the process? Discuss this as a group.
- Create an action plan. Translate the team mission statement and team goals into a series of specific tasks, to be done over time. Decide how those specific tasks will be carried out. Be very clear about who is going to do what, and when it will be accomplished. Make sure that all team members are in full agreement of the action plan and then present it to your instructor for feedback.

Important team processes for this stage include the following:

1. Encouraging each other by acknowledging individual team members strengths and contributions to date
2. Acknowledging and assessing team progress
3. Transforming team norms and goals into specific roles, responsibilities, and individual tasks through an action plan.

Stage 4: Performing

From norming, teams eventually progress to the fourth stage of team development, performing. In the performing stage, a team reaches its stride. The team's functioning in this stage evidently benefits from the preceding preliminary team building: creative plans and goals are in place, members are playing positive roles, norms are guiding day-to-day activities, and members are now doing their individual best on their assigned tasks to contribute to achieving the team's overall goal. This is performing. No longer are preliminary team building tasks the focus issues at meetings; rather, you are talking about the research, readings, reporting, and data that will contribute to a successful project. The team building structure is secondary as the procedures become natural. Your real success now is in the technical work you're doing, not the team development work.

At this point, the team has reached maturity, allowing it to solve problems and react to changes quickly. Even the method for solving problems has evolved into a "consensus" form of decision making, with the team members practicing the ability to "agree to disagree" and "agree and commit." Relationships, expectations, roles, and processes become dependable and effective as team members feel a strong sense of loyalty, identity, and commitment. Your team's morale is extremely high, with a real sense of caring and appreciation for one another. The team becomes more confident in its abilities and often sets "stretch" goals for itself. In this stage, teams tend to achieve more than one would expect, and true synergy is realized.

TRY THIS:
Team exercises for the performing stage

- As a team, discuss the various roles and tasks that individual team members have fulfilled thus far. Are the team members comfortable with their roles thus far? Is there anything that they would like to change or modify? Are there any areas where team members would like help in meeting specific tasks?
- As a team, return to the action plan on a regular basis. Are the team mission and specific goals being fulfilled? Are specific tasks being accomplished in a timely manner? Is the team working together effectively? What, if any, modifications need to be made to the team action plan?

This is not to say that everything is completely smooth. Problems and disagreements do arise. When these differences become personal, bitter, frustrating, and time-wasting, a team is experiencing *conflict*. Although conflict is detrimental to your team's functioning, differences *can* be positive. This is *controversy*. (For more on the conflict/controversy distinction, see below.) Even with controversy, a team can form a highly effective work unit that is very committed to achieving team goals. The team's problem solving abilities are quick and effective. The team relies on several processes during this stage including:

1. Using and improving problem-solving skills
2. Encouraging and getting feedback from other team members
3. Assessing the various goals, roles, and responsibilities, and making changes wherever necessary

Stage 5: Adjourning

When your team has completed its goals and is disbanding it will pass through the adjourning stage. You may feel some sadness after having such a positive experience getting to know each other and working with the team. This can lead to some anxiety about separating from the team, making it difficult for team members to disengage and move on to their next challenges. Team members will typically develop very positive feelings towards other team members and will want to work with them again. Individual team members usually partake in some self-evaluation and performance review.

CONFLICT AND CONTROVERSY

In all group settings, there will be disagreements. People have differing opinions, and it is a good thing to hear all sides of an argument or discussion. However, there are two ways that this can affect a group: by bringing **conflict** or **controversy.**

- *Conflict* occurs when the group doesn't resolve differences well, people are left with negative feelings about the situation, fights or arguments occur, or things don't get settled.
- *Controversy* occurs when the group manages differences and disagreements well, and people are left feeling satisfied with the end result. A compromise has been reached and the team grows and develops because of the situation.

Controversy is necessary in healthy team interaction and eventual success. It is the positive face of conflict. When controversy is used for stimulation and expansion of ideas, it can lead to a truly informed team decision, or consensus. This is linked to a basic principle of team success: *team members must learn from each other.*

The reality is that conflicts will occur that obstruct consensus. On the one hand, conflict occurs when people have a personal stake in a specific position and are emotional (neither of which is inherently bad but are obstacles when working with others). Controversy occurs, on the other hand, when people are focused on the team's interests, not personal positions, and when members show good will toward each other, while taking a healthy perspective on issues of potential conflict.

While conflict is an obstacle to be avoided, controversy is actually necessary to team success. Controversy ensures that everyone's opinions are taken into account and fosters well-informed decisions. This doesn't happen by chance, however. A proper team atmosphere must be in place for it to bloom. Watch for the signs below in your team, and see if you can turn it toward positive ways of dealing with disagreement.

Conditions for controversy

Focusing on interests
Active listening
Perspective taking
Data based statements

Indicators of conflict

Focusing on positions
Interrupting
Emotional outbursts
Personal attacks
Taking challenges personally

BEHAVIORS THAT ENHANCE TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

There are specific kinds of **behaviors** that people will use in a team setting. Many of these behaviors are ones that people in certain roles may take on often, but a "behavior" is different from a "role." Roles are sets of behaviors that people use most often, while behaviors are one-time events that anyone may perform anytime. In addition, most people use a combination of many different kinds of behaviors. There are three kinds of behaviors -- **task-oriented, team-oriented,** and **self-oriented** -- that often occur during a team's process.

Task-oriented behaviors ensure that the team's task will be accomplished.

- **Initiating.** In groups of people it's often the case that no one steps forward to initiate anything, perhaps because everyone assumes someone else will do it. While this strategy may be "successful" in a discussion section, in an effective team someone must be willing to bring up new business, ideas, and procedures with statements like "Let's build an agenda..." or "It's time we moved to the next item." Although this behavior may seem trivial, other task-related activity would not occur without it.
- **Seeking/giving information or opinions.** Clear and efficient flow of facts and opinions are necessary for team functioning. Statements such as "I have some information..." or "What does the team think of..." can keep the team on task and help make sure that members are participating.
- **Clarifying and elaborating.** Clarifying behavior, such as asking questions and elaborating on what has been said, will ensure that the team understands what is going on. This behavior is important for developing new ideas, as well as for keeping everyone on the same page.
- **Summarizing.** Occasionally a team member should summarize ideas with a statement like "It sounds like we are saying that..." to help the team move forward in their tasks. This serves to bring together ideas contributed by all members of the team.
- **Consensus testing.** At various points in the meeting, the statement "Have we made a decision on that point?" can be very helpful. Even if the team is not yet ready to commit to a decision, it serves to remind everyone of the task at hand.

Team-oriented behaviors ensure that good working relationships are maintained within the team.

- **Gatekeeping.** Gatekeepers bring others into the conversation, facilitate procedures, and generally keep communication open. Gatekeeping makes sure that information doesn't get lost, that conversations don't stray from the point, and that less assertive people don't get cut off. A gatekeeper may use phrases such as "Let's give Joe a chance to finish his thought" and "We need to talk one at a time so everyone can follow the discussion."
- **Encouraging.** Encouraging also ensures that all potentially relevant and necessary information is shared and considered. Examples are such statements as, "I know you haven't had a chance to work through this in your mind but keep thinking out loud and we'll try to help" and "Before we move on, Mary, do you have anything you want to add?"
- **Harmonizing/Compromising.** These two functions are very important but tricky because their overuse or inappropriate use can reduce a team's effectiveness. This behavior helps team members to see where they are in agreement during a controversy. However, this behavior should be used with caution so as not to avoid important tension and creativity that often result from conflict.
- **Tension relieving.** When your team gets angry or tense, you might try to get it back on track by joking, proposing fun approaches, or suggesting breaks. However, overdoing this can turn into clowning, and become a source of tension in its own right.

Self-oriented behaviors are different from the others in that, although all are very common, they are harmful to the team rather than helpful. This is because all of them are in some sense more about the individual than the team. The distinction between team-oriented tension relieving, for example, and self-oriented clowning is that clowning is about getting attention for the "clown" instead of facilitating the work of the team. Similarly, team-oriented giving of opinions is constructive, whereas self-oriented aggressiveness or blocking, although it may also involve giving opinions, is destructive only.

Self-oriented behaviors have negative effects on the team and are meant to satisfy and help one person.

- **Aggression.** Working for status by criticizing and blaming others, showing hostility against the team or some individual, deflating the ego or status of others.
- **Blocking.** Interfering with the progress of the team by going off on a tangent, citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem, arguing too much on a point, or rejecting ideas without consideration.
- **Seeking sympathy.** Trying to induce other team members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes, deploring one's own situation, or disparaging one's own ideas to gain support.
- **Manipulating.** Introducing or supporting ideas that meet one's personal needs and interests regardless of whether they are in the best interest of the team.
- **Clowning.** Goofing around, clowning, joking, mimicking, and disrupting the work of the team.
- **Seeking attention.** Attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, unusual behavior.
- **Withdrawing.** Acting diffident or passive, resorting to excessive formality, daydreaming, doodling, whispering to others, or wandering from the subject.
- **Competing.** Conscious or unconscious striving to rival others. An effort to appear more competitive, useful, and able than others in the team in order to gain favor from important people.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this section you should be able to:

- Name and describe each of the stages of the 5-stage model.
- Distinguish between task, team, and self-oriented behaviors and understand their effects on the team.
- Describe the elements of effective teams.
- Distinguish between conflict and controversy.
- Discuss how team building will help your team.

TEAM BUILDING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following ten questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I have specific knowledge and understand the elements of an effective team.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I understand and recognize the various roles and behaviors required for effective team functioning (e.g. task-orientated, maintenance-orientated, and self-orientated behaviors).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

I understand the various stages of team development.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I understand what is necessary for me to be a member of an effective team.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I understand how to evaluate and give feedback regarding team work: my own contribution, the contribution of fellow team members, and the effectiveness of a team as a whole.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can identify which roles people take on my team.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I recognize behaviors that will create a dysfunctional team environment and I know what steps I can take to intervene.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I recognize the need for conflict in a team and know how to deal with it effectively.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can assess the needs of a team.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
The team functions effectively, the individual members are satisfied, and team tasks and goals are reached.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

Interpretation:
When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always" categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of team building. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this still as it relates to you both as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of team building, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your team building skills. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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Huszczo, Gregory E. (1996). *Tools for Team Excellence: Getting Your Team into High Gear and Keeping it There*. Consulting Psychology Press. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishers.

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Effective meetings

We have all been involved in unproductive meetings, and we certainly know that they are not fun and should be avoided if at all possible. Why are those meetings ineffective and what can be done to change them? There are really two basic parts in a meeting that dictate the meeting's effectiveness: the meeting procedures and the behavior of the team members. We will explore each of these aspects and show ways to avoid destructive behaviors and encourage positive ones.

MEETING PROCEDURES

A team's meeting procedures have a large influence on their ability to stay on task, accomplish meeting objectives, ensure equal team participation, and develop decisions by consensus. Some of these procedures involve the assignment of formal roles to team members for the meeting. Experience tells us that meeting procedures and basic rules are essential for conducting productive and orderly meetings.

1. Facilitation

A meeting needs to have a facilitator who is responsible for the logistics of the meeting. Ordinarily, this role is appropriate for the project team leader, but your team may choose to rotate the responsibility. In highly effective teams very little facilitation is necessary; however, ineffective teams will need a very skilled facilitator to conduct a successful meeting. The facilitator's role is to ensure that common problems do not disrupt the group or derail the project.

2. Agendas

Each meeting must have an agenda, preferably one drafted at the previous meeting and developed in detail prior to the actual meeting. If possible, it should be sent to participants in advance. The following items are typical found on agendas:

- **Warm-up**. A short (five to ten minute) activity used to free people's minds from the outside world and get them focused on the meeting.
- **Review.** Simply start each meeting by going over the agenda, adding or deleting items, and modifying time estimates.
- **Breaks.** If the meeting lasts more than two hours, schedule at least one short break.
- **Evaluation.** Gathering input from the team allows the facilitator to assess what parts of the meetings are going well and what parts are perceived to be ineffective.
- **Topics.** Including a sentence or two that defines each item and why it is being discussed.
- **Presenters**. Typically the person who originated the item, is most responsible for it, or is knowledgeable about it presents it.
- **Timeline**. The estimated time in minutes needed to discuss each item.

In order to provide some consistency between meetings, it is best to draft the agenda for the next meeting at the end of the current one. By doing this, all team members will get to participate in the development of the agenda and team members will have a clear sense of the next few items that need to be discussed. This process also helps to create more team commitment and provides the opportunity for people to take meeting responsibilities once they know what is going to be discussed.

3. Minutes

Each meeting should also have a note taker who records the points discussed, the decisions made, and the responsibilities assigned by the team. In effective meetings the note taker and facilitator will identify and record items that the group has agreed to raise again later, either in this meeting or at a future time. It is very important for a meeting recap to be distributed to team members as soon as possible after the meeting. The recap does not have to be a verbatim account of the meeting, but it will add closure and provide absent members with an account of what happened. The recap should include: what was discussed; what was decided or agreed upon; and what actions will be taken as a result, by whom, and by when. Teams typically find it best to rotate this duty among the members.

"A meeting is a place where you keep the minutes and lose the hours".

– Anonymous

4. Evaluation

An athlete, musician or craftsman knows that improvement comes with practice aimed at correcting mistakes and improving upon the things that contribute to success. Meeting evaluation is the process a team can use to improve the way they operate.

Meeting evaluation can be accomplished in a number of different ways. Your choice of method will be determined by the purpose of the evaluation, the time you have available, or the degree to which the group needs to work on improving its meetings. Any meeting evaluation method will follow the same basic process:

1. Gather information on meeting strengths and areas for improvement.
2. Provide this information to the group -- discuss and clarify.
3. Identify specific actions to be taken.
4. Identify responsibility for those actions.

Physical Setting

The setting of a meeting is very important. The place needs to be in a location that can be easily reached by everyone. The room must also be large enough to hold all of the participants, but not so large as to discourage participation. Seating should take into consideration the number of participants and should be arranged to maximize the participation of all team members. Be sure you have all the materials needed -- such as paper and pen for the recorder, newsprint, etc. Finally, snacks or food can provide either and incentive or reward to team members and can meet basic needs for longer meetings.

MEETING BEHAVIORS

Meeting behaviors, or "norms," concern how meetings will be run, how team members will interact, and what kind of behavior is accepted. Some are stated aloud while others are implicit. A few of the more important ground rules to establish are:

1. **Attendance** - What are legitimate reasons for missing a meeting, and how should members inform the team or team leader about the absence?

2. **Promptness** - In order to ensure that meetings will start and end on time all team members need to make sure they are prepared and on-time.

3. **Active Listening** - Use good communication skills to ensure that everyone's ideas are heard and considered.

4. **Active Participation** - Encourage an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome to participate in the discussion and encourage those who have not spoken to share their ideas.

5. **The 100-Mile Rule** - Everyone is expected to give the meeting their full attention. No one should interrupt the meeting unless it is so important that the disruption would occur even if all of the members had traveled 100 miles to attend the meeting.

6. **Accountability** - Much of a team's work is done between meetings. When members are given assignments, it is important they complete their tasks on time.

7. **Role Rotation** - Decide who will be responsible for the meeting facilitation, minutes, agenda, and room set-up, along with how to rotate these duties among team members.

8. **Tacit Rules** - Some behaviors are not stated explicitly but still govern the group's behavior and may include such issues as:
   - What kind of language is acceptable in this group (cursing, jargon, etc.)?
   - What is OK to talk about? What is not OK?
   - What place does humor have? What is an acceptable target for jokes?

EFFECTIVE FACILITATION

Facilitation is a process involving, coaching and enabling others to act efficiently and productively by drawing on the expertise, knowledge, and experience of others. It typically means taking ownership of a process or activity to ensure that a decision or discussion is handled correctly.

Facilitator Behaviors & Attributes

Being an effective facilitator requires the ability play a lot of different roles depending upon what is needed. An effective facilitator identifies which role would be the most beneficial, and adapts an attitude that supports the team, its members, and its goals.

Roles of Facilitation

- **Active Listener** - Sometimes the facilitator should just listen. When team members are sharing beliefs, emotions, or personal views, the facilitator is well advised to consider psychologically withdrawing. The facilitator should allow the conversation to continue until it is time to intervene.
- **Supporter** - The support of the facilitator is important. Individuals need to be encouraged and given air time. The team will need emotional support, especially in times of difficulty. Functional support also may be needed such as meeting locations, note taking, or goal-setting.
- **Catalyst** - The facilitator alters the way in which the team behaves by paying attention to issues that the team usually fails to address. The facilitator acts as a catalyst to encourage a constructive and open climate marked by thorough and candid debates and discussions.
- **Confronter** - The facilitator provides feedback to the team and its members on how things are going. Whenever possible, the feedback should be checked for accuracy against the perceptions of others.
- **Devil's Advocate** - Teams develop a myopic way of seeing the world that prevents them from testing their arguments. The facilitator needs to be able to question, generate informed debate, and stimulate the thorough exploration of options. To accomplish this the facilitator must confront illusions of invulnerability, excessive optimism, or declining ethical standards.
- **Disciplinarian** - Team building often requires looking at issues that are uncomfortable, long-term, and abstract. In order for the team to tackle important underlying issues, the facilitator needs to set standards and adhere to them despite others' frustration or fatigue.
- **Guide** - Facilitators need to understand where the team has been and where the team wants to go. While, it is the decision and planning of the team that will take them there the facilitator must act as a guide, making sure that the team stays focused and along its course.

Attributes of Facilitation

- **Assertiveness** - As the facilitator, you need to have the ability and the guts to speak the hard truth when necessary. If you are afraid to say what needs to be said when it needs to be said, you won't be as effective or credible. However, the challenge of assertiveness is knowing when to push and when to pull back. There is a big difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness.
- **Intuition** - Meeting facilitation is not a skill that rests on applying a simple formula to arrive at the "right answer." You must find it on your own by identifying what is best for each situation. One could argue that intuition comes from experience, but it also includes the ability to act on a hunch.
- **Creativity and Flexibility** - You will need to put together techniques in new and creative ways every time you facilitate a meeting. You will also need to think on your feet, stay on your feet, and accept new and better ideas from others.
- **Confidence/Enthusiasm** - Without facilitator confidence and enthusiasm, a group quickly prepares for a boring, unproductive experience. The ability to appear articulate and knowledgeable in front of a group of people is essential in creating a positive atmosphere from the start.
- **Team Player** - A team facilitator is the moderator, the interpreter, and the timekeeper, but not the star. Your recognition comes from the work you allow others to accomplish and the success you help build in the organizations you serve.
- **Dedicated to Learning** - Good facilitators are dedicated to continuously building their skills. The more tools you have available to you, the less likely you will be to panic when a certain technique doesn't work the way you planned.

FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

Facilitators are required to use their skills in a number of different team settings. The behaviors and attributes listed above are needed in any of these settings; however certain techniques are useful when facilitating a team discussion. These techniques ensure that the team follows a productive path to reach a decision.

Setting the Stage:

- State the reasons for a discussion.
- Indicate the method for holding discussion.
- Lay down ground rules.

Keeping on Track:

- Don't introduce a new topic until the current one is finished.
- Ensure that the topic is within the framework of the task's objectives.
- Keep someone from dominating the conversation.
- Document all ideas, new decisions and important objections.
- Prevent people from talking at the same time.

Guiding the Discussion:

- Ask for suggestions/ideas from the team as a whole.
- Periodically check for consensus.
- Encourage everyone to voice their ideas, even if tentative or incomplete.
- Encourage equal participation.
- Intervene when a conflict arises.
- Use active listening skills to clarify the arguments made by the team.

Closing the Discussion:

- Indicate how the discussion was useful.
- Provide a summary of what was discussed and the objections raised.
- Explicitly state the tasks associated with the agreed upon decisions.
- Thank the team for their participation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe the various roles and procedures involved in an effective meeting.
- Identify positive team behaviors and how to encourage them.
- Use various techniques to actively engage in the meeting process.
- Describe facilitation.
- Identify the various roles and attributes of a facilitator.
- Explain how to facilitate through common team problems.
- Facilitate an effective meeting.

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following ten questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question. Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

Meeting Members

I take on required roles as assigned by the group (facilitator, note taker, etc.).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I come to meetings prepared for my role and specific assignment.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I actively engage in the meeting process.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I actively assume behaviors that assist the meeting to be productive (such as gatekeeping, consensus building, etc.).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

Facilitator Role

I prepare and distribute the agenda well in advance of a meeting.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I consult with participants before a meeting to ensure that they are properly prepared.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I establish specific time parameters for a meeting.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I encourage and support participation by all members.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I discourage the clash of personalities.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I bring closure by summarizing accomplishments and allocating follow-up assignments.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of effective meetings. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to both you as an individual, and you as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of effective meetings and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your proficiency in effective meetings. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vma/vms.htm – The Virtual Meeting Assistant is a great place to find more information on agendas, meeting facilitation, and the structure of different types of meetings.

http://www.triangle.org/howto/meetings/index.html – This national fraternity website can show you a variety of meeting roles, elements of an effective meeting, properties of an agenda, and ways to handle "problem" participants.

http://www.facilitationfactory.com -- This site contains all sorts of information, excercises, and neat facts about facilitation.

http://www.thiagi.com/article-sectrets.html -- Look here for more information on effective facilitator qualities and techniques.

Building trust

An essential aspect of group effectiveness is developing and maintaining a high level of trust among group members. The more that members trust each other, the better they will work together. Group effectiveness depends on every member sharing resources, giving and receiving help, dividing the work, and contributing to the accomplishment of mutual goals. This behavior will occur when there is trust, and everyone is contributing to the group's progress and not using members' openness and sharing of resources for personal (rather than group) gain. Group members will more openly express their thoughts, feelings, reactions, opinions, information, and ideas when the trust level is high. When the trust level is low, group members will be evasive, dishonest, and inconsiderate in their communications.

Trust is essential for relationships to grow and develop among group members. In order to build a productive group, members must create a climate of trust that reduces their own and other members' fears of betrayal and rejection, and promotes the hope of acceptance, support, and confirmation. Trust is not a stable personality trait; it is an aspect of relationships that constantly changes and varies. Although this seems like an obvious idea, it's easy to forget that everything group members do either increases or decreases the trust level in the group. Lastly, trust is a major influence on how individuals feel about the team experience. You'll be much happier with your team experience if your team has worked to build trust among members.

Appropriateness of Trust

Trust is not always appropriate. There are definitely times when you shouldn't disclose your thoughts, feelings, or reactions to another person. There are people you undoubtedly know who would behave in untrustworthy ways if you made yourself vulnerable to them. To master the skills in building and maintaining trust you need to be able to tell when it is appropriate to be trusting and when it is not. A person must develop the capacity to size up situations and make enlightened decisions about when, whom, and how much to trust others. Remember not to reveal yourself so quickly to another person that he or she is overpowered and bewildered. Also, remember there are situations in which trust is inappropriate and destructive to your interests. In some situations, such as competitive ones, trust is not appropriate.

An Effective Trust Building Process

What can be done to expand the radius of trust within your groups? To accomplish an effective trust building process we need to understand what key points give rise to trust. Trust is founded on a few basic imperatives: achieving results, acting with integrity, and demonstrating concern. For high levels of trust to exist, these factors must be exhibited and practiced consistently.

1. Achieving Results

The first and perhaps most important aspect in earning trust in a school setting - or indeed, in any setting that demands action and results - involves peoples' performance in fulfilling their obligations and commitments. The results are key: even if people's motives are characterized by goodwill, they will not regain our trust if they are incompetent or powerless to fulfill the expectations we have of them. In such cases, we deem them unworthy of trust not because they are malicious but because they can't deliver.

2. Acting With Integrity

A second imperative for trust is acting with integrity. By integrity, we mean honesty in one's words and consistency in one's actions. In most cases, we trust those who behave consistently in their words and actions. If, for example, we see inconsistency in another's words or deeds we may conclude that he is at odds with our interests or unable to fulfill his professional responsibilities. Even the perception of inconsistency (which may not have a factual basis) can result in increasing our distrust. Trust requires that our most important expectations in a given situation be fulfilled. Gaps between what we anticipate and what actually occurs give rise to distrust.

Inconsistency suggests that others may be dishonest and self-serving and thus unworthy of trust. Inconsistency in words and actions is one of the most important indicators we have that others are incompetent or perhaps malevolent - and it is these attributes that often mean others will not fulfill their obligations to us. The impact of integrity on trust is particularly important early in the history of a relationship, as each side assesses the degree to which it is willing to risk vulnerability.

TRY THIS:
Team exercises for building trust

Before trust can be built in teams, it is critical for team members to get to know one another. By taking turns disclosing information about yourself and actively listening to others disclosing information about themselves, your team members will get to know one another and begin to establish trusting relationships. The following activity can help your team begin to build trust. This activity should be used early your group's time together. It is important that all members are present for this activity. For a team of three to six members you will need 1-2 hours (larger groups should allow more time).

Take turns answering the questions that follow. When one member is talking, the other members should listen carefully, asking questions for clarification when necessary.

Questions: (Choose any of them – you don't have to go in order.)

- What was the most interesting experience of your life?
- What things do you do very well?
- What are your favorite things to do?
- What are some experiences you're looking forward to having in the future?
- What's the best team experience you've ever had?
- Tell about an opportunity that you missed.
- What are some things you want to start doing at this point in your life?
- What are some of the values you're very committed to?
- What are some things that you'd like to get better at?
- Talk about a turning point in your life.
- How do you envision your life 10 years from now?

3. Demonstrating Concern

A third imperative for trust is demonstrating concern for others. At the most basic level, we trust those who care about us. We trust those whom we believe understand our concerns and will act in a way that meets or at least does not conflict with our needs. Think of those who you trust the most – they are those who care about you the most, such as family or friends. This element of concern involves the degree to which we believe others are supporting our well being or that of the whole. For example, trust is evident in this statement: "He is not working any personal agenda and wants what is best for the team."

Concern for others is as imperative for trust and goes beyond caring for us as individuals; it includes a broader concern for the groups of which we are part. We expect those we trust to extend their concern to our family, our work team, or our company. This is particularly important in relation to trusting those in positions of leadership and authority, as their concern or lack of it can have an impact not only on individuals but on large groups as well. Adapted from Johnson and Johnson (1997).

Destroying Trust

For trust to develop, one person has to let down his or her guard and become somehwhat vulnerable to see whether the other person abuses that vulnerability. A series of positive encounters may be necessary before trust is high. However, it often takes only just one betrayal to establish distrust and, once established, distrust is extremely resistant to change. Distrust is difficult to change because it leads to the perception that despite the other person's attempts to make up, betrayal will recur in the future.

There are three types of behavior that will decrease trust in a relationship. The first is the use of rejection, ridicule, or disrespect as a response to the other's openness. Making a joke at the expense of the other person, laughing at his disclosures, moralizing about behavior, being evaluative in your response, or being silent and poker faced all communicate rejection and will effectively silence the other person and destroy some of the trust in the relationship.

The second is the non-reciprocation of openness. To the extent that you are closed and the other members are open, they will not trust you. If a group member is open and you do not reciprocate, she will often feel overexposed and vulnerable.

The third type of behavior that will decrease trust in a relationship is the refusal to disclose your thoughts, information, conclusions, feelings, and reactions after the other person has indicated considerable acceptance, support, and co-operativeness. If a group member indicates acceptance and you are closed and guarded in response, he will feel discounted and rejected.

REESTABLISHING TRUST AFTER IT HAS BEEN BROKEN

How can trust, once lost, be regained? The following guidelines may help. To reestablish trust, group members should take eight actions:

1. Establish cooperative goals that are so compelling that everyone will join in to achieve them. Such goals are often referred to as superordinate goals.
2. Increase resource interdependence so that it is clear that no one person has a chance for succeeding on his or her own.
3. Openly and consistently express cooperative intentions.
4. Reestablish credibility by making certain that members' actions match their announced intentions. Group members must always follow up on their word.
5. Be absolutely and consistently trustworthy when dealing with each other and accept and support other members.
6. Periodically test the waters by engaging in trusting actions and making themselves vulnerable to the other members.
7. Apologize sincerely and immediately when inadvertently engaging in untrustworthy actions.
8. Strive to build a tough but fair reputation by initially and periodically responding cooperatively to other members who act competitively (even when you know in advance that the others plan to compete). Use a "this for that" strategy that matches the other person's behavior if the others continue to compete.

TRY THIS:
Individual excercise for developing and maintaining trust

Recall a situation in which you trusted an individual with something. What were the respective payoffs or consequences of the trust being upheld or broken? What reasons did you choose for making the decsion you did?

15 WAYS TO WIN PEOPLE'S TRUST

Adapted from: Industry Week Magazine, February 1, 1993.

1. Demonstrate that you are working for others' interest, as well as your own.
2. Listen in ways that show you respect others and that you value their ideas
3. Practice openness -- the critical value for team action.
4. Speak your feelings.
5. Explain what you understand, and admit there are things you don't understand.
6. Share as much as you know about where the team is going.
7. Show consistency in the basic values that guide your decision-making.
8. Make the right choices after viewing the alternatives that are before you.
9. Demonstrate awareness of all the key ramifications of your decision.
10. Explain why you are shifting roles or behavioral styles when the situation calls for a shift.
11. Let people know the downside -- the negatives -- as well as the good news.
12. Support your team members decisions.
13. Show that you know how to work with and earn the support of faculty and instructors.
14. Signal an error, a breakdown, and a missed objective that will affectc other people's expectations.
15. Respect old ideas while you dig for new ones.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Identify at least three actions you can take to build trust with your team members.
- Identify and explain at least four of the eight actions that you can take to re-build trust after you have let somebody down.
- Identify risks involved in trusting your team members.

TRUST BUILDING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following three questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I give my team members the opportunity to demonstrate responsible behavior.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I act in a personally responsible way.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I actively engage in bahavior that repairs relationships when trust has been broken.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of trust building. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to both you as an individual, and you as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of trust building and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your trust building skill. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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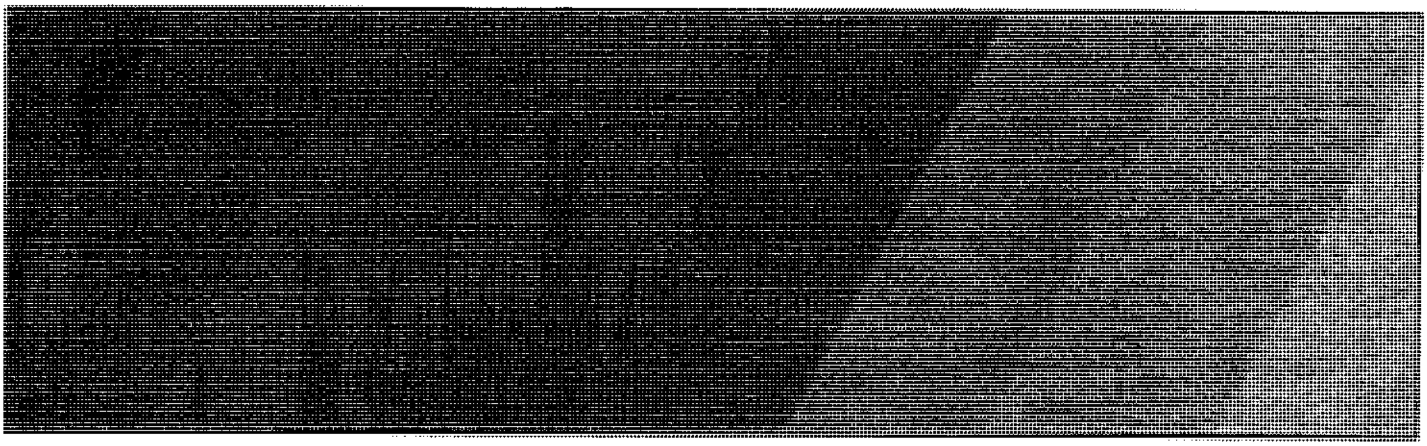
Respect for self and others

Self-awareness

Multiple perspectives

Accountability



"The unexamined life is not worth living."

— Plato

These three skills – self-awareness, multiple perspectives, and accountability – represent some of the most fundamental abilities a person can possess. They impact our everyday lives on the deepest levels: how we understand ourselves, how we understand others, and how we establish trust.

Self-awareness is fundamental to performance in nearly every area of life: when we are self-aware, we know how to make the most of our experiences, responsibilities, and interactions. If we are not self-aware, we tend to be oblivious to why we interact with the world as we do. Self-awareness allows us to know the extent of our developed abilities, the pattern of our habits, and the direction our lives are taking. For example, when we say "I find that I need at least three days to study for an exam in order to pass it," we are using the advantage of self awareness through our past experience to better understand how we work best.

When we know ourselves, we can utilize that knowledge to understand the perspectives of others and to enrich our own awareness with those perspectives. When we lack an understanding of multiple perspectives, we run the risk of incorrectly judging others' reactions, of alienating others, and of limiting our own viewpoint. Multiple perspective building involves expanding our own viewpoint to understand the point of view that each individual possesses. We gain the ability to see that each individual perspective adds something to the world, and that a whole culture is composes of a collection of individual points of view. We might even be able to adopt some of these perspectives for ourselves once we understand them and find them valuable. When we move into the work force and begin building our careers, we will find that there is great strength in understanding others' perspectives: for example, professionals such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, marketing people, and psychologists benefit from understanding the perspectives of their clients. In fact, all of us benefit from understanding the points of view of our employers and colleagues.

Accountability is a skill that is crucial in establishing trust as a team. It enables us to set goals and promises to ourselves and others, and follow through. Each person needs to have a sense of accountability for his/her part of a project, and team members need to be able to trust that everyone will complete their work on the project as expected. We need some degree of self-awareness in order to make promises that we know we will have a good chance of keeping. When we understand ourselves and the scope of our abilities, we're able to know the situations where we feel comfortable being held accountable for our actions, and able to step out of situations where we might be uncomfortable for good reason. Moreover, we need to have an understanding of others' perspectives in order to see what reasonable expectations they may have of us and how we might best fulfill those expectations.

In fact, nearly every skill in this manual can be directly traced back to one, two, or all three of these skills in obvious ways. Setting goals, time management, and proactivity can be traced back to the initial skill of self-awareness. Without knowledge of our own abilities, we cannot set goals for ourselves, keep our commitments, or manage our time effectively. Likewise, active listening, feedback, sharing information and team building all rely on our skill with self-awareness,our possession of multiple perspectives, and our commitment to accountability.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the first step towards becoming an effective member of a team. Each of us needs to have a clear understanding and appreciation of our own values and behavioral tendencies. Although this sounds simple, many people do not accept credit for their skills or own up to their deficiencies. Only when we are fully comfortable with ourselves can we share this information with our teammates in a meaningful and constructive manner.

Self-awareness is the ability to reflect on and understand the basis of your feelings, perspectives, and behaviors. As you gain this understanding, you are in a better position to exert control over the direction of your life. Self-awareness allows us to understand difficult feelings and then respond to them in a manner appropriate to the situation. For example, when students begin at the University of Michigan, they often have their first experience with people from many different cultures and backgrounds. This can generate feelings of discomfort. Being self-aware allows us to understand that these feelings come from our own lack of experience and that they will soon pass as we become accustomed to the diversity of University life. As Carl Jung once said: "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." Similarly, understanding our behaviors -- why we do what we do -- gives us the ability to make positive changes where we need to. For example, it is common for college students to struggle with procrastination. Knowing that procrastination results from many different causes (e.g., fear, being overwhelmed, lack of time management, etc.) enables us take constructive action to overcome this tendency.

STEPS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF OTHER PEOPLE

A large part of self-awareness is understanding our own reactions to other people. A team must build on the strengths of all members for it to be most effective. The team has to welcome diverse ideas and actively search out the best course of action. Becoming comfortable with other cultures and belief structures is essential to understanding ideas outside of our own experience.

Being comfortable, however, does not mean that we say everything that we are thinking or feeling when we are talking with others. While it may not be appropriate to share every thought and feeling with others, it is important that you understand your own reactions to others because then you can better express your own needs.

When you are having a difficult interaction with someone, be aware of the things you are not saying. You may want to try finding tactful ways to share more of the things that you are thinking with the other person.

TRY THIS:
Individual exercise for examining whether your thoughts and actions correspond

Think of a difficult interaction that you had with a colleague, friend, roommate, family member, romantic partner, or professor. (You can choose someone else but it should be someone with whom you had an ongoing relationship, not someone you interacted with on a one-time basis.) Take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. Title the left-hand column "What you were thinking" and title the right-hand column "What was said." Write out the conversation in the right-hand column of the table below. Include both what you said and what the other person said. Then write down what you were thinking in the left-hand column. Use more sheets of paper as necessary. After you have finished writing, look at the differences in what you thought and what you actually said.

Were you able to successfully convey your needs to the other person? Are there things you wish you had said that you didn't say? Are there some things you wish you hadn't said?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN PERSONALITY

As we become more self aware, we begin to perceive ourselves as multi-faceted, contextual, and dynamic. We begin to understand that we have a variety of selves (instead of one homogenous self) and that we function differently in different groups and situations. For instance, you might recognize that you are very talkative with two roommates whom you've known from high school, but rather quiet in a student organization that you joined on campus recently. Becoming aware of these different strands within ourselves also helps us recognize that we are capable of change and development: if you are articulate in one situation, for example, you can certainly work toward becoming so in another one.

Moreover, self-awareness involves realizing that our worldviews are highly subjective rather than universal or normative. This means that *the way* we see the world and make sense of it is not the same as how all or even how most people see the world. Although this may seem obvious, it is a principle that has subtle yet powerful implications. When we assume that the way we see things is simply "normal" or "natural," we make the mistake of believing that everyone sees things the way that we do. In interacting with others who do not share our worldview, we are surprised, bewildered, and confused. Therefore, we are unable to respond effectively. It is quite easy to make the mistake of thinking that our way of perceiving is the "right" way, and those who see things differently are "wrong."

When we are perceiving the world through this narrow lens, we significantly limit ourselves. In situations where we are expected to interact with others who have had different life experiences from ourselves, our lack of self-awareness translates into relations that are awkward, strained, and even confrontational. Thus, our "normal" way of seeing the world actually deprives us of experiencing rewarding professional and social relationships with people who could otherwise greatly enhance our world and our experience of ourselves.

TRY THIS:
Individual excercise for understanding world views

Recall a situation where you saw things differently from someone else. For example, most of us have experienced a "generation gap" with parents and teachers. This generation gap arises because our worldviews differ. (Our worldview is affected by our age and in what time period we were born.) Looking back at the situation, try to think about how all of the parties involved may have had different worldviews. Do you see the conflict differently once you have considered the issue of worldviews? In the future, how can you use the idea of "worldview" in times of conflict?

What is this "normal" way of seeing and interacting with the world? We might think of it as a choice, but this probably too strong for a process of which we are largely unconscious much of the time. It might be better to think of this in terms of *preferences* or *tendencies*.

TRY THIS:
Individual excercise for understanding your own personality

- Complete the Myers-Briggs personal inventory* on the web at www.keirsey.com (listed as the Keirsey Temperament Sorter II). This instrument can give you a clearer understanding of your personal strengths and what you bring to a team. Once you have completed the instrument on the web you might want to share the results with your team members.

*The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one way to help you understand some preferences or tendencies about yourself: how you make decisions, organize your external environment, and you tend to direct your energy, whether internally or externally.

Once team members have done the Keirsey questionnaire individually, they can then bring their results and share them with their team members. Here are some questions that can facilitate discussion:

- How can the information you gathered for the indicator be used as a member of the team?
- What particular strengths or challenges do you see yourself bringing to the team?
- As a team, collectively assess the strengths of your team as a whole. How can the diversity of team members be supported in carrying out the goals and mission of the team?

STEPS TO INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

1. Recognize the roles you adopt in different contexts. How does your behavior change in different situations? Assess the extent to which you are comfortable and effective in these various roles. Identify those roles you might want to improve on or change. (Possible roles in groups may include those of student, teacher/mentor, leader, facilitator, gatekeeper, friend, listener, etc.)
2. Understand your interpersonal dynamic—both how you react to people and how people react to you in varying situations—this will help you to be more knowledgeable and effective in different situations.
3. Discover that your understanding and perceptions of the world are specific to your personality and culture, and that they may not be shared by other group members.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define self-awareness and explain the benefits of being self-aware.
- Interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and describe your termperament.

SELF AWARENESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following nine questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I can describe my personal values to others.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When assigned a task, I can judge how difficult it will be for me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I recognize the point at which I need to ask for help on something (before it's too late).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can explain my feelings to others.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I am aware of how I react to other people, and why.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
My behavior changes when interacting between different groups of people.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I understand why I make certain choices over others when I make them.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
How others see me and how I see myself generally agree.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I notice personal characteristics about myself that make me a good team member.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your awareness of self. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about self awareness as it relates to you as both an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of self, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will beighten your self awareness. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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Multiple perspectives

Today's universities, professional environments and society at large are marked by differences in perspective resulting from the various backgrounds, experiences, and values of people. The ability to view ideas from multiple perspectives involves the recognition that the same concept may be perceived very differently by individuals with experiences or group identities that differ from yours. Developing this skill helps you become more comfortable negotiating all forms of diversity that you encounter in your everyday life. Moreover, it facilitates sophisticated critical thinking by enabling you to go beyond narrow, singular approaches. You develop broader and more complex viewpoints of your own and become a better learner overall.

In approaching this skill it is important that you remain aware of the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity, both of which contribute to differences in perspective. Primary dimensions include age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions are changeable, and include educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, and work experiences.

A big university setting is inevitably characterized by numerous differences within its student population. As a student at the University of Michigan, you will constantly meet fellow students with very different backgrounds and experiences from your own. Whether you are working on a group project in the classroom, or participating in a student organization, or simply having a meal in a dorm, you will probably be around some students from, for example, the opposite gender, or another race, or a different socio-economic class. Since these varying factors influence peoples' opinions in different ways, many of these students will have viewpoints that differ from yours. If you open yourself up to multiple perspectives, your interactions with fellow students will be richer, you will be able to work more effectively with them both in and out of class, and your own perspectives will become well-rounded. On the other hand, if you cling to opinions influenced simply by your own background and past experiences, you are likely to become isolated and not have the best possible living and learning experience at the University.

You might also keep in mind that the earlier theory of the United States as a "melting pot" (which encouraged assimilation) is progressively giving way to the conception of it as a "tossed salad" (which encourages appreciating and working with difference). Therefore, developing this skill is not only crucial within the context of today's heterogeneous educational institutions, but also within the context of this larger cultural shift which you will encounter in the "real world."

HOW WILL DEVELOPING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES HELP?

Individually, this skill will enable you to understand the benefits of viewing ideas from multiple perspectives, and to appreciate and respect all forms of diversity. You will also interact more effectively in all areas of life by constructing networks with diverse groups of people academically, professionally, and socially.

Within a team, this skill will create a working environment that is flexible, supportive, and fosters collaboration among diverse team members. Your team will be better able to set goals, undertake actions, and make decisions in which all group members feel invested. Team members will also become more receptive and sensitive to each other's concerns about using appropriate language and terminology, so as not to alienate/offend anyone. Finally, your team will be able to generate more creative strategies to reach team goals and solve challenging issues/problems.

TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

1. Spend time talking with, listening to, and making an effort to understand people who have backgrounds, experiences, and/or viewpoints that differ from your own.
2. When you encounter new or different perspectives, try to see the world with these viewpoints, instead of dismissing them or trying to convert the other person to your point of view.
3. Brainstorm multiple ways for approaching every topic and consider various solutions while attacking any problem. Don't simply

settle for the first approach or solution; synthesize approaches and solutions to generate the richest ones.

4. Avoid groupthink, "a group attitude or norm that discourages or prevents airing of views that are counter to the majority views" (Verderber, 1982). If you sense that any group member is uncomfortable expressing a divergent viewpoint or is being pressured into consensus with the majority, encourage the member to express his/her views freely and urge your group to give serious consideration to these views.
5. Have someone occasionally play devil's advocate to your perspectives so you can develop an awareness of the limitations of your viewpoints.
6. Expose yourself to as many perspectives as possible by reading widely, taking classes in other majors, being present at cultural events you wouldn't ordinarily think of attending, etc.

TRY THIS: How using multiple perspectives can enhance problem solving

The purpose of this exercise is to enable you to recognize and appreciate the multiple perspectives that different group members bring to the team, and to demonstrate how drawing on a wide range of perspectives generates synergy.

Instructions:

1. As a group, choose a problem—such as drinking at fraternities or being assigned a group grade—which is of concern to all team members.
2. Collectively brainstorm and list all the different dimensions of the problem.
3. Individually, write up a brief plan of action that might solve the problem at least partially.
4. Share your solution with the group, soliciting feedback on its strengths and weaknesses.
5. Working as a group, write up a final solution that draws on some strong point from each of the individual solutions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did working as a group increase your awareness of the multiple dimensions of this problem?
2. Which aspect of this exercise did you find most challenging? Which aspect did you find most fulfilling?
3. Do you think the final solution is stronger than your individual one? Why?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.
- Name and understand ways that viewing ideas from different perspectives will help you.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following eight questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I view every important issue from more than one perspective.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I try to understand the social and experiential factors that influence differences in others' perspectives.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I try to understand where other people are coming from when I disagree with them.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I try to accommodate others' values, expectations, and needs when making decisions that affect others.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I feel able to reduce conflict with or between others by negotiating differences in perspectives.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I talk about my own perspectives to others.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I seek out others' opinions or perspectives when faced with a challenging problem.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I try to utilize the varied perspectives of others when solving complex problems.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your understanding of multiple perspectives. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you as both an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of multiple perspectives, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your ability to view ideas from multiple perspectives. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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Accountability

"When members of a group fail to do their part, it brings the rest of the group down in grades on a project."
—Jennifer Chen, Engineering/ChemE

WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?

Every day, we put our lives in the hands of unknown individuals whom we assume have been responsible in designing automobiles, airplanes, traffic signals, and roads. We assume that someone or something has taken responsibility to make sure that our safety is the first priority.

In every facet of our personal and professional lives we are expected to take responsibility for all of our actions, whether positive or negative. When we speak of a "mature" person, the word "responsible" invariably pops up. Accountability requires a commitment to accepting responsibility for our actions and choices in our personal and professional lives. Every time we take an action that we implicitly or explicitly accept responsibility for, we are demonstrating our accountability.

There are several aspects of our life that are impacted by our commitment to accountability. The first and deepest aspect is our responsibility to ourselves, keeping promises to ourselves and taking care of ourselves. The second impact is in the trust relationship with family and friends. How often have we had friends whom, for some reason or another, have avoided responsibility for something they have said or done, and how deeply has this affected our relationship with them? The third impact is where accountability intersects with one's professional and career life. Employers demand responsible employees, whether the employees are tending a cash register or designing an airplane. In a college or university, we may be asked to work in teams in various courses on specific assignments, which is very much like working in teams in the professional world. Finally, accountability figures into our dealings with other members of society, whether it's obeying traffic laws to keep other people safe, promising to pay off a mortgage, or voting during elections to exercise our right as citizens. With these four broad categories, it isn't difficult to see how pervasive accountability is in nearly every aspect of our lives. We'll examine each of these four categories in turn.

Personal accountability

The most basic form of accountability is in our responsibility to ourselves. The first step to strengthening our personal accountability is in recognizing how important it is to develop and define our own personal code of behavior. Integrity is a priceless quality partly defined by how many of our values intersect with our actions (see Personal Integrity sidebar).

We each have an inner "honor code," the sum of which are usually termed "values." The greatest advantage to being an accountable person rests in the fact that we are able to uphold our personal integrity and values. An accountable person is not only true to her promises to other people, she is also true to her own beliefs and takes her responsibility to herself seriously.

What is the difference between taking responsibility for our actions, and accepting blame for negative consequences? Besides the obvious passive stance of "accepting" blame versus the active stance of "taking responsibility," blame and responsibility are two different things. Blame is defined in *Webster's* as "to find fault with; to reproach." A sense of guilt, or criticism from an outside source, imposes blame on a person. Blame has synonyms like "fault," "sin" and "crime." A person who takes responsibility for a negative action does not need to take "blame" for that action. Blame is laden with emotions and guilt, while taking responsibility simply means that one realizes that they are responsible for any consequences and are willing to shoulder the task of attending to a solution, or setting things right. While guilt and other uncomfortable emotions can accompany some negative consequences of a person's actions, there is nothing constructive about the concept of "blame," nor does it accomplish anything worthwhile. One should not be required to "accept blame," but one should always be ready to "take responsibility," which is ultimately more empowering.

Personal Integrity

Integrity: "Moral soundness; honesty; freedom from corrupting influence or motive; — used especially with reference to the fulfillment of contracts, the discharge of agencies, trusts, and the like; uprightness; rectitude."

— Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary

"My word is my bond." It's not difficult to see how important accountability is to personal integrity. In the best of all worlds, our promises would be all that was needed to secure a loan or close a deal. Personal integrity is maintained when one's actions are consistent with one's personal values. It is an extremely valuable trait which reflects itself in the ongoing trust relationships with family and friends, one's progress and performance in one's job, down to the more mundane effects of credit rating and debt. In this way, integrity is also tied to self-awareness in that we must understand ourselves and our own values.

Sometimes it's hard to face consequences we haven't foreseen, or to take responsibility for an action that has negative fallout. There is a great deal of freedom in knowing that one can stand and take responsibility for one's actions. (However, responsibility is not "blame," which we discuss in the text of this module, though the two are often confused.) There are more advantages to facing negative consequences than there are to avoiding them, and the greatest advantage is in maintaining our personal integrity.

Accountability and trust relationships

One of the foundations of any relationship is trust. Commitment to any kind of relationship with parents, family, or friends requires different kinds of responsibility, whether it's to keep promises, respect other's privacy, provide love and care, or simply communicate with and support another when they need it. An accountable person establishes and upholds this intimate trust by following through with his/her commitments to others in all aspects of the relationship.

Accountability and professional careers

One cannot have a successful professional career without a commitment to responsibility. In fact, we put our lives in the hands of others' accountability every day. We count on others' commitment to responsibility every time we fly in an airplane or drive a car. Our employers trust us to call attention to mistakes, to not willfully cause harm by action or inaction, to give our best in the job we have taken on. An accountable employee can be trusted to tell the truth and to admit to mistakes so they can be corrected immediately.

Mutual accountability and teamwork

"[Accountability]...is the oil of the team machine. If you can count on another, a load is taken off your shoulders."

— Amy Marcotte, LSA English

Synergy is defined as that which is more than the sum of its parts. The whole point of working in teams is to assure that the product that your team will produce will be that much better than something that would be produced by any one individual. Research has shown that this is generally true. However, when team members do not contribute to the team, synergy is diminished if not destroyed. A commitment to contribute significant effort to the performance and product of a team is implicit in the idea of mutual accountability. Without mutual accountability among all team members, the team's output and even its performance can be seriously impacted. Often, accountability breakdowns occur not because teammates are lazy or unable to accept responsibility, but because they are unclear on what this responsibility entails. Therefore, it's important to assure that all your teammates are given the chance to contribute something to the performance of the team by providing everyone with a blueprint of what mutual accountability means to your team.

TRY THIS:
The Hero Exercise

List up to three people in your life... friends, family, counselors, teachers, etc... whom you see as having a strong positive sense of accountability, responsibility, or both.

Now list examples of how you see them as especially responsible. What benefits do these people reap from their sense of accountability? List these benefits and determine which you would like for yourself.

How can you begin gathering the same benefits for yourself?

HOW DOES BEING ACCOUNTABLE HELP?

Being accountable for our actions provides a basis for personal integrity. Even if we make bad choices, our ability to take responsibility for those choices gives us the capability to reflect on our past choices, and make a better judgment the next time. A person who understands that they are accountable for their own actions is liable to be a more trustworthy person. Other people observe our commitment to accountability, and therefore are given reason to trust us.

"Accountability is part of everyday life, as well. By enrolling in class, you are being held accountable to do the work. By making friendships, you are being held accountable to be a friend and support others. By taking on a leadership role in an organization, you are being held accountable for all of the actions/ ideologies of that group."
— Neel Chokshi, Engineering/Chem (pre-med)

A person who is personally accountable can do the following:

- Articulate one's own personal values and a commitment to them
- Know the range of choices available for various situations, and the consequences that result from those choices
- Understand the importance of delivering on promises, and not promising beyond what one can give (also, see self-awareness)
- Articulate the importance of assuming responsibility for mistakes and failures, and be able to separate *taking responsibility* from the concept of *blame*.
- Recognize the importance of personal integrity and the basis of trust stemming from accountability; for example, not taking credit for other's work.

When we work in a group, other group members have certain expectations of us, such as showing up on time or coming to a meeting prepared. When we work in a team, this "following through" with our responsibilities is even more important, since most teams are working together to produce some kind of product in a limited amount of time. A team where each individual does his/her part is usually a successful team: one that completes tasks and reaches goals within a limited time.

TRY THIS:
Following Through Exercise

In this exercise, it is very important to actually record your results, so you can have a clear idea of how to become successful in a very challenging aspect of daily life: following through.

List up to ten critical responsibilities you have assumed in your life in order of importance. (Examples: completing homework, going to class, paying off debt, taking care of a pet, going to work every day on time, etc.)

How do you live up to these responsibilities every day of your life? Are any of them especially difficult? In a separate list, re-order the list made in #1 in order of difficulty. For instance, you might find it very difficult to get to class every day, moderately difficult to pay debt off on time, minimally difficult to finish homework, and very easy to feed the dog every day.

List the consequences you must face if you don't follow through with each of the responsibilities you listed in #1. Include the negative effects on your family, friends, classmates, co-workers, yourself.

One way of assuring that we follow through on these responsibilities is to use a daily or weekly "To Do" list, or an "Action Plan." To begin your "To Do" list, make a list of techniques that would allow you to follow through with the difficult responsibilities you listed in #2. For instance, setting an alarm clock 10 minutes earlier, and going to bed earlier, might help you get up for class every day on time.

Which of these actions can be done tomorrow? From this action list, make a "To Do" list for tomorrow and even today. Attempt to complete as many as you can by tomorrow evening.

Often, following through with our responsibilities gives us a sense of relief, and takes away a source of pressure and stress. What other benefits do you gain by meeting these responsibilities?

Teams who engage in mutual accountability will:

- Integrate individual accountability within a group
- List the team's common values and goals so as to include all members
- Build camaraderie, trust and relationships among team members through reliability
- Demonstrate the group's responsibility to support and encourage individual accountability: a team's process and product is the responsibility of the team as a whole
- Demonstrate equal sharing of tasks and responsibility within the team
- Commit to reasonable standards of individual and team performance and pinpoint unreasonable expectations.
- Encourage commitment to group agreements and deadlines
- Give individual recognition for performance and achievement

Establishing accountability

Operating agreements are often a good starting point for any team. An operating agreement is a set of rules for expected behavior for all team members. Some teams write down the operating agreement as a kind of "Team Contract." Any number of items can be in an operating agreement, from basic behaviors like listening and being considerate, to where and when to hold team meetings, to expected tasks and duties of each individual team member. It can be as specific or as general as suits the needs of each team, but the more specific the operating agreement is, the more it can help avoid problems in the team, later. Even teams that only meet once or twice during a team's lifetime can benefit from an operating agreement because those meetings should be made as productive as possible.

The exercise at the end of this section, dealing with creating an Operating Agreement, should help you get started. For examples of operating agreements, see the sidebars. Operating Agreement #1 is very short and is appropriate for that particular informal discussion group whose main "product" is discussion and an informal class report. Operating Agreement #2 is a bit longer and is appropriate for an upper-division course whose main product must be a formal report with several milestones of due dates spread along the way. As you can imagine, both groups benefit from their agreements and each agreement suits the particular team it was written for.

Besides producing an operating agreement, there are other useful ways to help foster mutual accountability within your group:

- Hold regular team meetings. Schedule the entire semester's meetings ahead of time if possible.
- Divide tasks into groups of two when appropriate. This helps get tasks completed.
- Assure that no team member feels left out by assisting all team members in understanding the material or other parts of the project. This includes taking initiative in assuring that you learn the material, too.
- Ask for regular feedback at your meetings about the project as a whole. Make it a point to find out what other team members think about the project and the function of the team.
- Read the "Building trust" section in the "Working in teams" unit of this manual.

Operating Agreement #1

This Agreement is for a team formed for a literature course, whose primary purpose is discussion of specific literature and the production of an informal critical report to be brought to class.

1. We agree to make sure all team members give their ideas and that their ideas will be truly heard and considered by the team as a whole. This means each team member will be an active listener, commit to sharing information with other members of the group, be willing to compromise, ask for clarification, keep an objective viewpoint with the team goals in mind, and respect the various perspectives of each team member. If we see ideas being put down or skipped over, we will stop the discussion and allow the idea to be given again.
2. When this does not work, we will politely remind the other team members of this Operating Agreement by giving feedback.
3. If there is a disagreement on a decision we have made and we cannot resolve it, we will look for a consensus-based solution. If there is no consensus, we can go to our GSI and have her arbitrate for us.

Operating Agreement #2

This Agreement is for a team formed for an upper-division engineering course, whose primary purpose is the research and creation of a large written report to be submitted to Detroit City Hall.

1. We each commit to fostering an atmosphere of respect and professionalism by valuing our different perspectives and opinions because that's where the strength of our team is. We will do this by committing to active listening, communication between group members, and making sure that we value everyone's opinion.
2. We will stay focused on the project goal: to provide an excellent written report on the structural conditions of several inner-city Detroit building structures to City Hall by the end of the semester. We will keep this goal in mind at all times. This is our team mission, and we should put aside our desire for individual recognition and instead work towards what's best for our team and our project's final product.
3. We will hold weekly meetings on Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm in the Media Union, until which time we need to start meeting twice a week, then we will also meet on Monday nights and possibly also on weekends towards the end of the semester.
4. We will rotate the duties of note-taker and facilitator each week. We will keep minutes. Whoever takes minutes is responsible for sending copies out to everyone.
5. Our instructor will arbitrate conflicts within the team. We agree to give our instructor the ability to help us come to a consensus or solve a conflict.
6. All of our team members must agree for there to be a consensus decision. This will be important when we are making large-scale decisions such as study approach or report format. Otherwise, people doing particular tasks have the authority to make decisions and bring them back to the group. If there are no expressed objections to these individual decisions, we will stick with them.
7. We expect all team members to attend our scheduled meetings, and to show up on time. If someone can't show up, we need to know a day ahead of time so we can reschedule the meeting for him or her. If we can't reschedule for all group members we will hold the meeting anyway. The only excuse for not telling the team about the absence ahead of time is being really sick. We will only accept two such absence instances all semester before we consider a person in violation of our agreement.
8. We discourage negative behaviors such as disruptive talking, lack of respect for other group members, bringing other outside people to our meetings, eating meals at our meetings (drinks or snacks are ok), or trying to get out of a meeting early. We expect that all team members try to keep the group on task and not side track the conversation into sports or anything.

If any of us seriously break any of the items 1-8, for instance, refusing to let the instructor's decision solve a conflict, or consistently miss more than two meetings, then we will warn the person. If it happens again, then we go to the instructor and possibly that team member will be asked to leave our team.

TRY THIS:
Operating Agreement Excercise: Negotiating the Ground Roles

This exercise helps a team to generate an agreement on expected individual performance and behavior that all team members must follow. This is called an Operating Agreement. It's good to have a team goal in mind while creating this agreement, but it's not necessary. Examples are given on the previous pages.

When to use this exercise: During one of the initial team meetings; during the group's forming and storming stages.
Time for this exercise: 1 hour of focused team time (or longer, depending on the number of priorities)
Materials: Flip chart or board, colored markers/chalk, notebook paper, pens
Preparation: Read the previous text on Operating Agreements. You may also wish to bring your own version of an operating agreement to the meeting.
Instructions: During a team meeting, decide on which operational points are important for the smooth workings and success of your team. You do this by sharing individually created versions of a team operating agreement, or generating the agreement on a flip chart or paper through open group discussion during this meeting.

Since operating agreements focus on providing a roadmap of behavior and performance within the team, it may be helpful for your team to consider the following questions while writing your agreement. Select a reasonable number of points that each member agrees is important. There is no "perfect length" for an operating agreement, except that it should be complete enough to cover the points that your team believes is important. As for the following questions, you may not be concerned with all of them, and might have some that aren't even listed here.

- What can we each do to support the success of our team? (For instance: we agree to be active listeners, value our diverse opinions, attempt objective viewpoints, stay focused on the team mission and goals and not the success or failure of our own ideas within the team, etc.)
- How, when and where will team meetings be held?
- Who is responsible for what roles during the meetings? (Roles such as note taker, facilitator, etc....perhaps rotating tasks.)
- Who is responsible for physically keeping the team's notes, minutes, and products together and bringing these items to team meetings?
- How will conflicts within the team be resolved?
- Which behaviors are encouraged, and which are not?
- What constitutes a "consensus" decision in the group?
- What will happen if there is an 'even split' in opinions within the group?
- When will team consensus be important in decision making?
- What constitutes a major violation of this Operating Agreement (consistently missing meetings, not completing tasks in an acceptable time period, negative behavior during meetings, etc.).
- What are the consequences to someone who violates this Operating Agreement, and when will they be considered in violation of it (how many "chances" do they get)? (Examples of consequences are team assistance for an individual, going to the instructor, banishment in extreme cases.)

Number each of your operating agreement points and put them together in a single printed document.

You will recall that Operating Agreements are only effective if every team member buys into them. If any team member is uncomfortable with any of the points on the list, it's better to change the statement or remove it altogether than have an Operating Agreement that does not have 100 percent agreement, because then the team's Operating Agreement is worthless.

Assuming complete agreement, each of your team members should now sign and date the agreement. You may want to make a copy of the signed document for your instructor, and you certainly want to have each team member to have a copy.

The Agreement can be revised at a later date, as long as all the group members buy into the revision completely. Don't be afraid to put your Operating Agreement into effect during your team's meetings. Sometimes you or your team members may need to be reminded of the points within it. Therefore, it should be kept handy and at every meeting so it can be referred to when it's needed.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe personal and mutual accountability.
- Describe the benefits of being accountable.
- Explain how operating agreements help teams establish accountability.

ACCOUNTABILITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following six questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question. Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I place blame on myself or others easily.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
People feel comfortable relying on me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I avoid conflicts in scheduling that might reduce my effectiveness.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I immediately seek to understand what is expected of me when I take on a particular task.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I give credit to others when it's due, even if it seems to my disadvantage.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I accept responsibility for any negative consequences stemming from my actions.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always" categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of accountability. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you both as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of accountability, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your understanding of accountability. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

Accountability assessments within a team (same key, same procedure, but assessed separately for each team member. There is no scoring here; instead, you may wish to discuss the results with a team member or the instructor may ask for this information as part of a self-evaluation process.

Accountability assessment for ______________________________(team member's name)

Within our team, this person achieves the agreed-on performance standards (possibly in an operating agreement).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
This team member properly appreciates contributions from the rest of us.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
This team member gives credit where and when it's due.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
This team member exhibits a sense of responsibility for the team's mission or value statement.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
This team member admits difficulties with task completion and doesn't wait until deadlines to articulate difficulties (advance warning).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
This team member completes his or her assigned tasks to the best of her or his ability.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

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http://www.i5ive.com/welcome.cfm/personal_accountability (Very cool)

Maximizing productivity

Setting goals

Being proactive

Time management

"If you want to make good use of your time, you've got to know what's most important and then give it all you've got." – Lee Iacocca

Human beings are active by nature. We all have a set of wants, needs, and values. We all take actions to attain our wants, to meet our needs, and fulfill our values. To a certain degree, how active you are in pursuing these will determine whether or not you reach them. That is to say, your level of productivity is directly related to your activity. If your activities are properly planned, you can maximize your productivity. This section aims at providing you with some insight into the skills needed to properly plan your activities.

Part of achieving your wants and needs is simply knowing what they are! To do this, it is necessary to identify your personal values and what really matters to you. Then you can work on defining your goals based on these values. By defining what it is that you seek to accomplish, you are taking the first step towards achieving it. The word "productivity" itself stems from the word "produce." So, before you aim to maximize productivity, isn't it pretty important to determine what it is you plan to produce? This vital step, known as goal setting, is overlooked by many; we will see why it pays to make goal setting a priority.

While human beings are indeed active beings, there is a definite difference in productivity between proactive and reactive individuals. Being proactive allows you to take the steps to set your goals and plan your actions in the ways mentioned above. Proactivity is being assertive with your wants, needs, and values; it is also an attitude that will empower you to take the actions necessary to achieve these. By being proactive, you will be able to identify actions to take in order to accomplish your goals successfully.

The best way to achieve a goal, however, is not just to begin. With a plan to guide you, you can most easily get where you are going and accomplish the goals you have set for yourself. Time management, which plays an important role in this planning process, is a strategy that we utilize by organizing our actions effectively to maximize our long-term productivity. Surely we have all used time management in scheduling classes, meetings, study time, and work in ways that leave us some free time. However, the term doesn't simply refer to scheduling items that need to be completed; instead, it is taking the actions necessary to do these tasks effectively, based on your wants, needs, and goals. We will see how time management will contribute to maximizing your productivity by allowing you to regularly do the things that make you happy, while enabling you to do all the tasks that need to be done.

Determining what is important to you by examining your values will allow you to set the most appropriate **goals** for yourself. Being proactive will help you seize the **initiative** to take actions that will help you achieve your goals. A carefully managed plan of your **time** will help you effectively use your time and maximize your long-term productivity. This section will examine these three skills in further detail and help you develop a personal proficiency at each one.

Setting goals

Goal setting is the process of determining what you are trying to achieve and identifying the steps to get there. By setting goals, people will feel more organized, focused and motivated to achieve what they want in life. People who set goals are found to accomplish much more than people who do not set goals.

If goal setting is so important and beneficial, why don't people do it? There are four major reasons why people don't set goals. The first is that they don't see the importance of goals. If goal setting was not used or supported by a family member or an important figure in one's life, then we don't see the value and positive outcomes associated with it.

The second reason is that most people do not know how to set goals. Although many of us go through 12-16 years of education we are never taught how to set and use goals to our advantage.

The third reason we do not set goals is the fear of rejection. This fear is a result of constructive criticism from others. Every time we set a goal and someone tells us that we can't do it, we're wasting our time, or we're foolish, this fear is increased. The best way to avoid this is to keep your goals to yourself or only share your goals with those who are committed to achieving goals of their own, and those who are willing to help you accomplish your goals. This way no one can discourage you from success.

The last reason is the fear of failure. We fear failing at accomplishing our goals. We need to realize that the quest for all complex goals is filled with obstacles and delays. Too often, people do not understand the value of failure in achievement. Many times success is preceded by failure. We need to risk failure to learn valuable lessons and grow. As you may have heard, "You learn the most from your mistakes." Our natural tendency is to stay within a comfort zone, to be satisfied and complacent with our current level of achievement. But successful people move into the risk zone with no guarantee of success, but a guarantee of learning a great deal.

Goals serve as a guide by directing one's effort toward performance of important responsibilities and duties. They encourage a person to strive toward completing a task or raise one's level of performance. Goals that are challenging encourage a person to find more efficient ways to do work, while also increasing work effort (Yuki, 1990).

We all have limited resources and time: goal setting gives you the direction to achieve what is most important to you. The process of setting goals necessitates breaking our grand visions into more manageable, incremental steps. And, each step can be linked to a finite time period that fits into your overall schedule.

Moreover, goal setting increases effective communication between team members, providing common ground on which to develop teamwork. When we set goals, we create opportunities for our team to assess progress and measure success.

TRY THIS:

Putting personal goals into perspective

These value-based questions will enable you to put your various goals into perspective and help you determine what is most important in your life. Take ten minutes and think about the following and write them down in your course notebook.

- What are the five things you value most in your life?
- In thirty seconds write down the three most important goals in your life right now.
- What would you do if you won a million dollars in the lottery today?
- What would you do if you learned you only had six months to live?
- What have you always wanted to do, but have been too afraid to attempt?
- In looking back over the things you've done, what has given you the greatest feelings of self-importance?
- Imagine that you received a magic wish from a genie, what great thing would you accomplish if you knew that you would not fail?

Write down and think about your answers to these questions, you will gain insight into what your goals should be. The only question is how badly do you want to achieve them and are you willing to pay the price?

TRY THIS:
Setting goals on a smaller scale

Gain a greater appreciation for the value of setting goals on a smaller, more manageable scale.

- Turn to a clean sheet of paper in your notebook and clear your mind.
- Think about the five most important things that you want to accomplish the following day. This list could include items like getting 7 hours of sleep, finishing a rough outline of your report, or making time to catch up with a roommate.
- Write these items out (word for word) on the sheet of paper.
- Then tear it out and carry it with you the next day, referring back to it as a reminder.

At the end of the day, take out the list and evaluate on the scale of 1-10 how much progress you have made in accomplishing each individual goal. Think about what hindered you from completing any of the tasks. Refer to the tips above to help you deal with any obstacles that may reoccur. Keep these in mind as you write your list of goals for the following day.

GOAL SETTING TECHNIQUES

Here is a process that will aid in setting high quality goals:

1. Identify a vision.
2. With a broad vision in mind, think of how you see yourself and where you would like to be (or what your team wants to accomplish).
3. Articulate the goals necessary to realize the vision.
4. Brainstorm all things that need to happen to accomplish your vision.
5. Narrow down your list, ensuring that your goals are:
    - specific
    - challenging
    - set with a time limit for accomplishment
    - measurable
    - achievable
    - in domains over which you have control
    - worthwhile
6. Assess and prioritize the tradeoffs and balancing between multiple goals.
   This will most likely take some practice. Long range and short term goals may interfere with each other. You must gain experience in knowing when it is acceptable to postpone work on long term goal because of the immediacy of a short-term activity/obligation or vice versa. Not all goals are equally important, and sometimes one must be put on hold to work on another.
7. Monitor your needs.
   Analyze where you are in terms of your goals and objectives. What have you accomplished? What is there left to do? Who can you talk to for help in achieving your goals? These are questions you must ask yourself.
8. Verify goal achievements.
   When you have realized a goal under your prescribed deadline, celebrate it and be proud of your achievement.

Seven goal setting myths debunked

Myth #1: Goal setting is not that important.
Reality: Success requires goals - end of story! A life of meaning needs goals and specific plans to achieve them. Success does not happen by accident.
Myth #2: Goal setting is difficult and takes too much time.
Reality: Performance is accelerated by time invested in strategy. The game of life is won behind the scenes, in time spent on preparation.
Myth #3: The New Year is the best time to set goals.
Reality: There's no better time than now to take control of your life. Goal setting is not about timing; it's about decision. Life is not a dress rehearsal.
Myth #4: Goals don't need to be written. You can keep them in your head.
Reality: Written goals clarify thinking, objectify their potential and reinforce commitment. The palest ink is better than the strongest memory.
Myth #5: Long term planning is a waste of time.
Reality: Your future deserves consideration. It will someday be your present reality. It's worth considering seriously.
Myth #6: The best way to achieve a goal is to just begin.
Reality: Action without planning is the root cause of most failure. Success is a choice. With a plan to lead you, you can figure out how to get where you are going.
Myth #7: Goals only need to be reviewed once a year.
Reality: Inspect what you expect. Everything changes. Your goals must keep shaping, shifting and flexing to fit these fast-changing times. Adopt a regular and consistent review process. Use it.

Some common statements about team goals

"Everyone knows why we're here."

Watch out! At an initial meeting of a group, members will have different ideas about what the group should be, where it should be going, and what its goals should be. Your first task as a leader should be to help the group determine its purpose. This can be done by stating the purpose clearly (if it has been determined in advance) or to formulate the purpose of the group with the members.

"Now that we're all here, let's get going."

It's hard for a group of enthusiastic people to resist the temptation to jump right in and start planning programs, activities, and services. Everyone has ideas and wants to start working. As an effective leader, you must channel those energies into the setting of goals for the group. In the short run, some members may be bored ("why can't we do something?"), but in the long run, goals will give the group and its activities direction and can serve as motivation throughout the year.

"Everyone is equally committed to the goals."

Quite simply, in any group, members are not equally committed to the group or its goals. People have many reasons for joining groups and would like to see them work toward various goals. An effective leader will be aware of this variable commitment and will be able to work with it. Remember, people will seek to meet personal goals through group membership. The more that you are aware, as a leader, of those personal goals and can relate them to group goals, the more effective the group will be.

"Now that we have our goals, let's get going."

All too many groups take the time to establish goals, write them down and distribute them, and then forget them in their hurry to start doing things. Take the time to review goals, to ask how a given activity will help to fulfill a goal. Don't be afraid to revise goals if they are no longer reasonable — just don't forget them. "We've got goals, now what do we do with them?" Don't forget to also determine objectives, which are small steps towards reaching goals. Without clearly defined and shared objectives, everyone will have a way to meet the goals and efforts will become scattered. When objectives are stated and efforts are made by all group members collectively to meet them, the group will be more effective in meetings its goals.

Criteria for a good goal statement

1. It begins with the word "to" and contains only observable ACTION verbs such as: establish, create, increase, change, present, prepare, discuss, recruit, train, etc.
2. It should be a broad statement of what the group wants to accomplish within a relatively long time frame (e.g. a semester, quarter, or year). The date of completion should be specified as part of the statement.
3. It should reflect a specific and identifiable outcome or result; something that will indicate if and to what degree you accomplished what you set out to do.

It should contain no reference to "what is," but should instead look beyond the present and be a statement of something you would like to have happen.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain the four reasons people do not set goals.
- Understand why goal setting is important.
- State and describe the eight-step process that aids in setting goals.

SETTING GOALS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following eight questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I set long-range goals for myself.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I have a plan for the next few days (a to-do list, for example).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I accomplish what I need to do, daily.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
It's easy for me to find a direction for a project when I'm assigned it.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I keep my long-range goals in mind, even on a short-term basis.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I know when a goal is difficult or impossible to achieve.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I rate my goals in order of importance.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can set and meet deadlines.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of setting goals. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you as both an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of setting goals, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that that will heighten your proficiency in setting goals. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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Being proactive

To be proactive involves setting goals that are based on your wants, needs, and values and initiating activities to help you reach these goals.

People respond to one another with reactive behavior or proactive behavior. Proactive decisions are value-based ones, whereas reactive decisions are largely dependent on external stimuli. For instance, a value-based decision considers the internal principles, commitments, and ideals of the individual making judgment, whereas one that is based on external stimuli does not. Instead, reactive people build their emotional lives around the behavior of others, allowing these behaviors and attitudes of other people to control their own. They are driven by circumstances and by the conditions of their environment. Proactive people, on the other hand, are driven by values – carefully thought about, selected, and internalized values. By defining these values, you will be able to easily take the initiative to achieve your goals.

WHY BE PROACTIVE?

Being proactive allows you to seize the initiative and take responsibility to do whatever is necessary and consistent with your principles. It enables you to do the job while gaining self-confidence and respect from others.

Individually, proactivity will:

- Allow for a greater command of your environment and effectively self-manage a life-style of your wants, needs, and values.
- Help you take responsibility for the quality of relationships that you have with others.
- Help you acknowledge a mistake right away, correct it and learn from it, quickly turning a negative experience to a positive, valuable one.

In groups, proactivity will:

- Provide you wth the initiative to deal with controversy constructively, rather than putting it aside and aggravating the situation.
- Help you focus your group's energies in the appropriate direction without being too pushy, obnoxious, or aggressive.

HOW TO BECOME PROACTIVE

1. Choose your language carefully

Language, for example, is a good indicator of the degree to which we see ourselves as being proactive people. The language of reactive people absolves them from responsibility. This in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

- There's nothing I can do.
- That's just the way I am.
- I have to do that.
- I can't...
- I must...

Proactive language involves verbs that are deterministic. For instance, the above phrases from a proactive attitude may appear as follows:

- Let's look at our alternatives.
- I can choose a different approach.
- I will choose an appropriate response.
- I choose...
- I prefer ...

(Covey, 1989)

2. Be assertive

One way for you to demonstrate proactivity is through being assertive. Assertiveness is defined as a direct, honest, and appropriate expression of one's feelings and opinions. It allows for standing up for oneself in a way that the rights of another are not violated. Being assertive means that you take risks, such as speaking honestly about how you think and feel, and expressing what your desires, need, and wants are, while considering the feelings of others. Oftentimes assertiveness is seen as the middle ground between passivity and aggressiveness.

We all have the right to express our wants, needs, and values. The problem with trying to achieve this is that people are either too passive (saying nothing, giving up your interests, and keeping your wants to yourself) or too aggressive (trying to hurt the other person and demanding that people act in accordance with your wishes). It is also important to understand that others have the right to refuse to meet your wants and needs or facilitate your goal accomplishment if they see it as destructive to their own interests. That is, by asserting your needs and goals, do not expect people to do exactly as you wish.

Proactive individuals will typically display assertive behaviors in order to make clear their intentions and take steps towards achieving their goals. Showing passive behavior when your interests are at stake is indicative of being a reactive individual. This behavior will inhibit you from expressing yourself directly and honestly. It can cause you to build up anger and to feel negative about yourself. Furthermore, this leads to increased passivity with the unfortunate attitude that, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" (Davidson, 1997).

3. Make your interests known while in a team

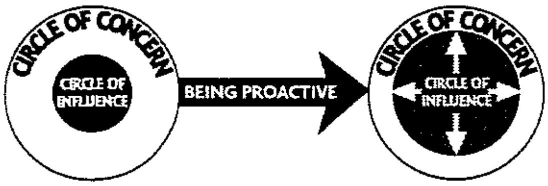
Following some tips at being proactive and assertive within your teams will help avoid or deal with conflict: (Johnson & Johnson, 1997)

- Take ownership of your interests. Make personal statements that refer to "I," "me," "my" or "mine." In doing so, you are helping make your intentions and subsequent behaviors clear.
- Acknowledge the goals of others in your team. Describe how the other person's actions are blocking what you want to achieve either individually or as a team.
- In doing so, be sure to separate the behavior from the person. This includes making a *behavioral description statement* that includes the specific behaviors you have observed and does NOT include any judgments, evaluations, or any inferences about the person's motives, personality, or attitudes. (See the Accountability section).

4. Focus on your circle of influence

Another excellent way of becoming more self-aware of our degree of proactivity is to look at where we focus our time and energy.

We each have a wide range of concerns – our health, our families, problems at school/work, the national debt, unemployment, nuclear war, etc. By looking at some things within this "Circle of Concern," it is evident that there are some things over which we have NO control and others that we can really do something about. We can identify these latter concerns by placing them in a smaller "Circle of Influence." By determining which of these two circles is the focus of most of our time, energy, and worries, we can discover much about our own degree of proactivity.



Proactive individuals will focus their efforts in the Circle of Influence; that is to say these individuals spend their time and energy impacting things that are somewhat within their control. The nature of their energy is positive, enlarging and magnifying, causing their Circle of Influence to increase.

Reactive people, in contrast, mainly focus their efforts in the Circle of Concern. They focus on the weaknesses of other people, the problems of the environment/context, and circumstances over which they have no control. And as long and you are concentrating your energies in the Circle of Concern, rather than Influence, then you are empowering the things within the Circle of Concern to control you: you aren't taking the PROACTIVE initiative necessary to effect positive change.

Changing our habits, changing our methods of influence, and changing the way we see our uncontrollable problems are all within our Circle of Influence. When we change one part of a chemical formula, we change the nature of the results.

TRY THIS:

Write a personal mission statement

"Writing a personal mission statement will be without question, one of the most powerful and significant things you will ever do to take leadership of your life. In it you will identify the first, most important roles, relationships, and things in your life—who you want to be, what you want to do, to whom and what you want to give your life, the principles you want to anchor your life to, the legacy you want to leave. All the goals and decisions you will make in the future will be based upon it." -Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Instructions: (You'll need to be online on a computer to do this exercise).

1. Type in the website: http://www.franklincovey.com/customer/missionform.html
2. Follow the directions on the screen.

Follow Up: Keep this statement with you and update it as necessary. Refer to it for guidance and assistance in dealing with difficult decisions and obstacles in your teamwork and in the rest of your life. As trust grows and develops among your team, share this personal mission statement with your team members.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define proactivity.
- Distinguish between reactive and proactive behavior and language.
- Name several ways proactive helps individuals and groups.
- Distinguish between assertiveness, passiveness, and aggressiveness and explain the effects of each type of behavior.
- Define and understand the Circle of Influence / Circle of Concern model.

BEING PROACTIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following six questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I can identify long-range goals for myself.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can identify proactive behavior in others and myself.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I feel in charge of making things happen.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I feel driven by my personal values.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I feel confident at focusing the group's energy toward our goal.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can identify strategies / methods towards managing my wants, needs, and and values.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I can identify strategies / methods towards managing my wants, needs, and and values.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of being proactive. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you both as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of being proactive, and as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your skill in being proactive. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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Time management

The way you choose to spend your time inevitably determines your success. Whether you realize it or not, every decision that you make during each day encompasses some aspect of time management. If you have ever asked yourself any of the following questions, time management can help you answer them:

- Why do I have so much to do and so little time?
- Should I study now or at midnight?
- Should I go to bed late or wake up early?
- Should I answer the phone and break my train of thought?

Time management is a strategy, or system, by which we organize our activities to effectively use our time and maximize long-term productivity. It implies active control and the making of conscious choices as to how to spend one's time (Walter and Siebert, 1993). The active control encompasses both our own activities and the activities of others that may affect us. The conscious choices encompass minor, daily decisions, such as when to set the alarm in the morning and what to do while your clothes dry in the laundromat, as well as major, life-long decisions, such as preparing to go to graduate school or opting to design and build your dream house.

Time management, therefore, isn't just a matter of scheduling the tasks that must be done or that "come our way;" rather, it is a way of initiating tasks and doing them effectively based on your preferences, strengths, desires, values, and long-term goals. Although sometimes we cannot avoid "adapting to events that are beyond our control," the heart of time management is "event control" (Winwood, 1990). In other words, with time management, we are not just accomplishing our assigned tasks in a timely and effective manner, we are choosing, creating, and prioritizing those tasks in the first place, then scheduling them to suit our individual styles.

Most of us would prefer to spend 10 hours next week at a high-paying consulting job to spending 40 hours at a minimum wage job at a coffee shop (though the brew does smell good). Nonetheless, not all necessary tasks are pleasant and not all our activities satisfy our ultimate expectations for ourselves. With time management, we do the unavoidable, necessary, and transitional tasks effectively, so we can spend increasingly more of our time on activities that we enjoy and value. Jogging 5 miles at 6 AM, then meeting a study group at 7:30 AM, before going to a 9:00 AM class, albeit a bit routine, may very well be part of an overall time management plan in which you've set your sights on being able to pursue your hobbies of painting and skydiving, separately, at least 10 hours every week while also working in your chosen career.

Thus, time management is a way to regularly do the things that make you happy, in a context of productively doing all the tasks that need to be done. At least one philosophy of happiness places self-control at the root, not material items or external stimulus and the like: "Productive work is the process through which [a person achieves] that sense of control over his life which is the precondition of his being able to fully enjoy the other values possible to him" (Branden, 1969).

The folks behind the popular and successful Franklin Planner System go one step further. They say that a cycle of Event Control, Productivity, and Self Esteem is set in motion with time management. That is, with time management, you control events, not the other way around; you become productive; and this productivity increases your confidence and self esteem, which leads to greater event control and productivity, and so on (Winwood, 1990). The cycle eventually enables you to achieve more and more of your goals and dreams.

WHY HAVE TIME MANAGEMENT?

People who have been given significant responsibilities from a young age (perhaps to help care for a younger sibling or serve as a student officer in high school) probably have a sense of the importance of time management. Similarly, people with numerous hobbies, activities, and ambitions have probably been practicing time management for many years. For others, however, the college years represent the first life period when time management becomes critical. What happens in college (or what happened when your mom went back to work and left you in charge of your little sister) that makes time management indispensable?

The answers include the following:

- You have many activities/tasks to accomplish in a limited amount of time.
- You have a hard time deciding what to do and when to do it, given all the demands and distractions.
- The tasks seem to be getting harder and you seem to be getting more and more exhausted.
- You observe other people from numerous other backgrounds with different perspectives on life, values, and time; and these can influence you either positively or negatively.
- Your achievements, or failures, are being judged, recorded, and passed along to people and organizations that may either promote or obstruct your path toward success.

No matter your current level of time management skill, you should be motivated to study the topic and read the following pages. If you are already convinced of time management's benefit, you will likely want to read further to see if you can pick up new and different ideas, techniques, strategies, etc. If you are new to time management, you will likely recognize that your performance and success is not currently at its maximum.

No matter where you begin, all students of time management end at the same place: you will be better organized for school, and your day to day life will be improved. You will work smarter, not harder.

BENEFITS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

You must realize that although time management does take time, and therefore poses an additional duty, its payoff can be tremendously greater than its cost. What can you expect to achieve if you implement a time management system? The answer to that question varies depending on how thoroughly you implement a system. You might simply find a way to make sure you have three nights each week for fun, rather than study. Or you might find that you are choosing to do activities this semester that you envision will lead to a major life achievement four years from now: living in Paris, speaking French, and working for an international newspaper. In general terms, you can expect the following outcomes from time management:

You will complete satisfactory work on time, if not ahead of schedule.

Example: Your laboratory report for chemistry is complete by Thursday evening, for a Friday deadline. Perhaps Friday morning, you'll give it another perusal to check for any further errors that can be changed.

You will have time for things you want to do as well as things you have to do.

Example: You've been invited to play walleyball at 11:00 PM on Thursday night, with some friends from a dormitory. You can go to this because you finished your laboratory report in the afternoon.

You will be better prepared for unexpected setbacks.

Example: On Friday morning, your roommate slips in the bathroom and sprains an ankle. She is distraught and looks to you for solace. You offer to drive her to the Emergency clinic. You no longer have that extra hour to proofread your laboratory report. Nonetheless, at least it is finished and you can turn it in on schedule in class later that morning.

A further set of outcomes include the following:

- Understanding key terms and concepts of time management
- Tailoring your own time management system to your habits and preferences
- Gaining control of your life
- Learning to save time and work efficiently

TIME MANAGEMENT BASICS

No matter which time management theory you study, you will find some common principles at the core of them all. These principles are concerned with the importance of your personal values, dreams, goals, and priorities. After laying out the fundamental principles, most time management theories include a system of planning and decision-making based on those principles. Your plans should put your principles into action. Finally, scheduling techniques and daily practices are introduced as the glue to hold the principles and the planning together. Thus, time management, in its simplest form, consists of principles, plans, and practices. This can be seen pictorially as a tether ball setup with the principles as the base and post, and your daily practices are the ball, going around and around, day in and day out, but not just in any old haphazard way, but tethered to the principles by plans.

PRINCIPLES

The basic principles of time management are simple: You should spend the time doing the things that are most important to you, or at least doing those things that will lead to doing the more important things in the future. Thus, you need to know which things are most important to you. If you don't know, find out immediately, before you make tomorrow's activity schedule. Time management requires personal (or team) goal setting. (See section on setting goals.)

Goals are linked closely with dreams, values, and priorities. Dreams are your grandest plans for yourself. So as not to confuse them with the mental activity during sleep, we can use the terms "long-term goals" or "ambitions" instead. Though it may seem hard to imagine that your ambition of being an architect has much to do with deciding how many hours to study for a physics exam, it does. Why are you studying physics in the first place? Do you need to do well in your physics class to be ultimately admitted into architecture school? Is a basic knowledge of physics at all useful to an architect?

The Franklin Planner System folks suggest that values can be categorized neatly into eight themes. You may ultimately develop your own synthesis of values, but these themes are a good place to start when thinking about your underlying values.

- Physical well being
- Family
- Spiritual/humanitarian
- Financial
- Company career
- Company strategic
- Community/political
- Educational/personal development

Our goals usually correlate with our values. For example, let's say that you have goals for this week of (1) sending out your resume to a local company and (2) going on a date with Pat. These goals are appropriate if you value both hard work and companionship. If you value, however, leisure time and solitude, then perhaps your goals for this week should be to earn just enough money delivering pizzas to be able to put gas in your car so you can drive to your log cabin on a remote Canadian lake. Your life is coherent when you can find an underlying value (or values) for every goal.

The goal to get married suggests a value placed on family. The goal to be a professional artist goes well with placing value on creativity, aestheticism, and individualism. By setting your long-term goals (say, be a successful entrepreneur in the building industry), you can set near-term goals (obtain a summer job as building inspector) and immediate goals (send out resume next Wednesday). Oddly, but not uncommonly, sometimes people have goals that have been imposed upon them, that aren't really their own, or maybe the goals were handy but not really thought out. For instance, many college students set goals of getting straight A grades. Have they really asked themselves if this goal suits their dreams and values? If you want to go to medical school, perhaps A grades are necessary; if you want to be an entrepreneur in the building industry, your grades are perhaps not as critical as getting hands-on experience, the sooner the better.

Once you've understood your dreams and values, you can identify your priorities. For a future architect, physics class is a higher priority than political science. For an entrepreneur, accompanying your boss on a new construction site walk-though is a higher priority than your regular Thursday afternoon tennis match with your roommate. Priorities can be set the night before for the following day, such as deciding to get the laboratory report finalized before you watch that video a friend lent you, or for a whole semester, such as "good grades and good health are my priorities."

PLANNING

When you have your values, goals, and priorities laid out, you can begin to plan you time in detail. You should make plans at various temporal levels: entire years, single semesters, months, weeks, and days. Many of us think about planning the hours of the day, but that should be done only after long-term planning is complete. Here's an example of one person's total plan.

In the next four years, I want to obtain a bachelor's degree. This coming semester, I want to earn 15 college credits, and work at a computer lab. Each month, I want to visit home once, go see one new release film, and make one entry in my journal. Every week, I want to reserve Friday nights for fun and spend no more than 25 hours on homework. On Mondays, I plan to swim at 7 AM, go to my two classes, and put in 4 hours of work at the computer lab. I will eat lunch by myself, using most of the free hour for leisure reading.

This plan is fine for starters, but to make it work, the planning phase of time management should be used to achieve personally-adapted efficiency. Therefore, we will refer to this schedule as the discussion of planning continues.

• Use biological prime time

Each person has an internal, biological clock. The planning of daily activities should take into account your natural energy cycles and biorhythms. Peak alertness and efficiency occur at different times of the day for different people. Peak periods should be used for difficult tasks and ones that require creativity. Simple or unimportant tasks should be scheduled for times of low mental and physical energy.

• Prioritizing

To determine the tasks you need and prefer to do, start with your values, goals, etc., as described in the previous section. Make a list of your highest-priority activities. Put them in the schedule at the most opportune times (based on necessity or your biological clock). When an activity has no prescribed start and end time, anticipate a realistic or efficient time period for it.

Add time for personal care, eating, and sleeping. Do an entire week; see if you have empty slots: that's free time for yourself, for friends, for leisure.

Or start with all the things you plan to do in the upcoming week, and evaluate them. Two evaluation methods are worth knowing about: ABC Prioritizing and the Payoff System. ABC prioritizing is a method of ranking your activities by priority: A for highest, B for middle, C for low. The point is simple: make sure that you get the A and B activities into your schedule before the C's. And, it's OK to leave out the C activities entirely.

The Payoff System is similar to ABC prioritizing, with the difference that you evaluate all your possible activities based on eventual payoff with regard to your overall goals. Will buying a new binder at the book store have high payoff, medium payoff, or low payoff? You will have your papers in a neat holding device, but what's wrong with your current binder? Will your grade in the class be affected by the new binder? Maybe that 45 minutes you will spend going to the bookstore, placing your backpack in a locker, and waiting in line while the cashier replaces the register tape roll could be spent on a higher priority task.

An Italian economist, Milfredo Pareto, identified the 80/20 formula, also known as the Pareto Principle. He saw that this formula was mysteriously applicable to all situations. He put it this way: the value of a small number of items in a group far outweighs that derived from the other items. Specifically, 20 percent of items in a group yield 80% of the value. This is useful to keep in mind when prioritizing. Apply this to tasks, letters in the mail, people you know, and so on. As an example, think about it with regard to the whole sum of activities you have planned for tomorrow. If you know that 20% of those activities will yield 80% of the benefit (1) be sure to do them before you do the others and (2) prune away much of the other 80% of activities so that your "critical 20%" becomes the focus of your day. One of this country's greatest contributors to corporate success and industrial quality, Joseph Juran, expressed his own version of the Pareto Principle: "vital few and the trivial many." You must apply this concept to tasks, interruptions, emails, phone calls, and so on.

> "A successful life does not result from chance nor is it determined by fate or good fortune, but from a succession of successful days."
>
> —Ari Kiev
>
> A Strategy for Daily Living

• Anticipate

Recognize that things may take longer than expected, and act accordingly. Avoid the parking meter syndrome (Mancini, 1994): you know you only need 5 minutes to find one item in the store and pay for it with cash, so you use just one quarter in a meter, which gives you a whopping 12 minutes of time. You go into a store, get delayed in the store due to the person in front of you holding up the line by waiting for a price check, and end up with a $10 ticket on your windshield. You're 15 minutes late to class to boot.

Don't do things at the last minute, allowing just enough time as you foresee to complete the task: it might take longer and you may not make the deadline; don't try to cut it close. If you get to appointments early, get something to do while you wait.

• Document

Now that you've prioritized your activities and anticipated realistic times for all of them, you can document them on your planner. If you think you'd like more free time or you can't fit everything into your week, you could try the next two techniques: combine and delegate.

• Combine or delegate

Once you've created a schedule, look it over and identify places where you can combine or delegate activities. Combining is easy, once you get the hang of it. Instead of scheduling 30 minutes after dinner to read the newspaper, read it on the bus during your two 15-minute rides to and from home. Delegating is harder than combining, but you can still do it when appropriate. If you volunteered to make the data tables to present your team's research findings, but you just don't feel like it, ask the other team members if someone else would actually enjoy making the tables. You could volunteer to do another part of the report.

Practices

Although the universe of time management practices is nearly infinite, you can't let that deter you from trying to incorporate some of them into your routine. If you do the following six, you'll probably get a large payoff for the time invested:

• Use to-do lists
To be effective, you need to focus on the present and not worry about something three weeks from now. You don't need to carry your monthly schedule with you at all times. Most successful time managers feel that a daily to-do list is ideal, for two reasons: It gives you a quick-check reminder of your priorities; and it allows you to physically write something down. Having something in writing makes doing it more likely and when done, the entry can be crossed off, which increases a feeling of accomplishment.

• Start now and don't procrastinate
Beating procrastination is one area of time management where you can see immediate results. It's simple: do it now. As simple as it sounds, people find a hard time doing it. Many people put things off, saying "I'll do it tomorrow."

Fear, conflict, stress, habits, addictions, ruts can all be causes of procrastination. These are considered internal forces causing procrastination. According to Marc Mancini, "They come, for the most part, from the psychological makeup of the procrastinator." The four typical internal forces are fear of change, fear of failure, addiction to cramming, and tendency to overcommit.

In some cases, external forces cause procrastination. These can include "unpleasant tasks, overwhelming tasks, unclear task flow, and unclear goals" (Mancini, 1994). This is not to say that there are not psychological reasons. But unpleasant or overwhelming tasks—and unclear goals or task flow—are enough to make anyone want to postpone the inevitable.

• Stick to schedules
You should both start and end scheduled activities on time. Because you've determined your schedule based on a thorough plan, don't change it based on spur-of-the-moment thinking.

• Reward your successes
You deserve rewards for achieving your goals, both long-term and short-term ones. Most people will celebrate after finishing a degree program, but celebrating after finishing a mid-term paper is less common. Nevertheless, you should celebrate any aspect of schedule completion you feel represents a step forward in your time management expertise.

• Avoid distractions and interruptions
We must put aside solid blocks of time to accomplish our goals. Fortunately, most distractions can be avoided with a little foresight. Identify places and time where/when you are least likely to meet with interruptions. Although some interruptions are inevitable, they do not have to prevent you from meeting your goals. You have a choice about how you react to interruptions. If you are studying for an exam, and a friend comes by to talk about his problems with a romantic partner, you can stop studying to talk or you can tell him that you will be available in a couple of hours when your task is done.

TRY THIS:
The procrastination self-assessment

Marc Mancini suggests the following self-assessment. Examine eight common causes of procrastination below.

Fear of change, fear of failure, addiction to cramming, tendency to overcommit, unpleasant tasks, overwhelming tasks, unclear task flow, unclear goals

1. Cross out those that you feel are least relevant to your own procrastination tendencies.
2. Put a star over the one you feel is the principal cause of your own delaying tactics.
3. Answer the following questions:

A. Was this exercise an easy one for you? If so, then you probably are not in a procrastination rut. If you are in such a rut, then the challenge of getting out may be relatively simple for you.

B. Was it a difficult exercise? Then your procrastination may be caused by a complex web of interdependent factors. Yours will be an uphill battle; you will have to be tenacious. But it can be done.

C. Was your starred factor a result of internal forces? Then you will need to look deeply into yourself for the answers.

D. On the other hand, was the starred factor a result of environmental or external forces? Then, to get results, you will have to do all you can to reshape the environment you work and live in.

- **Be flexible**

Although we all have experienced days when events unfolded according to our schedule, sometimes "things come up." At such points, you should allow for flexibility. You drive to a job interview and you find out the interviewer had to fly to New York suddenly. A secretary asks you to call next week to reschedule. You are kept waiting at the health service center 40 minutes beyond your appointment time. The best response is to adjust your schedule, not give up on it.

- When a meeting or appointment is canceled, go exercise or check your email.
- While waiting excessively at the doctor's office, read a textbook, not the travel magazine.
- Your flexibility may help out others around you. They may be grateful to you and consider you a person they can count on. A person in your study group might want to move the study session up from Thursday night to Wednesday. Say "yes" if you can switch your Wednesday activity to Thursday without harm to yourself.

BEATING PROCRASTINATION

The following is not an exhaustive list of the cures for procrastination. Nonetheless, you should find some novel and sensible suggestions below. Everyone should find at least one or two cures that should suit their style. They were inspired by Mancini (1994) and Burns (1989).

- *Find the motivation in the task.* Motivation doesn't come first; productive action does. You have to "prime the pump" by getting started whether you feel like it or not. Once you begin to accomplish something, it will often spur you on to do even more.
- *Ride the momentum.* Once you get going, keep going as long as your concentration stays strong and fresh. But when your mind wanders, stop. Take a break.
- *Divide and conquer.* Breaking a major job into small pieces can help defeat an overwhelming task.
- *Do it the first thing in the day.* Often, if you can do an unpleasant task before you have had much time to think about it, it will seem easier. Or, if you do want to spend some time thinking, why not think about how unburdened you will feel for the rest of the day when the task is done?
- *Find a solitary place to do it.* Is there a room at work or at home where few people ever go? Hide yourself there to do the task that should not be interrupted. Close your office door, and make clear to everyone that you are not to be disturbed. Or go off on a "work vacation" to do what you must in pleasant surroundings, undisturbed.
- *Change your physical environment.* Old habits cling to old places. Try a new room, a new chair, a new office, a new anything You will be surprised how such a change can spark actions on duties you are avoiding.
- *Change your routines and patterns.* Is there something you do not want to do tomorrow? Then drive to work by a different route. You may be surprised at how you might feel toward a procrastinated obligation when you get there.
- *Do nothing.* Just walk into your home or office, sit down, stare at the wall. You will soon be so bored that a change will be precisely what you want.
- *Make an advantage/disadvantage list.* This is for heavy duty kinds of unpleasantness. List all the positive things that will result from getting the task done, then list all the disadvantages to doing it. Just seeing it all on paper may relieve your anxiety.
- *Find somebody else to do it.* Remember this: What you find unpleasant, someone else might actually enjoy.
- *Get out of overcommitments.* Review your current situation and list five examples of things you may be overcommitted to. Now cross out two or three that you should and could unburden yourself from. Decide, right now, to do it. For the time being, continue to honor the other commitments. You may find time to accomplish them easily since two or three crossed-out items have freed hours and energy for the task.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain what time management is and how it helps.
- Describe the relationships between values, goals, and priorities.
- Identify and explain the three steps of scheduling.
- List and describe time management techniques.

TIME MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Pick words that you think best apply to time. This questionnaire determines if time is your enemy, something to be filled, or something to be taken charge of to fit your goals and lifestyle. Read the following list, then circle the five words that you feel best apply to time. Allow yourself a little creativity in your choices (from Marc Mancini 1994).

spent
opportunity
exhausting
busy
mountainous
valley-like
energetic
jammed

white
lively
hollow
handy
relentless
available
restless
blank

friendly
unclaimed
ready
effective
tense
empty
bumpy
exciting

How can you interpret your choices? If the majority of your choices include the following, valley-like, white, hollow, available, unclaimed, ready, blank, or empty, you view time as something to be filled. On the one hand, this can be positive: you're probably not under very great time pressures. On the other hand, you may be too passive about time, allowing others to dictate its use to you.

If the following terms dominate your choices, spent, exhausting, mountainous, jammed, relentless, restless, tense, or bumpy, you view time as an enemy. This is dangerous. It can mean that you're presently overstressed by environment and responsibilities or that you feel that time controls you. In either case, some change will be necessary before you can truly manage your time.

Did the following words compose the majority of your choices: opportunity, busy, energetic, lively, handy, friendly, effective, exciting? If so, you're the kind of person who takes charge of time, who reshapes it to fit your goals and life-style.

What if no category won? Like many people, you probably have mixed feelings about time. Your goal should be to view time as an ally, not as a bully or enemy.

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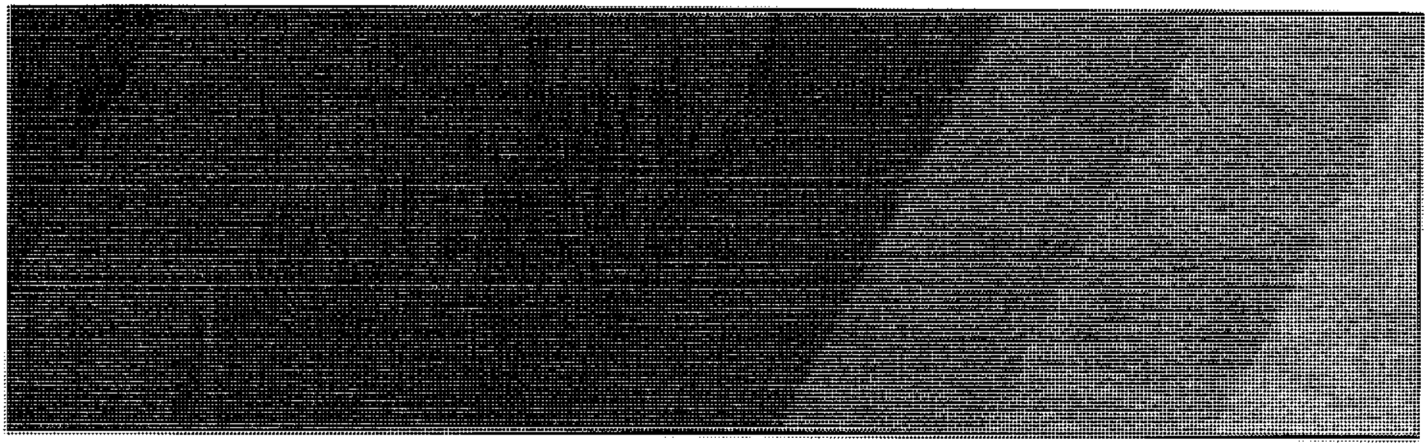
Working with others

Sharing information

Active listening

Giving & receiving feedback



One of the main things that distinguishes work in the professional world from some kinds of student work is that it is social—it always takes place in collaboration with other people—and in order to be social we must be able to share information. But we all have our own histories, skills, experiences, worldviews, goals, and feelings. These differences can lead to misunderstandings or, perhaps worse, to the illusion of understanding. If we don't do something about these differences, if we don't recognize that they are there, we quickly run into problems. For example, if you and your team members assume that you have clearly communicated the location of the next meeting, you may be surprised when team members show up at two different locations of Cava Java. The process of doing something about those differences is called communication. Everyone knows what communication is, but this section will attempt to give you some insight into the skills needed to succeed at this critically important task.

Communication is often presented in terms of a model that resembles a radio or a telephone. At one end we have a transmitter (the speaker) who has something to communicate (ideas, thoughts, emotions, plans). At the other end is a receiver (the hearer). Communication takes place when the speaker "encodes" a message in some special form (say, language) and transmits it to the receiver, who "decodes" the message, opens it up, and places the contents in his or her mind.

Communication, however, is more than just a matter of transmitting bits of information from one person to another—it is the sharing of knowledge between people. The very word stems from the Latin communis, "shared." Since we can't download the contents of our heads to one another, communication consists of two people each trying to judge what the other already knows and then offering the information needed to create a growing base of shared knowledge that will allow the two to work effectively together.

This is a tricky task, and one that has many ways of going wrong. The speaker can misjudge what the hearer already knows, and thus go over the hearer's head, as when a lecturer goes into technical details that the audience isn't equipped to comprehend. Or the hearer can get distracted, and miss crucial bits of the message. In fact, for things to go right, a number of things have to happen:

The speaker has to adequately understand what the hearer brings to the conversation—not just what he or she knows, but also the feelings, assumptions, biases and background that we all have—and to effectively articulate the new knowledge that he or she is trying to convey. Being vague, evasive, rude, longwinded, or off-topic all get in the way of effectively getting the message across. Effective communication occurs when a speaker does more than just speak, but rather **shares information.**

The listener has to **actively listen** to what the speaker has to say, to take responsibility for understanding and evaluating the speaker's message and to try to identify areas where problems can arise.

Both parties have to be willing and able to effectively **give and receive feedback**, both to ensure that the message has been received and understood and that the channels of communication remain open and functioning.

In this section, we'll look at these three basic competencies.

Sharing information

The one element without which no team can function is communication. In fact, it's fair to say that teams could not even *exist* without being able to communicate in some way. Without communication, a team is just a set of individuals, doing separate sets of tasks without any way of coordinating their efforts. To be able to work together, we have to be able to share information in some way, whether it is spoken language, email, hand signals, facial expressions, or the simple act of being in a particular place at a particular time.

Most team projects, however, are basically dependent on one form of communication above all others: talk. Talk can be characterized as an informal, interactive exchange of information. A team's success, or failure, can depend in many ways on the talk that goes on within the team. When more than one person is involved in a task, there are inevitable differences: in team members' knowledge of the issues, in their commitment to the project, in the way they understand their goals, and in their knowledge of and feelings toward one another. Any of these things can cause problems: team members can come to a project with all kinds of good will and energy, and end up working at cross purposes, duplicating each others' work, overlooking important issues, or simply being unable to work together. To avoid these kinds of problems, being able to communicate effectively is essential. Good communication is no guarantee of success, but *poor* communication is tantamount to a guarantee of failure. In this section, we'll look at some of the outstanding issues communication raises for teams.

Communication as teamwork

Another name for the "talk" we mentioned above is dialogue. Contrary to what many people think, the *di-* in dialogue has nothing to do with the number two (as in two people having a conversation). Instead, the prefix *dia-*, from ancient Greek, means "across," and logos means "word" or "idea." Dialogue is the sharing of words and ideas across the space that divides people.

Let's divide dialogue into three types, which we'll call *conversation*, *discussion*, and *debate*. Everyone is familiar with conversation- the pleasant, unfocused kind of talk that unfolds without a real agenda between people who are comfortable with each other. Everyone is equally familiar with debate, whether of the high school debate-club sort or the full-out verbal combat that takes place in a courtroom. Somewhere in between lies discussion, which is friendly but focused discussion that aims to resolve or understand some set of problems or issues.

In normal conversation, although a number of topics might be discussed (some of which may be important to many participants), the subject matter isn't really the overall focus. Instead, it's the participants themselves and their relationship: simply enjoying the company of someone you find interesting and worth spending time with. At the other extreme of debate, the personal relationships of the participants are immaterial; what matters is making your case and proving your point. What matters is *winning*. This adversarial system has come to be the standard way of resolving issues in some areas: if you're in court, for example, it's good for you when your attorney is focused utterly on winning. But in other areas, the polarizing effect of debate can be a real obstacle to getting anything accomplished, causing people to hold to entrenched positions rather than looking for a workable consensus on what to do next. Practical problem solving is the domain of discussion instead, where the need to enjoy each other and the need to win are both put aside for the sake of finding ways to get things done.

Does this sound familiar? It's exactly the distinction made in earlier sections of this coursepack between team-oriented, self-oriented, and task-oriented behavior, only now applied to talk. As team members, we always have a choice of attending to the maintenance of the team, progress on the project, or our own position, and we choose how to express this in our behavior. Conversation, in our sense, is about feeling good as a team; debate is about raising one's own status by "winning" the argument; discussion is about making progress on the task at hand. As with team behavior in general, both team and task orientations are necessary to an effectively functioning team, while orienting mainly to the needs of the self can have a destructive impact. So our goal is to find ways of communicating that enhance the team and task aspects of our projects and minimize the self-oriented aspects. The question, then, is: how do we contribute to the team by talking?

Everyone communicates, but not everyone communicates effectively. Effective communication adds "value" to the team. In a professional setting, "value" doesn't necessarily mean style, beauty or wit; it's something that furthers your organization or your team in its task. This doesn't mean that every word you utter has to be business and only business; every team needs to be able to relax, joke and enjoy each other's company. What you have to contribute via talk is information, whether it's facts, ideas, questions, feelings, jokes, or something else. What's important is that you have something in your head and you help your team by sharing it.

Value-added communication

What makes talk valuable? The obvious answer, of course, is that you have something worthwhile to say. But the way we say things can be a major factor as well. We're all familiar with people who seem to have brilliant things to contribute, but are so inarticulate or so obnoxious that it becomes a chore to pay attention. Such people are essentially depending on their listeners to do the job of finding the valuable parts and ignoring the rest. Not all listeners are willing or able to do that, so if you don't want your valuable contributions to go down the drain, you should try to make their task easier.

Know your audience

The goal of communication is shared understanding, but this has to start from some common ground between speaker and listener. The better you understand what your audience brings to the conversation, the better your chances of building on that to achieve your goals. Know the following about your audience:

- Knowledge
- Interest
- Attitude

Misunderstandings are inevitable, but too many arise from problems that can be simply addressed, such as a basic misjudgment of the audience. We may misjudge how much technical knowledge our audience has and end up mystifying or boring them. We may misjudge how interested they are and fail to do the simple task of motivating them to listen.

As you get to know the people you're working with, you get better at anticipating their communication needs, their styles of thought, their degrees of expertise. With some careful attention to this, you will be better able to organize your communication so that they can understand and accept your message.

Be respectful

In effective teams, everyone has to be able to contribute. Just as importantly, everyone has to *feel* able to contribute.

Furthermore, in the contemporary university or workplace, you will be working with people from a variety of backgrounds. In these circumstances, it's easy to *inadvertently* give the impression that you lack respect for someone. What you think of as "joking around" may feel deeply offensive or insensitive to a teammate, or your style of conversation may be so different that your teammate may feel excluded or ignored.

There's not much you can do to avoid this, short of becoming an authority on conversational style. What you *can* do is to be up front about the problem. Let your teammates know that you don't mean to be disrespectful, and periodically check to make sure that everyone is feeling comfortable. This can be done without making an issue of it, and it's just the kind of "maintenance" work that keeps small issues from snowballing.

Be comfortable

The converse of being respectful is this: just as you should be careful not to make others uncomfortable, you should be careful not to let others make *you* uncomfortable. It's easy to let yourself be intimidated into silence if peer pressure seems to dictate that. If you're trying to make decisions based on consensus, it may be tempting to "agree for the sake of consensus." But the essential counterpart to this is "principled objection": if you have something to say, you have a responsibility to say it. It may very well be *your* perspective that provides the answer to a problem.

Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

This sounds simpler than it is. You can "tell the truth" in a trivial sense—only say things you know to be true—and still fail to communicate effectively. If you've ever failed to understand a textbook or a lecture that the instructor thinks is "perfectly clear," you know this already. To be successful at sharing information, your messages have to be:

- Explicit
- Clear
- Concise
- Complete

A real case

Toward the end of a four-month long project, three members of a student team came to talk to their instructor. One, Patrick, was clearly looked upon as the leader by the other two.

"We need to talk to you about Andrew," Patrick said. "He hasn't contributed to the project at all. At meetings he just sits there, he never says a word no matter how hard we try to get him to talk. We all have lots of ideas for the project, and we don't feel that it's fair Andrew should get the credit for all our work. We want him off our team."

The instructor promised to look into the situation and agreed to "grant a divorce" if it came to that. Before she had a chance, however, Andrew came by her office.

"I need to talk to you about my team," he said. "I feel like nobody ever listens to me. They all talk so much I have trouble getting a word in, especially Pat. He's always badgering me to talk, but before I even have a chance, he's off on some tangent. They treat me like I'm stupid, but I'm not, I just have a hard time expressing myself quickly. At this point I don't even feel like I am a member of the team. I don't know what to do."

What do you think the problem is here? What should the instructor do? What could the team members have done to avoid this problem?

Much of the world prefers to communicate indirectly— you don't say "Meet me at 10:00 in the lounge," you say "I'll be in the lounge at 10:00." As long as your listeners know how to interpret this, everything is fine, but if they don't, you find yourself in the lounge, alone, at 10:00. Maybe they went to the wrong lounge, maybe they got the wrong night, maybe they didn't realize you were telling them to meet you there. You need to state, explicitly and directly, what you mean, and even check if you think there's some possibility of misunderstanding ("OK, is everyone straight that we're meeting in the blue lounge at ten tonight?").

It's also important to provide the right *quantity* of information. If you give too much, you risk overtaxing your listeners, or confusing them about what your main point is. If you don't give enough, you also may confuse them or worse, they may misunderstand without knowing they misunderstand. Try to be concise, but not so concise that you end up being cryptic, and ask for feedback on what you say so that you can be sure you are understood.

You can't not communicate

• **Make your verbal and nonverbal messages congruent.** We all send messages non-verbally as well as verbally, by our gestures, our facial expressions, our posture, our use of "personal space," and in many other ways. Non-verbals are very powerful, if almost unconscious, ways of communicating attitudes and emotions. If your non-verbal message is inadvertently one of boredom, no matter how much you say you're interested, your audience will at least suspect that you really are bored. However, if your non-verbals say "I'm interested" (by looking at the speaker, leaning forward, nodding), your audience will be encouraged to contribute more.

Here are some of the major factors that affect how others perceive us:

- Facial expression
- Gaze
- Posture
- Gesture
- Proximity
- Clothing

• **Understand the norms** of the particular type of communication you're engaged in. Informal conversation has different norms than a formal presentation; a written report has different norms than a personal letter; conversing with Japanese people may work differently than conversing with Americans. To be truly effective, you must understand the norms of the situation. If you break the rules, you may accidentally give offense, or be misunderstood, or simply be seen as *weird*.

• **Use multiple methods** to get your ideas across. Not everyone thinks the same way you do. Some people are more proficient at getting ideas verbally, others, think visually, some spatially. By reinforcing your words with images— diagrams, sketches, and symbols— you can increase the impact of your communication.

The importance of nonverbal communication

We use nonverbal communication all of the time but we generally fail to realize how important it is. The following activity demonstrates the importance of nonverbal communication. With a partner, select a controversial topic such as mandatory drug testing, corporal punishment, foreign language requirements, or gun control. One of you should argue each side of the argument in a 5-10 minute discussion. Here's the catch—you should not use any nonverbal communication. Do not use hand gestures, facial expressions, or other forms of nonverbal communication. How did it feel to argue your point without using nonverbal communication? Was it more difficult than you expected?

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain why communication is important in a team.
- Name and describe techniques to more effectively communicate (i.e. – Know your Audience)
- Explain why nonverbal communication is important.

SHARING INFORMATION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following ten questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question. Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I encourage others to ask questions until everyone understands what they need to.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When I don't understand some instructions, I ask for clarification until I am sure of what the speaker wants me to do.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I let others know when I am irritated or impatient, embarrassed by, or opposed to something someone says or does.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I encourage others to share their impressions of my behavior and actions.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I check to make sure I understand what other speakers mean before agreeing or disagreeing.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I paraphrase or restate what others have said before responding.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I keep my thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reactions to myself.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I check out what other people are feeling and how they're reacting rather than assuming I know.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I let others know when I like or approve of something they say or do.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
All the information I have about a current topic of discussion is known to others that I work with.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always" categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of sharing information. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you both as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of sharing information, and to use this material as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that that will heighten your proficiency in sharing information. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

Active listening

Listening is a crucial part of communication. Whether we are presenting information to a group or engaging in one-on-one conversation, we hope to get our point across. We try to be conscious of our audience and hope that they are *listening* to our message. But what about when we are the listeners? Do we use the same listening skills as (we hope) our audience does when we are speaking?

Listening is more than merely hearing, and active listening is more than merely listening. Active listening is taking responsibility for understanding the speaker's message and making the speaker feel as if their message is important. It's difficult to develop effective interpersonal skills if you are not an effective listener – messages can be misinterpreted, misunderstandings can occur, and conflicts can result.

It is important to communicate to the speaker that you are attentive and interested in hearing the message. Regardless of whether you agree or disagree, giving the speaker your full attention is essential to developing an informed opinion. Your role as the listener should be to try to understand what the speaker wants to communicate as opposed to what you want to hear. The challenge for the active listener is to absorb what is being said and to withhold judgment on content until the speaker is finished (Robbins & Hunsaker, 1996).

How does active listening help?

Although listening is a critical part of communication, most formal training in communication focuses on reading, writing, and presentation skills. Becoming an active listener is a valuable tool in developing the quality of our overall communication skills. In most instances, we perceive that our ability to show value and competence is centered in our ability to speak rather than to listen. While response is an important part of communicating what we have absorbed through listening, it is important to *first listen* to the message. We need to realize that we are not perfect listeners. We are inundated with distractions, both those we can and cannot control. As responsible listeners, we must do our part to reduce those distractions that we can control. One barrier to effective listening is our ability to listen at almost twice the rate of the spoken word. As a result, we may tend to jump ahead of the speaker, reach premature conclusions, construct rebuttals to what we are hearing, or daydream.

The benefits of active listening are numerous. Active listening improves relations between individuals. Genuine communication can be successfully established between individuals that take time to listen to one another. This, in turn, can result in increased effectiveness among individuals, groups and teams. Conflicts can be resolved more easily.

Individuals derive many benefits from active listening:

- Increased understanding.
- Increased positive participation in communication.
- Increased comfort.
- Increased productivity.
- Enhanced relationships with others.

For groups, active listening benefits include the following:

- Easier conflict resolution.
- Improved communication between team members.
- Clarified meaning(s).

How to be an active listener

Individuals can use several techniques to improve their active listening skills. You must be conscious of your environment and behavior to improve active listening skills. As the listener, you must take responsibility for understanding, seeking clarification, and making the speaker feel comfortable in delivering the message. Among the various techniques for effective listening are both verbal and nonverbal cues.

TRY THIS:
Active Listening Practice

Get into pairs. In five minute intervals, spend time just listening to the other person. Do not ask questions, or otherwise respond verbally in any way. Try only to respond in ways that display active listening. Each person takes a turn doing this.

After both members have had a turn, reflect on the experience. What was challenging about this exercise? What did you learn about the skills involved in active listening?

Verbal Cues for Active Listening

Ask questions for clarification.

If the speaker states something that is confusing to you, be sure to ask him/her to clarify what was said. Ask questions to be sure you understand the speaker's message and to avoid misunderstandings.

Reflect and paraphrase or summarize periodically.

Restate what the speaker has said in your own words. Paraphrasing and summarizing allows you to measure your effectiveness as a listener. If you are truly listening, you should be able to restate the speaker's idea in your own words. In addition, this allows you to clarify the accuracy of your understanding.

Do not interrupt or argue.

Allow the speaker to communicate the message fully before jumping to any conclusions. By interrupting, you cut off the speaker before receiving the entire message. This can lead to conflict and arguments. Be respectful.

Make statements to validate the speaker's experiences and perspectives.

Sometimes, the experiences and perspectives of the speaker may not be like your own. This does not mean that they are not valid, nor does it mean that your experiences and perspectives are not valid. However, making statements to validate the speaker's experiences and perspectives assure the speaker that you understand the value of their perspective.

Disclose your own experiences.

Share your perspectives with the speaker. Sometimes you will find you have more in common than you may have thought. On the other hand, you may not, but take this as an opportunity to learn from each other.

Use "I" messages.

It is important to own your statements. Using "I" messages allows you to communicate your feelings and let the speaker know how his/her message is affecting you.

Nonverbal Cues for Active Listening

Maintain the appropriate distance.

This depends on the relationship between you and the speaker and the content of the conversation. Situating yourself close to the speaker may communicate your interest in the message. However, depending on the situation, it may communicate confrontation and may be perceived as an invasion of personal space. Assess the situation and make the best judgment after reviewing all the factors.

Make appropriate eye contact.

Look at the speaker, but do not try to outstare them. Good eye contact communicates to the speaker that he/she has your attention and is a way to encourage the speaker as well. Ironically, even though "you listen with your ears, people judge you whether you are listening by looking at your eyes" (Hunsaker and Alessandra, 1986, p. 123). Eye contact can aid in reducing distractions as well. If you are looking at the speaker, it is unlikely that something else will occupy your attention.

Lean forward slightly and face speaker squarely.

Along with eye contact, leaning forward shows that you are interested in the speaker's message. Proper body positioning communicates that the speaker has your full attention and interest.

Avoid distracting actions and gestures.

Do not fidget, doodle, play with your pencil, shuffle papers or keep your eye on the clock. You can not give the speaker your full attention if you ae engaged in other activities. The result may be your missing an important part of the message.

Exhibit appropriate facial expressions.

Be aware of your facial expressions. Facial expressions can be windows to your thoughts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define active listening.
- Explain the benefits of active listening.
- List and describe both verbal and nonverbal active listening techniques.

ACTIVE LISTENING SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following TEN questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I am able to avoid distraction (such as phones or outside activity) when in a conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I avoid writing or doodling during a conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I gaze at my partner during a conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I use the speaker's name in the conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I resist the temptation to finish the speaker's sentences or draw conclusions before they offer them.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I avoid making distracting gestures, like looking at my watch or shuffling through my bag.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I sit comfortably and at attention when in a conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I speak slowly and in a relaxed manner during a conversation.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I feel comfortable saying "I don't know" if I can't offer a firm answer.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I help the speaker bring the conversation to closure by forging mutual conclusions and observations	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of active listening. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of active listening, as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your active listening skills. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

Feedback

What is feedback?

Feedback is the information that people receive from others about their own behaviors.

We must all develop competency in giving, soliciting and receiving feedback. Giving feedback is the activity of providing information to others about their behaviors and the effects of their behaviors. Soliciting feedback is asking others for their perceptions of your own behavior. Receiving feedback involves listening to, assessing, and making constructive use of feedback.

It can be uncomfortable to give or receive feedback. When giving feedback we may worry about hurting the recipient's feelings. We may also worry that we are not competent to evaluate the recipient's behavior or that the recipient will react negatively (London, 1997). When receiving feedback, we may feel apprehensive or defensive. These feelings may cause us to ignore the feedback (London, 1997). Fortunately there are a number of techniques that can make both giving and receiving feedback more comfortable.

Feedback can be given in constructive or destructive ways. Constructive feedback is both considerate of the recipient's feelings and useful to the recipient. In order to be effective, you should give feedback that specifically describes the recipient's behaviors and the effects of those behaviors. If the recipient is being asked to change a poor behavior, suggestions for how to improve must be given. Feedback is destructive when it is inconsiderate or when it is too general. When given constructively, feedback can help recipients identify behaviors they should maintain or change and can be relatively comfortable for both giver and recipient.

How does feedback help?

Feedback is valuable because it reinforces desired behaviors and corrects poor behaviors (London, 1997). In work settings, feedback can allow you to improve by giving you the ability to reflect on other's perspectives of your performance. In team settings, feedback can facilitate interpersonal interaction as well as improve your team's task performance. Constructive feedback can also be useful in addressing the behavior of our roommates, romantic partners, and family members. Constructive feedback lets us know how our behavior is affecting others and suggests how our behavior could be improved.

As we become skilled at giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback, we will:

- Be able to give feedback by communicating to others specific information about their behaviors and the effects of their behaviors in an immediate way.
- Know how to solicit feedback from others, and feel comfortable seeking information from others about our performance
- Feel comfortable listening to feedback and use this information to maintain or change our behaviors.

In teams, feedback is very important because our behavior is not always conducive to positive relationships among team members or to achieving the team's goals. Because others may be reluctant to give us feedback, it is important that we know how to ask for feedback. Developing competency in giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback allows us to be more effective group members. Feedback benefits us by helping us improve ourselves and benefits our team by making all members better contributors. Feedback helps identify problematic behavior and reinforces positive and effective patterns of behavior.

TRY THIS:
Developing Feedback Skills

The following scenarios are for you to discuss with teammates, classmates, or friends. Following the guidelines for constructive feedback, generate specific responses for the following situations.

- Think of three things a friend or relative did well recently. Did you praise the person at the time? If not, why? The next time that person does something well, how can you give him or her positive feedback?
- You have a good friend who has a mannerism (speech, body movement, style of dress, or the like) that you think is inappropriate and detracts from the overall impression that he or she tries to make. If you were to mention the mannerism to this person, how would you do it?
- How would you go about giving feedback to your instructor(s) about how their courses are going thus far? How would you handle topics that are difficult?

How to Give, Solicit, and Receive Feedback

There are some simple ways to make feedback more comfortable and effective for both the giver and the recipient. Feedback should be given frequently because, when feedback is a common occurrence, people are less apprehensive about it. Furthermore, feedback should be given at the time when it's needed. It is more effective to tell someone about the effects of something that they have just done than it is to give them feedback about something they did several weeks ago.

There are a few conditions under which we shouldn't give out feedback. It is inappropriate to give feedback when we know little about the circumstances in which the behavior occurred. It is also inappropriate to give out negative feedback when we don't have a long-term involvement with the person or project. Feedback should usually be given in private. Also, it's important to ensure that there is ample time for discussion of the feedback with the other person, so they can have time to understand what you're saying and the reasons why you're saying it. The following guidelines can make the feedback process more effective and comfortable for both giver and recipient.

Giving Feedback

1. Be specific and descriptive.
   Tell the recipient exactly which behaviors you are praising or criticizing. It can help to use recent examples of the behavior. Avoid making broad generalizations about the recipient's behavior.
2. Be accurate.
   Only give feedback about things you know for certain. Don't exaggerate when describing the recipient's behavior. Avoid using "never" and "always."
3. Give task-relevant feedback.
   Relate feedback to project goals. Don't give feedback about personality. Feedback which is not relevant to the project is inappropriate.
4. Avoid futile feedback. Only give feedback about behaviors that the recipient has the power to change. Giving feedback about things that are beyond the recipient's control is likely to be useless and frustrating.
5. Avoid labels and judgmental language.
   Labeling the recipient or their behavior will often trigger a defensive reaction. Furthermore, labels are often ambiguous. Words like "bad" and "worst" should also be

An Easy-to-Remember Guide for Constructive Feedback

	Sequence	Explanation
1.	"When you…"	Start with a "When you…" statement that describes the behavior without judgment, exaggeration, labeling, attribution, or motives. Just state the facts as specifically as possible.
2.	"I feel…"	Tell how their behavior affects you. If you need more than a word or two to describe the feeling, it's probably just some variation of joy, sorrow, anger, or fear.
3.	Because I…"	Now say why you are affected that way. Describe the connection between the facts you observed and the feelings they provoke in you.
4.	Pause for discussion	Let the other person respond.
5.	"I would like…"	Describe the change you want the other person to consider…
6.	"Because…"	…and why you think the change will alleviate the problem.
7.	"What do you think?"	Listen to the other person's response. Be prepared to discuss options and compromise on a solution.

Example: When you are late for meetings, I get angry because I think it is wasting the time of all the other team members and we are never able to get through our agenda items. I would like you to consider finding some way of planning your schedule that lets you get to these meetings on time. That way we can be more productive at the meetings and we can all keep to our tight schedules.

(From Scholtes (1988), *The Team Handbook*, pages 6-23 to 6-31) avoided.

6. Speak for yourself.
   State how you feel about the recipient's behavior. Avoid making claims about what other people think of the recipient's behavior.
7. Don't compare.
   Comparing the recipient to others does not provide useful information and will often lead to feelings of anger and defensiveness.
8. Help the recipient accept positive feedback.
   People may have a hard time accepting compliments, don't let them brush off positive feedback.
9. Acknowledge appreciation for listening.
   Let the recipient know that you appreciate their hearing you out and considering making changes.
10. Follow up.
    If the recipient continues desirable behavior or changes poor behavior, let them know that they are doing well. If poor behavior continues, give more constructive feedback.

Soliciting Feedback

1. Be honest with yourself about the need for feedback.
   Sometimes you may realize that you are having difficulty, other times things may be going relatively well but you may not know how others think of your work. Recognize that others are a valuable source of information about your performance and can provide you with suggestions for how to improve.
2. Ask.
   Sometimes you will need to prompt others to give you feedback. Asking them directly is the best way to obtain feedback when it is not forthcoming.
3. Encourage the giver to be honest and specific.
4. Be flexible. Keep in mind that not everyone that you interact with will be skilled at giving feedback. Encourage the giver to be as specific as possible. Assure the giver that you want their honest feedback and that you will not react negatively.

Receiving Feedback

1. Remain calm.
   Sometimes it can be upsetting to hear negative feedback. Take deep breaths and try consciously to remain relaxed. Remember that the long-term benefit of having the information you need to improve outweighs any short-term discomfort.
2. Listen carefully and don't interrupt.
   Be receptive to hearing the feedback giver out. Try to listen for information that helps you know which behaviors you may want to change. Don't react defensively.
3. Ask questions for clarity.
   If the feedback is ambiguous, probe for more information. Ask for specific examples.
4. Acknowledge the feedback.
   Paraphrase the main points of the feedback to ensure that you really understand and to let the giver know that you have been listening.
5. Acknowledge valid points.
   Let the giver know what you agree with. Acknowledge their point of view.
6. Take time to sort out what you've heard.
   You don't have to accept all the feedback you are given. You may want to check with other sources to see if they agree. Evaluate the usefulness and accuracy of the feedback.
7. Implement needed changes.
   If you are given negative feedback that you think is accurate, think of ways to change or improve behaviors. Then do it!
8. Don't downplay positive feedback.
   If you are given positive feedback, don't brush it off. Take a moment to celebrate the good job that you've been doing. Then keep it up!

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define feedback and explain the reasons why giving, soliciting, and receiving feedback are important.
- Distinguish between destructive and constructive feedback.
- List and describe techniques for giving, receiving, and soliciting feedback.

FEEDBACK SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following eight questions honestly about the way you are, not the way you would like to be. Answer according to your first instinct and don't try to figure out the point or "correct" answer for each question.

Key: N = Never R = Rarely S = Sometimes O = Often A = Always

I give feedback to other people when it's needed.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When giving feedback, I focus on specific behaviors.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When giving feedback, I focus on behaviors that the recipient has control over.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When giving feedback, I try to use descriptive language (You tend to look down at the table while you speak) rather than evaluative language (When you don't look at us, it weakens your position).	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
When giving criticism, I give suggestions on ways to improve.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I seek feedback on my work.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I listen to feedback without feeling uncomfortable or defensive.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**
I prefer others to give me honest feedback. I reflect on feedback that's been given to me.	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**A**

When you are looking at your responses, ask yourself if they reflect both your knowledge of the subject as well as your behaviors (where applicable).

If your responses are generally in the "often" or "always"categories, use this section as a way to deepen your perspective of feedback. This is an opportunity to move toward thinking about this skill as it relates to you both as an individual and as a member of a team.

If your responses are generally in the "sometimes" range, this section can be used to further your own understanding of feedback and as an opportunity to work on specific actions that will increase your skills in this area.

If your responses fall into the "never" and "rarely" range, use this section as a way to begin building knowledge while practicing specific behaviors that will heighten your feedback proficiency. It may be helpful to read more on the topic, get feedback from your peers, and continue to do self-assessments.

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