Team Building

Conflict

- Conflict may bring out new ideas and raise new issues.
- Unhealthy conflict is one of the biggest barriers to team performance.
- Where there is unhealthy conflict, positive action has to be taken.

Conflict and the team leader

- It is usually down to the team leader to deal with any conflicts that may arise.
- These are common at the storming stage, where skilful handling is vital if progress is to be made.
- The skill is to stand back and take a good look at the behaviour that's taking place before acting.

Handling conflict

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Be assertive

- Join the other person(s) in working towards a win/win outcome
- Keep a picture of the person and yourself separate from the issue
- Make clear 'I' statements
- Be clear about your perception of the conflict and your outcome
- Take one issue at a time
- Look and listen to each other
- Ensure that you understand each other
- Open your minds to creative ways of sorting out the conflict
- Choose a mutually convenient time and place for discussion
- Acknowledge and appreciate each other
- Remember that silence is very powerful in any conflict situation

Leadership style

Styles range from:

- Controller
- Guide
- Consultant
- Facilitator

Changing your leadership style

Think about the sort of followers you have:

- Are they the type of people who follow unwillingly, and treat everything you say with caution or do they expect to be involved in what's happening?
- How well do they work together?
- How mature is the leader/follower relationship?
- What is the stage of development?

Be prepared to alter your style to suit changing situations and circumstances.

Lack of balance

In successful teams you need someone who can:

- be creative and come up with imaginative ideas
- take the chair, pull people together and give structure to the group

They do not have to be the chosen leader

A successful team needs someone to:

- Give direction by pulling ideas together and looking for ways of pushing the group into making decisions
- Promote unity amongst the group
- Worry about schedules, deadlines and what might go wrong

A successful team needs someone to: (continued)

- Organise people by converting decisions and plans into practical tasks that others can get on with.
- Find out what's needed by using a range of contacts, often outside the group.
- Analyse situations and information from a variety of sources.

Keeping a balance

Successful teams acknowledge that:

- members may have to take on more than one role
- not all roles may be essential
- skilled leaders make the best of their resources

Skills shortage

- Try and identify the skills needed before you select or inherit the group.
- Build up a skills inventory of the people you have
  - How far does it match what you require?
  - How can you bridge the gap?

Performance issues ignored

The team will not achieve its goals when:

- Poor performance is tolerated
- Good performance is not recognised
- The push for team effort is poor mainly because individual team members are weak

Tips for achieving acceptable standards

- At the start make sure that the team is clear about when it has to achieve and how well it has to perform
- Offer help in the form of training and support where necessary
- Introduce a way of checking performance and make it an item at team meetings
- Examine the causes of any performance problems before rushing in with an instant solution
- Encourage self-appraisal of skills as well as feedback between members

Lack of discipline

If there is a lack of discipline:

- Ask yourself, 'Is what's happening within my control?'
- It it's happening within the team, quickly make people aware of its effects and what it is doing to the team.

Recognise if your team has stopped being creative

You can recognise if your team has stopped being creative when they:

- Fail to challenge, even the obvious
- Restrict their thinking to imposed boundaries
- Give the answer that they think is expected
- Keep 'yes, butting' every suggestion and the team's ideas' person becomes frustrated

What can you do?

- Look at areas where new ideas are needed
- Bear in mind that creativity can be developed
- Pick up on examples where people are closing their minds to new ideas
- Hold idea-generating sessions

Scattered locations

There is a danger that:

- People will feel isolated
- There's a lack of team identity
- A 'them and us' split may emerge
- The communications process is slowed down
- The chance to share skills and experience can be missed

Virtual teams

- Are made up of people who have to collaborate closely but who may not be based in the same locations
- Are often temporary in nature
- Are not the same as face-to-face teams
- Tend to rely more on technology

Grumbling

You could find people complaining about:

- Pay
- Terms of employment
- Working conditions
- Lack of resources

As a leader, you will need to try and get these sorted out before you can ask/expect people to pull together as a unit.

No enthusiasm for teams

For example:

- They've seen it all before and don't believe that it's the way forward
- They're unwilling to open up and be part of a team
- They don't want to give their ideas away for fear of losing the credit
- They're not prepared to take the 'hurt' that is necessary in order to learn

What can you do?

Try adopting a low-key approach to those with no enthusiasm:

- Get them to work with one or two people on a particular task
- Call a team meeting but don’t invite them

Recognition

Successful teams can be recognised by:

- Their commitment towards each other and to achieving goals
- The climate they create
- The openness and honesty developed
- How they constantly look to improve what they do
- Their ability to analyse and solve problems, and their commitment
- How they use resources within the team to the best effect
- Their active encouragement of different opinions and ideas
- The results they achieve

How to lead

- At this stage of the group's development, the style needs to be more 'hands off', as opposed to 'hands on'.
- Don't feel that you have to hang on to your power and status.
- A key role will be to look for support and resources from within the organisation.

Dangers

Successful teams can run into danger if they:

- Get a good reputation and rest on their laurels
- Believe that they are invincible and can do no wrong
- Close ranks and make it difficult for newcomers to get in
- Fail to see what's happening to the outside world
- Become complacent and suffer from 'Groupthink'

‘Groupthink’ occurs when:

- The culture of the group becomes so strong that members think only of themselves and ignore the task
- Extreme views are turned down and compromises made to reduce risks
- There’s concern for solidarity and maintaining the status quo

More about 'Groupthink'

'Groupthink' can lead to the group:

- Failing to solve its problems effectively
- Discussing only a minimum number of alternatives
- Following courses of action without examining hidden risks or alternatives
- Failing to use expertise available to the group

A final thought

Even the most successful sports teams can just as easily lose their edge if they:

- Hang on to players who are past their best
- Fail to adapt to changing situations
- Do not introduce new talent and tactics
- Ignore what the opposition is doing

Considerable time, effort, skill and hard work go into making teams successful:

- 10% inspiration, 90% perspiration!