Today’s Session

- A Simple Question About Teams
- High-Performance Teams
- Leadership and Team Alignment
- Building a Strong and Effective Team
- Team Building Exercise
- Summary Thoughts
If we have such a solid and complete understanding as to what makes teams successful, why are there so many unsuccessful teams?
An Investigation of High-Performance Teams

Larson and LaFasto* (1989) evaluated 30 “high-performance” teams, including, among others:

- Boeing 747 Project team
- IBM PC Development team
- Mt. Everest Expedition team
- CDC Epidemiology teams
- Presidential Cabinet teams
- Challenger Disaster Commission

Research yielded eight dimensions related to team effectiveness

*"Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong"
Eight Dimensions of Team Effectiveness

1) A Clear, Elevating Goal
2) Results-Driven Structure
3) Competent Team Members
4) Unified Commitment
5) A Collaborative Climate
6) Standards of Excellence
7) External Support and Recognition
8) Principled Leadership

*"Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong"
Expectations of High-Performance Team Leaders

1) Not compromising the team’s objectives with political issues
2) Exhibiting personal commitment to the team’s goals
3) Not diluting the team’s efforts with too many priorities
4) Being fair and impartial toward all team members
5) Being willing to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members
6) Being open to new ideas and information from team members

These principles could be applied to team leaders at all levels

*"Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong"
Expectations of High-Performance Team Members

1) Demonstrate a realistic understanding of his/her role and tasks
2) Demonstrate objective and fact-based decision making
3) Collaborate effectively with other team members
4) Make the team goal a higher priority than any personal objective
5) Willingness to put in the effort necessary for team success
6) Willingness to share information, perceptions, and feedback openly
7) Provide help to other team members when needed and appropriate
8) Demonstrate high standards of excellence
9) Stand behind and support team decisions
10) Demonstrate courage of conviction by directly confronting important and/or problematic issues
11) Demonstrate leadership in ways which contribute to team success
12) Respond constructively to feedback from others

Commitments we make to each other as team members

*"Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong”
A Simple Team Alignment Process

1. Identification of Strategic Objectives
2. Team Working Session
3. Draft Initial Individual Objectives
4. Team Validation Discussion
# Accountability/Priority Alignment Matrix

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<th>Strategic Priorities</th>
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Process Can Repeat in Top-Down Cascade

- **Tier 1 Team**
  - Identification of Strategic Objectives
  - Team Working Session
  - Draft Initial Individual Objectives
  - Team Validation Discussion

- **Tier 2 Team**
  - Identification of Strategic Objectives
  - Team Working Session
  - Draft Initial Individual Objectives
  - Team Validation Discussion

- **Tier 3 Team**
  - Identification of Strategic Objectives
  - Team Working Session
  - Draft Initial Individual Objectives
  - Team Validation Discussion
Team Development and Team Building
How to Build a Strong and Effective Team

• Communicate high performance standards

• Set the tone in the first meeting(s)

• Create a sense of urgency and importance of the team

• Make sure members have the right skills—selection is key!

• Establish clear rules/norms for team behavior and model them as a leader

• Find ways to create and communicate early “successes”

• Give positive feedback and reward high performance

• Talk on a regular basis about the team’s own effectiveness
Sample Team Discussion Questions

• What are our strengths as a team? Our weaknesses?

• How have these strengths and weaknesses impacted us in the past? How are they likely to impact us in the future?

• Are team member roles clearly defined, communicated and understood?

• What do we need to do to “find our stride” for long-term success?

• What’s the biggest change we could make to improve our team’s effectiveness and synergy? The next biggest?

• Are there obstacles not yet encountered that we need to anticipate?

• What do we need to a) keep doing, b) stop doing, and c) start doing?
Team Building

• A process designed to improve teamwork and increase group cohesiveness
• Can be used within and/or across groups

Different Approaches to Team Building

• Single event/discussion (e.g., during a staff meeting)

• Recreational activity (e.g., bowling, sporting event, etc.)

• Low-key offsite (e.g., combining recreation and focused discussion)

• Intensive offsite experiences (e.g., use of surveys, intense discussion)

• Outdoor experience (e.g., Outward Bound)

Think carefully about your goals when planning a team building event
Team Building Considerations/Issues

- Is team building the correct approach? Is it a team-level issue?
- Use P=A x M x O…it can help in diagnosing issues
- Clearly identify and articulate the goal(s) of the team building
  - Issues with context, composition, work design, process?
  - Based on anecdotal information and/or observation and/or structured instruments and/or anecdotal information
- Make sure you get clear endorsement/enthusiasm from leaders
- Make sure you involve everyone you need to
- Identify activities/approaches that address the important issues
Team Building Exercise
Summary Thoughts on Team Building

• Most people hate the thought of team building, but can “get into it” once it’s started

• Make sure people know why they’re involved in team building

• Know your audience and incorporate that into your choice of activities

• Be able to show a clear linkage between the team building activities and the important issues

• Remember that the debrief is a critical element of team building… without it, people may have few meaningful “takeaways”

• Ensure you’ve got visible, enthusiastic support from leaders

• Think strategically; it may require time and multiple events/activities
Closing Thoughts—Team Effectiveness

- Our different social styles allow for an engaging and productive work environment, but versatility and inclusion are crucial.

- Effective high-performance teams have their own special character and characteristics on which we need to continue to focus.

- Tools, systems and processes will only get us so far; the rest comes from a true focus on, and dedication to, a team discipline.

- Each of us has roles and responsibilities as both a team member and a team leader…both are vitally important.

- The most effective teams are those with a continuous improvement mindset, that continually ask “how can we be even better?”

- Teams improve to the extent that each person values improvement.