

Tools and Techniques of High-Performing Teams

Resource Guide



A team is a small number of people with complementary skills committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Source: "The wisdom of Teams"

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Each page describes a tool/technique.

Each tool on the page is identified as:

- a tool/technique to improve Personal Communication
- a tool /technique to improve Conflict Effectiveness
- a tool/technique to improve Negotiation Skill

In the example here, a page with a tool which is helpful for improving Personal Communication. (The area covered in the page is underlined)



THE NEED FOR TEAMS

We believe that teams—real teams, not just groups that management calls "teams"—should be the basic unit of performance for most organizations, regardless of size. In any situation requiring the real-time combination of multiple skills, experiences, and judgments, a team inevitably gets better results than a collection of individuals operating within confined job roles and responsibilities. Teams are more flexible than larger organizational groupings because they can be more quickly assembled, deployed, refocused, and disbanded, usually in ways that enhance rather than disrupt more permanent structures and processes. Teams are more productive than groups that have no clear performance objectives because their members are committed to delivering tangible performance results. Teams and performance are an unbeatable combination.

Teams are not the solution to everyone's current and future organizational needs. They will not solve every problem, enhance every group's results, nor help top management address every performance challenge. Moreover, when misapplied, they can be both wasteful and disruptive. Nonetheless, teams usually do outperform other groups and individuals. They represent one of the best ways to support the broad-based changes necessary for the high-performing organization. And executives who really believe that behaviorally based characteristics like quality, innovation, cost effectiveness, and customer service will help build a sustainable competitive advantage will give top priority to the development of team performance.

To succeed, however, they and others must also pay a lot of attention to why most people approach teams cautiously. In large part, this resistance springs from undeniable experiences and convictions about individual responsibility and the risks involved in trusting other people. Teams, for example, do demand a merging of individual accountability with mutual accountability. Teams also do require lots of time together; indeed, it is folly to assume that teams can perform without investing time to shape and agree upon a common purpose, set of goals, and working approach. Moreover, few groups become real teams without taking risks to overcome constraints imposed by individual, functional, and hierarchical boundaries. And team members do depend on one another in pursuit of common performance.

No wonder, then, that many of us only reluctantly entrust critical issues to team resolution. We all fool ourselves if we think well-meaning aspirations to "work better as a team" will be enough to dispel the resistance to teams. Building the performance of teams throughout an organization that needs to perform better, we argue, is mandatory. But doing so also poses a far more serious challenge than any of us would like to admit.

The good news is that there is a discipline to teams that, if rigorously followed, can transform reluctance into team performance. Moreover, while some of the elements of this discipline are counterintuitive and must be learned—for example, that "becoming a team" is not the primary goal—most of it builds on commonsense ideas like the importance of goal setting and mutual accountability. Furthermore, this discipline applies equally well to teams that run things, teams that recommend things, and teams that make or do things. What works at the front lines also works in the executive suite.

The bad news is that, like all disciplines, the price of success is strict adherence and practice. Very few people lose weight, quit smoking, or learn the piano or golf without constant practice and discipline. Very few small groups of people become teams without discipline as well. Extracting team performance is challenging. Long-standing habits of individualism, rampant confusion about teams and teamwork, and seemingly adverse team experiences all undercut the possibilities teams offer at the very moment that team performance has become so critical. Groups do not become teams just because we tell them to; launching hundreds of teams will not necessarily produce real teams in the right places; and building teams at the top remains among the most difficult of tests. Yet the fact remains that potential teams throughout most organizations usually can perform much better than they do. We believe this untapped potential literally begs for renewed attention, especially from the top. We also believe the key to such performance is in recognizing the wisdom of teams, having the courage to try, and then applying the discipline to learn from the experience.

Source: Jon R. Katzenbach, Douglas K. Smith "The Wisdom of Teams. Creating the High-Performance Organization"

WORK-GROUP OR TEAM?

In the Work-group, the leader:

1. Makes and communicates decisions for the group. The group members expect the group leader to make decisions
2. Sets the performance goals and determines individual responsibilities
3. Defines the individual work products based on individual responsibilities
4. Sets the pace and determines the working approach
5. Accelerates or slows the pace by setting the deadlines for the group and its members
6. Is responsible for achieving group results that are acceptable to higher-level managers
7. Establishes benchmarks and standards for group communication
8. Ensures communication between members and outsiders

In the Team:

1. Decisions are made by the appropriate people, often the person whose skills or experience best qualify them to decide. The leader intervenes only if the team is stuck
2. The goals of the team are set and affirmed individually and collectively by the team. Collective goals prevail over individual goals. Only the team – not individual - can fail
3. The team defines collective, not individual, work products based on teaming responsibilities
4. The pace and working approach are set by the group, making the approach a matter of shared commitment. The team chooses the best way to integrate work, manage logistics and administration, and enforce norms for each other. Roles and contributions are flexible and may shift to fit difference performance tasks
5. The team is its own toughest critic. Members of the team hold each other accountable to a greater degree than they are held accountable by a single leader
6. The team constantly focuses on high standards that arise from a compelling performance purpose to which all members are committed
7. Team members master the disciplines of teamwork: personal communication, conflict management and negotiation
8. The team communicates with outsiders on a need by need basis

ELEMENTS OF TEAMWORK

1. **Complexity**

Teams deal with day-to-day complexity and change better than individuals. Teamwork is a critical leadership skill when dealing with complexity.

2. **Personal Responsibility**

Teamwork is an individual, not group-skill and our success as individuals largely depends on it. We know that if we are willing to take 100% responsibility for the quality of each team we are in, we will be able to operate in high-performing teams regardless of who has the authority.

3. **Interdependence**

Every group can suddenly deliver if the group operates from the individual responsibility stances of its members. In this stance, team members take responsibility for working inter-dependently with each other. A responsible group member requests responsibility of the others and does not simply go along. While we know that individuals have behaviors in groups that are more or less effective in prompting collaborative teamwork, still we assume that everyone is trying to do their best.

4. **Accountability**

The accountability of our work in teams may vary based on different organization's values, experience and openness to teamwork. However as the task is the reason for the team, a team is always defined and held accountable by what it is tasked to do. As such, every team is accountable for something, with or without authority, which justifies its existence.

5. **Improvability**

We are individually responsible for developing our individual teamwork skills. No matter age, rank or education, everyone's teamwork skills can be improved to become more effective in dealing with complexity. As other skills, the best way to develop those skills – rather than exposure to group theory or knowledge of group dynamics - is actual work in a team with guided practice, feedback and an openness to make mistakes.

TEAMWORK

The ability of an individual to get work done while working in a team

- **Teamwork** is an individual skill
- **Teamwork** is hard work that does not happen naturally, unless each team member is willing to recognize shared responsibility for the task at hand and commitment to get it done.
- **Team members** do not need to like each other to perform at their best but they do need to master personal communication, negotiation and conflict skills to make their teams high-performing.
- **Teamwork** is a series of specific conversations that occur between people while getting something done.

FOUR LEVELS OF LISTENING



Personal Communication

Conflict Effectiveness

Negotiation Skill

“...I try to listen at four quite different levels.

The first one is pretty obvious: I listen for content. I listen for what is said, and how it tracks with the analysis we need to get done.

The second thing I listen for is how things are said. There are always emotional undercurrents. Sometimes the voice is tentative. Sometimes the voice is very strong. Sometimes there's a lack of energy in the comments. Sometimes there's tremendous dynamism in the debate. So I'm listening for that particularly so that, when we hit an emotional current, we can ride it. That's where the teamwork tends to take off.

The third thing I'm listening for is almost a contradiction in terms. I'm listening for what is left unsaid. Take, for instance, work which has ethical implications. People are often very uncomfortable raising the ethical issues. If I go for ten, fifteen, twenty minutes in the heart of a discussion, and people are avoiding that point, I'll raise it. I'm listening for the fact that they haven't said anything about it.

And then the fourth thing you listen for, and this one is tricky, is you listen for disconnects. When somebody says X, and somebody comes back with a response that doesn't quite meet them, there is a lack of correspondence somehow. They either didn't get it or they didn't quite take it in and fully understand it. In order to engage the debate they have to be on the same wavelength.

So I will go back to either the first person or the second person and say, "Did he get that right?" or, "Are you two talking the same language?" because disconnects can frequently be highly disruptive unless people will meet each other on the same level.”

Purpose To sharpen your ability to understand where your team is

How To Do It (1) Listen for content, (2) Listen for how things are said, (3) Listen for what is not said, (4) listen for disconnects

For example:

- (1) I heard you saying, Helen, that the keyboard design will only be approved if we use Paul's specifications"
- (2) Going through that certification must be frustrating
- (3) I wonder if you could talk about the user experience
- (4) John said "Can we verify the content?" John was your question answered?

Source: David Garvin – Participant centered Learning and the case-method – Harvard Business School DVD

FOUR CONVERSATIONS FOR NEW TEAMS



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

Every team should have the following four conversations in order to maximize its performance:

CONVERSATION 1: On GOALS and OBJECTIVES

- What kind of challenge is the group called to resolve?
- What does success look like?
- Are individuals truly tied to specific group objectives?
- How are people motivated to get results for their group?
- Do individuals' personal goals interfere with group cooperation?

CONVERSATION 2: On CURRENT and NEW SKILLS

- How does the group measure up as far as group ability to learn new skills as a way to add greater flexibility in accomplishing more?
- How does the group do as far as reaching outside the group for needed skills and learning as required?

CONVERSATION 3: On ACCOUNTABILITY

- How do we hold each other accountable?
- How does the group rate as far as expectation of the quality of the work?
- How would you rate each group member as far as their ability to get things done?

CONVERSATION 4: On COMMUNICATION

- How do group members communicate and share about their work?
- What structured times allow for free exchange of communication between team members?
- What in the group ensures the flow of Information/coordination?
- What tools does the team use to communicate?
- How do we deal with conflict?

Purpose To start up the work of a team clarifying all possible roadblocks and planning for success

How To Do It (1) Openly discuss the purpose of the team, (2) Openly discuss what each team member brings to the table, (3) Openly discuss how the team is accountable, (4) Openly discuss how team members communicate, ground rules, etc..

For example:

- (1) "I have sent an email to each of you about the work ahead. Now I would like to hear from each of you any questions you might have about it "
- (2) "By Wednesday I would like each of you to interview another team member and in 60 seconds tell us what skills that person brings to the team"
- (3) "I would like each of you to be aware of the deliverable deadline for next month."
- (4) "I am open to meet once a week for a Status Meeting. However feel free to have meetings without me if you see them as necessary"

Source: Jon R. Katzenbach, Douglas K. Smith "The Wisdom of Teams. Creating the High-Performance Organization"

THE TRIANGLE OF TEAM SUCCESS

Successful teams measure their performance across three dimensions of success. They make conscious choices about where to focus their attention in order to have the highest impact



- Personal Communication**
- Conflict Effectiveness**
- Negotiation Skill**

Dimensions

Questions to Ask to Measure Success

Results

Accomplishment of the Task or Goal

- Did the results meet the team's specific performance goals?
- Did the results meet customer expectations (internal and external)?
- Were our goals challenging enough?

Processes

Method/Approach For Doing The Work

- Did our plans or team processes work for the task(s) at hand?
- Were we able to adjust when needed?
- Was our process well-coordinated and facilitated?
- Were roles and responsibilities clear and executed effectively?
- Did our team employ our skills and talents effectively?

Relationships

Rapport Between Team Members

- Did team members support each other and share responsibility for success?
- Did team members establish trusting relationships in which members felt valued?
- Overall, did the team maintain a sense of team spirit and commitment to the team's purpose?

RESULTS

Shared
Responsibility
For Success

RELATIONSHIP

PROCESSES

Purpose To assess how a team is doing

How To Do It (1) Ask questions of the team as far as results, (2) Ask questions of the team as far as processes, (3) Ask questions of the team as far as relationships

For example:

- (1) "Were our goals challenging enough?"
- (2) "Were roles and responsibilities clear and executed effectively?"
- (3) "Did team members establish trusting relationships in which members felt valued?"

Source: CAP Change Acceleration Program, Interaction Associates

FIVE TYPES OF QUESTIONS



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

A good way to help other people think about a subject is to ask them a question about it. Being asked a good question can really help us put information together, evaluate our existing ideas and create new ideas.

Asking questions that are specifically intended to help others learn is known as *Socratic questioning*, named after Socrates in Ancient Greece.

Socratic questions require you to listen very carefully to the other person to help you judge and phrase your question in a helpful, constructive, and hopefully non-confrontational way.

Here are five examples of such questions:

1. On Understanding

- What do you mean when you say _____?
- What is your main point?
- How does _____ relate to _____?
- Could you put that another way?
- Let me see if I understand you; do you mean _____ or _____?
- How does this relate to our problem/discussion/issue?
- Jane, can you summarize in your own words what Richard said? ... Richard, is that what you meant?
- Could you give me an example?
- Would _____ be a good example of that?

2. On assumptions

- What are you assuming here?
- What is Jenny assuming?
- What could we assume instead?
- You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly?
- All of your reasoning depends on the idea that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ instead of _____?
- You seem to be assuming _____. How do you justify taking that for granted?
- Is that always the case? Why do you think the assumption holds here?
- Why would someone make that assumption?

3. On reasons and evidence

- Could you explain your reasons to us?
- How does that apply to this case?
- Is there a reason to doubt that evidence?
- Who is in a position to know that is true?
- What would you say to someone who said that _____?

- Can someone else give evidence to support that view?
- By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
- How could we find out if that is true?

4. On viewpoints or perspectives

- What are you implying by that?
- When you say _____, are you implying _____?
- But, if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?
- What effect would that have?
- Would that necessarily happen or only possibly/probably happen?
- What is an alternative?
- If _____ and _____ are the case, then what might also be true?
- If we say that _____ is ethical, how about _____?

5. On implications and consequences

- How can we find out?
- What does this question assume?
- Would _____ ask this question differently?
- How could someone settle this question?
- Can we break this question down at all?
- Is this question clear? Do we understand it?
- Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?
- Do we all agree that this is the question?
- To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?
- How would _____ state the issue?
- Why is this issue important?
- Is this the most important question, or is there an underlying question?
- Can you see how this might relate to _____?

Other GREAT QUESTIONS FOR TEAMS

- What has become clear since last we met?
- What, if you made an improvement, would give you and others the greatest return on time, energy and dollars invested?
- What are you trying to make happen in the next three months?
- What is the most important decision you are facing right now? What is keeping you from making it?
- What topic are you hoping I will not bring up?
- What part of our responsibilities are we avoiding right now?
- What do you wish you had more time to do?
- What things are you doing that you would like to stop doing or delegating?

Purpose To develop inquiry skills to generate deep understanding and liberate the creative potential of your team

How To Do It (1) Ask questions and take time to listen to the answers

For example:

- (1) "To answer this question, what other questions must we answer first?"

FOUR-PLAYER MODEL



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

Four Actions for Dialogic Leaders

The four qualities for a dialogic leader are mirrored in four distinct kinds of actions that a person may take in any conversation. These actions were identified by David Kantor, a well-known family systems therapist (see “Four-Player Model” on the following page).

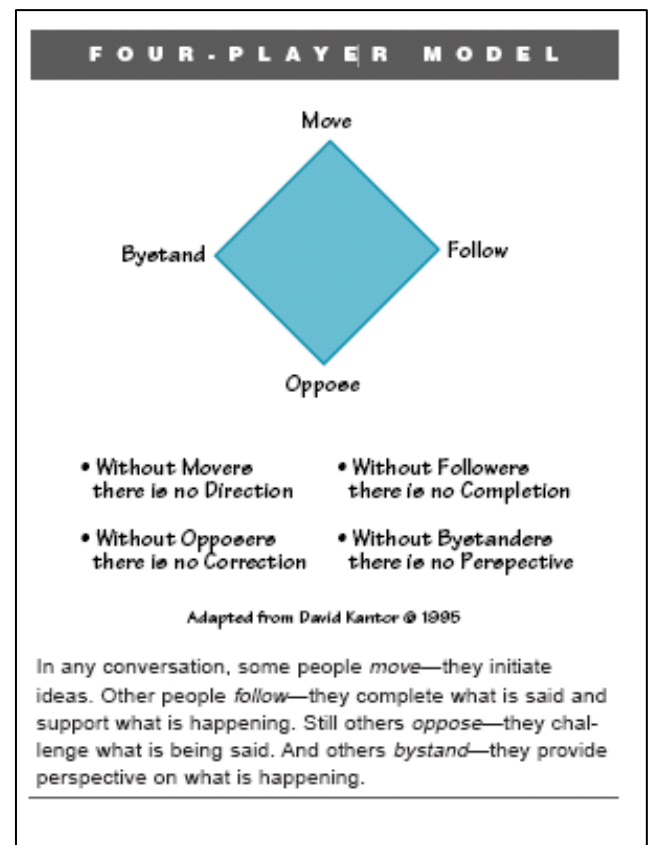
1. Kantor suggests that some people move—they initiate ideas and offer direction.
2. Other people follow—they complete what is said, help others clarify their thoughts, and support what is happening.
3. Still others oppose—they challenge what is being said and question its validity.
4. And others bystand— they actively notice what is going on and provide perspective on what is happening.

For instance, in a dialogic system, any person may take any of the four actions at any time. Although people may have a preferred position, each individual is able to move and initiate, to follow and complete things, to oppose, and to observe and provide perspective.

None of these roles is better or worse than the others. They are all necessary for the system to function properly. As people recognize these different roles and can act on this recognition, they begin to create a sequence of interactions that keeps the conversation moving toward balance. In a system that is moving away from dialogue, people generally get stuck in one of the four positions.

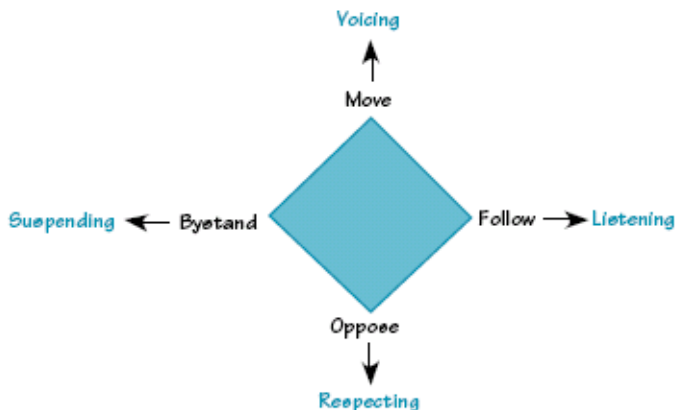
For instance, some people are “stuck movers”: They express one idea, and before that idea is established or acted upon, they give another, and another, making it difficult to know what to focus on. But perhaps most revealing of non-dialogic interactions are the ritualized and repetitive interactions that people fall into that systematically exclude one or more of the positions.

An intense move-oppose cycle between two high-powered players like this one often prevents others from fulfilling their roles as “bystanders” and “followers.” The bystanders, who can see the ineffective exchange, often become “disabled,” imagining that no one wants them to identify what is happening. So the knowledge they carry is lost. At the same time, people who might otherwise be inclined to follow one side or the other to help complete what is being said tend to stay on the sidelines, for fear of getting caught in the cross-fire. The result is that the interaction remains unbalanced.



The quality and nature of the specific roles can often cause difficulties. For example, opposers are generally branded as troublemakers because they question the prevailing wisdom when people would prefer to have agreement. For this reason, others often tune them out. This failure to acknowledge the value of the opposer's perspective leads them to raise their voices and sometimes increase the critical tone of their comments. In such cases, people hear the criticism, but not the underlying intent, which is almost always to clarify, correct, or bring balance and integrity to the situation.

**FOUR PRACTICES
FOR DIALOGIC LEADERSHIP**



Four practices can enhance the quality of conversation: speaking your true voice and encouraging others to do the same; listening as a participant; respecting the coherence of others' views; and suspending your certainties.

A dialogic leader will often look for ways to restore balance in people's interactions. For instance, she might strengthen the opposers if they are weak or reinforce the bystanders if they have information but have withheld it. Genuinely making room for someone who wants to challenge typically causes them to soften the stridency of their tone and makes it more possible for others to hear what they have to say. Reinforcing and standing with those who have delicate but vital information can enable them to reveal it. The simple rule here is: Pay attention to the actions that are missing and provide them yourself, or encourage others to do so.

Purpose To pay attention to the actions that are missing in a conversation and to acknowledge all roles teams must play in order to develop effective team conversations

How To Do It

- (1) Offer encouragement to the team if none is making a move in the conversation
- (2) Encourage people to jump on other's idea with the intent of building on it
- (3) Encourage people to disagree for the purpose of correcting ideas and refine them for the group
- (4) Encourage people to comment on where the team is to provide perspective

For example:

- (1) "In your opinion what is it that we should do?"
- (2) "Let's make sure people fully understand what Mary said before dismissing her idea as unrealistic"
- (3) "If you do not agree, can you tell us why?"
- (4) "I see some people have not talked yet. Shall we hear from everyone?"

3 CONVERSATION MOVES



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness

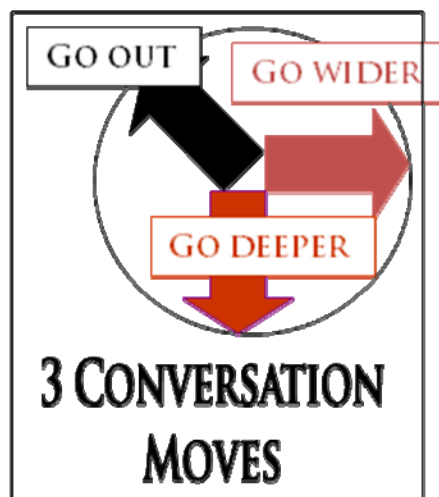


Negotiation Skill

WIDER, DEEPER or OUT?

In any learning conversation you have three possible ways to proceed:

1. You can go wider meaning ask someone to contribute more to the conversation
2. You can go deeper meaning asking whoever is talking to say more
3. You can go out meaning moving to some other topic or changing something



Purpose To make sure a learning conversation with a team is really taking full advantage of all levels

How To Do It

- (1) Ask someone to contribute more to the conversation (without putting them on the spot)
- (2) Ask someone who is talking to say more
- (3) Change the subject by moving to some other topic

For example:

- (1) "John, I see you haven't agreed or disagreed. Would you like to add something?"
- (2) "Sue, can you tell me more about the analysis you are referencing?"
- (3) "Well, let's deal with this off-line..."

Source: Adriano Pianesi, "From PowerPoint to Powerful: Rules of Engagement for trainers"

FOUR KINDS OF TEAM CONVERSATIONS



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

Michael Kahn in “the Tao of Conversation” has discovered that there are four different kinds of seminars....

1. The free-for-all.

There is a prize out there in the middle of the floor. It may be the instructor’s or the boss’ approval or it may be one’s own self esteem, but it’s out there, and the goal is to win it. Anything goes: elbows, knees, gouging, anything. You win not just by looking smart, but by looking smarter. And that means that making others look dumb is just as important as making yourself look smart.

2. The Beauty Contest.

There is a prize here too, but this time I try to win by seeking your admiration. I parade my idea by you in its bathing suit and high heels. When it’s off the runway, I go the dressing room and get ready for my next appearance while you are parading your idea. Of course, I am not paying any attention to your idea, and you are not paying any attention to mine.

3. The Distinguished House Tour.

In most cities you can arrange to be taken on such a tour. You are driven to a stately home which is a good example of Edwardian architecture and furniture....Then you get back into the bus and go look at another house, say one that is a good example of Georgian architecture.

In the Distinguished house tour seminar, someone advances an idea. The rest of the seminar spends some time exploring her house. They ask questions, they explore for inconsistencies, and they try hard to understand the idea. When they have a good grasp of it, one of the other members offers another idea. It may be a whole different point of view on the same subject. Everyone, including the first idea’s hostess, then explore that house. The houses are not compared, nor does one person claim that his or hers is better. Each house is thought to be interesting in its own right and worth exploringLater we invented the verb “socratease” to describe what happens when you ask a friendly question to show the holes in a person’s idea. Even in friendly territories, it’s not just the young and shy who find defending or explaining a position lonely and stressful...It’s an adrenaline starter, not calculated to bring out one’s best thinking.

4. The Barn Raising.

When a family in frontier America needed a barn and had limited labor and other resources, the entire community gathered to help them build it. The family described the kind of barn they had in mind and picked

the site; the community then pitched in and built it. Often neighbors would suggest changes and improvements as they built.

A Barn Raising seminar begins when someone brings the group an idea or asks a question. The original idea may be barely fledged or not at all thought out. It doesn't matter. The community gathers to build the barn, to put together that idea.....

The interesting thing about this seminar is that people didn't come out of the seminar with the same ideas they went in with. They learned, and they expanded their point of view....trying to persuade someone to accept an idea is a good way of stopping them from even considering it...But if I make it my task to help build your idea, then my defenses are down, my creativity is mobilized, and the ground is fertile for learning."

Purpose To ensure team conversations are effective in bringing to the surface new learning and new insights

How To Do It

- (1) Say something when your team is not just coming up with new ideas to look good or to make other team members look dumb
- (2) Say something when your team is just throwing out ideas without really understanding or listening to them
- (3) Say something if your team has the gift of analysis but not a knack for decisions

For example:

- (1) "This is not a contest! We are a team trying to solve a problem together."
- (2) "What happened to Ted's idea? I would like to hear that again. Ted?"
- (3) "Shall we define objective criteria to make a decision? We have been discussing the ins and outs of all three ideas, but haven't selected one yet..."

Source: Michael Kahn "The Tao of conversation"

8 BAD GROUP SHORTCUTS

When people have an ego investment in a point of view or personal feelings, irrational shortcuts (fallacies) may be used as a rescue. Fallacies are used to persuade emotionally or psychologically, not rationally. When fallacies are present it is very hard to reach agreement, unless there is a shared understanding on their irrationality.

Groups or Teams use fallacies as intimidation, diversion or as an attack often to avoid further inquiry or work. Learn to recognize each strategy next time you hear it in your next team meeting. Unmasking fallacies might help your group resolve conflicts bringing a more rational perspective to the table.



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

FALLACY	MEANING	EXAMPLE
AD HOMINEM	Attacking opponent personally; belittle opponent	"She is divorced, so her idea for the project will not work."
STRAW MAN	Misrepresenting what another says to make idea seem unacceptable	"He is a bad guy, so his idea for the project will not work."
CIRCULAR REASONING	Using the premise of an argument to prove the argument-assuming truth of what is intended to be proved	"John's idea is a good idea because it is a good idea"
TWO-WRONGS	Defending a particular wrongdoing by looking for a wrongdoing previously overlooked.	"I cut him off because he cut me off"
SLIPPERY SLOPE	Objecting to something because of a wrong assumption that the thing will lead to other undesirable consequences.	"I object to this idea on the grounds it will lead to other unexpected consequences"
APPEALING TO AUTHORITY	Appeals to majority, traditional wisdom, or authorities that disagree or are problematic.	"It is a great idea because it is the general manager's idea!"
GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	The guilt of the discredited individual is transferred to the opponent.	"His friend was fired so his idea must be wrong"
RED HERRING	A controversial claim defended by taking the offensive. The defense involves setting up a new issue that is more supportable. Attention is deflected.	"That team is incompetent".

Purpose To ensure team conversations are rationally sound

How To Do It

(1) When you hear any of the above in your team, simply point out that it is a logical fallacy

For example:

(1) "John said that the PM's idea to test the application at three o'clock in the morning is a good one. I beg to differ."

Source: A Falikowski "Mastering Human Relations"

SIX WAYS TO GUARD TEAM ACCOUNTABILITY



Personal Communication

Conflict Effectiveness

Negotiation Skill

What's next after "taking the high road" once or twice with a team behavior that impacts others? The very outcomes we fear if we don't confront a behavior (breaking the relationship, causing problems, etc...) are practically guaranteed to show up if we do nothing. It will just take longer time and longer resources. Here are six ways to make sure all teams are on the same page as far as accountability.

- A. **Agree to response-Ability.** When you choose to respond intentionally to whatever happens in life, you have the key to personal power and growth. Denial, Blame, Justification or Going Along without passion or commitment creates two phenomena:
 1. Groups go where no one wants to go
 2. People hanging together with low commitment, low energy, low performance, resentment.
- B. **Be provocable.** Being "provocable" is healthier for your team than being nice. Being provocable means to show what really happens to us as a result of other people's behavior. Calling others on broken agreements can be difficult! The easy shortcut is to be untrue and do nothing. Instead start with collaborative behavior and expect collaborative behaviors. If they behave uncooperatively then show provocability and deal with the issue promptly.
- C. **Use upset as an opportunity for team learning.** Excuse mentality does not free us from uncomfortable situations. It is only when we operate from a "Responsibility mentality" that upsets can become opportunities to learn and potentially to escape from future dilemma. ("What can I learn from this?" How did I contribute to creating it?" "How did my own choices and actions create the upset?")
- D. **Switch to a "Service" mentality.** Keep in mind at all times that your interest is to be helpful to other team members. Do your partners and team mates see you as a person who helps them achieve their goals? If they don't, maybe you are the problem.
- E. **Bring gifts.** Little favors that cost little, something that provides real value to build the goodwill for team members. The goodwill can build a sense of togetherness that – in turn – can result in greater accountability.

Examples:

 - Early warning (i.e. email with a reminder for an important deadline)
 - Introductions (i.e. introduce a web developer to a friend of yours who wrote a book on cold fusion)
 - Welcoming feedback (i.e. send a document for review and ask for feedback to the team)
 - Covering for someone (i.e. take turns writing the minutes for a meeting)
 - Forwarding messages (i.e. forward an email that has the potential to impact someone else's job on your team)
 - Holding open doors (i.e. allowing people to talk to you, being available and not always in a hurry)
 - Take the time to answer a question
- F. **Distinguish criticism from feedback.** Constructive criticism is still criticism. Feedback your response with compassion. Defensiveness blocks messages! Rather than "You..." instead, use "When you.... I..." Above all, please do not make it personal.

(NOTE: without a compact or agreed ground rules in advance, it is easier to make it personal!)

Sources: Christopher Avery "Teamwork is an individual skill"

MBTI PREFERENCES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT



Personal Communication

Conflict Effectiveness

Negotiation Skill

Integrating Type with a Conflict Resolution Model

Psychologists and sociologists have developed models that provide a structure for resolving conflicts (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975). All of these models suggest ways to avoid or get beyond a win/lose approach to conflict, where one side is “right” and the other is clearly “wrong.”

Practitioners’ use of any such models in resolving conflicts will be strengthened by integrating type:

- It identifies and affirms an individual’s natural style of dealing with conflict.
- It makes clear that others will have a very different style that is equally right for them.
- It supports modifying natural styles to interact more effectively.

This ethic of the MBTI—the constructive use of differences—provides a framework and perspective for using any conflict resolution approach.

Extraversion-Introversion Conflicts here frequently relate to two areas: (1) quick versus more measured pacing and (2) breadth/changeability of topics versus focus.

The natural pace of those who prefer Extraversion is rapid. They develop their ideas by talking about them. As they talk, their thoughts become clearer to them; consequently they often change direction during the course of discussions.

Those who prefer Introversion usually want to process internally and need some talk-free time and space to do so. The thinking-out-loud process of those preferring Extraversion can interfere with their thinking-inside process. Additionally, when people preferring Introversion tune back into the conversation, they may find the discussion has shifted to a

<p>Extraverts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to develop solutions by talking it through • Often change direction or topic during course of discussions • Experience Introverts as “withholding” 	<p>Introverts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer measured pacing and need talk-free time for internal processing • Need a more intense focus, and to come back to ideas after consideration • Experience Extraverts as “invasive”
<p>Sensing Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the problem based on concrete events and on what actually happened • Seek explanations and solutions based on experience • Experience Intuitive types as “unrealistic” 	<p>Intuitive Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See specific behavior as part of an underlying pattern that is the real problem • Seek theoretical explanations and solutions • Experience Sensing types as “shooting down their ideas” or blocking progress
<p>Thinking Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for logical alternatives and apply them to everyone • Believe that if a problem can be defined accurately and the relevant evidence gathered, there will be a “correct” solution • Experience Feeling types as “irrational, inconsistent, and illogical” 	<p>Feeling Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for individual solutions that work for people • Believe the solution will be found by gathering many perspectives and finding the answer that fits everyone’s needs • Experience Thinking types as “cold and uncaring”
<p>Judging Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need structure, decisions, and closure • Create plans, structures, and time frames to achieve goals • Experience Perceiving types as people they cannot count on to follow through 	<p>Perceiving Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need flexibility, and want decisions to grow out of the process • Have faith in their own internal sense of timing; want to be trusted to meet goals in their own ways • Experience Judging types as “hemming them in”

different topic.

The opposites on this dichotomy often experience conflict, with Extraverts labeling the Introverts as “withholding” or “not interested”, while Introverts experience Extraverts as “invasive”. And each may think the other is “avoiding the topic”.

Sensing-Intuition Two conflicts that frequently develop related to differences in this dichotomy are (1) agreement on what the problem is and (2) a focus on experience versus a focus on theories.

For Sensing types, the problem or conflict is defined by what actually happened, usually concrete events: “John is late for our meetings 90% of the time.” Intuitive types are more likely to see specific behavior as part of a pattern that they think is the real problem: “John has difficulty dealing with authority figures.” For Intuitive types, taking some action to ensure that John arrives on time to meetings doesn’t deal with the “real” problem. For Sensing types, “difficulty with authority figures” has little meaning and no solution.

When conflicts or problems arise, Sensing types tend to reflect on their experience and trust what they know has worked before in similar situations. Intuitive types are more likely to find theoretical explanations and solutions persuasive: A new book or new interpretation seems more attractive and more likely to achieve long-term results.

Sensing types and Intuitive types sometimes end up in a conflict where each thinks the other “just doesn’t get it” (the problem), with Sensing types seeing Intuitive types as unrealistic or “off the wall” and Intuitive types seeing Sensing types as “shooting down” their ideas.

Thinking-Feeling Two frequent conflicts related to this dichotomy are (1) searching for the “right” answer versus exploration of people’s ideas and (2) choosing the logical alternative and applying it to everyone versus finding individual solutions that work for people.

Thinking types tend to believe that if a problem can be defined accurately and the relevant evidence gathered, there will be a correct solution, and that’s what people should do. Feeling types are much more likely to think that “truth” is not cut and dried: What’s right for one may be wrong for another. The “solution” will be found by gathering many perspectives and finding the answer that fits best for everyone.

For Thinking types, the answer that is correct is generally the one supported by logic and reason—the “objective” perspective, with personal considerations and emotions separated out. For Feeling types, personal considerations identify the solution: The best answer is found through empathizing with those involved and finding ways to support them.

Thinking types may experience the decision-making process of Feeling types as irrational, inconsistent, and illogical. Feeling types may experience the decision making of Thinking types as cold and uncaring.

Judging-Perceiving Two of the normal conflicts related to this dichotomy are (1) the need for structure versus the need for flexibility and (2) the desire for closure versus the desire for openness (waiting).

Judging types want clear goals; then they create plans, structures, and time frames to achieve them. Perceiving types typically want clear goals and a deadline; then they want to be trusted to meet them in their own ways.

Judging types want decisions and closure. Ambiguity, delayed decisions, reopening decisions, and changing goals are extremely uncomfortable to them. Perceiving types, on the other hand, want decisions to grow out of the process. Making a decision because “it’s time”, or because the Judging type wants one, often feels forced, premature, and likely to be the wrong decision to Perceiving types. They have faith in their own internal sense of timing and trust that when the right time comes, they will know: “Now is the time: now I know what we should do”.

Judging types often have trouble trusting that Perceiving types will come through in a timely way, that decisions will be made and action will be taken. Perceiving types often feel hemmed in, limited, and restricted by Judging types.

These are not the only type-related conflicts that practitioners may see in work settings, but they are some of the most common. As practitioners watch work interactions through a type lens, they will be able to identify such conflicts more confidently.

The Advantages of Recognizing Type in Conflicts The benefits of recognizing these components in conflicts is that the type perspective tends to depersonalize disagreements. Colleagues shift from seeing each other as wrong, or willfully obstructive, to recognizing that each is operating out of a valid perspective that needs to be heard and honored in the resolution of the conflict. Conflict resolution becomes much easier when both parties invest in the constructive use of differences.

MBTI TYPES AND CONFLICT

Early research on psychological type and conflict (Kilman & Thomas, 1975; Mills, Robey & Smith, 1985) found, in general, that Thinking types tended to be assertive and competitive in conflict situations, Feeling types favored cooperation and accommodation, and those preferring introversion avoided conflict.

Dominant Extraverted Thinking (ETJs)	
Males	Compete
Females	Compromise
Dominant Introverted Thinking (ITPs)	Compromise
Auxiliary Extraverted Thinking (ITJs)	Compromise
Auxiliary Introverted Thinking (ETPs)	Compromise
Dominant Extraverted Feeling (EFJs)	Collaborate
Dominant Introverted Feeling (IFPs)	Accommodate
Auxiliary Extraverted Feeling (IFJs)	Accommodate
Auxiliary Introverted Feeling (EFPs)	Accommodate

WARNING: When Type Should Not Be Used in Conflict Resolution

Van Sant (personal communication, 1998) suggests that, while type is invaluable in conflict resolution, there are times when it can get in the way and be counterproductive. Type should not be used, for example, when one party wants to talk type implications and the other does not. The intensity of conflicts can be greatly increased if one of the parties uses type concepts in a way that stereotypes or “explains away” the other’s perspective.

Van Sant’s experience suggests that type may also not be helpful when it becomes a way of intellectualizing a conflict to avoid acknowledging and validating the emotions experienced by the parties in the conflict.

Sources: Isabel Briggs Myers, Mary McCaulley, Naomi Quenk, Allen Hammer “MBTI manual”

FOUR GOLDEN RULES OF A NEGOTIATION



Personal Communication



Conflict Effectiveness



Negotiation Skill

Problem		Solution
Positional Bargain: Which Game Should you Play		Change The Game – Negotiate on the Merits
SOFT	HARD	PRINCIPLED
Participants as friends	Participants as adversaries	Participants as Problem-Solvers
Goal is agreement	Goal is victory	Goal is wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably
Make concessions to cultivate the relationship	Demand concession as a condition of the relationship	1. SEPARATE THE PEOPLE FROM THE PROBLEM
Be soft on the people and the problem	Be hard on the problem and the people	Be soft on the people, hard on the problem
Trust others	Distrust Others	Proceed independent of trust
Change your position easily	Dig in to your position	2. FOCUS ON INTERESTS NOT POSITIONS
Make offers	Make Threats	Explore Interest
Disclose your bottom line	Mislead as to your bottom line	Avoid having a bottom line
Accept one-side losses to reach agreement	Demand one-side gains as the price of agreement	3. INVENT OPTIONS FOR MUTUAL GAIN
Search for the single answer		Develop multiple options to choose from; decide later
Insist on agreement	Insist on your position	4. INSIST ON USING OBJECTIVE CRITERIA
Yield to pressure	Apply pressure	Reason; yield to principle not pressure

Purpose To ensure team negotiations create wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably

How To Do It

- (1) Avoid using names, instead mention what the issues are
- (2) Do not repeat the positions of the individuals, instead mention their interests
- (3) Get your creative juices going with your group in trying to find options for mutual gain
- (3) Make sure objective, not subjective criteria are agreed upon

For example:

- (1) "I am trying to find a way to solve the deadline conflict" (NOT "I am trying to find a way to solve John's problem")
- (2) "Maureen needs to take the bus to go home." (NOT Maureen disagrees with the meeting at 6 PM)
- (3) "Can we explore maybe.... a virtual meeting? Does anyone have other ideas?"
- (4) "What objective criteria do we have to make a final decision?"

Sources: Roger Fisher, William Uri "Getting to Yes. Negotiating agreement without giving in".

FOUR TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP INQUIRY



Personal Communication

Conflict Effectiveness

Negotiation Skill

Techniques For Inquiry: (1) Bracket

Purpose To create an open mind so that you can listen, free from your own filters, to the other person's point of view

How To Do It Consciously tell yourself that your goal is to understand the speaker's words, thoughts, and feelings. "Turn down the volume" of your own internal thoughts by putting aside your own reactions, opinions, and feelings when they appear. Focus instead on trying to understand the speaker's point of view

Techniques For Inquiry: (2) Paraphrase

Purpose To validate the speaker and confirm what you think you heard him or her say

How To Do It Listen for key phrases and words and then restate them using your own words

For example:

"What I heard you saying, Helen, is that the keyboard design will only be approved if we use Paul's specifications"

Techniques For Inquiry: (3) Ask Probing Questions

Purpose To get more information and deepen understanding

How To Do It Ask basic questions using "who," "what," "why," "where," or "how." Make sure the intention of your questions is to seek more information, not to veil an evaluation or challenge

For Example:

"What other concerns did the review committee express about the proposed design?"

"Could you say some more about...?"

"Could you give me an example of...?"

"How did you come to hold this view?"

Techniques For Inquiry: (4) Check Perceptions

Purpose To confirm something you suspect the speaker may be thinking or feeling ("reading between the lines") - this deepens your ability to understand and empathize with the speaker

How To Do It If you pick up any unspoken assumptions, conclusions or feelings the speaker may have, name them and ask if your perceptions are correct

For Example:

"Doug, you seem kind of pressured and agitated ~ do you think I'm trying to lay work on you that's not your responsibility?"

Source: CAP Change Acceleration Program, Interaction Associates

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