

Tools and Techniques of High-Performing Teams



Workbook

A customized PBGC workshop presented by Adriano Pianesi and Jean Palmer

PARTICIPATION
consulting



GOOD NEWS!

“... 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. ...

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....

Yet the fact remains that potential teams throughout most organizations usually can perform much better than they do....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.

**From “The Wisdom of Teams. Creating the High Performance Organization”
by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith**

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TASK #1

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Why are you excited to be here?
- How many teams or groups do you belong to here at PBGC?
- Where are you planning to use what you learn in this class?
- What have you tried in the past to improve your teamwork skills?
What were the results? What did not work? What worked?
- What would a great team experience look like for you?



TASK #2

ABOUT MY TEAMS...

1. Think about a prior experience when you believed you were part of a really effective team versus one when you felt the team was ineffective.
2. What were the characteristics that distinguished the two?
3. Based on your answer, can you name three characteristics of an effective team versus an ineffective team?

EFFECTIVE TEAM _____

INEFFECTIVE TEAM _____



TASK #3

PARTY COMMITTEE MEETING – A VIDEO

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. In the video you are about to see, Dan presides over a Committee that has been tasked to organize a party for the General Manager's Birthday. As they organize the party they start talking about what to do and...

How would you evaluate the ability of this team to be held accountable for its decisions?



TASK #4

THE TEAM THAT WASN'T – A CASE STUDY

“The last thing Eric Holt had expected to miss about New York City was its sunrises. Seeing one usually meant he had pulled another all-nighter at the consulting firm where, as a vice president, he had managed three teams of manufacturing specialists. But as he stood on the balcony of his new apartment in the small Indiana city that was now his home, Eric suddenly felt a pang of nostalgia for the way the dawn plays off the skyscrapers of Manhattan

.....

A moment later, Ray LaPierre was standing again. “Forget it. This is never going to work. It’s just a waste of time for all of us,” he said, more resigned than gruff. “We’re all in this together, or there’s no point.” He headed for the door, and before Eric could stop him, two others were at his heels.”

Why doesn't this team work?



TASK # 5 (Resource Guide Pages 3, 4, 5, 6)

“THE WISDOM OF TEAM” AND “THE DISCIPLINE OF TEAMS”

In this workshop we have been talking about a somewhat non-traditional way to talk about teams. In this task we would like for you to test our assumptions.

At your table read as a group the page assigned from the instructors.

Discuss among yourself:

1. Do you agree or disagree with the text you read? Why?
2. Which of the statements you read you have the hardest time with? Why?
3. What is personally important to you for your work in teams? Why?



TASK #6 (Resource Guide Pages 7, 8, 9, 10)

TASK FORCE

Following a major breach of security at PBGC, Senior Management has decided to organize a task force of 8 people that will work to solve the problem. The team will have the burden to propose a solution in 30 days and implement it in the next 9 months. Senior Management is fully behind the initiative and the directors have pledged that they will not interfere with the activities of the team. The team will be informing management of the initiative, to keep them in the loop.

For this particular work, and given the urgency of the task at hand, the team has unlimited spending power to hire, spend, request money and organize itself.

You are a member of the team and today it is your first meeting together. Up to this point the only thing you know it is that you are part of the task force and that you have 30 days to come up with a solution and 9 months to implement it. All team members have agreed to meet for 60 minutes to start working. No agenda is set up.

Welcome to the meeting!



TASK #7 (Resource Guide Page 7)

FOUR LEVELS OF LISTENING

EXERCISE 1

Tell about something really positive that has happened to you at work – it could be a team that you worked on that really clicked, an award you won, a promotion that you didn't expect, a surprise party to honor you, etc.

EXERCISE 2

Tell about a difficult situation you had to deal at work – a conflict with another team member, an upset customer, an uncooperative coworker, etc.

EXERCISE 3 (follow directions from the instructors)

EXERCISE 4 (follow directions from the instructors)

What kind of impact did this have on you as a speaker?

Feedback to the listener?



TASK #9 (Resource Guide Pages 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 26)

AQUASOFT PROJECT – A VIDEO

The quality of a team conversation has a great impact on the ability of a team to perform. But what happens to teamwork when the quality of the conversation degrades? How do you solve a problem when ideas are not explored?

In the video you are about to see Valerie, the Project Manager at Aquasoft Systems Inc. - a medium-sized software company - breaks bad news to her team: the plan they worked so hard on has been rejected by management without explanations and the entire team has been sent back to the drawing board. They need new, solid thinking and they need it fast...

Is this group able to regroup and create a plan of action to solve the problem they are facing?