

# **A Strategic Guide for Building Effective Teams**

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**Managers must recognize that they play a central role in effective team building. However, to be successful, managers require a framework to guide their activities. The purpose of this paper is to provide such a framework in the form of a seven-step process that can guide managers in their team-building efforts. The model itself is built upon the assumption that there are identifiable team characteristics that, if present, will help ensure team success. The model presents a set of decision strategies for the selection and sequencing of team-building efforts and interventions. The model is an iterative, multi-staged effort that requires considerable planning and environmental knowledge to successfully implement.**

In response to globalization, rapid changes in external environments, and a desire by organizations to remain competitive, organizations have continued to flatten, decentralize, re-engineer their business processes, downsize, and empower their employees.<sup>1</sup> To facilitate these changes and gain a competitive edge, managers are increasingly turning to team structures.<sup>2</sup> The actual team design used to support organizational goals may include such structures as cross functional teams, functional work teams, project teams, self-managed teams, intact work teams, employee participation teams, problem-solving teams, maintenance or support teams, and management teams. Cohen and Baily<sup>3</sup> indicate that in the United States, 82 percent of companies employing more than 100 employees have turned to the use of groups to support organizational goals. We must therefore draw the conclusion that "European and North American employees often do not work in isolation from each other but work in team."<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, the typical team-building effort proves ineffective, for three reasons.<sup>5</sup> First, it relies on the services of an external consultant, who is often unfamiliar with the particular characteristics of the business, the organization, and its people. Second, it involves off-site activities in artificial settings that fail to adequately reflect actual work-site conditions and therefore make transfer difficult. Third, it fails to plan for, monitor, and assess the transfer of team-building activities to the work environment.

In our view, the principal reason for the ineffectual outcomes of many team-building activities is the failure to use a critical team-building resource that is readily available in organizations — the manager. Managers play a critical role in maintaining a team climate through their day-to-day activities. For us, team building must be an ongoing activity internal to the organization. As such, it should be made one of the manager's primary responsibilities, instead of the responsibility of an external team-building consultant or third party within the organization.

## **A Strategic Model**

To fulfill the team-building role, managers require a framework to guide activities. The framework should be action oriented and easy to understand and apply, while incorporating the critical factors associated with effective team performance found in the team-building literature. Our purpose in this paper is to provide such a framework in a seven-step process intended to guide managers in their team-building efforts.

**Figure 1** illustrates our framework. Each step in the framework is discussed in the sections that follow.

Our action framework assumes that managers, during their day-to-day interactions with others and when making decisions affecting their work group, can play a key role in facilitating team development. The framework also assumes that the target group of team building is an intact work group where members (a) work within an organizational context, (b) engage in a number of interrelated work tasks or activities, and (c) are psychologically aware of one another but do not necessarily perform in the same physical location.

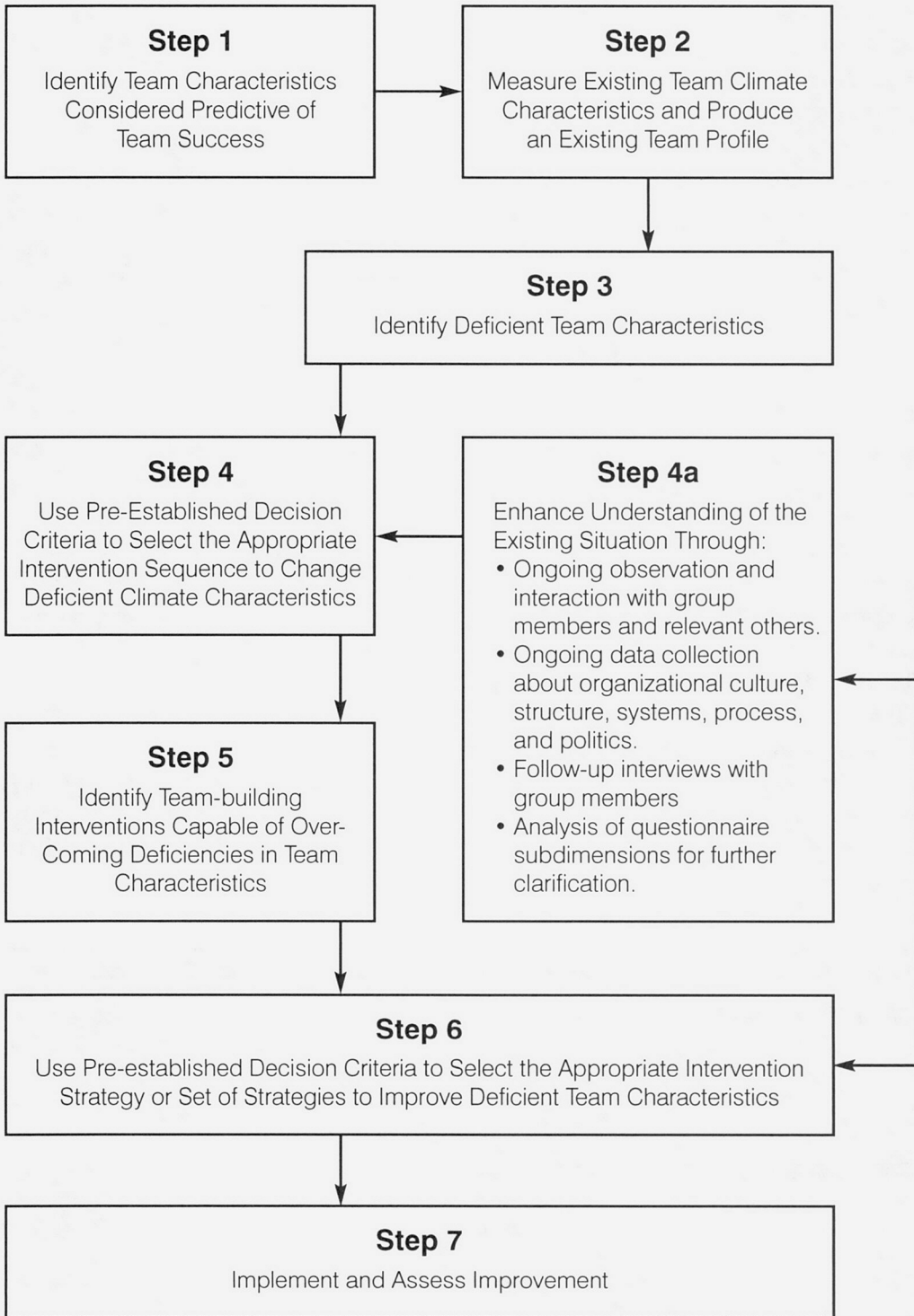
### **Step 1 — Identify Team Characteristics Considered Predictive of Team Success**

Behavioral scientists argue that the success of team-building efforts is a function of the number of desirable team characteristics that can be built into a work environment. The actual mix of factors considered relevant is a function of the type of team being formed (e.g., temporary vs. permanent), tasks performed, the team's level in the organization, the length of time it has been in existence, and the ease of substitutability of existing members.

When forming a new temporary team, the manager is normally interested in the technical and interpersonal skills of potential members that are relevant to the group's tasks, the power distribution of selected members, and whether or not selected members adequately represent relevant constituencies. The key to creating an effective new, temporary team is balance in the attributes of team members, and the presence of needed resources to achieve stated goals. For example, in problem solving and implementation teams, managers must make sure that critical managers with power are selected as members. Therefore, when decisions are made, non-participating managers cannot easily resist. Similarly, managers want to ensure that the required expertise and knowledge exists within the group. This increases the probability of creative problem solving and outcome acceptance by non-members.

In the case of intact groups, where the work unit already exists, management is likely to consider a different set of factors. This happens because intact groups do not allow for easy inter-group transfer and typically engage in tasks that are well established. Consequently, when intact groups are not achieving desired synergies, it is the manager's responsibility to identify those team characteristics likely to have a positive impact on team behavior and change the existing climate so as to remove existing deficiencies.

**Figure 1. Action Framework for Managers Attempting to Engage in Team Building in Intact Groups**



Our discussion focuses its attention on team characteristics for intact, permanent groups. Therefore selection issues relating to personality characteristics, skills, or personal power are treated as givens within the existing work environment. Our argument for using this approach is that most managers do not have the luxury of replacing existing group members. Put another way, once employees stay beyond designated trial periods of employment it is difficult to remove them without just cause. Similarly, our discussion treats the group's task and size as givens.

In a foundational article, Hackman argued for the development of a normative model that would identify "the factors that most powerfully enhance or depress the task effectiveness of a group and to do so in a way that increases the possibility that constructive change can occur."<sup>6</sup> Studies followed in the 1990s that attempted to address Hackman's call by investigating the relationship between team effectiveness and a variety of contextual, compositional, and team process characteristics.<sup>7</sup> For example, in a study of self-managed work teams, Spreitzer et al.<sup>8</sup> found such team characteristics as coordination, expertise, stability, norms, and innovation related to team effectiveness; Stevens and Campion<sup>9</sup> found conflict resolution skills, collaborative problem solving, communications, goal setting, and performance management practices important for team effectiveness. Taggar and Brown found a positive relationship between a typology of behavior observation scales (BOS) and the performance of problem-solving teams.<sup>10</sup>

Based on this literature brainstorming session by subject matter experts (SMEs), Mealiea<sup>11</sup> identified 12 summary dimensions of team climate and provided preliminary empirical support to the argument that each of the 12 characteristics is significantly related to team performance. A descriptive listing of these dimensions is found in **Table 1**. The present authors have added another five team characteristics often discussed in the team literature. We believe that team characteristics listed in Table 1 could be used as the basis for assessing team environments.

Most recently, Mealiea and Baltazar<sup>12</sup> found that collaboration, networking, role/goal knowledge, and team orientation explained a significant proportion of variance in such team outcomes as group productive output, team growth, and individual satisfaction.

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**Table 1. Team Characteristics Associated with Group Performance**

**Clear Purpose** refers to the condition where group members agree on the group's goals. These shared goals act to spark group effort by providing clear direction and buy-in. (It should be noted that such goals could have been unilaterally set by the leader, jointly set by the leader and group members, or set by group members independent of the boss.)

**Consensus Decision Making** occurs when groups allow all members to express their opinions and preferences openly and to discuss any disagreement that might exist. Within the consensus decision-making process, all members are allowed to "have their day in court" while building a consensus as to which alternative is correct. Some members may still believe that there is a better alternative but can accept the position taken by the other group members.

**Shared Leadership** occurs when such leadership roles as contributor, collaborator, challenger, facilitator, and controller are carried out by the group members rather than by the group's leader exclusively. Such shared leadership will vary from situation to situation and may not always be carried out by the same individual.

**Listening** reflects the willingness of group members to listen to others in an effort to achieve interpersonal understanding and facilitate interpersonal sensitivity. Team members will actively seek out listening opportunities to ensure open channels of communication are maintained.

**Open Communication** occurs when group members take advantage of communication opportunities, openly share their feelings, provide timely and relevant feedback, and share relevant information with other group members.

**Self-Assessment** allows groups and their members to assess performance, changing environments, and existing goals. Such assessment allows groups to determine when changes should be made to ensure group success.

**Civilized Disagreement** implies that groups have developed appropriate internal mechanisms and interpersonal sensitivities necessary to manage the full range of conflicts that occur within the groups.

**Style Diversity** occurs when group members are not only tolerant of style and behavioral differences but also actively seek out those differences necessary to perform and develop.

**Networking** reflects group members' ability and willingness to link up with others external to the group. Such contacts can be drawn upon for information, support, and assistance when needed to facilitate goal achievement.

**Participation** by group members in a broad range of group activities and decisions facilitates member buy-in. Participation also facilitates strategy development and increases member self-efficacy.

**Informal Relations** occur within a group environment that can be characterized by a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. Under these conditions, interpersonal interactions are sought out and maintained because members feel comfortable with each other.

**Clear Roles and Assignments** occur when group members have a clear understanding of their roles and assignments and other group members also agree.

**Willingness to Share** allows group members to benefit from the knowledge, experience, emotional support, energy, and tools/equipment possessed by other group members.

**Prepared for Independence** increases the probability that group members have the requisite skills necessary to perform required tasks. This can be achieved either through formal training, coaching, or self-development.

**Structural Support** creates a work environment designed to facilitate group performance, e.g., open communication channels, team-based reward system.

**Leader/Management Style** relates to the manager's ability to support, encourage, coach, and empower his or her staff so as to facilitate employee self-confidence, self-management, and interpersonal interactions.

**Learning Environment** relates to the degree to which the group/organizational environment permits group members to learn from their experiences and the experiences of others.

## **Step 2 — Measure Existing Team Climate Characteristics to Produce a Team Profile**

It is important to recognize that research demonstrates a clear link between the presence of positive team characteristics and team effectiveness. Therefore, managers must find a mechanism to measure the degree to which relevant team characteristics currently exist in a given environment. Anderson and West argue that such information can be used to create team climate surveys, create team climate diagnosis, create team innovativeness, measure team development, and for the selection of new team members.<sup>13</sup>

There are three traditional approaches to collecting this information: paper-and-pencil questionnaires or surveys, direct observation, and interviews.

### **Paper and Pencil Questionnaires**

**Appendix 1** contains sample items from a 94-item team questionnaire that can be used to assess the existing team climate of intact work groups. A sample plot of this questionnaire's results is shown in **Figure 2**. Similar surveys have been developed and used by other researchers to assess team characteristics.<sup>14</sup> Paper-and-pencil questionnaires allow managers to effectively assess the perceptions of group members. Unfortunately, they require significant time to develop and do not allow for real-time clarification by individuals who complete them or follow-up questions by the manager using them.

### **Observing Team Characteristics**

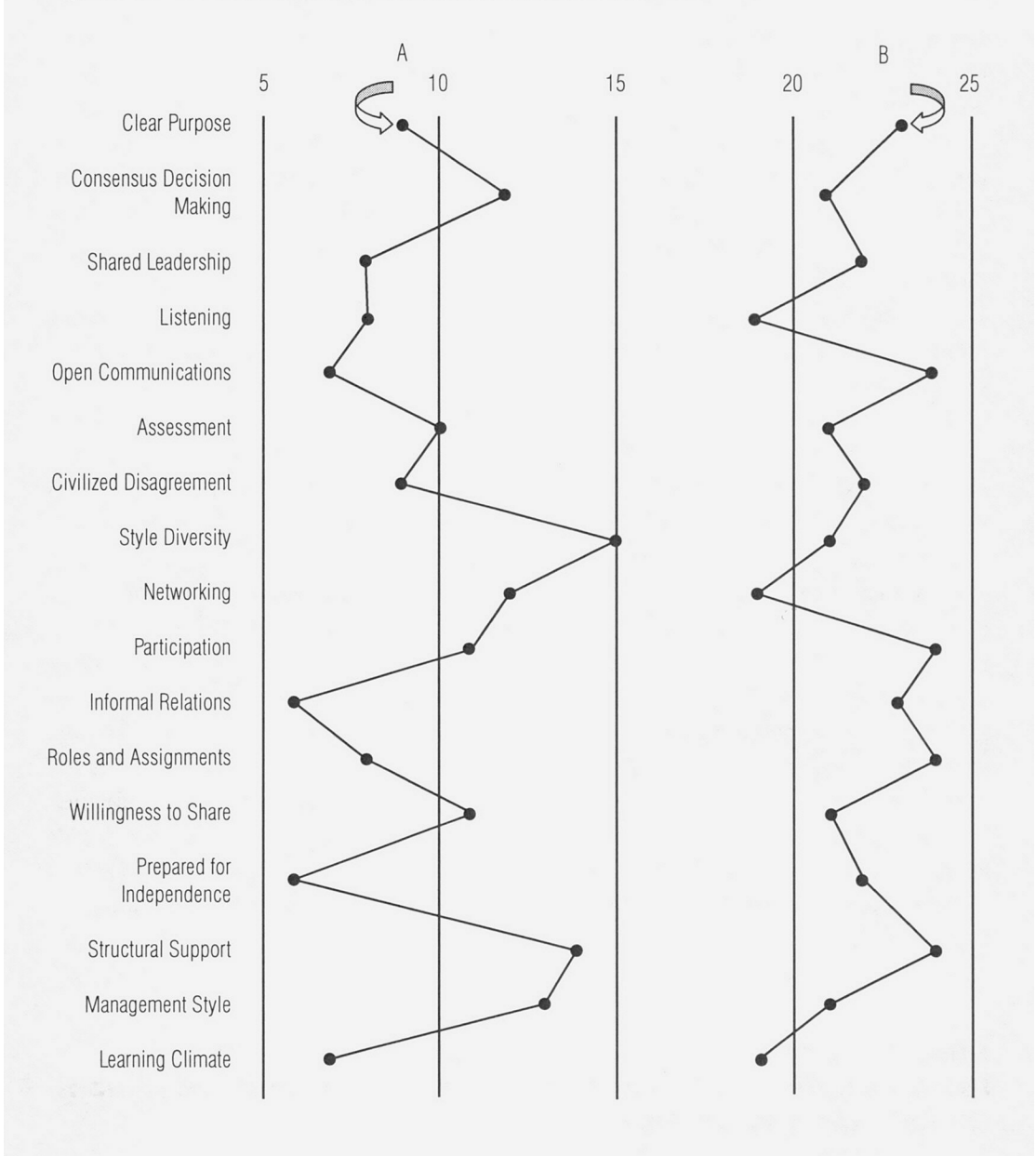
Direct observation is a second proven technique that can be useful in assessing an existing group or team climate. It requires managers to spend extended periods of time observing, recording, and assessing pre-identified behavioral dimensions and support behaviors. It is assumed that the observer knows specifically what he or she is looking for and is skilled in observing and recording employee behaviors. In the case of team performance in an intact group, it requires that managers have identified a relevant team and the desired behaviors associated with each team characteristic.

While this technique can be effective, it does have its disadvantages. One of the primary disadvantages is that direct observation is labor intensive. To effectively assess an existing team climate can require weeks of observation. At the same time, observation has the potential of altering the behavior of those being watched. Therefore, it is important to be clear with group members about the purpose of direct observation, e.g., the improvement of an existing group climate and not the assessment of specific individuals. Lastly, the process does not work well unless participants are willing to be observed.

### **Interviews**

A potential compromise between a paper-and-pencil questionnaire and direct observation is the interview. Interviews allow managers to directly interact with group members, respond to non-verbal cues, and ask follow-up questions should the need arise. Interviews can also be used to supplement information obtained through questionnaires and direct observation. Interviews are most effective if they are well designed, structured, and ask the same question of each participant.

**Figure 2. Observed Team Characteristic Profiles**



Whatever the technique used, it is important to validate that the team characteristics being measured are predictive of team effectiveness. It is also possible to use any combination of these data collection techniques. The objective is to obtain as accurate an assessment of the existing environment as possible. Ultimately, the collected data will allow managers to construct a team characteristic profile. Figure 2 provides two such profiles. These profiles will be used as a basis for subsequent discussions.

### **Step 3 — Identify Deficient Team Characteristics**

High scores in Figure 2 indicate that the climate being measured has more of each team characteristic present than would be the case if a low score had been obtained. In the graphic depicted, the maximum total score possible for a team characteristic is 25 and the minimum possible score is five. Groups with profiles that fall to the right are likely to be more effective than groups whose profiles fall to the left. When considering team-building interventions, managers should be primarily concerned with poor performing groups whose profile falls on the left of Figure 2.

Profile B would represent a group that appears to have achieved a positive team climate. All but three of the team characteristics are above 20. The three remaining team characteristics (shared leadership, networking, and learning climate) have scores of 19 — just below the 20 level. In the event that this group is not performing up to expectations, the manager should look for something other than an ineffective team climate to explain the shortfall. For example, poor performance could be caused by misalignment between employee skills and task requirements, lack of training, lack of practice, or the lack of appropriate tools and equipment.

Alternatively, profile A represents a group with numerous team characteristic deficiencies. Only one of the 17 team characteristics achieves a score of 15. Of the remaining 16, nine fall between 10 and 14, and seven have scores of nine or less. From a team perspective, this group is clearly dysfunctional. Without listing all the group's problems we can see that (a) it lacks direction, (b) members do not understand their roles and assignments, (c) the work climate prevents learning, (d) members are unwilling to share, and (e) members are unwilling to share leadership responsibilities. Until some type of team intervention is undertaken, and a more positive team climate is created, management should not expect significant improvements in the group's performance. At the very minimum, management is unlikely to be taking advantage of the group's potential.

### **Step 4 — Use Pre-Established Decision Criteria to Select the Appropriate Intervention Sequence to Change Deficient Climate Characteristics**

It is unlikely that individuals managing a group with profile A will have the time, energy, or resources to attack all deficiencies simultaneously. Furthermore, given the complexity and uniqueness of most business environments, and the interrelationships between team characteristics, it would be administratively unsound to attempt a broad-based intervention without considering how best to proceed; in other words: which deficiencies should be addressed first and what would be the appropriate sequence of subsequent interventions? Managers should therefore develop and consider a number of decision criteria that would help them address the issues of setting priorities and sequencing.

When selecting and sequencing intervention strategies, the criteria presented in **Table 2** should prove helpful. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into detail for each criterion. However, several examples will help clarify how managers might use these criteria to guide their actions. When operationalizing these criteria, managers should already have a detailed understanding of their environments. First, they need to understand the strengths, weaknesses, interests, and workload of their staff. Next, they should be aware of the history, traditions, and existing culture within the company. Similarly, they need to know what resources are available and how power is distributed within the organization in the event that they need to get more. Above all, they must know their own strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations. In those instances where this information is not at managers' fingertips they must take steps to increase their K's (knowledge) within the organization.

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**Table 2. Criteria of Choices: Selecting Intervention Targets**

- Likelihood of Success
- Situational Importance and Urgency
- Complexity/Difficulty of Desired Changes versus Organization, Leader, and Group Member Competencies
- Leader Preferences or Competencies
- Organizational Culture and History
- Improvement in those Areas with the Greatest Deficiencies
- Relevant Sequencing Issues
- Availability of Internal/External Hard Resources (Money, Trainers, Facilities, Equipment, etc.)
- Team Member Characteristics and Preparedness
- Likelihood of Team Member Support
- Availability of Time
- Political Pressures and Organizational Realities
- Impression Management Issues (Organizational Optics)

The following examples represent how managers might apply the above criteria.

- One of the most often used choice criterion is that of importance, or relevance, to successful group or unit performance. Most managers and researchers would argue that it is critical to organizational success that group members are aware of, understand, and agree with unit or group goals and that group members

understand what behaviors are expected from them. The logic here is that unless there is consensus on where the group should be going and how this fits with the organization's vision, and members understand their roles (behaviors and assigned activities), teams are unlikely to maximize their contribution to organizational success. Therefore, managers facing profile A (Figure 2), and applying the importance criteria may want to first address the issues of clear purpose and member roles and assignments.

- However, the likelihood of achieving group consensus will be greatest in those situations where group members are able to communicate openly to one another. Similarly, it is more likely that groups will be able to work out their differences when they can discuss these differences in a civilized manner. Given profile A, it is unlikely that this will happen. Therefore, it might be appropriate for the sequence criteria to take precedence over the importance criteria. In such a case, the manager would decide to take steps to improve the group's communication, listening, and problem solving/negotiating skills before attempting to obtain consensus on group goals and member roles.
- Others might argue that team characteristics having the lowest scores (most deficient) should be addressed first. The logic behind this argument would be that the most deficient team characteristics are likely to do the greatest amount of damage to the team's ability to perform. Following this criterion, the manager facing profile A would likely direct his or her attention toward open communication, informal relations, group members' readiness for independence, and unit conditions for learning.
- Alternatively, managers might want to consider the existing level of staff confidence, or personal self-efficacy. It is unreasonable to expect employees with low levels of confidence or self-efficacy to take risks, learn new behaviors, embrace change, or assert themselves when challenged. Such individuals often do not demonstrate persistence or exhibit the hardiness necessary to withstand stress or adverse situations. Therefore, if levels of self-efficacy and confidence are an issue in the group, the "likelihood of success" criterion may dominate managers' decision-making process. By selecting one or two of the easiest team characteristics to change, managers are more likely to succeed and at the same time strengthen group member confidence or self-efficacy. By ensuring small successes, managers can better equip or prepare group members to work towards improving more complex or entrenched team characteristics.
- It should also be realized that choice criteria can indicate which team characteristics not to change first. For example, if the organization's culture encourages a "command and control" type of relationship between managers and their staff, it would be unwise to make "shared leadership" an initial goal of a planned team-building intervention. This is in spite of the fact that such a change would lighten managerial responsibilities of group leaders and empower group members.

- Similarly, it must be recognized by change agents that internal politics and organizational traditions may dictate which team characteristics should not be the focus of early team-building initiatives. For example, given profile A, it might appear logical to take steps to introduce better assessment tools, both within the unit being measured and with other departments or groups. This would be especially true in those situations where assessment would provide objective data for feedback, performance management, and other administrative decisions. However, organizational tradition, history, or internal politics may have produced a climate in which internal assessment, or interdepartmental comparisons, would result in high levels of conflict or management resistance. Consequently, it may be desirable to focus on other deficiencies first and allow time to gain internal and external support for one's team-building efforts.

Clearly, the actual team-building strategy, or set of strategies, selected by managers will reflect the unique characteristics of each situation. In other words, managers must have an intimate understanding of the unit and the organization. As a result, it is essential for managers to have what the authors call "Ks" in place. "Ks" refer to an intimate working knowledge of the situation. Without this working knowledge of their environment, it is unlikely that managers will be able to make correct decisions as to which deficiencies to improve first and in what sequence to address remaining team characteristic deficiencies.

There are four data-collection techniques that are capable of providing the necessary "Ks" — real-time observation, review of historical data, interviews, and questionnaires (step 4a — Figure 1). The first two are day-to-day data collection techniques that help managers understand their micro and macro environments. As such, they are not specific to team building, but rather should reflect the efforts of managers to remain current with their work environments. The remaining two data collection methods are designed to fine-tune managers' decision-making capabilities when engaging in specific team-building efforts. If a pencil-and-paper questionnaire is initially used to collect team characteristic data, interviews can be used to thoroughly investigate questions or issues arising from the questionnaire. Similarly, summary scores for each team characteristic may fail to provide the necessary detail assessment of what is occurring in the situation. To ensure that this is not the case, managers can review the sub-dimensions or items used to produce the summary scores.

### **Step 5 — Identify Team-building Strategies Capable of Overcoming Deficiencies in Team Characteristics**

All too often, managers, when attempting to build effective teams, turn to outside professionals to create teams within their units or organization. Once selected, these outside professionals typically take the natural or intact work group off site, and engage in some type of intensive team-building experience. Carried out in this manner, team-building experiences often take employees away from their jobs for two or

three days at a time. The assumption is that intact groups or individuals will transfer appropriate team behaviors back to the job or organizational setting. While such efforts can sensitize group members to the importance of team characteristics, or kick-start an in-house team-building effort, it is the author's experience that desired behaviors are not often transferred to the work environment, and if they are, they soon deteriorate.

Instead, the model being espoused by the authors argues that managers can and do play a significant role in the development of teams. Therefore, once managers have determined which team characteristic deficiency should be addressed first, and the sequence of subsequent interventions, they should attempt to articulate available team-building strategies. In constructing such a list, managers can turn to the team-building literature, personal experience, in-house experts or managers, or benchmark best practices in other organizations. **Table 3** presents a list of strategies the authors have found useful when training managers to become more efficient team builders in their own departments.

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**Table 3. Intervention Strategies for Building a Winning Team**

- Goal Setting (Clarify Behavioral Expectations as to Desired Team Behaviors)
- Leadership — Modeling Desired Team Behaviors
- Structural Changes — e.g., Reporting Relationships, Required Relationships, Required Interactions, Pairing, Task Enrichment
- Empowering Group as a Whole — e.g., Allow for Group Decision Making and Problem Solving
- Changes to the Performance Management System — Especially in the Area of Reward/Behavior Links
- Formal Training in Deficient Areas
- Team Member Coaching by Team Leader or Peers
- Behavior Modification through Shaping
- Constructive Feedback
- Changing Membership (Transfers, Infusion of New Members, etc.)
- Kick Starting Retreats

## **Step 6 — Use Pre-Established Decision Criteria to Select the Appropriate Intervention Strategies to Improve Deficient Team Characteristics**

Here again, managers are unlikely to have the time, energy, or resources to apply all improvement strategies simultaneously. Nor is it likely that all improvement strategies will be equally effective when applied to any one team characteristic. Managers should therefore once more articulate and apply a number of decision criteria that would help them decide on the appropriate mix of improvement interventions.

**Table 4** provides criteria that managers might find helpful when attempting to compare and select intervention strategies. The criteria are quite similar to those presented in Table 2, but put greater emphasis on costs and benefits, organizational fit, and alignment with managerial and group member competencies, risk propensity, and preparedness.

Which interventions are selected will reflect the unique characteristics of the situation being considered and the managerial philosophies of key decision makers. As was the case above, it is essential for managers to have their “Ks” in place. To facilitate this process, the data collection techniques described in Figure 1 (see block 4a) can again be used to collect the information necessary to make a quality selection decision. In this way, managers will select a mix of interventions that make sense for their unique situation.

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**Table 4. Criteria of Choice: Selecting Intervention Strategy**

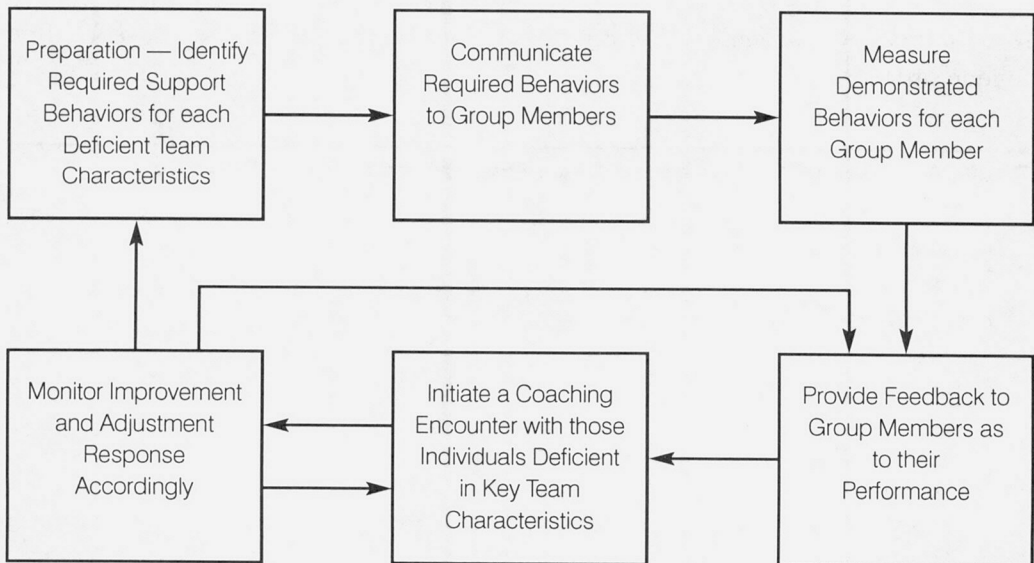
- Likelihood of Success
- Cost Benefit or Utility Analysis
- Time Requirements for Completion
- Leader Preferences or Competencies
- Organizational Culture and History
- Availability of Internal/External Hard Resources to Support Intervention Strategy (Money, Trainers, Facilities, Equipment, etc.)
- Team Member Characteristics and Preparedness
- Likelihood of Group Member Support
- Political Pressures and Organizational Realities
- Impression Management Issues (Organizational Optics)

## Step 7 — Implement and Assess Improvements

Implementation is a critical component of any team-building intervention. It is the point at which analysis and planning become reality. Each intervention will have its own unique sequence of steps designed to bring it on line and obtain the desired improvement in the selected team characteristic. Space limitations prevent a detailed discussion of appropriate steps for each intervention strategy. However, a brief example will hopefully provide some insight into the implementation process.

For discussion purposes, assume that a manager has applied his or her choice criteria to available intervention strategies and has selected goal setting and coaching to improve goal consensus, open communications, and create a positive learning environment. **Figure 3** provides a brief overview of the steps that might be followed to implement such a goal-setting intervention. Let us briefly consider what activities the manager would engage in during each of these steps.

**Figure 3. Implementing a Goal Setting/Coaching Strategy to Improve Deficient Team Characteristics**



**Preparation** — To begin the intervention process to improve open communications, the manager must first identify what he or she believes are required support behaviors. This can be accomplished through a detailed job analysis, analysis of critical incidents, direct observation, personal introspection, or by seeking input from experts or other successful managers. Output from such activities should provide the manager with the required support behaviors necessary to help improve goal consensus. For example, the manager might identify the following three behaviors:

- If confused about group goals, you should acknowledge your lack of personal understanding and seek clarification from the team leader or peers.
- When the group schedules a meeting to discuss goals, you should come to the meeting prepared, e.g., review appropriate support material and make an attempt to clarify your personal views on what the group should achieve.
- If you believe that the group is moving in the wrong direction, or engaging in activities that will thwart goal achievement, you should stop the group and express your concerns.

**Communicate Behaviors** — Once identified, it is critical that the manager's behavioral expectations are clearly communicated to group members. This can be accomplished through a formal goal setting meeting, brief informal exchanges with group members, or direct feedback to deficient individuals. When communicating one's behavioral expectations it is also necessary to indicate why the behaviors are important, the consequences of desired behaviors, the conditions under which they should be exhibited, and how group members will be assessed. The key is to make the employee understand, accept, and be willing to engage in the new behaviors.

**Measurement/Feedback** — The next two steps should be linked by the manager. He or she observes, records, and rates group members' behavior. When sufficient information has been collected to draw meaningful conclusions, the manager then provides meaningful feedback to group members. During this feedback encounter the manager should indicate his or her willingness to help group members improve their performance through one-on-one coaching.

**Coaching Encounter** — Any coaching exchange initiated by group members, or the team leader, should be voluntary and reflect the assumption that the coach and employee are joint partners in the process. The two parties will jointly (a) assess current behavior; (b) try to understand why desired behavior or activities did not occur, and determine if any environmental barriers exist; and (c) establish new behavioral expectations for each other. It is at this point that the group member states his or her willingness to change personal behavior.

**Monitor and Recycle** — No intervention strategy is worth initiating unless managers are willing to monitor its success. Therefore managers working through this process must again observe, record, and evaluate group member behaviors. This information will help managers identify new required behaviors, fine-tune the coaching process, or directly act as the basis for group member feedback.

As indicated above, the process just described is only one of the intervention strategies available to managers engaged in team building. What is important is that the strategies selected fit the environment and have a high probability of success. Finally, since the world is not a perfect place, the possibility exists that initial attempts will fail to produce the desired results. Should this occur, managers must revisit their available intervention strategies and select an alternative strategy.

## **Conclusion**

It is hoped that the reader better understands and accepts the role that managers play in building effective teams. The model presented here is an attempt to provide some structure to this complex and demanding process and to help guide managers who recognize the need to build an effective team within their units. The model itself is built on the assumption that there are identifiable team characteristics that, if present, will help ensure team success. It should also be recognized that this model implies an iterative, multi-staged effort that requires considerable planning and environmental knowledge to be successfully implemented.

## Appendix A

### Partial Team Evaluation Form

Below you will find a number of questions that relate to the work climate existing in the group you are thinking about. Please take 15 minutes to complete the form and calculate your scores on the 12 dimensions listed on the last page of the questionnaire. Answer these questions in terms of the group's actual climate and not what you think it should have been.

Each statement is followed by a five-point scale. Please circle the number that best reflects how your department currently operates. Please proceed.

1. If asked, group members could quickly and accurately describe the general objectives important to the group.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

2. Once group decisions were made, group members actively supported agreed-upon action, even when the final decision was not their initial position.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

3. Departmental meetings (problem solving, informational, fact finding, etc.) were always chaired by the same person.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

4. Group members took the time to listen to what others were saying.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

5. Group members frequently gave accurate and timely feedback to each other. Feedback given related to both content and process issues.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

6. Group members were comfortable assessing their own performance and the performance of others.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

7. Group members openly discussed differences of opinion.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

8. Group members demanded oneness of approach in actual member performance or behavior.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

9. Group members rarely interacted with individuals outside the group; i.e., in the organization or in other classes if you have selected a student group.

|                |   |                |   |                   |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree |   | Somewhat Agree |   | Strongly Disagree |
| 5              | 4 | 3              | 2 | 1                 |

## Notes

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