

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM PROCESS

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Key elements of engaging in effective teamwork

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# Overview

- What makes for an effective team? (slides 3-4)
- Common challenges of teamwork? (slides 5-7)
- Team process (slides 8-12)

# Google: What makes for an effective team?

- Set out to find “the perfect mix of individual traits and skills necessary for a stellar team”
- Conducted 200+ interviews
- Examined > 250 attributes of 180+ Google teams

What do you think they discovered?

***Who is on a team matters less than how the team members interact, structure their work, and view their contributions***

# Google: What makes for an effective team?

5 key dynamics of team process that set successful teams apart:

- **Psychological safety:** Can we take risks on this team without feeling insecure or embarrassed?
- **Dependability:** Can we count on each other to do high quality work on time?
- **Structure & clarity:** Are goals, roles, and execution plans on our team clear?
- **Meaning of work:** Are we working on something that is personally important for each of us?
- **Impact of work:** Do we fundamentally believe that the work we're doing matters?

# Discuss: What were your past team experiences like?

How were teams beneficial for completing tasks?

What were some challenges you experienced?

How much time did you spend on team processes (setting goals and norms, discussing procedures, reflecting)?

# If teams are so challenging, why do we use them?

Teams enable division of labor (DOL)

DOL ensures specialized information and expertise to improve individual performance

But, DOL raises the questions of

- Are members motivated to work hard in their specialty?
- Can the efforts of different members be coordinated to serve the interests of the team?
- How can you bring diverse perspectives into alignment?

# Managing Teams

Three dimensions that must be attended to at the same time:

- **Information**—who has the best information/expertise for a decision or a task?
- **Motivation**—how can each individual be motivated to perform to the best of his/her abilities?
- **Coordination**—how is the performance of different individuals “put back together” so that it serves the team’s interests?

Whether things go well or poorly is largely dependent on how effective a team’s processes are

# Aspects of Team Process

- Decision-Making
- Participation
- Influence
- Conflict

Source: Hill, Linda A., and Maria Farkas. ["A Note on Team Process."](#) Harvard Business School Background Note 402-032, October 2001.

# Team Decision Making Trap: The Common Knowledge Effect

Commonly held information is more influential on group decisions, compared to unique information.

- Common information impacts the initial preferences of more team members before the meeting.
- Common information is more likely to be introduced at the meeting, simply because more people have this information.
- Common information is more likely to be repeated in conversation.
- As team converges on an answer, there is a norm of not bringing up new facts.

# Fix: Use a rigorous decision-making process

1. Identify and explore the problem
  2. Generate possible solutions
  3. Refine and critique possible solutions
  4. Implement the solution
- Pay attention to who is participating and who has a lot of influence
  - Use breadth of team's knowledge and expertise
  - Express your true opinions and don't just express what you think others are thinking and feeling
  - Present solid justifications for your position and demand the same from others
  - Create norms that foster differences in opinion

How else can we overcome (or prevent) teamwork challenges?

# Developing good team process

- **Team process must be actively created and monitored**
  - Goals
  - Roles
  - Norms
  - Monitoring/Learning/Refining
  - Evaluating Performance
- **Team charters can be a useful tool**