

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

200
1822 - 2022

BMSW4002

**Effective Team work and
Communication**

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Benefits of team working

The benefits of teamwork apply across all categories of work, – some jobs simply cannot be done alone, whilst others will be enhanced by the efforts of more people. Individuals all have their own strengths, their own skills and their own ideas to bring to the table and, when they work together as a team, will create something far more powerful than anything that is turned out by one single person.

Productivity Boost – when the workload is shared equally by members of a team and the tasks are allocated according to the strengths and skills of each team member, tasks are completed faster and more efficiently which results in a noticeable increase in productivity.

Promotes Innovation – working in a team means working more creatively, bouncing ideas off each other and creating innovative and practical solutions to problems. When working in a team on a brainstorming exercise, people are usually more confident and come up with unique and creative ideas.

Benefits of team working

Improves Morale – when the workload is shared by a team, the collaboration enables all members to feel a greater sense of achievement when the task is completed. Each member accomplishes more than they could alone, feeling the recognition and the sense of belonging that improves their self-esteem. This leads to job satisfaction with the feeling of joy that comes from the sense of belonging.

Support Network – during the challenging times that face any business, team members will help and rely on each other for support and guidance. This enables them to focus on the goal, reduces the stress during difficult times and enables them to complete projects in an efficient manner.

Benefits of team working

Establishes Strong Relationships – developing strong relationships with colleagues helps team members to communicate freely and more effectively. Members will motivate and encourage each other to work with their strengths and talents, developing new ones too. Being part of a team builds trust and strong bonds, creating a work environment in which members feel comfortable trying new ways of doing things, asking questions and asking for or offering help when necessary.

Improves Communication Skills – for all team members. No two people are the same and sometimes there is a clash of personalities. Enhanced communication skills gained by working in a team will facilitate conflict resolution as the team needs to work collectively towards a common goal that depends upon the input of all members.

Benefits of team working

Enables Flexibility – team members who collaborate in the workplace are often cross-trained to cover for each other's strengths and skills. This means that there is more flexibility for employees to plan their personal obligations (such as medical appointments or childcare) without disrupting the project. This type of flexibility often improves morale and productivity while promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Increases Skills and Knowledge – team members share information as they work which leads to all team members having an increased knowledge and skillset.

Develops Leadership Qualities – whether the team has one specific member as team leader or whether the team leader changes depending on the task, all members of the team will be encouraged to enhance and deploy their own leadership qualities from time to time.

Benefits of team working

Facilitates Career Progress – working as part of a team helps to advance your career. By collaborating with others, you're exposed to their skillsets which means that you can learn and expand on your own skillset. This can lead to better career opportunities in the future.

Expands Professional Network – the alliances forged can potentially lead to bigger and better opportunities in the future.

Improves Service – the benefits of teamwork are not just limited to the workplace – it also improves the service provided to customers.

Teams that work well together result in an organisation with happy employees and most people and business prefer to do business with organisations whose employees have a strong work ethic and team spirit. To find out how your business can benefit from Teamwork, why not check out our one-day course on Creating a Team Based Environment?

The stages of a team development(Tuckman theory)

Psychologist Bruce Tuckman came up with the memorable phrase "forming, storming, norming, and performing" in his 1965 paper, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups." [1] It describes the path that teams follow on their way to high performance. Later, he added a fifth stage, "adjourning" (also known as "mourning") to mark the end of a team's journey.

Forming

In the beginning, when a new team forms, individuals will be unsure of the team's purpose, how they fit in, and whether they'll work well with one another. They may be anxious, curious, or excited to get going. However they feel, they'll be looking to the team leader for direction.

This may take some time, as people get to know their new colleagues and one another's ways of working.

The stages of a team development(Tuckman theory)

Storming

In the storming stage, people start to push against the established boundaries. Conflict or friction can also arise between team members as their true characters – and their preferred ways of working – surface and clash with other people's.

At this stage team members may challenge your authority or management style, or even the team's mission. Left unchecked, this can lead to face-to-face confrontations or simmering online tensions.

If roles and responsibilities aren't yet clear, individuals might begin to feel overwhelmed by their workload or frustrated at a lack of progress.

The stages of a team development(Tuckman theory)

Norming

Gradually, the team moves into the norming stage. People start to resolve their differences, appreciate one another's strengths, and respect your authority as a leader.

Now that they know one another better, your team members will feel more comfortable asking for help and offering constructive feedback. They'll share a stronger commitment to the team's goals, and they should make good progress toward it.



The stages of a team development(Tuckman theory)

Performing

Now your team is in flow and performing to its full potential. With hard work and structured processes, the team is likely to achieve its goals efficiently.

Judith Stein, from MIT's HR department, says of this stage, "Roles on the team may have become more fluid, with members taking on various roles and responsibilities as needed. Differences among members are appreciated and used to enhance the team's performance."

The stages of a team development(Tuckman theory)

Adjourning

Many teams reach this stage naturally. For example, projects come to an end, or permanent teams are disbanded and people redeployed.

People who like routine, or who have developed close working relationships with colleagues, may find this time difficult.

Tuckman's model isn't a one-way street – teams may go back and forth between stages. When you hit the performing stage, keep observing your team's progress in case it slips back. For example, a new team member can disrupt the group dynamic, or a new business direction might mean you have to reevaluate your team roles and goals.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

The research indicated that the most successful teams were made up of a diverse mix of behaviours. Each team needs access to each of the nine Belbin Team Role behaviours to become a high-performing team.

What are the nine Belbin Team Roles?

The nine Belbin Team Roles are: Resource Investigator, Teamworker and Co-ordinator (the Social roles); Plant, Monitor Evaluator and Specialist (the Thinking roles), and Shaper, Implementer and Completer Finisher (the Action or Task roles).

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Resource investigator

Uses their inquisitive nature to find ideas to bring back to the team.

Strengths: Outgoing, enthusiastic. Explores opportunities and develops contacts.

Allowable weaknesses: Might be over-optimistic, and can lose interest once the initial enthusiasm has passed.

Don't be surprised to find that: They might forget to follow up on a lead.

Teamworker

Helps the team to gel, using their versatility to identify the work required and complete it on behalf of the team.

Strengths: Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.

Allowable weaknesses: Can be indecisive in crunch situations and tends to avoid confrontation.

Don't be surprised to find that: They might be hesitant to make unpopular decisions.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Coordinator

Needed to focus on the team's objectives, draw out team members and delegate work appropriately.

Strengths: Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals.

Allowable weaknesses: Can be seen as manipulative and might offload their own share of the work.

Don't be surprised to find that: They might over-delegate, leaving themselves little work to do.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Plant

Tends to be highly creative and good at solving problems in unconventional ways.

Strengths: Creative, imaginative, free-thinking, generates ideas and solves difficult problems.

Allowable weaknesses: Might ignore incidentals, and may be too preoccupied to communicate effectively.

Don't be surprised to find that: They could be absent-minded or forgetful.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Monitor Evaluator

Provides a logical eye, making impartial judgements where required and weighs up the team's options in a dispassionate way.

Strengths: Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.

Allowable weaknesses: Sometimes lacks the drive and ability to inspire others and can be overly critical.

Don't be surprised to find that: They could be slow to come to decisions.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Specialist

Brings in-depth knowledge of a key area to the team.

Strengths: Single-minded, self-starting and dedicated. They provide specialist knowledge and skills.

Allowable weaknesses: Tends to contribute on a narrow front and can dwell on the technicalities.

Don't be surprised to find that: They overload you with information.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Shaper

Provides the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum.

Strengths: Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.

Allowable weaknesses: Can be prone to provocation, and may sometimes offend people's feelings.

Don't be surprised to find that: They could risk becoming aggressive and bad-humoured in their attempts to get things done.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Implementer

Needed to plan a workable strategy and carry it out as efficiently as possible.

Strengths: Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organises work that needs to be done.

Allowable weaknesses: Can be a bit inflexible and slow to respond to new possibilities.

Don't be surprised to find that: They might be slow to relinquish their plans in favour of positive changes.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Completer Finisher

Most effectively used at the end of tasks to polish and scrutinise the work for errors, subjecting it to the highest standards of quality control.

Strengths: Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.

Allowable weaknesses: Can be inclined to worry unduly, and reluctant to delegate.

Don't be surprised to find that: They could be accused of taking their perfectionism to extremes.

What are the team roles(Belbin)

Although there are nine Belbin Team Roles, this doesn't mean that every team requires nine people. Most people will have two or three Belbin Team Roles that they are most comfortable with, and this can change over time. Each Belbin Team Role has strengths and weaknesses, and each role has equal importance.

It's not always necessary to have all Team Roles working simultaneously. It is important to look first at the team objectives, and then work out which tasks need to be undertaken. Once this has been done, discussions can take place regarding how and when each Belbin Team Role behaviour should be utilised.

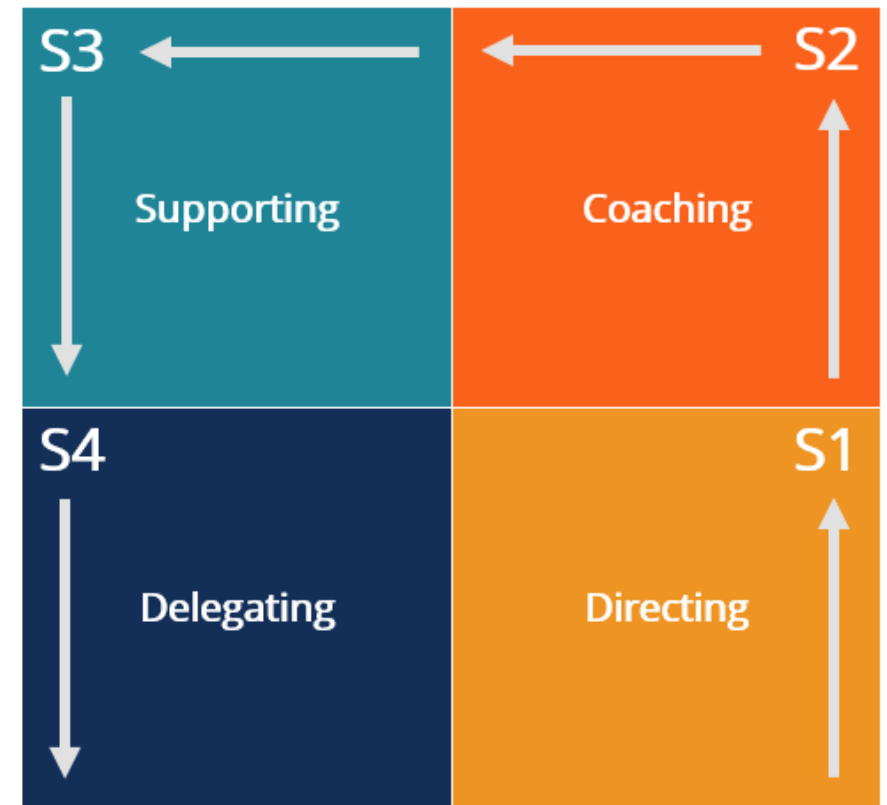
Using Belbin can give individuals a greater understanding of their strengths, which leads to more effective communication in the team. Managers can put together great teams, enhance the performance of existing ones, and ensure that everyone feels that they are making a difference in the workplace.

Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

The Hersey-Blanchard Model is a leadership model that focuses on the ability and willingness of individual employees. Developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, the model is also referred to as the Situational Leadership Model.

Unlike other leadership models, the Hersey-Blanchard model disregards the idea that corporations require a single approach to leadership. Instead, the model proposes a leadership style that adapts to the unique circumstances of each workplace.

By evaluating each employee's ability and experience, leaders can adapt their leadership methods to encourage professional development in their employees. It results in a progression of leadership methods that continuously adapt alongside an employee's professional development.



Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

Analyzing the Hersey-Blanchard Model

The Hersey-Blanchard model uses a diagram to classify employees based on their capacity and experience. In the model, employees are referred to as “followers,” while managers are referred to as “leaders.”

The diagram below outlines four distinct groups of followers, each organized by their ability and willingness to work. **Ability** refers to a follower’s ability to perform their job successfully with a combination of skills and experience. **Willingness** refers to followers who are motivated to take on a task and have the confidence to carry out their responsibilities.

Based on the Hersey-Blanchard model, the four groups of followers are:

Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

1. Unable and Unwilling (D1)

D1 followers are unable to complete their tasks because they lack the proper skills to succeed. They are also unmotivated and lack confidence in their abilities.

2. Unable and Willing (D2)

D2 followers are unable to complete their tasks, usually due to a lack of skills and experience. However, they are still willing to try and attempt the task. It exemplifies new employees that are motivated to succeed but lack adequate knowledge and ability.



Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

3. Able and Unwilling (D3)

D3 followers have the capacity and experience to complete their tasks but are unwilling to do so. It can be attributed to a lack of self-confidence in their ability or a lack of motivation to follow their leader's guidance.

4. Able and Willing (D4)

D4 followers have the necessary skills and experience, as well as the confidence in their ability to complete tasks successfully. The employees have the highest level of capacity and can complete tasks while also taking responsibility for their work.

Leadership under the Hersey-Blanchard Model

Under the Hersey-Blanchard model, a leader must adapt their leadership methods depending on the ability and willingness of their followers. For example, a follower with a D2 development level should be led differently than a follower with a D4.

Therefore, the Hersey-Blanchard model outlines four distinct leadership styles, each corresponding to a specific level of employee development.

Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

1. Directing (S1)

The S1 leadership style focuses primarily on providing direction to employees. At the S1 stage, followers lack the ability and willingness to complete their tasks, and leaders must clearly define their responsibilities and ensure they develop the foundational skills to be successful. Typical S1 leadership methods include simple instructions, clear explanations, and careful supervision.

2. Coaching (S2)

The S2 leadership style provides followers with both direction and personal support. In the S2 stage of development, followers are still unable to perform their tasks but are motivated to succeed. Therefore, leaders should ensure that followers are developing the necessary skills but still maintaining their self-confidence. Ultimately, this results in followers that can take on personal responsibility for their tasks.

3. Supporting (S3)

The S3 leadership style focuses on supporting followers and less emphasis on providing direction. At the S3 stage, the follower has already developed the necessary skills to complete their tasks. Therefore, the leader should focus on providing feedback and support to motivate the employee and encourage greater development.

Situational Leadership role (Hersey and Blanchard)

4. Delegating (S4)

The S4 leadership style involves minimal direction and support, as the follower is already capable of performing their tasks independently. At the S4 level, the leader should provide support when needed but also provide the follower with autonomy over their responsibilities.

Downsides of the Hersey-Blanchard Model

Although the Hersey-Blanchard model is well-regarded among professionals, there are still difficulties with its application in the real-world. Since the model is highly focused on the individual, it can be challenging for leaders to apply the model to groups with varying degrees of abilities and experience.

Also, not all leaders can adapt their leadership styles, especially if they hold beliefs that have been established over time.

How to manage conflict in a team(Thomas and Kilmann)

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed a model of conflict, describing conflict as the condition in which people's concerns are incomparable. If the things which two people care about are opposed, then there is conflict.

The word 'conflict' has a natural negative association of battling, shouting, blaming and arguing. This makes conflict seem like something to be avoided at all costs. However, conflict has a very positive side of debating, questioning and challenging the status quo. If conflict is viewed as a simple incompatibility of concerns, then it is a rational matter of choosing an approach in a given situation. So we can control conflict through our choice of approach.

According to the Thomas Kilmann model we each have a natural approach to managing conflict. I immediately connected this to challenging coaching and how we each feel about challenging our coachees. Maybe we have a natural orientation to challenge as we do for conflict?

How to manage conflict in a team(Thomas and Kilmann)

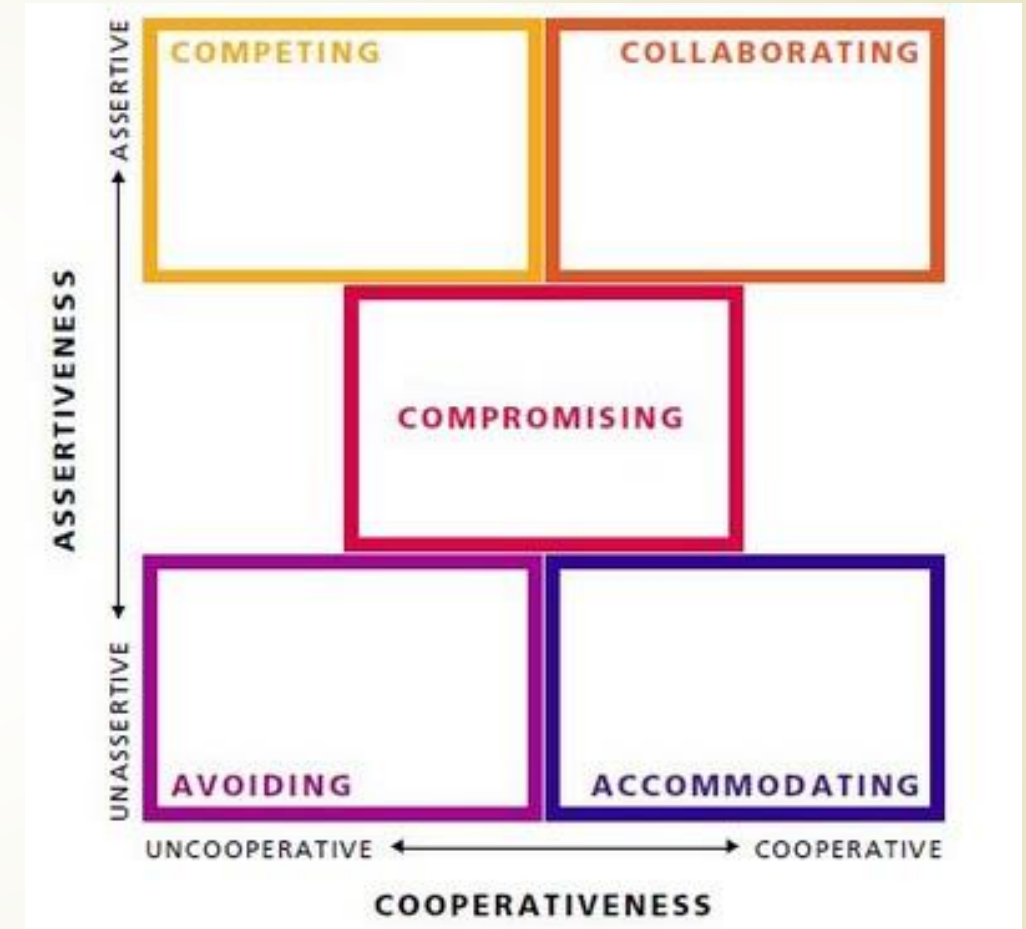
Avoiding = sidestepping the conflict

Accommodating = trying to satisfy the other person's concerns at expense of your own

Compromising = trying to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns

Competing = trying to satisfy your concerns at the expense of others

Collaborating = trying to find a win-win solution which completely satisfies both people's concerns



Thomas Kilmann Model

How to manage conflict in a team(Thomas and Kilmann)

These conflict handling modes are intentions; you aim to resolve the conflict in this way, this does not refer to skill level or actual displayed behaviour.

The TKI questionnaire that accompanies the Thomas Kilmann model assesses your natural or typical conflict handling mode.

When we are challenging a coachee it could be said that we are in a conflict situation and so may also have a natural approach. The difference when coaching is the 'concerns' of the coach are minimal. There are the coachee's needs and concerns, and those of the sponsoring organisation and stakeholders. If as a coach we represent the interests of the sponsoring company and absent stakeholders there is the potential to be at odds with the concerns of the coachee.

However, if we do not challenge our coachee, are we accommodating their concerns at the expense of the sponsor and stakeholders?

The sweet spot is the collaborating zone, so the needs of the coachee, sponsor and stakeholders are **fully** and **equally** met. This is achieved through a balance of support and challenge, and an adult-adult conversation.

You may find it interesting to reflect on your typical conflict handling mode and consider if this is connected to your view of challenge when coaching.

The great thing about the Thomas Kilmann model is that it states that conflict handling modes are developable, and so not fixed. Through awareness and focus it is a dynamic and flexible model. The same can said about challenging coaching. Value it, develop it, and apply it.

Successful team development

- Good teamwork is essential to success. Good organizations need teams that are high-performing and can communicate clearly. As a supervisor or manager, you can contribute by cultivating strong teams and encouraging teamwork.
- Successful teams encourage team members to share ideas, consider solutions and solve problems together. Good teams benefit individual members by offering added support and opportunities for development. Successful teams typically have the following characteristics:
 - **Goal-oriented mindset:** The most effective teams set, implement and track goals together to increase efficiency and improve productivity.
 - **Commitment to their roles:** Individuals working in roles based on their strengths and expertise are often highly motivated.
 - **Open to learning:** Some teams may adjust roles and responsibilities due to the needs of a project or task. Team members who are interested in challenging their skills and learning to complete new individual tasks encourage professional growth.

Successful team development

Diverse perspectives and experiences: Since diversity tends to encourage creativity and innovation, teams with the largest spectrum of experiences and opinions have the potential to perform at their best.

Shared culture: Whether it is a company culture or group culture, teams who are united by a singular mission or set of values are often more motivated.

Responsibility and accountability: When teams share a set of values and goals, each team member can be held to the same standard.

Clear communication: Good teams brainstorm solutions, provide status updates and complete tasks.

An effective leader: Leaders who provide clear direction and encourage team members to succeed are typically managing successful teams.

Successful team development

How to build an effective team

To build a strong team, consider these eight steps:

1. Set SMART goals.
2. Perform well-defined roles.
3. Experiment regularly.
4. Embrace diversity.
5. Share a common culture.
6. Be accountable to the team.
7. Communicate effectively.
8. Welcome strong leadership.

Successful team development

1. Set SMART goals

Your team can prioritize SMART goals by choosing objectives that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-based. For example, you may want to exceed your quarterly quota by 10% by the end of the second quarter.

After implementing these objectives, track progress regularly. Since every member shares the same team-specific metrics, your team can monitor advancement and celebrate accomplishments. Measuring progress with a single metric rather than applying their own definitions of success helps individual team members more accurately understand their progress.

Successful team development

2. Perform well-defined roles

Teams tend to work best when each member is responsible for contributing something specific. When team members have well-defined roles, they can focus on accomplishing individual tasks and following specific workflows rather than devoting energy to identifying their place. For example, you can assign some team members to take charge of leading different project types, while others may conduct research, perform analysis or recommend solutions.

In some cases, teams may achieve even more when members have opportunities to contribute more and advance into new roles. To make these changes as effective as possible, think about assigning new roles when beginning new projects or when taking on new responsibilities.

Successful team development

3. Experiment regularly

Although teams are often most productive when they have well-defined roles, consider experimenting with new ideas. The most successful teams tend to accommodate informed risk-taking and allow ample opportunities for learning, especially if these experiments have the potential to generate better results.

To introduce experimentation into your standard workflows, try making time for brainstorming before starting a project. During this thoughtful exercise, team members can contribute ideas for conducting research, structuring a project or collecting and analyzing results.

Successful team development

4. Embrace diversity

The most effective teams embrace different skill sets, experience levels and professional backgrounds. You should include members who have dissimilar opinions and encourage different ways of thinking. By welcoming members with diverse views, your team may consider different approaches or goals.

5. Share a common culture

Despite differences, the most successful teams share a common culture, such as a company or group culture. Your team might create and agree on these shared behaviors unconsciously, as they are likely to reflect preferred working or communication styles. However, your team is likely to be more productive when it has guidelines to follow. As the leader, you should gather input from members to establish a cultural values framework.

For many teams, shared values start with a cohesive mission. You should establish a singular team mission by reflecting on the organization's mission statement and the ways your team contributes to this overarching goal.

Successful team development

6. Be accountable to the team

To build a successful team, each member should maintain accountability. When each member is held accountable, they typically do their best work. You can establish this type of accountability by setting a good example with your own work, encouraging your team members to discuss ways to improve and making a point of implementing feedback. By encouraging group accountability, your team members can find a sense of belonging and purpose.

7. Communicate effectively

To work together seamlessly, teams need clear lines of communication. To streamline communication, your team should clarify each member's roles and responsibilities. This will show who is in charge of what and what to do when an issue arises or a problem needs to be solved.

Also, your team should decide how project updates will be communicated, be it email, messaging platforms or project management applications.

8. Welcome strong leadership

To ensure that teams reach their goals, work together smoothly and perform at their best, they need strong leadership. You can demonstrate effective leadership by being committed, accountable and responsible for your work. To be a strong leader, you should also cultivate adaptability, welcome feedback and motivate team members to do their best work.

Select a leadership style that best fits the type of team you're managing to discover how to best facilitate communication, mediate discussion and conflicts and ensure continuous progress.

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