

Working Groups

By Nicole Stedman

Not only are teams becoming a more popular way to manage business, but in most of the responsibilities we have, we are working in teams or groups to accomplish tasks. Families, civic groups, school-based programming all depend on groups of people to work together. Rarely do tasks happen in isolation.

However, outside of leading teams being a good team member is equally important. One must be able to diagnose, his/her strengths, as well as others, in order to work efficiently and effectively. There are certain elements that make us successful, but there are also natural roles that we fit into. Becoming a better team member can be easily achieved using these strategies.

There are two types of competencies that each of us should understand in relation to working in groups. These are: Technical Skills and Personal Characteristics.

Technical Skills attributes and characteristics include the ability of the individual to have knowledge, skills and abilities related to team objective and the individual must know technical skills to be able to do well.

Personal Characteristics attributes and characteristics of individuals include qualities, skills and abilities necessary for issue resolution and the individual must allow for people to function as a team.

The key to building groups is to have a good mixture of both technical skills and personal characteristics.

In addition to these two characteristics, there are also seven predictors of successful team members. These include:

- Intellectual Ability
- Results Orientation
- Interpersonal Skills
- Team Orientation
- Planning and Organizing
- Maturity
- Presence

Types of Teams. There are three basic types of teams. These three include:

- Problem Resolution
- Creative
- Tactical

Problem Resolution teams typically rely on trust. General characteristics of problem resolution teams include intelligent, “street smart”, sensitive to interpersonal needs, and they have a high degree of integrity.

Creative teams must include autonomy. General characteristics include intelligent (but must be able to abandon normative thinking), self-starters, and they have a high degree of confidence and tenacity.

Tactical teams rely on clarity for success. General characteristics include high responsiveness, action-oriented / sense of urgency; and they desire strong team identification and a strong sense of commitment.

Measuring Team Success. Team success can be measured in two categories. These categories are productivity and cohesion.

- *Productivity* is designed to measure the effectiveness of the group by being able to measure accomplishments in a timeliness manner. This basically addresses and measuring the ability for the group to reach the intended goal.
- *Cohesion* is designed to measure how well the group met the goal by working together. This includes the ability to enhance capacity, sticking together, and working well together.

Conclusion. It is important to know that you can not just throw people together and expect for production to happen. Working in groups must be carefully planned out so that success can happen. We see talented people be unproductive all the time. It takes everyone understanding and embracing their roles for group success.