Working in Groups

Objectives
- ✓ To analyze what it takes to be a team member
- ✓ To identify various ways group members contribute
- ✓ To evaluate different forms of groups or teams

Advance Preparation
- ✓ Review materials and PowerPoint
- ✓ Prepare Zero Sum? Activity

Materials Needed
- ✓ Copies of Zero Sum? (Attachment #1)
- ✓ Flip chart
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Tools to group participants
- ✓ The PowerPoint Presentation

Time Needed
- ✓ 1 hour and half

BACKGROUND

This session may be used in conjunction with the L.E.A.D.ing Teams, as it addresses a different, but complementary component of team leadership.

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.

INTEREST APPROACH (15 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is to come to a consensus on what makes a team member. To facilitate dialogue, this activity works best with small groups of 4 or 5, but can also work with larger groups. This activity works best when you split the group up into smaller groups of 4 or 5 people.

Steps for Activity
1. Break larger group into smaller groups of 4 or 5 participants. This may be facilitated in a number of ways. Provide the group with a set of markers and a piece of post-it flip chart paper.

2. Give each group 5 minutes to devise a list and come to consensus on what they believe is a "good" team member. They should do this on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Have the groups cartoon a picture of what this Super Team Member might look like. This should be a fun a light-hearted activity. No more than an additional 5 minutes, or 10 minutes for both parts of the activity. This should be done on the flip chart paper.
4. Once all the groups have finished their pictures, allow them to share explaining their rationale for including different characteristics.
5. Ask the entire group, facilitated by you, to pick out 5 key characteristics.

LESSON
1. Open the lesson/discussion with the reading of John Maxwell's quote on working together. Have the group discuss what makes it easy and difficult to work in a group. What are the pros and cons. (slide 2)
2. Review objectives for the lesson. (slide 3)
3. Interest approach. This is a guided activity to engage the participants in thinking about what they want in a "good" team member. Follow the steps outlined above. (slide 4)
4. After the completion of the activity use the discussion questions to talk with participants about being the reality of their characteristics. (slide 5)
5. The next slide reviews the two types of competencies that should initially guide group or team member selection. These are technical and personal, review the descriptions. Ask for participants to share examples of people they know that would fit into either category. (slide 6)
6. Show participants the 7 predictors. Determine if any of these align with the 5 the group came up with during the opening interest approach activity. Have them discuss why these might be important. (slide 7)
7. The next nine slides review some typical roles that individuals might naturally fall into. (slide 8-16)
8. Discuss the benefits of using the role assignment with participants. (slide 9)
9. The 3 main roles to be discussed are listed. (slide 10)
10. Task roles are the first to be discussed, allow participants to think and discuss what they believe this means, examples of when a task role member would be helpful, or not. (slides 11-12)
11. The second role is that of maintenance. The definition and examples are given, follow the same process of discussion as you did with the task roles. (slides 13-14)
12. Individual roles are the last to be discussed. The individual role tends to be looked at negatively… Have the participants discuss what they see as positives about this type of role. (slides 15-16)
13. There are some types of group members that do have a less than positive effect on the work that teams are able to accomplish. These are the problem members. Have participants share ways that they feel are effective means for dealing with these various types of problem members. (slide 17)
14. The next set of slides provides an outline of different types of teams. 3 basic types are reviewed. (slide 18)
15. Problem resolution teams are typically set up to solve a problem, address a concern, or identify an issue. This is usually an on-going team. Ex. Centers for Disease Control. (slide 19)

16. Creative teams are designed to devise plans, be innovative, and be on the cutting edge. They explore possibilities and alternatives. Ex. HBO programming team. (slide 20)
17. A tactical team has and knows the plan inside out. The goal is to execute the plan. Ex. sports teams, military teams. (slide 21)
18. The most common type of team doesn't necessarily have to be one of the three mentioned, but may be a slight combination. This may occur when there is a shortage of individuals to take positions or the over-arching issue is specific. Ex. A task force developed to work on a specific issue, might also need to devise and adhere to a plan, while creatively working with limited resources. (slide 22)
19. The last item to be discussed is, "what does it take to be successful?" There are four main criteria that look beyond goal completion. Review each of the four with participants. Let them discuss if teams can still be successful even if their goal or objective was not completed. (slides 23-24)
20. Review the content covered from the module. (slide 25)
21. Prepare participants for their closing activity Zero Sum? Very specific directions are provided in an attachment to this module. This activity will allow participants to experience team member roles and working together first hand.

APPLICATION
In this case, the application piece of the lesson is every opportunity to be on a team or work in a group. Having a basic understanding of the importance of team member competence, but also some of the roles that individuals might more naturally fit into will help make them and their teams/groups more successful. After this session, participants should feel better prepared to complete work in teams or groups and let go of the, "I like to work alone," mentality.

REFERENCE
Rees, F. (2001). *How to lead work teams*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.