NASAGA member Veronica Brown shares one of her favorite teaming activities. Through a process of individual reflection and small group discussion, participants are challenged to share and compare their ideas about effective team characteristics with other participants in this ready-to-use activity.

Team Attributes

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Discuss the Team Effectiveness Attributes and their use with others at their stations
- Identify the characteristics of high-performing teams

Time

- Facilitator Introduction: 3 minutes
- Part 1: 3 minutes
- Part 2: 6 minutes
- Part 3: 12 minutes
- Reports: 15 minutes
- TOTAL: approximately 40 minutes

About the Handouts

These handouts contain all the Team Effectiveness Attributes, plus other attributes of teams collected from these sources:

- *The Wisdom of Teams*, by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith
- *Team Architect Workbook*, by Korn/Ferry International, Powered by LOMINGER
- *Initiative and Project Implementation Assessment*, by Aubrey Daniels

Instructions for Facilitators

Before the Seminar

1. Print the handouts in this document so that each participant gets a single handout.
   Example: for 20 participants, print 5 of each of the 4 handouts.
   Tip: Print in color, and use the colors to help participants organize easily during the activity.
2. Collate handouts in sets of 1,2,3,4.

Setting Up

1. Provide enough flip charts for each team in Part 3 of the activity.

   The number of groups = # Participants / 4.

   Example: For 20 participants, have 5 flip charts.

Activity

Do: Explain the origins and purpose of the Team Effectiveness Attributes. Introduce the wall chart listing the attributes.

Do: Distribute handouts to participants in 1,2,3,4 order to create new combinations for discussion groups.

Say: All of the Team Effectiveness Attributes will help your teams become more effective. But different organizations have different strengths and weaknesses. We'd like to identify the attributes that will be the most useful to you, as a leader of teams in your organization.

Part 1

Say: These handouts include the Team Effective Attributes, plus some other characteristics of high-performing teams. There are several different handouts. On the handout you have, circle the two attributes that you believe are the *most important in creating a strong team that will meet its objectives*. These might be ones that you have found to be effective, or ones that you want to work on with your department or working group when you get back to your station. Be ready to talk about your choices.

Do: Allow 3 minutes for individual work.

Part 2

Say: Now it's time to compare our choices. Stand up and find the other people in the room who have the same handout you do. [Identify them by Numbers 1-4, and colors if used.] In your groups, draw a square around the two attributes that are the most important to the members of your group. If there's not a clear consensus, discuss it and come up with only two.

Do: Allow 5 minutes for group work.

Part 3

Say: For this next discussion group, each of you is the ambassador of your current group. Stand up and regroup so that each group has one member with each handout. [Identify them by Numbers 1-4, and colors if used.] Each group has a flip chart. As the ambassador of your original group, make a case for why your two attributes are the most valuable to creating better teams. Write the best two attributes from all ambassadors up on the flip chart. Appoint a spokesperson who will share your choices with the entire class, and tell us why they were chosen.

Do: Allow 10 minutes for group work.

Do: Allow each team to report their results to the class. Encourage participants to write down ideas for actions they will take based on the ideas presented.

Debrief Questions

1. What patterns or themes did you notice in the team attributes that rose to the top of your list?

2. How will you use these attributes to identify an effective team when you see one?

3. How will these team attributes improve the overall performance of teams in your work setting?

4. What are some action items that you will take back to your own work?

Team Effectiveness
Handout #1

1. Each member understands the others' roles and skills

2. Fresh input and perspectives are systematically sought and added: e.g., from new members and sponsors, or from additional analysis

3. Goals are clear, simple, and either measurable or easily determined

4. Members are clear on their individual responsibilities and joint responsibilities

5. Members commit to goals and to each other; the team includes alignment activities as part of their core business

6. Members communicate unified support for team decisions to their organizations

7. Members motivate one another, avoid negative competition, and readily assist other members when needed

8. Progress is measured against specific goals

9. Results from leadership assessments, personality profiles, or other tools used to assess incumbent and new team members are openly communicated and are used as input for development actions to improve both individual and team effectiveness

10. Team decisions, actions, and behaviors demonstrate a commitment to safety

11. Team members feel a common sense of ownership for goals and share mutual accountability to achieve team and organizational objectives

12. Team members give each other positive and critical feedback to improve performance and team functioning

13. The team leader is identified and is recognized as being ultimately accountable for ensuring effective team functioning

14. The team leverages the diversity of members' styles, strengths, and perspectives to optimize results

15. The team uses different conflict resolution techniques depending on the issue, including consensus, compromise, negotiation, authoritative command, and delegation

16. When decisions are final, all members support and commit to it – unless new information requires that the decision be revisited

Team Effectiveness
Handout #2

1. All team members believe the team has urgent and worthwhile purpose

2. Goals are realistic as well as ambitious

3. Members understand different individual styles (i.e., the tendency to behave, contribute, and interrelate with others in a particular way) and interact in ways to sustain optimal team dynamics

4. Members use objective methods for solving problems

5. Members volunteer/assign people as task requires, even if not typical

6. Performance expectations are clearly communicated to all of the performers

7. Team members "walk their talk"; actual behavior aligns with stated values and expectations

8. Team members communicate assertively, not aggressively, and express concerns without blaming individuals; challenges are used to positively influence better team outcomes

9. Team members identify and communicate conflicts potentially impacting team effectiveness

10. Team members put effort into building team cohesion

11. Team members reinforce the importance of individuals executing their team roles and challenge those who do not meet the intent or who step out of their assigned roles

12. Team members share the values of the team and of the organization

13. Team members work together to control risks to the plant, to the organization, and to the overall enterprise

14. The team clearly articulates a shared vision of excellence

15. The team continually adjusts its purpose, goals, and working approach to meet new challenges

16. The team sets rules and expectations for the quantity and quality of work that each member will contribute.

Team Effectiveness
Handout #3

1. Decision making processes include appropriate flexibility to address emergent issues and to adjust to unexpected outcomes

2. Each member willingly defers to or delegates to another who is more skilled for the task

3. Goals allow small wins along the way

4. Leaders empower and provide oversight for other individuals and teams to lead and make decisions

5. Members are rewarded for contributions to the team, even if the contributions are expected

6. Members hold themselves and each other accountable for meeting internal and external commitments

7. Members share common guiding principles around what is most important and have a clear understanding about how work gets done

8. Team talent is complementary, balanced, and results in team proficiency

9. Teams recognize the vulnerability to engage in "group think" and the team values members who challenge conventional wisdom

10. The desired results are objectively defined and measured

11. The team critiques its successes and shortfalls in order to perform better

12. The team demonstrates excellent internal and external communication skills

13. The team is self-aware of proficiency challenges and acts to mitigate them

14. The team makes timely decisions commensurate with the level of risk; issues are not open for endless debate or fact-finding

15. The team sets ground rules such as attendance requirements and "no interruptions to take phone calls"

16. The team sets rules for discussion such as "no sacred cows" and rules of confidentiality

Team Effectiveness
Handout #4

1. Communication inside the team is mutually supportive, respectful, open, honest, and complete

2. Conflicts are resolved openly and respectfully

3. Goals are well-known, understood, and discussed

4. Goals call for a concrete set of team work-products

5. Members can communicate easily and frequently

6. Members pinch-hit for each other; do multiple jobs

7. Team members actively pursue and are accountable for the success of their teammates as well as themselves

8. Team members demonstrate collective ownership for overall station performance -- including improving the effectiveness of the entire organization -- not just their areas of specific functional responsibility

9. Team members experience creative insights during impromptu and casual interactions

10. Team members have the resources (e.g., time, materials) to do what is expected of them

11. Team members spend lots of time together.

12. Team talent pool closely matches needs

13. The team effectively uses opportunities to learn, and to give and receive feedback

14. The team promotes a positive atmosphere through celebration and collegial fun

15. There is a well-oiled process for setting goals