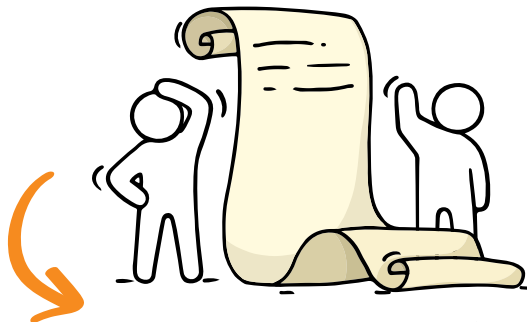


Team Development Toolkit

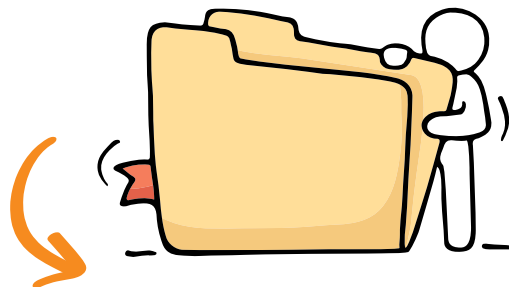
Team Development Toolkit

Many of us work in teams, be it functional teams, project teams, cross-department teams or committees. To be effective, a team has to actively invest time, energy and efforts. This toolkit will help you navigate common situations you may face in your team(s).

Purpose of this toolkit:



Enable you to be more aware of key team processes and dynamics and appreciate their importance



Provide you with practical, actionable tips and advice to improve your team's effectiveness

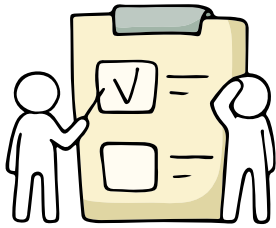
What makes an effective team?

An effective, high-performing team not only achieves its performance goals, but also creates a meaningful team experience and facilitates personal learning.



Building a team requires a proactive approach. It's not just the team leader who is responsible for the results and health of the team. Team members play an equally important role in the team's success.

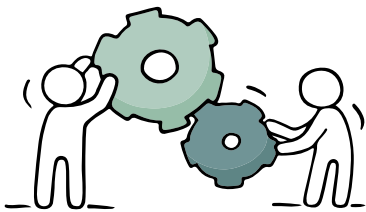
The T.E.A.M. framework can help you improve the quality of key team processes and consequently the quality of your team's performance outcomes and learning experiences:



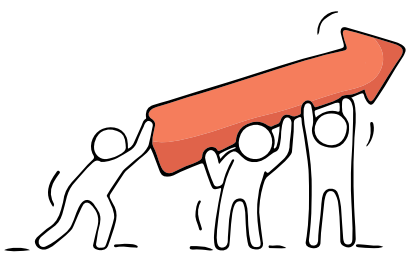
Take stock of what is happening



Evaluate your options and determine the desired outcome(s)

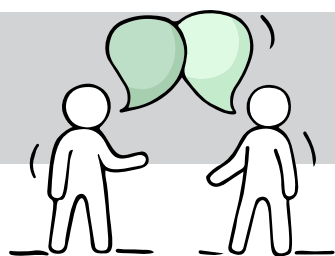


Act and take steps to improve the current state



Maintain progress and keep your team going strong

Communication, conflict management, decision-making and team motivation are four key factors that can impact a team's performance.



COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to a team's performance. Effective team interactions can lead to better team performance. However, the reverse can also be true. After all, different team members may have different backgrounds, and therefore miscommunication can easily occur due to a lack of awareness of one another's perspectives.

Team members should work on improving the communication climate and communication skills to improve the quality of team interactions and enhance team performance.



Take stock of what is happening

Assess the quality of communication in your team:

- ✓ **Level of participation:** How often does each team member share his or her views during team interactions?
- ✓ **Quality of interactions:** To what extent are the team discussions and conversations open, honest and inclusive?
- ✓ **Communication skills:** To what extent do team members ask questions to clarify understanding and encourage discussion, listen actively, challenge assumptions and give constructive feedback to improve team performance?



Evaluate your options and determine the desired outcome(s)

- ✓ Consider the following factors that can encourage team members' participation and enhance the quality of team interactions:

Communication climate

- Supportive, inclusive, open and rewarding
- Allows team members to give and receive constructive responses.

Psychological safety for team members

Team members feel safe to share their thoughts and raise issues freely without fear of being judged.

Building trust within the team

- Team members are confident that the team is capable of completing its tasks well
- Team members will honour their commitments.

- ✓ Set a goal to improve the quality of communication within your team. Note down what you would observe if the goal has been achieved.



Act and take steps to improve the current state

Discuss and practise the following to improve team interactions:

- ✓ Ensure that team members with diverse views feel safe and valued to express their opinions and feelings.
- ✓ Improve the level of trust within the team to encourage open communication, better cooperation and reduce risk of conflict.
- ✓ Ensure that everyone has basic communication skills to have good team interactions.

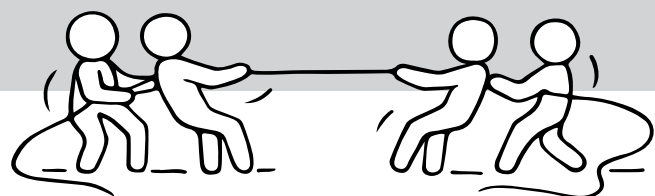


Maintain progress and keep your team going well and strong

Here are some tips to:

- ✓ **Improve communication skills**
 - Encourage questioning to clarify intentions and assumptions.
 - Practise active listening to provide constructive feedback which in turn increases team performance.
 - Focus on the task and manage emotions so it does not hinder the team from achieving its goal.
- ✓ **Create psychological safety -**
 - Develop team norms that encourage open communication and feedback to increase team performance, such as a process for everyone to critique ideas and decisions to identify potential loopholes.
 - Encourage team members to share ideas, big and small.
- ✓ **Build trust**
 - Create shared experiences or social interactions for team members to develop and maintain relationships, e.g., team lunches, social gatherings.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



Healthy and constructive conflict is essential for teams to be effective and productive. However, conflict is often viewed as negative. Yet, when managed properly, conflict can yield positive outcomes, e.g., improved team performance, better team communication. However, if a conflict is not managed properly and becomes destructive, it can damage team cohesion, hurt relationships and affect team performance.



Take stock of what is happening

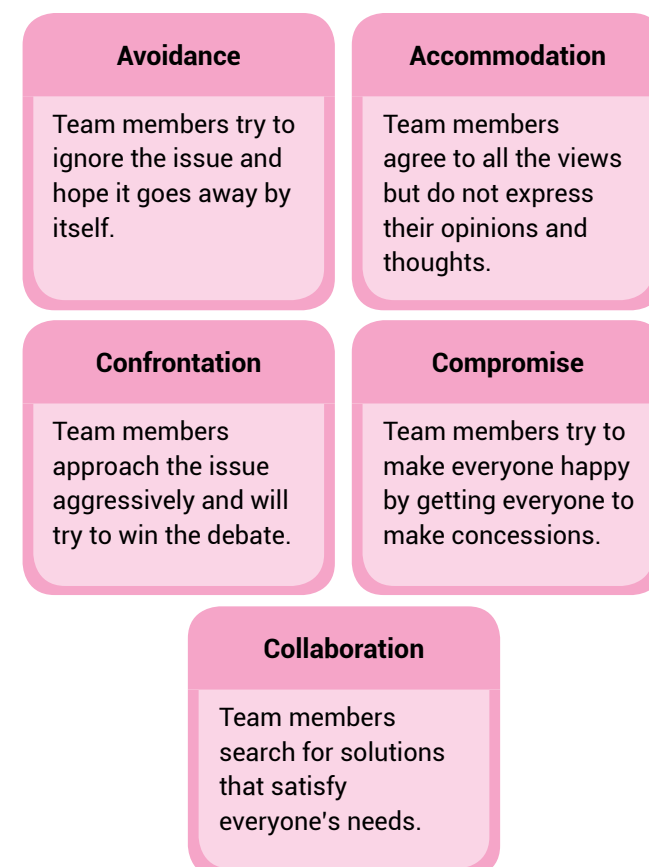
Assess the sources of conflict and how conflicts are managed in your team:

- ☒ Sources of conflict: Is the conflict healthy, with a focus on task(s) or differences in values and perspectives or differences in expectations, as opposed to personal emotions?
- ☒ Does the team have a conflict resolution process to identify and manage conflicts?
- ☒ To what extent is the team encouraged to explore new approaches and ideas to resolve the issue?



Evaluate your options and determine the desired outcome(s)

- ☒ Consider the following approaches¹ for your team's conflict resolution:



- ☒ Collaboration may be the 'best' approach in theory, but it is difficult to achieve in reality. Consider using different approaches that best suit the type of conflict.



Act and take steps to improve the current state

Discuss and practise the following to manage conflicts more effectively:

- ☒ Get the team to acknowledge that there is a conflict and recognise the issue.
- ☒ Discuss the impact of the conflict on the team.
- ☒ Discuss and agree on how the team will work together to resolve this conflict.
- ☒ Get agreement from team members to keep communications open and factual.
- ☒ Understand the issue by clarifying team members' perceptions and assumptions about the issue. (Team leader needs to create a safe space for members to speak. Team leader and members need to be mindful not to judge and be objective to ideas and solutions suggested to resolve the conflict.)
- ☒ Decide as a team what decisions and actions to take to reach agreement as a team.

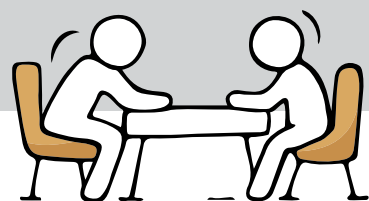


Maintain progress and keep your team going well and strong

Here are some tips on making managing conflicts more effectively:

- ☒ Create psychology safety that allows team members to address conflicts in a collaborative way rather than avoiding conflicts, e.g. focusing on the team goals and outcomes.
- ☒ Invite a mediator (e.g. someone external the team can trust) to step in and help facilitate communications during a team conflict, especially in highly emotionally charged situations.
- ☒ Focus on the issues to help team members develop win-win solutions for everyone.

¹ Refer to <http://www.kilmanndiagnostics.com/overview-thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-instrument-tki> on more info about the five approaches.



DECISION MAKING

Decision making is an important activity in teams. Through discussions, everyone can gain a better understanding of the issues and thereby allow the team to make more informed decisions. Capitalising on team members' different skills and perspectives can make a team's decision more robust. However, decision making at a team level can also be inefficient and tedious.

A team can make better decisions when it can successfully pool resources and each individual's unique knowledge and ideas; and especially when problems are too complex and difficult for an individual to solve.



Take stock of what is happening

Assess how decisions are made in your team:

- ☒ **Buy-in:** To what degree does each team member support the decisions?
- ☒ **Self-censorship:** To what degree does each team member hold back from sharing perspectives or ideas that are different from the team's views?
- ☒ **Groupthink:** To what extent is the team making sub-optimal decisions in order to maintain good relations?
- ☒ **Decision defects:** To what extent does the team consider alternatives or consequences or the advice of outside experts (if applicable)?



Evaluate your options and determine the desired outcome(s)

- ☒ Consider the following approaches for various types of group decisions:

Leader oriented

- Executive decision by leader
- Expert assigned by leader to decide
- Consultative: Leader consults with team and then decides

Group technique

- Mathematical technique by averaging
- Structured technique such as nominal group technique²
- Democratic: Majority rules from group voting

Full participation

Consensus: All group members discuss, reach a consensus and accept the final decision (even if they disagree with it)

- ☒ Set a goal to improve the quality of decision making for your team. Note down what you would observe if the goal has been achieved.



Act and take steps to improve the current state

Discuss and practise the following to make better team decisions:

- ☒ Listen actively and without interrupting as each team member articulates his/her position, perspective and underlying assumptions on the issue
- ☒ Articulate your own position, perspective and underlying assumptions.
- ☒ Discuss openly and as a group what everyone shared about their positions, perspectives and underlying assumptions.
- ☒ Determine criteria for decisions (e.g., speed/ time, stakeholder support, member support, costs).

Discuss weight and implications of the decision(s) on the team's goals.

Review the results of the decisions and discuss what to do if it did not work or yielded poor results.

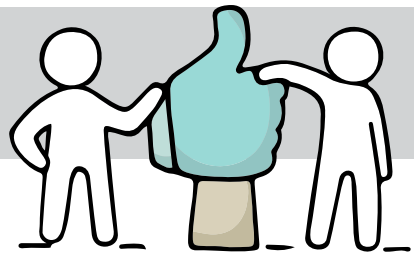


Maintain progress and keep your team going well and strong

Here are some tips to make effective decisions as a team:

- ☒ Define and discuss problems to be solved to achieve clarity on the issues and alternative ways of dealing with them before making a decision.
- ☒ Determine how decisions will be made before attempting to make them, to ensure the selection of an effective decision-making strategy and obtain the support of every team member.
- ☒ Review the decisions made to assess their quality and effectiveness and if the intended results were achieved.

² Refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief7.pdf> on how to use the nominal group technique.



MOTIVATION

A team's motivation levels can heavily impact its performance. Team members may be motivated to work harder to achieve collective goals when they are able to exchange diverse ideas and experience team spirit and camaraderie. However, individual efforts may decrease when people work in groups – a phenomenon referred to as *social loafing*, when there is a reduction of individual contributions in a collective setting.

Understanding what motivates a team and how to increase motivation can maximise the potential gains of teamwork, create meaningful experiences and learning for team members, and achieve greater team success.



Take stock of what is happening

Assess the level of motivation in your team:

- ☒ To what extent do you observe any of the following phenomena in your team?
 - “Free riders”: Minimal contribution by individuals who do not believe their efforts matter and who know they will receive their share of the team's rewards regardless of their own efforts
 - “Sucker effect”: by normally high-performing and hardworking individuals to avoid others taking advantage of them



Evaluate your options and determine the desired outcome(s)

- ☒ Consider the following factors that can encourage motivation in your team:

Team task interdependence

Team members are dependent on one another and must work together successfully to complete it.

Evaluation and reward of performance

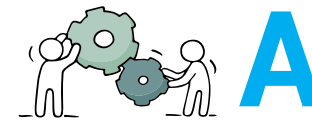
Team members are rewarded based on both team success and identifiable individual's contributions to that success.

Team efficacy

The team perceives that it is capable of performing well and building on its past successes.

Team members' sense of commitment

Team members value being part of the team, in terms of enjoying the tasks and the social interactions with one another.



Act and take steps to improve the current state

Guide to improve team motivation:

- ☒ Review the team composition to meet the need (if any) to assemble team members with diverse skills and knowledge to work on a challenging team goal.
- ☒ Conduct a team launch to clarify team goals, individual roles, team processes and interaction norms.
- ☒ Review and adjust (if necessary) the reward system to balance performance rewards at individual and team levels.
- ☒ Strengthen the team identity to grow the sense of belonging, attraction and membership in the group, such as celebrating collective milestones and informal team bonding activities.



Maintain progress and keep your team going well and strong

Here are some tips to sustain team motivation:

- ☒ Help team members to realise how their individual contributions are connected to the team goal.
- ☒ Share feedback with one another to recognise individual contributions and to enhance the sense of responsibility for outcomes.
- ☒ Recognise and celebrate team successes to increase team morale and efficacy.
- ☒ Initiate and encourage social interactions to strengthen interpersonal bonds, e.g., team lunches, social gatherings.

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