

### **What is a Team?**

A team is a group of individuals working together to achieve a common goal or purpose.

### **Effective Teamwork**

Effective teamwork describes the functioning of a group of people who are closely knit around a common purpose, who work easily together, and who have positive work relationships.

### **The County Team**

Who is on your County's team?

**Characteristics of Effectively Functioning Teams**

- ❖ mutual support and genuine concern for each other
- ❖ a high degree of mutual trust and respect
- ❖ communications are open and honest
- ❖ vision, mission, values are shared and understood
- ❖ conflict is confronted and worked through
- ❖ supportive respect for individual differences
- ❖ balanced participation
- ❖ clearly specified and understood roles and responsibilities
- ❖ a collaborative climate
- ❖ new members are systematically brought on board

## **QUICK TEAM CHECK**

**Directions:** Please review each factor. Then indicate the extent to which you agree that it is true about your team according to the following scale:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree Somewhat
3. Neither Disagree nor Agree
4. Agree Somewhat
5. Strongly Agree

Place the number of your response in the space to the left of the statement.

- \_\_\_ 1. Goals: We have clear performance objectives
- \_\_\_ 2. Climate: The atmosphere is informal & relaxed.
- \_\_\_ 3. Roles: Everyone is clear about what is expected of them on the team.
- \_\_\_ 4. Participation: Everyone participates in team discussions and decisions.
- \_\_\_ 5. Resources: The team has sufficient resources to do the work.
- \_\_\_ 6. Communication: Members feel free to express themselves on all issues.
- \_\_\_ 7. Support: Organization provides a sufficient degree of support for the team.
- \_\_\_ 8. Meetings: Team meetings are well planned and carried out.
- \_\_\_ 9. Interfaces: The team has effective relationships with key people outside of the team.
- \_\_\_ 10. Conflict: Disagreements among team members are resolved quickly & effectively.

**Total Score:** \_\_\_

### Interpreting Your Results

#### ***37 - 50=High Performance***

The internal dynamics of the team are positive and should be continued. However, the enemies of high performing teams are complacency and stagnation. Therefore, your team should spend some time identifying the factors (e.g., leadership, training, support) that produced these excellent results. Then, plan to invest in these factors.

#### ***23 - 36=Average Performance***

The team is doing well, but performance improvements are needed. Analyze the specific results for each of the ten areas. Identify the areas where your scores were low, analyze the causes of the situation and develop a plan to address the issues.

#### ***10 - 22=Below Average Performance***

The team needs to take a hard look at the results. Develop a plan that includes short-term actions that can produce immediate results and provide incentive to address the long-term issues dealing with the team's fundamentals

**Styles of Team Members**  
**(Glenn M. Parker)**

- ❖ **Contributor –** **Task**  
*Characteristics* - maintains clear priorities, well-organized, works consistently toward goals, an expert in field, task-oriented, a coach/mentor, upholds high quality standards  
  
*Potential downsides* – too task oriented, micromanages
  
- ❖ **Collaborator –** **Goal**  
*Characteristics* - flexible, shares credit and responsibility, a helper, thinks long-term and big picture  
  
*Potential downsides* – too global, overly ambitious, overlooks details
  
- ❖ **Communicator –** **Process**  
*Characteristics* - a negotiator, approaches conflict situations directly and helpfully, good at giving and receiving feedback, fosters relationships among team members, enthusiastic, maintains sense of urgency about the team’s mission  
  
*Potential downsides* – believes better communication solves all problems, inhibits questioning of work, loses focus on task
  
- ❖ **Challenger –** **Question**  
*Characteristics* - a question-asker, especially “why” and “how”, supports high ethical standards, a “whistle-blower”, candid in reporting bad or unpleasant news, never reluctant to express a minority opinion – not squelched by apparent consensus  
  
*Potential downsides* – offend others by confronting, can cause a tense climate, extreme in positions

### **Who's Responsible?**

**Instructions: Read the following short story. Individually answer the question that directly follows the story. Use line A for recording your individual answer and line B for your group's answer.**

In a house lives a young woman married to a man who works very hard. She feels neglected. When her husband goes off on still another trip, the young wife meets an attractive man who invites her to his house. She spends the night and at dawn she leaves, knowing her husband is coming back soon. The bridge is blocked by a madman who kills everyone who comes near him. The young wife follows the river and meets the ferryman, but he demands one-hundred francs to take her to the other side. The young wife has no money. She runs back to her lover and asks for one-hundred francs; he refuses to help. The woman remembers that a platonic friend lives close by. She runs to him and explains her plight. The friend refuses to help; she has disillusioned him by her conduct. Her only choice is to go by the bridge in spite of the danger and the madman kills her.

**Question: In what order do you hold the principals (woman, husband, lover, madman, ferryman, and friend) responsible for the tragedy?**

Line A: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**As a group, arrive at a group consensus. All group members should agree to the final ordering of responsibility. Avoid communication-reduction techniques such as drawing from a hat or vote-taking. Record the group's answer on line B.**

Line B: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

### **The “Abilene Paradox”**

The “Abilene Paradox” refers to the tendency for participants in group decision process to acquiesce (agree, go along) without communicating their reservations to others in the group. Reasons for this behavior include the desire to be seen as a loyal team player, reluctance to disturb the group’s tranquility, insufficient preparation prior to making the decision, and time pressures.

### **“Groupthink”**

“Groupthink” refers to the concept that members of any group tend to evolve informal norms to preserve friendly intra-group relations and these norms become part of the hidden agenda at group meetings. Within groups there are clear-cut pressures toward uniformity which subvert the fundamental purpose of group meetings. Strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.

***Dysfunctions of a Team*** (Patrick Lencioni)

- 1) Absence of Trust
  
- 2) Fear of Conflict
  
- 3) Lack of Commitment
  
- 4) Avoidance of Accountability
  
- 5) Inattention to Results

### **Beneficial Team Member Behaviors**

- ❖ initiates ideas or actions
- ❖ elaborates or builds on ideas of others
- ❖ clarifies issues
- ❖ supports and encourages others
- ❖ reduces tension where appropriate
- ❖ expresses tensions where appropriate
- ❖ shows enthusiasm, interest, involvement with the group
- ❖ mediates differences, offers compromises, finds new options
- ❖ surfaces and understands differences in personal values



## BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE COUNTY TEAM

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### BEHAVIOR INVENTORY

For the behaviors listed circle the number which you feel describes how much of each behavior you show as a member of the Team.

|    |   | Rarely |   | Sometimes |   | Often |
|----|---|--------|---|-----------|---|-------|
| 1. | Initiates ideas or actions                                  | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 2. | Elaborates or builds on ideas of others                     | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 3. | Clarifies issues  | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 4. | Supports and encourages others                              | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 5. | Reduces tensions where appropriate                          | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 6. | Expresses tensions where appropriate                        | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 7. | Shows interest, enthusiasm, involvement with group          | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 8. | Mediates differences, offers compromises, finds new options | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |
| 9. | Surfaces and understands differences in values              | 1      | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5     |

**Techniques for Building an Effective Team**

- ❖ use meetings, work sessions, retreats
- ❖ encourage and allow each member to actively participate
- ❖ share expectations, responsibility and rewards
- ❖ respect individual differences
- ❖ communicate openly and honestly
- ❖ get to know each other
- ❖ collective vision, mission, values, goals

**TEAM REPORT CARD**

1. What one word do you think the constituents of the county believe best describes Council?
2. What one word do you think the employees of the county believe best describes Council?
3. What grade (A-F) do you feel your constituents would assign to Council? Why?
4. What grade (A-F) would you assign to Council in regards to working as a team?
5. What would your constituents say Council needs to do better?
6. What would you say are Council's strengths as a team?
7. What would you say Council needs to do better?
8. What one strategy will you try to improve your County team?