

# Working in Groups:

## Objectives

1. To analyze what it takes to be a team member
2. To identify various ways group members contribute
3. To evaluate different forms of groups or teams

## Advance Preparation

1. Review materials and PowerPoint
2. Prepare Zero Sum? Activity

## Materials Needed

1. Copies of Zero Sum? Activity (see attached)
2. Flip chart
3. Markers
4. Tools to group participants

## 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

### Defining a “Good” Team Member – 15 minutes

#### Purpose:

1. To identify and come to consensus on, what makes a good team member.

#### Group Size:

To facilitate dialogue works best with small groups of 4 or 5, but can also work with larger groups.

#### Supplies:

Flip chart and markers for discussion.

### **Instructions:**

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. All the entire group, facilitated by you, to pick out 5 key characteristics.

### **Lesson**

- 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)
- Review objectives for the lesson. (slide 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)
- After the completion of the activity use the discussion questions to talk with participants about being the reality of their characteristics. (slide 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)
- 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)
- The next nine slides review some typical roles that individuals might naturally fall into. (slide 8-16)
- Discuss the benefits of using the role assignment with participants. (slide 9)
- The 3 main roles to be discussed are listed. (slide 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- The next set of slides provides an outline of different types of teams. 3 basic types are reviewed. (slide 18)

- 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)
- 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)
- A tactical team has and knows the plan inside out. Their goal is to execute the plan. Ex. Sports teams, military teams. (slide 21)
- 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)
- 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)
- Review the content covered from the module. (slide 25)
- 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.

## Zero Sum?

### Goals:

1. To discourage teams from automatically competing with one another. Allows team member roles to also be diagnosed.

### Process:

1. Prior to the activity. Determine how many groups you will have. For each Triplets Puzzle Sheet, complete 2 – 3 of the linking words. Ensure these are different for each team. When the activity begins, each team will already have a couple of the linking words completed.
1. Have participants return to small groups of 4-6 people. Select one person from each group to be the Observer. There is a separate instruction sheet for this individual.
2. Hand out the Team Instructions Sheet and Triplets Puzzle Sheet (one per team). There is one additional sheet, which is for facilitator use. Refer to this when describing what a triplet puzzle is. This will give some direction to the participants.
3. Based on the Team Instructions Sheet, teams have 5 minutes to work through the puzzle. This might not be enough time. Use your best judgment to allow teams additional time to work on the puzzle.
4. At the end of the time limit call teams to stop working. See who has completed the puzzle. Congratulate this team. If no one has finished it, congratulate the team with the most completed – CORRECT, answers. Teams might have many completed, but ensure that they are correct.
5. Work through the discussion questions:
  - a. Ask the observer what type of team member roles they observed.
  - b. Have them describe how each either, a) hindered or b) helped the team complete the puzzle.
  - c. Ask participants, if they were aware of how they behaved when working in a group. Allow them to discuss the effects of this activity on work they do in the future.
  - d. Did anyone consider working collaboratively with another team?
  - e. What would have happened if teams worked together?

Thiagarajan, S. & Parker, G. (1999). *Teamwork and teamplay*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, Inc.

## Facilitator Instruction Sheet

Work through this sheet with participants prior to allowing the activity to start.

A triplet is a set of three words that are linked by a common fourth word. For example:

ELEPHANT – HOUSE – SNOW

What word links these three words? The linking word should appear before or after each of the three words to form well-known compound words or phrases.

The correct answer for this triplet is WHITE, as in WHITE ELEPHANT, WHITE HOUSE, and SNOW WHITE.

Here are three more triplets. See if you can find the linking word for each of them. Remember that the linking word may appear either before or after each word in the triplet.

BOARD – HOLE – JACK  
DOUBLE – ROAD – STITCH  
MAKER – TENNIS – STICK

Correct Solutions:

BLACK (BLACK BOARD, BLACK HOLE, BLACK JACK)  
CROSS (DOUBLE CROSS, CROSS ROAD, CROSS STITCH)  
MATCH (MATCH MAKER, TENNIS MATCH, MATCH STICK)

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## Team Instruction Sheet

Directions:

- All teams have the same puzzle sheet, but each team has a different set of clues.
- Find the link word for each triplet and write it in the appropriate blank.
- After you have solved all the triplets, copy the first letters of the link words. You will get an important message about teams.

Time Limit:

You have 5 minutes to solve the puzzle.

Scoring:

- If your team solves the puzzle in 3 minutes, you get 10 points
- If your team solves the puzzle in 5 minutes, you get 5 points.

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5. CREAM
6. OPNION
7. MONEY
8. PAINT
9. ENTRY
10. TRADE
11. ESCAPE
12. ACTIVE
13. UNDER
14. TOUR
15. ODD
16. MEDICINE
17. AGENT
18. TIME
19. IRON
20. CAMERA
21. ANIMAL
22. LIP
23. LABOR
24. YELLOW

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#### Team Observer Sheet

**Directions:**

Please sit where you can see and hear most of the team discussions. You are a silent observer – do not speak or in any way participate in the activity. Take notes. Use quotes that demonstrate a point.

1. Task Role Behaviors – What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?

2. Maintenance Role Behaviors - What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?

3. Individual Role Behaviors - What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?