

Team Building Competency Development Activities

Competency Definition

Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride and trust; facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

Developmental Activity Levels

All (A)

Applies to all competency levels

Beginner-Basic Knowledge (B)

A person at the Beginner-Basic Knowledge level has limited experience applying the competency. He/she applies general knowledge in common situations but has limited practical experience in applying the competency in a work environment presenting more complex situations.

Mid-level (M)

A person with mid-level proficiency has applied the competency repeatedly and successfully in the performance of his/her job but still has much to learn about the advanced aspects or behaviors associated with the competency. A person at this level can usually apply the competency on his/her own.

High (H)

A person at the High level has extensive knowledge of and experience with this competency and can apply the competency exceptionally well on the job without assistance. At this level one is an expert and has enough experience to teach the competency to others.

Articles, Books, and Websites

A Lloyd, Joan, "[7 Tips to Begin Earning Employees' Commitment, Initiative and Motivation](#)", Joan Lloyd at Work, October 10, 2001.

Most employees start a new job filled with cheerful optimism, and over time, some learn that their ideas aren't valued or they are better off just doing what they are told. This article offers day-to-day steps that will retain motivation and create a path to organizational commitment.

A [Giving and Receiving Feedback: Building Constructive Communication](#), Patti Hathaway, Crisp Publications, March, 1998.

Employees and supervisors alike grapple with the difficulty of discussing anything potentially negative. This updated guide shows how to get rid of negative connotations and use feedback communication as a vehicle for growth. The author uses case studies to illustrate her stance on

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

gender, self-image, and criticism.

A American Society for Training & Development www.astd.org

The website of the professional association offers resources on workplace learning and performance issues.

A Rowh, Mark, "How to Be A Team Player", Career World, October, 2001.

You know being a team player is important. Find out what it takes to be one.

A Avery, Christopher, "Individual-based teamwork. Teamwork isn't just a group process. This time, it's personal.", Training & Development, January, 2002.

Teamwork isn't just a group process, it's also a personal responsibility and skill. Here are several key guidelines for working responsibly with others no matter who reports to whom.

A Wilson, Jeanne M. and George, Jill A., Team Member's Survival Guide, McGraw-Hill, 1997.

The authors help outline roles and responsibilities necessary to be a team player in today's organizations.

M Miller, Karen Massetti, Poertner, Shirley, "The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback", American Media Inc, 1996.

Feedback is an important person-to-person communication skill. This guide provides knowledge on how to assert goal-oriented, detailed feedback for improved reception, how to handle difficult feedback situations, and how to receive and accept good and bad feedback.

M Zeus, Perry and Skiffington, Suzanne, The Complete Guide to Coaching at Work , McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, May, 2001.

This book provides a blueprint of successful coaching methods, models and tools, using case studies and an accessible format to make it easy to use and informative. It contains useful insights on how to permanently enhance personal and organizational effectiveness, performance and growth in the workplace.

M Cohen, Norman H., The Manager's Pocket Guide to Mentoring, Human Resource Development Press, February, 1999.

This guide presents an expanded view of the behavioral expertise required of today's mentors who are faced with the challenge of establishing and sustaining mentoring relationships within more complex workplace, academic, and social environments.

M Bell, Chip R., The Mentor as Partner, Training & Development, February, 2000. A mentor is someone who helps someone else learn something that he or she would have learned less well,

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

more slowly, or not at all if left alone. Mentors are not power figures; they are learning coaches--sensitive and trusted advisors.

M Maxwell, John C., Nelson, Thomas, The 17 Essential Qualities of A Team Player Becoming The Kind Of Person Every Team Wants, January, 2002.

The book is organized into short chapters, each devoted to one of the 17 qualities that Maxwell deems essential to a successful and harmonious workplace, qualities such as competence, discipline, adaptability, commitment, selflessness, and preparedness.

M Craumer, Martha, "How to Coach Your Employees", Harvard Management Communication Letter, December 1, 2001.

Managerial coaching is a way to get the most out of your people by showing them that you respect and value them. This article offers tips on initiating and developing a coaching relationship with your employees.

M Huszczo, Gregory, Tools for Team Leadership: Delivering the X-Factor in Team eXcellence, Davies-Black Publishing, September, 2004.

This book introduces the critical "X-factor" in team success--leadership--and delivers an advanced set of tools and strategies to help anyone become an effective team leader. Grounded in the author's practical frontline experience with hundreds of teams and backed by solid research and instruments, it explores the essence of leadership in a team environment. The author presents a comprehensive toolbox for use in analyzing a team's strengths and weaknesses, creatively brainstorming strategies and tactics, generating options and facilitating consensus, and implementing action plans that help teams help themselves.

M Michelman, Paul, Decisions: How Will You Make Your Team a Team?, Harvard Management Update, May, 2004.

What do you do when the whole of the team you are leading appears to be less than the sum of its parts? Everything seems to be in place: solid people, a demanding but reasonable plan, sufficient resources. But, still, there is something missing from the effort, and filling the gap falls on your shoulders. The author believes that leaders cannot single-handedly boost performance, but they can guide the tone, tempo, and mechanisms that create opportunities for better things.

M Hillmann, Michael R., Dongier, Philippe, When Failure Isn't an Option, Harvard Business Review, July, 2005. HBR: R0507C

Some teams, by the very nature of their work, must consistently perform at the highest levels.

How do you--as a team leader, a supervisor, a trainer, or an outside coach--ensure that this happens? To answer this question, Harvard Business Review asked six people who work with high-performance teams to comment on developing and managing these teams. For all of them, the stakes are high. Despite their differences, some similarities emerge in the ways they achieve

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

top performance.

M Cummings, Jonathon N., [Building Better Teams](#), MIT Sloan Management Review: Winter, 2004. MIT SMR: 4521

The author advises managers to be more explicit about the importance of knowledge sharing. To encourage greater sharing, he recommends, among other things, cross-functional workshops and “knowledge fairs” to bring people together and specific incentives to motivate employees. For instance, performance evaluations could be based in part on how well workers exchange knowledge with one another.

M Throughout Your Organization Annunzio, Susan Lucia, [Contagious Success: Spreading High Performance](#), Portfolio, November, 2004.

This book contains proven strategies for identifying, nurturing, and replicating business units that are already high performing. These workgroups tend to be ignored while senior management focuses on fixing its lowest performing units. The author argues for the opposite strategy: Focus on the groups that are doing the best work in the organization, learn their secrets, and help spread their expertise to the average groups.

M Harvard Business School, [Teams That Click](#), Harvard Business School Press, June, 2004.

With advice on everything from finding and selecting the right mix of people to avoiding people management pitfalls to creating virtual teams, this is every manager’s hands-on guide to boosting productivity through superior team performance.

M Daniels, Aubrey C., [Bringing Out the Best in People: How to Apply the Astonishing Power of Positive Reinforcement](#) (2nd edition), McGraw-Hill, November, 2000.

A powerfully positive system for gaining maximum performance from every employee. Backed by performance management case studies at 3M, Xerox, ConAgra, and other major firms, this book gives managers the tools to permanently revitalize productivity.

M CoachInc.com

Comprised of two sections: Coach U was created and is continuing to evolve for the purpose of sharing core coaching competencies and skills with people who are asking themselves their own questions. Corporate Coach U prepares individuals to expand their skills to work effectively with people and with teams in businesses and organizations.

M Kinlaw, Dennis, [Coaching for Commitment: Interpersonal Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance from Individuals and Teams](#), Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, January, 1999.

In this all-new edition, Dennis Kinlaw gives you the insight you need to improve performance by empowering your colleagues. With the help of this book, you can teach people in all types of organizations to: build commitment to tasks; encourage successful project completion; enhance

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

job satisfaction; and much more.

M Eaton, John and Johnson, Roy Johnson, Coaching Successfully (Essential Managers), Dorling Kindersley Publishing, March, 2001.

Learn all you need to know about helping others to achieve their full potential. Power tips help you to handle real-life situations and increase your effectiveness as a role model and confidant.

M Jerome, Paul J., Coaching Through Effective Feedback, Jossey-Bass, Inc., April, 1999.

How does one openly work with a 'poor team player'? Positively handle a 'negative attitude'? Objectively deal with 'bad judgment'? Sensitively criticize one's boss (and keep your job)? And, how does one praise others to capitalize on your team's strengths? This book illustrates effective tactics that address these challenges.

M "Creating an Informal Learning Organization", Harvard Management Update, July 1, 2000.

Estimates show people learn 70% of what they know about their jobs informally, through processes not sponsored by the company. Managers who recognize this advantage of organizational knowledge want to capture this learning.

M Blandchard, Ken, Bowles, Sheldon M., Carew, Don, Parisi-Carew, Eunice, High Five! The Magic of Working Together, William Morrow & Co, 2000.

This light, introductory book on change and leaderships offers a parable of a hockey coach to illustrate importance of teamwork.

M Pfeil, Sherri, "Giving Constructive Feedback Requires Tactfulness", Employment Review, September, 2000.

The writer gives tips for improving the effectiveness of feedback. She emphasizes important tactics to providing negative feedback discretely and constructively.

M Wheatley, Margaret J., Leadership and the New Science, Berrett-Koehler, March, 1994.

This classic book on the fundamentals of leadership includes a new chapter with all-new insights, the latest developments in the new science, and updated examples based on Wheatley's experience of working with these ideas for the past decade.

M Gary, Loren, "Managing a Team vs. Managing the Individuals on a Team", Harvard Management Update, March 1, 1997.

Managing a team is not the same thing as managing the individuals who make up a team. To maximize the effectiveness of their teams, managers should ask themselves four questions, particularly in the early stages of assembling the team.

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

M Hargrove, Robert, Masterful Coaching: Extraordinary Results by Impacting People and the Way They Think and Work Together, John Wiley & Sons, June, 2000.

The setup of this book makes it useful as an easy reference when the reader is looking for quick guidance for coaching. It is a book for anyone who plans to influence lives for change.

M Greengard, Samuel, "Moving Forward with Reverse Mentoring", WorkForce, March, 2002.

For years, forward-thinking companies have viewed mentoring as a way to pass on experience and knowledge within an organization. Hundreds of companies in an array of industries have established formal and informal programs designed to ratchet up their competitive firepower.

H Blanchard, Ken, Gung Ho! Turn On the People in Any Organization, William Morrow, October, 1997.

This book is an invaluable management tool that outlines foolproof ways to increase productivity by fostering excellent morale in the workplace.

H Warner, Fara, "Inside Intel's Mentoring Movement", Fast Company, April, 2002. Forget everything that you've ever learned about mentoring, especially the idea of hitching your wagon to a rising star. Here's how Intel is reinventing the old approach to mentoring to teach, inspire, and reconnect its employees.

H Thomas, Kenneth W., Intrinsic Motivation at Work: Building Energy and Commitment, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, January, 2003.

Kenneth W. Thomas presents a model for using intrinsic motivation in the workplace to assure a more committed, self-managed workforce. He advocates leading for meaningfulness, choice, competence, and progress. He emphasizes the need to use this approach to give employees the greater independence and decision-making authority they need.

H Greenleaf, Robert K., "Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness", Paulist Press, November, 2002.

This is a classic introduction to many of the key concepts of modern leadership, including teamwork, loyalty, and empowerment. Greenleaf teaches managers how to lead by serving the needs of all stakeholders.

H Lindborg, Henry J., The Basics of Cross-Functional Teams, Productivity Press, Inc., October, 1997.

This book provides guidance on what it takes to build effective teams that cross departmental and functional boundaries in any organization. It offers advice on management's responsibilities in team formation as well as pointers on how good teams get started, understand organizational values, make decisions, and manage projects.

Team Building Competency Development Activities

H Autry, James A., The Servant Leader: How to Build a Creative Team, Develop Great Morale, and Improve Bottom-Line Performance, Prima Publishing, September, 2001.

This book shows you how to remain true to the servant leadership model when handling day-to-day and long-term management situations. You'll learn how to manage with respect and honesty and how to empower employees to achieve new levels of satisfaction. Servant leadership will produce fulfilling emotional, psychological, and spiritual rewards for everyone involved. It will enhance productivity, encourage creativity, and benefit the bottom line.

Activities

B Offer to manage/coach recent hires or a newly created work group.

B Provide special assignments, project oversight, or other stretch roles to your interested subordinates in order to accelerate their development.

B Recall instances of when you were given feedback from your managers and try to model aspects of behaviors that worked and eliminate behaviors that affected you adversely.

B Act as a role model by pitching in to do any kind of work when help is needed in order to promote teamwork.

M Ask team members to explain the goals and objectives of the organization. Assess how many are able to clearly articulate the direction so that others can understand it. Take responsibility if team members are struggling with this request. Create a simple, compelling message that portrays the essence of the strategy. Provide copies to employees. Increase the level of understanding so that team members easily identify with your message, and use it as a frame of reference when making decisions.

M Build a coaching toolbox that contains tools that help people learn through hands-on experience, observing, reading, discussion, etc..

M Develop peoples' experience and capabilities in ways that avoid the problem, or perception of favoritism among employees.

M Endeavor to provide constructive feedback in appropriate ways. Critique ideas, do not criticize people. Check with those persons to whom you have given such feedback as to whether they saw it as constructive. Provide positive feedback publicly (e.g., during staff meetings) and improvement feedback privately. Be specific and constructive. Saying, "You dropped the ball again" or even "Good job" means little and is less effective than saying, "Try using a scheduler to organize and prioritize your tasks so nothing else falls through the cracks" or "Your idea to work in pairs to speed up the process made a big difference. Thanks!"

M Introduce a new process or technology to a work group and ask for feedback on your approach to getting them up to speed.

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

M Offer individual or group positive reinforcement for positive team behavior (e.g., e-mails, recommendations for awards).

H Choose a staff member whose performance you've noted to be strong and can handle extra responsibilities. Empower him/her by delegating a significant part if not all of a project.

H Create a log of team members' skills and abilities as well as their areas for development, and use it to assign project tasks and activities that leverage strengths and provide development opportunities.

H Identify a development opportunity you would have liked to have had when you were more junior, and recommend it as an opportunity to a staff member who could use the development.

H Identify a work group with whom your group does not work as well as you would like. Actively seek out ways to improve the working relationship between the two groups.

H Seek assignment as a mentor or development advisor to an interested employee.

H Share leadership responsibilities when appropriate. One method for doing this is to periodically set time aside to identify responsibilities you are personally handling that could potentially be handled by others. You can also identify tasks where mistakes are not costly, and delegate those.

H Take on an expanded role that necessitates delegation of some of your existing responsibilities to less experienced or less skilled person(s).

Coaching Suggestions for Managers

H Ask staff member to debrief their successes and problems in doing their job. For the previous week, have them identify what went well as well as what could be improved. Have them share what they have learned with other staff members in order to expand everyone's learning from the experience.

H Ask employees to share books or articles they have read which highlight effective feedback techniques, as well as helpful tips and anecdotes from their own experience. Have them encourage others to use them and follow up to see what development has occurred as a consequence.

H Ask staff member to think about one of his/her strengths and to reflect on how he/she developed it. Did classroom activities, reading, practice, feedback or a good role model help him/her to learn? Ask how he/she might use a similar approach to develop in this area.

H Assign a staff member for a month the task of keeping track of the accomplishment of important goals, improvements or other noteworthy achievements by members of their work group. Challenge them to identify and provide rewards that are motivating, such as more decision-making authority, a special catered lunch, dinner and show tickets, etc. Rewards can

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

also be humorous (e.g., agree to wear a costume for the day, perform a funny skit, etc. when the team accomplishes a major goal). Any type of reward is effective if it draws attention to high performance and boosts the morale of the work group.

H Challenge employees to define high performance standards. Ask, "What is our criteria for doing best in class work on this project?" Help people see beyond the idea that solving a short-term problem or completing a project is the goal. Continue to evaluate standards and raise the bar. Work with members of your team to meet and exceed current levels of performance.

H Encourage staff members' career growth by asking them about their career goals. When a desired opportunity arises, alert them. Provide advice, endorsements and time to enable them to take it on.

H Engage your employees in your day-to-day issues, activities, decisions and goals to give them greater insight and visibility (e.g., delegated tasks, attend meetings).

H Help others recognize their impact by observing or asking how others react to their behavior. Talk informally with staff member to ask how he/she thinks he/she is perceived. Make suggestions in areas where he/she is having a negative impact. Praise and encourage continuation of positive examples. Focus particularly on areas in which people's reactions differ from the person's self perception. Use examples to illustrate your points.

H Invite less experienced peers to lead or take ownership for key tasks, and provide guidance through the process.

H Publicly recognize employees who take the initiative to develop and recommend solutions when they discover a problem.

H Set up peer coaching relationships by pairing up less experienced people with more experienced people for specific periods of time. Provide guidelines for what you'd like to see accomplished and hold follow-up conversations with each. Share resources (books, articles, etc. that you've read) which highlight effective feedback techniques or tips that you have found useful.

H Suggest that a staff member become a coach or mentor to someone in your team. Have them start by defining what they want to learn from their coaching/mentoring experience. Tell them to negotiate how they will support the mentoring relationship. It makes sense to set some regular time aside and be available on an as needed basis. Recommend useful articles or books on coaching or mentoring to help them get ideas on how to approach the coaching/mentoring assignment.

H Ask the staff member to observe staff meetings and note what seems to be effective and ineffective. Meet with them afterwards to discuss their observations and to elicit their suggestions for improvement. Ask them to go through the same process of analyzing their own meetings by having a member of their team observe one of their meetings.

Team Building

Competency Development Activities

H Suggest that others talk with members of highly effective teams. Have them ask how the team became so effective and what the team members did well or could do better/differently next time. Afterwards, ask what was learned and follow up to see if it is applied.