



A 7 STEP PROCESS TO IMPROVE TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

how to encourage team members to focus on solving their own team problems

The process described is designed to improve the effectiveness of a team. It is a straightforward approach which is not time-consuming and it requires the team leader to assume the role of coach or facilitator. Many team effectiveness processes are ineffective because they focus on solving the "team's problem" or someone else's problem. This process is powerfully effective because it encourages team members to focus on solving their own team problems.

Step 1: Before the first team session, ask team members to record their answers to two questions:

- "On a 1-10 scale (with 10 being ideal) how well are we doing in terms of working together as a team?"
- "On a 1-10 scale how well do we need to be doing in terms of working together as a team?"

This step is important both to provide an initial benchmark but also to help determine whether other team members feel that the team is functioning smoothly, and whether further team building activity would be seen as a valuable use of time.

Step 2: Discuss the results with the team, and agree whether the gap between current effectiveness and needed effectiveness indicates the need for team building.

Step 3: Ask the team to write down the two key behaviours the team should all try to change to make the team more effective. Then list behaviours on a flip-chart, and discuss the prioritisation of the behaviours, and determine the two most important behaviours for all team members to change.

Step 4: Invite each team member to have a one-to-one discussion with every other team member for about 5 minutes each. Each team member is asked to suggest to the other team member two areas for personal behavioural change (other than the two already agreed upon for every team member) that will help the team close the gap between where the team is and where the team wants to be. These discussions would typically take place simultaneously and if there are 6 team members each person will have 5 individual discussions, and end up with 10 suggestions on how they can personally change to help the team achieve its improvement objectives.

Step 5: Each team member reviews the feedback and suggested behavioural changes and chooses the two changes that seem to be the most important. Each team member is then asked to announce or write down their two key behaviours which they plan to change in the coming months.

Step 6: Agree with the team that on a monthly basis each team member will produce a brief 'progress report' for all other team members on their effectiveness in demonstrating the two key behaviours common to all team members, and their two key personal behaviours. This 'progress report' can either be shared in a team, or to save time, a monthly email progress report may be more convenient, and it could be circulated to each team member to increase the peer pressure to take action to change.

Step 7: After a period of 3-6 months, the team should initiate a follow-up survey to ask each team member to comment confidentially on any perceived change in effectiveness of all other team members. The survey should focus on the two items common to the team, the two personal items, and how much the individual has been following up and discussing progress with the other team members.

The survey questions might be presented as follows:

- Q1 Do you believe this person has become more (or less) effective in the past 6 months on the following items?
 - Team Items
 - Personal Items

The scale might range from -3 to +3 from less effective to more effective with 0 representing 'no perceived change'.

- Q2 How has this person followed up with you on areas that he/she has been trying to improve?
 - No follow-up
 - Little follow-up
 - Some follow-up
 - Frequent follow-up
 - Consistent follow-up
- Q3 What can this individual now do to become a more effective team member?