

# CHAPTER 20

## TEAM BUILDING

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# 1 INTRODUCTION



**Teamwork is very common in animal protection activities – partly because staff and resource shortages compel inter-organisational and inter-departmental cooperation and partly because the movement tends towards a collective mentality, rather than a hierarchical one. There is far more to effective teamwork than simply getting together to organise a common task, as the information below will begin to explain. Teamwork dynamics need to be understood to make the most effective use of teams in your organisation.**

# 2 DEFINITION

A simple, but effective, definition of a team is a group of people working together towards a common goal.

Terms that are often used to describe teamwork include:

- Whole > Sum
- Combined effort
- Cooperation
- Reporting to one boss
- Having one aim or mission.

Some of these terms are features of good teams. For example, ‘whole > sum’ (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts) is a feature of a team that is working well together – but there are some teams whose collective performance falls short of what you might expect given the quality of individuals.

The term ‘reporting to one boss’ can be a misleading one. In a well-designed organisational structure, people reporting to one boss do not often form teams, except around certain projects. In reality, team structures are often complicated, with people belonging to a number of different teams – often consisting of members of various departments. To be effective, teams often move away from usual hierarchical arrangements.

# 3 EFFECTIVE TEAM BUILDING

**TEAM BUILDING IS A PROCESS OF ENABLING THE TEAM TO ACHIEVE THE COMMON GOAL.**



- The stages involved in team building include clarifying the goal, identifying the inhibitors and removing them.
- Teamwork can use the different skills and talents within the group, unlocking diversity.
- Teamwork can achieve effective delegation to empower team members.
- Understanding the different stages of growth of teams can help enormously.
- Understanding different team roles and the value of diversity can also help a lot.
- Teamwork can be used to resolve conflict, or to form strong and trusting working relationships, if carried out sensitively.

- The nature of team building varies according to the size (scale) of the team and what you are trying to achieve:

	Scale	What is changed
Individual	1 person	Individual skills and perceptions
Small Team	2-12 people	Relationships between people
Inter-team	2 or more teams	Relationships between teams
Organisation	15+ people	The culture of the organisation

Research has shown that all members can participate effectively in a group of up to five or seven people. As a team becomes larger, say 10 to 12 people, it may be better to split the team into sub-groups.

The first step in developing your team building skills is to identify your personal team player style. Without knowing what your style is, it is very difficult to form an effective team, which will complement your strengths and weaknesses. Once you know what your own style is, it is equally important to identify the styles (and subsequent strengths and weaknesses) of the other members of your team (often your staff).

#### a) Team Player Style

The most useful and accessible team role model is that developed by Meredith Belbin in 1981. **The team roles were designed to define and predict potential success of management teams, recognising that the strongest teams have a diversity of characters and personality types.**

It has been criticised due to its potential oversimplification and 'pigeon-holing' of individuals. However, when used wisely to gain insight about the working of the team and the identification of the team strengths and weaknesses, it can be extremely useful.

According to Belbin:

**A TEAM ROLE IS 'A TENDENCY TO BEHAVE, CONTRIBUTE AND INTERRELATE WITH OTHERS IN A PARTICULAR WAY'.**

There are three action-orientated roles: Shaper, Implementer and Completer/Finisher; three people orientated roles: Coordinator, Team-worker and Resource Investigator and three cerebral roles: Plant, Monitor/Evaluator and Specialist. The nine team roles are summarised in the table on the following page.

The accurate delineation of these team roles is critical in understanding the dynamics of any management or work team.



### Team Player Styles

	TEAM ROLE	STRENGTHS	ALLOWABLE WEAKNESSES
<b>ACTION ORIENTATED ROLES</b>	Shaper	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prone to provocation. Can offend people's feelings.
	Implementer	Disciplined, reliable, conscientious and effective. Turns ideas into practical action.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
	Completer/ Finisher	Painstaking, conscientious and thorough. Searches out errors. Delivers on time	Inclined to worry unduly. Not good at delegating.
<b>PEOPLE ORIENTATED ROLES</b>	Coordinator (Chair)	Mature, confident, natural chair. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making. Delegates well.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads personal work.
	Team-worker	Cooperative, perceptive, mild and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction.	Indecisive in crisis situations. Unwilling to stand up for principles.
	Resource Investigator	Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses enthusiasm once initial enthusiasm has passed.
<b>CEREBRAL ROLES</b>	Plant	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems.	Ignores incidentals. Too preoccupied to communicate effectively.
	Monitor/ Evaluator	Sober, strategic, discerning. Sees all options. Judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others.
	Specialist	Single-minded, self-starter, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in scarce supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.

#### b) Team Building's Twelve Cs

Successful team building, which creates effective, focused teams, requires attention to each of the following:

**Clear Expectations:** Has management clearly communicated its expectations for the team's performance and expected outcomes? Do team members understand why the team was created? Is the organisation demonstrating constancy of purpose in supporting the team with resources of people, time and money?

**Context:** Do team members understand why they are on the team? Do they understand how the strategy of using teams will help the organisation attain its goals? Does the team understand where its work fits in the total context of the organisation's goals, principles, vision and values?

**Commitment:** Do team members want to participate in the team? Do team members feel the team mission is important? Are members committed to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes? Are team members excited and challenged by the team opportunity?

**Competence:** Does the team feel that it has the appropriate people participating? Does the team feel that its members have the knowledge, skill and capability to address the issues for which the team was formed? Does the team feel it has the resources, strategies and support needed to accomplish its mission?

**Charter – Goal Definition:** Has the team defined and communicated its goals; its anticipated outcomes and contributions; its timelines; and how it will measure both the outcomes of its work and the process the team followed to accomplish their task? Does the management support what the team has agreed?

**Control:** Does the team have enough freedom and empowerment to feel the ownership necessary to accomplish its goals? At the same time, do team members clearly understand their boundaries? Has the organisation defined the team's authority to make recommendations and to implement its plan? Is there a defined review process?

**Collaboration:** Does the team understand team and group process? Do members understand the stages of group development? Are team members working together effectively interpersonally? Do all team members understand roles and responsibilities?

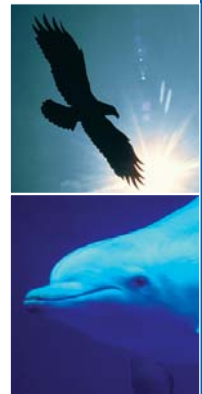
**Communication:** Are team members clear about the priority of their tasks? Is there an established method for the teams to receive honest performance feedback? Do team members communicate clearly and honestly with each other? Do team members bring diverse opinions to the table? Are necessary conflicts raised and addressed?

**Creative Innovation:** Is the organisation really interested in change? Does it value creative thinking, unique solutions and new ideas? Does it reward people who take reasonable risks to make improvements? Does it provide the necessary training, development etc?

**Consequences:** Do team members feel responsible and accountable for team achievements? Are rewards and recognition supplied when teams are successful? Is reasonable risk respected and encouraged? Can contributors see their impact on increased organisation success?

**Coordination:** Are teams coordinated by a central leadership team that assists the groups to obtain what they need for success? Have priorities and resource allocation been planned across departments?

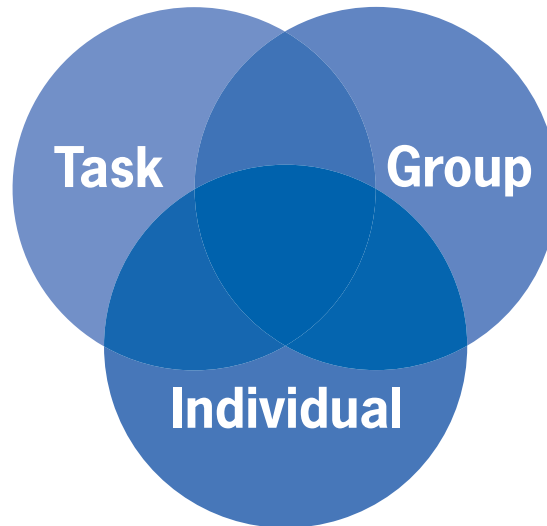
**Cultural Change:** Does the organisation recognise that the team-based, collaborative, empowering, enabling organisation of the future is different from the traditional, hierarchical organisation it may currently be? Does the organisation recognise that the more it can change its climate to support teams, the more it will receive in payback from the work of the teams?



### c) Team Dynamics

To be effective, a team needs not only to tackle the task in hand, but also to maintain social relations within the group and to ensure that individual needs are met.

This relationship is often depicted as:



Effective groups must carry out both task and maintenance functions.

#### Common Task Functions:

- Proposing and initiating – proposing ideas, courses of action which are relevant to the task
- Building – developing other people's proposals
- Diagnosing – analysing what is wrong, or what is causing the current situation
- Giving or seeking information
- Evaluating – evaluating the merits of certain proposals and outcomes
- Decision-making.

#### Common Maintenance Functions

- Gate-keeping – involving others in discussion and closing off or controlling, as necessary
- Encouraging – being friendly, supportive and responsive
- Conflict resolution – being prepared to acknowledge and deal with conflict
- Giving positive feedback
- Dealing with feelings – recognising and acknowledging people's feelings
- Looking after physical needs – for example, refreshments, breaks, space and light.

### d) Five Stages of Group Development

Like individuals, teams mature and develop. Research has shown that teams go through various common stages of development. The effectiveness of the team will depend on how well it deals with the problems that emerge at each stage.

The most common stage model that explains this is:

**Forming** – polite but untrusting. Formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.

**Storming** – testing others. Members start to communicate their feelings but probably still view themselves as part of their parent department rather than part of the team.

**Norming** – valuing other types. People feel part of the team and realise that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.



**Performing** – flexibility from trust. The team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.

**Adjourning** – The final stage, adjourning, involves the termination of task behaviours and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes.

The team may not share clear goals or purposes and therefore defining specific goals will be important. Teams often face issues that can decrease the effectiveness of the team and specifically its ability to make decisions:

- The time trade-offs in decision-making (team decision-making can take time away from working directly on projects)
- Pressure to conform
- The potential for increased conflict over decision-making
- Group anxiety – concern about the reactions of other groups members
- The potential for hidden agendas and blind spots.

Without adequate team training and preparation, it is unlikely that teams will work effectively to develop and realise a shared vision.



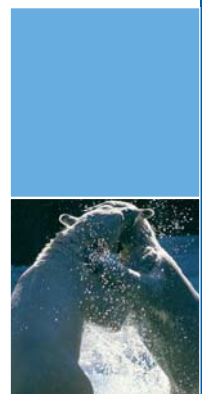
## 4

### BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) list the following requirements for building effective teams:

- Teams must be small enough in terms of the number of members.
- Members must have adequate levels of complementary skills.
- The team must have a truly meaningful purpose.
- The team must have a specific goal or goals.
- The team and its members must establish a clear approach to the team's work.
- Members must have a sense of mutual accountability.

Without team leadership (as opposed to traditional top-down leadership), teams will be unproductive. Another potential barrier is individual resistance to working in teams.



## 5

FURTHER RESOURCES

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**Websites****Belbin Team Roles**

[www.belbin.com/](http://www.belbin.com/)

**Keirsey Temperament Sorter**

<http://keirsey.com/>

**The Myers & Briggs Foundation**

[www.myersbriggs.org/](http://www.myersbriggs.org/)

**Team Building**

[www.mapnp.org/library/grp\\_skill/teams/teams.htm](http://www.mapnp.org/library/grp_skill/teams/teams.htm)

**Team Technology**

[www.teamtechnology.co.uk/tt/t-articl/mb-simpl.htm](http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/tt/t-articl/mb-simpl.htm)

**Books****Creating Effective and Successful Teams**

Thomas R. Keen

Publisher: Purdue University Press

ISBN: 1557532893

**Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders**

Susan A. Wheelan

Publisher: Sage Publications Ltd

ISBN: 0761918175

**Effective Teamwork: Practical Lessons from Organisational Research**

Michael A. West

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing

ISBN: 1405110589

**Groups That Work and Those That Don't: Creating Conditions for Effective Teamwork**

J. Richard Hackman (Editor)

Publisher: Jossey Bass Wiley

ISBN: 1555421873

**The Wilder Nonprofit Field Guide to Developing Effective Teams**

Beth Gilbertsen, Vijit Ramchandani

Publisher: Amherst H Wilder Foundation

ISBN: 0940069202