Team Curriculum

Path of creating a team

People → **Group** → **Team**

Individuals
- Collection of people
- Culture / Values
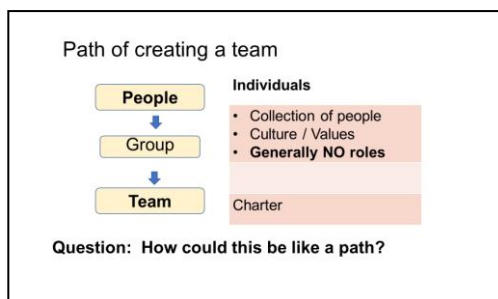- **Generally NO roles**

Charter

Question: How could this be like a path?

Essential Questions I must answer:

- 1. What do I bring to the team?
- 2. What are our commitments to one another?
- 3. What differences exist between us?
- 4. How will we operate?
- 5. How will we know we are succeeding? What benefits does a team approach help in solving problems?

How are we going to work together – handle conflicts

Do Organizations have a Culture?

Discussion of the elements of the community culture

What is the culture of the team?
How is a learning team like a sports team?

Write up the results

The school will foster a **Team/community**-based culture of a learning environment, with all treated as adults and with respect. What is our classroom culture? (How are we going to operate?)

The school will foster a **Team/community**-based culture of a learning environment, key values and treating all as adults and with respect.

Creating a team charter

The Charter Covers:

- Goals (Fun, ….),
- How will we be measured at the end,
- Roles that the team will do, (Scribe, Captain, Planner, Advisor, Tester, Public reporter,)
- Our values, … Curiosity, Trust, Flexibility,
- Deliverables?
- How will we handle conflicts?

Elements of Culture
- Language
  - Communication
- Symbol
  - Gesture, sound, color, design
- Values
  - Goodness and beauty
- Beliefs
  - Shared ideas
- Norms
  - Rules and expectations
- Rituals
  - Rites and Public ceremony

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Teamwork outline

We are a Massachusetts 501(C) 3 non-profit corporation dedicated to supporting students, dropouts and other workers to learn skills that will help them succeed in a career or additional schooling (college and career readiness (CCR))

This document is part of a series that details the elements of the training that supports Project Academy's students.

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1.0 The ability to work as part of a team **is one of the most important skills in today's job marke**t. Employers are looking for workers who can contribute their own ideas, but also want people who can work with others to create and develop projects and plans.

1.1 Teamwork is an essential part of workplace success. Like a basketball team working together to set up the perfect shot, every team member has a specific role to play in accomplishing tasks on the job. Although it may seem as if one player scored the basket, that basket was made possible by many people's planning, coordination, and cooperation to get that player the ball. Employers look for people who not only know how to work well with others, but who understand that not every player on the team can or will be the one who gets the ball. When everyone in the workplace works together to accomplish goals, everyone achieves more.

When employees work together to accomplish a goal, everyone benefits. Employers might expect to "see" this in action in different ways. For example, team members in the workplace plan ahead and work cooperatively to assign tasks, assess progress, and deliver on time. They have professional discussions during which differing approaches and opinions might be shared and assessed in a respectful manner. Even when certain employees end up with

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tasks that were not their first choices, jobs get done with limited complaints because it is in the spirit of teamwork and with the overall goal in mind. A leader or manager may often serve as the teamwork facilitator.

WHAT IS A TEAM?

The answer to this question isn't as obvious as it might seem. Everyone knows what a team is: a group of people working together toward a common goal, right? Well, yes and no. A team *is* a group with a common goal, but lots of groups have a common goal. And a team works together, but lots of groups work together. The members of the United States Congress work together toward a common goal (making the laws that are best for the country), but each member has her own private interests and beliefs -- her own agenda. The Congress is no more a team than is a soccer "team" of six-year-olds, each of whom plays as if he's the only person on the field.

A *team* is a group of people with a commitment to one another, to the team, to a high level of achievement, to a common goal, and to a common vision. They understand that team success depends on the work of every member.

A good team functions as a single organism. Not only do members work together toward a common goal, but they complement and support one another so that their work seems effortless. Compare that soccer team of six-year-olds and their individual agendas with the Brazilian national team in its heyday. Everyone seemed to know not only what all his teammates were doing, but what they were going to do. Passes always hit their mark, as if there were some sort of mysterious force among team members that directed their kicks. Obviously, their "magic" was the result of endless practice, but it was also the result of a shared passion for accomplishment and a shared vision of just that effortless, automatic play that made all other teams look clumsy.

So a team has a shared interest in accomplishment and a shared vision, both of which are different from a shared goal. The need for accomplishment provides a driving force. The vision provides not only a

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goal, but directions and a compass for reaching it. It keeps everyone moving in the same direction, at the same speed, working together to create as little friction and as efficient a journey as possible.

II Commandments for Teamwork

1. Work to build trust.
2. Help everyone win!
3. Show everyone respect.
4. Make decisions based on consensus.
5. Be engaged.
6. Confront issues right away.
7. Get to know eachother.
8. Keep expectations visible and clear.
9. Eliminate Toxic Teammates
10. Work hard and have fun
11. Believe in yourself

One of the ways that teams reduce friction is through their members' commitment to working *as* a team. They're willing to give up most of their need for individual recognition for success in reaching the goal. It's the accomplishments of the team as a whole that become important, and members of good teams hold themselves and one another accountable.

When it's working well, a team is more like a single individual doing a lot of things at once than it is a conglomeration of single individuals, each doing their own thing. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts: the team can accomplish more as a team than all its individual members could achieve if each were working alone.

1.3 Background:

Our pre-employment program is designed to give young adults, who dropped out of school or have graduated HS but have little career direction, the life skills and attitude training to become a successful part of the community. The program is designed to include the community and business partners to ensure success for the individual. Needs of the young adult will be assessed; such as transportation, family commitments, legal and others to make the training possible and successful.

· We look for young adults that have:
- a positive Attitude:
- a good Aptitudes **for doing certain** kinds of things easily and quickly.

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Our approach is to train young adults to be productive and great employees with skills that make them valuable in most service or industrial jobs. These new employees have the life-skills that companies need to be successful in addition to the technical skills to do the job. The program is over a 16-week period and provides a holistic environment to the student.

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1.4 Business Needs:
Businesses are reporting that a major need for their success are employees with life skills such as; interpersonal skills, communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving. Our program intends to work with local community & businesses to ensure that we provide these skills in addition to a positive attitude and seeing problems as opportunities.

1.5 About us:
Project Academy is a 501 (C)3 non-profit corp. whose purpose is to serve the community by successfully preparing entry level people & high school students to be productive in the work environment, education & society organizations. Our students see themselves as owners of their own business with a positive attitude, caring for the customers with continuous improvement and looking to learn and get better at what they do.

1.6 Our beliefs(tenants).

1. People will change careers equally as jobs in their life-time.
2. Life-skills are transferable between careers/jobs
3. Think of yourself as in your own business. … Your boss is your customer. Build your brand.
4. Problems are opportunities … "the bigger the problem the bigger the opportunity". Vinod Khosla
5. Use the engineering mind-set to focus on all the activities surrounding your work.
6. Most young adults have the capability and desire to do the right thing but need the correct environment to dream

1.7 Our Mission Statement: To have our students see the benefits of using life-skills and a team learning culture that successful connects with business and society organizations. For our employees, we will create a

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positive environment for their growth. Our purpose is to make our community a better place for us being there.

"I didn't value experience as much as character, creativity, and common sense, which I suppose was related to my having started Bridgewater two years out of school myself, and things out is more important than having specific knowledge of how to do something" … Dalio, Ray. Principles: Life and Work *my belief that having an ability to figure*

Student take away (Outcomes):

- Acquire self-awareness and apply self-management skills to achieve personal well-being and effectiveness

- Act with integrity and make responsible decisions that uphold moral principles

- Acquire social awareness and apply interpersonal skills to build and maintain positive relationships based on mutual respect

1.8 Benefits of Pre-Employment Training to the community:
- **Building a community and culture of a learning team:** Learn about and how to develop a learning culture that is like a sports team. How to handle disagreements and work together to solve a problem.

Area	Benefits
Society	Character traits, Problem solving, Design thinking, Soft-skills, Social & Emotions learning (SEL)

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Area	Benefits
Citizenship	Thinking skills (creative and critical thinking, questioning, reflection), Values, Character development
Work	Process methods, Collaboration, Innovative thinking, Financial understanding
Lifelong learners	Excitement in learning, Risk taking, Feedback, Values. Students feels impowered to continuous learn.

2.0 Responsibilities of the student
This is your handbook:
"Faber Est Suae Quisque Fortunae"
"Everyone is the maker of their destiny"   4th street school, Sydney, Australia

Your initial responsibility:

It is important for you to understand that you will build your own knowledge by using questions of why, how, what, when, & where
You will learn to think using creative questions as well as critical thinking question that will support you in your growth in a career or as well college. You will see that you need to become a lifelong learner to survive.

Commitment to each other:
In order to be successful, the organization; Project Academy, and the student must agree to following the training plan, time contracts and commitments of the plan, showing up and being prepared are critical for success both in this training as well as the work environment. Project academy will support the students outside needs of services such as transportation, legal, housing & food. These requirements will be learned in the beginning interview process. Project Academy also commitments to provide on-going support after the student finds employment. High standards and expectations will be the norm for both parties. The students will commit to viewing this program with a long-term attitude and Grit to get it completed successfully.
2.1 Attendance:

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Commitment for attendance is critical for success in this program. It is important to not missing classes during the 14 weeks. This is a skill that is very important in the work environment. Project Academy and your new employer needs to be able to count on your being there. *"80 percent of success is just showing up" —Woody Allen*

Weekly feedback sessions:
Each week, the teams will discuss the past weeks learning and write down what went right or wrong. The teams will share their perspective with other teams and discuss their finding. Feedback will be shared with Project Academy to improve the program. The results shall be visually posted each week.

2.2 Project Academy's responsibility/culture:
A holistic approach will be used where students' strengths and needs are assessed; a learning environment using project based learning is established for learning college and career readiness skills (CCR) and finally a community structure that is available for on-going learning and support.

Project Academy will foster a working environment (Culture) that treats individuals as partners. It will establish a community of people who will work together for the common good of the team. Classroom atmosphere will balance trust, risk-taking, originality and respect. It will be an innovation-friendly environment that embraces fast-cycle sharing, supports risk taking, and celebrates learning from failure... establishing a protective environment. The approach of continuous improvement will be practiced throughout the program.

Project Academy's culture statement:

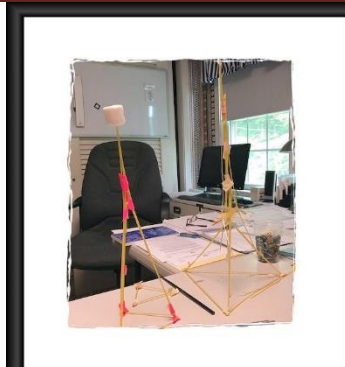| Key Word:	Description:
Expectations	We will have high expectations to achieve the best results for things we strive for. Our outlook will be to always make things better than what we found.
Trying something different	We should be willing to take risk in doing our projects and activities. We are looking for amazing things to be accomplished by all of us.

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Key Word:	Description:
Believe in people	Each of us are unique in what we can do and accomplish. We look for the good versus the bad in our make-up. We should strive to become better in our outlook.
Community	Our organization does not exist alone but is part of a community of others. We should strive to continuously be looking to make it better and be an active member.
Values:	Caring, Empathy, Striving for the best. Loving kindness, Trust, Respect, Curiosity, Thinking skills (creativity, critical, questions, reflection), Responsibility. No excuses
Language:	We should communicate with our fellow team member to achieve results that make them look better and have a positive outlook towards them. Our body language is a smiling face that looks at you in a positive way. We greet each other when we meet. and are polite and not aggressive.
Rituals:	We should take the time to celebrate our actions and communicate what we are planning or achieved. We use visual measurement to communicate and keep each of us posted on our schedule
Overall symbol:	**"Faber Est Suae Quisque Fortunae"** *Everyone is the maker of their destiny*
Our vision, goals, mission and purpose	Our organization documents are posted, clearly reviewed and discussed. We shall in include where necessary, time frames, measurements and expected outcomes to make sure these items are real.
Mindset thinking:	Ownership mindset … *think like an owner* Cultural engineering mindset … *manage tasks around a project* Growth mindset … *The brain is like a muscle use it or lose it* Team mindset: …*work together like a winning learning team*.

3.0 Beginning the team learning process

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Overview • **1.0 Ice Breaker ... Marshmallow project (Begin our thoughts on the problem to be solved)**	
Essential Questions • Why are we doing this? • How are we going to do this? • What outcome do we expect? • What can we learn from this? Material & Preparation http://www.projectacademy.org/Documents/marshmellow-short-intr.pdf Each team needs 1 yard of tape, 1 yard of string, 20 pieces of spaghetti (uncooked, of course), and one marshmallow. I also recommend making available one or two small scissors for all teams in the group to access during the activity.	Each team has 18 minutes to build the tallest, free-standing structure using the materials supplied to each group. The marshmallow must be attached to the top of the structure you build. After 18 minutes, I will measure the height of each structure that remains standing with the marshmallow on top. The winner is the team whose free-standing structure is the tallest. Tasks • Introduce each other • Create <5 people teams No more than 5 people per team. If the total group size is just 5 or 6 people, divide the group into teams of 3, if at all possible. Team size is more important than total number of participants involved in the activity. • Create name tags • Hand out instructions for the exercise Purpose: Get the students to work together and begin to cooperate in a team format to solve a problem.
Time	45 minutes or less 5 minute introduction; 18 minute activity; 5 minute video. Additional time for discussion. The 18 minute exercise is fixed. Other times can be adjusted as needed.

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3.2 Knowing yourself:

It's important to take the time to identify your strengths and PRACTICE talking about them in advance. That way, you'll be ready when you walk into the team, you can discuss with others.   Let's start by identifying/confirming what your greatest strengths are:

1. Brainstorm. Sit down and make a list of your top strengths — aim for at least 10 and be creative. Banish your modest internal editor to another room. Jot down everything that comes to mind. You can delete later if you like.

Your strengths could include:

Experience — Experience with a certain software or type of task, expertise in a particular industry, a track record of working with similar products or clients, etc.

Talents — Abilities such as programming in a desired language, writing proposals, selling widgets, litigating cases, organizing events, translating from Mandarin, etc. (the possibilities here are truly endless)

Soft skills — Competencies such as problem solving, influencing, team building, negotiation, managing up, etc.

Education/training — Relevant background on topics critical to the job — including college degrees, certifications, training seminars, mentoring, internships, etc.

If you have trouble coming up with enough work-related strengths, jot down positive personality qualities or personal strengths. You may find ways to relate these to job performance.

2. Focus. Narrow your list down to least five strengths that you are comfortable discussing (or could get comfortable discussing with a little bit of practice). The more, the better. You may not talk about all of these strengths in every interview, but it's good to have options.

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3. Prepare Examples. Develop at least one example or Interview Story to illustrate each of your strengths. If you're not sure how to go about crafting compelling stories and examples from your previous experience, check out [Big Interview and our Answer Builder](#).

3,3 **Professionalism** tops the list of success predictors. Have we stated the obvious? Yes. Professionalism is the "price of entry" for most positions (unless you value unprofessional workers). But how do you define professionalism? Clearly professionalism in a customer facing sales role differs from someone behind-the-scenes developing products, stocking the store, or cleaning it. Predictors of professionalism should therefore be job-specific. However, a variety of skills apply to professionalism across the board:
- Dependability
- Following instructions
- Work ethic

For some positions, professionalism might include:
- Ability to stay on top of industry trends
- Command of certain software tools
- Commitment to health & safety (critical in oil & gas industries, for instance)

The most telling indications of a candidate's professionalism come from fellow professionals' views on what it was like working with your candidate.

3.4 Culture: learning

Team Culture: Getting Teams to Collaborate

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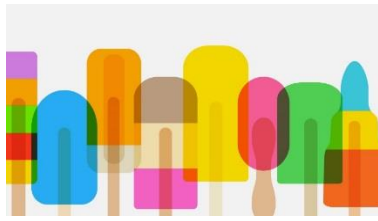
Understand what team culture is and how it works. A team's culture is its shared values and assumptions, and it results from a [mix of elements](): the organization, industry, geographic region and nation, and profession or function the team represents. Values are things we consider worth striving for, such as honesty, accountability, and compassion. Assumptions are beliefs we hold about how the world works or how things are related. For example, you may assume that people generally want to do a good job, or that people are more committed to a decision when they are involved in making it. A team manifests its culture in many artifacts, including norms that lead members to act in certain ways and to create structures, processes, and policies. It's important to distinguish between a team's espoused culture and the one it operates from. The values that team members *say* they operate from are the espoused culture — which may or may not be what they actually operate from.

CULTURE?

THE SCHOOL WILL FOSTER A **TEAM/COMMUNITY** BASED CULTURE OF A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, WITH ALL TREATED AS ADULTS AND WITH RESPECT.

KEY WORDS ARE:

RESPECT, EMPATHY, KINDNESS, TRUST, CURIOSITY, INNOVATION, PERSISTING, FLEXIBILITY, CONTINUOUS LEARNING, HUMOR, ACCEPTANCE, CARING AND TAKING RESPONSIBLE RISK.

[Roger Schwarz]() is an organizational psychologist, speaker, leadership team consultant, and president and CEO of Roger Schwarz & Associates. He is the author of *Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results*. For more, visit [www.schwarzassociates.com]() or find him on Twitter [@LeadSmarter]().
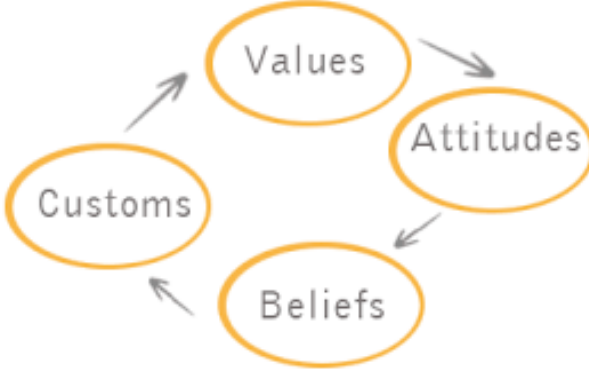
Create a Culture of Acceptance and Caring – Take a moment to examine your own approach to others. Are you accepting of family members? Neighbors? Colleagues? Friends? Do your conversations with your spouse include statements of understanding, compassion and

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empathy for those who are different or even who may challenge you? Whether you believe your child is listening or not, the perceptions of you and your partner are internalized by your child and become your family's culture.

Taking some time **to reflect on your own values** and how you communicate interpersonal problems among family members can set the tone for how your child deals with the outside world. Put yourself to the test. Notice when you are making judgements about another. Stop yourself and ask, "What can I learn from this person who is challenging me?" Reframe your discussion in terms of your own learning with self-awareness

On culture: What you want is to build a culture of inquiry not advocacy ~@AdamMGrant#StanfordETL #WednesdayWisdom

Motivation Is Inseparable from Culture

Engagement is the visible outcome of motivation, the natural capacity to direct energy in the pursuit of a goal. Our emotions influence our motivation. In turn, our emotions are socialized through culture—the deeply learned confluence of language, beliefs, values, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of our lives.

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For example, one person working at a task feels frustrated and stops, while another person working at the task feels joy and continues. Yet another person, with an even different set of cultural beliefs, feels frustrated at the task but continues with increased determination. What may elicit that frustration, joy, or determination may differ across cultures, because cultures differ in their definitions of novelty, hazard, opportunity, and gratification, and in their definitions of appropriate responses. Thus, the response a student has to a learning activity reflects his or her culture.

From HBR 3/2017

This Spotlight package focuses on the personality types that make up a team--and how to get the best from any combination. In "Pioneers, Drivers, Integrators, and Guardians," Suzanne Johnson Vickberg and Kim Christfort of Deloitte discuss strategies for making the most of cognitive diversity on teams. When teams fall short of their potential, it's often because leaders don't know how to spot and manage the differences in how people approach their work.

 To help organizations claim this lost value, Deloitte developed a framework for identifying and managing four primary working styles.

- "Pioneers" value possibilities, and they spark energy and imagination on their teams.
- "Guardians" value stability, and they bring order and rigor.
- "Drivers" value challenge and generate momentum.
- "Integrators" value connection and draw teams together.

Every person is a composite of these four styles, though most people are closely aligned with one or two. To get the most from the styles on their teams, leaders should

- pull opposite types closer together to generate productive friction,
- give more visibility and voice to people with nondominant perspectives,
- take extra care to get input from sensitive introverts, who risk being drowned out but have valuable contributions to make.

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3.5 The Importance of Trust

One definition describes trust as a "reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something."
Think about that definition for a moment. Trust means that you rely on someone else to do the right thing. You believe in the person's integrity and strength, to the extent that you're able to put yourself on the line, at some risk to yourself.

Trust is essential to an effective team, because it provides a sense of safety. When your team members feel safe with each other, they feel comfortable to open up, take appropriate risks, and expose vulnerabilities.

Without trust there's less innovation, collaboration, creative thinking, and productivity, and people spend their time protecting themselves and their interests – this is time that should be spent helping the group attain its goals.

Trust is also essential for knowledge sharing. A study published in the "Journal of Knowledge Management" found that trust was a key element in a team's knowledge acquisition. Put simply, if your team members trust one another, they're far more likely to share knowledge, and communicate openly.

Strategies for Building Trust

As a leader, what can you do to create a culture of trust within your team?

1. Lead by Example

If you want to build trust within your team, then **lead by example**, and show your people that you trust others. This means trusting your team, your colleagues, and your boss. Never forget that your team members are always watching and taking cues from you – take the opportunity to show them what trust in others really looks like.

2. Communicate Openly

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Open communication is essential for building trust. You need to get everyone on your team talking to one another in an honest, meaningful way, and you can use several strategies to accomplish this.

First, create a **team charter** to define the purpose of the team, as well as each person's role. Present this charter at the first team meeting, and encourage each team member to ask questions, and discuss his or her expectations.

Next, consider organizing **team building exercises**. When chosen carefully and planned well, these exercises can help "break the ice" and encourage people to open up and start communicating.

Note:

It's useful to help your people understand that other people's approaches and insights can be as valid as their own. This is where psychometric instruments such as **Myers-Briggs Personality Testing** and the **Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile** can help people understand and appreciate those that they work with, even when these people have quite different approaches.

Meet regularly, so that all team members have a chance to talk about their progress, and discuss any problems that they're experiencing. This time spent face-to-face is an important part of getting to know each other. It also creates opportunities for team members to talk, and to help one another solve problems.

Make sure that you "walk the talk" here: whenever you have important or relevant information to share, do so immediately. Demonstrate that open communication is important to you by consistently sharing with the group. The more you share with your team members, and thereby prove that you have no hidden agenda, the more comfortable they'll feel trusting you and each other.

3. Know Each Other Personally

One way to build trust is to encourage your team members to see their colleagues as people. Think about creating situations that help them share personal stories, and bond.

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Do this by asking sensitively about their family, or about their hobbies. Start by sharing some personal information about yourself, and then ask someone else about a hobby, or a musical interest.

Another way to get the team acquainted, and to form stronger bonds, is to **socialize after work** or at lunch.
For example, you could set aside time each week for informal group discussions. Consider asking team members to put forward suggestions on topics you could all cover. To start with, you could start a discussion around **values**. Share some of your own values, and encourage others to share theirs. Values are important to most people, and starting a conversation that allows people to share them highlights your team's humanity.

Note:

Use your own best judgment when asking team members or colleagues personal questions – don't invade their privacy!

4. Don't Place Blame

When people work together, honest mistakes and disappointments happen, and it's easy to blame someone who causes these. However, when everyone starts pointing fingers, an unpleasant atmosphere can quickly develop. This lowers morale, undermines trust, and is ultimately unproductive.

Instead, encourage everyone in your group to think about the mistake in a constructive way. What can you all do to fix what happened, and move forward together? And how can you make sure that this mistake doesn't happen again?

5. Discourage Cliques

Sometimes, cliques can form within a team, often between team members who share common interests or work tasks. However, these groups can – even inadvertently – make others feel isolated. They can also undermine trust between group members.

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Start an open discussion about this with your team members, and see what they think about cliques and their effect on other group members. Only by addressing the issue openly can you discourage this damaging behavior.

6. Discuss Trust Issues

If you manage an established team that has trust issues, it's essential to find out how these problems originate, so that you can come up with a strategy for overcoming them.

Consider giving team members a questionnaire to fill out anonymously. Ask them about the level of trust within the group, as well as why they think there's a lack of trust. Once you've read the results, get everyone together to talk about these issues (but make sure that you respect the anonymity of the survey!)

3.6 Cracking the Code of Sustained Collaboration HBR

1. Teach People to Listen, Not Talk

2. Train People to Practice Empathy

3. Make People More Comfortable with Feedback

4. Teach People to Lead *and* Follow

5. Speak with Clarity and Avoid Abstractions

6. Train People to Have Win-Win Interactions

3,7 Conflict resolution

Why you need it: "Any time you put more than one person into an organization, there is going to be conflict," says Robinson. "It's human nature." Therefore, being able to resolve issues with co-workers will help you maintain relationships with peers and work more effectively.

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Why employers want it: Being able to constructively work through disagreements with people is a sure indicator of maturity—as well as leadership potential. Someone like this helps to promote a healthy, collaborative workplace.

How to gain it: The best way to resolve disagreements between co-workers is to address issues directly but delicately. So, when stepping in as a mediator, let both parties air their grievances in a judgment-free environment and then work together to find a solution.

3.8 How to Design Meetings Your Team Will Want to Attend

Marion Barraud for HBR

There's a lot of advice out there about how to make meetings more efficient and productive. And while it's true that leading focused, deliberate conversations is critical to organizational performance, meetings aren't *just* about delivering results. There's another outcome that leaders should be paying more attention to: creating a quality experience for each participant.

What is a quality experience in a meeting? I define it as when employees leave feeling more connected, valued, and fulfilled. Of course, you should still be focused on achieving the meeting outcomes, but thoughtful meetings and productive ones don't have to be at odds.

I've worked with managers and project leaders to create these kinds of experiences. We begin by asking people to reflect on their best team experience and answer two questions: *What does a powerful group look like? What does it mean to be powerful in a group?*

The second question typically elicits answers like these:

- "I never left anything important unsaid. When I spoke, I felt like I was being heard, and I believed that what I said had an impact."

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- "It felt like I was really a member of the group. Everyone seemed genuinely interested in each other and in what was going on in our lives."
- "I knew that I added value, both in the meetings and outside of them."

In other words, each group meeting added to the experience of being a productive, valued member of the group.

Here's what I've seen leaders do to create that quality experience:

Work hard on being present. Take adequate time to prepare so that you can be available and attentive before and during the meeting. If you're running late because of another meeting or still thinking about how to conduct this meeting, you'll be preoccupied and not truly available for anyone who wants to connect.

Preparation allows you to relax about leading the meeting and pay more attention to "reading the room" — noticing how people are doing as they walk in, and throughout the meeting.

○

Demonstrate empathy. People associate attention with caring — your attention matters. Observe, listen, ask thoughtful questions, and avoid distractions and multitasking. Empathy is a learned skill that can be practiced by simply setting aside your phone and computer for two to three hours each week and really listening to someone. Meetings can be your primary place to hone this skill.

Set up and manage the conversation. Ask the group for permission to deliberately manage the conversation. It's important to establish some guidelines about distraction. Ask people to:

- avoid using technology unless it is pertinent to the topics
- avoid any distracting behavior — verbal or nonverbal
- listen and respect people when they're speaking
- invite others to speak if their view needs to be heard

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Include enough time on every topic to allow broad participation. This means having fewer [agenda items](#) and more time allocated to each topic. As a target, put 20% fewer items on your agenda and allow 20% more time for each item.

Slow down the conversation to include everyone. I like the idea of social turn-taking, where you have a sense of who has or hasn't spoken and whether the conversation is being controlled or dominated by one or more people. You don't need to set this up as a rule, but you can model it as an inclusive style of conversation, so people become more likely to notice who hasn't spoken yet.

To implement this practice, call on people gently and strategically. By *gently*, I mean make it feel and sound like an invitation — not some method of controlling participation. By *strategically*, I mean think through, during your preparation, who needs to be part of the discussion for each topic. Ask yourself:

- Who would be great at starting the conversation?
- Who is affected by the outcomes and therefore needs to be asked for their view?
- Who is most likely to have a different view?
- Who are the old hands who might sense whether we are making a mistake or missing something?

Check in with people at specific times. Begin each meeting with a question: "Does anyone have anything to say or ask before we begin?" Ask it deliberately and with a tone that signals that this conversation matters to you. And then wait. Pausing conveys that you're not interested in getting to someplace other than right here, right now — that this conversation matters. Don't spoil your pauses by making remarks about the lack of response or slowness of a response. People often need a few moments to reflect, find something to say, and think about the best way to express it. Just wait.

Once people realize that you are willing to pause, they'll become more aware, and when they have a question, they won't worry that they are slowing down the meeting.

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High-quality conversations with broad participation allow people to get to know each other in ways that lead to friendship and collaboration. It's the act of being with other people in an attentive, caring way that helps us feel that we are all in this together. Crafting a quality experience in your meetings takes time, but it's worth it.

Paul Axtell is an author, speaker, and corporate trainer.

3.9 Perform at a higher level Once your teams are formed, and they understand their task, I'll also suggest a seven-step process that may help them perform at the highest level:

1. Ask them to discuss their respective strengths and weaknesses. What will each of them bring to the team?

2. Ask them to explicitly identify their commitments to one another.

3. Ask them to mine for conflict. What differences exist between them? Do they see the project differently? Do they agree on the product?

4. Have them define the task and identify the first three steps they will take.

5. Emphasize first meetings and a fast start.

6. Challenge teams with fresh information on a regular basis.

7. Encourage "hang out" time and celebration. All good teams like to see and celebrate success.

teamwork rubric

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Category	4	3	2	1
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
Problem-solving	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.	Refines solutions suggested by others	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Lets others do the work.
Attitude	Is never publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s).	of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s). Is rarely publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Is occasionally publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Is often publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Is often negative about the task(s).
Focus on the task	Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done. Very self=directed.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on task	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.
Working with other	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player.

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Civility: Within ten feet acknowledge the person, Within five feet say hello

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