

Managing Teams
by Larry Holpp
A Briefcase Book published by McGraw-Hill
www.briefcasebooks.com
Discussion Guide

The following is designed to facilitate the use of *Managing Teams* by Lawrence Holpp (McGraw-Hill, 2000) in any organization that currently uses teams or is thinking about it.

Chapter 1. Questions to Ask Before Starting

Check This Out

If you are considering the use of teams read this chapter carefully and answer the questions honestly. You need to go into this process with your eyes wide open. You will learn important tips that will increase your chances of developing successful teams.

Let's Talk

1. What is your definition of a team?
2. How will teams help your organization? What do you hope to accomplish?
3. Will some people object to teams in your organization? How will you respond to them?
4. Why is communication important in building a team? How will your teams communicate?

Chapter 2. Creating the Culture for Teamwork

Check This Out

The readiness assessment questionnaire is a must if you are considering the use of teams. Ask yourself these twenty questions before you go any further.

Let's Talk

1. How did you assess the readiness of your organization? Are you ready to move forward with teams? If not, why not?
2. What are the roadblocks to teams in your organization?
3. Will traditional or self-directed teams work best? Why?

Chapter 3. Teams and Business Strategy

Check This Out

New advances in manufacturing technologies like just-in-time inventory, advanced integrated design capability, statistical process control, and integrated work cells can make use of teams. See why.

Let's Talk

1. Will teams fit in with your overall business strategy? Why?
2. What are the pros and cons for using teams in your organization?
3. Do you make use of any of these advances in manufacturing technology? Do you think teams will help?
4. Why is it important to move slowly with teams?

Chapter 4. Why Organizations Have Problems with Teams

Check This Out

Need help getting started setting up your team? Check out the Team Development Checklist, a simplified checklist of five phases of team development: 1. The Learning Phase 2. Developing a Strategy 3. Active Experimentation 4. Testing and Evaluating 5. Sharing and Growing.

Let's Talk

1. What problems has your organization had with teams?
2. How were the problems resolved? What problem solving techniques were used?
3. What are some ongoing problems that your organization has yet to resolve regarding teams? Why?

Chapter 5. Vision, Values, Mission, and Strategy

Check This Out

How do you come up with a good vision statement? Check out the Six Cs of Visioning to make sure you are on target—Clear, Concise, Connected, Compelling, Contrasting, Credible.

Let's Talk

1. What is your team vision? Does it follow the Six Cs?
2. What is your strategy for achieving this vision or goal?
3. How will you evaluate your progress?

Chapter 6. Team Dynamics

Check This Out

Is your team having problems? Check out the table “Team Development Tactics.” This is a helpful list of warning signs and what the team leader should do to turn things around.

Let’s Talk

1. What are some common problems that teams experience in trying to work together?
2. What are some suggestions for how to treat these problems?
3. From your own experience, which problems are most troubling and why?

Chapter 7. New Roles for Leaders of High-Performance Work Groups

Check This Out

Are you a team leader? You can select activities from the “Leadership Self-Analysis” checklist to supplement your own leadership plan.

Let’s Talk

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your team leader?
2. Discuss various leadership styles. Which do you think are most successful and why?
3. How is your leader evaluated?
4. Where can team leaders in your organization go for help?

Chapter 8. Conducting Team Meetings

Check This Out

For those who have to run team meetings, check out the section “Guidelines for Effective Team Meetings” and “Handling Common Team Meeting Problems,” a list of common problems and some suggestions for dealing with them.

Let’s Talk

1. How would you describe your team meetings? Are they well organized and effective?
2. How can your team meetings be improved? What changes, if any, are necessary?
3. Do you have enough time for meetings? How do you ensure that all opinions are heard?

Chapter 9. Coaching Teams and Team Members

Check This Out

Of course we all know the role of a coach for a sports team, but what about for a work team? Check out the “Guidelines for Coaching” to understand more fully the role of coach as “teacher” and “trainer” of players on teams in an organization.

Let’s Talk

1. Do the players on your team receive “coaching”? Who provides it?
2. How can coaching improve job performance, teamwork and leadership? Do you consider your coach to be effective? Why? Why not?
3. Discuss the importance of recognition. What recognition do players receive on your team? Is it sufficient?

Chapter 10. Coping with Conflicts and Changes

Check This Out

Every team will experience some degree of conflict. The question is how best to resolve it? Check out the “four styles to handle conflict,” with the advantages and disadvantages of each—Avoiding, Accommodating, Confronting, Collaborating.

Let’s Talk

1. How does your team handle conflict? Are there specific procedures in place?
2. From your experience, what techniques for conflict resolution seem to work best?
3. What kinds of conflict are the most difficult to resolve? Why?
4. What can teams and team leaders do to minimize conflict?

Chapter 11. Applied Empowerment

Check This Out

Delegating responsibility and authority can be a tricky business. To make sure the baton is passed smoothly check out the discussion on “the five principles of empowerment”:

1. Do the basics first.
2. Learn to do things flawlessly.
3. Add new tasks only as previous tasks are mastered.
4. Make the new tasks work as flawlessly as the basic ones.
5. Repeat, ad infinitum.

Let's Talk

1. What is the process for turning over new tasks to your team? Is the process effective? What is the role of management? What is the role of the team leader?
2. What changes would you like to see in this process?
3. Do you feel communication and training are adequate when your team assumes new responsibilities? Explain.

Chapter 12. Evaluating Your Team

Check This Out

For assistance in evaluating your team, check out the “Team Effectiveness Survey” and the “Team Peer Review.” They will provide important guidelines for developing your own evaluation checklist.

Let’s Talk

1. Why is it important to evaluate your team?
2. How is your team evaluated and by whom? Do you feel the evaluation is effective?
3. What changes would you like to see in the evaluation process?
4. What is done with the results?