A NEW MODEL OF TEAM BUILDING

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In this age of rapidly changing technology, market-driven decision making, customer sophistication, and employee restlessness, leaders and managers are faced with new challenges. For corporations, small companies, educational institutions, and service organizations to become competative and to survive, new structures must be built and new skills must be mastered.

As our work settings become more complex and involve increased numbers of interpersonal interactions, individual effort has less and less impact. In order to gain control over change by increasing efficiency and effectiveness, a group effort is required. The creation of teams to accomplish tasks and effect desired change has become necessary as a process to control organizational change by a group whose members are joined together in pursuit of a common purpose.

Team building is used to improve the effectiveness of work groups by focusing on any of the following four purposes: setting goals and priorities, deciding on means and methods, examining the way in which the group works, and exploring the quality of working relationships. A cycle then develops; it begins with the awareness or perception of a problem and is followed sequentially by data collection, data sharing, diagnosis, action planning, action implementation, and behavioral evaluation. This cycle is repeated as new problems are identified.

Some work groups technically are not teams. Reilly and Jones note four essential elements of team behavior: the team members must have mutual goals or a working relationship; individuals must be committed to the group effort; and the group must be accountable to a higher level within the organization. Karp cites the example of an athletic team. A reason to work together is defined by team goals and overall purpose. Individual players have specific assignments for which each is independently responsible, but each player also must depend on other team members to complete their assignments.

Teams are differentiated from groups in that they possess the four essential elements of goals, interdependence, commitment, and accountability. From a structural perspective, new work groups may be created that will differ in terms of composition, time span, and assigned tasks. A primary objective will be to increase awareness of group process. In essence, the group members will learn how to control change externally

by experimenting internally. The team-building effort will concentrate on barriers to effective functioning and the selection of strategies to overcome these barriers.

A team member is one of a group of mutual followers. Observation of individuals functioning within teams leads to the following list of characteristics of an effective team member. Such a person:

- Understands and is committed to group goals;
- Is friendly, concerned, and interested in others;
- Acknowledges and confronts conflict openly;
- Listens to others with understanding;
- Includes others in the descision-making process;
- Recognizes and respects individual differences;
- Conributes ideas and solutions;
- Values the ideas and contributions of others;
- Recognizes and rewards team efforts;
- Encourages and appreciates comments about team performance.

These characteristics are in a sequential pattern, alternating task and relationship behaviors. This pattern of behaviors is the starting point for the development of a model of team building.

A Model of Team Building

Stage	Theme	Task Outcome	Relationship Outcome
One	Awareness	Commitment	Acceptence
Two	Conflict	Clarification	Beloning
Three	Cooperation	Involvement	Support
Four	Productivity	Achievement	Pride
Five	Separation	Recognition	Satisfaction

To summarize the model, the five themes and their respective task and relationship outcomes are as follows: awareness (commitment and acceptance); conflict (clarification and belonging); cooperation (involvement and support); productivity (achievement and pride); and separation (recognition and satisfaction). Using specific elements, objectives, and values as a starting point, the presented model of team building identifies a group of observable behaviors that characterize effective teamwork. Although team development is presented as a process in which the members are mutual followers, the context in which team building occurs requires the facilitator or team leader to have a thorough understanding of the process of leadership. The two are mutually reciprocal. Effectiveness in one improves performance outcomes as well as working relationships; effectiveness in both creates a synergistic effect.