

# **BSBFLM312 Contribute to Team Effectiveness - Resource**



**BSB30115 Certificate  
III in Business**



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# COURSE INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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This learner guide covers one unit of competency that is part of the BSB30115 Certificate III in Business Training Package:

BSBFLM312C Contribute to team effectiveness

This specifies the outcomes required to by frontline managers to contribute to the effectiveness of the work team. It involves planning with the team to meet expected outcomes, developing team cohesion, participating in and facilitating the work team, and communicating with the management of the organisation.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Frontline managers have a key role in developing efficient and effective work teams within the context of the organisation. They play a prominent part in motivating, mentoring, coaching and developing team cohesion by providing leadership for the team and forming the bridge between the management of the organisation and the team members.

At this level, work will normally be carried out within known routines, methods and procedures, and may also involve a number of complex or non-routine activities that require some discretion and judgement.

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## ABOUT ASSESSMENT

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This guide contains a range of learning activities which support you in developing your competence. To apply this knowledge to your assessment you will be required to complete the assessment tools that are included in your program. The assessment is a competency based assessment, which has no pass or fail; you are either competent or not yet competent. This means that you still are in the process of understanding and acquiring the skills and knowledge required to be marked competent.

For valid and reliable assessment of this unit, a range of assessment methods will be used to assess practical skills and knowledge.

Your assessment may be conducted through a combination of the following methods:

- Third-party reports from a supervisor
- Practical demonstration of your skills in a classroom situation
- Projects and assignments
- Portfolio of evidence
- Written or verbal questioning to assess knowledge and understanding of business policies and procedures
- Oral presentation
- A combination of these methods

The assessment tool for this unit should be completed within the specified time period following the delivery of the unit. If you feel you are not yet ready for assessment, discuss this with your trainer.

To be successful in this unit you will need to be able to join you're learning to your work place, this should be achievable for those who are employed and for those who are not yet employed and you will be required to use observations of examples that can take place in a workplace environment.

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# ELEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

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- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Contribute to team outcomes | 1.1. Consult team members to identify team purpose, roles, responsibilities, goals, plans and objectives  |
|                                | 1.2. Support team members to meet expected outcomes   |
| 2. Support team cohesion       | 2.1. Encourage team members to participate in the planning, decision making and operational aspects of the work team to their level of responsibility                                 |
|                                | 2.2. Encourage team members to take responsibility for their own work and to assist each other in undertaking required roles and responsibilities                                     |
|                                | 2.3. Provide feedback to team members to encourage, value and reward team members' efforts and contributions  |
|                                | 2.4. Identify and address issues, concerns and problems identified by team members to relevant persons as required  |
| 3. Participate in work team    | 3.1. Actively encourage and support team members to participate in team activities and communication processes and to take responsibility for their actions                           |
|                                | 3.2. Support the team to identify and resolve problems which impede its performance   |
|                                | 3.3. Utilise own contribution to work team to serve as a role model for others and enhance the organisation's image within the work team, the organisation and with clients/customers |
| 4. Communicate with management | 4.1. Maintain open communication with line manager/management at all times  |
|                                | 4.2. Communicate information from line manager/management to the team   |
|                                | 4.3. Communicate unresolved issues to line manager/management and follow-up to ensure action is taken in response to these matters  |

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# REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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This describes the essential knowledge and skills and their level required for this unit.

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## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

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- Relevant legislation from all levels of government that affects business operation, especially in regard to occupational health and safety and environmental issues, equal opportunity, industrial relations and anti-discrimination
- Organisational policies and procedures
- Organisational goals, objectives and plans at both tactical and strategic levels
- Organisational structure including organisational chart
- Learning and development options available within and through organisation
- A general understanding of the principles and techniques of:
  - Group dynamics and processes
  - Motivation
  - Planning
  - Negotiation
- Individual behaviour and difference

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## REQUIRED SKILLS

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- Ability to relate to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and physical and mental abilities
- Communication skills, including listening
- Basic training skills, including mentoring and coaching
- Planning and organising skills
- Problem solving skills
- Attributes:
  - Empathic
  - Communicative
  - Self-aware
  - Supportive
  - Trusting
  - Open
  - Flexible
  - Accommodating
  - Initiating
  - Loyal
  - Fair
  - Adaptable

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# EVIDENCE GUIDE

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The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required knowledge and skills, the range statement and the assessment guidelines for this Training Package.

## **Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit**

Evidence of the following is essential:

- Demonstrate leadership in contributing to team plans
- Lead and facilitate teamwork
- Actively communicate with management
- Manage communication within the team
- Induct new team members
- Implement performance management system
- Handle problems

## **Context of and specific resources for assessment**

Assessment must ensure:

- That this unit can be assessed in the workplace or in a closely simulated work environment
- Access by the learner and trainer to appropriate documentation and resources normally used in the workplace
- Where assessment is part of a learning experience, evidence will need to be collected over a period of time, involving both formative and summative assessment
- That examples of actions taken by candidate to contribute to team effectiveness are provided

## **Method of assessment**

A range of assessment methods should be used to assess skills and knowledge. The following examples are appropriate for this unit:

- Direct questioning combined with review of portfolios of evidence and third party workplace reports of on-the-job performance by the candidate
- Records produced from working in a team, such as:
  - Reports
  - Minutes or records of meetings
  - Work journals or diaries
  - Learning and development plans developed with team members
  - Records of actions taken to address issues raised by team members



**Guidance information for assessment**

Holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is recommended.

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## PRE-REQUISITES

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This unit must be assessed after the following pre-requisite unit:

There are no pre-requisites for this unit.

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# TOPIC 1 – CONTRIBUTE TO TEAM OUTCOMES

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## CONSULT TEAM MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY TEAM PURPOSE, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, GOALS, PLANS AND OBJECTIVES

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A team can be defined as a group of individuals grouped together to work towards the achievement of a specific goal. This means that as a team member, you will be working with other individuals in order to achieve a specific goal or set of goals.



The specific set of goals you will be working towards as a group or team are your objectives, or outcomes. These goals are often referred to as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Organisations that consult on the setting of KPIs and use achievement of them to recognise teams and their individual members are more frequently among the high achievers. Setting specific goals is the first stage of the problem solving process. In order to determine what your team is attempting to solve, you need to define and describe the problem in detail. To fully examine what the problem is you need to understand the larger picture, how the problem relates to your organisation at large.

In order for your outcomes to be effective they must be:

### **Clear**

Clarity of expression is an important aspect of defining the outcomes of a group or team. In order for all members to be fully aware of what they are working towards, they need to understand the outcomes. Therefore you should ensure that the outcomes that you write are clear enough to allow for all members of the team to fully understand the outcomes required. Try to avoid the use of overly complex terms and jargon.



Attempt to write in plain English. You may also find it useful to include measurable terms in your outcomes. This assists you in being specific rather than vague. Consider the following:

- “By the end of this meeting we will be required to have a good understanding of the problem”.

- What does 'good' mean? Who are 'we'? This is vague, and needs to be tightened up in order to be clearer.
- "By the end of this meeting, all team members should be able to define the problem, and list its causes".

This objective is much better, as it states specifically who is required to be able to meet the objective (all team members) and defines the 'good understanding' from the previous outcome (define the problem, and list its causes).

### **Concise**

In many respects clarity of expression and being concise are intimately related. If you are concise, it goes that you are also being clear. Try to keep each outcome of the meeting to one or two sentences. If your outcome is longer than this, re-read it to ensure that all the information in a specific outcome is required. You will often find when writing an outcome that you repeat a single specific outcome two or three times in different words.

Being concise also assists the readability of anything that you write. Creating a list of long outcomes, which is two pages long, is less likely to be read than creating a short concise list of outcomes. Therefore, creating a shorter, more concise list is likely to lead to more effective meetings, as everyone will be more likely to read the outcomes.

### **Documented in an agreed format**

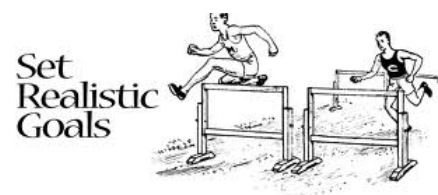
Ensure that your outcomes are documented in a manner which your organisation is happy with. Generally your outcomes should be documented in the form of an agenda, which is submitted to all the meeting participants. The format of the agenda is outlined in more detail in the following section. Bullet points are a useful means of documenting the outcomes of a meeting in a manner which is easy to take in.



### **Realistic**

You should also attempt to make any outcomes that you prepare for the meeting realistic.

This is important, because there is only a certain amount of work which you will be able to achieve in a one or two hour meeting. Do not attempt to place too high an expectation on yourself. It is better to create



outcomes which slightly underestimate what you will achieve in a meeting, than define outcomes which you couldn't possibly achieve.

Well defined goals allow our team members to know we are all heading in the same and right direction.

## **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference for a group or a team defines the group or team's reason for being – that is, why the group or team was brought into existence. It defines for the team or group members why the group was assembled, as well as providing other crucial information such as:

## **Team objectives**

The group's – objectives - what it is that is hoped to be achieved by the group? The boundaries within which the group operates. This is an important facet of the terms of reference, as it is the boundaries which define what the group may and may not consider as possible solutions to the problem. It also assists in reducing conflict between the group's recommendations and the rest of the organisation, as it states guidelines within which the group may not make changes. This is important as it ensures that the group are aware of any restrictions placed against them by management.

## **Boundaries**

Boundaries may also be set in terms of budgetary constraints. If the team is aware of what budget has been allocated to them, they have an idea of what recommendations are feasible for implementation.



## **Problem solving**

Problem solving methods to be utilised may also be referred to in the Terms of Reference set for the group or team. This will allow them to know the methods which will be used, and so will be able to prepare accordingly.

## **Completion date**

A date by which the process should be completed, so that the team are aware of any constraints in terms of time placed against them.

Terms of Reference must be agreed upon by the group or team in question. Agreement about the Terms of Reference means that they are fully aware of these important boundaries and constraints. Without agreement by all members of the team, you may find that the process becomes disrupted by some members discussing measures outside the terms of reference, and thus wasting precious time. There may also be problems whereby the team are not going to fully support any process to which they agree; therefore if they don't agree to the Terms of Reference set for them, conflict may arise during meetings.

As mentioned in the previous section the Terms of Reference set for a group or team will contain the overall objectives and outcomes which are set for the team. As with all objectives, these should be clear and concise. As well as these requirements, there are four other requirements which should be met for objectives to be seen as effective.

### **Objectives must be:**

#### **Specific**

It is important that your objectives are specific. It is not useful to write objectives which are vague, as this does not allow your group or team members to fully understand what is required of them. Use action verbs to describe exactly what is required to be done. Also avoid terms such as 'most departments' (which departments exactly?), 'several managers have comments' (who are they? what are their responsibilities?), problems have recently (when?), delays are causing some concern (how much concern?), management are not entirely happy (what does this mean? how happy are they? are they angry?). The key to writing objectives is to be specific with regards to what is required, if you aren't specific there may be room for interpretation by members, and this may result in recommendations which are not acceptable.

#### **Measurable**

As well as being specific, it is also important to include some form of measure against which the objective can be compared. The problem has already been identified, but in order to ensure that it is being addressed effectively, the team will need to be able to measure the results of their recommendations. For example:

Non-measurable objective:

- 'Improve productivity in the fabrication department'

Measurable objective:

- 'Improve productivity in the fabrication department by 15%'



Note that in the non-measurable objective, the group would not have known by how much productivity had to improve, and so the recommendations may not have been geared towards improving productivity by the level that was required.

## **Achievable**

While it is important to state what you would like to achieve in your objectives, it is a good idea not to make them too difficult to attain. If an objective seems impossible to achieve from the outset the members of your team may be less likely to achieve it. Be realistic with your expectations.



## **Time Based**

By setting time limits on your objectives, you make them more concrete. The team has an objective to work towards, and so you can ensure that they reach it. If no time limit is set you may find the group will drag out the project longer than you had anticipated.

## **Establishing Rules**

Group-based decision making is prone to problems as there are usually one or two members of the team who just aren't willing to cooperate, and this can cause conflict within the team, and generally disrupt the proceedings. It is therefore extremely important for the team to develop a set of rules and guidelines which outline the requirements for behaviour within the group setting. You may find that your organisation already has such a document. If they do not, some of the points to consider are:

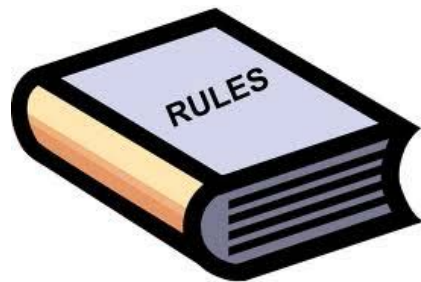
### **Rules for Effective Teams:**

- If the conversation is becoming too fast or loud, the chair has the right to slow the conversation down.
- Do not interrupt – or cut off people in mid-sentence.
- Do not make vague generalisations such as 'they do' or 'this always happens' – attempt to make statements clear and specific.
- Focus on solutions, not problems. Think forwards, not backwards.
- Do not talk about individuals who are not present in the meeting – only individuals in the meetings can solve the problem, so there is no need to talk about those outside the meeting.

- Focus on action: do not think about what others have done in the past, or are doing towards what we will do in the future.
- Do not use statements such as "I have got no choice", delay, or refuse to act. The group is here to achieve specific objectives. If you are not sure about any actions suggested, discuss it, do not just reject it out of hand.
- Do not attack, bully or insult ideas put forward. Constructive ideas are appreciated, but attacks on the individual who suggested them are not.

There is no point in denying having done something, twisting words, or outright lying. There are specific objectives to be met, so this type of action is counterproductive.

Once a set of rules and guidelines have been put in place, it is important that all team and group members are fully aware of them and agree on them. If there are any dissenting members, find out what they are not happy about, because if just a single member is not happy with the guidelines for behaviour, it may cause problems throughout the whole problem solving process.



#### Self-Test 1.1

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Specific, team, individuals**

A \_\_\_\_\_ can be defined as a group of \_\_\_\_\_ grouped together to work towards the achievement of a \_\_\_\_\_ goal.

#### Self-Test 1.2

Consultation with team members is used to identify team purpose, roles, responsibilities, goals, plans and objectives.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

### Self-Test 1.3

Which rule is not relevant to an effective team?

- Focus on action: do not think about what others have done in the past, or are doing towards what we will do in the future.
- Do not give others the chance to speak during the meeting. Make them wait until all communications have been completed and ask them to provide their comments in writing.
- Do not use statements such as "I have got no choice", delay, or refuse to act. The group is here to achieve specific objectives. If you are not sure about any actions suggested, discuss it, do not just reject it out of hand.
- Do not attack, bully or insult ideas put forward. Constructive ideas are appreciated, but attacks on the individual who suggested them are not.

## SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS TO MEET EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### SHARING INFORMATION

Good working relationships are based on openness, and being open means being willing to share information and opinions with others, no matter what that information is about. Even though you may be providing information or an opinion that the other party may not necessarily want to hear, it is important to show openness by providing all information that is required of you.



If a work colleague asked your opinion is it better to be open and tell them you do not believe their idea will work well or is it better to lie? In all cases it is much better to tell the truth rather than lie. Think about how you would feel if you were lied to. In order to provide the right information and opinions, the information must be:

Clear:

- Information is only useful if the other party can understand it. If what you write is not easily understood then your opinions or the information that you have provided are essentially useless. Clarity can come about through selecting easily understood words, being concise and most importantly understanding that even though you may understand what you write, the other party may not. Therefore always read back what you write, and think carefully about what you say. Unclear information may even be misleading and not give the intended message; it may even give an entirely different message that you did not intend to give.



Complete:

- As well as being clear, information or opinions you give also need to be complete. Be open and provide full information – do not hold information or your opinions back simply because you believe the end user does not want to hear it. It is important that the information that you provide to the end user is complete and does not omit anything, as the omitted information may be the information that is most crucial in making a decision.



Take into account the end user:

- While you may find that the information that you are providing is not really what the end user does want to hear, it is important to ensure that you take into account the way the end user will feel about the information as you provide the information. If it is not good information, be sensitive and attempt to make the information or your opinion easier for them to read, given their involvement in the task or project. If you believe their ideas are not good, give a negative opinion, but attempt to justify what you are saying by giving reasons, don't just say yes or no, as this is incomplete information.

### PROMISES MADE, PROMISES BROKEN

This may seem like common sense, but it is always important to ensure that any commitments, agreements, promises or undertakings that you make with other parties within the workplace are always kept. A broken agreement or promise can destroy an effective working relationship.

If you were to promise to get something done by a certain date, and do not – how can the other party trust you? It is extremely important that all undertakings are followed through. Whenever promises or undertakings are made, ensure that an agreed timeframe is set, consider the other work and commitments you have and determine how long the promised work will take. Then you are in a position to be able to agree on a timeframe for delivery. Once you have established a timeframe, keep this timeframe in mind, and always ensure you deliver at the specified time. If you do not, the working relationship is likely to suffer.

## Self-Test 1.4

Supporting team members means providing them with the right information so they can perform their role efficiently. In order to provide the right information it must be what? Check all the items below that fit the question.

- ☐ Clear
- ☐ Complete
- ☐ Take into account the receiver
- ☐ Written down
- ☐ Passed through another person
- ☐ Emailed

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## TOPIC 2 - SUPPORT TEAM COHESION

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ENCOURAGE TEAM MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING, DECISION MAKING AND OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE WORK TEAM AND ENCOURAGE TEAM MEMBERS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN WORK AND TO ASSIST EACH OTHER

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As corny as it sounds, your people are your most important resource. Their skills, knowledge and experience are among the most important factors that need to be considered when you are developing an effective team. Those staff members who undertake a specific work task most often are the best people to consult when developing a team, as they are the ones who are charged with doing specific roles most often and so know the function the best.



They are familiar with what can go wrong, what difficulties there can be and what needs to be done to get things right. Improvements can be made most easily when you are bringing together experts who know the process well and allowing them to work on those areas freely.

Staff must be given the authority to work on these areas, and make changes that they feel will improve the service best. Staff members who are involved and who participate in decision-making and improvement processes feel most committed to making the changes work.

Staff within an organisation will appreciate the opportunity to discuss their working environment and even personal issues such as their relationship with a fellow colleague or manager. Talking an issue through can help diffuse a negative situation before it gets out of hand. So you should devise strategies that will encourage this type of open communication among your staff members. This philosophy in your workplace should come from the top.

There should be a commitment from upper management to encourage open communication and discussion. By showing that management are willing to listen and make changes on the basis of what staff have discussed, you will encourage staff to be more open. Regular personal contact between staff and supervisors will assist in encouraging this type of communication.

As a leader you will have responsibility for ensuring the team has the physical resources that they require to complete their tasks and meet their goals, key performance indicators and objectives. They also need to build relationships with the teams within their workplace.

Establishing good relationships and maintaining those relationships in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives is achieved in a very similar way to establishing and maintaining personal relationships. Business relationships are built through being open, honest, co-operative and productive.

You will find that the people you must establish relationships with are set out by the tasks that you will be asked to perform. There is, in most cases, no ability to form relationships with those whom you work with because you will find yourself having to work with people who you normally would not choose as friends or those who are very different to you. This can cause difficulties, but creating relationships with the following four attributes will result in effective working relationships:

Openness:

Being open means that you are willing to provide all the information that is required to make a successful and effective decision. For example, if you are working with someone, but you do not provide him or her with all the information they need, they will most likely make a poor decision. In order to build a strong working relationship, all parties need to know that there is openness to share information and an openness to provide opinions without fearing retribution if those opinions are different to those held by other parties.

## Honesty:

As in all your personal relationships, without honesty it is extremely difficult to trust someone. You need to know that you can trust those you work with, and much of trust comes about from knowing that you are being told the truth. Therefore it is important to be sincere, and show that you are being honest with everything you are saying. Openness and honesty go hand-in-hand, and help to build a long lasting working relationship



## Productivity:

- In order for a working relationship to be effective, there must be a productive result. Achieving results and increasing the productivity can enhance a working relationship. For example a strong working relationship will actually achieve its aims. A weaker working relationship will most likely not achieve everything that was set out for it. Therefore it is important that you become accountable and cooperate in order to achieve these aims and objectives.

## Co-operation:

- Finally, the working relationships you have can be enhanced through increased levels of cooperation. Cooperation is essentially the willingness to help out if required, to cooperate and do what is required in order to get the job done. Co-operation can be shown by being willing to help out, and showing the other parties that you will do anything you need to do to help make the job easier.



While managing a team and/ or working in a team, you will often come across a member who is reluctant to contribute. Understanding some of the reasons for this reluctance can help you to identify how to rectify the problem. Some people are reluctant to contribute to a team because they: -

- fear they will have to do the work of others and that other team members won't contribute equally
- feel they may lack the skills or knowledge and worry about looking silly
- may have had a bad experience previously when part of a team
- have a dislike of meetings and having to listen to the different opinions expressed by others
- don't want to share success
- don't have sufficient trust in the team – particularly if working with people in higher positions and are concerned about expressing their opinions
- may lack a proper understanding of the team's goals

Where a team member is reluctant to contribute, a team leader should try and identify the cause/s of this reluctance. This may require some one on one coaching sessions with the individual, setting some rewards for involvement, provision of training to either the individual and/ or the team or even putting the individual in charge of their own team.

### Activity 2.1

Self-Reflection – How well do you work in a team? What factors cause you to limit your team involvement?

### Self-Test 2.1

Encouraging staff members involves creating good relationships with them. What four attributes should be present for creating relationships?

- ☐ Co-operation
- ☐ Openness
- ☐ Honesty
- ☐ Friendship
- ☐ Productivity
- ☐ Deceit
- ☐ Authority

### Self-Test 2.2

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Discuss, organisation, colleague, issues**

Staff within an \_\_\_\_\_ will appreciate the opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ their working environment and even personal \_\_\_\_\_ such as their relationship with a fellow \_\_\_\_\_ or manager.

## PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO TEAM MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE, VALUE AND REWARD TEAM MEMBERS' EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

### PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Feedback and advice are both important means of communication, and information transfer.

You must ensure that all communication is positive, so that employees are encouraged to communicate with managers more frequently. Negative communication often

discourages staff from letting management know what is happening on the work floor. Most employees want to know how they are doing and what they can do to improve. Employees also appreciate it when you notice good work and effort. Here are some ideas on giving positive feedback:

Feedback must always be helpful and meaningful to the end user. Try to ensure that all feedback that you provide is aimed at the actual job performance of the individual concerned.

Always look for ways in which to give people positive feedback. Do not reserve this simply for once a year. People need to know they are doing a good job as well as areas where they could improve.

Feedback that could be construed as being negative should always be framed as being constructive. Do this in private and in a very timely fashion. For change to occur people need to understand what they did that needs improvement?

Allow the staff member concerned an opportunity to talk with you about their performance and provide feedback on where they feel they are doing well and where they feel improvement is needed.

Keep it professional. Feedback does not need to concern issues with regards to personality or any other aspect that is outside of work.



Others are Experts Too - Just because you are a leader, does not mean that you have to do everything. You should draw on the expertise of others in order to enhance your working relationships. In order to achieve this you need to begin by identifying the expertise that the other parties hold. What are they good at? What special skills do they have? What experiences have they had which you have not?

Once you have identified the skills, recognise them by letting them know that you would like to be able to use their expertise. You may be able to use their skills to plan certain work activities, or to provide you with support and further information in certain areas. Whatever the case, ask whether they are interested and state that you believe their skills, experience and / or qualifications are suited to the task. Feedback is a valuable tool when used correctly to improve performance.

### Self-Test 2.3

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

Information, communication, advice

Feedback and \_\_\_\_\_ are both important means of \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ transfer.

### Self-Test 2.4

Why is feedback important to staff members?

- Because it helps them do their jobs better
- Because they know what to do
- Because they know how to do it
- It builds stronger teams

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## TOPIC 3 - PARTICIPATE IN WORK TEAM

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### ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN TEAM ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION PROCESSES AND TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS

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As a team facilitator or team leader, your actions will have a lot to do with the team's ultimate success or failure. I'm not taking about this in the sense of a manager controlling his people, but as a leader influencing his people. As a leader, you can expect that your team members will watch your actions and to a large part copy them. If your actions show that you are committed to the team and its success, than they will be much more likely to commit themselves to the team's success. On the other hand, if they see that you aren't serious about putting your effort into the team's success, they won't have much reason to put their best effort into it either.



### ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE TEAM MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE

A team is only a team when everyone participates. Can you imagine an AFL or Rugby

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team going on the field to play, but three of the players decide that they'll sit out the first half of the game? That would be disastrous for the team. Not only would the other team have a serious advantage, but the team wouldn't have enough players to cover the entire field.

It's the same with a work team in your company. Without the active participation of every team member, there's no way that you can count on accomplishing your goals and objectives. Granted, there will be specific tasks that require the skills of particular team members, while essentially leaving other members out of those tasks. However, the vast majority of team activities will require the time and energy of all team members. The team has been created with the specific members it contains, for the express purpose of being able to bring that set of skills together.

While scheduling conflicts and other work related responsibilities may keep a team member away from a team activity from time to time, watch out for team members who are notoriously absent way too often. These members aren't committed to the team.

Every team member is equally responsible for the actions and results of the team. This is different than a typical management structure, where the department manager is responsible for the actions and results of his or her department. With a team, the whole team receives the credit for success and the whole team receives the blame for failure. Your team members need to understand this, that their performance or lack thereof is going to reflect directly on themselves.

Communication between team members is critical. That's why I recommended having a work area that belongs to the team, where the team can come together and where team information can be collected. There are also a number of ways that you can use modern technology to foster team communications:



- E-mail – Okay, this one is a little obvious. Create an e-mail list or group for the team, so that correspondence and reports that need to go out to all team members can be distributed easily
- Off-Site, Online Storage – There are a number of web sites online which offer free limited storage for file storage. These files can be shared between team members. Check with your company's policies before doing this, as some companies don't allow it. Also check with your company's IT department, to see if they can set something like this up on your company's system
- Skype – This is a great tool for communicating when part of your team is in another location or out of town on a trip. You can audio or video conference a number of people together



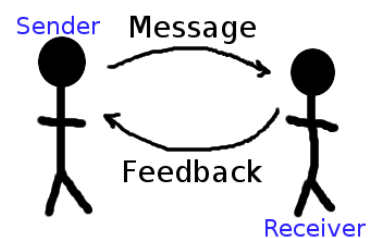
- Google Docs and Microsoft 365 – Part of Google and Microsoft’s many online tools. This allows you to share word processing documents, spread sheets, presentations, graphics and forms through the Internet
- Text Messaging – Again, this one’s a little bit obvious. However, it’s a great way of letting the whole team know of meeting times and places, or changes to such

All these are only tools for fostering the exchange of information. However, that doesn’t mean that they create communication or that the use of them will guarantee communication. For communication to occur, the speaker has to insure that the listener understands what they said.



Often, we think we communicate, without actually communicating. What that means is that we go through the motions of communication, assuming that the recipient actually got the message we were trying to send. There are a number of potential problems with this, though. First of all, you may not have been clear. Secondly, they may not have understood. Thirdly, they might not have been listening, but instead were distracted by something else.

You haven’t succeeded in communicating until you are sure that the recipient received the message that you were trying to send. I’m not talking about it getting to their inbox; I’m talking about it getting into their brain the way you intended it to. To insure this, it is useful to question the recipient, insuring that they truly understood your message.



### Self-Test 3.1

What types of modern technology can be used to foster communication in a team environment?

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Off site – online storage
- ☐ Skype
- ☐ Google Docs
- ☐ Text messages
- ☐ All the above

### Self-Test 3.2

What communication methods would usually be used by the following people? Match the pairs.

1. Managers	A. Email
2. Customers	B. Staff meetings
3. Team leaders	C. Verbal, face-to-face

## SUPPORT THE TEAM TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS WHICH IMPEDE ITS PERFORMANCE AND IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS ISSUES, CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY TEAM MEMBERS TO RELEVANT PERSONS AS REQUIRED

### SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

While your team is probably involved in solving some problem or need for the company, brainstorming and analysing various options to find a solution to a specific need, it needs to have a self-testing feature as well, to insure that it operates in the most efficient way possible.



Every team is going to run into problems which impede their ability to complete what it is they set out to do. Some of those problems will be small and simple in nature, while others will be major hurdles to overcome. How you confront those problems as a team can have a great impact on your performance, especially your effectiveness as a team.

Before getting into the “how” of dealing with problems, let me take a moment to mention something. While problems can be seen as something destructive, they can also be the greatest boon to creating team cohesiveness. When people go through a problem together, supporting each other, it brings them incredibly close together. That’s why soldiers, who have gone to war together, generally form incredibly strong, lifelong friendships, even crossing racial, cultural, religious and socioeconomic boundaries.

So, when your team is faced with problems, don’t look at it as a negative; instead, look at it as a team building opportunity. While you may all feel the pressure going through the problem; as long as you go through it together, you’ll come out stronger on the other side

### Self-Test 3.3

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

Identifying, address, resolving

Supporting a team means \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ problems and \_\_\_\_\_ issues and concerns when required.

### Self-Test 3.4

When your team is faced with problems, don't look at it as a negative; instead, look at it as a team building opportunity. This statement is true in what situations?

- ☐ All the time
- ☐ When the problems are simple
- ☐ When the problems are not based on conflicting personalities
- ☐ When the problems are sales based only

## UTILISE OWN CONTRIBUTION TO WORK TEAM TO SERVE AS A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHERS AND ENHANCE THE ORGANISATION'S IMAGE WITHIN THE WORK TEAM, THE ORGANISATION AND WITH CLIENTS/CUSTOMERS

### LEAD BY EXAMPLE



Being a leader doesn't mean that you can't get your hands dirty; in fact, you should get your hands dirty. Get right in there with the rest of the team and get to work. That's one of the signs of a good leader; that they are willing to lead by example. It's also a sign of a good team facilitator; that they are willing to participate in the work.

To lead, you've got to show that you know what you're talking about. Nobody wants to serve as part of a team, with a team leader that doesn't have any idea of what's going on.

### TEAM LEADER

The leader of the team is responsible for guiding the team to achieve its purpose. The leader will ensure that the environment allows each team member to fulfil his or her responsibilities.

Where necessary, the team leader is responsible for obtaining the resources necessary to achieve the team's purpose. The team leader is not always a manager or supervisor; however, they are required to lead.



To guide the team effectively, the leader needs to keep balance, i.e. they need to allow the team to make decisions but also maintain team focus.

Some of the roles of the team leader include:

- Coordinating team meetings
- Recognising and rewarding accomplishments
- Keeping the team focused
- Reminding the team of how their work fits within the organisation's goals and objectives
- Planning
- Liaising with others regarding the team's progress

The leader's role is a difficult one and as such it will require someone who is confident and able to keep the team focused.<sup>1</sup>



### Activity 3.1

Research some case studies about leadership on the internet. You might start with the following sites and follow up with more specific searches that relate to your industry or issues in your workplace.

<http://patimes.org/practical-case-studies-in-management-and-leadership-part-ii/>

[http://www.cfnps.org/research\\_case\\_studies.aspx?Cid=5](http://www.cfnps.org/research_case_studies.aspx?Cid=5)

### Self-Test 3.5

Some of the roles of the team leader include (Select all that apply):

- Coordinating team meetings
- Nagging people frequently
- Recognising and rewarding accomplishments
- Keeping the team focused
- Reminding people of their lowly position
- Reminding the team of how their work fits within the organisation's goals and objectives
- Telling people what to do and how to do it all the time
- Planning
- Liaising with others regarding the team's progress
- All the above

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.safework.com.au/pdfsamples/BSBFLM312C.pdf>

### Self-Test 3.6

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Show, idea, serve**

To lead, you've got to show that you know what you're talking about. Nobody wants to serve as part of a team, with a team leader that doesn't have any idea of what's going on.

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## TOPIC 4 - COMMUNICATE WITH MANAGEMENT

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### MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH LINE MANAGER/MANAGEMENT AT ALL TIMES

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Although communication between management and employees is a two-way street, the responsibility for ensuring a high level of quality communication clearly rests with management. Every manager within the organisation from top to bottom owns a piece of this responsibility. An organisation that pays little to no attention to how well it communicates with its employees, can suffer slumps in productivity and employee satisfaction, that can/will ultimately lead to customer dissatisfaction.

#### **Good Communication**

Good and open communication between management and employees is essential to the success of the organisation, and starts from the top down. Senior managers are responsible for setting the tone and atmosphere of the overall work environment. Middle and junior managers as team leaders, must strive to foster and encourage candid and open communication at all levels. Also they should keep in mind that communication involves more than just conversation, memos, bulletins, and email. Management's overall attitude in the work place speaks volumes about its willingness to participate in open and honest dialogue with the workers. Approachable managers are far more likely to keep lines of communication open than that guy or gal who sits in the office with the door half-closed.

In situations where communication between management and the employee body has slipped to levels demanding attention, it becomes the job of management to find a cure. But don't panic. Improving communication is not rocket science or brain surgery. There are easy solutions, and affective methods of improving management/employee communication gaps, that won't cost an arm and a leg, and you don't need to bring in a

team of consultants. The cure however will require sincere and genuine concern on the part of management.<sup>2</sup>

Let's start with the most simplistic approach to the problem. What do you do when your spouse, brother, or friend, has been giving you the silent treatment for two days, and you don't know why? You simply approach the person and initiate communication by asking, "What's wrong, did I do something to offend you"? Employees are people too! So why not approach them as you would a friend whom you haven't had the best communication with for two days? If you do however, it is extremely critical that you listen; I said, "LISTEN" to what he/she has to say. Show concern, and commit to take action if appropriate. Above all, don't make any promises you don't fully intend to keep.

Too often managers are reluctant to approach employees and initiate open dialogue, because they are afraid of what they might hear from the person. As long as he/she is not complaining why open a can of worms. RIGHT? Wrong! If employees perceive the lines of communication to be closed or clogged, trouble is not far off. So talk to them before the other shoe drops. This method of the manager making the first move can be applied in one-on-one situations or with the entire team.

Another approach to improving communication can be found in after-hours group activities. No, I'm not suggesting we all meet at Joe's bar tonight. If you're looking to correct a potential problem, Joe's bar is not the answer or place. However an organized game of softball after work against a sister firm or rival office, can do wonders for communication in the work place. It can be especially beneficial if the managers take a back seat to the employees, and allow them to run the teams. Remember, you have a greater purpose than softball in mind. So go ahead and mingle with subordinates in your group as well as employees from other departments. Initiate conversation, and let the employees pick the subject. Week-end/holiday company picnics can work too.

## **What to do?**

These are some very simple approaches that manager can employ when they feel the communication gap widening. If done with honest sincerity, employees will get that, and they will respond. There is however a third method I'd like to share, as it is my favorite. It's my favorite because I fully believe avoidance is the best solution to any problem. And this approach when properly implemented will eliminate most communication concerns between management and the employees.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.insidebusiness360.com/index.php/improving-communication-between-management-and-employees-3-24932/>

## MANAGING BY OBJECTIVES

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Although most managers are aware of and understand the principles of managing by objectives (MBO) given to us by Dr. Peter Drucker over a half century ago, few managers actually apply the principles of MBO in their daily activities. I can assure you from personal experiences, that organisations that embrace the concepts taught by Dr. Drucker, don't have nearly as many management/employee communication gaps.

The principles of MBO, requires that managers manage employee performance via a system of mutually agreed on objectives, measurements and feedback. With feedback as a key component of the process, managers are forced to have regular sessions with employees where they discuss employee performance and results. This meeting can also include discussion on other job related subjects.

The work environment created by a strong MBO program will automatically foster a climate of open discussion thereby eliminating most of the concerns managers must face when management isn't properly communicating with the team.

Organisations suffering from a lack of affective top-down communication deprive themselves of the benefits associated with bottom-up feedback. Talk to them!<sup>3</sup>

### MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH MANAGEMENT

Frontline managers are in a unique position when it comes to the exchange of information within an organisation. They must be proficient in both upward communication with senior management and downward communication with team members or other subordinates. This proficiency includes having a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the organisation. This means that frontline managers must keep their finger of the “pulse” or essence of the organisation’s vision.

Recall that the workplace atmosphere can be very tense or calm and relaxed. This tension level has a lot to do with how upper management is perceived by the rank and file workers in the organisation. Positive environments are ones where the behaviour is appropriate, and the lines of communication are open, direct, and consistent.



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.insidebusiness360.com/index.php/improving-communication-between-management-and-employees-3-24932/>



Open communications comes about more than anything from personal contact and relationship building. While not every manager in the company is going to be your best friend, you do need a good business relationship with as many of them as possible.

What constitutes a good business relationship? More than anything it is a relationship where you respect one another. That mutual respect gives a comfort level to both parties in the relationship and insures that both parties feel as if they will be heard by the other. Never forget that hearing and understanding aren't the same thing. To truly hear what someone is saying, you need to understand it as well.

While it may be seen by some as a waste of time, the few minutes you spend talking to various front line managers is probably the most effective way you have of insuring that your team is plugged into the activities of the company, and of insuring that you receive the information that you need.

Formal communications channels tend to do more to block information flow than to insure it. Even when they don't block communications, they tend to muddy the water, reducing information flow and also reducing the number of details that are passed along.

Let's take a quality problem with an incoming part, as an example. If that part gets past the incoming QA inspection, the first time that anyone will be aware of it is when they try and install those parts in the product. At that point, the situation instantly becomes critical, because there may not be any other parts to use. If we depend upon a formal report of the problem, the only information that is going to be passed on to the quality improvement team or the production problems team would be sketchy at best. However, if the leaders of those teams have a direct relationship with that line supervisor, the first communication will be a phone call, not a form. The phone call will convey more information and more detailed information than the form.

While there may still need to be a formal communication system in place, to guarantee that such problems are documented and acted upon, that doesn't solve the problem. The true problem resolution begins when the team leader goes to the production floor and talks to the front line supervisor.

Maintaining open communications also requires trust. It is important that the front line supervisor knows that talking

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to you, as a team leader, about the problem, will bring about some sort of action. If you have a history of not acting upon those contacts, there won't be any trust, impeding communications. We must realize that there are always extenuating circumstances that crop up, impeding prompt problem resolutions in all cases. That's a fact of life. How we deal with those delays is the important part.

Part of maintaining open communications is insuring that those extenuating circumstances are explained to the person who brought the problem to your attention. Just keeping them informed about where you are in the process will help foster that sense of trust, insuring that open communications are maintained.

#### Self-Test 4.1

Middle Managers must be proficient in both upward communication with senior management and downward communication with team members or other subordinates.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

#### Self-Test 4.2

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

Managers, work, tone, atmosphere

Senior managers are responsible for setting the tone and atmosphere of the overall work environment.

## COMMUNICATE INFORMATION FROM LINE MANAGER/MANAGEMENT TO THE TEAM

As the team leader or facilitator, you will be management's main point of contact to bring information, especially problem notices, to your team. When a problem comes up that your team needs to deal with, they will contact you. Then it's up to you to communicate that problem information to your team.

Let me make an important point here, if you depend upon your mind to remember everything, you're asking for trouble. If it's not written down, it doesn't exist. Any time somebody tells me important information, especially information that requires some action on my part, I write it down. That way, it doesn't get forgotten.



You need one place where you write all that information down. That can be a day planner, notebook, tablet computer, Palm, or the PIM (personal information manager) on your phone. Wherever it is, it must be a place where you can easily record the information you need in an organized manner and just as easily retrieve that information. It doesn't do any good to write yourself notes, if you don't look at them. One last point, you have to have some form of note-taking that you will always have with you; in the office, at home, and on the golf course. Otherwise, you'll end up making notes on a napkin in the restaurant. Those types of notes often get thrown away.

When you receive information from line managers, you want to make sure that you fully understand the information and that you have all the information there is to get. Depending upon the type of team you are leading, that may mean taking pictures (digital cameras are great for gathering information), taking material samples, gathering testimony from involved parties and receiving printed reports. Don't just accept the information if you're not sure of what it means. Ask questions.

Once you get back to the team, you'll need to convey the full essence of what you've received to the team. It is often best to do this as soon as possible, as to avoid forgetting, losing or confusing the information. If you receive two or more reports, ensure you understand them before giving them to the team, even give them one at a time so they don't get confused.

Again, clarity is the issue. You need to be sure that you understand it, so that you can convey the information clearly. Then, you need to be sure that you convey the information to your team in such a way as to insure that they understand what you are telling them.

The true test in how well you gather and convey this information is in how often your team members need to go back to the front line manager, seeking clarification. While there is nothing wrong with them doing that, it is not an efficient way of operating.

#### Self-Test 4.3

How can you ensure you remember information that has been given to you that must be relayed to others?

- ☐ Write it down
- ☐ Try to remember it
- ☐ Tell someone else to remind you
- ☐ All the above

## COMMUNICATE UNRESOLVED ISSUES TO LINE MANAGER/MANAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP TO ENSURE ACTION IS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THESE MATTERS

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As your team works on the various issues that have been brought to you by the front line managers, you'll find that some issues are resolved quickly and others take more time. You'll also encounter that the "answer" to issues will be incredibly varied. In some cases, it will require procedural changes.

In others, it will be product changes. Still others will require developing improvements to the way the company does business. Finally, there will be those which you have to take back to the front line manager, for them to take action on.

Regardless of the type of issue, the status of that issue, or the resolution of that issue, you need to communicate your status to the front line managers. This is especially true of issues that are longer term problems, requiring several steps to resolve. Lack of communication makes the line manager think that you are ignoring his issue. However, regular status reports will assure him that his problem is not forgotten.



Obviously, some problems carry a higher priority than others and will be worked on sooner. However, that shouldn't mean that the lower priority problems are just ignored or aren't dealt with. They too need to be dealt with, and done so in a reasonable amount of time.

One way to ensure that lower priority items are dealt with is to establish a policy for your team, where problems are prioritized and deadlines given based upon those priorities; something like:

- Priority A problems – will be dealt with in a day
- Priority B problems – will be dealt with within three days
- Priority C problems – will be dealt with within 10 days



While the priority A and B problems will get dealt with faster, the priority C problems will still get dealt with. To insure this, they will be scheduled on the team's calendar, based upon their due date. Even if too many high priority problems come along, delaying the completion of the priority C problem, it stays on the calendar, being pushed to the forefront by its date.

Never let poor communications between your team and the line managers become the cause of an issue not being dealt with. If you need to kick the problem back to the line manager, be sure to contact him directly to inform him; don't just put it on a status report. He's busy too, and may not read the entire status report.

Be especially sure that issues which require that the line manager provide further information or support to your team are expressed clearly. All too often, a problem sits around, not being dealt with, because a team thinks that the manager has to do something and the manager is thinking that the team has to do something. In those cases, just like the cases above, it's not enough to put the issue on a report, personal contact, to convey the need is called for.

Communicate unresolved issues, concerns and problems related to the team/team members raised by line managers/management to the team and ensure follow-up to action is taken

The final category of issues that needs to be communicated is that of issues between management and your team. You may have situations where a team member has been unresponsive to a line manager's needs, or the line manager thinks that the team member has been unresponsive.

You might also have situations where there was a heated disagreement between a line manager and one of your team members. Many people have trouble accepting the idea that they may be part of the problem. Therefore, in those cases, they tend to react rather negatively.

These sorts of problems are part and parcel of any company. There are always issues between people, especially when you are dealing with problems. Many people feel a great need to protect themselves and their departments from any and all attack. Therefore, they'll follow the sage advice that "the best defence is a good offense."



When these issues arise between your team or a team member and a member of management, you must switch over into your detective mode, in order to discover the root of the problem. I'll guarantee you, the two stories that you receive from the two parties will be different. In fact, they may be so different, that you can't tell they are talking about the same event.

Your detective work isn't so much for the purpose of laying blame, but of solving the problem. That means solving whatever issue there was between the two individuals, and also solving the problem of how that issue came up in the first place.



Of the two, resolving the issue between the two is the more urgent. Regardless of what happened, you need resolution. That may mean dealing with bruised feelings; but in fact, the true thing you have to deal with is whatever brought them together to have the disagreement in the first place. That problem has probably not yet been resolved.

Even though the first problem to be dealt with is the issue that caused the disagreement, that's not the most important to deal with. It's just first to ensure that people can get back to their jobs. However, dealing with whatever opened the door to that problem is more important, because closing that door can help insure that the problem doesn't arise again, with all its wasted time and effort.



Regardless of how you have to resolve the issue, you must also communicate the resolution. A resolution that hasn't been communicated isn't a resolution, it's just a game. A game in hiding from the necessity of dealing with the people and the problem. By dealing with them, you can help insure that the same sort of problem doesn't happen again.

An important part of the problem solving process is to generate a range of solutions. One of the most common group problem solving methods is brain storming where all members are asked to contribute a solution without discussion or any criticism. The goal is to generate as many different solutions as possible. The group then looks at combining and ranking these divergent solutions in order to refine their final answer.

## Activity

Use the internet to find two other problem solving techniques that would be useful to you. You might like to look at situational analysis, quality circles, SWOT analysis and the Delphi Method.

#### Self-Test 4.4

Who should you report unresolved issues to?

- ☐ Line Manager/Management
- ☐ Other team members
- ☐ No-one

#### Self-Test 4.5

Regardless of how you have to resolve the issue, you must also communicate the resolution. A resolution that hasn't been communicated isn't a resolution, it's just a game. Is this answer false or true?

- ☐ False
- ☐ True

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## SUMMARY

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In the workplace the team model is used simply because it has proved to be extremely effective and productive. We know this from workplace experience throughout the world.

Working in a team gives you the opportunity to:

- Share a range of ideas and opinions
- Improve your communication skills
- Learn from your peers
- Share a sense of responsibility for decision making and work projects
- Meet new people and experience a sense of belonging

It is also true that when people work together they are happier and more productive. They will also work harder to reach difficult targets, and will be proud of what they achieve together. Teamwork also gives people the opportunity to share their ideas on:

- How the work should be done
- What changes should be made
- How responsibilities should be allocated
- Who needs extra recognition?
- Who needs extra help?

When teams participate actively, more ideas are contributed and work is shared more effectively. Active participation involves:

- Making suggestions, even when you think other members of the group know more about the subject than you do
- Getting involved in decision making and organisation, and working hard on your allocated task
- Allowing other people's contributions to be heard.

You are not actively participating if you are:

- Withdrawing from the group
- Sitting quietly and letting others do the work
- Being aggressive or hostile
- Wanting to do all of the talking and not giving others a turn
- Turning other people's contributions into a joke.

It is important that you avoid these kinds of behaviour and discourage them in others. You can influence a group to accept your ideas without being forceful. Contributing to the group in a positive and supportive way can do this. You can:

- Put forward your ideas as open questions – “What about if we...”
- Show empathy with other team members – “I understand why you feel like that but...”
- Actively listen to other group member’s ideas and points of view

Now that you have completed this unit, you should have the skills and knowledge to contribute to the effectiveness of the work team.

If you have any questions about this resource please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.

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## REFERENCES

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<http://www.safework.com.au/pdfsamples/BSBFLM312C.pdf>

<http://www.insidebusiness360.com/index.php/improving-communication-between-management-and-employees-3-24932/>