Building Effective Work Teams
Fall Quarter 2018
Course Syllabus

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Course Overview. The purpose of this course is to equip you with tools to build and maintain effective work teams. You will learn how to design teams characterized by (a) strong and shared commitment to a compelling purpose, (b) collective buy-in to a set of concrete performance objectives, (c) general adherence to appropriate work rules and roles, (d) a robust and healthy team culture, and (e) mutual interpersonal trust, all of which are vital to extraordinary team performance. The principles we will cover are applicable whenever you must assemble a team to accomplish an objective.

The breadth of this course is immense relative to the amount of time we have together. Thus, our pace will be brisk. The aim is to introduce you to key concepts and ways to apply those concepts that you can further assimilate and build upon as you develop your core teams and the other teams in your life that you need to achieve goals.

Course Materials. Course articles and cases will be available via Canvas. You will receive directions for accessing them. Additional materials will be distributed in class.

Class Format. Sessions will involve various combinations of lectures, participant presentations, concept and case discussions, and experiential exercises. The course is designed as a workshop. Everyone is expected to actively and thoughtfully participate.

Course Requirements. Course credit will be determined by performance as follows:

Participation: You must attend each course session fully prepared to engage others in various cooperative learning activities. Participation points will be gained according to the quality of your contributions. Pre-reading and thinking (e.g., attempting to answer study questions) are essential for high-quality participation.

“Who Are We?” Exercise Team Presentation: Each team is expected to create a presentation for the “Who are we?” exercise. The presentation is to be delivered during our first class session. Directions will be available electronically.

Team Contract: Each team is expected to develop and submit a team contract. More information on this requirement will be provided when we meet.
Session Overview
We will examine the incredible benefits of effective teamwork and consider why teamwork effectiveness can be so difficult to attain. We will begin to explore the teambuilding or team development process, because teamwork effectiveness crucially hinges on teambuilding. The concepts of team identity and team identification will be highlighted.

Required Pre-Readings (listed in alpha order)
• Colvin, “Why dream teams fail”
• Janis, “Groupthink” (Psychology Today classic!)
• Soll, Milkman, & Payne, “Outsmart your own biases”

General Study Questions
1. What do you generally like best about working in teams? What do you think you will like best about working in your core team? Overall, what are the main benefits of teamwork?
2. What do you generally like least about working in teams? What concerns you most about working in your core team? Overall, what are the main drawbacks of teamwork?

Exercise
1. “Who are we?” Exercise: Prepare to work intensively with your teammates prior to the course. The deliverable is due during our first class session. Directions will be available via Canvas.
2. Teamwork exercise (materials will be distributed in class)
Session 2  Keystones of Effective Teamwork

Session Overview
We will consider how to identify and develop fundamental building blocks of teamwork effectiveness. The Team Performance Model will be introduced to achieve this objective. We will explore how to use the Model to create team goals, processes, and resources. Team decision-making will be featured.

Required Pre-Readings (listed in alpha order)
• Duhigg, “What Google learned in its quest to build the perfect team”
• Garvin & Roberto, “What you don’t know about making decisions”
• Katzenbach & Smith, “The discipline of teams…” (HBR classic!)

Case and Case Questions
• The Satera Team at Imatron Systems, Inc.

Case Questions
1. Who are the Satera Team’s stakeholders, and what do they expect of the team?
2. What team process breakdowns are apparent, and what are the root causes of the breakdowns?
3. What can Pinto do now to get the team on track?
4. What could Pinto have done differently at team inception to avoid the breakdowns?

Exercise
• Teamwork exercise (materials will be distributed in class)
Session Overview
We will continue to consider how to identify and develop fundamental building blocks of teamwork effectiveness, based on the Team Performance Model. Team performance improvement processes will be featured. We will also explore how to create a team contract that will enable your team to achieve its goals.

Required Pre-Readings (listed in alpha order)
- Darling et al., “Learning in the thick of it”
- Halvorson, “Get your team to do what it says it's going to do”
- Toegel & Barsoux, “How to preempt team conflict”

Case and Case Questions
- Harry and Learning Team 28

Case Questions
1. Who are Team 28’s stakeholders? What do they expect of the team?
2. What team process breakdowns are apparent, and what are the root causes of the breakdowns?
3. What can Team 28 do now to get on track?
4. What could team members have done differently at team inception to avoid the breakdowns?

Exercises
1. Teamwork exercise (directions will be distributed in class)
2. Team Contract: Organizing for Collective Effectiveness Exercise (directions will be distributed via Canvas, due date TBA)