

Teamwork - What is it?

Summary

Even if you work primarily on your own, we still depend partially on a larger network of individuals who can impact our success. Teams are regularly gathered in the workplace for creativity and problem-solving activities and to process tasks efficiently, assigning team members to roles in which they can stand out. Morale, commitment, and a willingness to get along are crucial values for teams, but it all starts with communication. A team must have a clear objective, plan, and assignment of roles and responsibilities. Teams also benefit from diversity as they pool individual knowledge, skills, and experiences to expand their expertise and capabilities. Knowing the elements for effective teamwork can help you be a successful, productive member of a high-performance team in any environment.

Primary Workplace Readiness Skill

Teamwork

Secondary Workplace Readiness Skills

- Respect for Diversity
- Conflict Resolution
- Efficiency and Productivity
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Listening and Speaking

Vocabulary

- collaborate
- team
- teamwork
- trait
- Tuckman Model
- shared responsibility
- delegate
- brainstorming
- roles
- expectations

Overview

What is teamwork? *Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people (a team) in order to achieve a goal.*

The definition of teamwork leads to the consideration of just what is a “team?”

A team is defined as a group of people who work together collaboratively to attain a common goal and who hold themselves accountable for the team’s accomplishments.

So a team is not just a group of people! For a team to successfully achieve a goal, each member of the team must exhibit certain traits or qualities. While there are numerous lists of traits of team members, all of them include:

Team members have:

- a common purpose and clear goals
- the necessary skills and resources
- trust in each other.

Each team member is willing to:

- share information
- learn from other team members
- support the other team members
- work through conflict
- accept help from other members of the team.

Once a team has been formed and is functioning, everyone benefits. Some of those benefits are:

- increased creativity
- increased efficiency and productivity
- better communication
- job satisfaction.

One of the most widely accepted models describing how a team develops and functions was the work of Dr. Bruce W. Tuckman. His model defines the stages a group of people move through as they go from “newly formed” to a “high-performance” team. It was first published in 1965 in the *Psychological Bulletin* as a short article entitled “*Developmental Sequence in Small Groups*.” There are many papers, articles, and videos explaining the Tuckman Model. In 2017, it was the subject of a presentation at the *Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)* conference. A brief description of the presentation and a link to the video is provided below:

The Must-Have Method to Build a High Performing Team Published on Apr 25, 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMh4W2rzIYY>

Melissa Lamson presents at PCMA 2017. She speaks about how to engage, motivate, and create high performing global teams. The basis for her talk is the Tuckman model.

(Note: The *Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)* is a non-profit professional organization.)

Context Questions

- What is your experience of participating as a member of a team?
- Do you participate in a team now?
- What are your favorite aspects of working with a team?
- What kind of team member are you?
- Do you have the qualities listed above?
- How could you improve your teamwork skills?

Guidelines

The next time you're asked to join a team, keep all the qualities of a good team member in mind and remember all the benefits of teamwork. Complete the *What Kind of Team Member Am I?* exercise and the *What I Learned About the Tuckman Model* exercise.

Resources:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtXKQOtNWPg>

The Power of Teamwork

This is a video montage of 3 ads from an advertising campaign for traveling in groups by riding the bus; but it illustrates the power of teamwork. The “stars” of the three segments are penguins, ants, and crabs!

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9LSopkLbpw>

How to keep your team motivated

Simple tools can increase the engagement of your team, increase productivity and avoid the ‘slacker effect.’ Professor Leigh Thompson (Kellogg School of Management) offers four tips to motivate your team and produce better results.

3. U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) – Office of Disability Employment Policy: *Curriculum on Soft Skills ... Skills to Pay the Bills*

- a. <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

See Soft Skill #3: Teamwork

The activities in this section seek to teach participants about the importance of teamwork to workplace success and the specific role each individual on a team may play. Participants will learn about positive teamwork behavior and discover how their own conduct can impact others on a team. (Click on *Download Soft Skill #3: Teamwork*)

- b. <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/SoftSkills-videos.htm>

Watch the video: *Soft Skill #3: Teamwork*

4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7tOALvmv_Q

Tuckman Model on Team Development

5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_gptRmpFyk

The stages of team development: Kids Form a Team

6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QbXc6E08H4>

Tuckman Model: understanding the stages of team formation

7. http://cte-wrs.org/Media/S3_Teamwork/story.html

Personal Qualities and People Skills – Standard Three: Teamwork

Teams – Teamwork – And Me!

This is a journaling exercise using the context questions from the activity. Answer each question.

Question	Your Response
1. Have you participated on a team? If “yes,” describe the team and its goal. If “no,” why not?	
2. Do you participate in a team now? Describe the team and its goals.	
3. Do you (or would you) enjoy working on a team? Explain why or why not.	
4. What kind of team member are you? Describe how you approach (or would approach) being a member of a team.	
5. Do you possess the traits listed? Look at each of the traits listed in the activity <i>Overview</i> and explain why you think you do or do not possess the trait.	
6. How could you improve your teamwork skills? Explain how you could improve on any of the traits of a team member.	

What I Learned About the Tuckman Model	
View one (or more) of the videos that present the Tuckman Model. In your own words, describe what occurs during each stage.	
STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1. FORMING	
2. NORMING	
3. STORMING	
4. PERFORMING	