

Collaboration Basics

When and How to Work as a Team

Highlights

Acadia Insurance, Strategic Management Team
May 29, 2014, Wentworth by the Sea
By Craig Freshley, Good Group Decisions

When to collaborate

- **When you seek wider expertise**
 - To make a better decision
 - To avoid unintended consequences
- **When you seek break-through innovation**
 - And you have the will and capacity to support it
- **When you want buy-in to the solution**
 - To set the stage for implementation
- **When the projected benefits outweigh the projected costs**
 - Quantify potential benefits, including reduced waste
 - Quantify projected process costs and opportunity costs
- **When you have the skills and capacity to do it right**
 - Doing it wrong can be very costly

The team that does NOT work well together

- No one knows what they are supposed to be doing
- No one cares about what we are supposed to be doing
- Some team members care only about themselves
- Some team members are not really sure if they are part of the team
- Some team members don't want to be part of the team
- The team leader doesn't really want to be the leader
- Doesn't know how to be a leader
- But won't let anyone else be the leader

Group Ideas - Most Important Ingredients for Good Teamwork

- **Clear outcomes**
 - Own the outcome
 - Clear goals and expected outcomes – IIII
 - Vision
- **Honesty and Transparency**
 - Honest communication

- Honesty
- Transparency
- Sharing interests
- No hidden agendas
- Caution about “reckless honesty”
- **Open mindedness**
 - Tolerance for change
 - Diversity of thought
 - Open to ideas
 - Respect
 - Listening
- **Supportive Relationships**
 - Free to take risks
 - Personal relationships
 - Know each others’ strengths and weaknesses
 - Knowing their perspectives
 - Supportive
 - Can be more critical of each other
 - Trust
 - Part of the culture
 - Be reliable
 - Repeated positive experience
 - Honesty
 - Faith in each others
 - Same outcome
- **Strong leadership**
 - Set the tone
 - Engaged
 - Push the group forward
 - Keep focused
 - Break the tie
 - Listening for the unsaid
 - See all views – open up to all ideas
 - Team interest first
 - Keeps time – sets the pace
- **Fun**
 - Laughter and humor are okay
 - Helps us get to know each other

Craig’s Ideas - Most Important Ingredients for Good Teamwork

- **Shared vision**
 - Common cause
 - A gift culture of coaching and mentoring

- A culture of mutual investment rather than individual interests
- **Leaders: launch well then stand by**
 - It's not magic, it's careful planning and preparation
 - Size matters, and smaller is better
 - Clarify roles – ambiguity kills productivity
 - Structure sets you free
 - Few things help an individual more than to let him know that you trust him
 - A horse runs best when loose in the harness
- **Proximity matters**
 - Face-to-face meetings are often worth it
 - Informal spaces and times foster collaboration
 - Team members getting to know each other fosters collaboration
- **Encourage constructive conflict**
 - Don't ignore it or avoid it or use it to assign blame
 - Disagreements about the work are okay
 - Define and implement a common method for resolving conflict
 - Equip people to resolve conflicts themselves
- **Information for all**
 - Everyone must have the freedom to communicate with anyone
 - It must be safe for everyone to offer ideas
 - Information and works in progress freely shared
 - Intense listening
 - Open to the best idea coming from anywhere
- **Credit the team**
 - Make others look good
 - The mark of a good leaders is that their followers become good leaders
 - Don't worry about individual credit or blame

Books and Resources

The Leadership Challenge by Kouzes and Posner

Servant Leadership by Robert Greenleaf

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey

Collaboration that Works, Harvard Business Review, OnPoint, Spring, 2014

The Wisdom of Group Decisions by Craig Freshley

Good Group Tips by Craig Freshley at www.GoodGroupTips.com