BSB51107
Diploma of Management

Phase A

Book 1 of 2

Learning Guide

Phase A includes the following units of competency:

Code	Competency
BSBWOR502A	Ensure team effectiveness
BSBWOR401A	Establish effective workplace relationships
BSBWOR501A	Manage personal work priorities and professional development
BSBOHS509A	Ensure a safe workplace

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Team Effectiveness

Introduction

In leadership training programs, we often ask participants to define teamwork. Working in different teams, their definitions are usually very similar.

A typical definition is:

A group of people whose work is interdependent

and who are collectively responsible for achieving an outcome.

During discussions, most participants agree that working within effective teams provides benefits to both the individuals and their organisation.

This module will provide you with the knowledge and skills you will need to build effective teams characterised by people with the ability and the desire to work toward a common vision.

Section 1
Building Team Cohesion

The main value of teams is their ability to assemble and empower employees to use their strengths and talents to improve their organisation. In more fully participating in decision-making and planning, employee contribution and job satisfaction are increased.

Characteristics of Effective Teams

Teamwork is all about people co-operating to achieve a common goal. It is in co-operation and cohesion that the real strengths of teams lie.

An effective team:

♦ Accomplishes its objectives efficiently and effectively

♦ Contributes to the effectiveness of a business unit

♦ Learns and then improves its performance over time

♦ Builds team member commitment and cooperation

How To Build Effective Teams

Teamwork will flourish in any soil that is carefully nurtured by each and every team member. An effective team needs:

♦ Interdependent Members

In an effective team, each member of the team is responsible to the other members. In this sense people are interdependent and, although there will be different roles, no person is more important than another. Interdependence implies that everyone relies on each other. Policies and procedures should be developed to ensure team members take responsibility for their own work while also assisting others to undertake required roles and responsibilities.

♦ Harmony

Teamwork at any level is based on harmony and unity of purpose. Harmony is based on positive and appropriate culture. Harmony does not necessarily mean that everyone agrees or has the same ideas. A piano and a violin sound entirely different and to play them requires different skills. Each has its strength depending on the piece of music chosen – but with the right music and in the right hands they harmonise beautifully. To ensure harmony is maintained it is important to develop processes to ensure issues, concerns and problems identified by team members are recognised and addressed.

♦ Shared Vision

Because of the differences within a team, the critical issue is to have a vision, mission, objectives and plan that draw the team together so that everyone is heading in the same direction.

A **mission** is your team's ultimate purpose.

♦ Why do we exist?
♦ Who do we serve?

♦ Motivation

Motivation really is all about 'getting people to consistently do what they don't necessarily want to do'. Motivation is essentially the stimulation of someone by another person, or by some external influence such as a reward, towards the achievement of a goal.   There a many motivators that drive people. Research (*Stokes and James, 1996*) shows that some of the most important motivators include:

- ♦ *The respect of peers and superiors*
- ♦ *Interesting work*
- ♦ *Feeling important and needed*
- ♦ *Recognition for effort*
- ♦ *Skill development (training/learning opportunities)*

- ♦ *Being listened to*
- ♦ *Autonomy*
- ♦ *An efficient work environment*
- ♦ *Complexity of job (ie. not too boring/easy)*
- ♦ *Being kept up to date*
- ♦ *Being involved in key decision making activities of the organisation.*

In addition to this list (but down the bottom of it in terms of priority) comes:

- ♦ *job security*
- ♦ *good benefits*
- ♦ *good pay*

♦ Morale

Usually if a team or an individual lack morale it is because the team needs to be motivated. Morale is a state of mind that is related to belief in the task, confidence in the outcome, confidence in the leader (and organisation) and belief in personal and team abilities. Morale is very dependent on success and in a team situation is closely related to pride in achievement. With every acknowledged success, higher morale is likely to follow. This doesn't mean you should not acknowledge problems/mistakes because this would mean you are ignoring reality. What it does mean is that you make a special point of acknowledging the good *and* the bad. Don't just focus on mistakes – focus on helping people feel good about what they do and helping them to *learn* from mistakes rather than wallow in failure. Feedback should be provided regularly to team members to encourage, value and reward individual and team efforts and contributions.

Case Study Activity
Building Effective Teams

Read the case study below and answer the questions given.

Gunther is the supervisor of the telemarketing section of a government department. He has ten telemarketers reporting to him. They are all responsible for incoming sales calls and customer assistance. The telemarketers have sales targets that they must achieve every week in order to keep their job. They also work on a commission basis and are paid commission for each sale they make.

Gunther has problems with building a cohesive and co-operative team. Each individual wants to answer the phone first so that they can make a sale. If the call is a customer needing assistance rather than a sale, the telemarketers quickly conclude the call so that they can be available to make sales. The incoming line that is for existing customers rarely gets answered because the operators know that the likelihood of making a sale is low. This results in unsatisfied or frustrated customers.

Some of the telemarketers feel despondent because they want to help the customer but know that it is also important for their position to maintain sales targets. Those who value customer service are the ones who are always left to answer the existing customer line while others wait for sales. This causes conflict between team members. The fact that many team members make a lot of money and others lose their jobs for not meeting targets is also a source of conflict and frustration.

What should Gunther do to develop each of the following aspects of effective teams?

- **Interdependent members**
- **Harmony**
- **Shared vision**
- **Pride**
- **Performance**
- **Motivation**
- **Morale**

Suggested Answers

Interdependence implies that everyone relies on each other. At the moment, Gunther only rewards individuals. To create a greater sense of interdependence, bonuses could be based on team performance as well as individual performance. In this way, people pull together as a team, as well as working to achieve individual excellence.

Teamwork at any level is based on **harmony** and unity of purpose. Harmony is based on positive and appropriate culture. Team based targets and bonuses for sales and service would encourage harmony rather than competition.

Effective teamwork is fostered by a **common vision**, a belief in a cause, implicit and total trust in your teammates and a confidence in their behaviour. Having the same goal (a team based goal) in sales and service would benefit Gunther's group. Gunther should also develop service standards for which all team members are accountable.

Pride within a group essentially comes from achievement. If a group gets an accolade, as it should when it achieves a goal, it can take pride in itself. Pride comes from and leads to better performance. It therefore enhances quality and continuous improvement. An organisation that only rewards individuals will have great difficulty instilling group pride and therefore group performance.

To **perform** competently a team needs to be composed of competent people. Even the best teams have good players, better players and really great players. However, no team can afford to have *bad* players. It is up to the leader to ensure that every member of the team has the skills, knowledge and attributes to competently carry his or her share of the workload to ensure cohesion. In Gunther's case, this applies to service as well as sales.

There a many **motivators** that drive people. Some of the important motivators that Gunther should focus on include:

- Recognition for effort (in all aspects of the job, not just sales)
- Skill development (training/learning opportunities)
- An efficient work environment (better systems, policies and standards)
- Complexity of job (not too boring or easy)
- Being kept up to date
- Being involved in key decision making activities
- Job security
- Good financial rewards

Morale is a state of mind that is related to belief in the task, confidence in the outcome, confidence in the leader (and organisation) and belief in personal and team abilities. Gunther's people will believe more strongly in the task and the organisation if focus and recognition is given to service as well as sales. Belief in personal and team abilities could come with greater focus on high standards, team targets and team rewards, as well as maintaining individual rewards to some degree. Morale is very dependent on success and in a team situation is closely related to pride in achievement. With every acknowledged success, higher morale is likely to follow.

Characteristics of Effective Team Members

♦   **Openness** is an important characteristic for any team member to have. Each and every member needs to be open to the ideas of others. They also need to be open in giving (rather than just taking). An effective team has team members that are prepared to be vulnerable enough to put their ideas and emotions on the line. Openness breeds team members that have faith in each other to honor their commitments, maintain confidences, support each other, and generally behave in a consistent and predictably acceptable fashion.

♦   **Acceptance** within teams is vital. This means accepting each person for who they are – regardless of colour, gender, race, religion or disability. Acceptance needs to go beyond superficial acceptance and needs to instead look at trying to understand and value another person's differences. It means seeing through another person's eyes and changing your perception as a result.

♦   If you want to work well with others you need to **put others and their ideas before yourself.** You need to treat others and you would want to be treated. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Effective team members see themselves as belonging to a team rather than as individuals who operate autonomously. They are committed to group goals above and behind their personal goals.

♦   **Good communication** means not only transmitting – but also receiving. Be very careful that you are someone who listens to ideas as well as generating them.

♦   To be a truly effective team member you need to **'play the game or get off the team'**. This may be a rather harsh way of viewing it but it is an important concept. It does not mean surrender your personality, your initiative or your independence. It *does* mean using these unique attributes in such a way that benefits the group. The Japanese have a saying 'the outstanding nail is the first to be hammered'. We are not saying that individuals should be hammered but the fact is that the floorboard is safer and more secure when all nails are hammered down. This is what **healthy interdependence** is all about.

♦ A **willingness to solve problems** within a group is important. The alternative is avoiding problems or running to an outside party to solve problems that have little to do with them. Successful team members work hard to ensure that conflict and differences of opinion are solved within the group.

♦ **Mutual respect** is another characteristic of an effective team member. It is vital that you understand that without respect – none of the other things in this list matter. You will earn the respect of others by displaying the characteristics in this list and by consistently being a person of integrity.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

There are essentially three key roles that help a work team achieve its goals:

1. Task related roles

These roles involve the actual performance activities required by the team's goals and objectives.
For example, the work team involved in writing this learning guide included people with task-related roles such as planning, writing, editing, reviewing, typing, graphics etc. Normally every team member will have one or more task roles, at any one time.

2. Maintenance related roles

These roles deal with people and involve building and maintaining relationships. For example, the project co-ordinator for this learning program had to ensure that team members communicated well with one another. Normally every team-member has one or many maintenance roles including encourager, communicator, standard setter, facilitator, peacemaker etc.

3. Liaison related roles

These roles are concerned with relationship building with other work teams or groups. Working collaboratively to identify and meet needs assists the team to achieve its goals. For example, the writer of this module had to collaborate with the graphics and printing departments.

Section 2
Facilitating Effective Teamwork

This section looks at two important processes in facilitating effective teamwork – problem solving and communication. The first process we look at is the problem solving process. However before you begin, there is one very important pre-requisite that you must take with you in any problem solving process – and that is your attitude, as it make a tremendous difference when it comes to problem solving.

You need to go into a problem solving activity presuming that solutions exist. If you think your problem can't be solved, chances are it can't be! If you believe the problem can be solved, you are well on the way to a solution before you begin.

> **One day in an upper level doctoral seminar in mathematics a professor wrote an unsolved problem on the board. Mathematicians had been trying for years to solve the problem. The professor was trying to emphasise to the students that there are no easy answers. He told them *'This problem is unsolvable but I want you to spend an hour trying to solve it anyway'*.**
>
> **One student came in five minutes late. He sat down, saw the problem on the board and began working on it. He solved it! Why? Because he had never heard anybody say it was unsolvable.**
>
> **John Maxwell**
> **Be All You Can Be**

Practicing Positive Problem Solving

The Positive Problem Solving Process involves six (6) steps:

Step 1:
Define the Problem Clearly

This is a simple yet vitally important first stage – that of clearly identifying and naming the problem. A vague feeling of unease, anxiety or angst is hard to tackle – a specific, clearly de fined problem is much easier.

Don't just think about your problem – write it down. Until you clearly define it and see it written there in front of you there is a danger of confusing the symptom with the problem.

Step 2:
Define the Desired Outcome

If you want to come up with the best solution to your problem – this step is a must. Just like the principles taught in mental imagery, it is important that you can clearly see the outcome you most desire – the result that you would like to achieve. Ask yourself: what would it look like if this problem was solved? Once you start working through the logistics of problem solving you may find that the ideal solution may not be able to be achieved, however you should start with that vision in mind if you want to arrive at the best outcome possible.
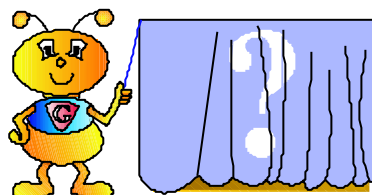
What does it look like?

Step 3:
Brainstorm Possible Solutions

Do a brainstorming exercise to think of as many solutions as you can. It is best to brainstorm with a friend or group of colleagues, but you can also do it alone for an effective result. The important point is that you do not reject a solution at this stage of the process – however preposterous it sounds. Just write it down and go on thinking about other possible solutions. See the box below for tips on brainstorming.

Brainstorming

- Write down a brief description of the problem to be solved and the desired outcome.

- Suggest a solution to the problem – any solution – just whatever comes to you mind, regardless of how viable it is in practice.

- Do not censor any of the solutions you come up with at this stage. No matter how silly or repetitive they are, write them all down.

- Continue suggesting solutions until all participants have run out of ideas.

Step 4:
Choose the Best Solution(s)

Work through each of the brainstormed solutions and consider the validity of each. Dismiss any solutions that are not valid, reasonable or able to be done within the resources that you have. Then decide which of the remaining solutions look the most promising. Of the promising solutions work through which ones would be most likely to help you achieve your desired outcome, as well as the resources you will need for each option and the positive or negative things that could happen if you implement any of the options. As a result of your analysis choose the best solution(s).

Step 5:
Develop and Implement an Action Plan

This is your plan for how you will implement your decision. Your plan should involve:

♦ the steps you need to take,

♦ the human and physical resources required, and

♦ the desired timelines:

Now implement your plan.

Step 6:
Evaluate

Start reflecting on how things are going as soon as you begin to implement your action plan, and again when it is all over. Ask yourself these questions:

♦ Did things go according to the plan?

♦ How did we deal with the contingencies?

♦ Did I achieve my desired outcome?

♦ Am I happy with the result?

♦ What feedback did I get from my team, manager, and customers?

♦ What did I learn from the experience? Should I have done anything different?

Practicing Positive Communication

> **Death and life are in the power of the tongue,**
> **and they that love it shall eat the fruit of it.**
>
> **Proverbs 18:21**

Positive communication within your team is the key to effective and fulfilling working relationships and is the basis for enhanced performance with less stress.

Honest, straightforward communication is the key to creating and maintaining positive energy and high performance.

Whether teams interact in person or using other forms of media, the components of a positive communication system should include:

♦ Information that is open and accessible to all team members

♦ The provision of opportunities for informal communication (eg. Social gatherings, informal discussions in the workplace, offsite retreats, team activities)

♦ The provision of opportunities for formal communication (eg. Team meetings)

Further Resources

To extend your learning and develop your knowledge further, this resource list is a valuable guide for finding more information on the subject areas covered in this module.

Coaching and mentoring : how to develop top talent and achieve stronger performance. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004.

Harvard management on coaching: a practical guide to improving the performance of people. Boston : Harvard Business School Press, 2003.

Belf, Teri-E. Coaching with spirit : allowing success to emerge. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Blanchard, Kenneth H. The little book of coaching: motivating people to be winners. New York : HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.