Teams: Session 2

ABBY BERENSON
Senior Associate Director, MIT Leadership Center
From Last Time

• Leadership is...
• Teams are Humans Connecting: Personization and Psych Safety

Building Blocks of Effective Teams

• Team vs work group
• Building blocks of effective teams
• Phases of team development

Team Agreement: Purpose
Leadership at MIT

Leadership is the *process* of solving problems that won’t be otherwise handled in the existing system.
Leadership at MIT is a process of:

- **Leading Yourself** - holding the tension between your personal aspirations and current capabilities
- **Leading Teams** - constructing and confronting problems that you can’t solve yourself
- **Leading Organizations** - creating organizations that catalyze and coordinate joint problem solving
Two Key Skills

DIAGNOSIS
(identify gaps)

OBJECTIVE ABOUT SUBJECTIVE
Constructing conflict

ACTION
(closing gaps)

PRODUCTIVE REASONING
Resolving conflict
1. Who are the type of team members you have worked with who you wish you could have on every team you work on? The type of team member who consistently promotes and facilitates a positive team experience.

2. What specifically do these team members say or do that is so effective in promoting positive team dynamics?

Team Members Who Promote:

- Trust
- Accountability
- Culture
- Camaraderie
- Conflict navigation
- Commitment
- Fun
An Evolving Definition of High Performing Teams
(Adapted from: Karlgaard and Malone, “Team Genius,” 2015)

Discussion:
What has your team already done? Or can start doing right now, to build towards a team that both achieves and produces?
J. Richard Hackman

Published 2002
Hackman’s Big Five

1. **Is the group a real team?** Is a team the right work design?
2. **Does the team have a compelling purpose?**
3. **Does the team’s structure—its task, composition, and core norms of conduct—enable rather than impede teamwork?**
4. **Does the larger system provide the necessary resources and support?**
5. **Is competent coaching available?**
A Framework for Understanding Teams

- Dynamics
- Structure
- Composition
- Context
- Markets
- Results/Impact

The External World of a Team
The Internal World of a Team

Purpose

Customers
Organization/Industry
Other Teams & Departments
Internal Elements of a Team

**Purpose:**
Goals, aspirations and measurements of success

**Composition:**
The pre-existing skills, expertise, experiences and work styles of individual team members

**Structure:**
The team’s processes, systems and allocations of roles/responsibilities to get the work done

**Dynamics:**
The team’s ability to surface and solve problems in ways that builds capability and resilience
## What’s Your Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of a good direction</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consequential</td>
<td>Orients</td>
<td>Aligns performance strategy with purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>Energizes</td>
<td>Enhances Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Engages</td>
<td>Fosters utilization of knowledge and skill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Composition

Composition is a collective understanding of each person’s:

- Skills = experience + expertise
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Motivations
- Behavioral profile
- Personal background (gender, culture, etc.)

Composition shifts and evolves over time

- Team members gain new skills, experiences, etc., and reveal more about each other.

*Teams are prone to sharing common information even though their value lies in sharing unique information

- => continue to get to know each other!
Structure (the Static Design)

Structure constitutes agreements that you can make ahead of time that will result in more effective and satisfying work. But, too much structure, and you are more of a work group than a team.

Structure can have several benefits:
- Saves "renegotiating" things every time—communication, work platforms, meeting times, etc.
- Reduces the need for expensive coordination
  - *I'll interpret the marketing data, you understand the engineering*
- Allows you to experience progress
  - Setting goals is an act of "structuring"

Effective teams regularly revisit their structure to determine if what they have in place continues to fuel how they work.
Dynamics accounts for the team’s ability to surface and solve problems in ways that builds capability and resilience. You can’t anticipate every contingency, but you can plan for how you will react to them.

**What will you do when things go wrong?**
- What kind of conflict is it? Goals, task, relational?
- Name:
  - the emotional response (i.e. anger, insecurity, fear, etc.)
  - your “automatic” (typical?) responses to that emotion

**Typical points of conflict**
- Timing—*when is it supposed to be done? When did we agree to meet?*
- Expectations—*this is good enough for me, I don’t care as much as you*
- Effort—*I worked really hard on my part, why didn’t you?*
Team Agreement - Purpose

Purpose: Goals, aspirations, and measurements of success

Discuss and then write down the following:
1. Each team member, describe a personal goal for the semester.
   • What would be the optimal experience?
   • What is at stake for you?
2. Which, if any, of these goals are shared across all team members?
3. As a team, what are you trying to accomplish? (Be concrete)
4. What must your team do / have to meet your goals?