TEAM BUILDING

Instructor's Workbook

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
Friend of Youth

GROW with OPTIMISM

TEAM BUILDING

Instructor's Workbook

Developed for:

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

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by:
Wayne Simmons
& Karl Weinrich
SIMMONS & ASSOCIATES
14 Boenker Court
St. Charles MO 63301
314-947-4057

Preface:

Welcome to one in a series of individualized Optimist International Skills Development Modules. Our goal is to help you, our members, learn and apply practical skills to deal with the opportunities and issues in your life. This series of modules is not designed to deal with "theoretical" issues, but rather to provide a practical "hands on" approach.

Each of these modules is to be used, written in and applied. You can learn skills on your own, or join with others in a collaborative learning venture. Each module contains an instructor's guide in addition to a separate participant's guide which can be duplicated as often as necessary to supply the needs of your Club members.

Future modules will deal with individual as well as group-oriented skills, all of which are designed to help individual Optimists enhance their personal leadership ability in any chosen field of activity, i.e., employment, home, school, and volunteer activities. This is a significant development for our organization in its service to its own members, and we hope that participants will provide feedback about each module to the International Headquarters (c/o Leadership Development). In this way, we can maintain our focus on providing meaningful leadership training to Districts, Clubs and individuals throughout our Optimist organization.

We truly hope you enjoy the journey to self-improvement.

Introduction:
This latest in Optimist International's series of personal development training modules has been created to serve as a design for helping our members develop high-performance teams. Putting this learning material to work will help you become both a better team member yourself and, if placed in such a position, help you become an effective team builder and leader.

It will give you information and tools to successfully arrange and conduct team building training sessions for your fellow Optimist International members or, for that matter, others in your professional or personal life. As explained later, it can also be used as a self-study program,

This program has two other important objectives. **First**, by improving the ability of members to build and serve on high-performance, effective teams, this program will optimize member participation and encourage the fun and festivity provided by group participation. After all, it is "fun" to be a member of an "effective team". Effective teams accomplish worthwhile things. Doing so is very self-satisfying. **Second**, improving the ability of members to build effective teams will help our organization better meet its goals and objectives. High-performance teams will better help our members respond to the special needs of their local communities. Dedicated individuals, working through effective teams, accomplish the things in their communities that define an Optimist Club.

What will be learned:
Following are the learning objectives of this module. Participants will learn...

- the dynamics and skills involved in becoming an effective, high-performance team

- how to effectively communicate with one another.

- how to define roles.

- how to recognize and use helpful behavior.

- how to avoid and overcome destructive behavior.

- the steps involved in team decision making and problem solving.

How to use this learning module:
Depending on your personal situation, this module can be used either in a group setting such as club, zone or district meetings, or individually, proceeding at your own pace. Both an Instructor's Workbook - this publication - and a Participant's Workbook are included in this learning module. (Note: Make as many copies of the Participant's Workbook as needed for your presentation.)

For a group setting...

If you will be presenting this *Team Building* module in a group setting, please read this Instructor's Workbook carefully. It is designed to guide you through your session.

As you will see, each section provides you with a "script" in the left-hand column to help you present the material. However, the best way to present the information is to **not** read this "script". No, that's not a contradiction!

For the most effective presentation, learn the information in the left-hand columns and then paraphrase or summarize it in your own words adding examples and/or anecdotes from your own life experience to help explain the points being covered. Only use the script as something to refer back to if necessary during your presentation. The script will also help you keep track of your presentation and help insure that you are covering everything

In the right-hand column of the Instructor's Workbook there is space for your own notes as well as special notes for the instructor. They include such things as important points to emphasize, group discussion ideas or topics, exercises for your group, and tips for you in your instructor's role.

You should also familiarize yourself with the Participant's Workbook. While much of the information is the same as in your Instructor's Workbook, there are some reading assignments not found in that workbook.

(Note: Since some of the discussion suggestions and exercises require keeping track of information gathered from your group, a flip chart and markers are essential when this module is used in a group setting.)

As a self-study program...

If you are using this module as a self-study program, you should read the Instructor's Workbook and follow along in the Participant's Workbook completing the various exercises when it is practical to do so on an individual basis. The Participant's Workbook repeats much of the information in the Instructor's Workbook. However, it contains special reading assignments not contained in the Instructor's Workbook. (Note: If using the module to simply improve your own team-building skills, why not have your family participate with you on some of the exercises. They can be fun and educational for your family.)

Recommended Time:

If this module is being presented in **a group setting, allow two hours for the class.** Naturally, the amount of time it will take for the presentation depends to a large degree on the individual giving the presentation. It is suggested that you practice going through the Instructor's Workbook at least once so that you can adjust your pace if necessary. You may want to practice the program with your family, a group of friends or even business associates. The information and skills apply to everyone.

Another factor that can affect the length of the session is the size of the group and their responsiveness. A large group, simply by its nature, will take a little longer completing the exercises and during discussion periods.

One of your roles as an instructor will be to keep things moving so that the announced length of this module is not exceeded. You can do this by politely cutting off discussion. Simply state that while there are some great points being made, it is necessary to move on to the next section. Don't be afraid to take charge to keep things on schedule. That's one of the duties of an instructor and one of the roles of a high-performance team leader. Those participating in the session will appreciate your concern with keeping on schedule.

If you are using this *Team Building* module as a self-study program, you can set your own pace. It can normally be accomplished in less than two hours if used in this manner.

Preparing For and Conducting Your Session

While making the plans for holding your Team Building class may seem like a minor problem in logistics, there is much more involved than what may first come to mind. In fact, careful planning will help make your session a success. In turn, forgetting a "minor detail" can create a session you'll want to forget.

First, use every means available to spread the word regarding your class. This can be done with a letter to other members in your chapter. You will also want to plan your class far enough in advance to allow announcements to be made at other group meetings. And, of course, you'll want to "talk up" your class whenever you're with other members.

Be sure to provide all of the information a person might need to know. For example, date, time, location (including room), what they might need to bring, deadline for registration, who to register with, how long the sessions will run, and what participants will learn (see "Learning Objectives", page one).

Second, nail down those nitty gritty details such as room arrangements including set up (how many tables and chairs and how should they be placed), refreshments (at least have water and, perhaps, coffee), and a flip chart.
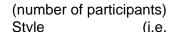
Write out a checklist including your contacts. (See sample Checklist at right. Give a duplicate of your checklist to your designated backup.

Checklist for A Successful Class
- Room arranged – contact
  _____
- Announcements prepared
  _____
- Announcements mailed
  _____
- Announcements will also be made at: _____
  _____
- Room set up arranged
  _____
  for _____
  (number of participants)
- Style _____ (i.e. classroom, theater, chevron, round table)
- Supplies (i.e. flip chart, markers, note pads, pencils/pins) acquired
  _____
- Refreshments arranged
- Agenda prepared
- Agenda sent to participants
  _____

Points To Remember
- Careful planning is important
- It's more than just logistics
- Have a backup person that your contacts and participants can reach
- Don't leave anything to chance
- A good agenda can be the key
- Use your checklist.
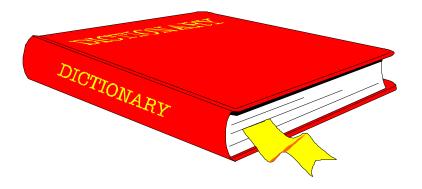
What Are Teams and Why Do They Work?

One of the things many members will want to know is exactly what is a "team" in a business sense and why do they work if, indeed, they do. After all, in many businesses "teams" and the "team concept" unfortunately are not respected. We've all seen some of the Dilbert cartoons that make fun of teams. The term has almost taken on as bad a meaning as "committee!"

Teams do work. It's <u>ineffective</u> teams that are disrespected and earn, in many cases rightfully, derision. What you are going to talk about are <u>effective</u> teams, in this lesson you will get your class to agree on a definition of a team, explain why teams work, and demonstrate to class participants what the benefits of effective teams are for both the members and for our organization.

A Definition
One of the definitions of "team" in *The American Heritage Dictionary* is "A group organized to work together." OK. That's not bad. But, let's expand it just a little. How about, "A team is a group of individuals working together to solve a problem, meet an objective, or tackle an issue."

The key words in this definition are "working together" and solve a problem, meet an objective, or tackle an issue." If any group can do those things, you can call it anything you wish, it's a winner.

Group Discussion
- How many of you are familiar with the term "team" as used in business settings? (Ask participants to raise their hands.) How many of you are on a team now or ever have been on one?
- What did you think of your experience? (Go around room. If you don't get many responses…either positive or negative… give one or two of your own.)
- Ask if anyone can define the term "team"? (Write answer(s) on flip chart.)
- Give the definition from the dictionary. Ask what the participants think. (Write on flip chart.)
- Give the second definition. Ask what the participants think. (Write on flip chart.)
- Gain consensus regarding the second definition.

Points To Emphasize
- A team is only as good as its members make it. If they work well together, they will have an effective team.
- Effective teams can solve problems, meet objectives and tackle issues.

Building an Effective Team

Getting back to the original question, why do teams work? That's not necessarily an easy question to answer, but let's try. If we can answer this question, we'll be well on our way to knowing how to create our own high-performance teams and how to be an effective member of such a team.

There are lots of sports analogies we could use about teamwork. Let's skip those. Instead, let's think about an adage we've all heard, The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A team is made up of various individuals all of whom bring a whole range of talents, knowledge, experience, contacts, information and other attributes. When those individuals are brought together into a group that learns to work as a team, those attributes combine into a whole new, more powerful mix.

A group working together effectively will always accomplish more than an individual or even the same number of individuals working on their own. When that group becomes a high-performance team, they can do the work quicker and better.

Benefits of High-Performance Teams:
Before we begin discussing how high-performance teams are developed and used, let's briefly go over some of the intangible benefits that can result for us as individuals, and for Optimist International from such teams.

First, there's a sense of accomplishment and self-fulfillment resulting for the team leader and members of an effective team. An esprit de corps develops and success begins to build on itself. Participation in a high-performance team gives members an opportunity to get to know one another. Such participation leads to even more participation in our organization's activities.

Well-run, effective teams will inevitably enhance Optimist International's reputation as a group that knows how to get things done for their members' communities.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Every team member brings special attributes that can help their team.
- Effective teams develop an *esprit de corps*.
- Having well-run, effective teams will enhance Optimist International's reputation.

Building an Effective Team

Getting to Know One Another

Let's assume that you have volunteered or been selected by some means to get together with other Optimist members from your chapter to accomplish a particular project. You get together for your first meeting and find out that you've been told that you're to be the team leader.

What's the first thing we should do to get things moving in the right direction?

That's right! We've got to learn about one another. First, simply go around the room and have everyone briefly introduce him or herself. For example, name, business, how long a member of Optimist International.

Before we do the group activity, which is lots of fun, by the way, let's talk about this very briefly. How many of you have been in a situation where you've felt like an outsider? I suspect that most of us have. It can be a difficult situation. That's why it's essential that a new team do something similar to the exercise we're now going to do.

This type of exercise can be an excellent "icebreaker" for a new team. It certainly is a lot more fun than the usual self-introductions!

As pointed out in the "Reading Assignment", there are many benefits that result from learning about members of a team. It helps everyone feel more comfortable. It identifies special talents, knowledge and resources that each member brings to the team. Team leaders must continually stress the importance to the team that they get to know one another.

Establishing Consensus as to the Team's Purpose

The next step is to discuss the purpose of your team. Is it a short-term team, one with an objective that, once met, allows the team to disband? For example, to plan a one time fundraiser. Is it a long-term team with an on-going objective? For example, to work to create more recreational opportunities for inner-city youths?

Notes…

This is an opportunity to have a little fun at your own expense. Depending on the group to whom you're presenting this module, you might want to say something like: I know, my being the team leader might be just a little difficult to accept for those of you who know me, but how about giving me the benefit of the doubt!

Don't spend much time discussing situations where people feel uncomfortable because they are outsiders. The main thing is to demonstrate that everyone has faced such situations.

Reading Assignment: Have your participants read the assignment on pages 4 and 5. Allow no more than two minutes. When they are finished, move on to the Group Activity on page 5.

Group Activity: Have the participants read the instructions. Remind them that they should write down five interesting things about themselves and that one should be a falsehood, but not an obvious one!

Allow no more than three minutes for your participant's to write down their statements. Have each participant read his/her statements. Now, go around the room asking each person in turn to guess the "white lie". Keep score to see who guesses the falsehood first. Congratulate the person who gets the most correct answers. Ask participants who had the most interesting outrageous, and/or most believable falsehood.

Building an Effective Team (Continued)

You need to establish specific objectives for the team as well as its authority.

Reaching a consensus as to the results that are expected of the team including a completion date is very important. Without such agreement your team can go off on a tangent and/or run into problems in meeting deadlines.
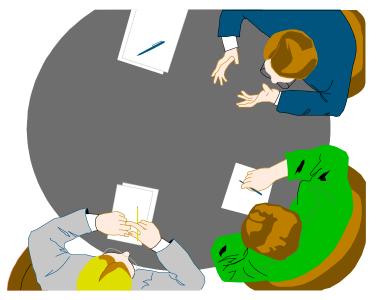
Identifying Available Resources
Next, you need to identify all of the resources available for the team. For example, what's the budget? If you don't know how much you can spend to accomplish your objective, you won't get very far. Do you have the use of special equipment that might be needed. Exactly how much time can everyone on the team devote. Get a commitment! Is there special information in the form of reports that will be relevant to your project? Are there other teams or individuals you need to work with?

Establishing Rules of Behavior
One of the most important steps in team building is the establishment of rules of behavior. In other words, what behavior is encouraged and what type of behavior is not going to be acceptable by your team.

Let's discuss some of the rules that a team should establish. First, let's list behavior we want to see.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Teams must come to a consensus regarding what results are expected.
- All resources available to the team must be identified.
- Rules of behavior must be established.

Building an Effective Team (Continued)

Helpful Behavior

- Be optimistic/positive about the team and its goals (of course!)
- Be on time for meetings
- Support one another
- Be courteous
- Be open minded
- Be honest
- Participate
- Be open. Say what you think and feel
- Listen. Pay attention to other team members
- Stay on track. Keep to the agenda
- Share the work
- Complete your work. Follow up
- Present your ideas, comments clearly
- Be prepared for the meeting

Harmful Behavior

- Being constantly critical, negative
- Attempt to dominate or monopolize meeting
- Be manipulative
- Be judgmental about ideas and/or other team
- Team members act bored or not interested
- Read or do other work during meetings
- Engage in side or sub-conversations during meetings
- Simply agree with everything
- Avoid making decisions
- Going off on a tangent
- Engage in name-calling
- Attacking people or ideas

Notes…

Go around the room asking participants first for "good" behavior. Write their suggestions on your flip chart. Suggest that they copy the list in their Participant's Workbooks. At left are ones you'll want to see on the list.

Next, ask participants for examples of behavior their team should discourage. Explain that it is not necessary to name the opposite of the helpful behavior already listed. For example, "being late for meetings" is not necessary since "being on time" is on our helpful behavior list. At left are ones you'll want to see on the list of harmful behaviors.

Once you have your list of good and bad behavior, ask participants if they agree that such rules will help a team run effectively. Ask if there is anything that's been left off. Allow a few moments for discussion.

Running a High-Performance Team

Ok, you've established your team. Everyone has had an opportunity to get to know one another. The team's objective has been agreed upon. Your team has identified all of its resources. You've agreed on rules of behavior. Now that the team is up and running, how do you make sure it becomes and remains a successful, high-performance team?

Communications
The first step involves a subject that all of us have heard discussed and argued many times; communications. Dictionary definitions include "to make known", "to have an interchange, as of ideas", and "to express oneself in such a way that one is readily and clearly understood". Those are three very important goals for people in general and for groups – such as teams – to strive to accomplish. If a team's members cannot learn to communicate effectively, that team simply cannot perform effectively.

Many of the behaviors that affect communications can be found on the lists we prepared earlier.

Every member of a team has a responsibility to communicate well by practicing these helpful behaviors and avoiding the harmful ones. However, it's the team leader who is ultimately responsible for assuring that the team communicates effectively.

Leaders of high performance teams first must set an example by striving to practice good communications themselves.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Establishing and maintaining good communications is vital.
- Practicing many of the behaviors from the list of "Helpful Behaviors" and "Harmful Behaviors" affect communications.

Now go to the list of "Helpful Behaviors" that you made earlier. Have participants name ones from that list that will help a team communicate effectively. Those should include being open minded and honest, participating, saying what one thinks and feels, listening, participating, and presenting ideas and comments clearly. Also take a look at the list of "Harmful Behaviors".

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

They need to insure that every team member is kept informed about every aspect of the particular project or goal that team is working on. No one should ever be "out of the loop". They must then be willing to take charge when they recognize that their team or individual members are not communicating well. This should be done with tact and diplomacy, but it must be done.

For example, if a particular person is dominating meetings, the team leader should start directing questions and comments toward others.

One might say, "Thanks for your comments, Bob, but let's see what Janet thinks about that approach." Or, "Bill, you've made your feelings known, let's go around the table and see what others think." This should help give the member who is monopolizing things an idea that his/her behavior is not appropriate.

If it doesn't, the next step is to discuss the problem in private with that team member. Simply point out that his/her views are important, but that everyone has to have an opportunity to participate.

What about the person who doesn't want to participate or doesn't seem to be listening? Again, the team leader needs to change this behavior by asking that person for his/her comments or ideas or by asking what they think of a comment another member has just made. Most members will want to avoid the embarrassment of not knowing what is being discussed.

What about the team member who doesn't present his/her ideas clearly or who rambles or who goes off on a tangent? The team leader must try to help that person by asking that they clarify their point or even offer to summarize what they are expressing. You might say, "If I understand you, John, you feel that..." Or, "Ok, Tim, your points are well taken, but let's get back to the subject."

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Every team member must be kept in the loop.
- Thank dominating members for their contributions, but ask them to allow others to participate.
- Do everything possible to get all members to participate.
- Help members make their point clearly.

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

In general, an effective team needs communication that is spontaneous and shared by all team members, and where all ideas and opinions are welcomed.

Gaining Participation
While mentioned previously, let's briefly discuss the importance of gaining every team member's participation. Earlier we talked about the reasons why teams work. One of the important reasons is that they are made up of a group of individuals all of whom bring with them a variety of skills, knowledge, talents, experience and contacts.

Those individual attributes can be drawn upon to help the team accomplish its goals. If a particular individual isn't participating for one reason or another, his or her attributes cannot be put to use by the team. This makes the team just that much less effective.

For example, you may need to have a proposal put together to gain the cooperation of your city's community college to present a series of self-esteem courses to troubled teens. It just so happens that one of your team members puts together fund raising proposals for a public relations agency. He would be the perfect choice for preparing your team's proposal. If he isn't attending meetings and doesn't participate, that opportunity may be lost.

The same thing is true of every member of a team. Everyone has various things they can contribute to the team's efforts. It's up to the team leader to make this point clear to his team members and to take action to insure that they all participate.

If they are not attending meetings, find out why and do something about it. If they are not taking part in discussions and decision making, take action to gain their participation. There are a number of ways a team leader can get every team member to participate. Here are a few:

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Every member must participate.
- If they don't participate, the special attributes they might offer are wasted.

Some Way to Involve Team Members:

• Passing a baton or other item from person to person. The person with the baton must make a contribution to the team discussion.

• Ask open-ended questions, i.e. ones that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

• Call directly on non-participating team members.

• Assign specific tasks to individual team members.

• Ask each team member in turn for his or her opinion.

• Rotating team roles.

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

Handling Team Conflicts

No matter how well a team may be functioning or how much it is accomplishing, conflicts are going to arise. It's simply human nature. The question is how to resolve those conflicts and differences of opinion.

Some examples of conflicts include individuals attacking personalities or ideas, constant criticism of other team members' ideas or points of view, displaying anger, and showing contempt for other team members and/or their views. Other behaviors that cause conflicts include members who are not willing to carry their share of the workload, who do not participate, or who say or do things outside of team meetings that hurt the team.

Sometimes conflicts build over time with insignificant problems accumulating until they reach a boiling point. A good team leader must work to stop these small problems from reaching such a point by handling them as they occur. In many instances, these small problems can be cured quickly by simply reminding the team in general and the guilty members in particular of your team's helpful/harmful behavior lists.

If this doesn't work, more formal conflict resolution may be necessary. One way is to have a discussion regarding behavior. Ask members to list things - not individuals - that they feel are leading to conflicts. For example, a member may list "constant criticism of my ideas" or "some people are not helping get our work done". Next, ask that they offer solutions to those problems. The team leader should open these perceived problems to discussion. The team needs to reach an agreement that those problems do exist and then reach a consensus as to the solution. This will often eliminate the conflicts.

Continuing problems with particular team members may mean a formal meeting between the team leader and the guilty individual. Point out the problem behavior and explain how it is hurting the team and the work it is doing. State that the behavior is not acceptable and how it should be changed.

Notes…

Ask participants for other examples of conflicts they have experienced. Ask for some examples of how those conflicts were resolved. Allow no more than five minutes for discussion.

Points To Emphasize
- Conflicts are always going to occur.
- Small problems can build into large ones.
- Remind members of your team's rules of behavior.
- Teams should discuss causes of conflict and try to resolve them.
- Formal, private conflict resolution meetings are sometimes necessary.

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

For example, "We know you have good ideas, but you need to also have an open mind about the points of view of other team members. Constantly criticizing other team members is not acceptable."

Points To Emphasize
- Sometimes conflicts can't be resolved and a member may have to be removed from the team.
- Recognition is important to team morale.
- Effective recognition awards should always be treated seriously.

Occasionally, even the best conflict resolution techniques and efforts will not change the behavior causing the problem. If that happens, removing the individual or individuals responsible for the conflict may be necessary. While this may not be pleasant, it nevertheless must be done.

Providing Recognition
An important way to keep a team performing effectively is to provide recognition for the efforts of individual members. It is natural for individuals to want to be given credit for their work even though they are members of a team.

On a continuous basis, team leaders should recognize individual team members for their suggestions, ideas, input, or other contributions. This can be as simple as saying something like, "That's a good idea, Connie." Or, "We can thank Gary for getting us the cost estimate for completing the project."

Individuals can also be recognized in more formal ways. This can include giving plaques or other awards for special accomplishments. The cost of the recognition item is not really important, it's the recognition that counts. However, the timing and way that the recognition award is given is also important. Awards should never be presented in a casual, off-hand manner. Instead, they should be treated as the serious matter they are.

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

In turn, lack of recognition, or worse, giving it to the wrong team member, can contribute to low team morale and potential conflicts. It's the team leader's responsibility to insure that team members receive recognition for their individual efforts and that the credit goes to the proper people.

Making Team Meetings Fun

Being a member of a high-performance team can be very satisfying. It also takes a lot of time, effort and sacrifice. Meetings can be long and intense with tremendous amounts of pressure to accomplish important goals within tight deadlines and restricted budgets. This can be especially true for service organizations such as Optimist International where the teams are made up of volunteers, most of whom have full-time jobs.

While it is next to impossible to make **every** team meeting a 100 percent enjoyable experience, it is possible to make the experience less stressful and even add at least an element of fun. Again, it's the team leader's responsibility to make his/her meeting a more enjoyable experience.

Naturally, the place where meetings take place must offer at least the basic amenities for a comfortable meeting. That includes all the necessary equipment required such as flip charts and audio/visual equipment. Good lighting and ventilation, quiet, and the avoidance of other outside distractions are also important.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize

- Lack of recognition can seriously hurt a team.
- Being part of a high-performance team is very satisfying.
- It can also be very hard on members.
- A good team leader can make meetings at least tolerable and even a little fun.
- The meeting site must be comfortable and free of distractions.

Running a High-Performance Team (Continued)

Refreshments can also make meetings more enjoyable. If your team meetings are held early in the morning, have coffee, juice and rolls. For afternoon meetings, coffee and soft drinks. Occasionally, schedule your meeting as a luncheon get-together even if your budget requires that members pay their own way. Another way of adding a little fun to your meeting is to make it a brown bag affair. Add a little fun by giving members an opportunity to trade their lunches or gather them up and auction them off!

Another way to make your meetings more fun is to use what are termed icebreakers or warm-ups. Here are some examples:

- **Trivia Quiz -** Come up with a list of ten trivia questions. Break your team up into smaller teams who must work together to come up with the answers in ten minutes.

- **Scavenger Hunt -** Divide the team into smaller teams. Provide a list of familiar items that team members may have in their pockets, purses or wallets (i.e. toothpick, pocketknife, breath mint, comb, pocket calculator). First team to complete the list is the winner.

Notes…

Ask participants for examples of icebreakers or other games that they've seen used at meetings. Allow no more than five minutes. Point out that there are hundreds of such icebreakers and meeting games. A series of books with icebreakers and other meeting games is listed in both this Instructor's Workbook and the Participant's Workbook.

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems

Gathering Information
Before a team can even begin taking any action toward accomplishing their objective, they must gather all of the facts and figures relating to the problem. This includes any reports that may have been produced by other teams, relevant financial reports, memos, research or surveys that may have been done, local laws that may affect a project, or examples of how other groups may have handled a similar situation or objective.

Points To Emphasize
- All the relevant facts and figures must be gathered.
- Research work should be spread out among all members.

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems (Continued)

Your team should make a list of any information that might affect your decision. Next, delegate the work to various members of the team. That way everyone becomes involved in this first step in the decision making process. Spreading out the research work also makes it easier for individual team members to do a thorough job.

Once the information has been gathered, it may also prove more practical for the members of your team to divide up the various materials to read or examine. Each individual can then give a report or summary of their assignment.

Additionally, this also spreads out the work and, by summarizing, will reduce the time needed for the entire team to hear all of the relevant facts and figures. This also gives each team member the opportunity to contribute.

Analyzing Information
The next step in the decision making process is for the team to begin an analysis of the information gathered.

After deciding which information is relevant to the task at hand, your team will need to come to a consensus as to the affect the information has on how the problem you're working on might be solved.

For example, do the facts and figures you've generated demonstrate that more money than anticipated is needed? Or, that there is an opportunity to gain support from a business you've never worked with before?

Or, do you need to talk to other individuals or teams? Perhaps the information shows that the project or objective your team is working on is neither practical nor needed.

You may discover that you need the help of others to analyze certain information your team has gathered.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- Team members should share reviewing information and reporting on it.
- After analyzing the information, teams must come to a consensus as to its affect on your decisions.
- The facts and figures may show that you need to do more research.
- They may even show that your project isn't practical or necessary.
- Help from outside professionals may be needed.

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems (Continued)

For example, you may need a professional accountant, or a lawyer, or a community official, or a business person's views. Whatever you do, don't make a team decision without fully understanding your data.

Generating & Analyzing Ideas
Once a team has gathered all of the information necessary and has analyzed it, the next step is to generate and analyze ideas for solving the problem or undertaking the project the team has as its objective.

There are lots of ways of generating ideas. Here are a few.

One of the best and most familiar is called "brainstorming". Most of you have probably participated in this activity. You simply have team members take turns giving ideas about the topic. Record those ideas on a flip chart. Wait until after the session for comments or criticisms. Keep things moving with an "anything goes" attitude. Continue until you have reached a point where members have no additional ideas.

If time allows, ask participants for other idea generating techniques they may have seen used. Ask how effective those techniques were.

Points To Emphasize
- Brainstorming is a familiar yet valuable way of generating ideas.
- Brainwriting is another excellent technique.

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems (Continued)

Another method is called "brainwriting". Give each team member a piece of paper divided into 21 squares (three columns, seven rows). Each team member fills three squares with one idea each. The papers are placed in the middle of the table and each member is asked to take a new one. Members then add three more new ideas or ones that expand on the ones previously placed on that sheet. Continue this exchange until each sheet is at least almost filled. Go around the table with each member reading, in a round robin, one of the ideas on the sheet he/she has ended up with. Members should mark off ones that are repeated on their forms.

Examining Solution Alternatives
All right, your team has gathered information, analyzed it, and generated ideas and possible solutions. Your next step in the decision making process is to examine the potential solutions from various perspectives.

One method is to complete what is called a "Solution Matrix". This matrix will help the team answer the key questions that are normally a criteria for a good decision.

In your workbook you'll find an illustration of a "Solution Matrix".

Possible Solutions	Cost High/Low	Ease of Implementation	Support from Other	Creates New Problems

One other tool your team can use for analyzing alternative solutions is the familiar cost/benefit analysis. In this case, simply identify all the costs that relate to a particular solution and then each of the benefits that would take place. Do this for each of the possible solutions.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- The "Solution Matrix" and cost/benefit analysis are two excellent ways of weighing alternative solutions.
- If a team's research and analysis has been thorough, the best solution should be obvious.

Group Discussion
If time allows, ask participants for examples of situations where they have had to consider and decide upon seemingly equal solutions to a problem.

How did they make a choice?

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems (Continued)

These two tools will help your team narrow the number of possible solutions and identify which may be the best. If the team's analysis has been properly undertaken, the best solution should be obvious.

Making Decisions & Gaining Consensus
Once your team has reached a point where a decision must be made between alternative solutions to a problem or alternative ways of moving ahead with a project, the simplest way to do so is by majority vote. Whichever solution wins the majority of votes is the one that the team undertakes. If the team is comfortable with this type of decision making, it's the one to use.

However, such an up-or-down vote may create problems for the team especially if the vote is very close. The team members losing the vote may end up unwilling to support that decision with their hearts and minds and continuing work.

Because of this, it is very important that every effort be made to gain a consensus and not simply go with majority rule. Team members should agree beforehand that the decision they reach will be fully supported by everyone.

Team members will be most likely to agree to such a policy if the team and their leader have practiced the rules we've outlined for running successful, high-performance teams.

Summary

As was stated at the beginning, because of time limitations we were only able to provide an overview of team building. There is much, much more for you to learn about teams and team building. If you wish to build on the information in this program, refer to the list of publications and other resources provided on the last page of your Participant's Workbook.

Notes…

Points To Emphasize
- An up-or-down, majority wins vote is often the best way to make the decision.
- However, every member must agree to support whatever decision wins the vote.
- If a team has practiced the rules outlined in this program, such a policy is likely to be agreed upon.

Making Team Decisions and Solving Problems (Continued)

However, in this program we did have an opportunity to discuss many important points that will help you both participate in and lead an effective, high-performance team. We talked about the importance of effective teams in solving problems. We explained how a team is only as good as its members make it. We agreed that every team member brings special attributes to his or her team. We talked about the importance of establishing rules of behavior for the team. The importance of maintaining good communications was covered at length. The need for all team members to actively participate also was emphasized.

In addition, we went over some of the different types of conflicts that can occur and how to handle them. We briefly talked about the importance of recognition for members' efforts and some of the ways it can be given. We discussed ways to make team meetings more enjoyable.

We also considered the steps involved in making team decisions and solving problems. This included the importance of gathering all the information that might be needed and analyzing it thoroughly. We talked about two tools used in examining alternative solutions including the use of a solution matrix and cost/benefit analysis. Finally, we examined ways of making decisions and gaining consensus. We concluded that a simple "majority rules" vote is usually best, but that all team members must agree in advance to support whatever decision is made.

This concludes the **Team Building** module. Thank you.

Notes…

As you conclude your presentation, and if time allows, summarize the key points made in this program. Use the "summary" at left.

For Future Reference

As mentioned at the beginning of this **Team Building Module**, this program, because of its nature, is only an overview of the skills needed for effective, high-performance teams. It only touches on the important points.

Fortunately, there is a wealth of training material including books, videos, self-study programs, magazine articles, and comprehensive seminar programs available. Following are a few reference books and other material you may wish to look into.

Baker, H. K. - "The Hows & Whys of Team Building," *Personnel Journal* 58 (June 1979): pages 367 - 370.

Buchholz, S., and Roth, T. - *Creating the High-Performance Team*. New York: Wiley, 1987.

Dyer, W. G. - *Team Building: Issues and Alternatives.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1987.

Gwynne, S. C. - "The Right Stuff." *Time* (October 29, 1990): pages 74 - 84

Merry, U. and Allerhand, M. E. - *Developing Teams & Organizations.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1977.

Norman, C. A., and Zawacki, R. A. - "Team Appraisals - Team Approach." *Personnel Journal* 70, number 9 (September 1991): pages 101 - 104.

Quick, T. - *Successful Team Building.* AMACOM. 1992

Zenger, J. J., and Miller, D. E. - "Building Effective Teams." *Personnel* 51 (1974): pages 20 - 29.

Training organizations such as the American Management Association and Padgett-Thompson also conduct seminars on team building and other related topics. Books and videos are also available from AMA.

There are numerous books with compilations of icebreakers, energizers and other games that can be used with team meetings. Here are three excellent ones.

Newstrom, John W., and Scannell, Edward E. - *Games Trainers Play, More Games Trainers Play,* and *Still More Games Trainers Play,* New York, NY McGraw-Hill, Inc.