

# FIVE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

This tool helps leaders understand the five elements of successful teams and establish these elements in their own teams. It includes a checklist to use in establishing a team “charter.” This is a very useful tool for new teams, as well as for teams that are searching for a renewed sense of purpose.

## **The Team Charter**

Successful teams have five things in place:

1. A clear sense of purpose
2. Well-understood norms of behavior
3. Measurable success indicators
4. Clear roles and responsibilities
5. Operating rules

These are often incorporated into a team charter – a single document in which all five elements are written down.

Use this checklist to ensure that you’ve established all five elements on your team.

Using a qualified facilitator will help everyone take part and ensure team buy-in for each element of the charter.

## **Team Purpose**

The first part of the meeting should be devoted to answering these questions:

- Why was this team put together in the first place?
- What is the fundamental purpose or mission of the team?
- What are the goals of the team?
- What else does the team want to achieve?
- What will the team be called?

## **Team Norms**

Team norms are the behaviors expected of each member of the team. Identifying them explicitly is critical to making the team function effectively.

- What are the values of the team? (Ask team members to identify the behaviors they would consider essential to team success.)
- How will we make decisions? (Recommended tool: “Decision making types”)
- How will the team members support and interact with one another?
- What will our meeting ground rules be? (Recommended tool: “Ground rules for productive conversations.”)

### **Success Indicators**

Next we want to look at how the team will measure its success. Ask the following questions:

- What outcomes does the team want to achieve?
- How will the team know it is successful? (What measurements will it use?)
- How will it evaluate the progress it is making?
- How will the team recognize one another and celebrate its successes?
- How will the team deal with poor performance?

### **Team Roles**

Team roles should focus on decision making. Ask the following questions:

- What is the typical mode of decision making for this team?
- Who's responsible for clarifying the decision-making roles of the team and of team members if we're unclear?
- Is someone on the team responsible for managing each major decision?
- How much authority does the team have to make decisions by consensus?

### **Operating Rules**

Operating rules should define the way the team manages its meetings. Ask the following questions:

- How often will the team meet?
- How long will the team meet?
- Who facilitates the meeting?
- What kind of agendas do we want? How will we build agendas?
- How will we evaluate our meetings/actions?
- What kind of meeting notes do we want?
- To whom are the notes distributed?
- When are the notes distributed?
- How else will we communicate after the meeting?
- How else will we manage our meetings?

### **Next Steps**

- Write down the team's commitments in a charter. Distribute the charter to every team member.
- Regularly review these commitments (at least twice a year). Ask the team: "Are we doing what we said we would?"
- Follow up in any areas where the team feels it needs to strengthen its commitments.