



## Unit - 2

## Characteristics of an Effective Team

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Identify different types of teams.
- ✓ Build teamwork by recognizing and tapping into the twelve characteristics of an effective team.

## Unit 2

# Characteristics of an Effective Team

## Characteristics of Great Teams

### The 12 Characteristics

These 12 characteristics of effective teams were developed by Glenn Parker, who has devoted his life's work to studying and developing teams. For the remainder of the afternoon and part of tomorrow, the group will look at some of these characteristics.

- ✓ Clear purpose
- ✓ Informality
- ✓ Participation
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Civilized disagreements
- ✓ Consensus decisions
- ✓ Open communication
- ✓ Clear roles and work assignments
- ✓ Shared leadership
- ✓ External relations
- ✓ Style diversity
- ✓ Self-assessment



### Clear Purpose

It can be frustrating to be part of a group with no clear idea of why you are there or what you should be doing. Do your team members know and accept the vision or mission of the organization? Are they part of the goal setting for the department or unit?

A clear purpose will set the direction for the team. Without it, the team could easily question why they exist, and what they are supposed to accomplish. Part of the team forming stage should include defining goals and outlining objectives.

### Informality and Participation

With high-performance teams, we encourage and nurture an environment that leads to greatest results. This means that a climate that is informal and comfortable, even relaxed, is encouraged. The team is observed to ensure that frustrations caused by boredom or personality conflict are dealt with so that participation levels remain high. As leaders, we encourage teams to interact comfortably and easily. We encourage lots of good-natured conversation and laughter.

Seating arrangements can facilitate this. A circle is usually the best seating arrangement so that people face one another, and a typical classroom arrangement is the worst where they have backs to one another.

### Listening

High performance teams focus on using effective communication techniques, particularly listening and asking questions.

**Active listening** means that we try to understand things from the speaker's point of view. It includes letting the speaker know that we are listening and that we have understood what was said. This is not the same as **hearing**, which is a physical process, where sound enters the eardrum and messages are passed to the brain. Active listening can be described as an attitude that leads to listening for shared understanding.

When we make a decision to listen for total meaning, we listen for the content of what is being said as well as the attitude behind what is being said. Is the speaker happy, angry, excited, sad...or something else entirely?

To improve your listening skills, use these tips:

- ✓ **Make a decision to listen.** Close your mind to clutter and noise and look at the person speaking with you. Give them your undivided attention.
- ✓ **Don't interrupt** people. Make it a habit to let them finish what they are saying. Respect that they have thoughts they are processing and speaking about, and wait to ask questions or make comments until they have finished.
- ✓ Keep your **eyes** focused on the speaker and your **ears** tuned to their voice. Don't let your eyes wander around the room, just in case your attention does too.
- ✓ Carry a **notebook** or start a conversation file on your computer. Write down all the discussions that you have in a day. Capture the subject, who spoke more (were you listening or doing a lot of the talking?), what you learned in the discussion, as well as the who, what, when, where, why, and how aspects of it. Once you have conducted this exercise 8-10 times, you will be able to see what level your listening skills are currently at.
- ✓ Ask a few **questions** throughout the conversation. When you ask, people will know that you are listening to them, and that you are interested in what they have to say. Your ability to summarize and paraphrase will also demonstrate that you heard them.
- ✓ When you demonstrate good listening skills, they tend to be **infectious**. If you want people to communicate well at work, you have to set a high example.

## Civilized Disagreements and Consensus

### Definitions

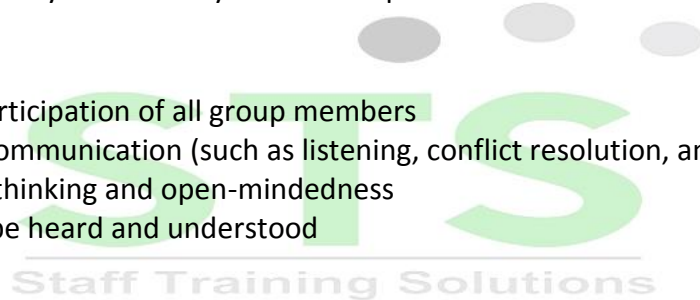
A civilized disagreement means what it sounds like: we can have a disagreement, but we're not going to let it ruin our relationship, nor are we going to behave badly while we work through it. We explain our positions, and even agree to disagree. (We will be spending more time on conflict later in the workshop.)

For important decisions, the goal is substantial (but not necessarily unanimous) agreement through open discussion of everyone's ideas and avoidance of formal voting or easy compromises.

One important element of achieving consensus is that you work toward a proposal or solution that all members will support and that no one will oppose. This is not the same as a unanimous vote since consensus doesn't have to reflect first priorities; the principles are not opposed and are fully supported by the group.

A resolution where everyone is totally satisfied requires these elements:

- ✓ Time
- ✓ Active participation of all group members
- ✓ Skills in communication (such as listening, conflict resolution, and facilitation)
- ✓ Creative thinking and open-mindedness
- ✓ Ideas to be heard and understood



### The Perfect Menu

The CEO of your company has just decided to diversify from the core business and open a chain of restaurants. Your team's job is to design the perfect dinner menu for business clients, with an appetizer, main course, dessert, house wine, and one additional option.

#### Appetizer

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#### Main Course

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#### Dessert

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## House Wine

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## Additional Option

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## Open Communication

Team players can encourage open communication and trust by being dependable, pitching in and helping out, reading and responding to verbal cues, and candidly sharing views. The basic principles of good communication include the following items.

### Objective

You should have an end result or objective clearly in mind before communicating. Examine your purpose. What specifically do you want the receiver to understand or to do, as a result of the communication?

### Method

What's the best method for achieving your objective? Obviously, some communication methods or channels are better than others for a given objective. Weigh the alternatives (written or oral, group or individual, formal or informal) before selecting a specific method such as a letter, memo, meeting, telephone call, or e-mail.

### Structure

How you organize and construct your communication is very important to its success. There are many considerations: How much or how little to cover? What's the best way to organize the message? How can you keep it simple and concise, yet complete? How can you gear it to your audience's needs (frame of reference)?

### Feedback

In order to ensure that your message has been understood and to evaluate the emotions of your receiver (how does he/she feel about it?), you should encourage frequent responses.

## Clear Roles and Assignments

For the first part of this morning, we will continue discussing the 12 characteristics of effective teams. Remember that the first seven characteristics were:

- ✓ Clear purpose
- ✓ Informality
- ✓ Participation
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Civilized disagreements
- ✓ Consensus decisions
- ✓ Open communication

The next characteristic is clear roles and assignments. This is facilitated by making sure that each team member understands what they are to do, and how what they do fits into the bigger picture. Work is distributed fairly throughout the team, and action plans are completed.

**Leader’s Expectation Checklist**

Area	Explanation	Rating (1-10)
<b>Work Methods</b>	Understanding our leader’s expectations regarding required work methods and procedures when completing jobs or projects.	
<b>Time Frames</b>	Understanding due dates for the completion of projects; determining when dates have slipped and which completion dates are final and nonnegotiable.	
<b>Work Responsibilities</b>	Understanding each team member’s role when we are assigned to a given job or responsibility.	
<b>Customer/Supplier Interface</b>	Understanding our leader’s expectations when dealing with supplier problems or customer complaints or requests; understanding how far we should go to build effective relationships with other work groups.	
<b>Work Priorities</b>	Understanding which jobs take priority and the changes in work priorities; being able to clearly differentiate between hot jobs and other jobs.	



The key to shared leadership is communication. If several (or all) members of the group are going to share in leading the group, they must agree on where they are going and how they are going to get there. They must also communicate along the way to make sure they are on track, and to resolve any problems that arise.

As an example, let's look at a traditional construction team. Typically, you have a supervisor (or foreman). This person directs the rest of the workers to get the construction project accomplished. Now, let's say that this team decided to use shared leadership and eliminate the supervisor's position. Without communication, this could be a disaster. You would probably end up in a situation where one person is laying carpet before painting has been completed. However, if the team meets each morning and lays out responsibilities and plans together, this shared leadership formula might work very well for them.

## Team Player Types

### What's Your Team Player Type?

There are many ways to discuss the personality types of people that we work and play with. Whether you use initials like the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), colors like Personality Dimensions, edutainment like True Colors, the names of animals, or Greek philosophers, the idea is that there are base temperaments that we can relate to, and that we prefer. The science behind this kind of assessment relates back to the work of Carl Jung. It has been substantiated through tens of thousands of people who have completed and validated the questionnaires.

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### Scoring Example

Add the total number of points that you wrote beside each letter of the alphabet in the questionnaire. Pay close attention, since the letters are not always in order!

### Scale

- ✓ 4 = Most like you
- ✓ 3 = A lot like you
- ✓ 2 = Somewhat like you
- ✓ 1 = Least like you

### Terms

1. A driving need for you is:

**3** C To find meaning in life

- |          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| <b>4</b> | A To learn and gain knowledge |
| <b>2</b> | B To belong                   |
| <b>1</b> | D Freedom to do what you want |

**Scoring**

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	
<b>D</b>	

**Your Score**

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	
<b>D</b>	

Total A's \_\_\_\_\_ Total B's \_\_\_\_\_ Total C's \_\_\_\_\_ Total D's \_\_\_\_\_

**The letter with the highest total is most like you. Write it here:** \_\_\_\_\_

The other letters are your next preferred styles. If your numbers are close to each other (within five points), you probably find it pretty easy to flex your style to those other categories. If your numbers are far apart, or one is much lower than the others, that is the area you will find it challenging to work within. You'll have the knowledge of how to do it once you work through the material below.

### **What Does it Mean To Have a Number?**

In reality, we are a blend of all types, moving within the numbers and flexing into the other styles that our circumstances and our comfort levels dictate. This means that we are more like a blended drink than distinct ingredients. You'll recognize that you may behave one way at work (super organized, for example), and might be more relaxed at home, but return to your super organized self when stress at home increases.

As you read the descriptions below, see if they agree with how you behave as a member of your team at work, whether you are in meetings or working on a project. You'll also get some insight into how to connect with the different types in the descriptions.

### **Mostly A's – Inquiring Rationals**

Inquiring Rationals are often **drawn to jobs like banking and engineering**. They like to figure out how things work. They consider the structure and configuration of things. They process information intuitively and look at the big picture. These are visionaries, like Albert Einstein and Bill Gates. When it is time to make decisions, they apply logic, and they don't get persuaded by emotions. If they don't respect you, you won't keep their attention. Experience and competency are very important to Inquiring Rationals.

This temperament profile makes up approximately **five to seven percent of the population**. Other notables in this group are Walt Disney, Ben Franklin, Margaret Thatcher, and Napoleon. To connect with Inquiring Rationals on your team, demonstrate your expertise in your work.

**As a member of the team**, you are the person who keeps track of things, most often with checklists and guidelines. You can be counted on to know what the assignment is and when it is due. You get frustrated with team members who are not big on details, or who want to try something new. You like to follow a recipe and you know where your tools are. You probably don't like surprises very much.

Most of the time you complete assignments in a timely and efficient manner, with all the needed detail. You also share the information and materials you have with other members of the team, and provide the technical training or background that they need. People usually see you as dependable, systematic, proficient, practical, and efficient.

Too much logic might mean that you are demonstrating some rigidity. Tap into your sense of humor and try to keep other people's styles in mind, especially if you are leading a team. You may go into data overload with long reports, push for unrealistic standards, and tend to lose patience with team climate and process issues.

### **Mostly B's – Authentic Idealists**

Authentic Idealists are **natural teachers, counselors, and leaders**. They are benevolent and intuitive, and they focus on global issues like world poverty and humanitarian issues. Idealists love metaphors, stories,

and symbols, rather than statistics and figures. They make decisions that reflect their values, and rely on emotion and instinct as opposed to logic. In fact, statistics and facts bore them. They are looking for significance, and they seek the truth.

The Authentic Idealist temperament makes up about **ten percent of the population**. Notable members of this group include Eleanor Roosevelt, Billy Graham, Mahatma Gandhi, Jane Goodall, Oprah Winfrey, and Albert Schweitzer.

Authentic Idealists are people-oriented. They don't want to rock the boat, and their focus is on having everyone in harmony on the team. They can focus more on people's feelings than results. They will step in to resolve process problems (for example, with conflict or lack of involvement), listen attentively while withholding judgment, and offer praise and recognition to other team members.

**To connect with the Authentic Idealists on your team**, share your values and personal convictions. Be authentic and reach out to them by telling stories that demonstrate your empathy. Appeal to personal ethics and a higher calling. Show that you care about them and each person in the room. Authentic Idealists are more interested in how much you care than how much you can cite statistics.

**If your teamwork style is that of an Authentic Idealist, your strengths include** making deep connections with your team at an emotional and personal level. You motivate and encourage. You're a good storyteller, so you find innovative ways to present your information. You have wisdom to share and are eager to do so. Your lack of ego about what you know makes you likeable. You have a sincere enthusiasm and empower people to act. People see you as encouraging, enthusiastic, supportive, humorous, and relaxed.

**Areas for development include** a tendency to be overly sensitive to others. You're intuitive and will interpret meaning behind everything. This also means that you can get distracted by reactions of other individual in the audience, and that can make you lose track. You may see team processes as an end to themselves and fail to challenge or contradict other team members. Make sure that you are well prepared for areas you are responsible for, and that you accommodate other members of the team by being sufficiently serious and aware of the bottom line.

### **Mostly C's – Organized Guardians**

Organized Guardians are extremely **dependable and loyal**, and they play by the rules. They have an amazing work ethic, stay down-to-earth, and they like routine. They are thorough and orderly. At times they are too serious, but they are practically always serious. They are good at taking care of other people. They want to hear about the bottom line, and they want the facts.

Organized Guardians will consider charts and graphs and follow a well prepared presentation longer than most people, but they can shut down when too much emotion is presented and may get bored with

stories. This temperament makes up **40 to 45% of the population** and includes people like Queen Elizabeth II, Mother Teresa, George Washington, and Colin Powell. With their respect for tradition, they are drawn to the military and policing. These are also the people who will pass traditions to their children and grandchildren.

**To connect with Organized Guardians on your team**, be concise, organized, and support statements with data. Present information in a logical sequence, and don't wander off down a tangent. Quote other experts. Expect, and encourage, them to collaborate.

**If you are an Organized Guardian as a team member**, you will be very logical and organized. You'll take notes, and you'll know how to find them. You're a big picture thinker, looking for the better way to do things. You can be persuasive, and you don't need to be tied down by excessive details. You see the vision, mission, and goals of the team as paramount. You are flexible to new ideas and willing to help out even in areas outside of your defined roles. You are willing to share in the limelight with the members of the team. You work hard to meet your objectives. People usually describe you as forward-thinking, cooperative, independent, flexible, and imaginative.

**Your weaknesses can be predictability.** The data will be there, but you may have to remind yourself (repeatedly) to give the group opportunities for self-discovery and application. Draw on your compassion for others to add emotional depth to your work and an appreciation of the strengths of others. Sometimes you may be tempted to publicly complain about team failures. Resist the urge! You may overlook the mission at times by being too future oriented, or lose sight of tasks. Resist the urge to dream, and get on with the doing.

### **Mostly D's – Resourceful Artisans**

Resourceful Artisans **crave action and live in the moment.** They are very social, confident, and persuasive. Donald Trump, Steven Spielberg, and Madonna are notable Resourceful Artisans. They're witty, playful, and fun. If they had a message to share, it would be that the world could lighten up a little. Like Organized Guardians, they can also perceive the world concretely. They can get bored with visionary tasks. They enjoy stories that they can easily relate to and imagine happening to them. This temperament makes up about **35% of the population.**

**To connect with Resourceful Artisans**, be real and spontaneous. Engage them with questions and discussion. Be prepared for them to challenge your ideas, and at times, authority. They will play the devil's advocate and look for weak links in anyone's argument.

**If you're a Resourceful Artisan, your strengths include** energy, personality, and creativity. Build in some interaction when you present your work to leverage your spontaneity. You are a natural storyteller, so tell some stories. You will encourage action, and you have good listening skills, so you are responsive to your team. While most people will appreciate your candor, it may take some practice before you know

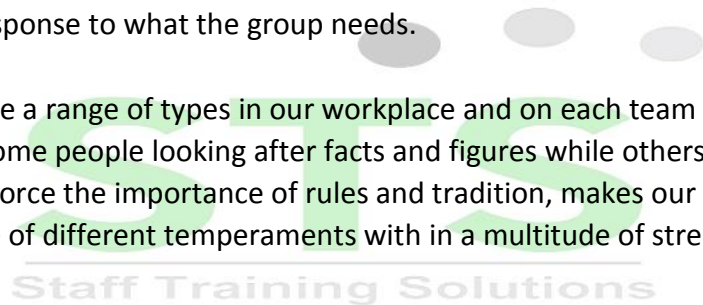
when to back off an issue. You will challenge the team to take well-considered risks and push them toward high ethical standards. People usually see you as candid, honest, principled, assertive, and ethical.

**Your weaknesses** can show up in your organization and structure. Because you are living in the moment, you might avoid the homework that goes into the development of a brilliant report or presentation. You might avoid preparation and be willing to rely on spontaneity, but then you are less focused on content. Be careful not to be so spontaneous that you miss a good opportunity to deliver a powerful message. You can be too direct in communicating with other team members, and sometimes become rigid and inflexible. Avoid painting yourself into a corner by knowing when to back off.

**What's Important?**

We all have preferences for how we do things, and now we hopefully understand a bit more about them. It's also important to remember that we ALL have the range of preferences described here. You might be mostly A, but call on behaviors that are more closely associated with B, C, and/or D as needed. You might also be very close in your results to more than one type, so you'll find it easier than other people to flex your own style in response to what the group needs.

It's important to have a range of types in our workplace and on each team that we work with. The strength of having some people looking after facts and figures while others can appeal to emotions, spontaneity, or reinforce the importance of rules and tradition, makes our business effective. It's the blend, that presence of different temperaments with in a multitude of strengths, which keeps our world fascinating.



**My Team Style**

**What are your individual strengths?**

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**What are your individual weaknesses?**

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**What are your team's strengths?**

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**What are your team's weaknesses?**

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**How can you shore up the weaknesses and leverage the strengths?**

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Further Reading:

