TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Guide to Developing Team Norms

ABOUT THIS TOOL	Establishing team norms helps create a clear set of expectations for how team members participate, contribute and interact with one another to achieve team goals and results.
WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL	Use this tool when you are forming a new team, when the make up of the team has changed or you need to reestablish expectations for the team on member participation, contributions and interactions.

What are team norms, and why do they matter?

Norms are guidelines for how the team members will interact and communicate. Norms help to clarify the expected behavior of individuals on the team and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Norms matter to a team because they lead to:
- Effective decision making.
- Clear expectations for how the team interacts and performs.
- Effective assimilation of new team members.

Examples of Team Norms
We recognize the value of our diverse experiences, styles, backgrounds and perspectives; we encourage one another to share our points of view and listen respectfully. Everyone has a voice even when one decision needs to be made.
We are present and actively contribute by refraining from iPhone/cell phone use during meetings and in public spaces unless it is an urgent matter or directly related to the meeting.
We hold ourselves and each other accountable to meet commitments; we accept personal responsibility for decisions and actions. We provide timely updates when delays or obstacles arise.

How to Establish Team Norms

A collaborative approach to developing team norms will create buy-in and promote team member agreement.

- To facilitate a team norms discussion with your team, use the following approach:
  - Explain the purpose of establishing norms.
  - Articulate that discussion and co-creation are essential to establishing norms.
    - Allow for disagreement during the conversation; however, it is important to gain everyone's agreement on a norm for it to become a team norm.

- Review already established norms if they exist and communicate the process you will use to establish a new list of team norms.
  - Discuss current productive and non-productive norms before creating new ones.
    - A productive norm is explicit and accepted by all team members.
    - A non-productive norm can be established unconsciously and may not serve the team.
    For example: "*Around here, when it comes to meetings, we typically start five minutes late.*" The only way to change a non-healthy norm is to openly discuss the current norm and then collectively agree to refine it.
    - Reframe non-productive norms by asking, "*What are alternative ways to approach the norm that will positively impact the team?*"
  - After reviewing current productive and non-productive ways of working, identify the behavior that must be exhibited by the team. These will become your norms.
    - We _____ by _____.
    - An example is: "*We model and encourage a culture of respectful feedback* by *respectfully and professionally presenting an alternative view and/or recommended action when opinions or views differ from a colleague's.*"
  - Achieve consensus to finalize the team norms for adoption.
  - Discuss the use of feedback to hold people accountable for norms.
- In follow up to the discussion, create a team norms document and distribute to all team members.

Applying the Team Norms

Integrate the Team's Norms into Day-to-Day Activates			
Ensure the team's norms are communicated during the onboarding process.	Use the team's norms for recognition.	Incorporate the team's norms to support a feedback-rich environment; identify when team members model the team's norms, and address team members when the norms are not demonstrated.	Regularly check in with the team on the effectiveness of each norm to see if adjustments need to be made.

LEARN MORE

Links to other materials, tools or recommended articles:
- LinkedIn Learning – *Facilitation Skills for Managers and Leaders*
- LinkedIn Learning Video – *Defining Accountability On Your Team*
- LinkedIn Learning Video – *Clarifying Norms*