



Unit: Team Building

Skill 30: Identifying Types of Teams

Activity B: Team Leadership Strategies

Activity Skills:

Small group interaction, brainstorming, listening and discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding approaches to leadership.
(Prepare with Activities 7: Leadership Styles, 8: Situational Leadership and 64: Team Types)

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Pencils or pens to write (five differently colored utensils if possible).
- Worksheets (included).

Do Ahead:

- Make copies of worksheets.

Source:

Developed by:
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Based On:
How Many Pins Are we Putting in Our Shirts?
By Mike Foti
Leadership Link, OSU
Leadership Center, Spring
2002

BACKGROUND:

When thinking of team leadership strategies there should always be one goal that is paramount – one strategy that is sure to benefit any leader using any style of leadership as well as any team type. In the article *How Many Pins Are We Putting in Our Shirts?* by Mike Foti, he describes this strategy of leadership by saying that when a new men's dress shirt is purchased, "We have to remove all the pins and collar protectors. What a pain! As leaders in organizations we have to ask ourselves, 'How many pins do we put in our peoples shirts?'" The pins here are obstacles, and the question is, as a leader, what do you do with obstacles your team may encounter?

Are you creating more obstacles (through actions like hovering over your team, over analyzing their decisions, etc.), or making existing obstacles more insurmountable (i.e. asking the impossible)? Are you taking on so much that your team has no obstacles – and, also, no work of its own? Or, are you relieving your team's obstacles as much as you can while still remaining effective in your own position?

Whatever team type you are dealing with, be it a work team, project team or focus group, and no matter what style of leadership you employ, your overall goal must be the same. Remove all obstacles that are blocking your team from optimum performance, but don't take on so much that you are exclusively tackling other people's responsibilities.

Invariably the biggest obstacle for any team is motivation. Without motivation even the simplest of tasks can remain undone. Therefore, while along the way other obstacles may crop up that need to be dealt with, as a leader your constant job will be to keep your team motivated. This can be done in various ways, from simply assigning tasks in such a way that each team member works with their inherent strengths, to praising team members, to giving the team a vision – elevating your teams idea of the accomplishment of their tasks to a grand scale so that when they come to work on the project, they are happy to complete every task.

WHAT TO DO:

After discussing the background information, hand out the Team Leadership Strategies worksheet to participants. Instruct them to read through the worksheet and then match each supportive behavior and task with the names in the center column. They should have about 10 minutes to complete the worksheet. Remind the participants that the same supportive behaviors can apply to different people, and multiple people can be assigned to the same task.

NOTE: There are no absolutely right or wrong answers for this activity. The goal is to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of any particular

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Notes:

pairing that a participant may come up with. For instance, if a participant pairs the task of “getting coffee” with Bob because Bob is the “new guy”, that is not incorrect. However, during discussion, why not suggest getting the coffee yourself in order to boost morale?

After individual participants have completed their pairings, the participants can be formed into groups of 2-4. The groups should take another ten minutes discussing their individual pairings, recording on the backs of their worksheets why they think their choices for each individual (Yourself, Jack, Jill, Bob and Betty) are correct.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Were there a great many disagreements about support and task pairings during this assignment? If so, why?
- While not all support behaviors could have been applied to each person, couldn't each task have been the responsibility of the *whole* team?
- How does a situation like this show that it is important to give how you will lead a team forethought?

Apply:

- Thinking back, has there ever been a time when someone has supported you in one of the ways listed on the worksheet?
- In the future, when leading a team, will you think ahead to how you will praise your team later?
- Have you ever been in a situation where lack of supportive leadership was evident? What happened and how did you feel?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Resources and Web Links:

How Many Pins Are we Putting in Our Shirts? By Mike Foti

Leadership Link, OSU Leadership Center, Spring 2002