



# Working Together

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# Introduction

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## Overview

Working Together is a team-building unit. The goal of this unit is to enhance your ability to work together effectively as a team. During this highly interactive unit the dynamics of successful teamwork are explored and experienced. Emphasis is placed on positive interpersonal skills between team members that are necessary to ensure the accomplishment of goals within a specific work group.

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## Objectives

The information, activities, and practice provided during this unit will enable you to:

1. Define team “synergy.”
2. Describe four requirements for successful teamwork.
3. Explain four communication styles and how they affect interactions with people.
4. List ways versatility can be used to communicate more effectively.
5. Identify “positive-impact phrases” that improve team cooperation.
6. Demonstrate how to show consideration for team members using targeted positive regard.
7. Describe the five stages of team development.
8. Identify specific actions of team members that will enhance team development at each stage.
9. Demonstrate commitment by creating an action plan for continuous team improvement.

Notes:





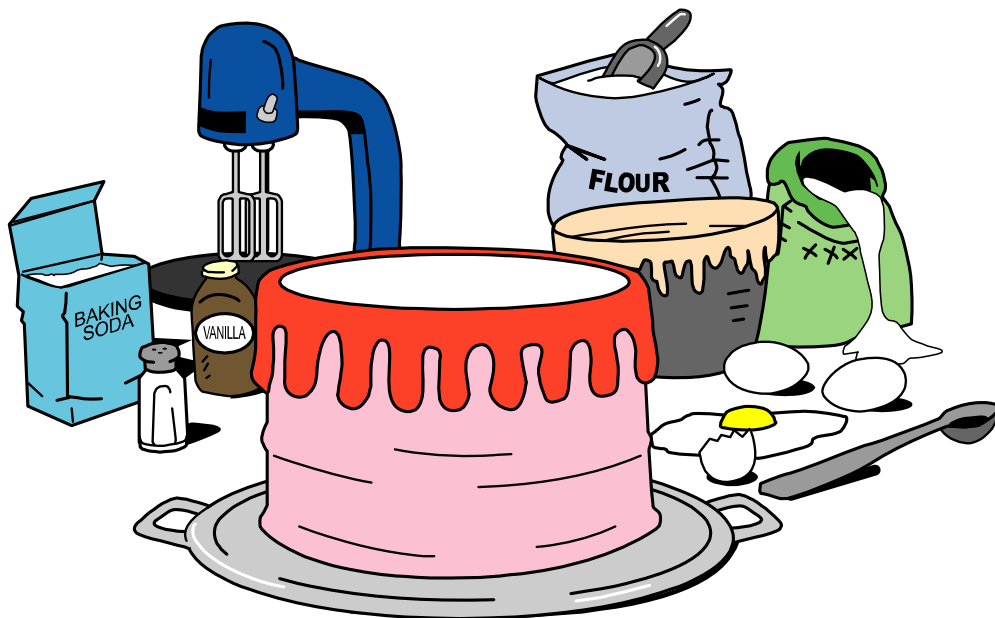
# Teamwork and Synergy

## Introduction

A *team* is any group of people working together to accomplish a task or goal. Every member of your company team will be united in its commitment to people, customers, suppliers, and the community. Each employee will also be a member of a smaller team, which has unique goals that support the company's mission.

How well team members work together will determine whether or not the team succeeds in accomplishing its tasks or goals.

When the quality of team work is high, team members can combine their actions and talents to achieve results which are greater than the sum of their individual efforts. This phenomenon is called “synergy.”



*Synergy*

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## **Activity: Characteristics of Successful and Unsuccessful Teams**

Most people have had the experience of being a member of a high performing team at one time or another and have felt the excitement and motivation that comes with working together successfully.

Most people have also experienced the “other” type of teamwork, such as playing on a losing sports team or working with others and not achieving their goals. They have felt the disappointment and frustration that ineffective teamwork brings.

Recall some of your personal experiences with teams (successful and unsuccessful). How did the successful teams differ from those that were unsuccessful? In the spaces provided below, describe the characteristics of successful teams.

**Successful team characteristics:**

**Unsuccessful team characteristics:**



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## The Four C's of Successful Teamwork

Characteristics of successful teams belong to one of four categories:

- Communication
- Cooperation
- Consideration
- Commitment

Teamwork usually fails when one or more of these basic requirements for working together effectively is not met.

### **Communication**

Communication among team members concerning purpose and strategies for meeting goals enables the team to function as a whole and achieve success.

Differences in communication styles can sometimes create communication barriers. Team members can improve communication by valuing and respecting their differences. Then they can build the kind of team environment that will support and encourage synergy.

### **Cooperation**

Often, it is necessary to look beyond one's immediate team for help in accomplishing tasks. In order for everyone to succeed, all teams must share resources, take risks, and cooperate.

The ideal company is one in which all team members cooperate with their coworkers and share a spirit of community effort. Achieving a high level of cooperation is possible through taking a positive approach to conflict situations as they surface.

## **Consideration**

Consideration means “going the extra mile” to give a helping hand to a fellow team member who is in need of assistance. The “little things” that team members say or do for each other can add up to make a big difference!

Each individual has a strong need to receive positive recognition and personal attention from others. Demonstrating consideration responds to this need by recognizing and valuing individuals for their uniqueness and their contributions to the team.

## **Commitment**

For teamwork to be successful, responsibility must be recognized as a part of *every* person’s job description.

Each team member is responsible for his or her contribution to the team and for his or her personal development. Team members also accept responsibility for team performance.

Successful teams plan for success and support each other in achieving it. These teams and individuals constantly strive to develop ways to improve the effectiveness of the team, as well as the quality of services and products that are produced by the team.



# Communication

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## Opening Communication Channels

Communication between people is a complex process. Even when a message is simple, people often perceive its meaning differently. This is because we filter our perception of events, situations, and other people through our own beliefs, expectations, needs, and experiences.

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## Activity: The Unfinished Project

It is Tuesday afternoon. Wendy and Marvin, two coworkers, are scheduled to meet to work together on a project concerning a process problem. They have been asked to present a list of possible actions for solving the problem to their quality team on Friday at 4:00 p.m.

Wendy arrives at the conference room five minutes early. She is wearing a navy blue outfit with matching shoes. Her work is carefully organized in folders with neatly typed and color-coded labels. Marvin walks in casually, ten minutes late, wearing plaid pants and a brightly-colored shirt. He drops a disorganized pile of papers on the table and bites into an apple. They begin to work on solving the process problem.

Wendy speaks slowly and quietly, and keeps her hands folded in her lap. Marvin speaks loudly and rapidly, changing the pace of his voice as he gets more and more excited about his ideas. He uses wide gestures and facial expressions to illustrate his ideas.

Marvin says, “I can’t wait to tell you about this great idea I have about how we can present our solutions to the rest of the team. I thought we could use colored graphs and posters and...”

Wendy looks at her watch and interrupts Marvin mid-sentence. She says, “That’s really nice, Marvin, but I think we need to begin by carefully planning a time-line for this project. I brought a calendar and I also ran off a copy of last year’s budget report so that we can review the data from our last project.”

Marvin pushes Wendy’s large pile of computer pages aside. He says, “I don’t care about all of those numbers. It cramps my creativity. I want to come up with something new and exciting — something that has never been done before. I want our team members to think this is the best action plan they’ve ever seen. I like the graph and poster ideas.”



Wendy's face reddens and she folds her arms. She says coldly, "That's fine, Marvin, but I want to be organized and accurate. I don't like having to go back and fix mistakes because we jumped in too fast without thinking this through. I really think we need to collect more data and information to analyze the real problem."

Marvin stands up and says, "You can go collect your data, but I'm going to start coming up with ideas. I'll be finished before you even get started."

Wendy gathers her papers in a neat pile and stands up. "That's fine," she says through clenched teeth. "We obviously can't communicate on this. Why don't you just do it your way and I'll do it mine!" She storms out of the room.

"We'll see who has better ideas!" Marvin yells as he slams the door behind her.

What happened to hinder communication between Wendy and Marvin?

How were Wendy and Marvin different in the way they approached this project?

Wendy:

Marvin:

Who was at fault?

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## Keys to Effective Communication

When two people have a problem communicating with each other, it is often neither person's "fault." Many communication barriers occur because people fail to understand and appreciate some simple individual differences in the way they relate to each other.

Effective communication occurs when we can understand the world through another person's viewpoint and they can understand the world through our viewpoint. This means that we need to identify and understand the other person's needs, values, beliefs and expectations. The other person also needs to understand our needs, values, beliefs and expectations.

The key to effective communication is to understand differences in communication styles and develop strategies for communicating more effectively with people who have different needs and expectations than your own.

To remove the communication barriers caused by clashes with other people's styles, team members can:

- Understand and appreciate team member differences.
- Understand their styles and how they are perceived by others.
- Modify their styles to respond appropriately to different situations.





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## Your Communication Style

Communication styles are a way of understanding differences in the way people relate to each other

Every team member has a set of general behavior patterns that are based on how he or she perceives the world. These patterns are formed by each person's needs, beliefs, values, and past experiences. They form the basis for how people communicate with others. This set of behavior patterns is called a "communication style."

As we look at the differences in the way people communicate, we find that most people exhibit one of four basic communication styles:

- Bold
- Expressive
- Sympathetic
- Technical

The "BEST" Profile is designed to provide you with information about how you, as a team member, communicate with others. It is an assessment of the communication style you use most often when you relate to others.

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## Two Dimensions of Behavior

All four of the communication styles are made up of two dimensions of behavior: assertiveness and responsiveness.

### The Assertiveness Dimension

The Assertiveness Dimension represents the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ a person makes to \_\_\_\_\_ the thinking and actions of others.

Different people show different degrees of assertiveness when they communicate with others. Thus, every person's communication behavior falls somewhere on a scale between two extremes: Direct and Indirect.

**Direct**

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**Indirect**

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## The Responsiveness Dimension

The Responsiveness Dimension refers to the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ a person expresses in his or her interactions with others.

Like the Assertiveness Dimension, different people show different degrees of emotion in their interactions with others. Thus, everyone's communication behavior falls on a scale between two extremes: Control and Emote.

### Control

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### Emote

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## The Four Communication Styles

When we combine the Assertiveness Dimension and the Responsiveness Dimension, we can identify four distinct communication styles.



*Four Styles of Communication*

Each of the four styles is characterized by a unique combination of traits from the two dimensions:

<u>Dimensions</u>	<u>Style</u>
Control/Direct .....	Bold Style
Emote/Direct .....	Expressive Style
Emote/Indirect .....	Sympathetic Style
Control/Indirect .....	Technical Style



Bold:

Expressive:

Sympathetic:

Technical:

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## Activity: Understanding Your Style

My communication style is:

Strengths of my style:

Potential risks of my style:

A slogan for my style:

Several famous people that share my style:

The most challenging style for me:



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## The Four Styles Under Stress

There is no such thing as a “good” style or a “bad” style. There are positive and negative aspects to each style, depending on how and where it is used. Every style can be successful, as long as it is appropriate for the situation and as long as it is used to enhance communication with others.

Communication problems occur when someone becomes so focused on his or her style that he or she is unable to understand and communicate effectively with people of different styles. Each person expects to be treated a certain way. When those expectations are not met, tensions begin to rise.

When individuals experience stress, whether it is caused by style clashes or other situations, their communication styles tend to become exaggerated and unproductive. We call this the “backup” style, because a person’s style “backs up” further toward the extreme ends of the assertiveness and responsiveness scales. As this happens, differences between people become even more exaggerated and communication breaks down completely.

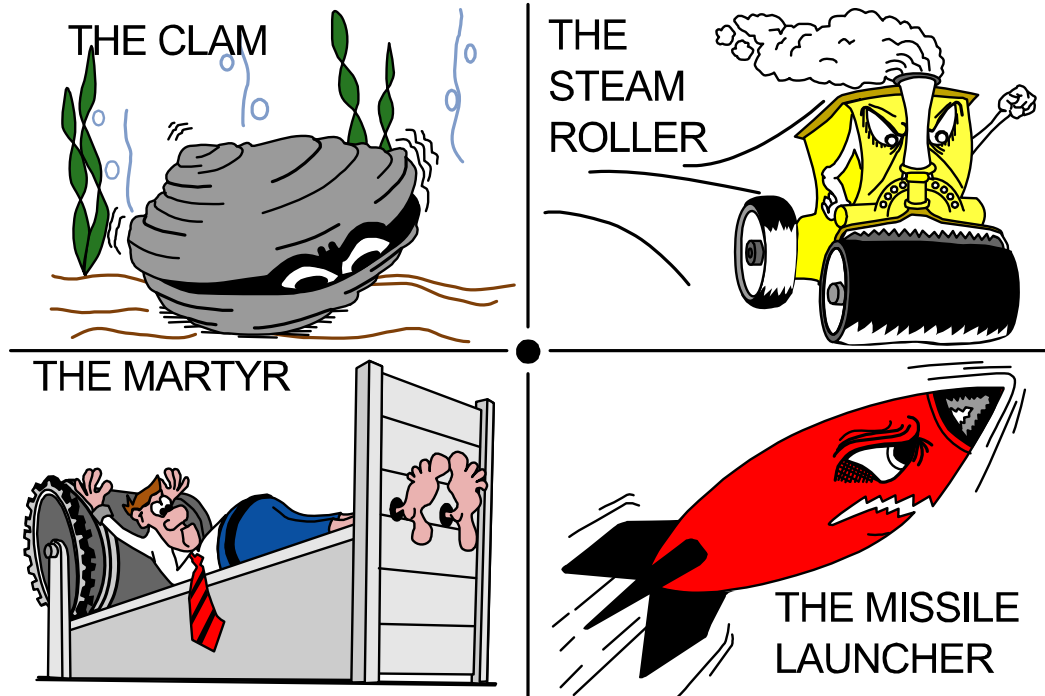
Each style reacts differently under stress.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Backup Style</u>
Bold .....	Steam Roller
Expressive .....	Missile Launcher
Sympathetic .....	Martyr
Technical .....	Clam

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## Backup Styles

Each style's "backup" style has unique characteristics. You may be able to relate to these, or see someone you know, in each of these styles.



*Communication Backup Styles*





## **Bold**

The “Steam Roller.” The Bold needs action and results. Under stress, the Bold style may take charge, using power or force to get something done. You may hear him or her say something like “Get out of my way and let me do it!”

## **Expressive**

The “Missile Launcher.” The Expressive style needs to vent emotion and feelings. Under stress, the expressive suppresses emotion until he or she explodes, much like a pressure cooker when the pressure is released suddenly.

He or she may verbally attack the situation or the person. Expressives use anger and emotion to get something done.

## **Sympathetic**

The “Martyr.” The Sympathetic style has a need to avoid conflict and maintain relationships. When conflict arises, sympathetics may quietly “give in” to preserve the relationship. Others may think everything is fine. But is everything fine? The sympathetic person may still be thinking the situation over long after the others have moved on.

The sympathetic may soon feel (and act) like a martyr. They don’t get mad, they get even! Sympathetics use guilt to get something done!

## **Technical**

The “Clam.” The Technical style also needs to avoid confrontation and requires time to logically think through the situation and to gather more information.

Under stress, or when styles clash, the technical style will avoid or withdraw from the issue or person. Technicals use “time out” to gather data and plan how to get something done.

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## Versatility

Versatility is the key to your communicating effectively with others. It is also the key to the success of your team.

*Versatility* is the ability to modify your style in order to work with individuals who think and behave differently.

The key to versatility is to treat others the way *they* want to be treated.

You can create positive interactions by behaving in ways that are appropriate and comfortable for others. When people see you making an effort to meet their needs, they will usually respond by increasing their versatility with you.

While there is no “right” style, there is often a right style for a given situation. The important thing is to make your style work effectively for you — by increasing your effectiveness with others and reducing the tension in your interactions with others.



*Versatility*



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## Activity: Flexible Communications

Versatility with Bold Styles:

Versatility with Expressive Styles:

Versatility with Sympathetic Styles:

Versatility with Technical Styles:

[illegible]



# Cooperation

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## What is Cooperation?

Cooperation is critical to the team's success. For a team to be effective, team members must be willing to work toward similar goals and look for ways to help each other out. If there is tension, infighting, disrespect, or a low level of trust among team members, there are virtually hundreds of potential obstacles in the path of effective teamwork.

Cooperation builds good working relationships that are characterized by openness and trust. When people cooperate with each other, many positive feelings develop. These positive feelings lead to positive actions that benefit team members and teamwork, such as:

- Team members are able to resolve challenging issues
- Every team member contributes new ideas and suggestions
- Team members support and trust each other
- Everyone shows enthusiasm and effort for the team's success



*Cooperation*

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## Sources of Conflict

If team members do not learn ways to handle conflict when it arises, it can damage relationships and destroy the effective functioning of the whole team. Managing conflict positively can open the door to healthier, stronger, and more satisfying team relationships.

In the space provided below, list some possible sources of conflict in a workplace.

Sources of Conflict:



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## A Positive Approach to Conflict

People do not automatically work well together just because they happen to belong to the same work group. While conflict cannot be eliminated, team members can learn ways to work through it constructively without damaging the team's progress or relationships between team members.

Cooperation is the ability of team members to recognize conflict and openly seek to resolve it.

When teams experience conflict and do not confront it openly or positively, the stage is set for an "office soap opera." Negative feelings ripple throughout the office, much like water in a pond when disturbed by a rock.

When conflict is dealt with positively, the energy and effort of the team is focused on the success of the team. The morale and self-esteem of everyone stays high, and the team stays together instead of splitting into several smaller subgroups.

Cooperation involves negotiating situations where everyone wins. Learning to handle conflict positively is a two-step process:

- Use positive-impact language.
- Use feedback to defuse conflict situations.

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## Positive Impact Phrases

Many familiar phrases which may appear, at first, to be acceptable, sometimes create conflict with others. These “negative-impact phrases” communicate a hidden message which the speaker may not intend to communicate.

Some common negative impact phrases are listed below:

<u>Negative Phrase</u>	<u>Positive Phrase</u>
I can't . . .	_____
I'll try . . .	_____
You should . . .	_____
You have to . . .	_____
Your problem . . .	_____
Your complaint . . .	_____
I like it but . . .	_____
It's not my job . . .	_____
You always/never . . .	_____





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## Activity: Using Positive Phrases

Consider the following sentences. How can each sentence be phrased more positively?

1. I'll try to get that information to you by Friday.
2. I can't help you with this report now.
3. You should log your calls to avoid confusion.
4. You always leave for break during the heaviest loads.
5. You have to fill out this form to receive credit for overtime.
6. Your problem seems to be that you don't understand the new procedure.
7. Your complaint is that we take too much time to complete these reports.
8. I agree with you, but I want the others to give us their opinions, too.

**Notes:**

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# Consideration

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## What Is Consideration?

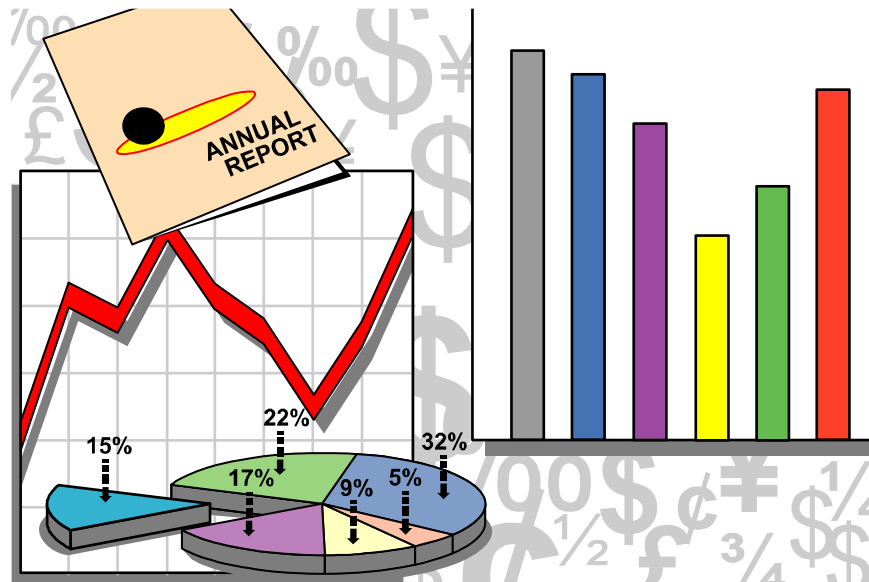
Consideration refers to how team members treat each other as they work together to accomplish goals. Successful teams recognize the value that consideration adds to teamwork.

In teams where members treat each other with high levels of consideration, relationships and productivity are enhanced. Unfortunately, consideration is sometimes overlooked because of its less tangible relationship to business goals.

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## The Two Worlds of Business

In every business there are two “worlds” that contribute to its success. In the “bottom-line world”, results and performance are measured in terms of factual data like costs, sales, budgets, and profit. This bottom-line world is important. A company that ignores bottom-line issues does not stay in business very long.



*The Bottom-line World*

There is also a “relationship world” that deals with interactions among team members. Events that take place in the relationship world can have an enormous impact on the bottom-line world.



*The Relationship World*

Many times team members get so involved with urgent bottom-line situations that they may become “too busy” to show consideration and maintain positive relationships with other team members. When personal attention is lacking, the bottom-line world suffers as well. Self-esteem is diminished, productivity declines, and teamwork suffers.

Showing consideration for others takes conscious effort that goes beyond courtesy and politeness. In addition, team members crave positive personal attention. Each individual needs to feel recognized and valued for his or her contributions and uniqueness.

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## The Power of Positive Expectations

The expectations of the team towards any of its members can have a major impact on the behavior and performance level of that member.

When team members make assumptions about another team member, they may change their behavior towards that individual and place an “invisible label” on him or her. The team member will usually change his or her behavior in response to that label and begin acting in a way that supports the expectations of the team.

This is called a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.

When team members have negative expectations about other team members' capabilities or qualifications, they may miss tapping into some strengths in the work group.

Team members have a responsibility to constantly show positive expectations of other team members.

Positive expectations create positive behaviors. When people believe that others want them to succeed, they will usually “rise” to meet those expectations.



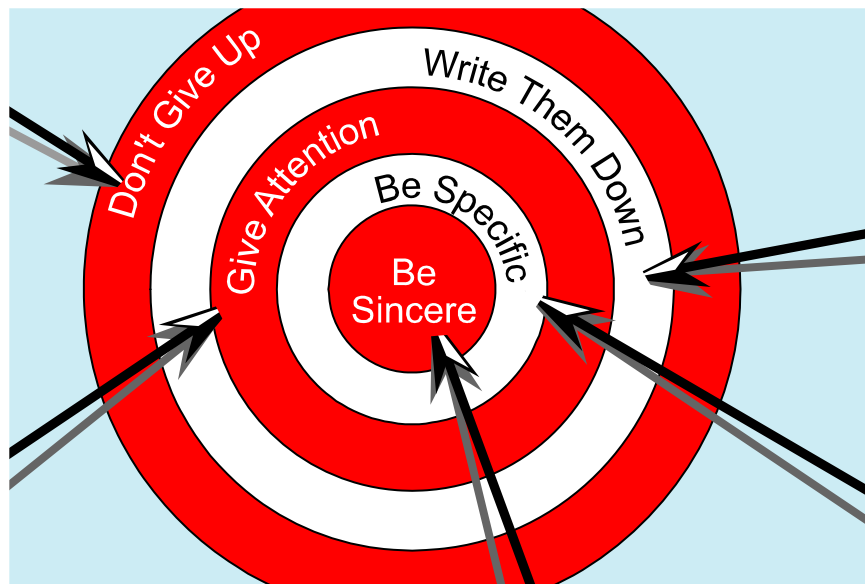
*The Power of Positive Expectations*

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## Targeted Positive Strokes

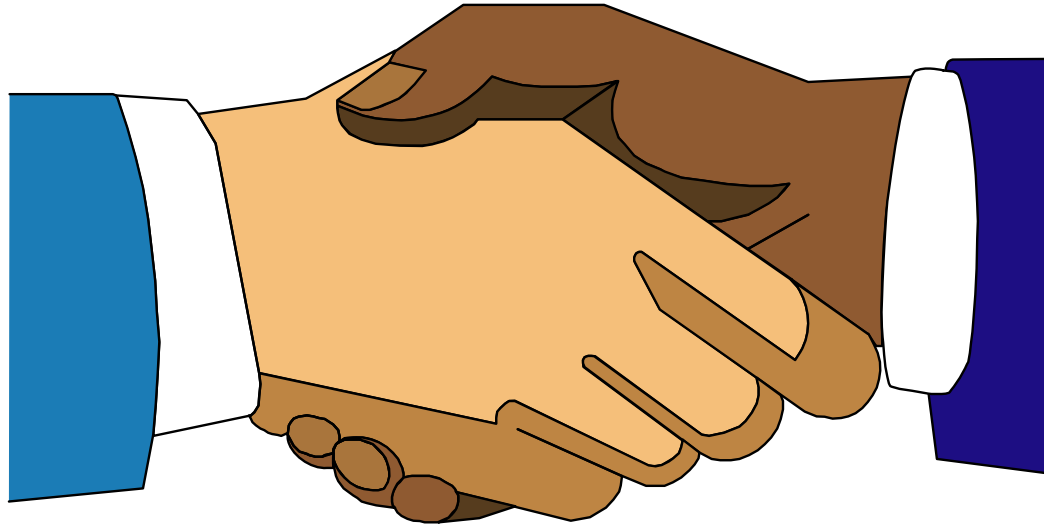
Enhancing and maintaining a team member's self-esteem is a foundation of effective teamwork. Every person has a basic, universal need to feel worthwhile, competent, and valuable to the team. Enhancing self-esteem creates an environment that allows all members to reach their full potential while achieving team objectives.

Everyone needs to feel empowered to do the best that he or she can. If team members feel appreciated and valued, they are more likely to contribute fully. Team synergy and productivity increase greatly. Anything that undermines self-esteem is destructive to team relationships and to the performance level of the team.



*Targeted Positive Strokes*

Team members can enhance consideration and the self-esteem of others by giving targeted positive strokes. Targeted positive strokes are the thanks, interest, positive attention, and praise that people give to and receive from others.



*Strokes*

Teamwork is enhanced when strokes are openly given:

- Between team members
- Between team leaders
- From team leaders to team members
- From team members to team leaders
- From members of different teams

The following guidelines may be helpful to ensure that positive strokes are well received.

Be Sincere:

Be Specific:

Give Attention:

Write Them Down:

Don't Give Up:





# Commitment

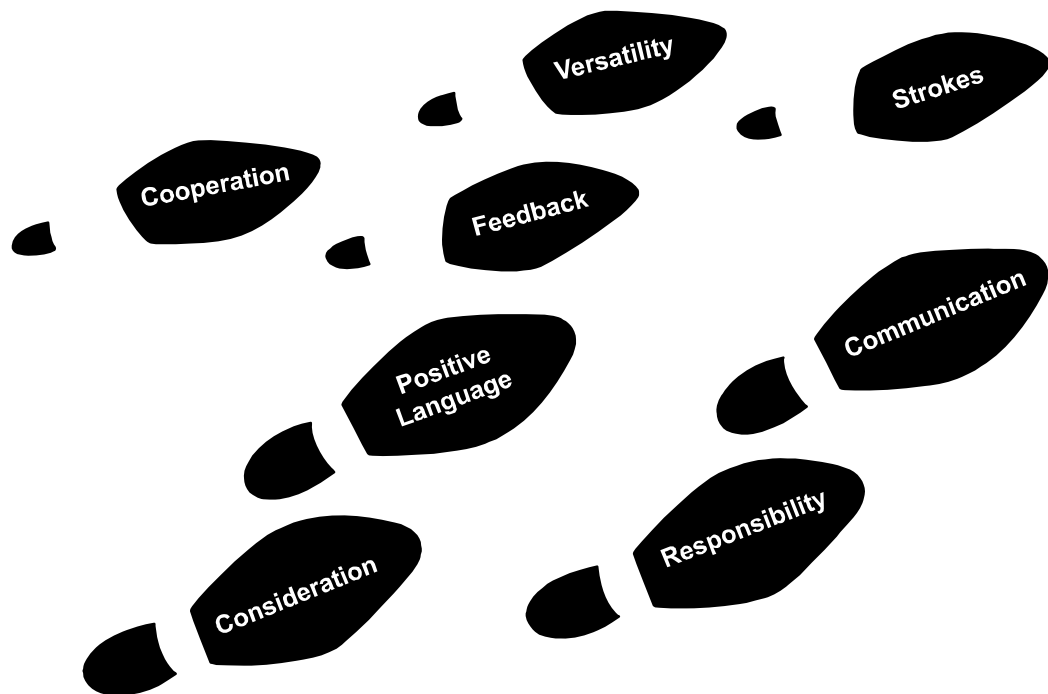
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## Walk the Talk

Commitment is the responsibility that team members demonstrate for the team, other team members, and themselves.

Tom Peters, author of *In Search of Excellence* and numerous other books about team excellence, describes commitment as “walking the talk”, or, living what you learn in order to achieve success.

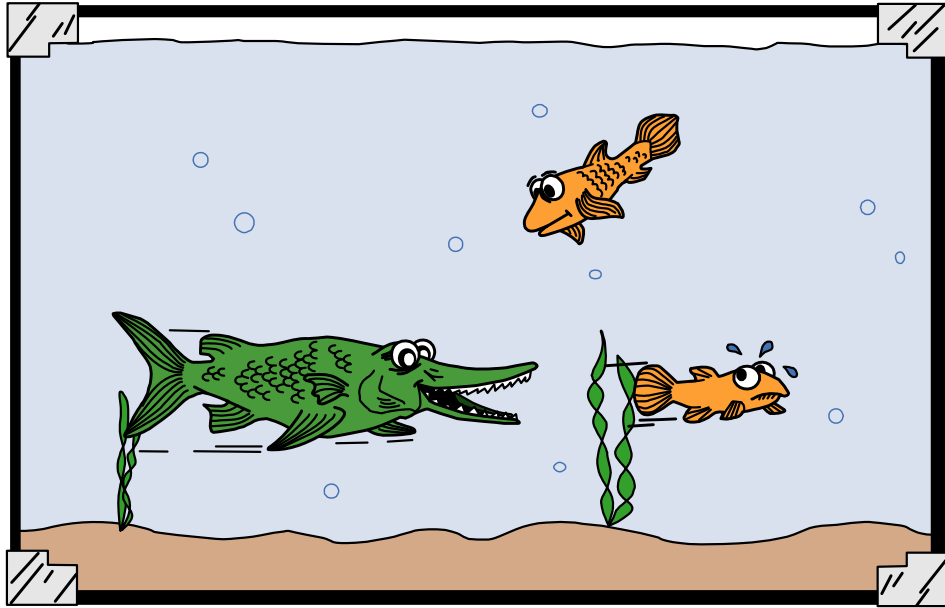
Sometimes team members are reluctant to try these new skills. One reason for this reluctance is illustrated by the following experiment that was conducted several years ago in Marineland, California.



*Walk the Talk*

## The Pike

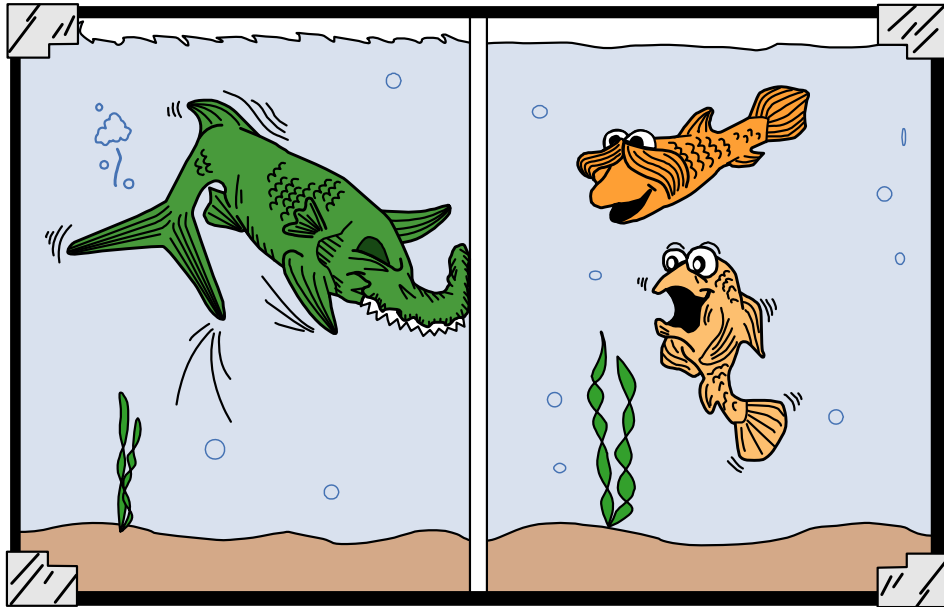
A pike was captured and placed in a glass tank that resembled its natural environment. The pike swam freely about the tank. Several times a day it was fed a favorite meal of minnows.



One day, after the pike had been fed, it was resting near the bottom of the tank. A glass wall was inserted into the tank, dividing the tank into two separate chambers. From the pike's perspective, nothing had changed.

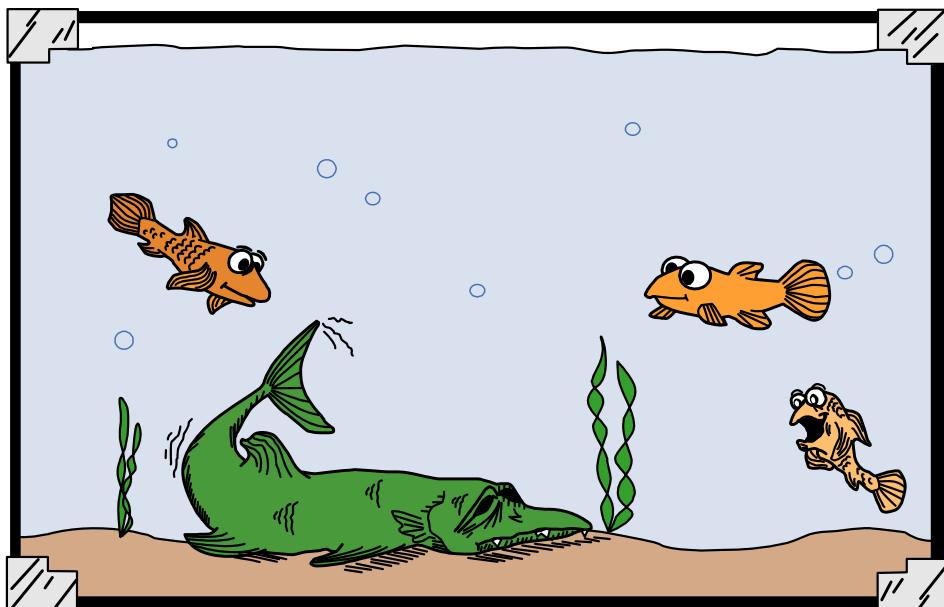
Later that day minnows were poured in the side of the tank that was separated from the pike by the glass wall. The pike was hungry and he darted at the minnows.

With each dart, the pike slammed into the glass. But he didn't give up. Again and again he darted towards the minnows, and each time he received a jolt.



Finally, the pike retreated to the bottom of the tank and lay motionless.

In the next phase of the experiment, the glass wall was removed. The minnows were now able to swim all about the tank. But the pike did not eat the minnows. Instead, he remained on the bottom of the tank and died of starvation.

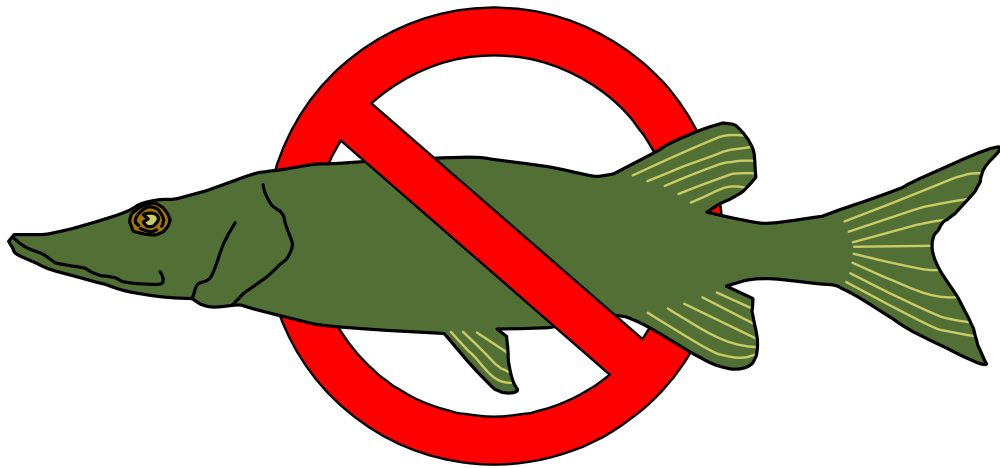


In this situation, the pike's past experiences had *conditioned* him to believe that darting after the minnows would cause him pain, so he made the choice to stop eating.

The sad fact about the pike's choice is that if he had tried *just one more time*, he would have survived.

Sometimes team members, like the pike, are also conditioned by negative past experiences. They do not even attempt to succeed. Instead, they pass up new opportunities, even though the barriers may only exist in their own minds.

Commitment requires that team members view past problems as learning events — not as obstacles which prevent future success.



*No Pikes*



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## Stages of Team Development

Commitment also requires that team members work together to help the team as it grows and reaches maturity. Teams experience stages of development and growth, much like individuals. These stages are:

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Warming

Understanding these stages of team development is an important step toward achieving goals and adapting to changes. At each stage of the team's development, team members play an important role for keeping the team functioning effectively.

Characteristics of each of these stages and actions that will strengthen the team during each are listed on the following pages.

## The Forming Stage

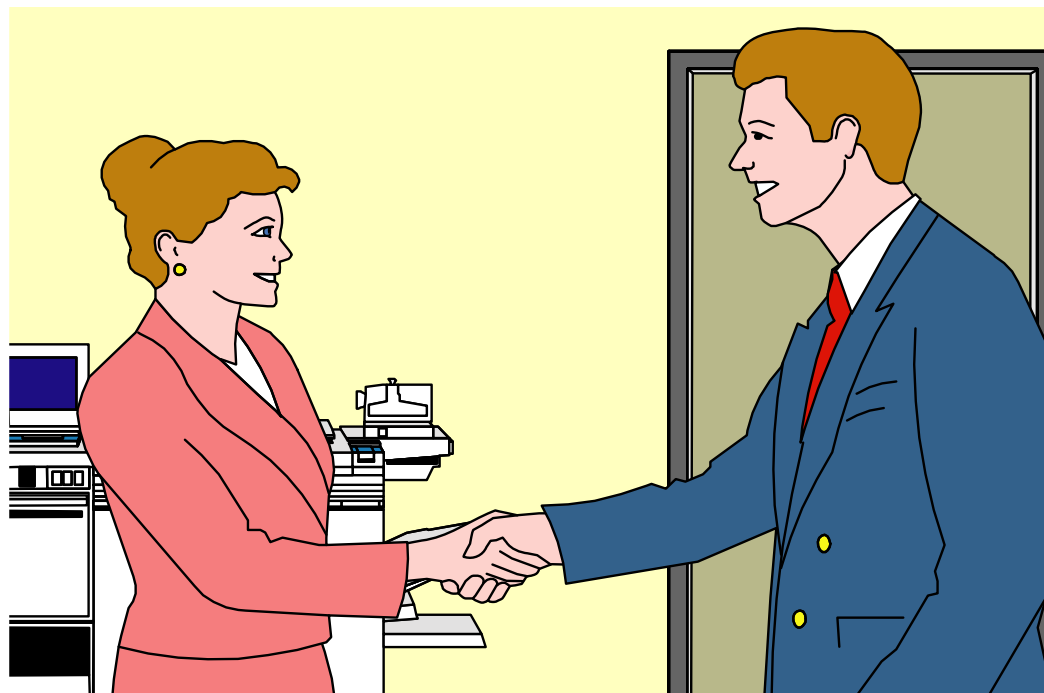
The Forming Stage focuses primarily on the start-up of a new team. This is when the team is preparing to work. Team members become acquainted with one another, share values, and establish the basis for the structure of the team.

### Characteristics

- Values and polite conversation are shared; behavior norms are established
- Confusion over team purpose, tasks, and individual roles
- Look to a leader or other member for rules and guidance

### Actions

- Encourage activity which enables people to become better acquainted
- Clarify team objectives, tasks, and individual roles
- Affirm individual abilities contribution.



*Forming*

## The Storming Stage

After the forming period, teams move into a period of storming characterized by challenging authority. The initial reluctance to express opinions in the Forming Stage is followed by a period of competition.

### Characteristics

- More open expression of personal opinion/disagreement/concerns
- Arguments over tasks and team processes; some task avoidance
- Competition; formation of cliques; less team spirit; discomfort among team members

### Actions

- Listen; focus on understanding other views
- Focus on team goal and work expectations
- Accept conflict as normal; look for win-win solutions to problems

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*Storming*

## The Norming Stage

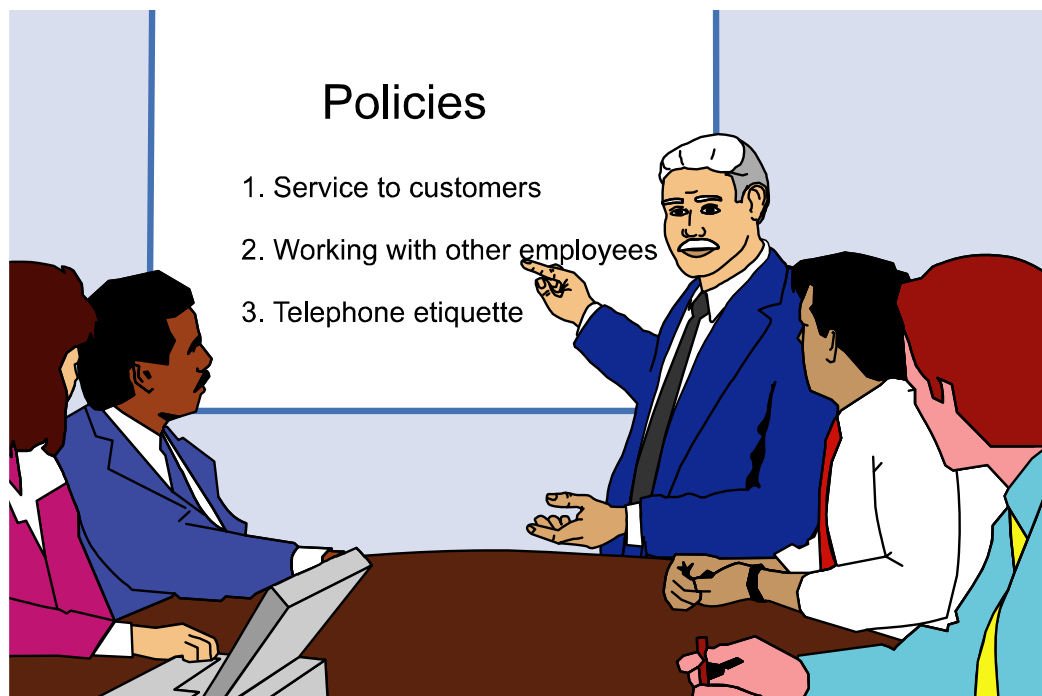
During the Norming Stage, team members are engaged in setting the guidelines for how the team will achieve its goals.

### Characteristics

- Understanding of team purpose, agreement on tasks, roles, ground rules, and behavior
- Listening; acceptance of new ideas and helpful ways to deal with conflict increases
- Team spirit builds; members value new identity

### Actions

- Highlight the desired results of teamwork
- Adapt conflict resolution skills; work toward win-win solutions
- Seek agreement; compromise when necessary



### Policies

1. Service to customers
2. Working with other employees
3. Telephone etiquette

*Norming*



## The Performing Stage

After the team experiences the initial three stages of development, it enters the more productive Performing Stage characterized by “getting down to business.” During this stage of development, team members work well together.

### Characteristics

- Team members cooperate; energy is focused on tasks/away from issues
- Focus on achieving goals and objectives
- Productivity increases; enhanced quantity and quality of work

### Actions

- Make work fun and challenging
- Support team goals/work expectations
- Support and reward individual and team performance

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*Performing*

## The Warming Stage

A team that progresses to the warming stage continues to be constructive and productive. In fact, this type of team usually achieves *more* than is expected because synergy is at its peak during the warming stage.



*Warming*



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## Our Team's Development

Successful teams plan for success and support each other in achieving it. These teams and individuals constantly strive to develop ways to improve the effectiveness of the team, as well as the quality of services and products that are produced by the team.

One way to reduce the time needed for a new, changing, or “stuck” team to become fully productive is through skill building in the Four C’s of Successful Teamwork: communication, consideration, cooperation, and commitment.

Successful teams also set goals and develop action plans for achieving their goals. They regularly review those plans to evaluate their progress.

What best characterizes our team?



What are the biggest barriers to teamwork that our team will face?

What can we do to strengthen our team at this stage?

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## Activity: Team Development Action Plan

Communication:

Cooperation:

Consideration:

Commitment:

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## Teamwork Coat of Arms

*Sow a thought, reap an action.*

*Sow an action, reap a habit.*

*Sow a habit, reap a character.*

*Sow a character, reap a destiny.*

In medieval days, knights were devoted to causes and undertook personal missions in support of those causes. To accomplish missions, knights often ventured out on quests which took them to new and exotic lands. Some travelled for many years, fulfilling their missions and learning much about different cultures in the foreign lands in which they travelled.



*Teamwork Coat of Arms*

It was common practice for each knight to carry a coat of arms that depicted symbols of the values and goals for which he stood. These coats of arms were displayed on the knight's shield.

When they returned home, the knights often brought with them mementos of the lands and cultures they had encountered, such as fragrant spices, rich fabrics and tapestries, colorful jewels, entertaining stories, and new ways of doing things.

Today, like the knights of medieval days, you have been on a quest of your own. This quest was to learn about working together more effectively. Now it's time to consider what mementos, or ideas, you will take back with you to *your* "homelands": your company, your team, and your job.



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## Activity: Teamwork Coat of Arms

Effective teamwork requires good communication, cooperation and consideration among team members, plus commitment to achieve team goals. What have you learned about each of the 4 C's that you can apply with your team? Note your ideas below. Be prepared to share your ideas with your team to create your own teamwork coat of arms.

[illegible]





# Summary

Everyone wants to belong to a winning team! Team success begins when team members communicate well and cooperate with each other, demonstrate consideration toward one another, and are committed to the team's success.

Trademarks of a successful team include:

- Open communication channels.
- Versatility with different communication styles.
- A positive approach to conflict.
- Positive-impact language.
- Positive expectations for every team member.
- Targeted positive strokes.
- Walking the talk.
- Goals for continuous team improvement.

When all of the components of effective teamwork are present in your team, synergy is created! Good teamwork will produce results far beyond the capabilities of its individual members. The success will be greater, your job will be more enjoyable, and your customers will receive service surpassed by none!

