

ESSENTIAL TEAM BEHAVIORS



What are the building blocks of effective change teams? Process improvement initiatives require certain behaviors and traits to succeed, such as mutual respect, good communication skills, and paying attention to details. Some teams, however, seem to do more in less time, while keeping group morale high. Fostering values such as honesty and fearlessness, as well as creating a culture of innovation and goal-orientedness make some change teams rise above the rest. Cultivating these values can also strengthen the team's ability to sustain the gains from process improvements and reduce problems brought about by high employee turnover.

EFFECTIVE CHANGE TEAMS VALUE/PRACTICE ...

- A** **GILITY**
A group's ability to learn fast and to get things done, regardless of how many times they fail, is the underlying principle behind rapid change initiatives. Most of us hesitate to go beyond our comfort zone, which prevents us from learning and carrying out substantial change.
- B** **ELIEVING IN ONE ANOTHER**
Respect and trust in one's colleagues serve as the foundation of any effective change team. Without the fundamental belief in one another's abilities, progress gets bogged down as projects are delayed or redone, wasting time and energy, and adversely affecting group morale.
- C** **OMMUNICATING WELL**
Many teams and many change initiatives falter and fall behind schedule due to ambiguous and inefficient channels of communication. Clear and direct lines of communication—whether verbal or written, electronic or manual—are essential to success.
- D** **ETAIL-ORIENTEDNESS**
Attention to detail distinguishes good craftsmen from artisans. Being detail-oriented implies the pursuit of excellence and, over time, provides competitive advantage in the service sector, where many organizations suffer death by mediocrity.
- E** **NTHUSIASM**
Even the most exciting change project eventually loses steam. One challenge change teams face is to maintain a consistent level of excitement, even during routine meetings. Attitudes towards team meetings can be a good indicator of team morale and productivity.
- F** **EARLESSNESS**
Fear of change poses perhaps the biggest threat to the growth and progress of any organization or change team. Teams can address this natural tendency by proactively advocating for a paradigm shift towards continuous improvement, thereby minimizing the crippling effects of the fear factor.

G

GOAL-ORIENTEDNESS

Clear and measurable objectives provide direction for a change team, and are essential for getting things done on time. The task of defining strategic, realistic goals, as well as establishing a sense of urgency to meet them, falls squarely on the shoulders of change leaders.

H

HONESTY

Sometimes what we say contradicts what we think or feel. Lack of honesty leads to second-guessing of motives and compromises group integrity. Productivity at the expense of group morale will be unhealthy in the long-run.

I

INNOVATIVENESS

Creativity gives excitement to change projects. Building a work environment that facilitates creative thinking, and adopting processes that encourage team members to practice the skill of “looking sideways,” will lead to innovative solutions.

J

JOKING AROUND

Humor can be a powerful tool for group morale, especially when predicated on mutual respect. Jokes belie a sense of optimism that is necessary to success, because failure is part of the learning process. Teams may focus on performance, but how they achieve their goals is just as important.



At their very core, members of effective change teams believe in one another. As a team, they communicate well and pay attention to details, moving forward with agile and enthusiastic feet. Honesty, humor, innovativeness, and fearlessness in the face of change are elements that extend these core behaviors. Goal-orientedness is the responsibility of leadership—an efficient Change Team needs a good leader to provide direction.