

DEFINING TEAM MEMBERS ROLES



*When a team assembles to set goals, work on problems or make decisions, out of habit their focus is on the **task** at hand. However, to operate effectively, they must first define their roles.*

BACKGROUND

Rarely does a team give serious consideration to the feelings and reactions of its members (**process issues**). Defining team member roles includes task roles and process roles. Task roles include planning the agenda for a meeting, resources needed, and meeting facilitation. Process roles include assigning a meeting leader, gatekeeper, timekeeper, note taker, team member responsibilities, knowledge experts, etc.

The most important aspect of the discussion is perceived to be the content or the **task** to be accomplished. The **process** (how we decide) receives little attention, if any. People's anger, pleasure, commitment, frustration, sense of pride, is present but rarely dealt with. Those issues can have a serious effect on the ultimate

quality of the results and team member willingness to support and carry out decisions.

CONSIDERATIONS

There are six items to consider when setting roles. These include:

Commitment: Members see themselves as belonging to a team rather than as independent individuals. They are directed to team goals above and beyond personal goals.

Trust: Team members respect each other, honor their obligations, maintain confidences, support each other, and operate in a consistent and predictably acceptable fashion.

Purpose: The team comprehends its role within the overall business of the organization. Team members feel a

sense of ownership and contribution.

Communication: Interactions among members and those outside the team are constructive. Members handle conflict, decision-making, and routines effectively. Information is shared.

Involvement Roles - within the team are clearly defined. Team members feel a sense of partnership and capitalize on differences. Contributions are respected and solicited. Consensus is established before committing the team to action.

Process

The team needs to apply a process to achieve its purpose successfully. Norms and values are defined clearly. Effective meeting skills, problem-solving tools, planning techniques, and conflict resolution strategies are the team's process.

TYPICAL ROLES ON A TEAM

Team Leader: Ensures that the work gets done

Team Recorder: Sometimes called a scribe, he/she captures the team's decisions, action items and task assignments

Team Facilitator: Manages the processes of the team

Team Coach: Advisor to the team but does not lead

Team Sponsor/Champion: An outside person, who charters the team, provides the initial goals, authorizes resources, removes barriers, and monitors progress