

Team Roles

Task Roles

Initiator suggests or proposes new ideas to the team. He or she offers a novel point of view concerning problems, procedures, goals, or solutions.

Information seeker asks for clarification of suggestions made in terms of their factual adequacy, for authoritative information and facts pertinent to the problem being discussed.

Opinion seeker asks primarily for a clarification of values pertinent to what the team is undertaking or values involved in various suggestions that have been made.

Information giver offers facts or generalizations that are "authoritative" or relates his or her own experience pertinent to the team problem.

Opinion giver states his or her belief pertinent to a suggestion made. The emphasis is on what he or she believes should be the team's view of pertinent values, not primarily upon relevant facts or information.

Elaborator spells out suggestions in terms of examples or developed meanings, offers a rationale for suggestions previously made, and tries to deduce how an idea or suggestion would work out if adopted primarily upon relevant facts or information.

Coordinator shows or clarifies the relationships among various ideas and suggestions, tries to pull ideas and suggestions together, or tries to coordinate the activities of various members of sub-teams.

Energizer prods the team to action or decision, attempts to stimulate or arouse the team to "greater" or "higher quality" activity.

Procedural technician expedites team movement by doing things for the team, e.g. passing out materials or setting up chairs.

Recorder writes down suggestions, makes a record of team decisions, or writes down the product of discussion. The recorder fills the role of "team memory."

Maintenance Roles

Encourager praises, agrees with, and accepts the contribution of the others. He or she indicates warmth and solidarity in his or her attitude toward other team members, offers commendation and praise, and in various ways indicates understanding and acceptance of other points of view, ideas, and suggestions.

Harmonizer mediates the differences between other members, attempts to reconcile disagreements, relieves tension in conflict situations through good-hearted jokes, a soothing attitude, etc.

Compromiser operates from within a conflict in which his or her idea or position is involved. He or she may offer a compromise by yielding status, admitting his or her error, by disciplining him- or herself to maintain team harmony, or by "coming halfway" in moving along with the team.

Gate-keeper expedites attempts to keep communication channels open by encouraging or facilitating the participation of others ("we haven't gotten the ideas of Mr. X yet," etc.) or by proposing regulation of the flow of communication ("why don't we limit the length of our contributions so that everyone will have a chance to contribute?" etc.)

Standard setter expresses standards for the team. These standards apply to the quality of the team process, or set limits on acceptable individual behavior within the team.

Team observer keeps records of various aspects of team process and feeds such data with proposed interpretations into the team's evaluation of its own procedures.

Summarizer defines the position of the team with respect to its goals by summarizing what has occurred, points to departures from agreed upon directions or goals, or raises questions about the direction which the team discussion is taking.

Reality tester subjects the accomplishment of the team to some standard or set of standards of team functioning in the context of the team task. Thus, he or she may evaluate or question the "practicality," the "logic," the "facts," or the "procedure" of the suggestion or of some unit of team discussion.

Blocking Roles

Dominator tries to assert authority or superiority in manipulating the team or certain members of the team. This domination may take the form of flattery, of asserting a superior status or right to attention, giving directions authoritatively, interrupting the contributions of others, etc.

Aggressor may work in many ways: deflating the status of others, expressing disapproval of the values, acts, or feelings of others, attacking the team or the problem it is working on, joking aggressively, showing envy toward another's contribution by trying to take credit for it, etc.

Blocker tends to be negativistic and stubbornly resists, disagreeing and opposing without or beyond "reason" and attempting to maintain or bring back an issue after the team has rejected or bypassed it.

Recognition-seeker works in various ways to call attention to him- or herself, whether through boasting, reporting on personal achievements, acting in unusual ways, struggling to prevent being placed in an "inferior" position, etc.

Anecdoter uses the audience opportunity, which the team setting provides, to share stories or feelings unrelated to the task at hand.

Distractor makes display of his or her lack of involvement in the team's processes. This may take the form of cynicism, nonchalance, horseplay, and other more or less studied forms of "out-of-field" behavior.

Help-seeker attempts to call forth a "sympathy" response from other team members or from the whole team, whether through expressions of insecurity, personal confusion, or depreciation of him- or herself beyond "reason."