TEAM BENCHMARK

Triaxia Development Team
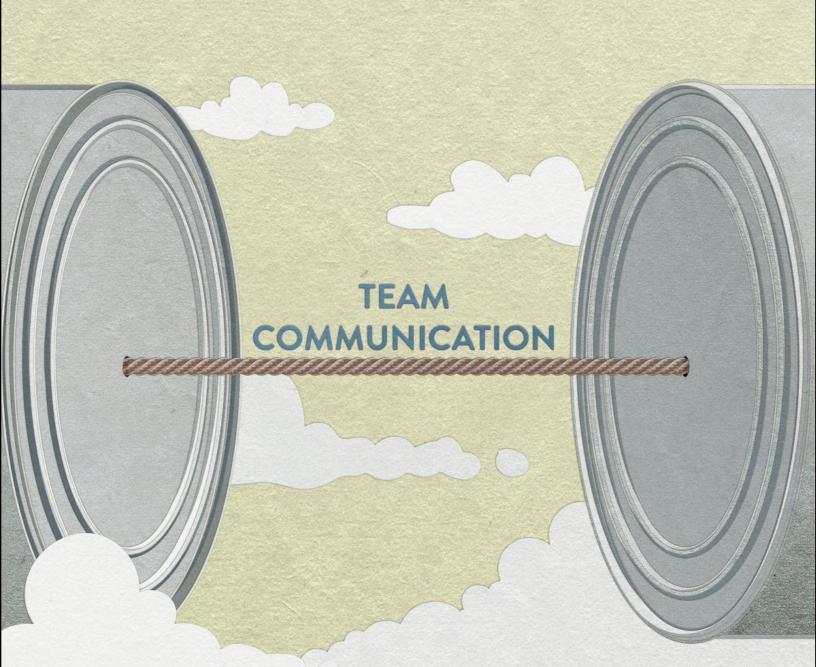
TEAM
COMMUNICATION

Introduction

Communication appears to be deceptively easy. However, most of us suffer from major misconceptions about the process, particularly our mindset that communication is primarily message sending. Actually, communication doesn't take place until someone receives the message and understands it as the sender intended. The more people receiving the message, the greater the opportunities exist for miscommunication.

Further, trust is a critical component of communication. Trust determines our willingness to be open and to share information about issues as well as about ourselves. In a low-trust environment, people will be unwilling to be open and will ignore, disguise, and distort facts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings.

Effective communication enables a team to achieve exceptional results. However, most teams find that barriers to communication are legion: incomplete or disorganized information, too much data, poor timing, or inappropriate vehicles for sending the message. Not surprisingly, only the most astute, pragmatic, and persistent teams overcome them.

Effective team communication doesn't just happen. Team members have to work together to create a climate of respect, candor, and trust even when things don't go well and members disagree. A team can't achieve its purpose if members don't have the skills and willingness to address the complexities of communication and encourage creative, candid, and comprehensive dialogue.

Following are some critical areas that impact a team's communication excellence: the Climate for communication, the Considerations that go into strategic communication, the Choices that the team makes in order to communicate effectively, and the Connections that enables effective communication and ensures a shared direction among team members.

Your Team Communication Inventory

The team needs to function effectively in all four areas-Climate, Considerations, Choices, and Connection-in order to communicate at a high level. Significant weakness in even one element should receive immediate attention and an aggressive initiative for improvement.

Use the table below to assess the team scores that follow:

Team Average	Grade	Description
4.00 - 5.00	A	Gold Standard
3.40 - 3.99	B	Good
2.60 - 3.39	C	Adequate
2.04 - 2.59	D	Marginal
< 2.03	F	Critical - Run for cover!

The bar chart below indicates your team averages for each of the four areas:

Area	Score
Climate	3.78
Considerations	3.97
Choices	3.95
Connection	3.95

The table below shows individual team member averages for each of the three areas. The far right column displays the "team average" for each member. The bottom row displays the team average for each of the four areas. The bottom right cell (shaded in grey) displays the total team average.

Member	Climate	Considerations	Choices	Connection	Overall
#7	3.83	4.20	3.71	4.14	4.00
#20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
#21	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
#22	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
#27	3.33	4.00	4.43	4.14	4.00
#56	3.50	3.60	3.57	3.43	3.53
Team Total	**3.78**	**3.97**	**3.95**	**3.95**	**3.92**

The table below shows individual team member averages for each of the four areas. The far right column displays the "team average" for each member. The bottom row displays the team average for each of the four areas. The bottom right cell (shaded in grey) displays the total team average.

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20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
21	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
22	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
27	3.33	4.00	4.43	4.14	4.00
56	3.50	3.60	3.57	3.43	3.53
Team	**3.78**	**3.97**	**3.95**	**3.95**	**3.92**

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Climate

The team must first create a climate for open, respectful, and energetic communication. People must feel safe raising ideas or even disagreeing with the rest of the team. Trust, understanding, acceptance, respect, and courtesy must be present for a healthy communication climate to exist.

Member	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Overall
#7	4	3	4	5	3	4	3.83
#20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00
#21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
#22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
#27	2	4	5	3	2	4	3.33
#56	2	3	4	5	4	3	3.50
Team	**3.3333**	**3.6667**	**4.1667**	**4.1667**	**3.5000**	**3.8333**	**3.78**

The far-right column in the grid above indicates the individual team member's average for "Climate". The bottom row indicates the team average for each question. The figure in the bottom right cell is the team average for "Climate".

Q1. We have a safe team environment that encourages open, clear communication.

Mean   3.33

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q2. We value and encourage the input of everyone in any discussion.

Mean   3.67

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q3. We encourage constructive criticism and the questioning of ideas.

Mean   4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q4. We are clear, direct, purposeful, and respectful in all verbal and nonverbal communication.

Mean   4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q5. We never attack each other's dignity, personality, or character.

Mean   3.50

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q6. We protect the rights of dissenters.

| Mean | 3.83 |

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Considerations

Successful communication on a team demands that members think strategically about the communication process. In any communication strategy, a person must first consider the purpose of the communication. What does the sender of the information want the outcome to be? Who will receive that information? Is the receiver receptive, neutral, or hostile to the topic? Is the subject of the communication important or trivial to that person or team? Do internal or external barriers or filters exist that will interfere with successful communication?

What about the personalities and the perceptions of sender and receiver(s)? Teams that communicate successfully understand the importance of all these essential elements.

Member	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Overall
#7	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	4.20
#20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00
#21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
#22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
#27	3	3	0	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	4.00
#56	2	3	4	3	5	4	3	3	4	5	3.60
Team	3.6667	3.6667	3.8000	4.0000	4.3333	4.0000	3.83	4.17	4.17	4.00	3.97

The far-right column in the grid above indicates the individual team member's average for "Considerations". The bottom row indicates the team average for each question. The figure in the bottom right cell is the team average for "Considerations".

Q7. Communication is purpose driven; message objectives are clear to both sender and receivers.

Mean   3.67

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q8. Team members consider their personal communication strengths and weaknesses when communicating with others.

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Mean	3.67

Comments

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- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q9. Team members recognize remove barriers, distractions, and filters, both as senders and receivers.

Mean	3.80

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q10. When communicating with teammates, team members are sensitive to the perspective and situation of their listeners.

Mean	4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q11. We create a common language and agree on interpretations of concepts.

Mean 4.33

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q12. Written documents are clear, concise, and readable with information that is easily accessible to the reader.

Mean 4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q13. We structure our messages to enable the greatest receptivity, taking unwelcome information especially into account.

Mean 3.83

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q14. Importance/urgency, and desired action are immediately clear to audience.

Mean 4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q15. As a team, we have mastered the art of 'straight talk'; we are tough on issues but not hard on people.

Mean 4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q16. We recognize and consider differences in culture, areas of expertise, and communication styles among team members.

Mean 4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

- This is a test comment for a survey item

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Choices

Successful communication involves making wise choices. What is the best way to communicate this message? Does the situation require a face-to-face encounter, or will a quick electronic note suffice? How is the team coping with the pervasive information overload that cuts productivity and impairs decision-making?

Choices also involve selecting the best tools and techniques to manage meetings, resolve conflict, and solve problems collaboratively.

Member	Q17	Q18	Q18	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Overall
#7	3	4	3	4	4	5	3	3.71
#20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00
#21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
#22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
#27	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4.43
#56	4	3	2	3	4	5	4	3.57
Team	**3.83**	**4.00**	**3.50**	**4.00**	**4.00**	**4.50**	**3.83**	**3.95**

The far-right column in the grid above indicates the individual team member's average for "Choices". The bottom row indicates the team average for each question. The figure in the bottom right cell is the team average for "Choices".

Q17. We keep each others' confidences. We do not indiscriminately copy, forward, or communicate messages that may be sensitive or proprietary to the sender.

Mean   3.83

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q18. We make effective use of creative tools to surface the best ideas (brainstorming, Nominal Group Technique, Software, etc.)

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Mean	4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q19. We have discussed and decided the appropriate channels (i.e., in person, written, fax, voice mail, email, etc.) for different topics and types of communication.

Mean	3.50

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q20. We exercise good judgment in deciding when it is better to communicate face-to-face or by phone, email, or in other forms of writing.

Mean	4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q21. We avoid overloading each other with e-mails and voice mails or indiscriminately copying or forwarding messages that may be sensitive.

Mean   4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q22. We have a clearly defined process for handling conflict that everyone adheres to.

Mean   4.50

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q23. Team members adjust their communication with others according to the setting/environment.

Mean   3.83

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
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Connection

Communication cannot occur in a vacuum, and managing relationships is key to a team's success. If the connection between sender and receiver breaks, even a brilliant strategy won't prevail.

Maintaining that connection starts with listening, asking the right questions to clarify and verify, and making everyone on the team feel heard. Often, team members are physically separated or immersed in specific elements of a task. Actively sharing relevant information and keeping everyone in the loop are non-negotiable components of successful team communication.

Connection involves taking initiative to obtain and share information and to be alert to what is not being said in team interaction.

Member	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Overall
#7	5	3	4	5	4	5	3	4.14
#20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00
#21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
#22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
#27	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4.14
#56	3	2	4	3	5	4	3	3.43
Team	**4.00**	**3.50**	**4.17**	**4.00**	**4.17**	**4.00**	**3.83**	**3.95**

The far-right column in the grid above indicates the individual team member's average for "Connection". The bottom row indicates the team average for each question. The figure in the bottom right cell is the team average for "Connection".

Q24. Team members feel connected and take responsibility to seek out information in order to know what is going on in the team.

Mean   4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q25. We are active, open listeners—we listen to the thoughts, ideas, and input of others with our ears, eyes, minds, and hearts.

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Mean   3.50

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q26. We pay attention to what is not being said, reading the nonverbals as well as listening to the words.

Mean   4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q27. We listen to each other with the same respect and courtesy that we show our constituents or managers.

Mean   4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
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- This is a test comment for a survey item

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Q28. All team members feel heard.

Mean   4.17

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q29. Team members take initiative to keep others in the loop.

Mean   4.00

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item

Q30. Team members have mastered the art of asking good questions both to get information and to solicit opinions and feelings.

Mean   3.83

Comments

- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
- This is a test comment for a survey item
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Discussion

Based on your team total average score, how did the team do?

Based on team averages for each category, how did the team do?

Does one area stand out as a high or low score?

Do you, as a team, believe this is an accurate reflection of where the team is regarding its communication skills and attitudes?

Can you identify the three biggest barriers to fast, clear communication on your team?

Were the scores for individual team members relatively close? If not, take a moment to discuss the different perspectives. What did one team member see that another did not?

Are there some obvious issues that could be addressed to improve team effectiveness?

Action Plan

What three steps will you take over the next 90 days to improve communication on your team?

1.

2.

3.

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Team Skill Survey®

The Team Performance Survey assists your team in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses against in each of the six characteristics of a high performance team. The resulting Team Skill Survey Report is designed to prioritize allow your team to attack its development needs with the confidence of knowing they are targeting the right issues.*

Team Development Profile®

The Team Development Profile enables your team to visually identify its current stage of team development, and better understand its potential for greater synergy and team effectiveness.*

Team Communication®

The Team Benchmark Team Communication diagnostic helps the team to assess their ability to effectively communicate with one another. This communication diagnostic enables team members to identify and address specific issues that clutter and confuse team communication.

Team Conflict Resolution®

This Team Benchmark diagnostic enables the team to identify and address conflict issues that de?rail team effectiveness, allowing your team to give immediate attention to the key issues and define a clear path for improvement.

Team Meetings®

This powerful meetings diagnostic will provide your team with unique insight on how well they are managing meeting together. This diagnostic allows your team to graphically identify strengths and weaknesses in key meeting components.

Visit www.TeamBenchmark.com to learn more about
how these diagnostic surveys can help take your teamwork to the next level.

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* Available in Spanish / *Disponible en Español