
How to LOVE Your Teammates

a workshop created for
IXD 5105 & 5205

Humber Polytechnic, Toronto
January, 2025

Workshop Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be prepared to create their team charters. In doing so they will understand how to have productive and organized project teams. They will learn to

- create efficient team communication protocols
- run focussed meetings and build clarity into meetings
- ensure team members feel heard, so that they buy into team decisions
- define "reliability" in the context of their team
- hold team members accountable
- analyze team dysfunctions; and
- face team conflicts with confidence

Work done together and individually in this workshop will be later transferred to a single team charter.

Workshop Outline

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 1. | Reflection: What have you learned from past team work? | Slides 8-14 |
| 2. | Awareness: What are the five dysfunctions of a team?
How can I begin to overcome them? | Slides 15-19 |
| 3. | Team Charter/Reliability Agreement | Slides 20-25 |
| 4. | Leadership: How do we make decisions? | Slides 26-28 |
| 5. | Break | |
| 6. | Organization: How can we make meetings matter? | Slides 30-38 |
| 7. | Communication: How can I improve my communication? | Slides 40-58 |
| 8. | Look at three scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. What's the problem?ii. How can it be solved?iii. How can it be prevented? | Slide 59 |
| 9. | Wrap-Up: What is your take-home message? | Slide 60 |

Characteristics of Teams

Slide #8

THE GOOD TEAM

- ☐ Meetings were organized and valuable.
- ☐ We all did what we promised. We were reliable. We trusted each other.
- ☐ We responded in a timely way.
- ☐ The team gave each other honest feedback about their contributions.
- ☐ We knew each other's responsibilities and where we each fit in.
- ☐ We shared the same *written* goals and expectations. We were all committed to the same outcomes. We were aligned.
- ☐ Everyone understood our goals and how far along we were towards them.
- ☐ We showed respect by listening, paraphrasing, and asking questions before assuming that we understood.
- ☐ We had a process for tracking and staying aware of each other's progress.
- ☐ People asked for help and offered help as needed.
- ☐ New ideas were welcome and considered. Team members were not afraid to raise questions about the team's process and priorities.
- ☐ It was the best of times.

THE BAD TEAM

- ☐ Meetings were a waste of time.
- ☐ People did not always do what they promised.
- ☐ It was hard to reach team members.
- ☐ We did not challenge people when they let us down.
- ☐ Jobs overlapped and efforts were duplicated. Roles were unclear.
- ☐ Goals were not clearly articulated. No one knew what was going on. There were misunderstandings.
- ☐ Progress towards goals was more imagined than actual.
- ☐ I did not feel that my ideas and statements were understood. People interrupted me. I often kept silent.
- ☐ I wasn't really sure how the other team members were progressing.
- ☐ I kept it secret when I was beyond my level of expertise.
- ☐ New ideas were discouraged. Group members became angry or defensive when a process or priority was questioned.
- ☐ It was the worst of times.

- ➡ Share one of the items you checked off (good or bad). What was it like on that team?

Trustbuilding Activity #1

Slide #17

Strengths and skills needed for this project: Put ☆ next to your high skill areas and a ✓ next to a skill area where you have some experience. Put !! next to an skill area where you'd like to practice and become confident.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorming | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting, pitching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designing | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researching | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving honest feedback |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing users | <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving feedback non-defensively |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coding | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prototyping | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping a team on track |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing, documenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Project management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> User testing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

When everyone is done, go around the group telling your teammates

1. one area where you feel most capable
2. one area where you are less confident

Trustbuilding Activity #2

Slide #19

Read the three questions and note a brief answer on the page.
Then go around the circle telling your team members your answers:

1. Where did you grow up?

2. How many are there in your family and what is your position (e.g. oldest, two younger brothers)?

3. What is a challenging experience of your childhood?

Good teams know each other as human beings.

Team Charter Worksheet

Team topic: _____

Team name: _____

1. What are the goals of the group?

Slide 21

Even though you may not have defined your project yet, you have enough information to create some group goals. Write at least two of your own goals. These goals can be goals related to learning, skill acquisition, achievement, collaboration, communication, and others. Share your goals with the team and see if there are any you all share. Eventually you will have a list of shared goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

2. How will we communicate?

Slide 22

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pass your name cards around copying the information here, or just add it to your devices. Make sure you have all three items stored.

Print First and Last Name	Phone #	Email
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Set up a channel for group communication now. Invite each member to the group.

Write a message to your teammates now. Make sure you have a message from all.

Check schedules now for at least two times when all team members are available:

What Does Reliability Mean to You?

What are our ground rules?

Slide 24

Begin now to make reliability agreements. Here are some areas:

- Attending meetings: What must you do if you miss a meeting?
- Preparing for meetings: What are the responsibilities for each member?
- Sending communication: Is there a central place where all can read and respond? What about "copying all" on project-related email?
- Responding to communication within agreed time period: Specifically how long?
- Letting others know when you will be unavailable
- Reading messages: Can we commit to actually reading messages and responding?
- Working to agreed-upon deadlines
- Asking for help when needed; letting others know about problems
- Documenting agreements and making these available to everyone
- Weekly goal-setting/reporting
- Can we agree to create milestones?
- Creating a progress chart that all can see: Keep focussed on end result!
- Other agreements specific to your group

Together the team will create the specifics of their reliability agreement and put these in the team charter.

Finish this sentence:

"On my team, reliability means _____"

Commitment

You demonstrate your commitment by your willingness to have performance and behaviour standards. Are your agreements written down? Does everyone share your understanding of reliability? The more time you spend in the beginning setting expectations and explaining standards, the more time you'll save later and the less anxiety you'll have. When the team is not running as smoothly as you'd like, look at your agreement list. Has someone become unreliable? Hold that person to account.

Sample Agenda

Slide 33

Date: _____
Facilitator: _____

Time: _____
Scribe: _____

Location: _____
Timer: _____

Create columns with the following headings:

Subject	Responsibility	Desired Outcome	Time
1.			
2.			
3. and etc.			

- End every meeting with a commitment clarification.
- Say: What have we decided here? Ask the scribe to review the agreements and make sure everyone is on side. Mine for conflict or ambivalence.

Sample Minutes

Slide 34

Date/Time _____ Facilitator _____
Location _____ Scribe _____

Present: *List names of all present.* Absent: *List names of absentees.*
Regrets: *Mention if an absent member has informed the group.*

The minutes will be numbered with each number corresponding to an agenda item. Follow the items on the agenda. Record decisions. Record items requiring action on the part of a group member.

1. **ACTION:** *name of team member will ...*
2. **ACTION:** *name of team member will ...*
3. **ACTION:** *name of team member who will prepare the next agenda.*
4. **DECISION:**

Date of next meeting: _____

Distribute minutes to all team members or post on shared site.

How to Apologize

Are you ever simply at fault? You made a mistake or missed a deadline? You know it. They know it. What's the best thing to do?

Create excuses? No.

Do these apologies sound familiar?

- "I'm sorry for missing the meeting -- but you know I have trouble making it to 10:00 a.m. meetings." (*Translation: It's your fault.*)
- "I'm sorry - OK?" (*Translation: I'm sorry you're mad. Get over it.*)
- "I said I was sorry. How many times do I have to apologize?" (*Translation: It's your fault that you're still mad. Get over it.*)

Teams spend too much time blaming and making excuses. If you knew how to apologize and were willing to, you 1) build good will; 2) prevent future resentments; and 3) save a lot of time!!! This format is also **especially useful** if you ever intend to be in an intimate relationship with another human.

A good apology focuses on the impact of your behaviour on the other person.

Of course you are eager to explain, but your explanation is *not* the main event here. You might give it at the end of the apology, providing you first say, "Do you want to know what happened?"

- Apologize for the specific thing. "I'm sorry for missing the meeting."
- Acknowledge the effect on the others: "You were waiting for my UX report before approving the design. You must have felt angry."
- Recognize the consequences: "Now, you are probably wondering if you can trust me with other responsibilities."
- Ask what you can do to build trust: "Is there anything I can do to show you I'm really sorry about screwing up." or
- Say what you will do in the future to reduce the risk of that happening again. "Next time I have work to share at a meeting, I will send the work to everyone the night before in case something happens to me."
- Ask for feedback, "What do you think?"

Identify the Problems

Read the situation aloud with your group.

Have one person record your group's answers to the three questions.

SCENARIO #1

- Your team is brainstorming new functionalities for your product.
- Team members have great ideas and are arguing productively about the ideas.
- Peng, however, stays quiet throughout brainstorming, even though he will have to do the coding.

What's the problem?

How can you solve it?

How could the problem have been prevented?

SCENARIO #2

- You are creating a shopping app for a particular community.
- At a meeting, the team adds an exciting functionality, and drops a less useful one.
- Everyone, including Sabina, is at the meeting and agrees to the change, but no one records this decision. The team has never needed decisions recorded.
- That evening you get a text from Sabina saying that she is excited to be working on an idea related to the area which has been dropped.

What's the problem?

How can you solve it?

How could the problem have been prevented?

SCENARIO #3

- Your team is preparing a seven-minute presentation to show your project to the client. The presentation is scheduled in one week.
- Your job is to put the slides together for the presentation. Each team member gave you five slides showing their part of the project. The team agreed on a format for the slides.
- Sid sent the slides showing the Figma prototype, but the slides seem minimal and are not in the same format as the rest of the team's slides. You know Sid did more work than is present on these slides; yet you hesitate to send them back to him.

What's the problem?

How can you solve it?

How could the problem have been prevented?

Please finish the sentence below and share with the class. Thank you.

Take-Home Message

One thing I want to remember to do when working with my project team is this:
