**DMIT2027**

**Guidelines: How to Create Team Norms**

All teams go through phases. Typically, these phases involve forming, norming (setting operational parameters), storming (dealing with conflict), and performing (when they get things done). The first two phases are the so-called the “honeymoon” period, where all is well, and hardly any issues appear in the horizon.

As teams begin to plan and accomplish tasks, divvy up duties and become more accountable to their client, supervisor, project manager, issues could start to gradually creep up. Often, conflict sets in because of personality differences, communication problems, following up on missed tasks, or dealing with team member motivation for success, and – quite frequently – absence at meetings. As the gravity of the situation rises, potential for conflict increases, paving the way for the honeymoon phase to come to a complete end.

Issues within a team do not always appear at once. There are often clues that point to underlying problems that need to get resolved before it escalates into something serious. These clues could include such behaviors as missing meetings, not completing tasks, and the usual excuses for absence at meetings or not completing assigned duties (child care, “I did not know”, health issues, car problems, or public transit, etc..). These behaviors are early indications of the need for frank, open team discussion.

Creating team norms right after formation can deal with some of the common team issues head on. Paying attention to the details of these norms can avoid much stress in the event of things falling apart, especially toward the end of the project where activities are in full gear, things must get done, and there is plenty of blame to go around.

When establishing your team norms, pay particular attention to:

1. Silence at your meetings, how decisions are made, and whether “groupthink” is present in your deliberations or not
2. Clarity on meetings times and places (especially outside of class) and being punctual. Constantly being late for meetings shows a lack respect for others’ time also erodes team cohesion and effectiveness.
3. Absence at meetings and what should the person who missed the meeting do to catch up, follow up, and complete tasks
4. Communication among team members: decisions, minutes, quorum, etc…
5. How to follow up on tasks completed as a team.
6. How to deal with conflict, interpersonal issues
7. Facilitation at meetings (rotating or not)
8. The rest of what your team will devise

Make sure your norms are clear. Be specific and detailed. Your instructor will read and mark your signed team norm document. Make sure you have asked and answered some tough (what if) questions when you discuss your team norms. Once the norms are set, you are expected to uphold your team norms throughout your team endeavours. So will your instructor.

Only one copy for each team is required. Make sure all team members sign the document before submissions. Your instructor will let you know how to submit. If a deadline is missed, the entire team’s submission is considered late may be subject to a late penalty charge. See your instructor for more details.

**Document Format**

All Word documents submitted by teams in this course must meet the following submission criteria: A **title page** must indicate:

1. Course and section number
2. Document name (in this case, Team Norms)
3. Your team name (choose one)
4. Members of your team and their individual signatures. There should be no missing signatures.

**Marking Scheme:**

Your team norms will be marked according to the following:

English grammar and punctuation – 20%

Clarity of the norms (specific and detailed) – 30%

Bullet-proof team contract (covers numerous WHAT IF situations) – 50%

*Note: Your instructor will want to know if you are having team challenges. You will be expected to resolve team difficulties within the team prior to involving your instructor to aid in conflict resolution. This is part of your team experience. A peer evaluation scheme will be used to rate team member performance. See instructor for details.*