This manual will introduce you to the approach of working in a team at this company. You and your team members will enjoy such benefits as:

* pooling the experience, knowledge, and viewpoints of several individuals together to make more informed decisions,
* an ability to learn from others,
* a climate of accountability,
* a sense of trust in your coworkers,
* improving our ability to solve complex problems,
* and a sense of community regardless of what happens.

Unfortunately, there are also drawbacks to working in a team. You will need to identify and mitigate these drawbacks to improve your team’s productivity. Such drawbacks include:

* a susceptibility to groupthink,
* the possibility that one or more individuals have private, counterproductive goals that they prioritize over those of the entire team,
* the additional time and money necessary to coordinate meetings and divide up work,
* and the possibility that individuals feel overloaded due to having too many team assignments.

Your team will succeed if it is comprised of an appropriate number of individuals who are like-minded in their values but who each possess skills that are useful for the group’s objective. The exact number of individuals on the team must be commensurate to the team’s specific responsibilities. You will be given a goal that is both clear and challenging. To this end, each member must be willing to put the team’s needs above their own. Each team member must also be committed to fostering a safe, honest environment where all members can communicate their ideas without fear of repercussion.

Your team will likely go through several phases to become a productive unit. These phases, outlined in the Tuckman model of group development, are as follows:

1. Forming: the group is established, and individuals’ roles begin to take shape

2. Storming: team members discuss their positions and share ideas for meeting the team’s goals

3. Norming: the group’s expectations and procedures become well-known to all members

4. Performing: the team completes the task to which it is assigned

5. Adjourning: the team analyzes its time together and disbands

It will be necessary for your team to practice effective communication to succeed. To ensure meaningful communication between team members, the following conditions must be met:

* an agreement on the goals and scope of the project,
* a clear plan for who will complete which tasks,
* work that is structured such that each person is lending their strengths to the team,
* frequent check-ins that encourage short, tangible milestones, and
* an acceptance of different writing styles throughout the group.

There are several collaboration technologies that your team can utilize to submit assignments and provide feedback. These include content management systems, wikis, shared online workspaces, social networks, workgroup messaging systems, and private networks. No matter what specific technology your team decides to adopt, it will be critical for each member to give constructive feedback. Such guidelines include discussing improvements instead of flaws, focusing on behaviors within another member’s control, being specific and impersonal, and timing the feedback carefully. Your group will also need to understand how to have productive team meetings. This process involves preparing for the meeting carefully through deciding the purpose, coordinating logistics, and providing an agenda; fully participating by keeping the meeting on track, following the agenda, and encouraging others’ participation; and putting the results to use effectively by making sure assignments are clearly communicated.

Finally, it will be important for each member of your team to practice good business etiquette. In short, business etiquette is about respecting others with the choices you make, whether that be inside or outside of the workplace. Etiquette is essential in the workplace, social settings, online, on the telephone, and concerning mobile devices.