Teamwork
Why Teams?

- In the past, in business at least, team building was not really practiced
- Recently, many success stories are directly related to effective use of teams
  - Honeywell example: switched to team organization, now has 80% of flight-navigational systems market; profits 200% above projections
- Comes in many disguises: “quality circle” and “shared governance” are common terms
- In software development it is how we accomplish more and better than what can be accomplished by the individual
  - Even though increased cost of communication, still can be more effective
- Benefits: productivity, quality, service, problem solving, innovation, and rapid response
Twelve Features of an Effective Team

1. Clear sense of purpose
   - The vision/task of the team has been defined and everyone fully understands it.
   - There is usually an action plan.
   - Clear daily tasks and agenda items for meetings.
   - Come well prepared to meetings to discuss all agenda items.

2. Informal climate
   - The climate tends to be informal, comfortable, and relaxed.
   - Humor is usually evident.
   - There are no obvious tensions or signs of boredom.
   - Environment such that when a meeting is scheduled, response is great, not UGH!
3. Participation

- There is much discussion and everyone participates.
- However, weighted participation is most effective
  - Everyone participates, but not with the same “time” commitment
  - Some may say a little, but may mean a lot
  - Others take time to develop their good ideas, so participate more
- Enhance participation by:
  - Limit discussion to current agenda item
  - Intervene when discussion is not relevant
  - Encourage silent members to join in
  - Speak out when views are contrary to the majority
12 Effective Team Features - 3

4. Listening
- Important skill: sit back, be attentive, and take what is said WITHOUT JUDGMENT!
  » Speech input is slower than our processing, so must analyze, evaluate, but don’t judge (yet).
- Active listening can help:
  » Respond either verbally (“I see”, “uh huh”) or non-verbally (nodding, eye contact)
  » Paraphrasing/reflecting can be very effective

5. Civilized Disagreement
- There will always be disagreement. Key is how it is handled:
  » Team should be comfortable with it
  » Should not avoid or smooth over or suppress conflict
- Maintain object, analytical approach to differences
- Be flexible and open to all points of view
- But must maintain professional decorum!!!
12 Effective Team Features - 4

6. Consensus
   - For formal decisions, the goal is substantial, but not necessarily unanimous agreement
   - Open discussion of everyone’s ideas
   - No formal voting or easy compromises
   - No horse trading

7. Open communication
   - Team members express feelings on tasks, group operation, everything! (TRUST is a key)
   - No hidden agendas
   - Communication outside of meetings is encouraged

8. Clear roles and work assignments
   - Clear expectations about roles
   - Clear assignments are made, accepted, and carried out
   - Fair distribution of work among team members
12 Effective Team Features - 5

9. Shared leadership
   - All teams should have a formal leader
   - But successful teams have the team not just the manager, feel responsible for success of the team

10. External relations
    - The team spends time developing key outside relationships, finding resources, and building credibility with important players in the organization

11. Style diversity
    - Broad spectrum of team player types: emphasize “on task”; goal setting; focus on process; and questions about how a team is functioning

12. Self-assessment
    - Periodically, the team stops and examines how well it is functioning and what may be interfering with its effectiveness.
Signs of Trouble - Ineffective Teams

1. You cannot easily describe the team’s mission
2. The meetings are formal, stuffy, or tense
3. There is a great deal of participation but little accomplishment
4. There is talk but not much communication
5. Disagreements are aired in private conversations after the meeting
6. Decisions tend to be made by the formal leader with little meaningful involvement of other team members
7. Members are not open with each other because trust is low
8. There is confusion or disagreement about roles or work assignments
9. People in other parts of the organization who are critical to the success of the team are not cooperating
10. The team is overloaded with people who have the same team-player style
11. The team has been in existence for at least three months and has never assessed its functioning
What Kind of Team Player Are You?

• Survey
  – Take 15 minutes and fill out the answers to each question
  – Rank your answers as 4, 3, 2, 1
    » 4 is most applicable to you
    » 1 is least applicable
  – No ties allowed
  – No duplicates are allowed
Team Player Styles

- Four types of team players
- Each contributes in different ways to the success of the team
- Each has a downside if carried to an extreme
- Each person usually belongs to one style, although under different situations we may adapt to another style - in general, one style dominates
- Each person has the capacity to exhibit all styles
- A person’s style can change over time
The Four Team Player Styles

● Contributor - task-oriented who enjoys providing the team with good technical information and data, does their homework, pushes team to set high performance standards and to use their resources wisely. Others view contributor as dependable
  - Dependable; Responsible; Organized; Efficient; Logical; Clear; Relevant; Pragmatic; Systematic; Proficient

● Collaborator - goal-directed who sees the vision, mission, or goal of the team as paramount, but is flexible and open to new ideas, is willing to pitch in and work outside their defined role, and is able to share the limelight with other team members. Others view collaborator as “big-picture” person
  - Cooperative; Flexible; Confident; Forward-looking; Conceptual; Accommodating; Generous; Open; Visionary, Imaginative
The Four Team Player Styles - 2

- **Communicator** - process-oriented who is an effective listener and facilitator of involvement, conflict resolution, consensus building, feedback, and the building of an informal, relaxed climate. Others see the communicator as a positive people person
  - Supportive; Encouraging; Relaxed; Tactful; Helpful; Friendly; Patient; Informal; Considerate; Spontaneous

- **Challenger** - questions the goals, methods, and even the ethics of the team, is willing to disagree with the leader or higher authority, and encourages the team to take well-conceived risks. Others appreciate the value of the challenger’s candor and openness
  - Candid; Ethical; Questioning; Honest; Truthful; Outspoken; Principled; Adventurous; Aboveboard; Brave
# Types Over the Years

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<th>Communicator</th>
<th>Challenger</th>
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Ineffective Team Players

- Ineffective Contributor - data overload; pushing for unrealistic performance standards; losing sight of the big picture; lack of patience. “Let’s be objective”

- Ineffective Collaborator - failure to revisit or challenge periodically the goals; lack of attention to the team tasks and performance; failure to focus on meeting the needs of the other team players; complaining publicly about team failures
Ineffective Team Players - 2

- Ineffective Communicator - seeing team process as an end in itself; failing to challenge or confront other team members; not recognizing the equal importance of completing task assignments and making progress toward team goals; overuse of humor and other process techniques.

- Ineffective Challenger - not knowing when to back off and let team move on; pushing team to take risks that are beyond reason; becoming self-righteous, rigid and inflexible; painting themselves into a corner where challenging is an end in itself; using so-called honesty as a cover for attacks on other team members.
What is the Right Mix?

- **Best solution - style diversity - a member from each style**
  - Team not subject to the vulnerabilities when a style is missing
  - Often though, teams constructed of people of similar styles
    » Prefer to work with people like themselves

- **Style overload**
  - Contributor overload - lots of high quality work gets done, but often loses sight of big picture
  - Collaborator overload - lots of blue sky ideas, always helpful, but often fails to meet short term goals
  - Communicator overload - very relaxed, having a lot of fun, concerned about feelings of others, but often forget that a positive climate is a means to an end, not the goal of the team
  - Challenger overload - teams are very creative, encourage risk taking, failures are not punished, conflict abounds, but can get bogged down focusing on what is wrong looking for problems rather than strengths