

## MGMT 8030 Managing the Project Team - 12 hours (1.2 CEUs)

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will know:

- What the processes of project communications management are
- How to define project team roles and responsibilities
- Tools and techniques to enhance project team productivity
- The dynamics of project teams
- How to address project team conflicts

PREREQUISITE None

### TEXTS

*A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), 6th Edition*, Project Management Institute, 2017

*The Team® Handbook, Third Edition*, Oriel, 2003

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### Module 3

#### Module Objectives

The objectives of this module are:

- Learn the stages of team development
- Learn the ingredients for a successful team
- Learn how to give and receive constructive feedback
- Learn how to address project team conflicts and problems

#### Reading Assignments

*The Team Handbook*, Chapters 6-7

### Stages of Team Development

Most project teams go through a development process until they reach a high-performing stage. *The Team Handbook* on p. 6-4 to 6-8 describes four stages that many small groups and teams go through in the process of a project: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Dr. Bruce Tuckman, who first identified these four stages, later added a fifth stage – Adjourning. The characteristics of these five stages are summarized as follows:

Team Development Stage	Characteristic
Forming	Excitement, anticipation, and optimism Suspicion, fear, and anxiety Determining what information is needed Complaining about barriers to the task
Storming	Frustration and resistance Being defensive and competitive Establishing unrealistic goals
Norming	Sense of team cohesion Acceptance of the team Maintaining ground rules and boundaries
Performing	Satisfaction at team progress Emphasis on results Positive problem solving and decision-making
Adjourning	Team prepares to disband Upbeat over project success and team accomplishments Depressed because of project failure and potential loss of employment

### **Stages of Team Development**

Introduction of one or more new team members into the team may cause the team to regress to an earlier stage in the team development process, perhaps even to the forming stage.

Ingredients for Successful Teams

Successful teams have many characteristics. *The Team Handbook* on p. 6-10 to 6-23 lists ten ingredients of successful teams. These ingredients are summarized as follows:

<b>Ingredient for Successful Team</b>	<b>Team Characteristic</b>
Clarity in team goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agrees on team or project charter</li> <li>Has a clear vision</li> </ul>
Plan for Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a work or project plan</li> <li>Knows what resources and training are needed</li> </ul>
Clearly defined roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designates roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Uses talents of team members</li> </ul>
Clear communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks with clarity and directness</li> <li>Listens actively</li> <li>Shares information</li> </ul>
Beneficial team behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks information and opinions</li> <li>Completes assignments on time</li> <li>Makes use of meeting skills</li> </ul>
Well-defined decision procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses how decisions will be made</li> <li>Explores important issues</li> <li>Uses data as the basis for decisions</li> </ul>
Balanced participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has all team members participate and contribute</li> </ul>
Established ground rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses acceptable and unacceptable behavior</li> <li>States or posts ground rules</li> </ul>
Awareness of the group process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands team dynamics</li> <li>Works on group process issues</li> </ul>
Use of the scientific approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks at data before making a decision</li> <li>Focuses on root causes of problems</li> <li>Seeks permanent solutions</li> <li>Uses improvement strategies</li> </ul>

**Ingredients for a Successful Team**

## Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback is very important for improving the interaction between team members. Guidelines for giving constructive feedback are discussed in p. 6-24 through 6-32 of *The Team Handbook*.

<b>Guidelines for Constructive Feedback</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<p><b>Acknowledge the need for feedback</b></p> <p><b>Give both positive and negative feedback</b></p> <p><b>Understand the context</b></p> <p><b>Know when to give feedback</b></p> <p><b>Know how to give feedback</b></p> <p><b>Know how to receive feedback</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback improves the interaction between team members</b></p> <p><b>Positive feedback is important</b></p> <p><b>Review the situation before giving feedback</b></p> <p><b>Don't give feedback when:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- you don't know the situation</li><li>- esteem is low</li><li>- the time or place is not appropriate</li><li>- emotions are high</li></ul> <p><b>Be descriptive</b></p> <p><b>Be clear and specific</b></p> <p><b>Don't exaggerate</b></p> <p><b>Don't be judgmental</b></p> <p><b>Speak for yourself, not for other people</b></p> <p><b>Use "I" statements, not questions</b></p> <p><b>Use facts, not opinions</b></p> <p><b>Help people accept positive feedback</b></p> <p><b>Breathe</b></p> <p><b>Listen carefully</b></p> <p><b>Ask questions to clarify</b></p> <p><b>Acknowledge the feedback</b></p> <p><b>Acknowledge valid points</b></p> <p><b>Ask for time to understand before responding</b></p>

## **Guidelines for Constructive Feedback**

## Dealing with Conflict

Chapter 7 in *The Team Handbook* addresses how to deal with conflict. Surprisingly, some conflict within the project is usually positive. In fact, lack of conflict is not a healthy sign for a project, because problems are likely to remain buried until they pop up at inopportune moments.

Page 7-2 and 7-3 discuss the danger of “Groupthink”, which is when there is too much agreement within a project. Symptoms of “Groupthink” include the following:

- No alternatives are offered to a position
- Different perspectives are dismissed
- Other information is not considered

Suggestions for preventing “Groupthink” include:

- Avoid focusing on one solution
- Brainstorm potential alternatives
- Gather and analyze data before reaching a conclusion
- Develop criteria to evaluate different options

As discussed on pages 7-4 through 7-7, there are several modes of conflict resolution, as shown in the chart below. Avoiding and smoothing are temporary modes, and do not result in achieving a permanent solution. Forcing, compromising, and problem-solving are all permanent solutions to a conflict. Forcing achieves a win-lose solution that benefits one party over the other. Problem-solving/collaboration achieves a win-win solution that benefits both parties. Compromising, although widely used, involves both parties giving up something, and therefore achieves only a lose-lose solution. Problem-solving/collaboration is the preferred option for conflict resolution.

Conflict Resolution Modes	Definition
Avoiding	Retreat from a conflict situation
Smoothing	Emphasize agreement rather than differences
Forcing	Push one person's viewpoint over others (win-lose)
Compromising	Find some degree of satisfaction for all (lose-lose)
Problem-solving/ collaboration	Use problem solving techniques to achieve win-win solutions

### Conflict Resolution Modes

#### Team Problems

Every team has problems that occur during a project. Ten of the most common problems, addressed in p. 7-14 though 7-24 of *The Team Handbook*, are listed in the following table with some potential solutions:

Team Problem	Potential Solutions
Floundering	Review team or project charter with team Review work or project plan with team Find out what is holding up progress
Overbearing participants	Review rights and responsibilities of team members Speak to the team member in private Review data with the team
Dominating participants	Encourage participation by all team members
Reluctant participants	Assign agenda items to all participants

<p>Unquestioned acceptance of opinions as facts</p> <p>Rush to accomplishment</p> <p>Attribution</p> <p>Discounts and “plops”</p> <p>Wanderlust: digression and tangents</p> <p>Feuding team members</p>	<p>Request data to verify opinions</p> <p>Request rationale for decisions</p> <p>Request verification of motives</p> <p>Value all team members’ opinions</p> <p>Conduct training in active listening</p> <p>Use a timeline for each agenda item</p> <p>Team facilitator reminds team members of topic that is being discussed</p> <p>Enforce meeting ground rules</p> <p>Have the adversarial team members discuss the situation in a private meeting</p>
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### Ten Common Team Problems

#### Module 3 Summary

In Module 3, we learned:

- The stages of team development
- The ingredients for a successful team
- How to give and receive constructive feedback
- How to address project team conflicts and problems

#### Meeting Agenda Assignment

The Meeting Agenda assignment is to create a meeting agenda for a project that you are working on or are familiar with. What are the problems or issues that need to be addressed in this meeting? Could any of these issues be addressed through any other method of communication? If they cannot, how do you specifically plan to address those issues that are best served by a physical meeting?

Who are the attendees? Make a list of them and what you suspect are their preferred communication channels.

Your agenda should include at least the following:

- Meeting time/place
- Meeting purpose
- Timeline for agenda items
- Action item table – action item, due date, responsible individual

Submit this Meeting Agenda by the date shown in the Syllabus.

### Discussion Postings

Post your discussion posting by the date shown in the Syllabus. Discussion postings must be a minimum of 100 words. In order to obtain full credit, review and comment on a minimum of two other students' discussion postings within two days after the scheduled posting date. Please respond to comments on your discussion postings.

The discussion posting for Module 3 is:

1. From a team that you were a member of or observed, what stages of the Tuckman model were encountered? Did the team go through a storming stage? What was the highest stage that was achieved?
2. In your experience or observation, what has been the key factor in developing a team that reaches the performing stage?
3. On a project that you are working on or are familiar with, describe a situation where conflict arose between two team members. How did the conflict begin? How did it manifest itself? Were there any aspects of the conflict that were constructive? What means could you have used to avoid the conflict? Were they able to resolve the conflict?
4. What did you like best in this course?
5. What changes would you suggest to improve the course in the future?
6. What were the most interesting or most important ideas and/or tools that you learned in this course?