

Twelve Cs for Team Building

Executives, managers and organization staff members universally explore ways to improve business results and profitability. Many view team-based, horizontal, organization structures as the best design for involving all employees in creating business success.

If your team improvement efforts are not living up to your expectations, this self-diagnosing checklist may tell you why. **Successful team building, that creates effective, focused work teams, requires attention to each of the following.**

- **Clear Expectations:** Has executive leadership clearly communicated its expectations for the team's performance and expected outcomes? **Do team members understand why the team was created?** Is the organization demonstrating constancy of purpose in supporting the team with resources of people, time and money? Does the work of the team receive sufficient emphasis as a priority in terms of the time, discussion, attention and interest directed its way by executive leaders? High expectations = high results
- **Context:** Do team members understand why they are participating on the team? Do they understand how the strategy of using teams will help the organization attain its communicated business goals? Can team members define their team's importance to the accomplishment of corporate goals? **Does the team understand where its work fits in the total context of the organization's goals, principles, vision and values?**
- **Commitment:** **Do team members want to participate on the team?** Do team members feel the team mission is important? Are members committed to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes? **Do team members perceive their service as valuable to the organization and to their own careers?** Do team members anticipate recognition for their contributions? Do team members expect their skills to grow and develop on the team? Are team members excited and challenged by the team opportunity?

- **Competence:** Does the team feel that it has the appropriate people participating? (As an example, in a process improvement, is each step of the process represented on the team?) Does the team feel that its members have the knowledge, skill and capability to address the issues for which the team was formed? If not, does the team have access to the help it needs? Does the team feel it has the resources, strategies and support needed to accomplish its mission?
- **Charter:** Has the team taken its assigned area of responsibility and designed its own mission, vision and strategies to accomplish the mission. Has the team defined and communicated its goals; its anticipated outcomes and contributions; its timelines; and how it will measure both the outcomes of its work and the process the team followed to accomplish their task? Does the leadership team or other coordinating group support what the team has designed?
- **Control:** Does the team have enough freedom and empowerment to feel the ownership necessary to accomplish its charter? At the same time, do team members clearly understand their boundaries? How far may members go in pursuit of solutions? Are limitations (i.e. monetary and time resources) defined at the beginning of the project before the team experiences barriers and rework? **WIIF**
- **Collaboration:** Does the team understand team and group process? Do members understand the stages of group development? **Are team members working together effectively interpersonally? Do all team members understand the roles and responsibilities of team members? team leaders? team recorders?** Can the team approach problem solving, process improvement, goal setting and measurement jointly? Do team members cooperate to accomplish the team charter? Has the team established group norms or rules of conduct in areas such as conflict resolution, consensus decision making and meeting management? Is the team using an appropriate strategy to accomplish its action plan?
- **Communication:** **Are team members clear about the priority of their tasks?** Does the organization provide important business information regularly? Do

the teams understand the complete context for their existence? **Do team members communicate clearly and honestly with each other?** Do team members bring diverse opinions to the table? Are necessary conflicts raised and addressed?

- **Creative Innovation:** **Is the organization really interested in change?** Does it value creative thinking, unique solutions, and new ideas? Does it reward people who take reasonable risks to make improvements? Or does it reward the people who fit in and maintain the status quo? Does it provide the training, education, access to books and films, and field trips necessary to stimulate new thinking?

[ix more tips for team building.](#) [Three final tips for team building.](#)

In the first part of this article, [three tips](#) for effective team building were presented. In the second, [six tips](#) for team building were provided. Here are three more tips for effective team building.

- **Consequences:** **Do team members feel responsible and accountable for team achievements?** Are rewards and recognition supplied when teams are successful? Is reasonable risk respected and encouraged in the organization? Do team members fear reprisal? Do team members spend their time finger pointing rather than resolving problems? Is the organization designing reward systems that recognize both team and individual performance? Is the organization planning to share gains and increased profitability with team and individual contributors? Can contributors see their impact on increased organization success?
- **Coordination:** Are teams coordinated by a central leadership team that assists the groups to obtain what they need for success? Have priorities and resource allocation been planned across departments? **Do teams understand the concept of the internal customer—the next process, anyone to whom they provide a product or a service?** Are cross-functional and multi-department teams common and working together effectively? Is the organization developing a customer-focused process-focused orientation and moving away from traditional departmental thinking?

- **Cultural Change:** Does the organization recognize that the team-based, collaborative, empowering, enabling organizational culture of the future is different than the traditional, hierarchical organization it may currently be? Is the organization planning to or in the process of changing how it rewards, recognizes, appraises, hires, develops, plans with, motivates and manages the people it employs?

Spend time and attention on each of these twelve tips to ensure your work teams contribute most effectively to your business success. Your team members will love you, your business will soar, and empowered people will "own" and be responsible for their work processes.

- Can your work life get any better than this?