Team Building

The purpose of this lesson is for students to comprehend the concepts of teambuilding, and show how team building can pay huge dividends in meeting organizational goals.

Desired Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the concept of team building.

2. Explain the "12 Cs" for creating successful teams.

3. Describe motivational concepts as they apply to team achievement.

4. Explain Tuckerman's Group Development Model.

5. Discuss considerations in creating successful team projects.

Scheduled Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Introduction

Most significant results today are achieved by teams.   Teams with members that work cooperatively and with the proper skills can produce amazing results.   This lesson will show you how to transform a group of individuals into a highly effective team with proper motivation, communication, oversight, and rewards.   Building a team takes effort.   It will also require courage and trust, not only from the leader but also from the team members.

Teamwork is hard because it requires emotional energy.   The work is difficult to measure because it impacts the organization in complex manners that make it impossible to isolate as a single factor.   Getting individuals to let go of their own ambitions for the good of the team is a leadership challenge.

This lesson will discuss the concept of team building. Good construction of the team helps in getting and keeping the team motivated.   The search for motivational factors that will work for a particular team takes time.   Keeping the team focused on results bolsters their spirits as they experience goals being completed.

1. Describe the concept of team building.

CAP members feel that they are a member of a special team. Squadron, Group and Wing commanders desire to have their unit function as a team. At CAP everyone adds their individual skills to the success of the organization. However, as a group it can be a struggle to get the job done. A group is not a team, nor will a team magically appear. There are several human obstacles to overcome in developing a team.

A team, as used in this lesson, is a small group of people with complementary skills who will work together to accomplish a defined purpose. A team will develop a cohesion that allows the team members to self-manage. Team members hold each other accountable for their performance. It is easier for a group of people to evolve into a team if the group is small, generally less than ten.

Teamwork is the process of people actively working together to accomplish the team's task. Your task as a team builder is to direct the group's individuals from their individual jobs towards the team's goals.

An effective team can achieve remarkable results; a synergy that makes the team greater than the sum of the individuals. Creating this high performing team takes time, effort and trust. It is well worth the investment.

Team building represents much more than asking for a group of volunteers and assigning a task. People have to be motivated to give up their individual motives and work towards the goal of the team. This means that the team goal must be well defined and clearly communicated to the team.

2. Explain the "12 Cs" for creating successful teams.

There are many reasons for CAP to create teams. Reasons range from developing a fund raising event, planning the yearly awards ceremony, or evaluating training scenarios. Finding people willing to become part of a team may be easy, or it can be difficult depending upon the task and how the task is sold.

The first task of a team builder is to be clear about the goal… the reason the team is to be formed. If the team builder is fuzzy on the goal, there is little likelihood the team will be successful when formed. The clearly defined task allows perspective team members to determine if they have the time and a contributing skill set to be an effective member of the team.

The next task is to select the members of the team. The primary key assisting team participant selection is to be very clear about the purpose of the team when asking for volunteers, or "voluntelling" someone, to be on the team (see above). Members who don't want to be a part of the team will stifle productivity.

Key components in selecting the team composition include: does this person have the time to participate, or is s/he someone who overextends him/herself everywhere?   Is this person committed to the team till the end, or is s/he someone who will find a new interest in a couple of weeks?   Is this person committed to the team's goals, or does s/he have his/her own agenda and will attempt to steer the team off course?   Not everything is directed towards only getting the best people.   The desire to have someone learn from the team experience is also important.

Tips for successful team development are known as the twelve 'C's.

Clear Expectations: The team builder with clearly defined goals has a head start in getting the team members selected.   As you begin the process of developing your team the first task is to establish clear expectations.   Work with the team creating all the expectations.   Primary are the team goals, but there are other expectations.   Let them know how often you expect the team to meet and if you're expecting interim reports.   Do team members understand why the team was created?   Not only is a final product expected, but how and when is it to be delivered?   Let the team know their autonomy in making decisions.   Team negotiations begin probably before the team is even announced.   A team kickoff meeting is strongly suggested to start working out the details.

List the goals of the team.   Then work with the team to establish the priorities of the goals.   Assist the team in clarifying real goals with nice to have items.

Charter: A team charter establishes the area of responsibility and the vision to accomplish the mission.   A good team charter benefits the team builder because it provides guidance to the team in helping it make decisions.   When everybody knows the goals, priorities and deadlines decisions can be made at lower levels and the decisions are easier to understand.

The team charter provides identity to the team.   Outsiders looking at the team know what the team is to accomplish.   The charter shows the team's fit with the organization's goals and mission.

Context: The team builder should help the team understand the context of the team.   Team members benefit from knowing how their effort contributes to the organization.   You should highlight the importance of their work with the organization's goals.   Some may be obvious but others need to be spelled out.   For example, explain how good training scenarios help with retention of CAP members.

Commitment: Mutual commitments make for a successful team.   You, as a team builder, recognize that team members are now working on a team and your responsibility is to allow them to serve on the team.   Members make a stronger commitment to the team if they feel the team task is important, their service is valuable to CAP and they will be recognized.   Team members expect their skills to grow by their

participation on the team and the team builder should make the commitment that the individuals have learning opportunities.

Competence: Balance expectations of the team members for a challenging opportunity to develop their skills against the team need to believe that the appropriate people are participating on the team.   In other words, the combination of all the team members' knowledge must be sufficient to accomplish the task, or at least support the development of the needed skills. If additional skills are needed for the team, make sure to provide support for skill development.

An example of competence is ensuring that at least someone on the team developing training scenarios understands radios well enough to pick communications sites appropriate for the training.   If the knowledge is not on the team, is a resource available to provide the needed information?   Preferably the resource is a person and not a tour of several websites.

Collaboration: Development of the team improves if the individuals understand team and group processes.   There are several roles to be filled on the team.   Known roles include a team leader and a recorder.   Other rolls contributing to success include: a promoter who champions ideas after they're initiated; an assessor to offer insightful analysis, perhaps to be the devil's advocate; an advocate is someone who will fight the external battles for the team.   A set of group rules of conduct benefits collaboration within the team.

The team builder improves internal collaboration by making sure each team member knows what the other team members are doing.   A leader improves external team collaboration by getting all parts of the organization to support the team goals.   The team leader assists the team by introducing team members to the appropriate people, or at a minimum, provides a list of correct phone numbers.

Coordination: Coordination is the partner of collaboration.   Coordination is the relationship of the team with external parts of the organization.   Does the organization assist the group in obtaining what they need for success?   Is the team able to work across boundaries in the organization?   Ensure that the team understands the customers of their product.   A simple thing of making sure that the team meeting place is always available when needed shows support for the team.   In contrast, a team constantly having to make concessions to the organization may be shown a lack of support by the organization.

Control: The team needs to have enough empowerment to carry out their task.   They should know if they are making recommendations and someone else will have the final say, or is the team expected to make decisions and implement them.   Will there be a review process?

Team members must understand their boundaries.   The limits individuals have to achieve their goals must be made clear.   Often the real boundary is cost.   Although

one of the benefits of a team is its ability to work around organizational politics, the team should be aware of political limits.

The other aspect of control is team members holding other members accountable to their commitments and timeliness. Generally peer pressure works; however, the team leader or commander may need to step in to resolve issues when they appear.

Consequences: A team is cognizant of the consequences of its actions. Members must know if they are to accept more risk than normal for the organization. In a volunteer organization very little can be done about being late, but there are impacts for exceeding cost or risking safety. Inside the team, the individuals should work together and be supportive, not pointing fingers and determining who is going to be the fall guy or gal. The nice side to consequences is making sure successes and improvements are recognized.

Communication: Communication shows up several times in the Officer Basic Course. The communication considerations for team building are both external and internal. The external factors include making sure the team understands their tasks and the priority of those tasks. Communication lines must remain open to provide needed business information to the team so they won't be making bad decisions. The ability to give and receive honest feedback keeps the team moving forward. Remember, CAP is, at its heart, also part of a larger organization.

Internal communication is vital. As the team evolves, team members will increasingly be able to communicate openly and honestly with each other. For the team to be effective team members must know what each other is doing. A team cannot cooperate and help out if they don't know the real status of everybody's progress. If Able is struggling on his task and Charlie has some extra time, Charlie can help out, but Able must communicate that he is falling behind.

Visibility is a communication trait that the team develops. Everything must be open and aboveboard. The team leader needs to be alert to private assignments and hidden agendas. The human desire to conceal failure to meet expectations has to be countered with emphasis on honest openness.

A characteristic of great communicators is the ability to listen. Say less and listen more. Only after a team leader has listened and truly understands what team members are saying can she react to the real issues. Many people fall into the trap of only hearing parts of a conversation and switch their brains to thinking what they are going to say next instead of continuing to listen. Listen with the intent to understand. Periodically repeat what you believe is being said. If you don't take the time to understand the message then you will be working with only partial knowledge.

The freedom to express ideas and have those ideas valued by the team is a requirement if creative and unique solutions are being sought. Good decisions are the result of critical analysis of all ideas. Resolving the differences among ideas requires

negotiating.   Principled negotiation is the effective way to amicably achieve a smart outcome.   You need to separate the people from the problem and focus on their interests, not their positions.   Insist on objective criteria to select from multiple options.   Most people are reasonable and will be satisfied if their ideas are heard and objectively evaluated.

Creative innovation: One of the boundaries the team needs to know is if the team builder is expecting new ideas.   Team members should know if creative ideas are anticipated or if the team was established just to nudge the status quo.   The team builder may unintentionally indicate to the team not to investigate new ideas by setting deadlines that don't allow time for information gathering on possible new solutions.

An honest appraisal of how much risk the team leader is willing to accept provides the foundation for creative innovation.   The team also needs to know expectations the leaders have for evaluating the risk.

Cultural change: The team builder should convey the climate in which the team and future teams will operate.   Perhaps squadron cadets have progressed in leadership where the commander wants to transition to a team based empowering culture.   Or, the squadron commander is currently overwhelmed and he/she is using the team to temporarily offload some work. The cultural environment may be a motivational factor for the current team, and also affects individuals after the team assignment is done and the team disbanded.

Successful team building requires attention to several factors known as the twelve Cs.   These attributes are interrelated and feed upon each other.   The two vital factors are clear expectations and communications.   Although these factors also apply in getting your entire unit to function as a team, they are focused towards getting a small group of people to work at accomplishing a well defined set of goals.

3. Describe motivational concepts as they apply to team achievement.

As team builder, you should know what you want from the team.   The team developed a charter with goals and a timetable to meet.   The previous section contains tips on how to create a successful team.   This section describes how to motivate the team to achieve.

Motivating a group of people takes effort, an emotional energy.   Fortunately you will have help from some team members.   These team members are participating because they already believe in the goals of the team.   Their inner drive to produce a great result serves you well.   The catch is: will their drive help unite the team, or will it cause some friction?

It will take time to find the right factors to motivate the team.   There will be mistakes along the way.   The team builder and team leader will work to unite the team and work

to keep the team together.   However, if an individual is not working out for the team, it is appropriate to remove the hindering member.

The most important motivational factor is trust.   To have a high performing team, members must have a fundamental trust of one another.   They must be comfortable in being vulnerable with each other.   If not, unique ideas are not even suggested. Wariness interferes with healthy criticism.

A team leader needs to have the right fuel to drive the team. That fuel is motivation. Like fossil fuel; motivation takes many forms: approval, awards, more responsibility, or the feeling of being needed. In CAP it is not going to be a bigger paycheck.   Some members are content to work behind the scenes for the betterment of the organization. Showing your appreciation for their efforts is still required.   Do the paperwork for certificates of appreciation or an appropriate award, particularly for the high performers.   Other unit members will learn the type of performance you expect to earn an award. Use awards to motivate your teams.

Proper development of a team assists the motivation.   By selecting appropriate team members and carefully selecting a team leader you are starting in the right direction. Don't make the team too large.   Not everyone has to participate on the team.   Large teams have issues such as finding a meeting time which can slow down the effort. Large teams also suffer from members believing that someone else is going to do a job.   Team cohesion is important to motivation and is easier to achieve with a smaller team size. If necessary, cohesion can also be improved by increasing membership homogeneity and more interaction.

Give the team assignments that require members to cooperatively work together to complete the tasks.   Continue to develop opportunities for team members to assist each other in getting the job done.

One of the challenges in maintaining motivation lies in how you introduce changes to the team's goals, especially when unpopular changes have to be incorporated.   A good team leader will react quickly.   Procrastinating rarely yields good results.   Keep the team informed.   And remember that it's the leadership's responsibility to communicate bad news to the team.   Don't let members learn of bad news through the rumor mill.

Focus on results. A teams' reason for being is the accomplishment of a goal.   Keeping the team focused on results will also keep them from expanding their assignments and delving into areas they don't need to.

CHALLENGES FOR TEAMS

Teams that have a fear of conflict will not produce the best results.   Ideas need to be constructively questioned in the attempt to find the best solution.   The team should have some rules of conduct so everyone knows the boundaries of the team's healthy confrontation mode.

A lack of commitment occurs if the team does not thoroughly discuss all the ideas. Everyone needs to understand and buy into the team's decisions.   This gives confidence to the team that they made the best decision.   Additionally, team members feel they can defend the decision outside the team.

A team builder will not get the desired results unless he keeps the team motivated. Because it is a human undertaking, discovering what "buttons to push" to get the team going will take time.   As discussed in the next section, the team builder is responsible for motivating the team at startup.   As the team develops it will build its own momentum.

4. Explain Tuckman's Group Development Model.

A small group of people who work together over a period of time evolve their manners of interacting with each other.   Numerous models exist about the developmental states of a team.   One of the most popular was proposed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965.   The Tuckman model consists of four stages: Forming, storming, norming and performing.

The **Forming** state exists when the team is created.   The team wants to know the objective for which it has been assembled.   Each member wants to know something about the other team members.   This is an orientation phase in many ways. Individuals are testing relationships with the leaders and each other.   They are working with the scope of the goals of the team.   The forming stage is where the team and team members are discovering and defining their roles.

As a team builder, your tasks during the forming state are directed by necessity.   The team members are generally motivated but need guidance to the objectives of the team and the issues to overcome.   It's a good time to observe who the emerging leaders of the team will be and provide corrections if the team steers off course.

The output during the formation state is generally low as the individuals on the team are concentrating on defining goals, how to approach the tasks and what additional knowledge or skills are needed.   This stage is important because the team members get to know each other, share some personal information and create new friendships. Successful team building requires this phase because the team members are people who need to cooperate.

After the somewhat artificial polite forming stage differences among group members emerge during the next stage, known as the **Storming** stage.   Individual ideas compete for consideration as members have their own concepts of what the group is supposed to do.   Team leadership, individual commitment, and differences in personalities are some of the issues on the floor for discussion, sometimes heated.   Members confront the perspectives and values of others.   It's a natural stage when people are gathered to get a task done.   During these series of generally minor conflicts some team members become frustrated with the team and the team's task.

The maturity of some team members usually determines the length of this phase. Generally the storming stage is relatively short, but it could become the stage from which the team never emerges. Tolerance of every team member and their ideas must be stressed by the team builder. Every idea presented has some importance to the team.

It is important for team builders to remain professional during this phase. The storming phase is a necessity to the development of the team. You should let the team work through their differences. Your focus is to make sure they do it professionally. This way the group becomes more comfortable with each other and will allow mangers to step back. Letting the team become more autonomous allows members to share opinions without feeling judged.

The next stage in team development is the **Norming** stage. At this point team members conform their behavior to each other. Team members modify the way they work to make teamwork a more natural way of working. Team roles become comfortable as members learn more about each other, thus how to work with each other.

Teams in the norming stage generally create group policies, shared procedures, team values, and perhaps taboos. The team builder does less leading and more participation. It is time for the group to make their own decisions, build trust with each other and feed everyone's motivation.

The team builder must still monitor the team's activities being aware of two pitfalls. The first is the team loses its diversity and starts to *groupthink*. Ideas are not challenged. The not so funny phrase "None of us is as dumb as all of us" should not apply to your team's outcome. This trait could appear if healthy dissent is suppressed. The other situation to look out for is some team members may become overwhelmed with the responsibilities they have been given. Their resistance to the workload may result into a renewal of the Storming stage.

A team reaches its stride in the **Performing** Stage. It is accomplishing work effectively. Tasks are done smoothly in a positive climate. Disagreements are expected and handled through processes the team developed in the norming stage. Team members are motivated and confident in the outcome of the team's tasks.

The team supervisor's task has been successfully accomplished. Members of the team are interdependent, competent and make decisions without supervision. The team accomplishes tasks effectively. Expect that the team may briefly redo the storming stage, particularly if team members change, but it should be relatively short lived as team norms and momentum are reestablished.

Over a period of time a group of people will go through recognizable stages of development as they form a team. Popular naming conventions for the stages are: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. As the team progresses through these

stages team members learn how to get along with each other, establish agreed upon methods for conducting their business and improve their productivity.

5. Discuss considerations in creating successful team projects.

One of the first questions a team has is: why are we here?   If you are going to put a team together to achieve something what factors should you be looking at?   In order for the team to be successful, the project they were assigned should be successful.   The team builder must consider three items for the people involved in the team: authority, responsibility and accountability. Project considerations include available resources, time, constraints, products and customers.

Many CAP projects need a team to complete them.   Obviously, running a cadet encampment takes a team effort.   Arranging a parents' night could be done by a single person, but having a team will make it easier to get all the coordination done.   Some projects simply require digging out what was done last time and updating the plans while other projects may start from scratch.   As team builder, let the creative innovation be a deciding factor.

Does the team have the authority and the resources needed to get the project done? Resources include budget.   Is enough money allocated for a successful project? Generally the most valuable resource is people.   Assemble the team with enough time so they can come up to speed, get organized and get the job done.   Is the team aware of the applicable CAP regulations under which they must operate?   The team needs to know who the customers of their products are.   Does the team need access to the customers to be successful?

Assigning the team to a project makes them somewhat responsible for the project's success.   The degree of that responsibility aligns with where decisions are being made. Will the team be making decisions on its own, or will there be almost constant oversight?   Is the team going to be held accountable for the success of the project? Are there possible repercussions for unsuccessful or overdue products?

How important is it for the team to deliver a correct product the first time?   For a cadet team learning exercise, the team builder may be happy with anything being delivered since that was the real goal of the team.   Other team products may be subject to a review and they get a second chance to improve their product.   A team could be in competition with other teams and their product may not be the one selected for future use.

There are many considerations with deciding which projects to hand over to a team. The project size and effort should match the skill set of the team.   A small task may be an ideal team project giving individuals the opportunity to learn how to function as a team.   There may be a project for which you desire some creativity.

Lesson Summary and Closure

There is more involved in team building then assembling a group of people together and handing over an assignment.   A team is constructed considering several factors.   The team develops itself through four stages.   A performing team builds a synergy that has it out performing what one would expect from all the individuals.   The team shares common goals as well as the rewards and responsibilities for achieving them.   The team experience will benefit the individuals of the team as well as the organization.

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