New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
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Building Effective Teams

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Location: Room C12, 25 W. 4th St.
(diagonally across from Tisch Hall)

Schedule:
January 23 and January 30, 2009
9:00am – 5:00pm
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

As businesses face unprecedented challenges to survive and succeed, many are rethinking the way they are structured, the way they are managed and the way work gets done. As a result, many have transformed their hierarchical structure to one with horizontal and cross-functional focus using teams as an effective way to get work done. This trend recognizes the unique potential of teams to deliver results and to meet business challenges successfully. In order to utilize teams with the desired result, attention must be paid to how and why teams are assembled, launched, managed and rewarded. This course is also designed to prepare students for their Capstone project teams.

This two-day course provides the fundamental principles and methods required to create high-performing work, project, Capstone, and/or problem-solving teams. Topics covered will include: moving from group to team; stages of team development; identifying the key competencies for successful team functioning; critical roles and responsibilities on a team; ensuring team productivity; aligning corporate culture with team culture; techniques for using a systematic problem-solving methodology; and troubleshooting common team problems. In addition, particular attention will be paid to the critical success factors of Capstone teams - a unique type of team that has its own special challenges.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide the skills to:

- launch and manage a team effectively
- establish team roles and responsibilities effectively
- understand stages of team development and their impact
- manage team dynamics and team meetings
- assess team functioning and performance
- utilize team troubleshooting techniques

Text - to be read prior to the first class session:
New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998 (this text is out of print but available from Unique Copy, 252 Greene St. for $17.45 or online).
Course Outline
This course is conducted in a workshop format in two, all-day sessions using small group activities, simulations, lecture, and discussion to cover the topics below.

Day One
• Introductions, individual objectives
• Course overview and objectives
• Introduction to teams
• Team formation, infrastructure and management
• Roles and responsibilities on a team
• Stages of team development
• Assessing team performance

Day One - Articles to be downloaded, links provided on Blackboard:
Building the Emotional Intelligence of Groups
Tapping into Teams
How Management Teams Can Have a Good Fight
The Tough Work of Turning Around a Team
Letters to the Editor: The Tough Work of Turning Around a Team
How to Kill a Team’s Creativity
The Team That Wasn’t

Day Two
• Team Dynamics - small group simulation
• Preparing an organization for team culture
• Meeting management guidelines
• Conflict resolution techniques
• Applying project management tools and techniques
• Application exercise
• Strategies for solving common team problems

Day Two - Articles to be downloaded, links provided on Blackboard:
Speeding Up Team Learning
Can Absence Make a Team Grow Stronger?
Expert answers to “The Team That Wasn’t” case (to be distributed in class)

Add’l Team Readings - Articles to be downloaded, links provided on Blackboard:
Building Effective Teams in Real Time
The Three Essentials of an Effective Team
Building and Leading Your Team
Managing a Team vs. Managing Individuals on the Team
Why Some Teams Succeed (and So Many Don’t)
Teams: Solving the Sophomore Slump
What Makes Teams Click
Assignments:

In order to ensure everyone comes into this two-session course with similar grounding, it is required that the text “Teams: Structure, Process, Culture and Politics” by E. Aranda, L. Aranda, and K. Conlon is read prior to the first class. This text is out of print but available from Unique Copy, 252 Greene St. for $17.45. It may also be available online. For the second class, there is a written, individual assignment based on course readings. The final assignment is a team project which is due on February 19. Please note only hard copy will be accepted on all written assignments (Please use 12-point font, one-inch margins, double space, number the pages and put your mailbox number at the top.)

Please note that Blackboard’s Library Research tab, under Bibliography & Footnote Style Guide, provides guidance for how to correctly document citations, references, bibliographies, etc. in written academic work. You are expected to follow a format of your choosing consistently throughout a given written assignment.

Course Requirements and Expectations:

All assignments and readings should be completed before class. Students should be actively engaged in class discussions, clearly demonstrating through comments that readings and assignments have been completed and thoughtful reflection has occurred. For class participation, your goal should be to contribute to the discussion and build upon the comments of your classmates. Think about substantive contributions and not simply talking for the sake of air time.

Grading for this course is determined by substantive, informed class participation (30%), the individual written assignment (30%), and the team project (30%) and individual team debrief (10%). Neither absences nor late submissions of assignments is allowed. Late arrival to class, lack of preparation and/or uneven substantive participation in class discussions will have a negative impact on your course grade.

Teamwork: It is also expected that you demonstrate good faith and collaborative team behavior while working on your final team assignment as you apply course content to your efforts.

Additional Readings:

There is an extensive literature on teams. The list below is selected to provide students with classic references for additional reading.