

## **Student Zone: HR-related Skill Development: Team Leadership Skills Chapter 5**

Work team meetings are a vital part of the team building and team performance process. Team meetings can, unless properly managed by team leaders, be frustrating and a waste of time. As such, the ability to manage a team meeting well is a valuable HR-related skill.

Team meetings can be held for a variety of purposes:

- **Communicating** information to let the team know what is happening - a one-way flow
- **Collecting** opinions and information from team members - a two-way flow
- **Creative** meetings where team members are encouraged to put forward new proposals and where creative thinking is encouraged
- **Conflict resolution** where there are differences of opinions
- **Change** announcements to let team members know what is happening and offer opportunities for feedback.

In addition to the agreed agenda there will also be hidden agendas. These are the personal wishes and needs of individual team members, their relationships and conflicts with one another, different values and priorities and so on. The key leadership skill involved in dealing with these aspects in a work team is to acknowledge them and listen, understanding they are an inevitable part of group dynamics. The key team leadership skills are:

### **Prior to meeting**

- Plan by clarifying purpose and agenda
- Gather relevant information
- Anticipate questions from team members

### **During meeting**

- Share information
- Support/build on ideas or proposals
- Acknowledge members' ideas by summarizing
- Respect and acknowledge emotions, be patient
- Be aware of 'hidden agenda'
- Deal with negative behaviours (for example side conversations, personal attacks, rambling) in a firm but friendly manner
- Use team members to deal with awkward individuals
- Break down conflicts, confirm agreements, clarify areas of disagreement, aim for consensus, if not total agreement, in the team

## **Leading a Change Meeting**

A meeting is the best way to inform your team about a change. A well led meeting reinforces the idea that people can work together to make things happen as a team and offer opportunities for feedback and input. In addition to the above guidelines, the following is a general format for a change meeting:

- Review the need for change and how it came about
- Describe the change in detail
- Explain how the change will affect your team
- Encourage participation by asking for questions about the change
- Solve problems in cooperation with team members
- Listen to concerns and respond appropriately
- Manage group dynamics
- Share your personal feelings (if appropriate)
- Ask for help and support in making the change work
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for team members.

## **Leader-centred Teams <sup>1</sup>**

To function well, managers need to learn how to:

- Train teams in group problem-solving techniques
- Master coaching skills for use with teams
- Infuse teams with a sense of their own identity
- Help teams choose their own leaders
- Monitor and assess peer performance appraisals
- Monitor and assess the peer discipline process
- Help the teams expand their responsibilities
- Foster innovation in teams
- Monitor team competition to prevent overzealous behaviours
- Refocus teams when necessary on team goals.

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<sup>1</sup> These skills are drawn from Jack Orsburn and Linda Moran, *The New Self-Directed Work Teams* (2000), New York: McGraw-Hill.