

ARE YOU A TEAM?¹

A team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, performance objectives and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable

- 1) Are you small enough in number?**
 - a) Can you convene easily and frequently?
 - b) Can you communicate with all members easily and frequently?
 - c) Are your discussions open and interactive for all members?
 - d) Does each member understand the other's roles and skills?
 - e) Do you need more people to achieve your ends?
 - f) Are sub-teams possible or necessary?

- 2) Do you have adequate levels of complementary skills and skill potential?**
 - a) Three categories of skills are required in a team: technical/functional, problem-solving/decision-making, and interpersonal. Are these three categories actually or potentially represented across the membership of your group?
 - b) Does each member have the potential in all three categories to advance his or her skills to the level required by the team's purpose and objectives?
 - c) Are any skill areas that are critical to team performance missing or underrepresented?
 - d) Are the members, individually or collectively, willing to spend the time to help themselves and others learn and develop skills?
 - e) Can you introduce new or supplemental skills as needed?

- 3) Do you have a broader, meaningful purpose that all members aspire to?**
 - a) Does it constitute a broader, deeper aspiration than just near-term objectives?
 - b) Is it a team purpose as opposed to an external purpose or just one individual's purpose?
 - c) Do all members understand and articulate it the same way? And do they do so without relying on ambiguous abstractions?
 - d) Do members define it vigorously in discussions with outsiders?
 - e) Do members frequently refer to it and explore its implications?
 - f) Does it contain themes that are particularly meaningful and memorable?
 - g) Do members feel it is important, if not exciting?

- 4) Do you have a specific set of performance objectives agreed upon by all?**
 - a) Are they team objectives vs. externally-imposed objectives or just one individual's objectives?
 - b) Are they clear, simple, and measurable? If not measurable, can their achievement be determined?
 - c) Are they realistic as well as ambitious? Do they allow small wins along the way?

¹ From Katzenbach and Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*, HarperCollins, 2006.

- d) Do they call for a concrete set of team work-products?
- e) Is their relative importance and priority clear to all members?
- f) Do all members agree with the objectives, their relative importance, and the way in which their achievement will be measured?
- g) Do all members articulate the objectives in the same way?

5) Is the working approach clearly understood and commonly agreed upon?

- a) Is the approach clear, concrete, and really understood and agreed to by everybody? Will it result in achievement of the objectives?
- b) Will it capitalize on and enhance the skills of all members? Is it consistent with other demands on the members?
- c) Does it require all members to contribute equivalent amounts of real work?
- d) Does it provide for open interaction, fact-based problem solving, and results-based evaluation?
- e) Do all members articulate the approach in the same way?
- f) Does it provide for modification and improvement over time?
- g) Are fresh input and perspectives systematically sought and added, for example, through information and analysis, new members and senior sponsors?

6) Do you hold yourselves individually and mutually accountable for the group's results?

- a) Are you individually and jointly accountable for the team's purpose, objectives, approach, and work-products?
- b) Can you and do you measure progress against specific objectives?
- c) Do all members feel equally responsible for all measures?
- d) Are the members clear on what they are individually responsible for and what they are jointly responsible for?
- e) Is there a sense that "only the team can fail"?