

## ARE YOU A TEAM?<sup>1</sup>

*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?
- d) Do they call for a concrete set of team work-products?

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<sup>1</sup> From Katzenbach and Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*, HarperCollins, 2006.

- 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"?