



**CSE 407**

Building and Managing  
an Effective Team



# The Project Management Life Cycle



Great things in business  
are never done by one  
person. They're done by  
a team of people.

– Steve Jobs



**PM** ProjectManager



# Importance of a good team

- World is constantly changing, and companies must quickly respond to new opportunities
- Team approach is best for capturing opportunities on a short timescale
- A team approach reduces a large, complex issue or opportunity into multiple smaller segments that can be solved in parallel
- A team problem-solving approach can result in greater productivity, more effective use of resources, higher-quality decisions, and a more open environment for creativity and innovation



# Characteristics of Effective Teams

- **Clear Purpose:** Vision, mission, and goals have been defined.
- **Participation:** Everyone is encouraged to participate and contribute.
- **Civilized Disagreement:** Members are comfortable with conflict. None disrespect others during conflict.
- **Good and Open Communication:** Members are free to express their feelings; no hidden agendas. Also open discussion of everyone's ideas leading to an acceptable solution.
- **Clear Roles and Work Assignments:** Clear expectations of role for each member.



# Additional Characteristics of Effective Teams

- **Shared Leadership:** Formal leader but leadership role can shift at times depending upon circumstances
- **External Relations:** Members develop outside relationships and build credibility in other parts of the organization
- **Style Diversity:** Members emphasize attention to task and goals and focus on process
- **Self-Assessment:** Periodic examination of how well the team is functioning.
- **Commitment:** Members really believe in the task
- **Skill Diversity:** Mix of subject matter expertise
- **Trust:** There are no ulterior motives or agendas



# How to Build an Effective Team

## 1. Get the right people on the team (choosing candidates)

- Thoroughly interview candidates
- Assess candidate attitude because in most cases attitude is more important than subject matter expertise
- Avoid matrixed team members because they have other masters to serve
- Go for self-assured, confident individuals with specific expertise and a positive attitude



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

## 2. Remove Unfit Member

- Remove individuals who have bad attitudes or are underperforming
- Understand that taking difficult decisions is important and part of your job
- Removing uncommitted individuals, regardless of their level of expertise, is absolutely necessary for your team to move forward.



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

## 3. Set Clear Goals and Vision

- As team lead, it is your responsibility to ensure that each member understands the high-level goals of the team and to show everyone a vision of success
- Align tasks with each individual's strength, and define these tasks using **SMART**.
- Define team behavioral norms that focus on trust and mutual respect and nurture these behaviors.



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	Make your goal specific and narrow for more effective planning	
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	Make sure your goal and progress are measurable	
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>	Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame	
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b>	Your goal should align with your values and long-term objectives	
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-based</b>	Set a realistic but ambitious end date to clarify task prioritization and increase motivation	



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

## 4. Plan and Track Progress

- Effective planning is important for project success
- Track the progress of your plan on a **shared calendar** and be willing to modify the plan if conditions change
- Impart a sense of urgency to the team by setting challenging milestones and discussing the impact to mission success
- Communicate often and through all means available and to all team members



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

## 5. Skilled Diversity and Assign Tasks based on Strength

- Diversity in **skill** and **talent** are important
- Members from different backgrounds can bring other talents in addition to their specific expertise
- Leadership roles can be shared when a task aligns with the expertise of a team member
- Problem solving becomes easier by having people of different expertise rather than people with similar strengths
- Tasks should be assigned based on one's strength.



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

## 6. Motivation and Feedback

- Motivation has been shown to be one of the strongest factors that determine team effectiveness
- Team lead must celebrate successes along the way to maintain high levels of motivation
- Intrinsic motivation, such as working for a good cause, is stronger than external motivation
- Motivational activities include providing public or private praise when warranted, giving on-the-spot awards, sharing praise from stakeholders, or providing something as simple as a cake to celebrate a milestone or a task well done.



# How to Build an Effective Team (Continued)

- Feedback should be solicited throughout the project
- Performance improvement opportunities might be missed if feedback is not obtained throughout the project
- Feedback questions should be used to obtain feedback from employees
- Answers to all the questions will provide the team lead clues on how to improve current and future team performance.
- Team leads should encourage this type of feedback and be open-minded to constructive criticism



# Sample Feedback Questions

- Do/did you understand the mission and goals of the team?
- Do/did you understand your role?
- Is/was your tasking specific enough?
- Do/did you understand how your input contributed to the goal of the project?
- Are/were the team meetings effective and timely?
- Do/did you feel you were respected and your thoughts listened to?
- Is/was the communication open and honest?
- Do/did you feel the team environment (meetings and interactions) was informal or formal?
- Any ideas on how to improve the process?



# Team Size Matters

- Studies find that if team size increases beyond 20 members, collaboration among team members decrease
- Communications follow the rule:  $n(n-1)/2$
- The greater the diversity, the less likely the team members were to share knowledge
- The greater the proportion of highly educated specialists on a team, the more likely the team was to have unproductive conflicts
- As teams became more virtual, the collaboration decreased.