THE FIVE BEHAVIORS OF A COHESIVE TEAM™

PROGRESS REPORT

optional activities

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TRUST: brown paper bag

activity goals

In this activity, participants will draw something about themselves and the drawings will randomly be distributed to other team members to review. They will have the opportunity to discuss feedback with the person who reviewed their drawing AND to discuss someone else's artwork. The goal of the activity is:

- To assist participants in providing personal information about themselves to other group members

what do you need?

- Time: 50-60 minutes
- Two pieces of standard paper for each participant
- Three different-colored writing utensils for each participant
- One large paper grocery bag

activity instructions

1 Introduce the activity. Then give each participant two sheets of paper. Ask them to fold one of the sheets in half horizontally. They should leave the other sheet of paper flat.

2 Distribute the writing utensils (or have them on the tables). On the top portion of the folded paper, above the fold, ask each participant to draw something about themselves. (These can be very rudimentary—artistic ability is inconsequential.) Say that each drawing should be a nonverbal clue that represents one or two items about themselves. It can be related to community activities, home life, hobby, sports, etc. It should be something that expresses a part of their personalities. **(10 minutes)**

3 When everyone has finished, ask them to fold their papers so the images are covered and then write their initials on the top left-hand corners of their papers so that you can tell who the sheet belongs to later in the activity. Collect the sheets of paper.

4 Now, ask participants, on the second sheet of paper, to record their ideas, thoughts, beliefs about, or descriptions of the items they drew on the first sheet of paper. What did it mean to them? Why did they pick this thing to describe themselves? While they are working, place the sheets of paper you collected into the brown paper sack. **(10 minutes)**

5 Tell them to keep their second sheets of paper for later discussion. Shake up the paper sack of papers so that everyone can see it and the papers are mixed thoroughly.

6 Next, ask participants to select one piece of paper from the bag as you move clockwise around the room. Ask them NOT to do anything with the papers until you have finished and given them further instructions. If, by chance, a participant selects his or her own paper, he or she should put it back and select another.

7 When everyone has someone else's paper, tell them to list their reactions to the drawing on the bottom, blank section of the paper. Remind the group to keep their reactions and comments positive, listing at least five or six short phrases that describe what they see. **(10 minutes)**

8 When the time is up, ask participants to move around the room and find the person whose drawing they have. Remind participants that their initials are on the top left-hand corners of the papers if they need a clue. After they have found the pictures' owners, have them discuss their perceptions of the pictures' meanings and correct any misperceptions—but don't have them return the pictures. They need to keep them for the next step.

Note: Be sure to allow time for two discussions to occur, since there will be multiple pairings. **(10-15 minutes)**

9 Next, ask participants to take turns saying whose picture they have and sharing the phrases they have written on the bottom of the sheets. Ask them to report any discoveries they had about the other person.

10 Wrap up with a discussion based on the following questions: **(10-15 minutes)**

- What were your reactions to the characteristics that were drawn on the paper you received? Did you see the person in a new way after viewing the drawing?
- Did the person who received your drawing have the same thoughts about what you had drawn as you yourself wrote on the second sheet of paper?
- What were your first impressions about disclosing personal information about yourself?

TRUST: owner's manual

activity goals

In this activity, participants will prepare a brief "manual" of things they would like their teammates to know about them in order to build better relationships. Each participant then takes a turn sharing his or her manual with the team. The goals are:

- To provide participants an opportunity to share some things about themselves with their teammates in order to help build relationships
- To provide the team with a chance to build vulnerability-based trust

what do you need?

- Time: 30-60 minutes
- Copy of individual Owner's Manuals
- (Optional) Additional copies of Owner's Manuals Instructions

activity instructions

1 Send the instructions (handout that follows) out at least two weeks in advance, along with an example of an Owner's Manual document.

2 Remind participants three or four days in advance of the session to bring a copy of their Manual to the session (and to bring copies for each of their team members if you choose that option).

3 Begin the activity by explaining that the intent of the activity is to give teammates a better understanding of themselves and help the team build stronger relationships.

4 Ask one team member to talk though his or her Owner's Manual. When that person is finished, ask the other team members for any comments they would like to make. Repeat the process for each team member.

5 If participants brought copies for their teammates, distribute the copies as each person finishes. Suggest that the team members place all the Owner's Manuals in a file they can easily access and reference.

* *Because participants can choose what information they wish to share, this is a relatively low-risk activity.*

HANDOUT: owner's manual instructions

Have you ever thought that it might be easier to form and manage relationships if each person came up with instructions?

Please prepare a brief guide that will help your teammates better understand you so that they can apply this knowledge in enhancing their relationships with you. Please organize your guide into four parts:

- Work preferences—Describe how you like to get things done at work. For example, do you prefer to work alone or with others? Do you tend to focus on the big picture or the details? Do you like to receive a lot of direction or do you prefer to figure things out for yourself?
- Pet peeves—Describe those things that drive you crazy at work. Don't identify specific people, just behaviors, processes, rules, and the like.
- Cautions—Share insights on your reactions to stressful situations and confrontations, as well as red flags that would be helpful for team members to know.
- Final note—List the areas that you are actively working to improve.

Tips

- Think about the aspects of your preferred work environment that would be most important for others to know about you.
- Write your Owner's Manual in the third person, as if you were writing about someone else.
- Don't be overly concerned with proper writing style; it is more important that your "voice" comes through in the writing.
- Limit your Owner's Manual to two pages.

TRUST: words of trust

activity goals

In this activity, participants work in groups to create lists, illustrations, and an action-oriented tip related to trust. The activity is comprised of four rounds followed by a discussion. The goals of the activity are:

- To recognize different meanings that participants ascribe to trust
- To explore the complexities and subtleties of building and maintaining trust

what do you need?

- Time: 60-70 minutes
- Blank sheet of paper for each participant
- Flipchart and markers
- Timer
- Masking tape

activity instructions

1 Explain to participants that the activity is a chance to explore and experience what it takes to create a trusting relationship among coworkers. Then have participants form groups of four or five. Give each group a flipchart and markers and every participant a blank paper and pen or pencil.

2 Say the activity has four rounds plus a debriefing session and that you will enforce a strict time limit for each round.

Tell the groups that Round 1 will be four minutes long. Explain that, during Round 1, each person will independently create a list of all the words that describe what trust means to him or her personally (you can choose to let people use trust to encompass all of life or just the workplace). Start round one. **(5 minutes)**

3 At the end of 4 minutes, ask participants to share their lists within their groups and to create two new lists and record them on a flipchart. List 1 should have five words everyone agrees with, and List 2 should have five words that there was disagreement about. Tell them this is round two and they will have 10 minutes. **(10 minutes)**

4 At the end of 10 minutes, call time and ask each group to trade their flipchart sheet with the two lists on it with another group.

5 Tell them that round three will be 10 minutes long and they will create one picture that illustrates each list of words on the flipchart page they received. Clarify that each group needs to create two pictures—one for each list. Start round three. **(10 minutes)**

6 At the end of 10 minutes, call time. Tell groups to trade their flipchart pages with the two lists and two pictures with another group.

7 State that round four will also last 10 minutes. The task this time is for each group to create a realistic, practical, and action-oriented tip that describes how to build, maintain, or enhance trust in the workplace. Say that the tip should integrate both lists of words and the pictures. Start round four. **(10 minutes)**

8 Call time and tell the groups they will now have a chance to share the tips they created, the pictures, and the lists of words on their flipchart sheets. Allow each group 1-2 minutes to share with the large group, depending on the number of groups you have. **(10 minutes)**

9 Lead a processing discussion based on the following questions: **(15 minutes)**

- What was difficult about this activity? Are some of these difficulties a factor when you are building trust in the workplace? Why or why not?
- What was easy about this activity? When is building trust easy for you?
- What did you learn about trust in general?
- How did the strict time limits mimic one challenge of building trust in the workplace? Describe one thing you can do to overcome that challenge.
- How did the rounds and tasks help or hinder in building trust within the small groups? How is this similar or dissimilar to the workplace?
- How did differences in opinion and perspectives or conflict among the small group members hinder building trust? How is this similar or dissimilar to the workplace?

CONFLICT: condemnations & appreciations

activity goals

In this activity, volunteers will argue two sides of an issue. They will experience what it's like to argue from both perspectives. This will be followed by a large group discussion about the experience the audience and the volunteers had. The goals of the activity are:

- To demonstrate a technique to resolve organizational or interpersonal conflict
- To differentiate among factual, assumptive, and emotional biases in an argument

what do you need?

- Time: 60 minutes
- List of topics
- Two flipcharts—one titled Condemnations, one titled Appreciations
- 2 sets of four different colored markers
- Masking tape

activity instructions

1

You will need to create a list of at least five potential topics. They need to have clear differences in point of view such as "Parents have too much influence on what is taught in the classroom" and "Daylight Savings Time should be kept year-round." Either post them where they can be seen by all or give a copy to each participant.

2

Introduce the activity as an opportunity for participants to experience both sides of an argument or difference of opinion.

Solicit four volunteers to come to the front of the room. Have them form two teams of two. One pair should stand to the left of the room, the other pair to the right. They should be no more than ten feet apart. One team will offer the Appreciations; the other will offer the Condemnations. **(3 minutes)**

3

Direct the people in the audience to choose a topic from the list on the flipchart (or handout).

The topic chosen will be the one the Appreciators will argue for and the Condemners will argue against. The activity will begin with the Appreciators making statements supporting the premise of the topic. They can spontaneously call out reasons why they agree with it. The team will have 60 seconds to make its case. After 60 seconds, the positions will be reversed and the Condemners will have 60 seconds to argue against the premise. Begin the activity. **(5 minutes)**

4

After this round, move quickly to the next round by telling the participants that they will now switch perspectives. Appreciators will argue against the premise and Condemners will argue for it. In other words, the teams will take the opposite point of view from the one held in the first round. However, there is one procedural change: both teams can talk at the same time.

After approximately 60 seconds, verbally signal an end to the round, lead applause, and let them return to their seats. **(3 minutes)**

5 Ask the audience which statements, points of view, arguments, and so forth they can recall that support the premise. Write the statements on a flipchart.

Next, ask the audience which statements, points of view, arguments and so forth they can recall that refute the premise. Write these statements on a separate flipchart using the same color marker. **(10 minutes)**

6 Make sure both flipchart pages are visible. Then ask participants to look at the flipchart sheets and identify which words could be classified as facts. Use a different color marker and place a checkmark next to each statement that is identified.

7 Next, ask participants which words could be classified as assumptions. Use a third color marker to put checkmarks next to those statements.

8 Now, ask the audience which of the words could be classified as feelings. Use a fourth color marker to place checkmarks.

9 Pose the following questions to the entire group: **(10 minutes)**

- Of facts, feelings, and assumptions, which is most effective in persuading someone to see another person's point of view?
- Is it always evident that a particular statement is a fact, feeling, or assumption?
- What words or actions help differentiate facts, feelings, and assumptions?

11 Direct the following questions to the people who participated on the two teams: **(10 minutes)**

- What was the experience like for you? Was it easy or hard to advocate positions that you are ordinarily opposed to?
- Was it easy or hard to shift positions? What strategies did you use to be convincing when you changed from Condemner to Appreciator or vice versa?

12 Mention that when there is disagreement on a topic, it is helpful to recognize that "acceptance" of another's point of view does not necessarily mean "agreement" with that position. Ask the observers the following questions: **(10 minutes)**

- Were you able to "see" both sides of the argument?
- What insight does this activity give you into what is, and what is not, effective when resolving a difference of opinion?
- In conflict resolution, what is the benefit in knowing what the other party believes or feels about the issue?

CONFLICT: conflict resolution

activity goals

In this activity, the whole team will clearly define a current or recent unresolved conflict. Participants will then individually make a list of the obstacles that arose during discussions about the issue. As a team, they share the obstacles and discuss the impact. Finally, the team will discuss ways to avoid or resolve these issues in the future. The goal is:

- To provide participants an opportunity to resolve a current or recent conflict

what do you need?

- Time: 30 minutes
- Flipchart
- Markers

activity instructions

1 Have the team come up with a recent or current issue that they're having trouble resolving. Be sure all participants are clear about what the issue is.

2 Have participants take a few minutes to write down obstacles that were present during the discussions about this issue (e.g. lack of information or failure to share opinions; company culture or politics; physical environment; an individual's position, reputation, skills or experience –or lack thereof, motives, values, self-esteem). They should do this individually.

3 When the time is up, go around the room and ask team members what obstacles they identified. Record the obstacles on a flipchart page and post the page.

4 Ask "What impact did these obstacles have on your decision-making process?" Elicit several responses and record them on a flipchart page.

5 Ask "What do you think you could do to handle these kinds of obstacles so you can improve the way you engage in conflict and make decisions, both for this issue and for others?" Elicit several responses and record them on a flipchart page.

6 After this exercise is complete, be sure to type up the notes and distribute them to team members for their future reference.

CONFLICT: reflecting on past experience

activity goals

In this activity, participants will reflect on a past positive and a negative experience of conflict. They will then discuss the descriptors of these conflicts both in the large group and in small groups to help understand what factors and approaches contribute to the most positive outcomes in conflict. The goal of the activity is:

- To illustrate the differences—in feelings, perspectives, and actions—between positive and negative conflict.

what do you need?

- Time: 50 minutes
- Pens for participants
- Two flipcharts
- Markers
- Masking tape

activity instructions

1. Introduce the activity by telling participants that they will have the opportunity to reflect on past experiences of conflict to help understand what approaches and perceptions will potentially lead to the most positive outcomes.

2. Give participants the Reflecting on Past Experience handout. Ask them to reflect on a time when they had a disagreement with someone at work and the situation was successfully resolved and the relationship was as good if not better than it previously was (Positive Experience).

   Then ask them to reflect on a time when the situation did not improve (Negative Experience). Have them complete the chart individually—they do not need to tell who was involved or what the conflict was actually about. **(10 minutes)**

3. After everyone has finished recording their conflicts, ask for and post the positive outcomes on one flipchart and the negative ones on the second. Ask only for general descriptors of the positive conflicts they have recalled. **(5 minutes)**

4. When you have finished listing characteristics of the positive conflict outcomes, move to the negative, using the same approach, asking for general descriptors of the conflict only—no details (for example, turf wars, operating in silos, a history of negative interactions, personality clashes, didn't really care about the other person, personal attacks). **(5 minutes)**

5 When you are finished with both lists, ask the participants to form small groups to discuss the following questions: **(10 minutes)**

- What stands out for you on the negative list?
- What was different about the positive disagreements (for example, about issues, people generally respected each other, there was a history of working through issues, people cared about each other, people avoided personal attacks)?

6 Ask the small groups to share what they came up with and note their comments on a flipchart. Ask them to recall what the "big deal" was about the negative issues. Ask what happened. Why did it trouble them so much? Look for underlying feelings that created discomfort for them. For example:

- It made me feel unimportant
- I felt like I had to do all the work.
- I felt disrespected.

(10 minutes)

7 Finally, ask them to discuss whether employing any of the characteristics on the positive conflict list would have improved their negative situation. In other words, what could they have done differently? **(10 minutes)**

8 Tell the group that in order to work out a conflict situation, we may have to approach the issue from another point of view—keeping the aspects of our past conflicts in the forefront of our minds, and applying what we have learned from our own and others' positive, healthy conflict experiences here today. The other critical piece is caring enough to be willing to work toward a more constructive relationship for personal satisfaction and the good of the team.

HANDOUT: reflecting on past experience

question	positive experience	negative experience
Briefly describe what, where, when, who was involved.		
What did you want that you weren't getting? What was your position?		
What did the other party want? What was his or her position?		
Was there "history" to the conflict, or was it a new issue?		
What was your intention for the relationship after the conflict? Were you clear that you did/did not want the relationship to be preserved?		
During the discussion, to what extent were you able to focus on the effect the issue or behavior had on you rather than making the other person out to be wrong?		
Did you learn something you didn't know as a result of the discussion you had?		
What was the emotional tone of the meeting: calm, loud, angry, sad, closed, or other?		

COMMITMENT: catching change

activity goals

In this activity, participants will form small groups and do a ball toss without any direction from the facilitator. They will then discuss how a lack of clarity around this activity impacted their commitment and success. Then, they will establish rules and a goal for the activity and perform the ball toss again. The goals of this activity are:

- To illustrate the importance clarity makes when performing and committing to a task
- To prompt people to think about the roles they play in communicating and buying in to change

what do you need?

- Time: 45 minutes
- Flipchart and marker
- Paper and pencil for each participant
- One large Koosh ball or similarly large, soft, squishy ball for each group

activity instructions

1 Introduce the activity by inviting the group to recall any significant change in the workplace they have personally experienced.

2 Give each participant a paper and a pencil. Ask them to write a brief title for the change effort they recall and focus on how they *felt* during this process. Ask, “What did it *feel* like when you first found out change was coming? Please list the words that come to mind.” **(2 minutes)**

3 Ask people to share the reactions they wrote down and record them on the flipchart. (The goal here is to develop a representative sample of the typical reactions and feelings we experience when we perceive that change is coming our way.) **(10 minutes)**

4 Have participants form groups of four or five. Hand one Koosh ball to each group. Tell participants to conduct a round of ball pitching. Give no further explanation. After 2 minutes say, “Okay, now change.” Say nothing more.

5 After three or four minutes, call a halt to the ball tossing. Ask how well they did. If they don’t mention the lack of clarity in directions, ask a more pointed question such as these:

- Did you keep score or even consider it?
- Did you know what to change (clarity)?
- Did you find out what the catcher needed to be successful?

The answers to these questions will most likely be "no."

Say, "Most likely, you were only half-heartedly going along with this activity since you didn't understand what you were doing or what you were trying to achieve."

Then ask, "What do you need to buy in to change or new initiatives?"

6 Hold up a Koosh ball and announce:

> "This ball represents change. In our earlier discussion, you shared some feelings of turmoil that change can provoke. Having clarity around decisions and new initiatives significantly affects whether or not we will commit to them. If we lack direction, we aren't likely to succeed—or even care."

7 Pass out the Pitching Change Worksheet. Ask the participants to individually take five minutes to complete the second column on the worksheet in relation to the ball-catching activity. Give a one-minute warning before calling time. **(5 minutes)**

Have participants share their ideas from their Pitching Change worksheets in their small groups. **(5 minutes)**

8 Tell the groups that you will give them three minutes to come up with some "rules" for throwing and catching the ball and a way to measure results. Invite them to use the ideas they discussed from their worksheets.

After three minutes have passed, tell them to begin tossing the ball. Let them toss the ball for a couple of minutes before calling time. **(5 minutes)**

9 Call on each team to share the rules they came up with for the ball toss. Ask the following questions: **(10 minutes)**

- At the end of three minutes, did everyone agree to the rules that you had established? Did people ultimately agree to the rules even if they initially had different ideas?
- In what ways was it helpful to have a team thinking through how to toss the ball?
- How did having a clear set of rules and a goal make a difference when you were tossing the ball?

10 Bring the activity to a close by reinforcing the importance of clarity and buy-in when it comes to commitment.

HANDOUT: catching change

As you reflect on your attempt at tossing and catching the Koosh ball, take a few minutes to list your thoughts below:

questions	**factors that affect "catching the ball" i.e. committing to change**
What information about the pitch would help you catch it?	
What should the "pitcher" know about you as the "catcher"?	
If you were to do this activity again, what kind of commitment from colleagues would help you succeed?	
If you could choose the manner in which the ball is pitched, what would you request?	
If you could choose an ultimate goal for throwing and catching the ball, what would it be?	
Other ideas for success:	

COMMITMENT: thematic goal

activity goals

In this activity, participants will be introduced to the thematic goal for a specified period of time. After considering some past team goals, the group will review the thematic goal model and an example. Team members will then work to create their own thematic goal. The goals of the activity are:

- To create a single "rallying cry" for the team to commit to
- To help team members focus on a collective goal

what do you need?

- Time: 60 minutes
- Flipchart
- Markers

activity instructions

1 First, you need to help the team understand what a thematic goal is (steps 1-5). A thematic goal is a rallying cry—a single overriding theme that remains the top priority of the entire team for a given period of time, such as three months, half a year, or the next three quarters—something that is the single most important goal that the team agrees needs to be achieved during that period to be successful.

2 Ask the team what their overriding themes and goals have been in the past. Write responses on a flipchart page. Write down every theme or goal that is mentioned, even if it isn't a thematic goal. Ask questions as needed to clarify, but do not stop to discuss or comment on the themes and goals.

(If team members don't offer any responses, give them examples such as increasing revenue, increasing market awareness, strengthening the team, controlling expenses, launching a new product etc.)

Another option: have participants work in pairs or small groups to answer the question above. When the time is up, have them write their ideas on a flipchart page.

3 Distribute a copy of the Elements of a Thematic Goal Handout to each participant and read the four elements (single, qualitative, time-bound, shared) and their descriptions aloud.

Refer to the flipchart of the team's themes and goals and ask which of them meets the four criteria on the handout. Lead a brief discussion to identify the themes and goals that meet the criteria. Circle them.

4 Next, explain that there are two critical components that help inform a thematic goal: defining objectives and standard operating objectives.

Defining objectives are specific actions that need to be taken to achieve the thematic goal. These are things like redesigning a product, optimizing the Google search ranking, etc.

Standard operating objectives do not go away in time. They are the team's day-to-day objectives that are always important. A standard operating objective might include topics like revenue and expenses, customer satisfaction, productivity, market share, or product quality.

5 Ask the team to list some of its standard operating objectives and write them on a flipchart. Then, ask the team to distinguish which ones are really thematic goals, which are defining objectives, and which are standard operating objectives.

6 Now, you will begin the exercise. The goal is to establish a thematic goal for this team for the next six to nine months. They will come up with a thematic goal and the defining objectives they will need to achieve that goal. Also, they will identify the standard operating objectives.

7 If you haven't already, distribute a copy of the Establishing a Thematic Goal Handout to each participant. Without talking to their neighbors, have them write an answer to the first question, "What do you think is the single most important goal that we must achieve during this period if we are to consider ourselves successful?"

Give them a couple of minutes to write, then go around the room and ask each person to share what he or she wrote. Record their goals on a flipchart (put checkmarks by goals that are mentioned more than once). Do not comment on whether or not the goal meets the criteria for a thematic goal.

8 Ask if there is any one goal on this list that clearly stands out as the top priority for this team to achieve during the next six to nine months. Circle the one that is most agreed on. (If the team can't agree, ask "What would happen if you did not achieve that goal?" as a way to help the team zero in. If the team still can't agree, ask the team leader or choose one yourself.)

Next, ask if there are any goals on the list that are really standard operating objectives—things that are always important and won't go away at the end of the time period.

Finally, ask if any appear to be defining objectives—specific actions that need to be performed to achieve the thematic goal.

**Put brackets around standard operating objectives, underline defining objectives, and put question marks next to any goals on which there is disagreement.*

9 Now that the thematic goal has been defined, have the team come up with defining objectives—four to six critical actions that have to be accomplished to achieve the thematic goal.

Write the defining objectives on a flipchart. You may use any from the flipchart with the team members' original goals and themes.

Review each of the items on the list to make sure that it directly supports the thematic goal, that is, it needs to be accomplished to achieve that goal. Put brackets around any item that is actually a standard operating objective.

10 Have the team decide which four to six objectives are the most critical for achieving the thematic goal. To help the team settle on the defining objectives, ask, "If we achieve all the defining objectives listed, will we have achieved our thematic goal?"

Then post the page and ask participants to write the defining objects on the Our Thematic Goal Handout.

11 There's one thing left to do—establish a final list of standard operating objectives. Refer to the flipchart pages with the team members' goals and themes from the beginning of the activity and pages generated during the activity.

There should be brackets around the things that are really standard operating objectives—things that are always important and are not going away at the end of the time period.

Ask a volunteer to read them aloud and copy them on a flipchart. Ask if there are any that should be added to the list and write them down. Then have participants copy them onto Our Thematic Goal Handout.

12 Tell participants that they now have a thematic goal for the next six to nine months that they can use on an ongoing basis to make sure they are doing the right things.

It should be the focus of every meeting they have.They should talk about the goal, who is doing what, how things are going, obstacles that might have come up, what they might need to do differently, and so on.

When they achieve the goal, they should use this process again to choose a new goal for the next period of time.

HANDOUT: elements of a thematic goal

A thematic goal is a single overriding theme that remains the top priority of the entire team for a given time period. A thematic goal is…

- *Single*—A team should have only one thematic goal in a given period, because if everything is important, nothing is important.

- *Qualitative*—A thematic goal is a general statement of a desired accomplishment with a verb that rallies people to do something, such as "improve," "reduce," or "eliminate." Eventually, though, the thematic goal will be clarified by metrics, numbers, and target dates.

- *Time-bound*—The thematic goal does not live beyond a fixed time period, such as three to twelve months, because it is not an ongoing objective. The time period depends on the nature of the organization.

- *Shared*—The thematic goal applies to everyone on the team, regardless of area of expertise or interest. Even if it naturally falls within one member's area of responsibility, it is critical that everyone take responsibility for achieving it.

There are two critical components that help inform a thematic goal…

- *Defining objectives*—These are specific actions that need to be taken to achieve the thematic goal. Defining objectives provide a level of specificity so that the thematic goal isn't merely a slogan but rather a specific and understandable call to action.

- *Standard operating objectives*—These are objectives that do not go away in time. They are the team's day-to-day objectives that are always important. Standard operating objectives include topics such as revenue expenses, customer satisfaction, quality, etc.

HANDOUT: establishing a thematic goal

1 What do you think is the single most important goal for our team to achieve during this period if we are to consider ourselves successful?

2 Other candidates for our thematic goal?

HANDOUT: our thematic goal

Fill in the following spaces with your team's…

1 Thematic Goal

2 Defining Objectives

3 Standard Operating Objectives

ACCOUNTABILITY: difficult conversations

activity goals

In this activity, participants practice addressing “touchy” issues with a partner. They will also practice planning for difficult conversations, emotional awareness, and listening skills. The goal of this activity is:

- To provide a model for launching into a difficult conversation

what do you need?

- Time: 30 minutes
- Planning handout for each participant
- Pen or pencil for each participant

activity instructions

1 Ask participants to pair up and have them choose one of the following issue sets (or make up other sets of moderate intensity relevant to the group). Each partner is to take one side of the issue and use the Planning Guide handout to plan for their side. They should only complete the handout **up to step 6.**

- A.1: Coworker is continuously late to project meetings.

  A.2: Coworker has been given another “choice” assignment and doesn’t feel he or she needs to attend project meetings.

- B.1: Coworker tends to use language and a tone of voice that makes you feel inferior.

  B.2: Coworker thinks you take too long to make decisions.

- C.1: Coworker’s staff does not follow agreed-on guidelines.

  C.2: Coworker’s staff does not think the guidelines are important.

2 Pull the group together to debrief the activity so far. This will keep them on the same page. Go through the first six steps and ask for a couple of examples for each step. If you feel someone didn’t “get” the intent of a step, ask the group, “What is another way that could be said?”

3 Now they should be ready to have the practice conversations. Ask them, “What would be some productive attitudes to have going into the conversation?” You would like to hear: positive, confident, open, caring, upbeat.

4 Tell them they are nearly ready to launch into the conversation; however, you'd like to review some listening skills. Ask someone to tell the group what you just said. Give kudos. Say that it's easier to listen when you aren't emotionally engaged. You have to try harder when emotions are up, and some of their comments can reflect back the emotion. For example, if your partner is yelling or speaking in a loud voice, you might say, "I get that you are angry."

5 Tell them to begin their difficult conversations. Allow five to ten minutes for the practice. Then pull them back together and debrief the experience.

- How did it go?
- What happened that surprised you?
- What did you do that you wouldn't do next time?
- How did feelings change and shift?
- Did any agreements come out of your discussions?
- What questions do you have about the process?

6 Let them know that having difficult conversations and holding one another accountable will become less stressful with practice, but they will not likely ever be "easy." Tell them to keep the planning guide worksheet to use in preparation for the next, real-life difficult conversation they need to hold.

In closing the session, ask each participant to consider one benefit of the discussion and one thing he or she will do differently. Ask them to write these down.

HANDOUT: planning guide

1. Be clear about your goal. What do you want to happen as a result of the conversation? Is there something you want the other person to start, stop, or change?

2. What is your intention for the relationship with the other person? Do you want the relationships to continue, improve, or dissolve?

3. What did the other person do that caused you difficulty?

4. What might your role have been in the way things are going/turned out?

5. What are the observable facts about the situation, e.g., what could be caught on videotape (showing up late, loud voice, etc.)?

6. What is your interpretation as to the motive of the other person involved?

7. What don't you know about the situation or the reason for the individual's behavior?

8. What about this situation makes it significant to you, something you don't want to let go? Perhaps it is how the situation makes you feel or how it impacts others.

9. What are three to five messages that you want to make sure the other person hears from you? Messages are assertive statements whereby you "own" your feelings and desires. They do not involve blame or shame. Examples include:

    - I want us to work this out.
    - I have been feeling….(disrespected, let down, annoyed, disengaged, out of the loop, etc.)
    - I feel that we could be doing a better job of…(communicating, working together, finding agreeable solutions, meeting targets, etc.)
    - I know that I have been…(avoiding you, not pulling my weight, distant, not easy to work with lately, etc.)
    - What is troubling me is that you…(aren't responding to emails, have been absent from meetings, don't seem to think are meetings are important, made xyz error that resulted in abc, etc.)

ACCOUNTABILITY: questionable questioner

activity goals

In this activity, three volunteers will role play how expectations influence behavior and performance. The goals of the activity are:

- To demonstrate that a foundation of trust will pave the way for accountability
- To illustrate the power of perception on performance and behavior

what do you need?

- Time: 45 minutes
- Pens for participants
- Paper for participants
- Question list for each questioner

activity instructions

1 Don't give away the goal of the activity. Ask for three volunteers. Have the three volunteers leave the room. Make sure they can't hear what you say to the rest of the participants.

2 Explain to the remaining participants that one of the volunteers will be questioned by the other two volunteers. Say that the first person who will ask questions will be a *career opportunist,* out for him- or herself only. The second person who will ask questions is known to be a kind person who helps everyone he or she meets.

3 Explain that they should watch the interviews closely, but they are not to be concerned with the questions or the answers. Their assignment is to watch the behavior of both the questioners and the questionee. Tell them to make notes of what they observe so they can answer questions later. (You may have to emphasize this more than once.) Hand out paper and pens to all participants.

4 **Bring one of the volunteers back into the room** and say that he or she will be questioned by the other two volunteers and that all he or she needs to do is answer the questions honestly.

Share that the first person to ask questions is a "career opportunist." Say that this person has a history of always getting ahead—usually at the expense of others—always in the right place at the right time and often taking credit for things he/she did not do. Say that you heard that last week this person started a rumor about a coworker. Everybody, including the boss, believed the rumor. Even worse, this person convinced the boss to let him/her do the coworker's task to make sure "it was done properly." Then the boss publicly praised this person for averting a catastrophe. Say that it is obvious that this person will do anything he/she can to "win"—no matter who is hurt in the process. Say, "Beware of this person." **(10 minutes)**

5 Choose one of the other two volunteers to come into the room next but **don't tell the person anything about how he or she has been portrayed.** Away from the group, give the person the Question List and loosely instruct him or her to ask the interviewee each question and, when all of the questions have been asked, to try to get to know the interviewee better by asking some of his or her own questions.

Bring the second volunteer into the room (leaving the third in the hallway) and ask the role players to begin

When the interview is finished, ask the first interviewer/second volunteer to sit down. **(10 minutes)**

6 Read the following description of the next interviewer to the group: "You are about to be asked some questions from a person known to be a "career builder." This person has a history of helping others get ahead. He or she has a lot of influence in the organization and many people go to him/her for advice. He/she always has something nice to say and does whatever he/she can to help others. No matter what he/she accomplishes, he/she gives all the credit for success to his/her team."

7 Away from the group, give the third volunteer the same instructions as before—to ask the questions from the list and then add additional questions to attempt to build a relationship with the person being interviewed. Bring in the third volunteer and ask the role players to begin.

8 After the second interviewer/third volunteer has finished, have all participants return to their seats. Ask the following questions of the participants: **(10 minutes)**

- What nonverbal behavior did you observe during the first interview?
- What do you suppose caused this to happen?

Let them discuss this for a while. There will be many observations. Encourage more discussion by asking:

- What made you come to these conclusions?
- Did you notice any change in behavior on either person's part as the questioning continued?

9 Explain that in both scenarios, the questioner's body language changed as he/she becomes subconsciously aware of the interviewee's expectations through that person's body language. Both questioners start out standing, speaking, and gesturing in a certain way and, as the interchange continues, each reacts to the interviewee's behavior by changing his or her own behavior.

State that this is exactly what happens at work. When people expect low performance from their coworkers, they exhibit certain behaviors. Their coworkers subconsciously pick up on this and react with defensive, aggressive, or ambiguous behavior.

If there is a high level of trust on the team, coworkers will be able to question one another and it will be well received. Furthermore, if team members expect the best in their coworkers, then that is often exactly what they get. Alternatively, poor performance will often be elicited when people have low expectations.

HANDOUT: questioner question list

How do you like working here?

What type of career goals or aspirations do you have?

What do you enjoy most about your job?

How do you find balance in your professional and personal life?

What do you enjoy doing when you go on vacation?

Where did you work before you took this job?

ACCOUNTABILITY: redirect role play

activity goals

In this activity, participants will engage in a role play to demonstrate how participants can use well-formed, intentional questions to hold coworkers accountable while also redirecting attention from problems toward achievable outcomes. The goals of this activity are:

- To practice holding one another accountable
- To demonstrate how to redirect problems to possibilities

what do you need?

- Time: 50 minutes
- Pens for participants
- Two flipcharts
- Markers
- Masking tape

activity instructions

1 Introduce the activity with a general description of the goal of learning the best approach to holding one another accountable.

Then, hand out copies of the scenario and have the group read it to themselves.

2 Explain that they will now select roles. One person will play Z, the person who is holding up the project. The other two people will both play the role of M—but one will use the "problem-based questions" and the other will use the "outcome-based questions."

Note: If there is one extra person, they can join a group and serve as an observer only. If there are two extra people, they can pair up with one of them serving dual roles as "Problem" *and* "Outcome" questioner.

3 While the groups are determining their roles, hand out:

- Pens or pencils to everyone who needs them
- One "problem-based questions" handout to each group
- One "outcome-based questions" handout to each group
- One "observer notes" handout to the people playing M and observers (everyone but the person playing Z)

4 Explain that there will be two rounds to this activity. The participant using the "problem-based questions" will go first and ask the person playing Z the questions. The "outcome-based questions" participant will serve as an observer during this round and fill out the observer notes handout. Tell them that observers will be asked to share observations with the group—including what was heard, seen, and intuited.

If a team is finished with the first set of questions early, they should refrain from discussing the problem or asking questions extemporaneously.

Be sure everyone understands what to do and then begin round one. **(10 minutes)**

5 After about five minutes, or when most people are finished, stop round one. Tell them to prepare for the second round. The person who just asked questions is now the observer, and the participant using the "outcome-based questions" will go next. The person playing Z will remain in the same role. Tell them to assume that this is a new conversation—the problem-based questions have never been asked. **(5 minutes)**

6 Call time. Ask observers from the first round what they observed about the person playing Z in round one. Encourage observations of behavior, word choice, attitude, tone, and nonverbal behavior. Post responses on a flipchart.

Then ask observers from the second round what they observed about the person playing Z in round two. Summarize responses on a second flipchart sheet. **(15 minutes)**

7 Ask what differences participants noticed in what the person playing Z did in response to questions asked in the two rounds.

Typically, round one elicits responses that are negative, problem-focused, and dejected. The second set of questions usually brings out exploring possibilities, hopefulness, and reflection.

Say that there was nothing wrong with the first set of "problem" questions—they *did* hold Z accountable; but the outcomes questions hold the person accountable *and* move him or her beyond the problem into possibilities and potential outcomes. *Outcome* questions redirect thinking, reframing challenges. Solutions emerge, replacing problems. *Problem* questions highlight past events, focusing on what has already occurred. **(10 minutes)**

8 To continue participants' learning, pose the following questions: **(10 minutes)**

- What is achieved through problem questions? What is gained from outcome questions?
- What ways can you apply outcome thinking to a professional or personal challenge in your life?
- How can application of outcome thinking improve accountability on the team?

HANDOUT: scenario

The Branding team at a highly successful technology company has been moving forward to roll out a new look for the company. It's a big project and the core team is tasked with ensuring that it keeps moving forward. M, the project manager, is frustrated. At their weekly meetings, Z, the designer, is continually pushing out the deadline for coming up with the initial designs for the project. For the last three weeks, it seems, Z has made no progress. After the meeting this week, when Z still doesn't have any rough designs to show the team, M decides it is time to have an honest discussion with Z about the delays that are holding the whole project up.

HANDOUT: observer notes

What language, speaking style, and tone did you notice?

What did “Z” convey physically through nonverbal communication?

What was “Z’s” attitude toward the problem?

How quickly did “Z” respond to the questions?

Does “Z” indicate that the problem is solvable?

Other observations:

HANDOUT: problem-based questions

Why don't I have your designs?

What or who caused this delay?

Didn't you give yourself enough time to do this?

This puts me in a tough spot, don't you agree?

You knew we had a deadline for rolling out the new brand didn't you?

When will you get this done?

HANDOUT: outcome-based questions

Can you help me understand what happened with this assignment?

What progress have you already made?

What can you try doing to change the situation?

What are some possible ways to resolve any challenges you've been having?

What resources will help you move forward?

What do you need from me at this point?

RESULTS: balloon bounce

activity goals

In this activity, participants work individually and then in pairs to keep balloons aloft. It allows participants to examine the role of interdependence in relationships while working toward a collective goal.

- To recognize the influence of interdependence on behavior and results
- To examine the importance of reciprocity, empathy, and concern for the interest of others in working toward a goal

what do you need?

- Time: 30 minutes
- 9-inch balloons—one for each participant.
- Clothesline rope—one per participant (lengths should vary, 6-14 inches)
- Flipchart markers (optional)

activity instructions

1 Provide each participant with one balloon and one piece of rope. Keep one for yourself. Then, ask participants to inflate their balloons and knot them (encourage them to ask a teammate for help with this if they need it).

2 Move to an open area free from tables, chairs, or equipment. Once participants are in position, ask them to temporarily place their pieces of rope in their pockets or on the floor.

3 Tell participants that the activity consists of three rounds. Say, "In round one, your goal is simply to keep your balloon aloft by hitting it with your hands and bouncing it into the air."

4 Ask participants to begin. Allow them to perform the task for about 15 seconds. When the time has elapsed, ask participants to stop. Say to them, "That was pretty easy, wasn't it? You all have been successful enough to move to round two."

5 Tell participants that in round two they will be paired with another participant. Ask participants to retrieve their ropes and pair up with someone standing close to them. If there is an odd number of participants, ask one of them to be an observer.

7 Announce that you are going to demonstrate the task for round two. Ask a volunteer to help you. As you demonstrate the task with the volunteer, provide the following directions:

- Face your partner.
- Place your balloon under one of your arms.
- Grasp the end of your rope with your left hand and ask your partner to grasp the opposite end of your rope with his or her right hand.
- Using your opposite hand, grasp your partner's rope in the same way.
- You and your partner should now be linked together with two ropes.
- Stand away from each other to provide some space between you. This is the starting point for the activity.
- Once you are linked, maneuver both of your balloons to rest on your wrists. When I give the signal, bounce your balloon upward using only your hands, wrists, and arms.
- What will make this process difficult, of course, is that you are linked to your partner and he or she is trying to accomplish the same task.
- Maintain contact with your partner, through the ropes, during the entire activity. You should not let go of the ropes, nor should you pull the ropes from your partner's hands.
- If your balloon happens to fall on the ground, you must work together to pick it up, remaining linked by the ropes as you do so (demonstrate with your volunteer). Once you've picked the balloon up, you may continue the activity.

8 Tell the participants that they will perform the activity for one minute. Tell them to begin round two. Time the activity and monitor participants for safety and compliance with the rules.

9 After one minute, have participants stop the activity. Tell participants, "Round three will consist of the same task, with the same goal of keeping your balloons aloft. Before you start again, discuss how you might work together to improve your performance from round two. You will have two minutes of discussion time. You can be creative in your improvement plans, but make sure that you use both balloons and both ropes. You cannot go back to individually bouncing your own balloon as in round one—and you may not use your head, knees, hips, or other body parts. This could cause injury to your partner."

10 Give participants two minutes to discuss improvement plans. Do not let participants begin round three until the discussion period is complete.

When the time is up, tell participants that round three will last for one minute. Begin round three and observe participants, as in round two. After one minute, halt the activity.

11 Ask participants to take three minutes to reflect on the following questions and discuss them with a partner. You may want to have them on a flipchart.

- What behaviors were necessary for sucess in bouncing the balloons?
- Did your performance improve in round three? In what way?
- What, if any, are the links between the activity and real-life relationships?

12 Debrief the activity with the following questions:

- What were the links between the activity and aspects of real life?
- How successful were you in round one, when you bounced the balloon on your own?
- How did you and your partner do in round two?
- What was required for success?
- Was it difficult to recover a dropped balloon? What actions were necessary to do so successfully?
- Did the discussion period between rounds two and three help you improve your ability to collaborate? Did it enhance your overall performance in keeping both balloons aloft?

13 Explain to the team that the balloon represents a goal. In round one, the balloon was an individual goal. In rounds two and three, the balloons were collective goals. It may be easier to focus on and manage individual goals, but to get results, the team needs to learn how to work together toward collective goals.

RESULTS: balloon tower

activity goals

In this activity, participants will form groups and use balloons and masking tape to build the tallest tower. Then they will combine their efforts to build an even taller tower during the second round. The goals of the activity are:

- To practice collaboration to get results
- To understand how the team works together when it comes to collective success

what do you need?

- Time: 60 minutes
- One bag of 50 balloons for each group
- One roll of masking tape for each group
- Flipchart and markers
- Tape measure

activity instructions

1 Introduce the session by explaining that the challenge is for participants to build the tallest freestanding balloon tower they can.

Divide the team into groups of 2-8 participants.

2 Give these instructions to the entire group:

"You will have ten minutes to plan and design the tallest and sturdiest balloon tower. The tower must be completely free-standing, that is, it must stand without any human assistance and may not be attached to the floor, wall, or any other object or person. Each team will receive the same building materials: one bag of 50 balloons and one roll of masking tape. All groups will build at the same time. You will have ten minutes to build your balloon tower after the planning and design time is over. Balloon towers will be measured immediately after the building time is over."

3 Tell the participants that each group will receive one test balloon. Give each group one balloon and tell them they have ten minutes of planning time. Give participants a two-minute warning before calling time.

4 Give one bag of balloons and one roll of masking tape to each group. Tell them they have ten minutes to build their balloon towers. While they are building, observe each group and tell them if they are violating any rules. Give participants a two-minute warning before calling time.

5 When time is up, determine which tower is the tallest by measuring with the tape measure if necessary. Ask the subgroup with the tallest tower to share their strategy with the rest of the group.

6 Give these instructions to the entire group:

"Welcome to round two. Your task is now to combine all balloon towers to create one tower. Decide how to collaborate and combine your towers and expertise to create the tallest tower ever. You have five minutes of planning time. You may not touch your towers during this time. You will then have five minutes to combine the towers. You will not receive any additional supplies."

7 Time the five-minute planning time, giving the participants a two-minute warning before calling time.

Then, time the five-minute building time, giving the participants a two-minute warning before calling time.

8 Measure the final tower. Lead a concluding discussion based on the following questions. Post replies on the flipchart paper and post them.

- How did having time devoted solely to planning affect accomplishing your goal?
- What project are you working on now that could be helped by designating planning time to look at the big picture and strategize?
- What did you notice about your collaborative effort while building the tower? Were people focused on collective success?
- Did people point out the contributions or good ideas that others had while strategizing and building the towers? What affect did this seem to have as you were working together?
- What did you learn about how you work together as a team to get results?
- Is there anything you might have done differently to lead to better success in this exercise?

RESULTS: the star team

activity goals

In this activity, participants will work together to create a large star out of rope. This will require a high level of communication and collaboration. The goals of the activity are:

- To build skills of teamwork and communication to get results
- To enhance camaraderie and team spirit

what do you need?

- Time: 30 minutes
- 100 foot nylon rope, tied together into a loop
- Flipchart
- Markers

activity instructions

1 Introduce the activity by explaining that teams are most effective when all of the members agree on their roles, values, and operating principles. This activity is designed to help team members examine how they function together as a team to get results.

2 You will need a large, open space for this activity.

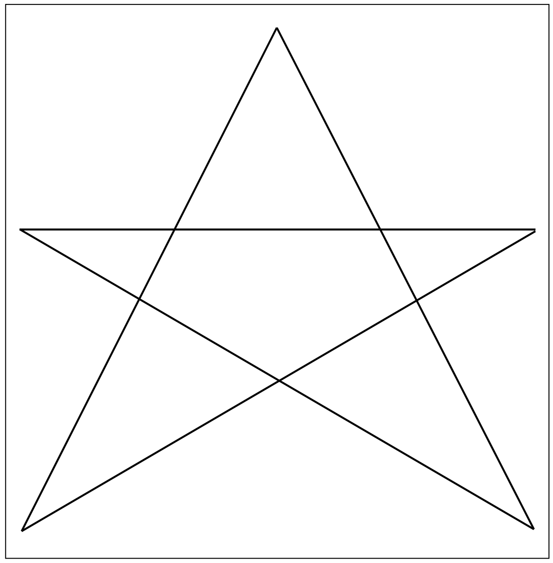
If the team is larger than 15 people, break it apart into groups of 8-15 participants.

If the team is smaller than 8 people, you may want to use a smaller rope and/or a simpler shape than the star drawn below.

3 Have the team stand in a circle, and lay a 100-foot rope in the center. Instruct the team members to pick up the rope so everyone is holding it and it creates a circle the same size as the group.

4 Instruct the group that, from this point on, no one may let go of the rope, nor may anyone change places on the rope with anyone else. People may slide their hands along the rope as they move, but they may not let go of the rope.

5 The goal is to use the rope to create a 5-pointed start with lines intersecting. Emphasizing that the star must have the lines intersecting. Remind them they are to use the entire rope to create their stars. Post a sketch like the one shown below on a flipchart to demonstrate what you mean.



6 Allow the team to create their star, observing the team dynamics. Be sure they do not let go of the rope or change where they are on the rope. As they move to create the star, they can simply slide their hands along the rope.

When the group feels they have achieved the goal, instruct them to lay the rope down on the ground so they can step away and see their results.

7 Celebrate their success or talk about the reasons why they were not successful, and then encourage them to make another attempt.

8 To debrief this activity, ask the following questions:

- What kinds of things happened as you went through this activity?
- What were the benefits of the activity for you as an individual? As a team?
- What was the most difficult thing about this activity? Why was it difficult?
- What surprised you as you went through this activity?
- What did you learn from the way you accomplished this task that relates to the way you work together as a team?