

Your First Team Meeting

Managing team dynamics is an important business skill. Make sure that all team members are present at your first team meeting. Our experience with hundreds of teams tells us that this initial investment will pay off handsomely in terms of better team performance and harmony.

Build positive working relationships

- Learn about each other's backgrounds (life, work, and academics). What skills and experiences may apply to the course?

Set goals for the Course

- What skills and knowledge do you hope to learn in this course? Consider technical, leadership, communication, and managerial skills.
- What are your expectations for performance and grades?
- What role would you like to play? (See the list at the end of this worksheet.)

Establish norms for team behavior

- Discuss working styles and how each member can adapt to different styles.
- Determine methods of communication and make communications transparent to all members.
- Consider contact hours and limitations. In general, when can you meet? When are you unavailable?
- Think about the workload. How do you divvy up work so that it is fair? Consider creating sub-teams. Start with small tasks and build mutual trust with subsequent assignments. Work together in groups of 2-3 on distinct parts of the project and brief the other team members so that everyone is on the same page.

Set up a meeting schedule

- Where, when, and how often do you want to meet?
- Assign to a team member the responsibility of organizing and running each meeting. Could be a rotating role.
- What could individual preparation for a team meeting be like?

Discuss approaches for when (not if) your team hits a roadblock

- What do you plan to do if the team gets stuck on an issue (e.g., cannot decide between alternative ideas)?
- Plan to do a couple of quick ongoing assessments on team dynamics and output.
- What do you plan to do if the team has disagreements about commitment to teamwork, performance, or quality of work?
- Discuss feedback on subpar behaviors and work output. How will it be delivered? How will it be received? How will you keep each other accountable if a deadline is missed or a deliverable is lacking?

- Avoid the tendency to accept work done by others uncritically. All team outputs are team responsibilities.
- How will you celebrate successes (small and large)?

Sample roles (incomplete set – add your own)

- Project Manager – timeboxes meetings, assigns tasks, keeps track of progress
- Closer/Editor – last person to edit and send along a project to stakeholders
- Book Manager – reads instructions carefully and verifies compliance with the requirements
- Records Manager – collects and stores documents; sets up storage systems
- Communications Lead – handles internal communication with the Team, connects with faculty/staff, connects with the target organization
- Communication Technologist – sets up the tools for the Team: Zoom, Whatsapp, Box, etc.
- Devil's advocate / Critic – advocates opposing views
- Researcher – <http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/commerce>
- Decider – resolve issues when the Team is stuck