T E A M   B U I L D I N G   R E T R E A T

At some point in the life of a team, the team may have these characteristics:

- a fairly clear understanding about short-term goals
- confusion about roles and relationships
- people with technical competence but lacking necessary team skills
- more focus on the immediate tasks of the team rather than on the team relationships among the new team members

There is evidence to suggest that there is a strong payoff if a new team can take a short period of time at the beginning of its life to examine in a collaborative way how it is going to work together: what methods, procedures, and work relationships will be, and what the priority concerns of its members are.

One example of such a model for such collaboration is:

Team members gather for a one-day team development effort, away from the work site

The team holds a facilitated meeting with this agenda:

A statement, discussion, and clarification of the vision, and then the mission of the group: its goals, timetable, work tasks

A discussion of the concerns and hopes of group members for this joint effort.

Possible issues include: individual roles, relationship to the leadership, how the group will organize itself, the reward system, what will happen when the task is ended

A presentation of the group leader's plans to organize the work - the organization structure, relationships to other parts of the system, and general ground rules

A discussion of major areas of responsibility and authority of each member (perhaps each person describes what he/she sees as their function and responsibilities, then checks these perceptions out with the leader and other team members)

A development of mechanisms for communications within the team (meetings, memoranda, etc.) as well as the team leader's sharing information about her/his personal administrative style

Planning for connecting with, training the parent organization

Arrangements for a follow-up team-building meeting to assess the functioning of the new team and refine team processes

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