

Teamworking



www.ralphlewis@co.uk

Contents

Agenda, Objectives and Programme	3
Why Teams ?	4
Spirited Teams - the DEC Experience	5
Key Processes for Fostering Team Spirit	6
Belbin Team Roles	7
Team Roles - Individual Implications	11
Our Team	12
Mapping Teams - The Four Quadrants	13
Team Issues Mapping - Team Mission	15
Clients and Service	16
Organisational Interaction	17
Tasks and Procedures	18
Team Members	19
Overall Conclusions	20
Team Preferences Questionnaire	21
Improving Team Relationships	27
Individual Team Contract	28
Team Contract	29

Why Teams?

Teams and groups have always been a part of working life. For example, prehistoric peoples hunted game in teams. Of course, some of us prefer to be loners and so we work by ourselves. Whilst others find working in a team is the most enjoyable part of their job. Whatever our individual needs, organisations often compel us to act in some kind of team sooner or later. So we need to be aware of how and why teams develop, how they can be managed and what makes a team effective or ineffective.

There are also both advantages and disadvantages to teamwork that we need to understand.

Some of the positive reasons for having teams are:

- sharing of information and ideas
- meeting psychological needs of people for being with others
- specialisation is possible
- improved learning and decision-making
- synergy ($1 + 1 = 3$)
- individual biases can be overcome

Some potential disadvantages are:

- stifling of individuality
- cost in time and effort of building a team
- decisions may be made on basis of keeping team members happy rather than being critically examined
- the dangers of group pressure

Every team needs to take time out to critically examine its ways of working.

Spirited Teams – the DEC Experience

David Buchanan looked at what Digital Equipment Corporation did in their manufacturing plant at Ayr to develop spirited teams. He found the following characteristics:

- teams had clear long-term and immediate purposes
- members had high levels of energy, motivation and commitment to high standards of performance
- tasks were achieved through integrated teamwork
- leadership was reliable and predictable
- effort was devoted to managing the team's image and its relationships with people outside the team
- new ideas to improve task performance were quickly adopted
- fewer resources were needed than for less high-performance teams
- teams were self-managing, self-organising and self-regulating

However, high performance teams are often regarded as a 'problem' by other teams and people outside the team because the often 'freewheeling' attitude of the team members is resented. To allow high-performance teams to develop Buchanan notes that management had to initiate a package of changes that were far reaching. These involved:

- sharing a clear vision with all employees that emphasised flexibility and quality
- developing new skills-based payment systems and removing job demarcations (so they had multi-skilled individuals)
- changing management styles to support rather than control
- introducing computer-aided systems to give the team help in getting materials and controlling their production
- involving employees in the changes so that they felt they 'owned' the ideas, including the team selecting other people in
- assessing training needs and carrying out intensive training

According to managers at Ayr, this package created massive personal growth and skills development. The only problem seems to have been that increased worker control had increased employee commitment to work which in some examples had had negative effects on home and social life.

David Buchanan, 'High Performance: New boundaries of Acceptability in Worker Control' in *Human Resources Strategies*, editor Graeme Salaman, Sage Publications, 1992.

Team Roles

Meredith Belbin has studied teams in business games and elsewhere to try to establish what it was that made teams successful. His idea was that in addition to having a functional role – such as accountant, production manager – the individuals in a team took on what he called 'team roles'. These are the roles that need to be carried out in a team if it is to be successful.

People tend to have a main preferred role and a back-up role they can use if no-one else uses it. About 30% of people do not fall clearly into one role. There are eight roles. These are:

Team role	Description
Co-ordinator (Chairman) (CO)	Sets the team goals and defines roles and structures. Co-ordinates team efforts and leads by eliciting respect, but may not get involved in the task
Shaper (SH)	The task leader who brings competitive drive and energy to the team. Makes things happen but may be thought abrasive
Plant (PL)	Imaginative, creative and the team's source of original ideas. Concerned with fundamentals. May not be 'involved' with the team
Monitor-Evaluator (ME)	Offers measured, dispassionate critical analysis. Keeps team from pursuing misguided objectives. Can be seen as negative
Resource Investigator (RI)	Salesman, diplomat, resource seeker. Good improviser with many external contacts. May be easily diverted from the task at hand
Completer (Finisher) (CF)	Worries about problems. Personally checks details. Intolerant of the casual and slapdash. Sees projects through. May not be interested in the big picture
Teamworker (TW)	Promotes team harmony. Good listener who builds on the ideas of others. Likeable and non assertive. In avoiding conflict may lose focus on the task
Implementer/Company Worker (IM)	Turns decisions and strategies into manageable tasks. Brings logical, methodical pursuit of objectives to the team

The main and back-up styles of individuals will indicate how best they can be used in a team. The least preferred roles should be balanced in a team by seeking people with those styles rather than remedying the individuals themselves.

In looking at teams it is important to check that each of the above roles is covered by someone, even if only as a back-up style. There are other complexities of course. Two or more shapers, for example, will clash with each other because both will want to be the task leader.

The main tasks of the team will place emphasis on different roles, e.g. Think Tanks will need more "plants" and "monitor evaluators" than production teams. Any preponderance of one type will produce, however, an imbalanced team.

Co-ordinator/Chairman (CO / CH)

Characteristics: Stable, dominant, extrovert, at least normally intelligent, but not brilliant. *Behaviours:* Preoccupied with objectives. Exerts personal authority and self-discipline. Is dominant, but not domineering. Has an instinct for trusting people. Through seeing people's strengths and weaknesses, is able to focus people on what they do best. Communicates (including listening) well.

Team Roles: Clarifies group objectives and sets its agenda. Establishes priorities and selects problems for consideration, but does NOT dominate and discussion. Tends to ask questions rather than assert or propose. Listens, sums up, and articulates. Is decisive - but lets everyone have their say.

Shaper (SH)

Characteristics: Impatient, dominant, extrovert, outgoing and emotional, impulsive and easily frustrated. The most prone to paranoia of the whole team. Wants action, and wants it NOW personally competitive and intolerant of wooliness, vagueness, and muddled thinking.

Behaviours: Quick to challenge and respond to challenge. Often has rows but does not harbour grudges. Exudes self-confidence, but only results can give assurance.

Team Roles: To give 'Shape' to the application of the team effort, often supplying a heavy personal input. Looks for a pattern in discussion and tries to unite ideas, objectives, and practical considerations into a single feasible project. Can 'Steamroller' the team, but gets results.

Innovator/Plant (Inn /PL)

Characteristics: Dominant very high IQ, introvert. Can be prickly. Very original and creative thinker the vital 'spark' of creativity in a team. Trustful and uninhibited, radical minded.

Behaviours: Has brilliant ideas, but can cause offence if criticised. May sulk if ideas are dissected or rejected. Needs to be handled carefully and (even) flattered to give the best. Very concerned with major issues, not a 'detail' person and may miss out on details, making careless mistakes.

Team Roles: The source of original ideas, suggestions, and proposals. Others have ideas, but the Plant's are original and radically-minded. The plant is the one who is most likely to start searching for completely new answers if the team gets bogged down.

Monitor Evaluator (ME)

Characteristics: High IQ, stable, introvert. A bit of a cold fish. Serious and not very exciting. Not noted for enthusiasm and euphoria therefore free of ego-involvement. Highly objective mind. Not tactful, or ambitious but fair-minded and open to change. Judgement is hardly ever wrong.

Behaviours: Objective but unequivocal critic. Slow to make up his mind, and likes to be given time to mull things over. Skilled at assimilating and interpreting complex written material, the ME can also analyse problems and judge and assess the contributions of others. Sometimes tactless and disparaging, and has no sense of timing or delivery in discussion. Solid and dependable but lacking in jollity and warmth. Can compete, often with CH or PL.

Team Roles: Contributions lie in measured and dispassionate analysis and an ability, through objectivity, to stop the team from getting itself committed to a misguided task. Judgement is hardly ever wrong.

Resource Investigator (RI)

Characteristics: Stable, dominant, extrovert, relaxed, sociable and gregarious with interest levels easily aroused. Positive and enthusiastic.

Behaviours: Makes friends easily, having masses of outside contacts, usually making more contacts by the minute. Loves to explore new possibilities in the wide world outside. When not in contact with others can easily become bored. demoralised and ineffective. Enthusiasms are sometimes short-lived.

Team Roles: The one that goes outside the group and brings ideas, information and developments back to it. The team's sales person, diplomat, liaison officer, explorer. Encourages innovation in others, improvises and is active under pressure. Can over-relax when pressure eases, or waste time on interesting irrelevancies.

Completer Finisher (CF)

Characteristics: Anxious, introvert. Worries about what might go wrong. Maintains a sense of urgency. Self-control and strength of character.

Behaviours: Compulsive measurer of deadlines and fulfiller of schedules. Never at ease until every detail has been personally checked, everything has been done, and nothing overlooked.

Team Role: Not an assertive member of the team, but maintains a permanent sense of urgency. Can be intolerant to more casual team-members. The Finisher can annoy and depress, get bogged down in detail, but the relentless follow-through is a great asset.

Team Worker (TW)

Characteristics: Stable, extrovert, low in dominance. The most sensitive in the team. Aware of individuals' needs and worries, and perceptive of emotional undercurrents in the group. Sympathetic, understanding and loyal, uncompetitive.

Behaviours: Builds on the ideas of others, a good and willing listener and communicator, encouraging others to do likewise. A promoter of unity and harmony, counterbalancing the discord of others. Dislikes personal confrontation, avoiding it and 'cooling down' others.

Team Roles: A force operating against division and disruption in the team. Likeable, popular and unassertive, the 'cement' of the team, loyal to the team as a unit, and supportive of the individuals in it. Although the TW's value may not be immediately visible, their absence is very noticeable in times of stress and pressures.

Implementer/Company Worker (IMP / CW)

Characteristics: Stable and controlled. Strength of character and disciplined approach. Needs stability and stable structures. Efficient, systematic and methodical. High sincerity, integrity and trust.

Behaviours: Not easily deflated or discouraged but sudden changes of plan are likely to upset them. Always tries to build stable structures. Efficient, systematic, methodical, and therefore a little inflexible, not liking "Airy Fairy" ideas.

Team Roles: Turns decisions and strategies into defined and management tasks. Sorts out objectives and pursues them logically. Willing to trim and adapt personal schedules to fit into agreed plans and systems. If you don't know what is being decided or what you are supposed to be doing, go to the Company Worker to find out.

Team Roles - Individual Implications

What are the implications for your work team in terms of your Belbin Team Roles?

Your Teamwork Roles

- Highs** 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- Moderate** 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- Low** 8. _____

What you bring to the team . . .

What you need from the team?

The areas you need help with

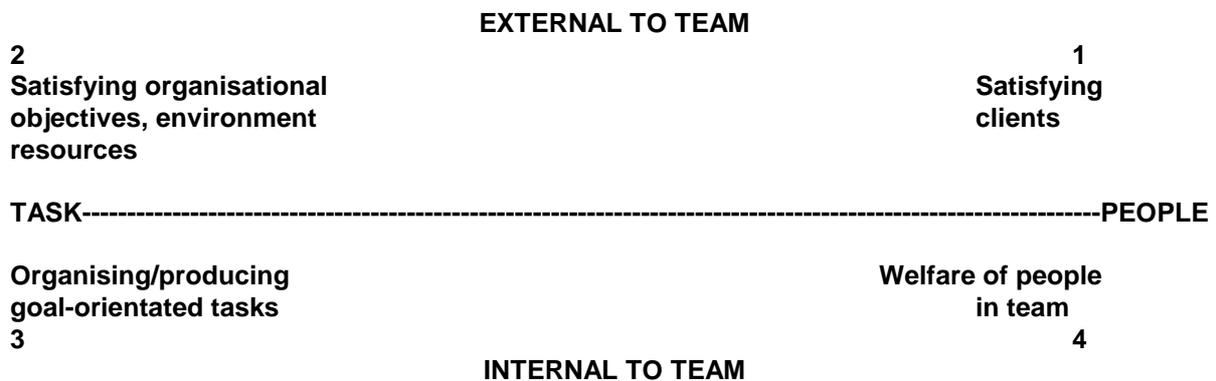
Actions needed

Mapping Teams

The Four Quadrants

A team can be defined as 'a group of people using shared resources in order to meet common aims'. We expect teams to be 'effective' (to meet goals which are clearly stated), and also to be 'efficient' (to use resources efficiently - at least within the commercial world). A team must weld together individuals into a whole. Therefore, there are both task and people functions that need to be carried out by teams. These can be summarised as:

1. Relate effectively to people outside the team (customers, clients, colleagues)
2. Adapt to the environment (resources, goals, effectiveness)
3. Carry out goal-orientated tasks (production, systems, efficiency)
4. Make people feel part of the team and reward them appropriately



Quadrant 1: refers to all those people with whom the team does business. They may be in the rest of the organisation or outside. Sometimes – as with a boss – it may be difficult to decide whether they are in the team or a customer.

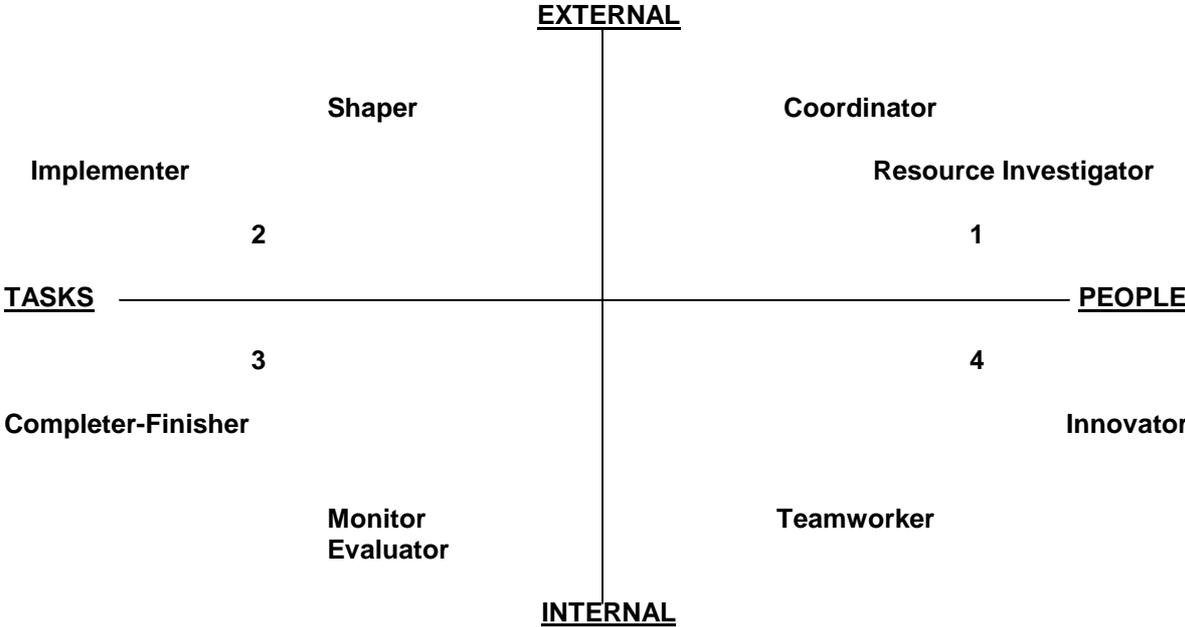
Quadrant 2: is about the external environment of the team - its 'market place'. It relates to the source of resources and supplies and is also its 'objective' environment (as opposed to the 'subjective' environment of clients). In this quadrant you would include all external organisational systems.

Quadrant 3: is about the internal environment of the team - this function is concerned with the performance of actual tasks - aimed at achieving the overall team goal. The team must ensure that its teams have the skills and knowledge to carry out these tasks. Clear performance standards need to be set if this area is to be managed effectively.

Quadrant 4: refers to the 'people' part of the team - looking after team communication, ensuring members are committed and rewarded for being part of the team.

All individuals will have different preferences for these quadrants. These individual differences are important for a team - why have a team, if not to get the benefit of these differences? Therefore, key skills in any team are managing the communication processes and conflicts that are bound to arise as a result of differences. Team leaders need to link all these functions through the team vision and other processes.

The Belbin Team Roles can help you identify your own preferences for different areas of team functions. They map onto the Team Preferences quadrant as can be seen below.



Clients - Service

- Who are your clients?
- What do they want from you?
- What are their criteria for judging the service they get from you?
- How do you get feedback from them?
- Who in your team is best at dealing with them?

<p><u>Quadrant 1 – Clients/People Environment:</u>How does your team respond/deal with clients?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Actions</u></p>

Organisational Interaction

- Who are your suppliers?
- How willing and effective are they in supplying you?
- What information do you need?
- Who has the information?
- Who in your team is best at dealing with the above?
- From where do you get your resources?
- What are your deliverables?
- How effective are you in delivery?

Quadrant 2 – External 'Marketplace' of team - resources, systems: How well does your team manage its environment?

Actions

Tasks/Procedures

- What are the essential tasks that are needed to achieve the team's aims?
- What are the key skills and knowledge needed to do the tasks effectively and efficiently?
- What systems and procedures are necessary to control the above?
- Who in your team is best at controlling and/or doing the key tasks necessary to achieve the team goals?

Quadrant 3 – Goal Oriented Tasks
What tasks does your team carry out? What knowledge, skills, standards, are set? How do these relate to the team's overall purpose?

Actions

Team Members

- Who are the team members?
- Why are they in the team?
- What are the skills they bring to the team?
- What are their values?
- What are their team preferences?
- Why do they do the work they do?
- What gives them a buzz?
- How do they communicate with each other?
- What style of management is appropriate for them?
- Who in the team is best at dealing with their concerns?

Quadrant 4 – Team Members:How well are the `people' aspects of your team managed

Actions

Team Mapping - Overall Conclusions

Looking at each of the quadrants, what key actions are needed?

Key Areas

Quadrant	Action
1. Customers	
2. Organisational Environment	
3. Tasks	
4. Team Members	

Improving Team Relationships

- be interested in others, ask questions, listen, acknowledge
- give compliments, praise
- clarify what you want from the relationship, what the issues are
- learn practical skills, dealing, show affection
- use positive body language, facial signals, voice, to show liking
- be open, use self-disclosure, trust and confide in others
- always consult before deciding

Key Skills

Listening: Listen actively and with empathy to the other person's feelings and take the cause of those feelings seriously. It is not easy and cannot be done successfully without **Empathy**. The aim is to show the other people you understand that they feel strongly, what they feel strongly about, and why they feel strongly about it.

Winning yourself a hearing by describing and explaining your own feelings will help in getting others to listen to you. The route to success is to avoid being aggressive, judgmental, appeasing or sarcastic but to concentrate on an **assertive** approach which clearly and firmly states your feeling. It is a powerful technique in its own right, but when used together with **Active Listening** it forms an even more persuasive combination.

Work to a Joint Solution Three clear stages should be apparent. First, make other people feel that you understand their point of view. Second, make sure they understand your point of view. Finally, come to an agreement. The key to reaching agreement is an open mind and mutual respect. Without mutual respect and understanding one or both parties are likely to be on the defensive. **Problem Solving** skills are essential in persuasion. With the effective use of power, influence over key issues can be substantially increased.

Listen Actively

Show others you understand

- o That they feel strongly
- o What they feel strongly about
- o Why they feel strongly

Pause to let them respond

Win yourself a hearing

Explain your own feelings
Refer back to their points
Make your points firmly but stay friendly

Work to a joint solution

Seek their ideas
Build on their ideas
Offer your ideas
Construct the solution together

Team Leadership

Leadership is about managing change through the use of power to get people to work together for their benefit and for those of their clients. In team leadership all the processes that are key for team membership apply but with additional standards of excellence. As well as managing the team, the leader needs to be able to have client focus and a sense of strategic clarity, i.e. knowing what the team's role is with the rest of the organisation.

There are two key areas in managing teams, the TASK areas and the PEOPLE areas. Managing the Task areas requires attention to clear problem-solving processes and analytical thought – in other words **Clarity**. Managing the people aspects requires good communication and effective means of building commitment, i.e. **Empathy**.

Managing Tasks - Setting team goals

Goal setting is at the heart of team management. Performance **standards** must be clear so that the team knows how well they are doing and where and how they can improve. Goals are important, therefore, because they act as an essential backcloth to behaviour. They are the vehicle through which meaningful team outcomes are achieved. Goals should follow the SMART format, i.e.

S _____ Is the goal SPECIFIC - does it define clearly the end result to be attainable rather than an activity

M _____ Is the goal MEASURABLE - are there clear indicators of success obviously linked to the end result?

A _____ Is the goal ATTAINABLE - is it realistic and achievable in the time-frame set? Is there sufficient 'stretch' to provide a challenge or is it too easy?

R _____ Is the goal RELEVANT – is it in step with the circumstances of the situation as you know or understand them?

T _____ Is the goal TRACKABLE - can you monitor what progress you are making?

Managing People

The interpersonal skills of listening, questioning and empathising are key. In fact they are the usual skills of a good leader. This includes knowing who to involve and why; allowing for different styles of working from team members and rewarding them for efforts.

Managing Processes

The task side of teams and the people side is brought together through team processes. Setting team purposes, initiating, setting clear direction, allocating roles according to team members strengths and motivations, rewarding and moving on. This includes having processes for decision-making, problem-solving and resolving conflicts.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles can be classified in many different ways depending on their task or people orientation. If one other dimension is added of External focus (looking outside the team to the rest of the organisation and clients) and Internal focus (looking at internal procedures and people) then four styles can be seen.

External-Task - Driving

These leaders are best at: being task-oriented and focused on goals
taking charge
directing others to achieve results
They may need to improve: listening and people skills
They see teams as generating results for the wider picture

External-People - Individualistic

These leaders are best at: focusing on individual clients
being enthusiastic and relating to others
motivating others
They may need to improve: planning skills and task focus
They see teams as being there to meet individual needs

Internal-Task - Systematic

These leaders are best at: analysis and task control
leading by practical example
focusing on quality of output
They may need to improve: communication and people relationships
They see teams as well-oiled machines delivering products or services

Internal-People - Sensitives

These leaders are best at: being people-oriented and value centred
leading by trust and concern for others
focusing on individual needs
They may need to improve: clarity on tasks and standards
They see teams as a well-adjusted family

All these styles have equal validity but a team leader has a responsibility to be more than just their own preferences. They need flexibility to deal well with all the aspects of a team.

What is your style?

Team Leadership Checklist

Leadership Philosophy

- ☺ Be clear about your own leadership values and how they support the team - if they are different explore why
- ☺ Transmit positive beliefs about how you expect others to perform
- ☺ Understand your team leadership styles - your strengths and areas where you need help

Client Focus

- ☺ Manage deadlines and schedules to successfully complete projects as the customer requires
- ☺ Establish two-way communication and feedback systems with the client
- ☺ With clients listen/get the facts - restate their issues and promise to check it out. Follow up apologies with action including when they will hear from you. Don't blame others.

Planning

- ☺ Foster communication in the planning phases - clarify expectations and establish accountabilities up front - be open to questions
- ☺ Develop your own preferred way of planning and scheduling at regular intervals
- ☺ Assign team roles resources according to abilities and draw quiet members out

Team Members

- ☺ Coach and manage those you have responsibility so you bring out the best of their talents - focus on what they do right, encourage
- ☺ Communicate in a positive way so others trust and welcome your direction, use open body language, be friendly and supportive
- ☺ Build trust by monitoring your "Emotional Bank Account" with others. Identify what can cause others to lose respect for you or start to distrust you
- ☺ Show appreciation for the "small stuff", recognising effort and treating others with kindness and respect including bosses
- ☺ Separate valid concerns from complaints - take action on all promises
- ☺ Use listening skills to address complaints - and take action if needed
- ☺ Eliminate negative whining by focusing on team goals
- ☺ Meet one-to-one with those with issues and agree contracts for behaviour change
- ☺ Coach others to take responsibility for getting important information
- ☺ Create a welcoming workplace, include team members in conversations and ask for their input
- ☺ Handle offensive references to individuals/groups by immediately making it clear that such comments are not appropriate
- ☺ Balance fairness to the individual with fairness to the company and others
- ☺ If tragedy happens listen privately to the person and get them help

Task

- ☺ Set clear standards of performance and make sure that all team members know them
- ☺ Set "SMART" goals with the team

Self

- ☺ Develop healthy "ventilation" channels for your own frustrations
- ☺
- ☺

Team Contract

These are the ways I agree to work with my team and the actions I agree to take.

What I will bring to the team . . . (Belbin Team Roles, Team Preferences, Skills)

My goals for myself in the team - my outputs
(Specific Actions and Timings)

The support I will need from my team members - our joint agreements

Our Team Contract

Our agreed purpose or team vision is:

Our agreed deliverables, and the resources we need to supply them are:

The ways we will perform our tasks (quality, timing etc.) are:

The way(s) we will work with our clients are:

The ways we will work with each other are:

We will deal with conflicts by:

What we, as individuals, agree to bring to the team is:

