

Making Team Agreements

The Value of Team Agreements

Team agreements provide a quick summary of what behaviors the team has agreed upon that will enable the team to be more cohesive and effective. The agreement contains behaviors expected within the team that will make it a positive, productive team by describing what team members will do or want to do. While some of the behaviors may seem obvious – we will be on time to our meetings – stating and agreeing to the behaviors creates accountability.

The agreement may also address negative behaviors the team would like to reduce, for example, “We won’t talk negatively about a team member who is not in the meeting.”

Effective team agreements enable the team to create momentum, have deeper discussions, make better decisions and communicate more clearly both among the team and to broader audiences. Team agreements,

- Develop shared responsibility
- Increase self-awareness behaviors
- Free the team to work together more smoothly
- Empower team members to quickly address potential problems

Keep it Simple

The agreed upon behaviors should be described in clear, concise language which easily reveals what is expected. So, for example, “*We will be on time to our meetings and ready to get started*” is a very effective.

Keys to team agreements that work well. . .

- Limited in number
- Are important to the team in the current season of their team journey
- Fully supported by all team members
- Agreements are re-read when the team needs a process check
- Are visible during meetings

Developing Team Agreements

Prime the Discussion – Start with having each team member write down two to three team behaviors they prefer.

What’s Working – Facilitate a team discussion asking “what’s been working well for the team?” and keep track of the items on an easel pad.

Making Team Agreements

It Would be Great If – Next, facilitate a team discussion asking “what one team behavior would make our team great/effective/engaged/successful/more fun” and keep track of the items on an easel pad.

Voting – Facilitate an inclusive, interactive voting process to narrow the list.

Consolidate – Create the final list of agreed upon behaviors.

Sign to Show Support – Have a ceremony and have each team member sign the consolidated list. A signature is a powerful commitment.

Get Creative – Have some fun with how the agreements will be displayed.

Create the Habit – At the start of the next several meetings, take a moment and have a team member read through the list of team agreements.

Sample Team Agreements

Working Agreements

Be Respectful

- Be an active listener—open to new ideas
- Use notes for side bar conversations

Be Responsible

- Be on time for sessions
- Silence cell phones—reply appropriately

Be a Problem Solver

- Follow the decision making process
- Work toward consensus and support decisions of the group

Making Team Agreements



- EVERY member is responsible for the team's progress and success
- Attend all team meetings; be on time
- Listen to & show respect for view of members
- Criticize ideas, not persons
- Use & expect constructive feedback
- Resolve conflicts constructively
- Always strive for win-win situations
- Avoid destructive behaviour
- Ask questions when you do not understand

Some Examples of Working Agreement Guidelines are:

- **Show respect.** Don't interrupt; let people finish what they're saying. It's OK to disagree with each other. No personal attacks, attack issues, we debate the merit of ideas, not people.
- **Contribution.** Everyone has equal voice and valuable contribution.
- **Meeting.** Be on time, end on time, have an agenda
- **Be transparent.** No hidden agendas. We will give feedback, we will receive feedback, and we will act on feedback.
- **Impediments.** Solve roadblocks within the team. If the impediment cant be solved within the team, give it to the Scrum master.
- **We make commitments as a team.** We will be held accountable to our commitments. – we work as a team to make a commitment and deliver on it.
- **Incomplete stories are not good** – it is better to help get an existing **story** to “done” than to start another story that can't be finished in the current sprint.

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Visit [Bishop House's Leadwell Knowledge Base](http://www.BishopHouse.com) for more resources on the topics that matter most to leaders



The banner features a collage of business-related images and text. The central text reads "Bishop House Leadwell Knowledge Base". Surrounding this are various icons and phrases such as "Mission?", "Insight", "I Love My Job", "NOTICE PROBLEMS NEXT OFFICE", "YOU ARE TALKING!", "LEADERSHIP", "CONFLICT", "MOTIVATION", "WHAT TO DO?", "REGAL OFF AHEAD", "LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS", "FOLLOW LEADER", "THE BOSS", "MAYBE YOU?", "CONFIDENT", "CREATIVITY", "COMMUNICATE", "TEAM", "BLAM", "I AM", "WAITING", "EXCEPTIONAL", "LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS", "TEAM", "BLAM", "I AM", "WAITING", "EXCEPTIONAL", "LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS", "TEAM", "BLAM", "I AM", "WAITING", "EXCEPTIONAL".

New Leader
Whether you just got promoted and don't know where to begin, or you have been in a leadership role for a while, these resources will provide you with valuable insight into the fundamentals of leadership.

Managing Change
Managing change can be challenging. Look here for ideas on how you can manage yourself through change and strategies for leading your team through change.

Effective Communication
Effective communication skills are essential to effective leadership. Click here to explore how to better communicate with employees, peers and others.

Managing Up
How to manage up when your boss has you down. Look here for strategies for dealing with your boss.

Your Development
Look here for ideas on how to develop as a leader and to continue to grow in your leadership knowledge.

Managing Performance
Explore content about being a coach to your employees, guiding them to success, managing poor performers, motivating good performers and more.

Productivity
Insights and tips on how to be more productive as a manager. Learn how to effectively and efficiently manage time, emails, meetings and other aspects of your role as a leader.

Building My Team
Resources for learning how to build a cohesive team as well as strategies for where to start when it is anything but.