

## Understanding Team Roles

### Overview

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this module is to develop participants' ability to identify appropriate roles and responsibilities for each team member.

#### **Objectives**

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Discuss individual roles within a team: team leader, team member, timekeeper, recorder, and coach as facilitator and trainer.
- Identify team support roles and the contributions each makes to a team.

#### **Content**

- Team Support Roles

### Team Support Roles

Roles clarify what behavior is expected from each member. Team members take on specific formal roles, such as team leader, recorder, time keeper, facilitator, and trainer as discussed in Module 1: Working in Teams. Team members also act based on their personalities, and support the team by taking on roles compatible with their inherent interaction styles. Team support roles will be discussed in this module. These roles are described in the exercise "Team Role Analysis" (Francis & Young, 1992).

#### **Process Manager**

Process management comprises a set of skills that should be acquired by all leaders of teams. The process manager channels human resources to get things done. He or she forms teams, identifies team members' strengths, clarifies objectives, structures meetings, explores issues, allocates roles, and maintains momentum. The process manager brings structure to the team and ensures that goals are set. He or she has the skills of a good chairperson, control, self-confidence, calmness, and the ability to communicate well with others.

Key contribution: Ability to chair and organize meetings

#### **Concept Developer**

The concept developer ensures that ideas are developed and evaluated. This person helps to identify possibilities and transform them into practical proposals. The concept developer has the ability to see the potential merits and drawbacks of ideas. When someone suggests an idea, the concept developer is creative and excels in envisioning, imagining, thinking logically,

and understanding.

Key contribution: Vision

### ***Radical***

The radical presents new ideas by considering problems and opportunities from unexplored angles. This person sees new possibilities, adopts unconventional approaches, has insights, and produces novel proposals. The radical often is strongly intuitive. Radicals look at situations with a fresh perspective, prefer to think things through independently, and refuse to accept “conventional wisdom.” The radical is a free spirit.

Key contribution: Conceptualizing

### ***Harmonizer***

The harmonizer builds team morale by energizing, supporting, and encouraging others and by resolving interpersonal conflicts. The harmonizer believes that team efficiency is based on positive interpersonal relationships. He or she encourages commitment and cooperation and, thereby, good performance. The predominant impression that others have of the harmonizer is that he or she is a caring person. The harmonizer tries to ensure that team members value one another and gain something significant from their membership in the team.

Key contribution: Supporting

### ***Technical Expert***

The technical expert is a subject matter specialist. The technical expert contributes an expert or professional viewpoint to the team, making the team the beneficiary of his or her extensive training and experience in a particular area.

Key contribution: Specialized know-how

### ***Output Driver***

The output driver makes sure that tasks are completed. He or she sets time limits and targets and follows through on assignments. The output driver pushes to get things done and maintains standards. He or she checks to see whether things could go wrong at the last minute and is a creative tactician and planner.

Key contribution: Pushing

### ***Critic***

The team member who takes the role of the critic must be intellectually capable, temperamentally inclined, and appropriately skilled. The critic takes a mental step back from the team to judge, to consider possibilities to

look for possible pitfalls, to sound notes of caution, and to question and challenge ideas. He or she confronts the team with objective observations and carefully weighted opinions. The critic's commentary should be objective, not negative or positive.

Key contribution: Impartial evaluation

### **Cooperator**

The cooperator is an industrious team member who assists in whatever way is needed by working hard and by being adaptable. The cooperator is sensitive to other's needs and is willing to tackle unpleasant jobs without complaint. To succeed as a cooperator, a person must have well developed observation skills, a sense of altruism, enthusiasm, and a variety of capabilities.

Key contribution: Flexibility

### **Politician**

Because politicians believe that they know the right thing to do, they try influence other people to support their opinions. They mold the team views, build alliances, and guide others. Politicians are results orientated, influential, power conscious, and persuasive. Such people are dogged and resolute; they bounce back after setbacks. The role of politician has been described as that of a "shaper," as the politician shapes opinions and objectives.

Key contribution: Drive

### **Promoter**

The promoter is an extrovert with a set of appropriate skills. The promoter gathers useful contacts and makes connections outside the team. He or she is open minded, socially skilled, and cooperative. This person links the team to others with his or her outgoing and sociable nature and ability to build relationships, to investigate resources and to check out ideas and possibilities. Promoters are "fixers" who enable things to get done.

Key contribution: Linking

## **References and Recommended Readings**

Francis, Dave and Young, Don. *Improving Work Groups: A Practical Manual for Team Building*, San Diego, California: Pfeiffer & Company, 1992.