6

BRINGING THE FOUR Cs TOGETHER

Designing a Team-Building Program

The goal of any team-building program is to help the team engage in a continual process of self-examination to gain awareness of those conditions that keep it from functioning effectively. In chapter 5, we identified a number of symptoms of unhealthy teams. Having gathered data about such problems, the team must learn how to use those data to make decisions and take actions that will change team context, composition, or competencies in ways that will lead to a growing state of team health. Team building in this sense is an ongoing process, not a one-time activity.

As we noted in chapter 5, team building often begins with a block of time, usually two or three days, during which the team starts learning how to engage in its own review, analysis, action planning, decision making, and action taking. Following the first meetings, the team may periodically take other blocks of time to continue the process, review progress made since the last team meeting, and identify what should be done to continue to improve the team's overall effectiveness. It is also possible that in time, the team will develop its skills for development to such a point that team members are always aware of areas that need improvement and will raise them at appropriate times with the appropriate people, thereby making it unnecessary to set aside a special meeting for such action.

There is no single way to put together a team-building program. The format depends on the experience, interests, and needs of the team members; the experience and needs of the team leader; the skills of the consultant (if one is needed); and the nature of the situation that has prompted the need for team building.

This chapter describes a range of design alternatives for each phase of a team-building program. Those planning such an activity may wish to select various design elements from among the alternatives that seem applicable to their own situations. Although the design of a team-building program generally follows the cycle described in chapter 5, in this chapter we outline some of the specific steps and actions that we take when designing a program.

Preparation

There are certain phases or steps in any team-building program. The first phase is describing the purpose of the program and introducing the team-building process to team members. We briefly describe the options available for team leaders as they begin to prepare their teams for team building.

Goals

The goals of this phase are to explain the purpose of team building, elicit agreement to work on certain problems, get commitment for participation, and do preliminary work for the team-building workshop. Any team-building program must be well conceived, and those involved must have indicated at least a minimal commitment to participate. Commitment will increase if people understand clearly why the program is being proposed and if they have an opportunity to influence the decision to go ahead with the program.

If this is the first time the team has spent some time together with the specific assignment to review their effectiveness and plan for change, they will likely be anxious and apprehensive. These concerns must be brought to the surface and addressed. Questions of deep concern probably will not be eliminated, but team members' concerns may be reduced as a supportive climate is established and as people test the water and find that plunging in is not very difficult. Experience will be the best teacher, and people will allay or confirm their fears as the session proceeds. Those conducting the session should anticipate such concerns and raise them prior to the first meeting to reduce any extreme anxiety by openly describing what will happen and what the anticipated outcome will be.

Alternative Actions

Among the possible actions that managers might take to get started are these:

1. Have an outside person interview each team member to identify problems, concerns, and the need for change.
2. Invite an outside speaker to talk about the role of teams in organizations and the purposes of team development. The speaker might discuss the Four Cs of team performance and how they might relate to the performance of that team.
3. Gather data on the level of team effectiveness. (See the team-building checklist in figure 5.1 and the other instruments presented in this book or online.)
4. Have a general discussion about the need for developing a team competency—which can emerge through a team-building program.
5. Invite a manager who has had successful team-building experiences to describe the activities and results in his or her unit.

Creating an Open Climate for Data Gathering

The second phase of the team-building program is creating a climate for gathering and sharing data. The goals for this phase and alternative approaches follow.

Goals

The goals of this phase are to create a climate for work; get people relaxed; establish norms for being open with problems, concerns, and ideas for planning and for dealing with issues; and present a framework for the whole experience. The climate established during the start-up phase influences the rest of the program.

Alternative Approaches to Data Gathering

There are several alternatives that the team can use for data gathering. These alternatives follow.

Alternative 1 The manager or team leader can give a short opening talk, reviewing the goals as he or she sees them and the need for the program, emphasizing his or her support, and reaffirming the norm that no negative sanctions are intended for any open, honest behavior. The role of the consultant, if there is one, can be explained by either the manager or the consultant.

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Participants can share their immediate here-and-now feelings about the meetings by responding to questions handed out on a sheet of paper (figure 6.1). They call out their answers (to set the norm of open sharing of data), and the person at the flip chart records the responses.

The data can be gathered openly from team members and tabulated on a whiteboard or it can be gathered anonymously,

Figure 6.1 Attitudes About Change

Instructions: Answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5.

1. How confident are you that any real change will result from these meetings?

1	2	3	4	5
I am not confident at all.		I am somewhat confident.		I am highly confident.

2. To what degree do you feel that people really want to be here and work on team development issues?

1	2	3	4	5
People don't really want to be here.		People have some interest in being here.		People have high interest in being here.

3. How willing do you think people are to make changes that may be suggested?

1	2	3	4	5
People will be unwilling to change.		People have some willingness to change.		People are very willing to change.

4. How willing do you think you and others will be to express real feelings and concerns?

1	2	3	4	5
We are not very willing to express feelings.		We have some degree of willingness to express feelings.		We are very willing to express feelings.

with the results tallied (with high and low scores on each item and the mean score) and then presented to the team. After seeing the results, the team should be asked to discuss these questions: Why are the scores rather low (or high)? What could be done here to help people feel more positive about these meetings? If the team is large, subgroups should be created to discuss these questions for twenty minutes and report back to the entire team.

This alternative for beginning is to set the norm that the program is centered on data gathering, data analysis, open sharing, and trying to plan with data. This also allows group members to test the water about simple, immediate data rather than more sensitive work group issues to see how they will respond and react to the questions.

Alternative 2 After preliminary remarks by the manager, the team members could be asked, "For us to get a picture of how you see our team functioning, please take a few minutes to describe our team as a kind of animal or combination of animals, a kind of machine, a kind of person, or whatever image comes to mind." Some teams in the past have been described as:

- A hunting dog—a pointer. "We run around and locate problems, then stop and point and hope that somebody else will take the action."
- A Cadillac with bicycle pedals. "We look good on the outside, but there is no real power to get us moving."
- A centipede with several missing or broken legs. "Although the centipede can move forward, its progress is crippled by the missing and broken legs."
- An octopus. "Each tentacle is out grasping anything it can but doesn't know what the other tentacles are doing."

As people share the images and explain why they came to mind, some questions for follow-up are: What are the common elements in these images? Do we like these images of ourselves? What do we need to do to change our image? Discussion aimed at answering these questions becomes the major agenda item for subsequent group meetings.

Alternative 3 In this alternative, the team is asked, usually by a consultant or trained observer, to work on a major decision-making problem—such as an arctic or desert survival exercise, or Tinker Toy tower building—and to function under the direction of the team leader in a fashion similar to the way they have previously worked on problems.[1] The consultant acts as a process observer for the exercise. After the exercise, the consultant has the group members review their own processes and determine both their strengths and their deficiencies in solving problems. The consultant shares his or her observations with the group. In some instances, we have found it useful to videotape the team doing the exercise and then replay the videotape so team members can see how they performed.

As the exercise is reviewed, lists of positive and negative features are compiled. The agenda for the following session is set, based on the question, "How do we maximize our strengths and overcome deficiencies?" For example, if the process review indicates that the group is highly dependent on the leader, that some people are overwhelmed by the "big talker," and that the group jumps to decisions before everyone has a chance to put in ideas, the agenda would focus on how to reduce or change these negative conditions.

Group Data Analysis and Problem Solving

After the team understands the purpose of the team-building program and data have been generated regarding the team's functioning and performance, the next phase is to focus on analyzing the data and developing a plan of action to solve the team's problems.

Goals

One goal of this phase is to begin to take action on the problems identified in the previous phase. Assignments are made and dates set for completing the work. Another goal is for the team to practice better problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and delegation skills.

Whatever the start-up method or combination of methods used, this third phase usually has two parts: (1) the team begins to engage in the problem-solving process, and (2) a process consultant or observer helps the group look at its context, composition, and competencies in working on problems as an effective team as a prelude to improving its problem-solving capabilities.

The process consultant or observer usually tries to see to what extent the group is effective at both task activities and relationship-maintaining activities. Ineffective teams are often characterized by one or more of the following conditions, and the consultant should watch for evidence of these conditions:

- Domination by the leader
- Warring cliques or subgroups
- Unequal participation and uneven use of group resources
- Rigid or dysfunctional group norms and procedures
- A climate of defensiveness or fear
- A lack of creative alternatives to problems
- Restricted communications—not all have opportunities to speak
- Avoidance of differences or potential conflicts

Such conditions reduce the team's ability to work together in collective problem-solving situations. The role of the consultant here is to help the group become aware of its processes and begin to develop better group skills. Specifically, after becoming aware of a process problem, the group needs to establish a procedure, guideline, or plan of action to respond to the negative condition.

Alternatives for Data Analysis

There are several alternatives that the team can use to analyze the data that have been gathered and generate solutions to team problems. These alternatives follow.

Alternative 1 Following the opening remarks, the consultant, outside person, or team leader presents data that have been collected from the team members through observations, interviews, or instruments prior to the meeting. The team is asked to analyze the data. What do the data mean? Why do we respond the way we do? What conditions give rise to negative responses? What do we need to change to get a more positive response to our own team? The team might sort the data into the categories of context, composition, competencies, and change to identify the root causes of the team's problems.

This analysis can best be done in subgroups of three to four people and then shared with the whole group and compiled into a list of issues and possible change actions. The summaries form the basis for subsequent sessions. The team also puts the data into the A, B, and C categories described in chapter 5. Category A items, those that can be worked on now in the meeting, are the major work issues on the agenda.

Alternative 2 This design requires some extensive case analysis prior to the team-building sessions. A consultant or someone in management pulls together one or more studies, vignettes, or critical incidents that seem to represent recurring problems for the team. Another possibility is to have each member take a problem area for him or her and write it up as a short case. The group task is to look at the cases, try to discern the underlying conditions that trigger recurring problems, and then plan action steps for reducing the likelihood that such problems will reoccur.

Alternative 3 In this alternative, objective data gathered from records about the team are compiled and presented to the group members. Such information as production records, the grievance rate, absenteeism, turnover, lost time, budget discrepancies, late reports, cost increases, and so on are included in this feedback. The team's job is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the data, diagnose the causes of the negative trends, and then plan for improvement.

Alternative 4 Instead of presenting data from prior data collection methods to the team, data about the conditions or problems of the team can be raised at the team meeting. Each person is asked to come prepared to share his or her answers to the following questions:

- What keeps this team from functioning at its maximum potential?
- What keeps you personally from doing the kind of job you would like to do?
- What things do you like in this team that you want to have maintained?
- What changes would you like to see made that would help you and the whole team?

Team members or the leader may have other items they would like to put on the agenda.

Each team member takes a turn sharing information. The responses are listed and common themes identified. The most important issues are listed in priority, and they become the items for discussion.

Problem-Solving Process

By this point, regardless of the alternatives selected, the team should have identified a series of problems, concerns, or issues. It may be helpful in the problem identification stage of team building for the team leader or consultant to share with the team the Four Cs of team performance and then list the problems the team faces in the four categories: context problems, composition problems, competency problems, and change management problems. In this way, the team can determine which problems reside within the team and which are related to context issues that may not be under the team's direct control.

The team next moves into a traditional problem-solving process by engaging in the following actions:

1. Put problems in order of priority and select the five or six most pressing ones to address during the workshop.
2. Begin the classic problem-solving process: clearly define the problem, describe the causes of the problem, list alternative solutions, select the alternative to implement, develop an action plan, perform the action, and evaluate the results.
3. Conduct a force-field analysis.[2] Identify the existing level of team performance on a set of performance metrics, formulate a specific goal to improve performance, identify the restraining forces (the factors that are barriers to better performance) and driving forces (the factors that encourage high performance), and develop a plan to remove the restraining forces or add driving forces.
4. Begin role negotiation. Negotiate between people or subunits that are interdependent and need to coordinate well with each other to improve effectiveness.
5. Set up task force teams or subunits. Give each team a problem to work on. It should develop a plan of action, carry out the plan, and assess the results.

6. After all problems have been listed, the team can sort them into categories based on the nature of the problem: (A) we can work on the problem here within our team, (B) someone else must handle the problem (and identify who that is), or (C) we must live with this problem, since it appears to be beyond our ability to change.
7. Set targets, objectives, or goals. The group should spend time identifying short- or long-range goals it wishes to achieve, make assignments, and set target dates for completion.

The Appreciative Inquiry Approach to Team Building

Up to this point we've focused on using a problem-centered approach to team building: the team identifies the problems it faces and then engages in problem solving to improve its performance. An alternative team-building approach is to focus on the more positive aspects of the team in a process called appreciative inquiry (AI).[3]

The AI approach to team building starts with the assumption that every team has some positive characteristics that can drive it to high performance. The issue for the team is how to discover and tap into these positive characteristics. Rather than focus on the negative—the problems that the team experiences—this approach focuses on the positive characteristics of the team. To begin the team-building activity, the manager, team leader, or consultant asks team members to answer the following questions[4]

1. Think of a time when you were on a hugely successful team, a time that you felt energized, fulfilled and the most effective—when you were able to accomplish even more than you imagined. What made it such a great team? Tell the story about the

situation, the people involved, and how the team achieved its breakthrough.

2. Without being humble, what was it about you that contributed to the success of the team? Describe in detail these qualities and what you value about yourself that enables team success.
3. It is one year from today and our team is functioning more successfully than any of you imagined. What are we doing, how are we working together differently, what does this success look like, and how did we make it happen?

Members of the team pair up and share their answers to these questions. They then can move into larger subgroups and share their stories, or the entire team can be brought back together to report their stories and their feelings about the future of the team. Gervase Bushe, professor of leadership and organization development at Simon Fraser University, who uses the AI approach, explains how one team improved its performance through AI:

> In one business team I worked with one member talked about a group of young men he played pick-up basketball with and described why they were, in his opinion, such an outstanding "team." He described their shared sense of what they were there to do, lack of rigid roles, [and] easy adaptability to the constraints of any particular situation in the service of their mission. But what most captured the team's imagination was his description of how this group was both competitive and collaborative at the same time. Each person competed with all the rest to play the best ball, to come up with the neatest move and play. Once having executed it, and shown his prowess, he quickly "gave it away" to the other players in the pick-up game, showing them how to do it as well. This was a very meaningful image for this group as a key, unspoken, tension was the amount of competitiveness members felt with each other at the same time as they needed to cooperate for the organization's good. "Back alley ball" became an important

> synthesizing image for this group that resolved the paradox of competitiveness and cooperation.[5]

By sharing such powerful images, a team may be able to envision a different way of functioning from its current pattern and create new values and beliefs that will enable it to plot a new course. The role of the team leader or consultant is to help the team identify images and metaphors that they can incorporate as they seek to improve team performance. The team members should ask and answer the following questions: (1) How can we as a team become like the high-performing teams that we've experienced in the past? and (2) How can I as a member of this team contribute to helping our team achieve its full potential? As the team and its members answer these questions, commitments are made to change the team in a positive direction. The team can use the images of team excellence to motivate the team to a higher level of performance.

The AI approach is often useful when team members tend to focus on the negative, continually bringing up negative images of the team and complaining about other team members. The positive approach of AI can give energy to an otherwise impotent and demoralized team. However, when using AI, the team should still be willing to confront important problems and not see the world completely through rose-colored glasses.

Using Feedback to Improve Team Performance

A major issue that often arises following the identification of problems is the sharing of feedback with individuals, subgroups within the team, or the team as a whole. Certain actions, functions, personal styles, or strategies on the part of one or more people may be hindering teamwork and preventing other team members from achieving their goals or feeling satisfied with the team. If this is the case, it may be legitimate to engage in an open feedback session.

Goals

The team should share feedback among individual team members in such a way as to help them improve their effectiveness and give feedback to the whole team with the same objective in mind. The goal of a feedback session is to share data about performance so that difficulties can be resolved. It is critical that a feedback session not slip into name calling, personal griping, or verbal punishing of others. All feedback should reflect a genuine willingness to work cooperatively. For example, one might say, "My performance suffers because of some things that happen in which you are involved. Let me share my feelings and reactions so you can see what is happening to me. I would like to come up with a way that we all can work more productively together."

Types of Feedback

Feedback is most helpful if it can be given in descriptive fashion or in the form of suggestions. Here are some examples.

Descriptive feedback: "John, when you promise me that you will have a report ready at a certain time, as happened last Thursday, and I don't get it, that really frustrates me. It puts me behind schedule and makes me feel very resentful toward you. Are you aware that such things are going on? Do you know what is causing the problem or have any ideas on how we could avoid this type of problem in the future?"

Suggestions: "John, let me make a suggestion that would really help me as we work together. If you could get your reports to me on time, particularly those that have been promised at a certain time, it would help my work schedule and reduce my frustration. Also, if I don't get a report on time, what would you prefer I do about it?"

Other possibilities: The following are some other ways group members might go about sharing feedback with one another:

- *Start-stop-continue activity.* Each person has a sheet of newsprint on the wall. Each team member writes on the sheets of other members' items in three areas: things that person should begin doing that will increase his or her effectiveness, things the individual should stop doing, and things he or she should continue to do. (More on this in chapter 7.)
- *Envelope exchange.* Each person writes a note to other team members with specific, individual feedback, covering the same issues as in the previous activity, and gives the notes to the other team members.
- *Confirmation-disconfirmation process.* Group members summarize how they view themselves and their own work performance—their strengths and areas that need improvement. Others are asked to confirm or disconfirm the person's diagnosis.
- *Management profile.* Each person presents the profile of his or her effectiveness from previously gathered data (there are a variety of profile instruments). The group confirms or disconfirms the profile.
- *Analysis of subunits.* If the team has subunits, each subunit is discussed in terms of what it does well, what it needs to change, and what it needs to improve.
- *Total unit or organizational analysis.* The entire department, division, or organization looks at how it has been functioning and critiques its own performance over the past year, identifying things it has done well and areas that need improvement. Group size is, of course, the main constraint with this option. Beckhard and Weisbord have developed approaches for working with large groups.[6]

- *Open feedback session.* Each person who would like feedback may ask for it in order to identify areas of personal effectiveness and areas that need improvement.
- *Prescription writing.* Each person writes a prescription for others: "Here is what I would prescribe that you do [or stop doing] in order to be more effective in your position." Prescriptions are then exchanged.

Action Planning

The end result of all the activities mentioned so far is to help the team identify conditions that are blocking both individual and team effectiveness so that the team can begin to develop plans for action and change. Action plans should include a commitment to carry the action to completion.

Goals

The goals of this phase are to pinpoint needed changes, set goals, develop plans, give assignments, outline procedures, and set dates for completion and review. Often the plan is a set of agreements on who is willing to take a specific action. All such agreements should be written down, circulated, and followed up later to ensure that they have been carried out.

Options for Action Planning

Following is a set of actions that are possible during this phase:

1. *Personal improvement plan.* Each person evaluates his or her feedback and develops a plan of action for personal improvement. This plan is presented to the others.
2. *Contract negotiations.* If there are particular problems between individuals or subunits, specific agreements for dealing with conflict issues are drawn up and signed.[7]

3. *Assignment summary.* Each person summarizes what his or her assignments are and the actions he or she intends to take as a follow-up of the team-building session.
4. *Subunit or team plans.* If development plans have been completed, they are presented and reviewed.
5. *Schedule review.* The team looks at its time schedule and its action plans. Dates for completion and dates for giving progress reports on work being done are confirmed. The next team meeting is scheduled. If another team development workshop or meeting is needed, it may be scheduled at this time.

Implementation, Evaluation, and Follow-up

Follow-up is an integral part of any team-building program. There must be some method of following up with team members on assignments or agreements and then some form of continuing goal setting for improved performance. These follow-up activities can be done by the whole team together, one-on-one between team members, or a combination of the two. Fortunately, some excellent research has been done that describes follow-up processes that have proved to be successful.

Wayne Boss of the University of Colorado became interested in the "regression effect" following a team-building session.[8] He observed, as have others, that during a two- or three-day intensive team-building activity, people become very enthusiastic about making improvements, but within a few weeks, the spark dwindles, and they regress to old behaviors and performance levels. Boss wondered whether there is a way to keep performance high following the team-building session and to prevent regression. He began to experiment with a one-on-one follow-up meeting he called the personal management interview (PMI). The PMI has two stages. First is a role negotiation meeting between team leader and subordinate (usually lasting one hour) during which both clarify their expectations of each other, what they need from each other, and what they will contract to do for each other.

Second, following the initial role negotiation session, the two parties meet regularly. Boss found that these meetings have to be held on a regular basis (weekly, biweekly, or monthly), but if they are held and follow the agreed-on agenda, performance stays high without regression for several years. States Boss, "Without exception, the off-site level of group effectiveness was maintained only in those teams that employed the PMI, while the teams that did not use the PMI evidenced substantial regression in the months after their team-building session."[9]

What goes on in these interviews that makes such a difference? Despite some variation, each interview tended to deal with the following issues:

- Discussion of any organizational or work problems facing the subordinate
- Training or coaching given by the supervisor to the subordinate
- Resolution of any concerns or problems between supervisor and subordinate
- Information sharing to bring the subordinate up to date on what is happening in the team and organization
- Discussion of any personal problems or concerns

These were common agenda items, but the first part of every meeting was spent reviewing assignments and accomplishments since the previous session. Time was also spent on making new assignments and agreeing on goals and plans to review at the next PMI. These assignments and agreements were written down, and both parties had a copy that was the basis of the review at the following meeting.

Boss has the following suggestions for conducting an effective PMI:

- The PMI is most effective when conducted in a climate of high support and trust. Establishing this climate is primarily the responsibility of the superior.

- The interviews must be held on a regular basis and be free from interruptions.
- Both parties must prepare for the meeting by having an agreed-on agenda; otherwise, the PMI becomes nothing more than a rap session.
- When possible, a third party whom both the supervisor and the subordinate trust should be present to take notes and record action items.
- Meetings should be documented by use of a standard form to make sure the key issues are addressed in a systematic way. Both parties agree on the form.
- The leader must be willing to hold subordinates accountable and ask the difficult "why" questions when assignments are not completed.

Boss has found that performance drops off if these meetings are not held but increase if meetings are started, even if they have never been held before or had been stopped for a time. Boss has tracked the use of PMIs in 202 teams across time periods ranging from three months to twenty-nine years.[10] His research indicates that regular PMIs can significantly decrease, and even prevent, regression to previous levels of team performance for as long as twenty-nine years with no additional interventions after the original team-building sessions. Certainly the evidence is compelling enough to indicate that this is an effective way to follow up on decisions made during a team-building session.

Boss's research does not discuss any further team sessions. Some units that have used the PMI have also reported having regular team meetings to deal with issues common to all, as well as additional team development sessions every three to six months. These later sessions identify any current problems or concerns and establish new goals for change and plans for improvement. And as we noted in chapter 3, Bain & Company has been successful by critiquing team performance monthly.

In the past, many teams have followed up a team-building session with additional team meetings to review progress. The advantage of the PMI is that it allows time to talk with each person on individually. If this were done in the presence of the whole team, it could be both inhibiting and extremely time-consuming.

Follow-up Team Sessions

We have known for many years, since the early research of Rensis Likert, that follow-up team sessions can also help to sustain high performance.[11] In his research on sales teams in sales offices from a national sales organization, Likert described the elements of follow-up team meetings that make a significant difference in the performance of members on the team. The top twenty sales units were compared with the bottom twenty to see what made the difference in their performance. Likert found the following to be the most important factors:

- The team leader (the sales manager) had high personal performance goals and a plan for achieving those goals. Team members saw an example of high performance as they watched the team leader.
- The team leader displayed highly supportive behavior toward team members and encouraged them to support one another.
- The team leader used participative methods in supervision. That is, all team members were involved in helping the team and the members achieve their goals.

The major process for achieving high performance was holding regular, well-planned meetings of the sales team for review of each person's performance. In contrast to Boss's PMI, a one-on-one follow-up, the units in the Likert research used team meetings as the follow-up process. Those team meetings had the following major features:

- The team met regularly every two weeks or every month.
- The size of the team varied but was usually between twelve and fifteen members. (Note that this is larger than the ideal team size discussed in chapter 3.)
- The sales manager presided over the meeting but allowed wide participation in the group. The main function of the manager was to keep the team focused on the task; push the team to set high performance goals; and discourage negative, nonsupportive, ego-deflating actions of team members.
- Each salesperson presented a report of his or her activities during the previous period, including a description of the approach used, closings attempted, sales achieved, and volume and quality of total sales.
- All of the other team members analyzed the person's efforts and offered suggestions for improvement. Coaching was given by team members to one another.
- Each salesperson announced his or her goals and procedures to be used, which would be reviewed at the next team meeting.

The researchers concluded that this form of team meeting results in four benefits:

1. Team members set higher goals.
2. They are more motivated to achieve their goals.
3. They receive more assistance, coaching, and help from their boss and peers.
4. The team gets more new ideas on how to improve performance as people share, not keep secret, their successful new methods.

It seems possible, then, to have either one-on-one follow-up meetings or a series of follow-up team meetings as a way of maintaining the high performance of team members. The key issue is that team building requires a continuous effort to monitor the team's ability to improve team performance. The key person is the team leader, who must build a follow-up procedure into the process.

The two most common follow-up methods are one-on-one interviews and follow-up team meetings. However, other follow-up procedures are available, depending on the nature of the team's problems and plans. For example, a follow-up data-gathering process can use a survey or questionnaire to see if the unit members feel the activities of the team have improved. Another approach is to have an outsider interview members to check on what has improved and what actions are still needed. Alternatively, an outside observer could be invited to watch the team in action and give a process review at the end of the meeting.

If a team has poor interaction at meetings, it is possible to follow up with a procedure to get reactions of people after each meeting or after some meetings. The team leaders could use a short paper-and-pencil survey or ask for a critique of the meeting verbally, posing questions such as the following:

- How satisfied were you with the team meeting today?
- Are there any actions we keep doing that restrict our effectiveness?
- What do we need to stop doing, start doing, or continue doing that would improve our team performance?
- Do we really function as a team, or are there indications that teamwork is lacking?
- Are we achieving our goals and using each person's resources effectively?

If your team discusses these questions, be sure to allot sufficient time for an adequate critique. If you use a written form, summarize the results and begin the next team meeting by reviewing the summary and discussing what should be done in the current meeting to make the team more effective.

In Summary

In this chapter we have described the basic elements of a team-building program:

- The purposes of the team-building program are described and any concerns or fears of team members are addressed. If a consultant is used, his or her role should be explained to the team.
- Data regarding the performance of the team are generated by examining archival data, observing the team as it performs a particular task, interviewing team members, or surveying members of the team. A variety of alternatives are available to generate such data.
- The team engages in a problem-solving process to come up with solutions to the problems that have been identified. An appreciative inquiry approach is an alternative to the traditional problem-solving model.
- The team develops and implements the action plans. Commitments generally are written down and assignments clearly communicated to team members.
- To ensure that changes in the team persist over time, team leaders should engage in regular personal management interviews with members of their team or conduct regular team meetings to review commitments made in the team-building sessions and to make changes as needed.

The next chapters explore some specific problems found in teams and some new team dynamics that often require the use of team building. We will outline some specific strategies for overcoming these problems to help a team be more effective.