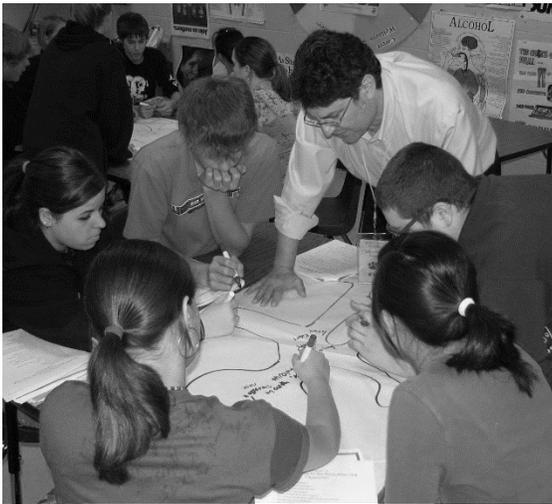


# Lesson – Effective Teamwork in the Workplace



## Lesson Overview

*In this lesson, participants will learn about the importance of teamwork on the job. Students will identify the skills needed to be an effective team member as well as the criteria of a highly effective team.*

## Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Understand the benefits of effective teamwork for the individual and the employer
- Identify characteristics of effective teams
- Successfully practice working as a member of a team as well as a leader of a team
- Identify teamwork skills that they need to strengthen

## Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are the benefits of effective teamwork?</i> handout (one per student)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Print/photocopy the <i>What are the benefits of effective teamwork?</i> – one per student</li> </ol>	15 – 20 minutes
LEARN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Index cards</li> <li>• <i>Characteristics of an Effective Workplace Team</i> handout – (one per student)</li> <li>• <i>Team Leadership Scenarios</i> handout (one per group)</li> <li>• <i>Teamwork Survival Scenario</i> handout (one per student)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Print/photocopy the <i>Characteristics of an Effective Workplace Team</i> – one per student</li> <li>2. Print/photocopy the <i>Team Leadership Scenarios</i> handout (one per team) and cut them apart.</li> <li>3. Print/photocopy the <i>Teamwork Survival Scenario</i> handout (one per student)</li> </ol>	Part 1 – 20 minutes Part 2 – 60-90 minutes Part 3 – 60 minutes
REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Apollo 13</i> movie clip – <i>Fitting a Square Peg in a Round Hole</i></li> <li>• <i>Apollo 13</i> movie clip – <i>Duct Tape and Cardboard</i></li> <li>• <i>Teamwork Skills Self Inventory</i> handout (one per student)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have movie clips ready to play on the computer</li> <li>2. Print/photocopy the <i>Teamwork Skills Self Inventory</i> handout (one per student)</li> </ol>	20 minutes

# Lesson – Effective Teamwork in the Workplace

## FOCUS: Benefits of Teamwork

15 - 20 minutes

### Purpose:

A team is defined as a group of people working together to reach a common goal. There are many benefits for team members and for employers. This activity will help students identify the benefits of effects teamwork for all parties involved.

### Materials:

- *What are the benefits of effective teamwork?* handout

### Facilitation Steps:

1. Begin by introducing the definition of a team to the class. A team is a group of people working together to reach a common goal. We will be focusing on teamwork in the workplace setting.
2. Give students the *What are the benefits of effective teamwork?* handout. Give them five minutes to identify as many benefits as they can by writing them in the spaces provided.
3. Call the class back together and have students share benefits that they have identified. Write this list on a white board. Some potential benefits could be:
  - Increased performance in work production
  - A bond or sense of camaraderie
  - Job satisfaction
  - Increased creativity

- Easier to communicate faster
- Mentorship or learning from one another

Here are the three most common types of work teams:

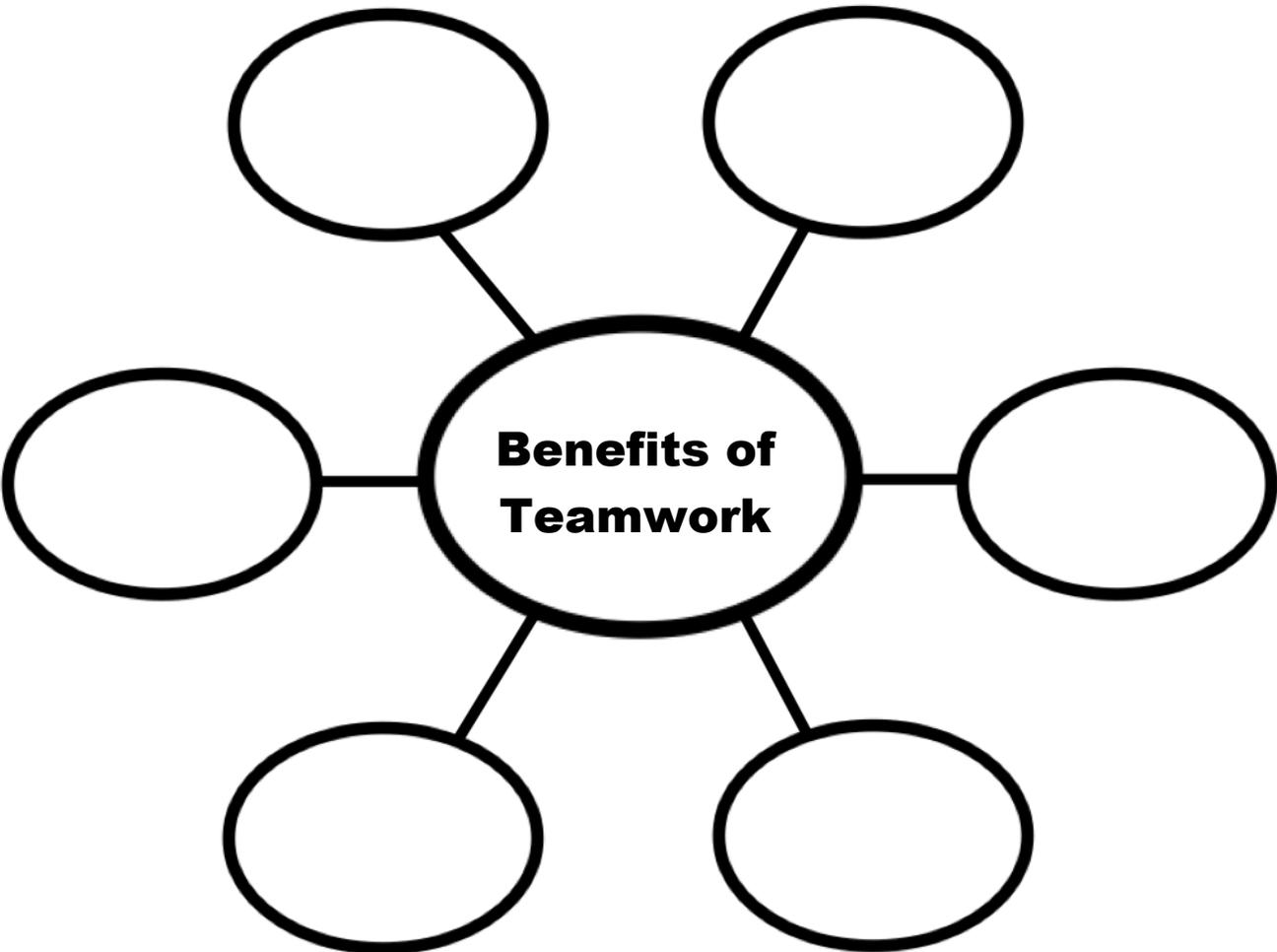
- **Project team:** A *project team* is a group of people brought together to accomplish a particular project. (Sometimes project teams are referred to as *steering committees* or *task forces*.) Typically, when the project ends, the team ends.
- **Cross-functional team:** A cross-functional team is made up of employees from different departments or areas of the business.
- **Self-directed work team:** Like a project team, a *self-directed work team* is a team that determines how it will get a job done and has the authority, and often the budget, to carry out decisions.

A team can also be managed by assigning a leader. A leader guides, directs and influences team members. An effective leader will give clear direction to a team. To be an effective team you should set clear goals, assign roles and communicate regularly with team members.



# What are the benefits of effective teamwork?

Think about the benefits that good teamwork has for the employer and employees in the workplace. Write them in the spaces provided. Add circles if you need additional space.



## Lesson – Effective Teamwork in the Workplace

### LEARN: Active Practice

**140-170 minutes**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is to have participants actively practice being an effective team member in a series of different activities. To develop effective teamwork skills, students need practice just like any other skill.

**Materials:**

- Index cards
- *Characteristics of an Effective Workplace Team* handout
- *Team Leadership Scenarios* handout
- *Team Survival Scenario* handout

**Facilitation Steps:**

**Activity 1 – Individual vs. Team Solutions (20 minutes)**

1. Give each student three blank index cards. Place a few on a table in the classroom in case students come up with more than three ideas. Explain to the class that this is going to be a brainstorming session where they will have to identify solutions individually.
2. Tell students that there are no wrong or right answers in this activity. You are going to read a scenario to them and they are going to have five minutes to write down as many solutions to the problem as possible. They should write each solution on a separate index card. If they identify more than three solutions, invite them to get additional cards.
3. Read the following scenario to the class:

*You work in a restaurant that also caters special events. A customer calls the morning of an anniversary party that the restaurant has agreed to cater that evening, to make sure everything is all set. You find that the order was taken by an employee who is no longer employed there and she didn't let anyone else know about this event. What options does the restaurant and catering staff have to solve this problem?*
4. Once the five minutes is up, pick up all of the index cards and shuffle them. Read through them and as a class choose the top five by show of hands.
5. Distribute the *Characteristics of an Effective Workplace Team* handout. Review each of the eight characteristics of an effective team.
6. Tell students to think back to the problem scenario they just worked with. How would this activity have been easier if they had worked in teams to identify solutions?

# Characteristics of Effective Teams

Think about the characteristics that teams should have in order to be effective. Here are eight to consider. What other characteristics would you add to this list?

**1** The team must have a clear goal.

**2** The team must have competent, knowledgeable team members.

**3** The team must be collaborative, with all members being honest, open and respectful of other members.

**4** The team must have a unified focus and commitment.

**5** The team should have a results-drive structure.

**6** The team must have high expectations that are understood by everyone.

**7** The team should receive support and encouragement from external sources.

**8** The team must have an effective leader who works for the good of the team.

## Activity 2 – Effective Team Leadership (60-90 minutes)

1. Review number eight from *Characteristics of an Effective Workplace Team* handout which was: “The team must have an effective leader who works for the good of the team.”
2. What does “effective” mean? What attributes or qualities make an effective team leader? Get suggestions from the class and write them down on a white board.
3. Tell students that there are many different lists that identify the qualities of an effective team leader. Here are ten to consider.
  - Clear communicator
  - Strong organizational skills
  - Confident in his or her abilities
  - Respectful of team members
  - Treats team members fairly
  - Has integrity
  - Influential to team members
  - Shares leadership through delegation
  - A strong facilitator
  - Uses negotiation skills to achieve results
4. Tell students that in this activity they will each have the opportunity to lead a small group through an activity. Divide the class into groups of four students. If there are additional students left, add one to each group but no more than five per group.
5. Each group will participate in four or five leadership scenarios. Each student will lead one activity/discussion. Give each student a sealed envelope. Inside of the envelope is the scenario that the student has been assigned to lead. Assign one person to be the observer who takes notes and gives feedback to the group. The remaining team members will work with the leader on the activity/discussion.
6. Each leader will have seven minutes to present their scenario and have the team solve the problem. The observer will be given three minutes to give feedback on what they saw. Each leadership task will take ten minutes.
7. Get the class back together again and ask students to answer the following questions as a reflection exercise:
  - What kind of a leader were you? What characteristics of an effective leader do you possess? What leadership qualities would you like to improve upon?

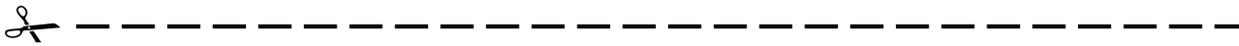
# Team Leadership Scenarios

Note to the instructor: Photocopy this sheet, one for each group, and give one scenario to each student.

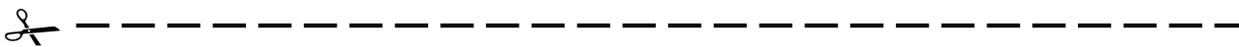
**Scenario A:** Your team is lost in the wilderness on a camping trip. The leader must ensure that the group is safe for the night and have a plan to get them back to their base camp in the morning. Discuss with your team about what needs to be done to make this happen. The team members are experienced campers and have tents and food along.



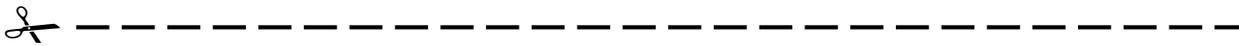
**Scenario B:** The company you work for has a great idea for a new cell phone that has five times the battery life of the closest competitor. The leader needs the team to come up with a name for the product that fits with the company logo of “We Connect the World.”



**Scenario C:** You work in the marketing department for a clothing company. You were recently approached by a customer who would like a special t-shirt designed for a fundraiser they are hosting. The fundraiser is to raise money for a local food pantry. The name of the food pantry is “Everyone’s Kitchen.” Your team must design the t-shirt for this fundraiser.



**Scenario D:** You are the director of a childcare center. Recently a three year old at your center found a way to leave the center during recess time and was found wandering two blocks away. You and your team of childcare teachers need to come up with a solution to ensure that this doesn’t happen ever again.



**Scenario E:** You are the captain of the local high school track team. Your coach tells you about several teammates who have behaved like poor sports after losing a race recently. As captain, you need to work with your track team to put together a policy on sportsmanship including some basic behavioral guidelines and consequences.

### Activity 3 – Teamwork Survival Exercise (60 minutes)

1. Introduce the activity to the class. Explain that today they will be working in small teams making decisions on a survival scenario. They will read the scenario together as a group. The goal is to choose the 12 most useful items to survive. First they will make their own individual list. Then they will create a team list based upon the contents of all individual lists. Finally they will discuss the choices, make rankings and then come to a group consensus.
2. Give each student the *Teamwork Survival Scenario* handout. They should read through it and write down all of the items they would want to have in order to survive.
3. Divide the class into small teams of four or five students. The teams should begin by sharing each of their individual lists and then compiling one master list that they will use for their discussion and rankings.
4. During the discussion with their team, remind them that they will need to come to a consensus. This will require some give and take in order to move forward towards a solution. Try not to vote or average. Try to reason and come together avoiding conflicts. Tell students they will have 30 minutes to come up with their master list of the top 12 items they will need to survive the scenario. They should also rank their final list in order of importance with one being most important to 12 being the least.
5. Some of the items on the list could include flares, spear, fishing pole, tent, matches, lighter, antibiotics, bucket, rope, ham radio, sunscreen, solar powered generator etc.
6. Have each team present their top 12 list.
7. Debrief by asking the class the following questions:
  - Did team members listen to each other?
  - How did you reach your final decision?
  - How could the decision-making process have been easier or more effective? What could you have done differently as a team?
  - How was conflict or differences of opinion managed?
  - How did everyone feel about the final list? Did anyone feel that they weren't listened to? Did anyone feel like they just 'gave in'?
  - Did someone assume the role as the leader of the team?
  - What situations at home/work/school do you think are similar to this activity?



# Team Survival Scenario



Read through the following scenario:

Your work team was given a trip as a reward for exceeding your sales goals last year. You all boarded the S.S. Super Clipper for a relaxing luxury week long cruise in the Pacific Ocean. You encountered a bad storm and the clipper ship limped to shore and partially sank. Only the top is still visible off the north tip of the island. You are all now stranded on an uninhabited island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The storm basically ruined most things on board, leaving very few useful items.

Your task is choose the 12 most useful items to help you survive on this deserted island. First, write a list of 12 items on the back of this sheet of paper that you would individually like to have on hand to survive on the island.

Next, work with your team to create a master list of items to choose from. Your next task is to work together with your team to come up with a list of the 12 most important items you feel would help the group survive on this island for the next 6-12 months. Rate the final list of 12 with 1 being the most important item through 12 being the least important item on your list.

For example, one item you may wish to have on hand is matches or a lighter.

# Lesson – Effective Communication Skills

## Review: Self Inventory of Teamwork Skills

20 minutes

### Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to have participants take an inventory of their teamwork skills. They will identify their strengths and also plan how they can improve skills that they think may need to be strengthened.

### Materials:

- *Apollo 13 Movie Clip – Fitting a Square Peg in a Round Hole* 1:34
- *Apollo 13 Movie Clip – Duct Tape and Cardboard* 3:01
- *Teamwork Skills Self Inventory* handout (one per student)

### Facilitation Steps:

1. Show the movie clip from Apollo 13 (1995) where the NASA Team has to fix the broken ventilation system on the space shuttle. It is a life or death task as the CO2 levels are reaching dangerous levels on the shuttle. Team members are tasked with figuring out how to fit a 'square peg in a round hole' using only the items found aboard the shuttle. The clip can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2YZnTL596Q>

Or you can do an internet search for Apollo 13 movie clip square peg round hole.

2. Think back to the list of *Characteristics of Effective Teams* handout and lesson. What characteristics did this team have from this list?

- The team must have a clear goal.
- The team must have competent, knowledgeable team members.
- The team must be collaborative with all members being honest, open and respectful of all team members.
- The team must have a unified focus.
- The team should have a results-drive structure.
- The team must have high expectations that are understood by everyone.
- The team should receive support and encouragement from external sources.
- The team must have an effective leader who works for the good of the team.

3. Show the movie clip from Apollo 13 that shows the solution that the team came up with. The clip can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zm5nUEG5Bjo>

Or you can do an Internet search for Apollo 13 movie slip duct tape and cardboard.

Were they able to solve the problem?

4. Give each student the *Teamwork Skills Self Inventory* handout. They should complete it honestly and return it to you with the final question answered on how they can improve teamwork skills.

# Teamwork Skills Self Inventory

Skills are learned behaviors and abilities. There are many different types of skills that are relevant to career development. Effective teamwork skills are very important. What do you think makes a good team member? Do you have the teamwork skills it takes to be a good team member? Take this self-inventory rating your strengths and areas you'd like to improve upon. Check the box that matches how you rate each skill.

Skill	Strong	Average	Needs Improvement
Willing to Listen – you listen to and respect various points of view			
Self-Motivated – you are responsible and dedicated to completing the task at hand			
Honest – you are fair and willing to share openly with others			
Reliable and Trustworthy – you can be counted on			
Effective Communicator – you clearly express your thoughts and ideas			
Organized – you are prepared and ready to participate and contribute			
Cooperative – you enjoy working with other team members to reach a common goal			
Flexible – you embrace change and aren't afraid to try new things			
Problem Solver – you can identify the issue and find a solution			

**What are ways you can strengthen the skills in the 'needs improvement' column?**

