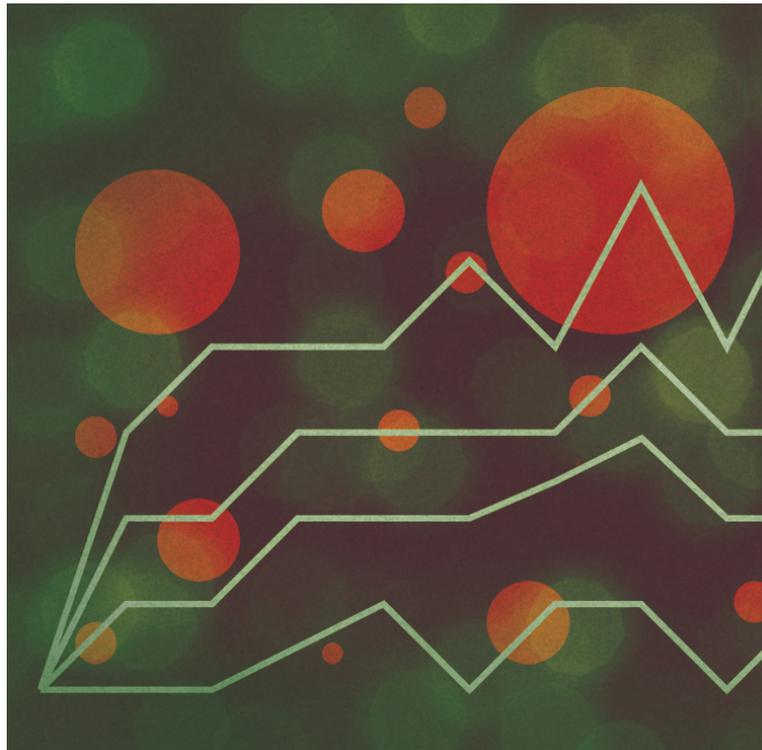




Nova Consulting Inc.

Team Development Answers

—*How to Develop Your Area: Team Development and Team Building*



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Introduction

Team development and team building are more than just “nice ways to get along.” They’re the foundational elements of realizing your area’s vision and mission. As such, the most crucial decisions about team development start with aligning your team structure, including membership and roles, with your mission or charter in ways to carry out the strategies. This document tells you how to go about that process because in doing so, especially as you plan or restructure teams, involving your people in your plans begin the teambuilding effort.

The more you involve people in the foundational work for your area’s mission, the more value and meaning their contributions have—and the more committed they are around a unifying common cause. As that work unfolds, it’s up to you to transition it for the future so that you’re developing your people to contribute at their maximal capacity and stretching them into new areas so that they—and all the layers in your organization—can advance. Nothing unifies people’s efforts better than integrating their talents and personal ambitions in a worthwhile effort.

This document contains two sections to help you make the most of Nova’s Training Programs for your specific situation:

Strategies and recommendations that provide a range of immediate answers for your situation. These are the building blocks of new behaviors to improve your performance.

A series of work sheets designed to help you engage actively with the strategies and recommendations to begin making the change you want and learning from your progress to refine your new behaviors.

END OF SECTION

Team Development and Team Building

CONSIDER YOUR AREA'S NEEDS AND IDEAL WHEN CREATING TEAMS

One of the first tasks you need to do is to determine what your organization's needs are in view of its mission and how well it's functioning as a whole. Look at how the teams are organized, the tasks, strategic objectives, and deliverables they have been charged with, and how well aligned they are. Consider the larger context of the whole group: how well is each team's structure and charge aligned with the overall vision and mission? Abandon all assumptions and current "realities" to consider how your "ideal" area would be organized, how it would operate, and what it would do. Use this idea, not as a daydream, but as a blueprint from which to start working.

USE THE IDEAL AND YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO DESIGN

Use your needs assessment and your ideal vision of your organization to design team structures that will best suit your needs now and in the future. You may need to envision a series of steps that will slowly bring your organization into better alignment with its current needs but that can be changed in a phased way to meet needs anticipated in the future.

DETERMINE WHO YOUR TOP TEAM IS AND WHAT OTHER TEAMS YOU MIGHT NEED

Whether you determine to restructure or not, review your "top team" for advisory and strategic purposes. What interests do they represent: political, project, function, specialty, or something else? Who should be on your "executive team," and why? What should they be doing? Do you also need to convene other teams, such as cross-functional operations teams to address infrastructure issues or disseminate valuable learning across all groups? Determine which teams you need to establish and why, and create a regular meeting schedule with them to consolidate your organization development and leadership.

DISCUSS YOUR PERSONNEL NEEDS WITH YOUR TOP TEAM

You don't have to do it all yourself. As part of working on strategic planning with your top team, discuss their views of the organization's personnel needs and present your own. Their input can be a valuable source of information. Working with them to identify the needs will give everyone a greater

appreciation of why changes are going to be made and will help ensure you are making the best decisions with the most buy-in.

WORK WITH YOUR TEAM TO CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN TO ANNOUNCE CHANGES

As you make organization changes—or choose not to—plan a way to communicate those to the entire organization to allay anxiety, provide a rationale, and demonstrate your leadership to the whole organization. Work with your team to determine the best way to announce your plans for the organization, including how you will share your vision and mission. A meeting of your entire area is recommended as a way to address questions and generate the greatest confidence in your plans.

CONSOLIDATE AND REGULARIZE COMMUNICATING STRUCTURES

One of the keys to unifying your area, strengthening the sense of your presence, and disseminating knowledge and information is institutionalizing the major mechanisms for communication. Consider which groups (functional, cross-functional, executive, etc.) should meet regularly, for what purpose, and who should be involved. In addition, reflect carefully on the value of your presence in these more formal

settings along with your casual drop-ins on people. Without burdening your organization or yourself with meetings, you will want to maintain an appropriate “leadership” presence that formally conveys important information and oversees certain activities. Learn to see your presence as a strategic asset to be deployed thoughtfully and effectively as a means of organization development.

INVOLVE YOUR TEAM IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

What unifies a team is having a common purpose. Once you’re clear on your team’s mission, involve people in the strategic planning process to bring it about. Teams are the best way to accomplish complex, integrated tasks, and successful teambuilding starts with creating a vision and mission of the work people can buy into and contribute to with their individual talents. Research has consistently shown that a diversity of ideas produces the best outcomes, so use your team as a think-tank to develop a strategic plan that will result in different roles and goals for everyone’s contribution. Involving people in the highest levels of planning for the work also stretches them and provides a meaningful framework for the importance of their contributions.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO BUILD ON YOUR IDEAS

Everyone has ideas about projects, and it's been proven that groups come up with better solutions than individuals. Develop team member talents and your ideas by giving everyone a chance to contribute. Take your ideas to your team. Ask for their input, ideas, and criticism about advantages and disadvantages. Listen attentively and respectfully to what each person has to say. They'll be glad to be consulted, and you'll come up with a much better set of ideas and solutions.

TREAT PEOPLE EQUALLY

It's natural to be attracted to some people more than others, and in the normal course of work, some people contribute more than others. No matter what your personal feelings or the level of contribution, make your behavior egalitarian, especially in public forums. Show the same degree of respect, acknowledgement, and attention to everyone, and give everyone equal airtime. As the leader, it is incumbent on you to level the playing field. Monitor how you respond to people to see how many more times you agree with, give positive body language to, or interrupt various individuals. Strive to interact with people more equitably, regardless of their position or your personal feelings about them. Make your responses to people performance-based for the strategic

objectives. Judge the work on how well it meets objectives, not on how much there is or who submitted it.

SHOWCASE OTHERS' WISDOM

Create a decision-making process that allows you to take advantage of your team's collective experience, especially one that will show when your opinion is the lone voice of direction, difference, or control. Listen to what they have to say and be willing to be guided by their needs and interests. Contribute by asking questions to draw out their reasoning or check the rigor of the process. The process may take longer up front, but it will save iterations and frustration later and develop the talent entrusted to you.

DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE FOR EVERYONE'S BENEFIT

Your team represents a huge reservoir of talent. Consider each person's potential for developing into areas of greater responsibility. Look at content areas they need to know but especially at the qualities they possess that will enable them to use their skills and knowledge to greatest advantage, such as a competency for strategic thinking or for influencing others. Match these against the needs you have to move your area forward, and consider them in light of what these individuals need

to learn to succeed to higher levels of leadership. Create a development plan for each person to grow them into increased contribution and a more complete realization of their capacity.

ACCEPT YOUR ROLE AS A CATALYST FOR LEARNING

Leaders are not lords to be served by their team; they are mentors and energizers of talent, who can see the potential in others, ignite and encourage it, and then direct it in a collective endeavor toward a common goal. Your job is to develop your people so they can do it right or very close to right, the first time. Consider how you would need to develop your team if they had to work without you for a protracted period yet still get the job done. Make your development plans for them accordingly. Only when you create a self-sustaining team are you truly doing your job as a leader.

OFFLOAD AS MANY OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS POSSIBLE

Determine where you are truly the best resource for executive-level duties: are there really so many things that only you can do? Reserve those uniquely high-level responsibilities for yourself and reconfigure your other duties by delegating as many as possible to others, recognizing you may need to spend some time developing their capacity to take them on. You may also

need to express the expectation that people will follow your example and cascade more of their responsibilities down the organization. Letting go will not only give you more space for senior-level responsibilities, it will stretch your people in ways that will not only advance their capabilities but also build capacity in your area as a whole.

BECOME A CONSULTANT

Your team excels at what they do. Let them know you respect their abilities by asking how you can serve them better, and adopt more the role of consultant and guide rather than overseer and director. In their areas, they may have a better approach or idea than you do. Ask where they need help or how you can facilitate their work. It's likely to be more in removing barriers and working with the overarching issues than with the day-to-day decisions affecting their ideas and production. When you let them lead in the day-to-day work, you will reduce the burden on everyone, give them the autonomy they crave, and build a more experienced team.

LEAVE THE DOING TO THE TEAM

Your primary job is leading the team, making them successful, overseeing strategic integration, and developing the next generation of leaders. Give

strategies and objectives to your leaders. Guide creativity and talent by asking questions, making suggestions—but not doing the work yourself. The standard of your success as a group leader is how rapidly you develop the talent to your level of expertise.

COACH RATHER THAN INSTRUCT YOUR COLLEAGUES

You possess a vast treasure of knowledge your team is eager to absorb. Use team meetings to coach people about the business in general, your professional field, and marketplace drivers. Draw out their wisdom by asking questions that cause them to think for themselves rather than setting yourself up as “the expert.” Your goal is to teach people how to think through for themselves where to go, which resources to use, and how to orchestrate them for optimal results—not to give them the answers.

BECOME A MENTOR FOR YOUR LEADERS

Leadership maturity comes from assuming the role of a mentor and statesman, facilitating your team’s work. Make succession planning one of your goals. Study each of your leaders with an eye to learning how they manage their businesses. When you consult with them about their organizations, ask critical questions to learn how they make decisions and what the issues are rather than taking control of their

decisions. Advise on the principles of decision-making, but leave the choices to them. Use what you learn to help them develop rather than to give them the answers, and focus their attention on their development rather than on the content of the problem solving.

START SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR YOUR POSITION

Develop a profile of your primary responsibilities, interfaces, specialized skills and knowledge, and the personal qualities that are critical to your success. Identify the candidates who have the most potential based on your evaluation. You should cultivate at least three, even if you have to locate them from outside your present organization. Create development plans and timelines to bring them up to your level, including delegating as much to them as possible to free you for higher-level pursuits. You must be comfortable giving people assignments that you know are stretch goals and taking them into uncharted territory for their abilities. Expect that they will make mistakes as a natural part of learning.

DEPLOY YOUR PEOPLE STRATEGICALLY

Give people assignments that play to their strengths, especially in areas that complement yours. Consider each person as a collection of assets you can

allocate to various projects. Create strategies to bring the best array of talent to each assignment. Consult people about their preferences and the ways in which they want to grow, and to the extent possible, give them stretch assignments as well as ones that play to their strengths.

GIVE YOUR TEAM ROOM AND TIME TO GROW

People need regular feedback to guide their progress, especially when they are stretching into new areas. Tell them how they are doing, what you would like to see more of and less of in their performance. If they need to improve, give them enough time to demonstrate the desired new behaviors before making a decision. Accept that they will make mistakes because they are taking risks and doing new things, and remember that progress will be bumpy, not smooth or consistent.

TAKING RISKS MEANS MAKING MISTAKES

No type of work proceeds without false starts and dead ends. This is true of your job, and that of your team. Innovation and expedience are often more essential than making the right calls every time. Expect that some mistakes will inevitably occur in activities large and small, and that it is a sign of progress when they do. Encourage calculated risk taking. If you extract the maximum amount of learning from each situation that does not work out rather than placing blame, you will accelerate creativity in your group.

NEVER REJECT WORK OUTRIGHT WITHOUT PROVIDING GUIDANCE WORDED AS SUGGESTIONS

When people give you work, they are invested in what they have done. Recognize what is good about it out loud, even if most of it is unacceptable (“I can see you have put a lot of time into this.”), and always recognize what is good first. If you need more, or if you need something else, state your needs, and then frame them as a question, “Do you see a way we can take this into account? How can we address this issue?” Place the burden for implementation on them, but be sure not to leave them in the lurch or to mandate what they must do. People should go away feeling clear on your objectives, optimistic they can do what you ask, and able to be creative in meeting your needs.

PROMOTE YOUR STAFF’S VISIBILITY AND YOUR TRANSPARENCY

Encourage your direct reports to participate in the meetings you have with key internal or external client contacts and senior management. They can see what you are doing, and it gives them direct access to important people. By turning over key projects to others, you will be developing your people as well as providing welcome recognition for them.

**PUT THE TALENT FIRST, FRONT AND CENTER
WITH CLIENTS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

Leadership maturity comes from assuming the role of a mentor and statesman, promoting and facilitating your team's work rather than yourself. The best leaders are transparent: they capture attention for their projects and help their people get ahead. Any time you start an initiative on your own, are in a position to air a project in a public forum, or are ready to take over a project at a certain time, check yourself. Strategize how you can turn the principal roles, credit, and responsibilities over to others. Your role is to become a guide, facilitator, and motivator. Any time your people are recognized by senior management or the client it reflects credit to you as the leader.

**DETERMINE APPROPRIATE REWARD AND
PROMOTION STRATEGIES**

Your strategic objectives provide an indication of the progress and goals that warrant recognition and reward. Work to create appropriate targets and incentives, especially promotions. Work with HR to ensure you are clear on the criteria for each step in the career ladder and are assessing your people with an eye for their advancement, not just how well they're doing in their current jobs.

**LAVISH PRAISE AND RECOGNITION ON
OTHERS**

A good word from you means more to your people than you will ever know. Use them lavishly. Regularly catch people doing things right and recognize them for it. Make praise a habit, especially in public forums. Also give acknowledgment to those who recognize others. Remember that what gets recognized gets reinforced, and what gets reinforced gets repeated.

END OF SECTION

Creating a Plan For Improvement

INTRODUCTION

This section is designed to help you work actively with the information and recommendations provided by Nova, first reflectively, then by applying them on a day-to-day basis. Most people find that this practice enables them to identify more quickly critical transactions where they can apply their learning to improve their leadership abilities and performance rapidly.

When you make note of strengths you can develop as well as the interactions that leave you feeling dissatisfied, uncomfortable, or less than successful, you can create strategies to take advantages of opportunities coming your way and to anticipate potential challenges in ways that can resolve them successfully.

IDENTIFYING AND APPLYING MY STRENGTHS

When I think about my performance in relation to the strategies and recommendations, my strengths and best assets I can apply to my situation include the following:

Based on the information and recommendations, I can best leverage my strengths in this situation by applying them in the following ways to improve my performance:

IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

These are the three most critical areas where I can improve my performance. List the situations that you find challenging in each area and the qualities or behaviors you would like to develop to improve your performance:

IMPROVEMENT AREA 1

IMPROVEMENT AREA 2

IMPROVEMENT AREA 3

END OF SECTION

Assessing Your Plan For Improvement

CHALLENGE 1, A SUCCESS STORY

This section is for you to track your efforts to change in the coming months. Each time you encounter a situation that involves one of your key challenge areas, capture it in writing. It's best to include not only "success stories," but incidents that illustrate that success isn't always easy. You will learn more and gain greater insight from times when you fall short of your goals in the situation you described, and comparing success with times that weren't so successful is an optimal learning experience.

State the background briefly, the people involved, and what was said or done. Indicate what you intended to accomplish in the situation in contrast to the way it actually turned out. Then write down how you can better manage similar situations—including how you might anticipate them—in the future so you can begin to plan and monitor your progress.

CHALLENGE 2, A TIME WHEN THINGS DID NOT GO AS DESIRED

State the background briefly, the people involved, and what was said or done. Indicate what you intended to accomplish in the situation in contrast to the way it actually turned out. Then write down how you can better manage similar situations—including how you might anticipate them—in the future so can begin to plan and monitor your progress.

END OF SECTION

Conclusion

Congratulations! You've now got specific recommendations for new behaviors that can improve your performance, and a way to work those behaviors into your day-to-day activities and learn quickly from practicing those new behaviors. If you consistently act on the recommendations and strategies provided here, you can become an outstanding leader in your organization or wherever your career takes you.