

TEACH OTHERS

Habits and Practices of Effective Teams

Successful organizing requires that people work in teams. An effective team is critical to winning the campaign. Here are some good practices for helping your organizing team work together effectively.



BUILD TRUST

Sounds obvious, but it is not always easy to achieve. Here are some things that can build trust among the team:

- Allow informal time for building relationships;
- Create transparency about the assessment of the work;
- Make asking for constructive feedback and offering it part of the daily routine; and
- Formalize peer support: tap into others' expertise and step outside your own area to help others.

Shared Purpose

Winning teams agree on the mission, are clear about the goals and are committed to do what it takes to get there.

DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT

Teams that don't commit to the plan waste time, fear failure and second guess each other. Commitment gives teams clear direction and priorities. Do this:

- Debate, analyze, but then decide;
- Commit to clear, tangible and achievable goals; and
- Commit to individual roles and goals that contribute to team success.

CHALLENGE EACH OTHER

Fear of conflict can stop people from challenging each other. But teams that respectfully challenge each other are smarter, get things done and correct mistakes faster:

- Create a process to challenge ideas if people are complacent or interact in nonproductive ways;
- Set up the debate by putting the controversial topic on the table and recognizing both sides;
- Regularly ask all members of the team to weigh in; and
- Shared purpose is your touchstone to challenge the team to deal with tough issues.

MODEL MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Lack of accountability leads to mediocrity, failure and resentment. Build group accountability into the habits of the team:

- Chart work progress together;
- Solicit obstacles, but don't leave without plans to tackle them; and
- Have team members report on their work to each other, and not just to the lead.

Clear Roles

Individual team members will be more successful when they are clear about their role and how their day-to-day progress is critical to the overall mission.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

Effective teams are focused on results. How many people actually came to the rally and what difference did it make? Are we winning?

- Set goals that reflect outcomes;
- During debriefs, ask organizers to talk the outcome of a meeting, house call, etc. (not just who showed up and what took place); and
- Distinguish between inputs (stuff we do) and outputs (impact of stuff we do).