

High Performing Team Checklist

1. Ground Rules

- You have established expectations about team behavior and values.
- Ground rules are written down and you refer to them regularly.

2. Team Identity

- The team can describe its primary purpose and metrics for success.
- You actively foster personal relationships among team members.

3. Participation

- Team members actively contribute to tasks and discussions.
- Team members regularly practice active listening.

4. Meeting Management

- Meetings are prepared with appropriate agendas.
- Participation is managed in the meetings.
- Decisions and action items are recorded.

5. Problem Solving

- Before diving into a problem, the team establishes a structured process.
- Team decision techniques allow for focused discussion and balanced input.

6. Decisions

- The team is capable of making a consensus decision in a timely manner.
- The team uses multiple decision models (e.g., consensus, voting, delegation) as appropriate to the situation.

7. Conflict

- The team regularly encounters disagreements.
- Team members feel free to voice conflicting points of view, including when they disagree with the leader.
- Conflicts are resolved in a timely and direct fashion, with no damage to relationships and with the best possible outcome.

8. Continuous Learning

- You use techniques for team feedback.
- Your ground rules reinforce creativity and continuous improvement.

9. Leadership

- You consciously work to build the components of a high performance team.

How do I help establish constructive team norms?

Having clear norms of behavior can eliminate ambiguities and misunderstandings that can lead to interpersonal conflict. Helping the team establish its own ground rules ideally takes place during the team's first meeting. It can also be effective when done during a meeting called expressly for that purpose. Steps to follow in establishing norms include:

Set aside time at a team meeting to discuss ground rules. All team members should have a chance to provide input.

- Ask team members to discuss prior group experiences. What worked well? What created problems?
- Ask the group to describe what they would like to happen when they work together.
- Write down the ground rules to which the team has agreed. Each member should have a copy.
- Ground rules should be reviewed periodically.

It is especially important to develop a shared understanding of how team members will collaborate. The following questions are helpful prompts for reaching agreement about team norms:

- What are the standards for meeting attendance, promptness, and participation?
- What roles need to be filled (time keeper, note taker, facilitator) and how will they be assigned?
- How will the team gather data and feedback from team members and other stakeholders?
- How will team members share information?
- How will team members communicate with each other (voice mail, e-mail, etc.)?
- How will decisions be made (e.g., consensus vs. majority rule)?
- How will conflicts be resolved?