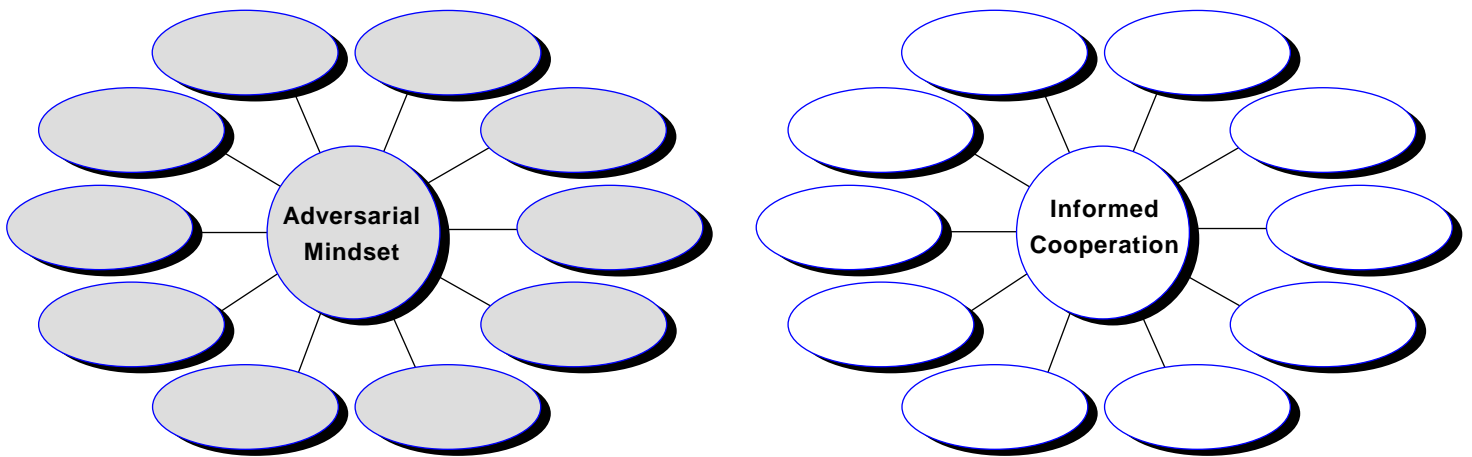


TEAMWORK: A DYNAMIC MODEL



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TEAMWORK: A DYNAMIC MODEL

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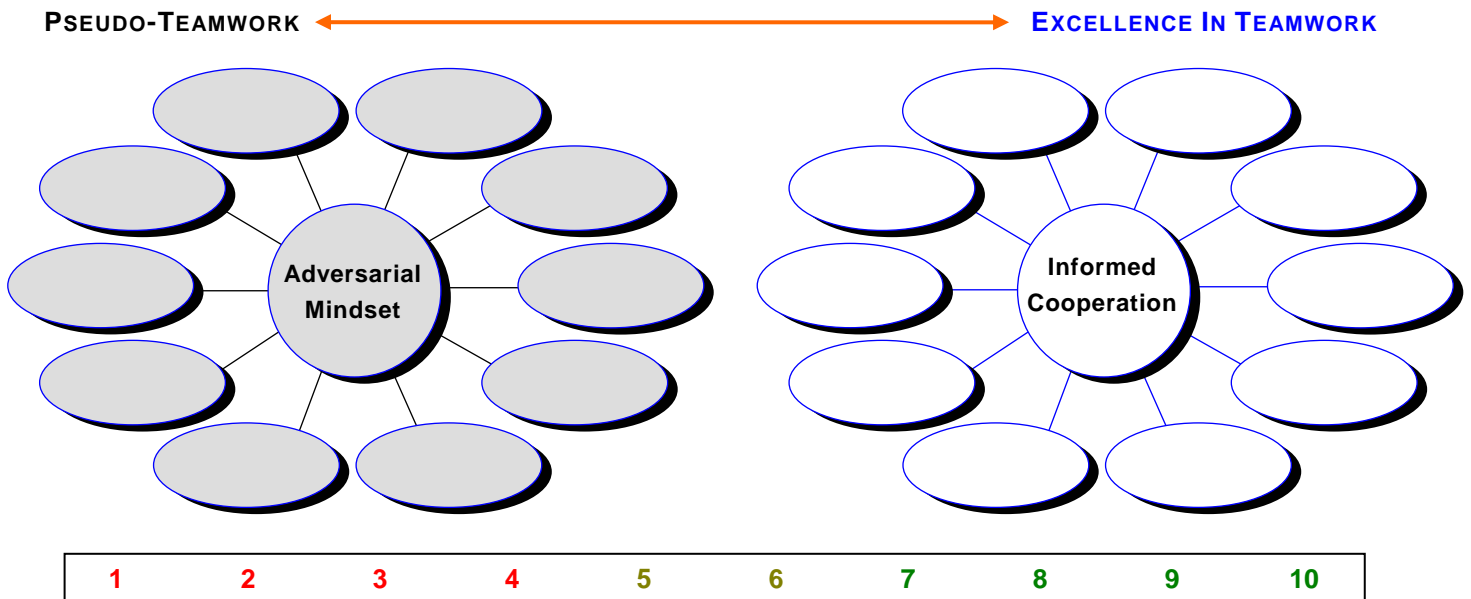
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TEAMWORK IS A DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTIC OF EVERY GROUP

It varies every day—even moment to moment—from Pseudo-Teamwork on one end of the continuum to Excellence in Teamwork on the other.



What is loosely called “teamwork” in most organizations is on the wrong end of the continuum. Most people come into organizations with a mixed history of team experiences. They have been participating in teams and observing teams all their lives, but they have never taken the time to sort through what works and what doesn’t work. Some are eager to join teams and others prefer to work alone.

Fortunately, everyone is capable of learning effective team skills. Because of the prevalence of Pseudo-teamwork, we think the best place to begin the learning process is with an acknowledgement of what doesn’t work. The explanation of Pseudo-teamwork that follows is purposefully as brief as possible to get across the concept. What we really want to focus and dwell on are the positive team skills on the excellent end of the continuum.



PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

ADVERSARIAL MINDSET

Each of the characteristics that typify pseudo-teamwork can be primary causes of the behavior and can contribute to sustaining it. We place an adversarial mindset in the center because it seems to be the one characteristic most common to poor teamwork, but certainly any of the remaining ones could be central in any given situation.

At the core of most pseudo-teamwork is an adversarial mindset—that is, a predisposition to compete—to take an opposing view—to make knee-jerk negative judgements of other’s ideas—to win *over* others. No one is born with an adversarial mindset, but we are socialized in an adversarial society—so much so that many people conclude (incorrectly) that it’s the normal way to behave.



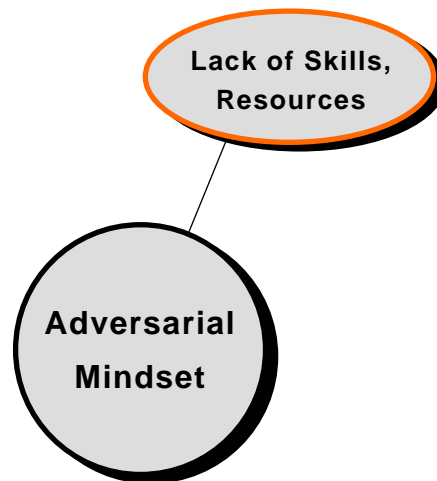


PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

LACK OF SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCES

In an ideal world, team members would be selected based on having skills and knowledge relevant to the team's task. In the real world, they are often assigned based on their availability almost without regard to their talents.

Likewise, you would think teams would always be provided the resources they need to be successful. But too often, teams must do the best they can with limited resources. It is unreasonable to expect teams to perform miracles when the deficits in human and other resources are too severe.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

AMBIGUOUS GOALS & ROLES

Common sense tells us that in order to work together well, we must have good clarity about *what* we're trying to do together and *who's* going to do what. Yet many teams are formed and continue to operate without this fundamental requirement. It's an almost guaranteed recipe for less than optimum results and even failure.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

SELF-CENTERED PLANNING

Mature human beings are natural planners. Being a responsible adult involves thinking ahead about what needs to be done and setting priorities about how we will use our time and resources. In the absence of clarity about how our work fits with others, we can't take adequate account of their needs and the planning we do will inevitably be seen as self-centered.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

SELF-SERVING COMMUNICATION

Communicating with others is a key means of establishing relationships and getting things done at work. Most of us prefer to avoid conflict so we tend to communicate more with those who share our view of the world and less with those who take different and opposing views. Not surprisingly, others see this style of communication as self-serving.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

WIN-LOSE CONFLICT

Since competition for scarce resources is common to all organizations, the stage is now set for win-lose conflict. The competitive mindset that pervades our adversarial culture assumes that there must be a winner and a loser in every competitive encounter. Men in particular have been conditioned to compete at the drop of a hat—and to win at any cost. Competing without insisting that there be a loser is a highly developed skill which is seldom seen in adversarial situations.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

POWER STRUGGLES

In the absence of shared goals and trusting relationships, many conflicts go unresolved and grabbing power is seen as the path to get your way and move up in the organization. Unfortunately, power has more negative connotations than positive ones for most people. This may be due to the fact that power is so often used to manipulate and coerce. The truth is, everyone has power and everyone likes to feel powerful—but not everyone is willing to engage in the endless power struggles common in this environment.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

SURVIVAL MENTALITY

A substantial number of people grow weary of the power struggles, give up hope of winning and adopt a survival strategy—lay low and don't make waves. Others become fearful that they will be hurt in the process of competing for power and they, too, choose to drop out of the struggle. This may seem to offer a degree of security, but it really doesn't. People who opt for this mode of operating are actually putting themselves and the team at risk by withholding their point of view.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

DOUBLE STANDARDS

People who win power often set policies and make decisions that favor themselves and their loyal supporters. Others correctly view these as double standards—particularly when they have no relationship to productivity—which is usually the case. In most organizations, it is taboo to even mention a double standard since to do so is, in essence, to be critical of the leader who created it or continues to enjoy it even though it was created by someone else.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

DISTRUST

The issue of who to trust absorbs a lot of valuable time on teams that are operating with an adversarial mindset. It's common for team members to withhold trust as a means of protecting themselves, but of course, there is no real way to protect yourself in this environment. Most people sense when others are withholding trust and this prompts them to withhold trust in response—thus perpetuating a cycle of distrust.





PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

PAROCHIAL POLITICS

Protecting our turf or building our fiefdom are common ways we refer to the tendency to build walls around our particular part of the organization without regard to how it impacts other parts. Hoarding information and resources in general are favorite strategies for turf builders.

Fear is a constant companion when teams are functioning in this way. Working daily with people who you consider to be adversaries saps energy as you monitor what you say in order to protect yourself. The net result is disappointing results. Two people working together under these conditions often produce less than they would if they were working independently.





EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

INFORMED COOPERATION

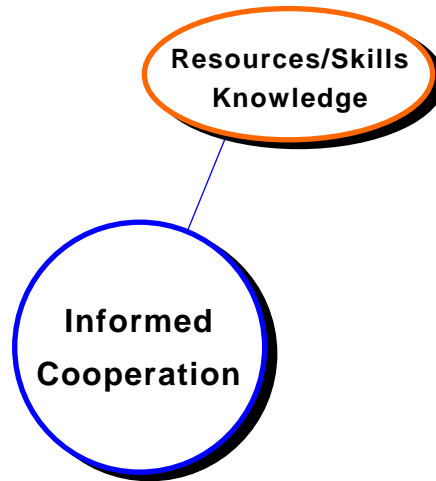


- Informed cooperation is the key to effective teamwork. It's characterized by a fundamental understanding that information is essential for success and that team goals supersede individual goals.
- Building and sustaining informed cooperation requires a lot more than an intention and a willingness to cooperate.
- It requires learning enough about other team members and their particular functions so that one knows on a continuing basis how to offer help effectively.
- It requires that team members not wait to be asked for help, but that they be proactive in looking for ways to support one another.
- It sometimes means throttling back your individual performance in order to make another team member and/or the entire team more effective.
- It always means evaluating individual performance in the light of contribution to team goals.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

RESOURCES, SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE



- When forming the team, take the time to choose people who have the necessary skills and knowledge base to be successful.
- Provide easy access to the technical, financial and other resources the team will need.
- Monitor team progress to assure that they make good use of the resources provided and to add new resources as needed.
- Allow team members the time to hone and update their skills and knowledge as needed.
- If it becomes clear that a team member is unwilling or unable to perform their role on the team, replace them with someone who can.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

CLEAR MISSION, GOALS & ROLES



- Information is crucial for cooperation. Knowing what the team is charged with doing, how it will do it, and who's responsible for what is the starting point for informed cooperation.
- The clarity we obtain today will not last long in a rapidly changing business environment. We must be willing to step outside our role as the situation demands. Knowing how goals and roles fit in the larger picture enables team members to behave effectively without having everything spelled out in such detail that role descriptions become restrictive.
- Knowing how goals and roles fit in the larger picture enables team members to behave effectively without having everything spelled out in such detail that role descriptions become restrictive.
- Believing that their jobs are important, knowing how they relate to the whole, and having a reasonable fit between their personal goals and the organizational goals energizes and motivates team members to cooperate.
- Team members need to know one another at a deeper level than the role each is playing. This tends to generate a genuine interest in each other's individual success, and in the final analysis, is essential for excellent cooperation.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

STRATEGIC PLANNING



- Mission, goal & role clarity enables, but doesn't guarantee, strategic planning. As complexity and task interdependence increase, so does the importance of this issue.
- Thinking strategically means thinking with end results in mind. It means sustaining an awareness of how one's job fits in the whole.
- Planning strategically means anticipating the needs of customers and suppliers in accomplishing your job.
- Acting strategically means stepping up to a problem and doing the right thing in the context of the overarching goals—even though the action might not be in your best personal interest.
- Complex tasks require that everyone think, plan, and act strategically—that everyone anticipate problems before they arise and that everyone use a systems mindset in solving problems.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

COMPLETE COMMUNICATION



- Accurate, timely information is the lifeblood of an effective organization. Since goals and roles need to change continually to meet changing conditions in the competitive environment, complete communication is essential for a team to sustain the clarity needed for effective cooperation.
- Complete communication doesn't mean telling everyone everything you know. That's a practical impossibility. It means voluntarily communicating everything you believe to be relevant for others to know and checking when you're not sure.
- Every person in the organization needs two kinds of information on a continuing basis: relevant input on the content of their work and timely feedback on the process of their work, i.e., on the impact of their performance on other team members and team outcomes.
- Complete communication is a lot more than simply passing information. It's a dialogue—a 2-way process in which both parties listen without judging and without taking everything personally.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

WIN-WIN CONFLICT



- When people strive for honest, complete communication, it's inevitable that there will be different perceptions and different preferences regarding decisions and courses of action. These differences or conflicts should be welcomed as a normal part of living and working together.
- When viewed and dealt with productively, conflicts need not cause problems in team relationships. On the contrary, they present opportunities to build relationships by attacking issues instead of each other.
- Good conflict resolution skills are an essential part of effective teamwork and can be learned by everyone. Learning to disagree without attacking the other person and without assuming there must be a winner and a loser in the dispute are central to achieving the potential benefit in conflict.
- Lively, productive conflict is energizing and can be a rich source of ideas and options when we don't fear personal attack or losing.
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EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

POWER SHARING



- Power has been viewed as a scarce resource to be hoarded, not shared. It has been equated with control. Changing this mindset is vital to effective teamwork and one of the most difficult things to accomplish.
- Everyone needs to feel powerful in the sense that they can make a difference—that they can make things happen.
- Feeling powerless is probably one of the most hopeless and discouraging feelings anyone can have.
- When power is shared, people are able to devote tremendous energy to the work at hand. When power is hoarded, people feel anxious about their own security and use their energy trying to figure out how to get power and how to be safe.
- Power sharing does not mean giving everyone an equal vote on every decision. It means giving people control over the relevant resources they need to do their jobs (including some flexibility in how they use their own time), giving them the information they need to be effective, giving them the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them, and giving them the opportunity to grow into jobs of greater responsibility.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

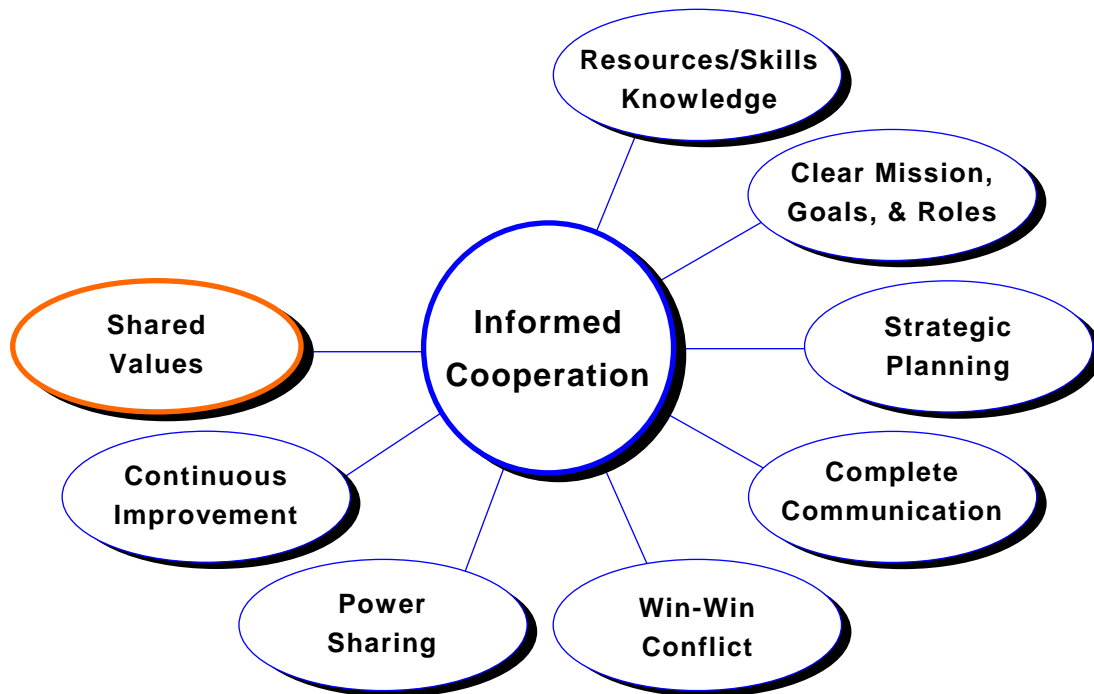


- Every human being is born with an insatiable curiosity and a compelling drive to learn. Unfortunately, our educational system and the socialization process combine to dampen and, in some cases, even destroy these powerful human drives. When fear is removed or at least significantly diminished, the natural tendency to learn and improve is unleashed.
- Effective teams are learning machines. Mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning—not occasions for punishment.
- Risk-taking is encouraged and rewarded. Risks are accepted as an essential part of the improvement process.
- Effective teams never become complacent. They are constantly examining their performance and searching for that next increment of improvement. Barriers and limits to performance are continually pushed back, since no one knows what's ultimately possible.
- The team's ability to see reality is constantly expanding, since everyone's view is respected and accepted.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

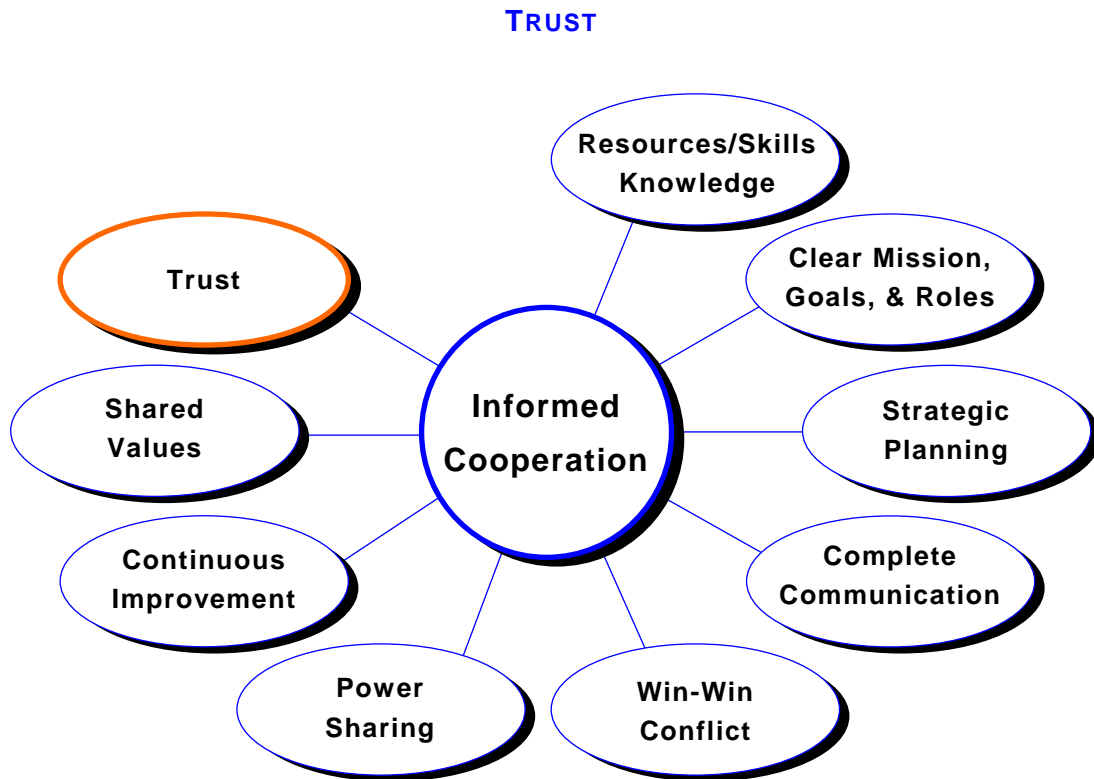
SHARED VALUES



- Every decision we make at work is value-based. People on effective teams share some core values which they believe to be related to their success.
- Team leaders make it their business to preserve the core values and teach them to new team members.
- Fairness and equality are two such values. Everyone deserves to be fairly rewarded for their contributions and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Quality is another. People derive pride and satisfaction from their involvement in producing quality products and services.
- Caring is the universal core value. People want to be involved in meaningful work, and when they are, they care deeply about what they're doing and the other people with whom they're working and serving.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

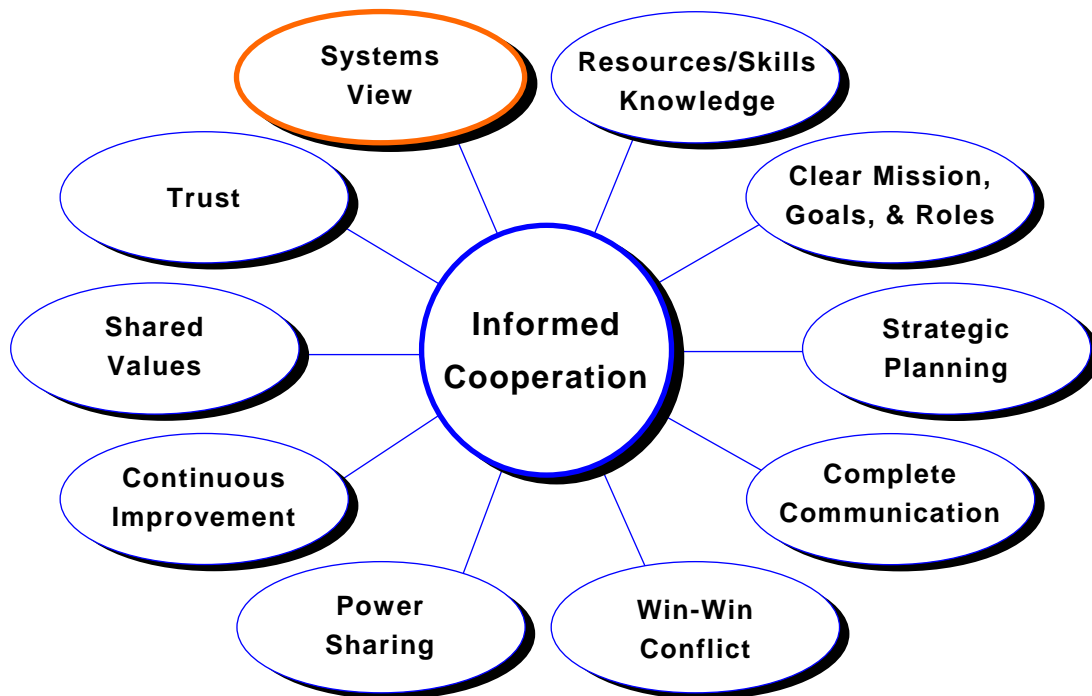


- Trust is a master variable in organizational life. It impacts behavior in important ways every day.
- Everyone is capable of participating in high-trust relationships, but it is not automatic and cannot be taken for granted.
- People enter teams with unique life experiences around trust. Some will extend trust quickly while others will be cautious and slow to trust.
- Misunderstandings are inevitable when teams are undertaking challenging tasks, but when the trust level is high, team members give each other the benefit of the doubt—then check it out.
- Extending trust without any forethought can be just as ineffective as never trusting at all.
- It takes time to develop deep trust among an entire team, but it can be destroyed quickly.



EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

SYSTEMS VIEW

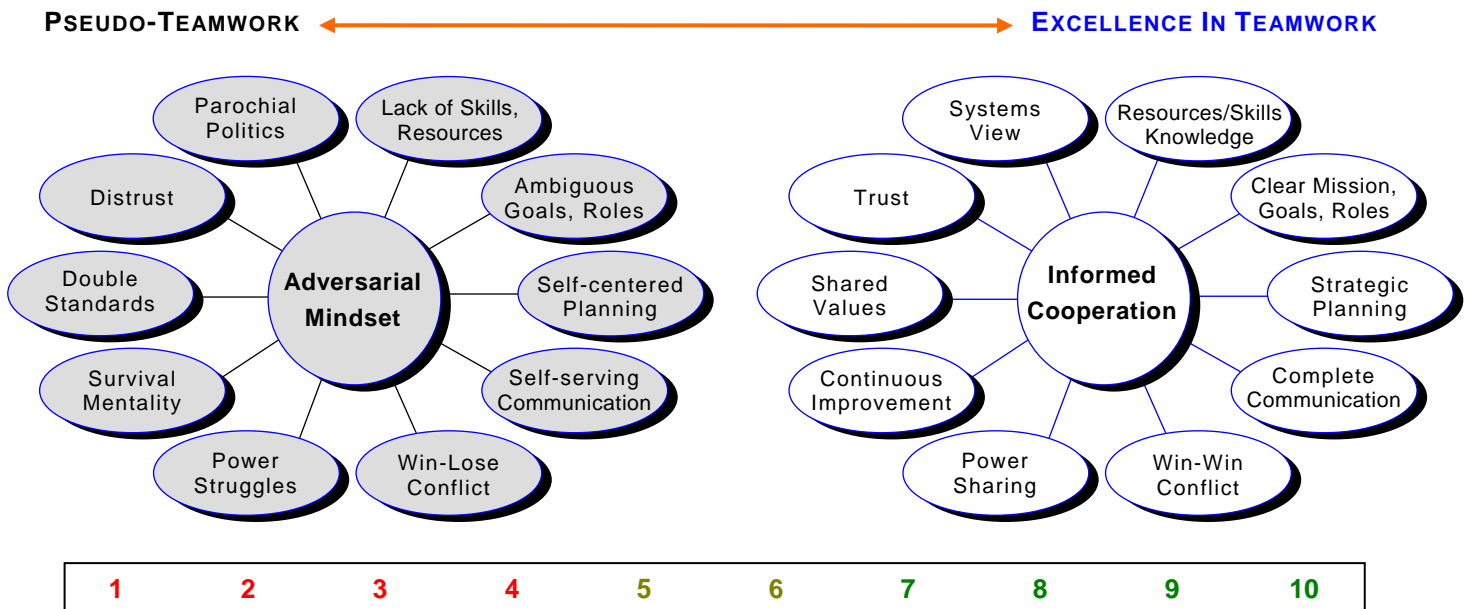


- Taking the systems view means operating with a constant awareness that everyone in the organization is a part of the same system and therefore subject to each of the following principles.
- The performance of the whole system is affected by the performance of each part of the system.
- The way each part affects the whole system is influenced by at least one other part of the system.
- Parts of the whole system can be grouped into functional subsystems. Each subsystem has an effect on the performance of the whole system.
- The performance of the whole system depends critically on how well the parts fit and work together, not merely on how well each performs when considered independently.
- The performance of a synergistic system is better than the performance of any particular part and better than the performance of the sum of its parts.



TEAMWORK CONTINUUM

No team ever arrives at a point where there is no more room for improvement. The challenge is to continuously build our ability to sustain higher and higher levels of performance. This is the essence of excellence—the ability to produce outstanding results consistently.



The most striking thing about our world today is its interconnectedness. Everything is connected to everything else. Effective teams consciously frame their agenda in the larger context. They are constantly aware of how their actions impact other teams and departments and strive to align their actions toward shared goals.

Being part of a winning team that’s moving toward excellence generates tremendous energy. Fear is replaced by trust as you know at a deep level that you can count on the support of others in the pursuit of shared goals. The results that are produced under these conditions often surprise even the greatest optimists among us.

Gettin' good players is easy. Gettin' 'em to play together is the hard part.

Casey Stengel

The key elements in the art of working together are how to deal with change, how to deal with conflict, and how to reach our potential...the needs of the team are best met when we meet the needs of individual persons.

Max DePree



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