

# objective

**What are the aims of team development training?**

**Increased team performance through:**

- Development of effective functional processes in newly-formed teams
- Optimization of cooperation in existing teams
- Mastering intercultural challenges (in international project teams, management teams, etc.)
- Goal-oriented conflict management & resolution
- Optimization of formal and informal communication, etc.

In addition to these aims, we hold the following to be fundamental goals of every team training:

- Awareness of group processes, and agreement on a common language for the discussion of such processes
- Creating a common picture of the teams co-operation patterns, as a basis for development
- Understanding of behavior: ones own and that of ones colleagues
- Increased awareness of the potential and resources that a team possesses to successfully develop and improve its performance
- Agreement on, and commitment to concrete action plans

The following areas all have an impact on team performance and are therefore focused on during an essence team development process

- Direction: mission, vision, goals, strategy
- Structure: roles, functions, responsibilities, business processes and organisational structure
- Relationship: co-operation, trust, dealing with mistakes and conflict, leadership, team values, implicit norms, ...

# contracting

**What are important aspects of the contracting phase?**

- Choice of the appropriate measure (training, coaching, workshop, etc.)
- Clarity about goals and expectations between contractor, consultant and participants
- Defining objectives that balance giving direction and narrowing down possible contents with empowering the delegates to co-create the developmental process

An exploratory discussion between contractor and the essence consultant explores which measures and steps seem appropriate in your given situation to achieve the developmental objective. One-on-one coaching or conflict mediation can sometimes offer a more effective and cheaper alternative to a team development training involving the whole team.

The aim of the further contracting process is to ensure that all involved parties (contractor, essence consultant, participants) have a clear picture about the objectives and each others expectations for the team development. When outdoor elements are integrated there may be the danger of widely varying expectations that can have a negative effect on the performance improvement impact of the training.

The objectives of the team development process should balance the need for direction and targeting on the relevant topics with creating enough freedom to enable the participants to actively co-create the developmental process. Only through this freedom for the team members to choose the topics that they consider relevant - within the target frame, will they feel responsible for the development of their teams performance.

# structure

**How is a team development training structured?**

**phase 1: creating a commonly shared picture of the teams dynamic and developmental areas**  
**phase 2: processing the identified developmental areas**

The essence team development process is characterized by two phases, assessment and processing. The goal of the team assessment is for the team to create a commonly shared picture of the teams strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Part of this exploratory phase can be completed before the training in the form of questionnaires or interviews. During the training the results and their consequences can then be discussed, while an outdoor exercise can promote further team insights (see next question). The assessment results are the starting point for the processing phase. Together with the essence consultant the group establishes priorities about which topics have the strongest impact on the improvement of their team performance.

In the following facilitated processing phase the team addresses these developmental areas. This typically takes 1,5 to 2 days and takes happens largely indoors. The team looks not only at the problems but also at the benefits of their developmental areas, works on these patterns, addresses interdependencies between individual actions and events and the overall team performance and thus develops new strategies and solutions. This phase results in team agreements on concrete, measurable, and accountable action items.

# outdoor

**What is the benefit of the outdoor exercises?** **outdoor exercises offer a large benefit - especially in the assessment phase:**

Outdoor exercises - integrated within a consulting process -  
... engage everyone.  
... promote self discovery.  
... display consequences and interdependencies.  
... lead to a commitment to change.  
... bond.  
... promote sustainable development.

# sustainability

**What can promote a sustainable development?** **One-on-one leadership coaching: empowering the leader instead of team follow-ups.**

After the team development training it is the leaders core responsibility to follow up on the agreed action items. Here he or she needs to balance a clear expectation for the implementation with the support of the team on the other hand.

In order to empower and support the leader in this process - which is crucial for the success of the team development training, our clients find essence one-on-one leadership coaching most helpful.

# duration

How much time do we need?

- team building for newly formed teams: 1-2 days
- team development training for existing teams: 2-3 days
- Through pre-workshop preparation at the workplace we keep the workshop duration to a minimum.

We differentiate the team development work between the "on-site" part which happens at work and the "off-site" part e.g. a workshop away from the work place. In order to keep the time away from work to a minimum, our approach minimizes the off-site time. (see also "structure").

**For a newly formed team** (e.g. project kick-off) the training might focus on the development of trust, increasing awareness of team processes, agreement on ground-rules, or the clarification of roles. For this kind of training we recommend 1 to 2 days in order to achieve solid results which lead to successful teamwork.

**For an existing team**, more time is needed in order to achieve concrete action plans. Experience shows that the decision to participate in a team training is often made when problems are already evident. Visible signs may include: tensions within the team; poor performance due to friction and conflict; ineffective meetings; tense working atmosphere.

To work effectively on the above issues we would recommend a duration of 2-3 days..

# participants

Who should take part?

involved and affected people, decision makers, next level manager

- the core team and all those affected by the topics at hand
- decision-makers whose input and agreement are critical to any measures which may be agreed upon
- supervisory managers who should either take part in the entire training or should be included in critical workshop elements
- deciding exactly who should participate is an important question, particularly for project teams where "membership" is difficult to define. The following aspects should be considered:  
On one hand, all those who can make a positive contribution, are responsible for necessary decisions, and/or must carry out the measures determined at the training should attend.  
On the other hand, a smaller team is better able to make decisions and is conducive to more intensive, personal seminar work.  
For optimal results we recommend balancing the two by relying on the axiom: "As many as necessary, as few as possible."

# Team Development Training Preparation Guidelines (4/4)

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## timing

### When is the “right” time?

A team training is especially timely as a preventative measure when challenging situations appear (e.g. changes in normal routines and schedules; increased production pressures; restructuring; etc.). Team development trainings can provide team-members with effective strategies, preparing them to successfully master the coming challenges.

**When tensions are already present in a team, it is essential to recognize and address them as soon as possible.** Under such circumstances, team-members often resist the notion of "sacrificing" 2-3 days for a training. ("That's the last thing we have time for now!")

A tactical pause at that point, however, is often precisely what is most needed. It affords the team the opportunity to step back and gain perspective on the team processes, opening the door to significant improvement via immediate, concrete, practical measures. In this way, a team training--even under the most acute conditions--can increase the motivation of team-members, leading to dramatically improved cooperation and results.