

Teamwork Survey

In their groundbreaking study* of teams which they entitled 'Teamwork', Carl Larson and Frank Lafasto attempted to answer the question, 'What makes an effective team?' The results of their work were eight key characteristics which help to explain how teams develop or why they don't develop. They argue that the eight characteristics are present in all successful teams however the significance of certain characteristics may increase or decrease depending upon the general objective of the team concerned; is it a problem-solving, creative or tactical team?

The first characteristic was a **clear and elevating goal**. The study found that teams often ran into difficulties when their goal became diluted with other priorities or when individual targets took priority over the shared team goal. Other characteristics were a **results-driven structure** which included team roles and processes, **competent team members** where both technical and interpersonal skills were critical and a **unified commitment** to the common team values and objectives.

Establishing trust between team members was the core driver of what Larson and Lafasto referred to as a **collaborative climate** and teams that defined and held each other accountable to **standards of excellence** were consistently able to deliver higher levels of performance than teams that didn't. **External support and recognition** was the characteristic that is as 'easy to describe when it is missing but more difficult to describe when it is present'. Teams that don't receive sufficient incentives, support and resources are simply less effective. The final characteristic described as **principled leadership** found that team leaders that were able to inspire a shared vision of the future, create and support change and encourage decision-making on the part of their team members were generally rewarded with superior results.

We have designed this team survey to help you to benchmark your current team effectiveness against the eight characteristics. The Teamwork Survey can be administered via email (as an attached form) or using an internet-based questionnaire. It is intended to support a team feedback and action planning session – either with or without an external facilitator. If you would like more information or would like to see a sample report, please contact us at info@clarionlearning.com.au .

*Teamwork, Carl E. Larson and Frank M.J. LaFasto, Sage Publications, 1989