

### Team Launch Exercise

This exercise can help make sure that all members are in agreement about your team's main purposes--and, importantly, that you are able to bring the full range of members' knowledge, skill, and experience to bear in accomplishing those purposes.

Plan on a full hour for this exercise, although you may be able to complete it in less time.

#### Step One: Selection of Timekeeper and Recorder

Identify one person who will keep track of time and move the team along as needed, and another person who will record on the board or flip chart the ideas that are generated. Write their names below.

Timekeeper: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step Two: Individual Work (5 minutes)

Each person should answer the following questions without consulting other members.

1. What is the main purpose of your team as you understand it? (A sentence or two, at most.)

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2. In your personal view, what could be the main consequences of:

--the team achieving its purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

--the team failing to achieve its purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How challenging will it be for the team to achieve its purpose? (check one of the following)

- Impossible to achieve
- Very challenging
- Moderately challenging
- Slightly challenging
- Trivial to achieve

**Step Three: Discussion by Pairs of Members (25 minutes)**

Form pairs of members, consisting (to the extent possible) of people who do not know one another very well, or who have different backgrounds or home organizations. (One group can be a triad if necessary.)

Each pair should address the following items, in turn.

1. How well do our separate descriptions of the main purpose of the team agree? Are there differences for which we wish to seek clarification from the team as a whole? Jot them down:

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2. One person (A) interviews the other (B) to learn what knowledge skill, experience, perspectives, and relevant outside contacts Person B has that could be helpful in accomplishing the team's main purposes. Take notes, since you will be reporting to the whole team a little later. (10 minutes)

3. Now Person B conducts the same interview of Person A. (10 minutes)

4. Together, decide what you want to report to, or ask of, the rest of the team. (Make a very short list of any such items.)

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**Step Four: Reconvene, Report, and Discuss (30 minutes or less)**

The person in the "recorder" role should facilitate discussion of these four items, and summarize the team's reports and conclusions on the board or flip chart .

1. Ask each pair for any questions or issues they have for the team as a whole. Discuss as needed. Do we need any clarification at this point from the person(s) who created our team?
2. What expertise do we have within our team for pursuing our main purposes? To address this question, each member should report on the special knowledge, skill, and experience brought

to the team by the person he or she interviewed. The recorder lists all of these resources.  
(*Note: This is an important aspect of the launch process that should not be skipped.*)

3. What additional expertise do we need? Which of us are in the best position to obtain it from sources outside the team itself? Do we need to do this immediately, or can it wait?
4. What one or two team norms do we want to establish about how we will work together? Give special attention to how we can best use the knowledge, skill, and experience of team of different team members.

To prime the pump, here are examples of some norms that other analytic teams have adopted: (a) "consider all ideas that are suggested, especially ones that seem far out," or (b) "whenever we're about to agree on something, stop for a minute to consider alternative conclusions," or (c) focus especially on information about the expertise, experience, and networks of the potential adversaries."

List below the main norms *your* team will follow in carrying out your work.

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5: Wrap Up** (10 minutes)

1. Is there anything else that any member of our team feels we need to address before beginning work? (Make sure each member has the opportunity to raise anything that may be on his or her mind.)
2. Do we want to select a team leader, someone who would be responsible for keeping an eye on how we are progressing, and facilitate the work process if needed? If so, who will that be:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Based on what we discussed and concluded, what is the first thing we should do to get off to a good start with actual work on our task?  
  
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