So What Will You Get Out of the 15.279 Team Experience?

- Practice in teamwork skills
- Friendships
- A grade
- A richer sense of your
  - Skills
  - Propensities
  - Style relative to others
Agenda

• It’s all about communication

• Three concrete tips

• Where teams can get into trouble
  – Individual behaviors
  – Group social psychology
It’s All About Communication

Practicing good communication skills

+ Refraining from communication roadblocks

Engaging in dialogue

Building trust

Being productive!

Communication for Managers
To Communicate Well . . .

- Listen well
- Observe carefully
- Give feedback constructively
Communication Behaviors to Observe

- Who participates
- Who doesn’t
- How do people take turns?
- Who talks to whom?
- Who responds to whom?
- How are interruptions handled?

- Is silence O.K.?
- Is anyone dominating the conversation?
- How are decisions made?
  - By consensus?
  - By voting?
  - By one person?
And be sure to observe your own feelings, reactions, and behaviors
Communication Can Go Awry If We . . .

- Order or command
- Warn or threaten
- Preach or moralize
- Cross examine
- Label, evaluate, or judge
- Tease or make light of
- Respond with sarcasm

- Avoid discussing an issue
- Assume instead of listen
- Forget differences in communication style may be related to gender or cultural differences

Communication for Managers
Four Principles of Communication

- All communication takes place on the content and relationship level
- We cannot not communicate
- Often the problem with communication is the assumption of it
- Metacommunication is very useful
When You Have Built Trust, You Have . . .

• Acted with consistency and coherence

• Demonstrated concern

• Treated others with a sense of fairness

• Fulfilled obligations and commitments
When You Are Engaging in Dialogue, You Are . . .

- Seeing things from the other person’s perspective
- Really listening
- Expressing your concerns as *your concerns*, not as another person’s problem
- Giving others a stake in the process or outcome
Three Concrete Tips

• Use a facilitator/coordinator

• Delegate tasks effectively, using a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

• Set some ground rules
Work Breakdown Structure

• Way to organize a series of tasks to accomplish a project objective. Consists of:
  – Hierarchical diagram of tasks
  – Person responsible for executing the task
  – Deadline to have the task completed
  – Interdependencies with other tasks

• Each task in a WBS should contribute to the goal of delivering the required material on time and done well
Sample WBS--Planning a Vacation

Trip to Florida Christmas Break 12/26-1/2

Research and buy tickets
George--11/1

Research places to stay and make reservations
Sheryl--11/5

Find out about things to do

Water related
Selina--12/1

Restaurants
Vikram--12/1
Facilitator/Coordinator

• Why? If everyone is responsible, no one is.

• The coordinator/facilitator should
  – Focus the team toward the task
  – Get all team members to participate
  – Keep the team to its agreed-upon time frame
  – Suggest alternatives
  – Help team members confront problems
  – Summarize team decisions
Setting Ground Rules

• Goals and expectations
• Work norms
• Facilitator norms
• Communication norms
• Meeting norms
• Consideration norms
What Makes Teams Troublesome*

• Individual behaviors

• Group social psychology

*Even people with good intentions can get into trouble.
Individual Behaviors

• “Ego integrity”
• Self-interest versus group interest
• Inability to observe self and/or use feedback
• Different styles of
  – Learning
  – Interaction
  – Expression
Group Behaviors

- “Defensive routines”
- Us versus them
- Reluctance to test assumptions publicly
- Getting “off task”
- Lack of boundaries
  - Ill defined roles
  - Unclear objectives and/or expectations

Communication for Managers