

5 – THE TEAM’S LIFE CYCLE (CHAPTER 4)

Overview Statement: Teams are made from a group of individuals banding together for a common purpose. How a team forms determines, in large measure, how the team performs.

Connection to the Curriculum: Ties in with a central theme of chapter four in *Learn to Lead*, Team Leadership.

Estimated Time: 25-30 Minutes

Resources Required: *Learn to Lead*, Module Two; Whiteboard (or chalkboard, butcher paper or easel pad).

Key Terms:

Cohesive – “Unified; working together as a united whole.” Encarta Dictionary

Team – “A number of people organized to function cooperatively as a group.” Encarta Dictionary

INTRODUCTION

Attention: Quickly name some things that all teams need. {Write answers on the board.}

Motivation: You’re correct: All teams need people, a leader, common goals, open communication, good morale, everyone’s involvement, mutual respect, and a fair way to resolve conflicts.

Overview: Today’s lesson will take a step back from what teams are to discuss how teams are formed.

Your role in this discussion is to be an active participant. You are free to share your views with each other. Please be involved and considerate of one another. My role will be to take notes on what you say, and I may occasionally ask a question or two. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am simply interested in what you have to say.

MAIN POINT 1: ORGANIZE A TEAM WITH THE GOAL IN MIND

Cadet NCOs will often be called upon to gather a small team to accomplish a particular task. If the NCO gathers the team before fully understanding the team’s goal, the team may be organized

incorrectly. The team may even fail – not because of the team’s efforts, but because the leader did not start with the goal in mind.

Question: Let’s suppose that your Cadet Commander wants you to gather a small team to perform a line search. You quickly gather a couple of your friends, go outside and the team does a line search. What is wrong with this supposition? Describe how you would correct any errors.

Question: Why is it important for the leader to ask “What is the goal?”

Question: {Form two or more small groups of cadets. Assign each group this question. Allow time for discussion and ask for an oral report at the end.} Our squadron will have an open house in three months. Choose something that your team will do to ensure that the open house is successful. Start with your end goal in mind, work backwards in describing the steps you would take to organize your team. Focus more on how to organize your team than on the elements of the open house.

MAIN POINT 2: THE TEAM’S LIFE CYCLE

Transforming a group of individuals into a cohesive team takes practice. One researcher, Bruce Tuckman, notes that teams typically pass through four stages on their journey from a disorganized group to an effective team. This model is so easy to remember, that “form, storm, norm and perform” has become a popular leadership slogan. Team leaders need to use Tuckman’s principles of team dynamics so they can provide the right support at the right time.

Review:

Forming ~ When a group comes together there is usually chaos. Everyone is pointed in a different direction. People may not know what to expect. When a bunch of nervous first year cadets report to their flight for encampment, they’re forming.

Storming ~ As the team begins to take shape, individual personalities begin to show. People struggle to assert their personal needs and goals. At this early stage, the team lacks the trust necessary to become cohesive.

Norming ~ Now the team is coming into its own. The leader’s standards gain acceptance by the team and the members themselves set standards about how they will work together. People feel more secure because the uncertainty of the forming stage and the conflict of the storming stage is waning.

Performing ~ The group has truly become a team. This is the stage at which the team is at its best. Although there's always room for improvement, it is at this stage that the team is fine-tuning its ability to work together well. The team will not only succeed but will reach its full potential.

Question: Can a team accomplish the task prior to the performing stage? Why, then, is the performing stage the one to strive for?

Question: Describe some ways that a leader can move his/her team from forming to storming.

Question: What do you think will happen if the leader asserts him/herself too quickly in the storming stage? Describe how you would do better.

Question: How should a leader motivate his/her team to form?

CONCLUSION

Summary: Leaders lead followers, but followers must have purpose. The team's life cycle helps to establish a common purpose and worthwhile goals. The team can reach its fullest potential if the leader knows how to move his/her team through the team's life cycle. When forming a team, always start with the end goal in mind.

Remotivation: Teams that are highly motivated are the ones who have reached the performing stage.

Closure: Strive to get your team to the performing level.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note to the instructor: Every informal discussion should be followed by one or more hands-on activities that reinforce one or more of the concepts being discussed. These activities should last 25-30 minutes, giving about one hour total block of time for the leadership session at a typical CAP meeting (25-30 minutes for the informal discussion, plus 25-30 minutes for the activities).

Along with any questions found in the activities themselves, you should be sure to ask, "**How does this activity tie in with our discussion?**"

CAP recommends activities from the *Learn to Lead Activity Guide* by Rob Smith (published by the Civil Air Patrol). You are free to substitute another activity, or create your own, as long as you tie in with one or more concepts of the informal discussion.

Main concepts for this lesson: **Teamwork; organizing; goals.**