

## **Spider Web Analysis Tool for Teams**

### **Definitions of Foundational Elements of an Effective Team**

**Clear Purpose:** Each member of the team understands the mission or objective.

**Self-conscious about Operations:** The group has taken time to explicitly discuss group process – how the group will function to achieve its objectives. The group has a clear, explicit, and mutually agreed-upon approach: mechanics, norms, expectations, and rules.

**Clear and Demanding Performance Goals:** The performance goals are well-defined concrete milestones against which it measures itself. The group defines and achieves a continuous series of "small wins" along the way to larger goals.

**Establishing and Fostering a Trust Environment:** This is fundamental, if not crucial, to the formation of successful operation of self-directed teams. Includes trust among team members and those in leadership positions. Trust must be earned through performance.

**Informal, Comfortable, and Relaxed Atmosphere:** There are no obvious tensions, a working atmosphere in which people are involved and interested.

**Listening:** Team members listen to each other. They summarize, paraphrase, or ask questions in order to encourage explanation or elaboration.

**Open Communication:** Team members tell each other how they feel about the team's project and the team's operation. They have no secrets or ulterior motives. If discussion gets off track, someone will bring it back in short order. Every idea is given a hearing. People are not afraid of being foolish by putting forth a creative thought even if it seems extreme.

**Civilized Disagreement:** Team members feel comfortable disagreeing with each other. Disagreements are polite and friendly. Disagreements are not suppressed or overridden by premature group action. The reasons are carefully examined, and the group seeks to resolve them rather than dominate the dissenter. If there are basic disagreements that cannot be resolved, the group figures out a way to live with them without letting them block its efforts

**Consensus Decisions:** The team arrives at its decisions through discussion of each member's ideas. Team members avoid both formal voting and easy compromises. Team members proactively seek out divergent views and approaches for discussion before reaching convergence. They seek divergence within their teams, from other teams and from other sources, including clients, cooperators, public agencies, and other stakeholders.

**Clear Roles and Work Assignments:** Each member of the team understands the job that he or she is expected to do. Work assignments are fairly distributed and promptly completed. Each

individual is respectful of the mechanics of the group: arriving on time, coming to meetings prepared, completing agreed upon tasks on time, etc. When action is taken, clear assignments are made (who-what-when) and willingly accepted and completed by each group member.

**Shared Leadership:** The responsibilities of leadership rotate periodically among the members of the team.

**External Relations:** The team develops a working relationship with the supervisor and with other teams. Its displays to those outside the team has a distinct identity.

**Diverse Responsibilities:** Each member of the team has a special emphasis. The team is deliberate in obtaining the complementary skills needed for team performance - especially when team products and services are complex and varied, need for innovation is high, and team processes are complicated. For example, the team includes members who emphasize the quality of the document, the setting of objectives, the process of investigating alternatives, building consensus, and the administration of the team.

**Self-assessment:** The team does periodic self-examinations. Each member of the team evaluates how effectively the team is functioning and recommends how it might improve.

**Fostering Continuous Learning:** The team provides opportunities for professional development of all team members because this is vital to creative and innovative actions and enhanced performance of the team. This includes the development of both technical and soft skills. Resources are deliberately directed to professional development for team members.

**Team Recognition:** Recognition and awards should be established by both the team and parent organization/administration. Individual recognition (instead of the entire team being recognized) of team effort undermines team spirit and overall effectiveness of team development.