

Team Process Review Exercise

Objective: Enable team members to view how the team is functioning in order to identify improvement opportunities and eliminate waste and inefficiencies.

Method:

1. Select a team member to not participate in that particular meeting, but instead to observe the team during a meeting in a structured way and provide the structured feedback to the team after the meeting. It is best to rotate the role of team observer every time a new meeting is held over a period of time.
2. Set aside time within a week of the meeting for the team to hear and reflect on the observer's feedback. The observer presents the top 3 – 5 observations with examples (from the meeting). Team members can ask specific questions for the sole purpose of clarifying the feedback received. This is followed by a discussion on how the team can make changes to improve its own functioning and effectiveness. Team members then reflect on their individual roles in specific team dynamics and how they could personally make a difference towards improved future meetings. Team leader goes around the room and each team member commits to some behavior change for meetings going forward. (Change means stopping a behavior, starting a new behavior or maintaining a behavior that does yield the desired outcomes). An action items list is generated to help the team implement specific agreements for better future meetings.

Role of the observer:

Note the time in the meeting/agenda item, what is happening in terms of the discussion, who is talking and how is the rest of the group reacting to the topic and what is being said? Look for signs of people not engaged – closed body language. Look for signs that people do not agree, but they do not speak up. Or perhaps they do say something, but others talk over them or ignore their comments. How well is the team using the time that they have together? Do all agenda topics come to an outcome after discussion? Is the discussion based on facts or is it merely the opinion of some the drive the team towards a specific outcome/path forward? Is there an action list that will be followed up by a specific person and time? Does everyone get the opportunity to contribute? Are there opportunities to explore other options or is every discussion closed down before it had been explored further? Is there a general spirit of collaboration, sharing of information, camaraderie in the room when the team meets? What is the general atmosphere like? Also note how long each agenda topic takes to fully complete – sometimes teams have longer meetings than planned simply because they have too many agenda topics and a lack of awareness regarding the time it takes to fully complete a discussion and a path forward on each topic.

Guard against the following, which is not part of the assignment of an observer: individual criticism, judging the motivations of others (remember you can only observe what is done and said, not what underlying motives are/could be).

Template to capture Team Observer Impressions

[illegible]