

# Performance Vistas, Inc.

2145 Azalea Drive

Roswell, Georgia 30075

O: (770) 992-0679

[www.PerformanceVistas.org](http://www.PerformanceVistas.org)

## Effective Work Teams



1. **Atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, relaxed.** There are no obvious tensions. There is a working atmosphere in which people are involved and interested. There are no signs of boredom.
2. **Lots of discussion** in which virtually everyone participates, but it remains pertinent to the task of the group. If the discussion gets off the subject, someone brings it back in short order.
3. **The task or the objective of the group is well understood and accepted by the members.** There will have been free discussion of the objective at some point, until it was formulated in such a way that the members of the group could commit themselves to it.



4. **The members listen to each other!** The discussion does not jump from one idea to another unrelated one. Every idea gets a hearing. People do not appear to be afraid of being foolish by putting forth a creative thought, even if it seems fairly extreme.
5. **There is disagreement, and the group is comfortable with this.** It shows no signs of having to avoid conflict or suppressing

dissent to maintain artificial "sweetness and light." Disagreements are not suppressed or overridden by a rush to judgment leading to premature action. Nor are differences dismissed with ill-timed humor. The group carefully examines the reasons for disagreements, and seeks to resolve them rather than to dominate dissenters. On the other hand, there is no "tyranny of the minority." Individuals who disagree do not appear to be trying to dominate the group or to express hostility. Their disagreement is an expression of a genuine difference of opinion, and they expect a hearing in order that a solution may be found.

Sometimes there are basic disagreements which cannot be resolved. The group finds it possible to live with them, adapting them but not permitting them to block its efforts. Under some conditions, action will be deferred to permit further study of an issue between the members. On other occasions, where the disagreement cannot be resolved and action is necessary, it will be taken but with open caution and recognition that the action may be subject to later reconsideration.



6. **Most decisions are reached by a kind of consensus in which it is clear that everybody is in general agreement and willing to go along.** However, there is little tendency for individuals who oppose the action to keep their opposition private and thus let an apparent consensus mask real disagreement. Formal voting is at a minimum; the group does not accept a simple majority as a proper basis for action.

7. **Criticism is frequent, frank, and relatively comfortable.** There is little evidence of personal attack, either openly or in a hidden fashion. The criticism has a constructive flavor in that it is oriented toward removing an obstacle that faces the group and prevents it from getting the job done.
8. **People are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas both on the problem and on the group's operation.** There is little pussyfooting, there are few hidden agendas. Everybody appears to know quite well how everybody else feels about any matter under discussion.
9. **When action is taken, clear assignments are made and accepted.**
10. **The chair of the group does not dominate it, nor does the group show undue deference to the leader.** In fact, it is clear that the leadership shifts from time to time, depending on the circumstances. Different members, because of their knowledge or experience, are in a position at various times to act as resources for the group. The members utilize them in this fashion and they occupy leadership roles while they are thus being used. There is little evidence of a struggle for power as the group operates. *The issue is not who controls, but how to get the job done.*
11. **The group is self-conscious about its own operations.** Frequently, it will stop to examine how well it is doing or what may be interfering with its operation. The problem may be a matter of procedure, or it may be an individual whose behavior is interfering with the accomplishment of the group's objectives. Whatever it is, it gets open discussion until a solution is found.

**SOURCE:** Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, 1960, as quoted in *Leadership Challenges*, the 40-hour leadership development program developed and delivered by Performance Vistas, Inc.