

**King Saud University  
College of Business Administration  
Department of Health Administration  
Masters` Program**

***PA 505 –The Quality of Healthcare First  
Semester 1436/ 1437***

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# Improvement Project Team

## Learning Objectives

- ❖ **Explain the role of improvement project participants,**
- ❖ **Discuss the purpose of a team charter,**
- ❖ **Recognize beneficial and disruptive team behaviors,**
- ❖ **Apply leadership skills to manage team meetings effectively,**
- ❖ **Describe stages of team development, and**
- ❖ **Identify strategies for preventing improvement project failures.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Team

- ❖ **When improvement opportunities are identified, a group of people known as an improvement team is assembled. By following an improvement model and using improvement tools, the team works together to accomplish improvement goals.**
- ❖ **This team's success hinges on effective project management.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Team

- ❖ A formal team need not be assembled for every improvement opportunity.
- ❖ The case study at the beginning of Chapter 3 describes an initiative to reduce patient wait times at the Redwood Health Center. The clinic manager did most of the work for this project. He gathered data on how long patients waited to be seen by a clinician, shared those data with other people in the clinic, and informally discussed ways of reducing wait times. An improvement team was not formed for the project.



# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Team

- ❖ **Some performance problems cannot (and should not) be solved individually or informally and require the attention of a dedicated improvement project team that includes several people familiar with the systems and processes that need to be changed.**
- ❖ **A project team should be created when the improvement goal is more likely to be achieved through the coordinated efforts of people with varying knowledge, skills, and perspectives.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Team

- ❖ **The greatest improvement potential lies in problems that involve different professions and departments.**
- ❖ **The team's role is to analyze and eliminate undesirable, unpredictable, or unworkable performance situations. Once the improvement project is complete, the team is disbanded.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Team

- ❖ **People at all levels in the organization may be part of an improvement project team. Because projects generally take employees away from their primary work responsibilities, time spent on an improvement initiative had better produce measurable performance gains.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

**A team of people is chosen to fill the following roles:**

- ❖ **Sponsor**
- ❖ **Team leader**
- ❖ **Facilitator**
- ❖ **Recorder**
- ❖ **Timekeeper**
- ❖ **Team members**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor

**An individual or a group that supports, guides, and mentors an improvement project team; serves as a link to the organization's leadership; removes barriers; and acquires the resources a team needs to achieve successful outcomes.**

### Sponsor Role

**Charters the improvement team, provides initial improvement goals, monitors team progress, and supports the team**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ The sponsor clearly defines the performance problem that needs to be solved by writing a problem statement—a description of the situation.
- ❖ The problem statement influences many aspects of the project, including the makeup of the team and improvement expectations.
- ❖ In addition, a clearly communicated problem statement establishes project boundaries so that problem-solving activities do not escalate into larger issues or wander into unrelated topics.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ The project goal should include measurable performance expectations.
- ❖ The project sponsor sets these expectations and defines the time frame for achieving them.
- ❖ An explicit project goal with clearly stated, measurable expectations and time frames focuses the improvement efforts.
- ❖ Once the goal is clear, the sponsor identifies people who need to be included in the project. If the sponsor already has someone in mind to serve as the team leader, that person may help the sponsor select these key people.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

**The following questions can guide their selection:**

- ❖ **Where is the problem occurring?**
- ❖ **What tasks are involved?**
- ❖ **Who carries out these tasks?**
- ❖ **Who determines how the tasks should be done?**
- ❖ **Who provides the **inputs** to these tasks?**
- ❖ **Who uses the **outputs** of these tasks?**



# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ The people chosen for the team should have detailed knowledge through experience with some part of the performance problem.
- ❖ They also must be willing and able to attend team meetings and make time for project work that may need to be done between meetings.
- ❖ Once the project is under way, the team may ask additional members to participate if critical expertise is needed or a key group is not represented.
- ❖ The team should be capped at five to ten members.
- ❖ To keep the team from expanding beyond the preferred size, some individuals may serve as consultants and attend meetings only when their expertise is needed.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ In an ideal project initiation, the sponsor creates a written charter incorporating all the aforementioned elements: the project goal, a description of the system or process to be improved, the time frame for project completion, deliverables, measures, project scope, and team members. Exhibit 7.2 is a charter for a project aimed at improving the employee hiring process in a county-operated emergency medical service (ambulance) company.
- ❖ When expectations are unclear or too broad, an improvement project can flounder.

# Exhibit 7.2 is a charter for a project

## EXHIBIT 7.2.

### Charter for Improvement Project

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#### Problem Statement

- During the last fiscal year, 342 applications were received for paramedic or emergency medical technician (EMT) vacancies. In this same period, 49 applicants—14%—were hired and eventually began employment with Grant County Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
- The current hiring process for EMTs and paramedics averages 87 days with a range of 7 to 212 days from time of application.
- As of February, EMS operations are understaffed by 17% (47 vacancies for EMTs and paramedics).
- Understaffing causes an increase in EMS operational overtime, field training idle time, and system and administrative workload.

#### Goal

A 5% or less vacancy rate for EMTs and paramedics

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#### Project Scope

Individuals who apply for a paramedic or EMT position with Grant County EMS

#### Out-of-Project Scope

- Existing paramedic or EMT employees who are promoted or return to full-time status
  - Vacancies for other positions
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# Exhibit 7.2 is a charter for a project

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## Measures

- Current vacancies
  - Current overtime standby utilization
  - Hiring process intervals (in days) and cost
  - Applicants (count)
  - Applicant status (percentage of overall applicants)
  - Range of application date to start date
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## Deliverables

Within 6 months:

- Increase the hire rate of qualified applicants from 14% to 30%.
  - Reduce annualized cost of EMS overtime and standby time to less than \$280,000.
  - Reduce cost per new hire (recruiting, advertising, and assessing) to no more than \$300.
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<b>Sponsor</b>	Robert Jones, Director, Public Safety
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<b>Team Leader</b>	Larry McNeill, Deputy Chief, EMS Training
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<b>Team Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jackie Gregory, Administrative Services</li><li>• Todd O'Brien, Human Resources</li><li>• Michael Fine, EMT</li><li>• Gary Young, Paramedic</li></ul>
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<b>Team Facilitator</b>	Sally Steward, Manager, Information Services
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# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ A **charter** is a written declaration of an improvement team's purpose.
- ❖ **Charters** keep teams focused and on track during projects.
- ❖ Team members may want to revisit the **charter** periodically to remind themselves of the project's boundaries and the objectives of the improvement effort.
- ❖ If the team receives new information during the project or if situations change, it may need to renegotiate its objectives or boundaries.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Sponsor Role

- ❖ **The sponsor supports the team throughout the project, monitoring progress and clearing obstacles that may arise.**
- ❖ **The sponsor acts as a sounding board for improvement ideas but does not become overly involved in the details of the team's work.**
- ❖ **At the end of the project, the sponsor reviews the team's improvement actions and ensures the solutions are effectively implemented.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Leader

**Team Leader or process owners**, are individuals ultimately responsible for a process, including its performance and outcomes—supervisors, managers, or physicians in the work area most affected by the improvement project. The leader is considered a member of the team.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Leader Role

- ❖ **The team leader organizes the project, chairs team discussions, keeps the project focused on the improvement goal, establishes the meeting schedule, and serves as a liaison between the team and the sponsor.**
- ❖ **Coordinates project assignments and communication with external parties, removes barriers, and keeps the project on track**



# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Leader Role

- ❖ **The team leader should be familiar with the improvement model to be used during the project and various improvement tools.**
- ❖ **She should also be skilled at managing group interactions and running a project.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Leader Role

- ❖ Some organizations assign a quality resource adviser to interdepartmental improvement projects. This person is familiar with performance improvement principles and serves as an internal consultant.
- ❖ The quality resource adviser helps the team understand the purpose of the project, the desired results, and team roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ When there is no quality adviser assigned to the project, the team leader takes on these responsibilities.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Facilitator

- ❖ **A facilitator** is an individual knowledgeable about group processes and team interaction as well as performance improvement principles and techniques.

### Facilitator Role

- ❖ **The facilitator supports the team leader. The facilitator assists with team-building activities, keeps meeting discussions and the entire project on track, and ensures deadlines are met.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Facilitator Role

- ❖ **The facilitator should be an objective team resource and detached from the process being improved.**
- ❖ **As a neutral party, the facilitator is particularly effective at engaging everyone on the team and helping the group reach consensus on controversial issues.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Facilitator Role

- ❖ **The facilitator works with the leader to plan meetings, structure tasks and assignments, and incorporate quality improvement tools into the project.**
- ❖ **The facilitator knows what data to gather, how to gather the data, and how to present the results in a meaningful graphic or tabular form.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Facilitator Role

- ❖ In cases where the project is not overly complex, one person may assume the dual role of team leader and facilitator.
- ❖ Research suggests, however, that multifaceted health- care improvement projects involving several departments and professions benefit from having a facilitator who is not also responsible for leading the project

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Facilitator Role

- ❖ **The facilitator helps manage discussions about the process during team meetings, usually by asking questions (e.g., how do we want to make this decision? What points can we agree on?)**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Recorder

- ❖ The recorder, or note taker, documents activities throughout the project, this position is usually assigned to one or more team members.

### Recorder Role

- ❖ During meetings, recorders are responsible for writing the team's ideas, decisions, and recommendations on a flip chart or whiteboard.



# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Recorder Role

- ❖ **Recorders also create meeting minutes and distribute them to team members before the next meeting.**
- ❖ **The team uses the minutes to recall previous ideas, decisions, the rationales behind decisions, actions to be taken, the people responsible for executing those actions, and the schedule according to which those actions will be carried out.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Timekeeper

- ❖ The timekeeper keeps the team on track during meetings.
- ❖ If the time allotted for a discussion point is exceeded, the timekeeper alerts the group.
- ❖ The team then decides whether to accelerate the discussion, defer the item to another meeting, or end the discussion.
- ❖ In some cases, the leader functions as the timekeeper or this role may be assigned to the facilitator or another team member.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Members

- ❖ **An improvement project involves several roles. At a minimum, each project includes a sponsor, a team leader, and team members.**
- ❖ **Team members** share responsibility for achieving the improvement goal.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Members Roles

- ❖ **Members Participates in discussions, decision making, and other team tasks such as gathering data, analyzing information, assisting with documentation, and sharing results.**
- ❖ **Each team member should represent a program, department, or work unit significantly affected by the process to be improved or the problem to be solved.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Members Roles

- ❖ Ideally, team members should have a basic understanding of quality improvement principles, but familiarity with this topic is not a prerequisite for team membership.
- ❖ Inclusion of one or two **independents**—members with little or no knowledge of the process—can also be useful.
- ❖ Because **independents** have no vested interest in the problem, they may provide a fresh and creative perspective.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Members Roles

- ❖ Some healthcare improvement projects also benefit from **customer input**.
- ❖ For example, if a hospital team is working to improve security in the newborns nursery, a woman who recently delivered a baby in the facility can be included as a team member.
- ❖ The recent patient may be made a permanent member of the team or serve part time by attending meetings only when her input is needed.

# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Meetings

- ❖ At the first meeting, the team leader uses the project charter to introduce and explain the project goal and scope.
- ❖ He should discuss the charter openly to prevent misunderstandings.
- ❖ Any confusion or disagreement should be resolved at the first meeting.

# Improvement Project Team

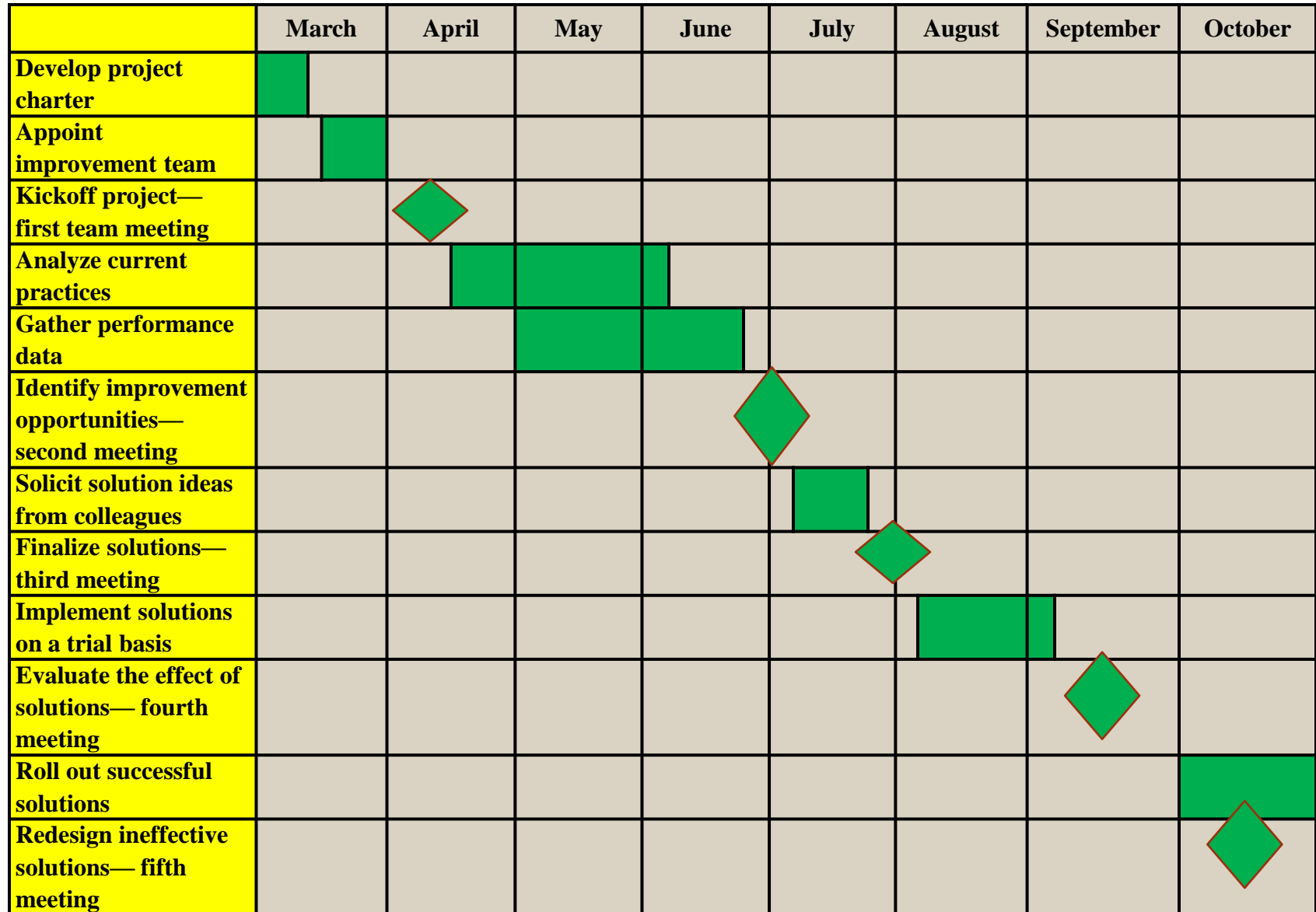
## Project Participants

### Team Meetings

- ❖ The team leader also provides an overview of the project timeline at the first meeting.
- ❖ Exhibit 7.3 is a Gantt chart showing the approximate start and finish times for the steps of an improvement project.



**Exhibit 7.3 is a Gantt chart showing the approximate start and finish times for the steps of an improvement project**



# Improvement Project Team

## Project Participants

### Team Meetings

- ❖ **The first meeting also is a good time to set ground rules for team conduct— directives stating how team members are expected to communicate in meetings, make decisions, resolve conflicts, and so forth.**
- ❖ **Critical Concept 7.1 lists examples of improvement team ground rules.**
- ❖ **Teams usually adopt only a few key ground rules; however, project improvement best practices do not limit the number**

# Improvement Project Team

## CRITICAL CONCEPT Improvement Team Ground Rules

- ❖ **Participate by sharing your own opinions and experience**
- ❖ **Contribute but do not dominate.**
- ❖ **Effectiveness—Care should be based on scientific knowledge and provided to**
- ❖ **Actively listen to and consider the opinions of others.**
- ❖ **Stay focused on the improvement goal.**
- ❖ **Avoid side conversations.**
- ❖ **Respect other people's time (e.g., arrives on time, do not leave early, return from breaks promptly).**
- ❖ **Complete assignments to which you have committed.**

# Improvement Project Team

## CRITICAL CONCEPT Improvement Team Ground Rules

- ❖ **Speak one at a time.**
- ❖ **Leave rank at the door; all team members are equal.**
- ❖ **Address conflict by dealing with the issue, not the person.**
- ❖ **Turn off cell phones and other mobile devices.**
- ❖ **Be a participant, not a lurker.**
- ❖ **Have fun, but not at the expense of someone else's feelings.**
- ❖ **Be physically and mentally present during meetings.**
- ❖ **Listen, listen, listen, and respond.**

# Improvement Project Team

## CRITICAL CONCEPT Improvement Team Ground Rules

- ❖ Allow for some mistakes; acknowledge them, let go, and move on.
- ❖ Accept conflict and its resolution as necessary catalysts for learning.
- ❖ Be open-minded to new thoughts and different behaviors.
- ❖ Honor confidentiality.
- ❖ Accept diversity as a gift.
- ❖ Begin and end all meetings on time.
- ❖ Share in the responsibilities of the recorder.
- ❖ Criticize ideas, not individuals.

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Length

- ❖ **The time needed to complete an improvement project varies. Some projects are elephant-sized, and some are bite-sized. Exhibit 7.4 is a timeline for completion of a project involving signage in a hospital.**
- ❖ **At this hospital, patients occasionally have difficulty finding the outpatient testing departments.**
- ❖ **Although signs are posted to lead the way, patients may not be able to read the signs or the signs may be unclear.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Length

- ❖ The director of the patient registration department brought this concern to the attention of the chief operating officer, who then sponsored a project to resolve the problem.
- ❖ Not all projects are completed quickly. A project team at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics was formed for the purpose of improving the use of intravenous pumps to deliver patient medications.

# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Length

- ❖ The 22-member team included representatives from anesthesiology, biomedical engineering central supply, industrial engineering, internal medicine, nursing, and pharmacy.
- ❖ The team met for 46 hours over four-and-a-half months to describe the process, identify improvement opportunities, and design solutions, and then it took additional time to implement the solutions.



# Improvement Project Team

## Improvement Project Length

- ❖ **Whether the project is long or short, the team should meet regularly; otherwise, enthusiasm for achieving the improvement goal diminishes.**
- ❖ **The project sponsor must stay informed of the progress of the initiative and intervene when progress is moving too slowly.**

# Improvement Project Team

## The Leader's Responsibilities

The team leader manages project meetings. This responsibility involves activities that ensure meetings are well run, including:

- ❖ Preparing the meeting agenda and distributing it at least one day in advance,
- ❖ Keeping the meeting focused on the agenda,
- ❖ Encouraging participation by all team members,
- ❖ Fostering an environment in which team members feel safe expressing their ideas, and
- ❖ Distributing the last meeting's minutes before the next meeting.

# Improvement Project Team

## The Leader's Responsibilities

- ❖ Absent a clear agenda, meetings are likely to veer off track.
- ❖ When meetings deteriorate, issues are left unresolved and team members become frustrated.
- ❖ In their frustration, they may stop showing up for meetings.
- ❖ The responsibility of keeping meetings focused does not rest on the team leader alone, however.
- ❖ All team members must cooperate to ensure successful meeting outcomes.

# Improvement Project Team

## The Leader's Responsibilities

To minimize disruptions, meetings should flow in an orderly manner and include the following elements:

- ❖ A brief overview of the agenda, including the primary objective of the meeting,
- ❖ A short update (no longer than five minutes) on work completed since the last meeting, including a synopsis of any major obstacles encountered,
- ❖ A group assessment of overall progress, including a review of the improvement project timeline,
- ❖ A brief discussion or time for reflection on the team's functioning as a group,
- ❖ Assignment of action items to be accomplished by the next meeting

# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

- ❖ **Tension always arises between people who come together to accomplish a common goal.**
- ❖ **An improvement team is like a family. Each member of the team brings his values, beliefs, and personal agendas to the project.**
- ❖ **Some people show up at the first meeting thinking they already know what the problem is and how it should be fixed.**
- ❖ **Some team members are unwilling to express their opinions when a manager or leader is in the room.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

- ❖ **Some members want to be sure the improvement solutions will not require too much extra work.**
- ❖ **These people typically advocate easy-to-implement solutions even though other improvement actions might produce better results.**
- ❖ **The team leader, assisted by the facilitator, is responsible for managing this diverse group of people.**
- ❖ **One of the team leader's greatest challenges is moving the improvement team through the stages of team development.**

# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

*In the 1960s, psychologist B. W. Tuckman (1965) identified four stages that all teams go through to become productive:*

- ❖ ***Forming***, the team meets and works together for the first time.
- ❖ ***Storming***, Team members “jockey” for position and struggle for control.
- ❖ ***Norming***, Team members adjust to one another and feel comfortable working together.
- ❖ ***Performing***, the team begins to function as a highly effective, problem-solving group.

# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

- ❖ Typical team characteristics and the role of the leader at each stage of development are summarized in **Exhibit 7.5. Page 177.**
- ❖ As mentioned earlier, if a facilitator has been assigned to the team, he will help the leader with team-building and project management responsibilities.
- ❖ The rapidity of a team's progression through the four stages depends on the composition of the team, the capabilities of the team leader and members, and the tasks to be performed.



# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

- ❖ But no team passes through the storming stage quickly.
- ❖ This stage is uncomfortable, but this discomfort and conflict experienced are prerequisites to successful project outcomes.
- ❖ When the leader is not able to help the team work through the storming phase, members are less likely to voice different perspectives.
- ❖ The success of the improvement project is jeopardized if team members cannot work as a cohesive group.

# Improvement Project Team

## Team Dynamics

- ❖ Improvement teams do not develop as neatly and sequentially as these stages imply.
- ❖ Teams can cycle from one stage to another relatively easily or become stuck in one stage.
- ❖ The team leader must identify where the team is along the development path and move it to the next phase with minimal fuss and resistance.
- ❖ Leaders with good team facilitation skills are better able to help teams progress through the stages than are leaders with poor skills in this area.

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