

Lessons From Geese

A team building workshop



Specification

Duration: 60 - 90 minutes.

Optimum group size: 8 to 15 people.

Target Audience: Any natural work team (including team leader) or any formal / informal team, for example a group of team leaders or a management team.

Objective: This workshop is designed to make team members more aware of the characteristics of successful teams and how each person's behaviour contributes to the smooth running of the team and its success. It uses the "Lessons from Geese" theme.

Learnings: By the end of the workshop each participant will have

- Learned about the four stages of team development - how teams form and evolve over time.
- Identified their own group's stage of development.
- Identified where team behaviours need to improve.
- Learned about the "Lessons From Geese" model of teamwork.
- Identified where they can contribute to the team's effectiveness by utilising one or more of the behaviours outlined in the model.
- Made a commitment to their team to contribute to the team's success.

Overview

Module 1: What is the purpose of this session.

Module 2: Where are we now? The four stages of team development.

Module 3: How effective are we as a group?

Module 4: Lessons from Geese.

Remarks

Although this training intervention has been designed to be delivered as one workshop it can be broken down into two smaller sessions: Modules 1 and 2 followed later by Modules 3 and 4.

Modules 3 and 4 should not be separated as they depend on each other.



Leader's Guide

In this CD ROM you will find:

- * The specification including learning objectives (in this document).
- * This Leader's Guide.
- * A set of black and white overhead transparencies as a .pdf file.
- * A master set of handouts as a .pdf file.
- * A master questionnaire as a .pdf file.
- * Colour overheads in a PowerPoint presentation.

What you will need to deliver this programme

- * Overhead projector (plus datashow if you want to use the PowerPoint version).
- * Whiteboard.
- * Video and TV.
- * Pens and paper for each participant.
- * A copy of the video "Lessons from Geese", available from Training Point.net, PO Box 17-096, Greenlane, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: (+64) 9 580 1470. Fax: (+64) 9 580 1420.



How to use this workshop

This workshop is designed to be used with the "Lessons from Geese" television commercial produced by Saatchi and Saatchi. The information upon which the commercial is based is well known and has been in circulation for some time. This intervention has been designed to link the inspirational commercial to the practicalities of how team members behave in a team.

It is suitable for teams at all but the most basic stages of development. It doesn't matter what kind of team, or what kind of business / service / industry. It is designed to create awareness among team members of team processes and how these contribute to overall effectiveness.

As always, the organisational culture and climate can influence how effective this programme will be. For example, if staff are disgruntled and in conflict with management, or if teams are "micromanaged" instead of being given some latitude, then the programme will be less effective.

The Team Effectiveness Questionnaire, which forms the basis of Module 3, can be used as a crude organisational diagnosis tool, but if you use it for this purpose please be aware that:

- * you will need to look at the results from a number of teams, not just one or two, and
- * your conclusions should be supported by what you actually see happening in the workplace.

You should begin by reading through this leader's guide and familiarising yourself with the programme. View the video at the appropriate places, not in isolation.



How to use the Leader's Guide

This workshop comprises three modules. Each module is designed to lead into the next and provide a flow. Each module comprises:

Explanation: information for the facilitator's use only on how to use the module. Explanation material is "cued" in the margin by this flag:



Content: information to be conveyed to the participants. Content material is "cued" in the margin by this flag:



Exercise: an activity to be undertaken by the participants. Exercises are "cued" in the margin by this flag:



Review: suggestions for the facilitator on how to end the module. Review material is "cued" in the margin by this flag:



"True Stories": boxed anecdotes to illustrate the content. These may be read by the facilitator.

Overhead transparencies (or slides in the PowerPoint presentation) are detailed in bold in the text thus:

(OHP: OHP Title)

and is "cued" in the margin by this symbol:



The place to play the videotape is marked in the text thus:

(Play Videotape)

and is "cued" in the margin by this symbol:



We suggest that you prepare the appropriate number of handouts for the session but don't give them out until the end - you need their attention.



Module 1

Explanation

What is the purpose of this session?

It is important that the team is thoroughly familiar with why this session is being held and what will result from it. Begin by welcoming the team members. You won't have to introduce them to each other as they will be a natural work team.

Read (but don't show) the learnings and tell the team that hand-outs will be available after the session. If you have "house rules" for conducting such training sessions, re-iterate them at this stage. Make the point that this session is for the benefit of them as individuals as well as for the team as a whole, and they'll only get from it as much as they're prepared to contribute.

After reading out the learnings, ask if there are any questions about the purpose of the session before moving on to Module 2. Make sure any misapprehensions (e.g. "will this form part of my appraisal?") are addressed but don't get bogged down with questions of process at this stage.

[OHP: Lessons from Geese title OHP]

Content

By the end of this workshop each of you will have ...

- * Learned about the four stages of team development - how teams form and evolve over time.
- * Identified your own group's stage of development.
- * Identified how well your team is performing and where it needs to improve.
- * Learned about the "Lessons From Geese" as they relate to teamwork.
- * Identified where you can contribute to the team's effectiveness by learning and using the Lessons from Geese, and
- * Made a commitment to your team to contribute to the team's success.



Module 2

Where are we now? The four stages of team development.

Explanation

There are four (or five if you like - see later) stages through which groups will move after they have been brought together for the first time or when they have been disrupted (for example, an influx of new members, a restructuring and so on). It is important for teams to know these stages and acknowledge that some of the behaviours they see happening are mostly a normal part of their evolution towards becoming effective as a team. This can help place events and people's behaviour in perspective, reassure team members that what they're going through is normal, and that they can influence the process of becoming as effective as they can be.

[OHP: Where are we now?]

Content

Generally there are four stages a group goes through once they have been formed or reformed. It's a little like a group of people being asked to take part in a recreational sports event, for example a social soccer team.

[OHP: Soccer Team]

When everyone first comes together they are generally polite and greet one another. They try and learn as much about each other as they can. They question the purpose of the group - why they're together; what the objectives are. Then things get a little chaotic. People are questioning, asking what the rules are, finding out how far they can go, and what other people are doing.

Soon everyone is trying to find a place for themselves on the team - what role, what position. Some will take on a role very quickly and readily, others may stand back and wait. Some natural leadership arises from people with previous experience ... or people who just like to organise others.

Later the team will evolve their own idea of what is normal and acceptable behaviour. Behaviour which doesn't conform to this unwritten code attracts censure from other team members. Finally, when everyone knows the others and has worked with them, knows their role and what they contribute to the team, and understands what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, the team begins to perform.

The stages are:

- * Forming
- * Storming
- * Norming
- * Performing

The time spent at each stage varies with the composition of the group and the task. A group with many dominant, self-confident personalities will probably spend more time Storming. A group of people who are sociable and care about people's feelings will probably spend more time Forming and Norming.

Often we call a team dysfunctional when we see it Storming, but it is only so if they spend a great deal of time in this stage without



showing signs of moving on. When Norming begins, the team begins to police itself, which tends to moderate Stormy behaviour.

[OHP: Forming]

Forming - meeting and greeting

In this first stage you're getting to know the other group members - who they are and what they're like. You seek information about the other members, ask questions and are, in turn questioned by others, or at least they talk to you. As a group you also try and clarify what the group's purpose is and what the limits and boundaries are. You are beginning to identify a role in the group for you - your place. Soon you are ...

[OHP: Storming]

Storming - jostling for position.

People now try and "carve a niche" or make a place for themselves in the group. You'll seek a place that best suits your own personal needs, for example:

- * to be left alone (you stand back a little),
- * to belong (you seek the company of other group members),
- * to have control and power (you look for functions to take over, e.g. recording minutes of group meetings or looking after the reports or representing the group at other meetings),
- * to avoid having control and the responsibility that comes with it (you don't take added responsibility), and so on.

There may also be a little rebellion - pushing the team leader to see how they react, pushing the boundaries. It is important to let this Storming happen in a team, otherwise conflict will be buried and will surface again some time later as a grudge.

[OHP: Norming]

Norming - setting the expectations

Once you know your place and role in the group, and have tested the boundaries (and the team leader) you'll begin to almost sub-consciously agree standards of behaviour and what is acceptable or not (the team's "norms"). Pretty soon everyone has a shared understanding of things we do and don't do. Getting drunk and noisy may be acceptable for a team of rugby supporters, but may be unacceptable to a team of customer service professionals.

Among the subtle "rules" may be standards of appearance (how we dress and how we're groomed). In fact some teams ask to be able to wear uniform or corporate wardrobe. Others almost unconsciously adopt an unwritten dress code (e.g. business or business casual).

By this stage, too, the conflict seen in the Norming stage has mostly been sorted out, although that which remains has to be managed, which is one of the functions of the informal "rules".



True Story

Infighting

You would think that highly-disciplined special forces soldiers would form disciplined teams, wouldn't you. In a book by a former British SAS (Special Air Service) member, the author speaks about the different "troops" (teams) which made up the unit to which he belonged. Each had a personality of its own, but one in particular was strange. While the other troops worked (mostly) harmoniously together, the members of this troop were continually fighting each other. In fact a fight broke out on a petrol station forecourt when team members, coming back from a social outing in a minibus, disagreed about whose turn it was to buy the petrol!



During the Norming stage you and your fellow team members begin to take on individual responsibility and start taking on your roles.

However, some “norms” may be unhelpful: that you’ll be aggressively competitive with other teams, that you will bury conflict (“anything for a quiet life”), or that you won’t trust any other team.

[OHP: Performing]

Performing - getting on with the job

When you and your team members are co-operating, supporting each other and achieving goals, and everyone feels their needs are being met, your team is entering the Performing stage. Your team will work well at this stage with members supporting and communicating with each other, challenging and stimulating each other, achieving the work goals and socialising together.

The rules - the “norms” - are well in place and act to regulate the team, and the conflict and jostling of the Storming phase is well behind you



Exercise: Discussion

Tell the team that it is important that we all identify the stage that we have reached as a team. On the white board write up the for stages left to right and draw a line underneath them like this:

FORMING STORMING NORMING PERFORMING

Ask each team member to come forward and mark on the line where they feel the team is. Tell them they can choose a point anywhere between the stages, to indicate that they feel the team is between phases. When this is completed look for similarities and circle where the bulk of the marks are. Use this as the basis for a 15 minute discussion. Record key words or key points on the white board. You may like to use the following prompts:

- * How realistic is this representation of where the team is?
- * What behaviours are we showing that makes you rate the team at this stage?
- * How well do you feel we have been or are dealing with conflict and differences?
- * How do we need to behave in order to move on?
- * Also mention extreme views - where a team member has rated the team well below or above the consensus. Ask those team members why they feel this way (this exposes the optimists and the “black hats”). Value their opinions and use them to get a reaction from the other team members.

Should the team rate themselves as Performing (extremely positive) ask them:



- * Are they sure this is where the team has reached? Challenge them to demonstrate the conflict is managed, everyone supports each other and so on.
- * How can the team's performance can be improved or maintained.

Should the team rate themselves as Forming or early Storming, probe and ask why. If they mention conflict, "bitching and moaning", "personality clashes" and so on, reassure them that this is normal and get them to acknowledge how far they've progressed. Then focus them on what will move them on: dealing with conflicts honestly, supporting each other, owning the roles and the tasks and so on.

[OHP: Mourning]

The Fifth Stage: Mourning

Content

Many authors believe there is a fifth stage, when a team is disbanded or undergoes major change in structure or membership: Mourning. This is a form of group grief, where members become less interested in the team and its goals, may distance themselves from the others, may yearn for the "old days", feel unfulfilled, feel dissatisfied that they didn't achieve what they wanted, and so on. This, too, is a perfectly natural reaction to change. When teams disband it's important to have a ceremony of some kind where the work achieved by the group is publicly valued and celebrated, people's contributions valued and everyone leaves on a highnote.

True Story

Mourning Glory

In the mid 1980s a factory in a small provincial town was closed and the staff made redundant. By doing things the right way, and with a huge amount of emotional effort, the company managed the closure humanely and found other work for many of the staff. The day the factory closed staff returned in the evening for a closure party with a band and entertainers, paid for by the company, which was still going at 7am the next day. In fact a local radio station hosted its breakfast show from the party.



Overhead



[OHP: Where are we now: Review]

Review

Sum up what the team has discussed in this module. Re-iterate the four stages and review the actions the team members need to take to improve the team's performance. Take a copy of these key points and circulate after the session.



Overhead



"Lessons from Geese" ©2001 Michael Maryan, All Rights Reserved.



Module 3

How effective are we as a group?

Explanation

The purpose of this module is to allow the team to rate themselves on how well the team is performing according to ten criteria which make up successful teams. The criteria have been distilled from existing research, literature on team performance, and the author's experience. The criteria may be referred to elsewhere by different names but they all refer to the ways in which team members behave. This model is no more or less valid than any other model but it is convenient and does link into Module 4.

Since they are based on observable behaviours and what team members say, they can be measured and used as the basis for having the team evaluate their own performance as a team.

- * Goal clarity
- * Participation
- * Using the skills of team members
- * Communication
- * Mutual Support
- * Role clarity
- * Taking Responsibility
- * Working together
- * Giving and receiving Feedback
- * Handling Conflict

Content

There have been many studies of what goes to make an effective team. While the way in which a team is led, how the organisation treats its people generally, and what's happening to the organisation (whether it is stable or changing) all affect how teams perform, there are a number of factors that team members can themselves control by what they do and how they act towards each other.

Generally there are ten such factors which influence how well a team performs.

[OHP: How effective is our Team?]

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| A. Goals | The extent to which members understand the goals and objectives of the team as a whole. |
| B. Participation | The extent to which members participate in the workings of the team and show an interest in the team. |
| C. Using Skills | The extent to which people's individual talents and skills are recognised, valued and put to good use by the team. |
| D. Communication | How well the team members communicate with each other and the extent to which open communication prevents misunderstandings. |
| E. Mutual Support | How well team members support each other emotionally and practically. |



F. Role Clarity	How well individual team members understand their role in the team and what they can contribute to the team's smooth running.
G. Responsibility	The extent to which team members accept responsibility for taking action and doing tasks.
H. Working together	How well team members work together and help each other out.
I. Feedback	The extent to which team members encourage each other and give each other feedback.
J. Handling Conflict	How well team members handle differences and conflict among themselves.

True Story

Email - good or bad?

Two team members had a major difference of opinion which had not been "sorted". On the surface the team looked to be functioning well as the two protagonists never aired their differences in public. That was because they were exchanging strongly-worded vitriolic emails, even though they sat just metres away from each other. Things came to a head when one of the pair began copying his emails to the team leader and the other began doing the same. The team leader had to step in quite firmly, bring the matter to the surface and resolve it. Because the conflict was, essentially, hidden from view there's no telling how long it might have gone on had it not been for the "c.c." function.

Effective teams tend to do all these things well, and many do some of these things well. In order to become more effective it is important to know how you, the team members, rate this team according to the ten factors. To do this we will be using a simple questionnaire.

Exercise



The Team Effectiveness Questionnaire

Tell the team that this simple questionnaire asks them to rate their team - to think about how the team performs and rate the team from one to four on each factor. Distribute one copy of the questionnaire to each team member and allow around five minutes for them to complete it before collecting the questionnaires. See the sheet "Team Effectiveness Questionnaire: Collating the Team's Responses" for instructions on collating the scores.

[OHP: Team Effectiveness Questionnaire (with results)]

Once the scores have been collated and transferred to the grid on the OHP transparency, ask the team a general question such as "overall, how well do you think we're doing?" Allow some quick responses to whet their appetites before showing the results.



Use the results as the basis for a discussion of around 15 minutes or so about the team's strengths and weaknesses. Point out where the team is rated highly and identify these as strengths - praise them for these. Then point out factors which score not so well. Identify these as factors which will need to be improved, and where everyone has a role to play. Focus on the low scoring factors and deal with them one by one.

You may like to use the following prompts and record the key words on the white board:

- * How realistic is this picture of the team's strengths and weaknesses?
- * Why do you think this factor is rated so low?
- * What specifically are we doing or not doing that makes us rate this factor so low?
- * How do we need to behave in order to improve?

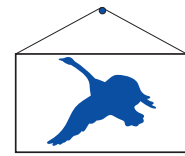


Finish by reminding the team of the factors where they rate highly - their strengths. Remind them that they are doing some things very well.

[OHP: Review: How Effective Are We?]

Review

Sum up the ten factors which contribute to making an effective team. Re-iterate the factors on which the team performs well. Identify the factors where they do not perform well and remind them of what needs to happen in order for the team to become even more effective. Take a copy of these key points and circulate after the session.



Overhead



Module 4

Lessons from Geese

Explanation

The purpose of this module is to link the ten factors influencing team effectiveness to the theme of “Lessons from Geese”. The Goose metaphor, which is used in the video “Lessons from Geese”, a television commercial produced by advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi, is commonly used as an inspirational message; an appeal to the heart and the emotions. This links the emotional appeal of the message to the practical business of applying that message through how team members behave.

This module is last because the previous modules build to a climax. Module 2 states that developing an effective team is a journey and allows team members to plot their position on that journey. Module two shows 10 factors which go to make up an effective team and allows members to rate themselves on these factors. This module brings all this together in the five lessons from Geese.

First of all complete the “Lessons from Geese - Collating and displaying the scores” sheet. Transfer the team’s scores from the Team Effectiveness Questionnaire to this sheet and collate as shown.

For each of the five Lessons from Geese, two factors from the team effectiveness model apply. For instance, Flying in Formation depends on Goals and Role Clarity; Staying with the Flock depends on Participation and Taking Responsibility.

Now transfer these five scores to the “Lessons from Geese” grid, connecting the points to form a graph.

[OHP: Lessons from Geese - Canada Goose ...]

Content

Canada Geese are found in far Eastern Russia, Alaska, Canada and the northern US. They are migratory birds and their travels have been well studied. Each northern hemisphere winter they fly south in flocks of 200 to 300 birds in distinctive V or W shaped formations. Their migration is the subject of the feature film Fly Away Home, and a television commercial you may have seen.

(Play Videotape)

Play videotape “Lessons from Geese”. At the end immediately rewind the tape back to the start.

So what can we learn from Geese? There are five lessons in all.

[OHP: Flying in Formation]

Flying in formation

Geese fly in a V formation which results in a 71 per cent extra flying range. Teams are more powerful than individuals on their own. By sharing a sense of being a team, and trusting one another, we can help each other get where we’re going more easily.



[OHP: Staying with the flock]

Staying with the flock

If a goose drops out of formation they lose speed and lift provided by the other geese and soon re-join the formation. We should stay with our teams and get the benefits of membership, but we also have to accept responsibility for giving and receiving help.

[OHP: Rotating the lead]

Rotating the lead

When the leading goose becomes tired it drops back and another takes its place. We should share the hard tasks and respect each others' skills and abilities.

[OHP: Honking to encourage others]

Honking to encourage others

Geese will honk to encourage the geese ahead of them to keep up their speed. We should encourage others in our team because then we'll be more productive. If our honking is quality honking we'll become more confident as team members.

[OHP: Standing by each other]

Standing by each other

When a goose gets sick and falls out of formation two other geese will follow it down and protect it. We should stand by each other in bad times and good.

In fact when a flock of geese are feeding, some geese move to the perimeter of the group and act as sentries. They are relieved at intervals by other geese so that they, too, can feed.

If we were a flock of geese how would we rate? Show the team their "Lessons from Geese" graph.

[OHP: Questionnaire results transferred to grid]

Explain that this is made up from the Team Effectiveness Questionnaire they've just completed.

We can relate Lessons from Geese to the Team Effectiveness Questionnaire and the ten factors that make a team effective. In this explanation the factors are in brackets.

[OHP: Lessons from Geese & Team Effectiveness]

Flying in formation

To fly effectively in formation means everyone must know where we're heading (**Goals**) and must know the role they play in the team (**Role Clarity**).

Staying with the flock

To remain with the flock and give and receive the benefits of being a team member requires us to take part in team activities (**Participation**) and to take responsibility for contributing and taking action (**Taking Responsibility**).



Overhead



Overhead



Overhead



Overhead



Overhead



Overhead



Rotating the lead

How well we rotate the lead position depends on how well we recognise and value each others' skills (**Using Skills**) and how well we actually work together (**Working Together**).

Honking to encourage others

The extent to which we honk encouragement at each other depends on how well we communicate (**Communication**) and how well we give and receive feedback (**Feedback**).

Standing by each other

Whether we help those who fall out of formation depends on how well we support each other (**Mutual Support**) and how well we deal with our differences (**Handling Conflict**).

Exercise

Discussion

[OHP: Lessons from Geese Quest Graph (with results)]

Using the Lessons from Geese graph, identify where the team is doing well and acknowledge this. Now identify where the team is not doing so well and ask the team what we have to do to improve this. Don't dwell on this too much as the team has already discussed much of this when talking about the results of the team Effectiveness Questionnaire. Choose main points not details and you may care to use prompts such as:

- * How well do you think we're honking? Do you feel honked at enough?
- * How's our formation doing? Are we a good V formation?
- * When you can see someone falling out of formation, what are you going to do?
- * Has anyone ever felt like they are in the lead and getting tired?
- * How are we going to make sure we're staying with the flock?

[OHP: Lessons from Geese - Review]

Review

Summarise what has been achieved in this session, mentioning that the team now knows whether they are forming, storming, norming or performing; that they've looked hard at their team and identified things they're doing well and things that need attention; and that we've all learned some valuable lessons from geese.

End by showing the videotape "Lessons from Geese" once again.

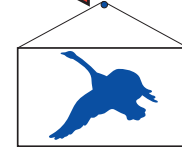
(Play Videotape)

[OHP: Lessons from Geese - now it's up to you]

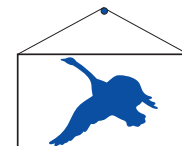
True Story

More lessons from Geese

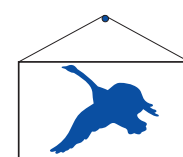
Canada Geese mate for life. Once they've paired the male will chase away other males from his mate but it's all show and the encounters are seldom violent. The female incubates the eggs for 28 days during which time the male guards her against predators. So protective are the males that there is a record of a man riding a horse close to a nest being attacked and knocked off his mount by the male goose! When the chicks are born they are led to the water by the parents - the male in the lead, watching out for danger, and the female at the back of the column shepherding the youngsters along.



Overhead



Overhead



Overhead



Appendix

About the Author

Michael Maryan B. Sc. (Hons.), Dip. Jour., FPRINZ.

Michael's first line-management job was managing a University student cinema and its staff, an experience which began a life-long interest in leadership and organisational behaviour (as well as film). After graduating with an honours degree in neurophysiology and behaviour he studied journalism and entered public relations consulting. He then became managing editor of a publishing company before moving into the corporate world as a senior manager for a multinational company.



In the late 1980s he took the opportunity of starting his own management consultancy which later became First Principles, of which he is a director. He has been a trainer and training designer since starting his own business and has designed, developed and delivered training in customer service, selling skills, telephone skills and career management, among other subjects. He has also undertaken a number of development and leadership programmes for first line managers (team leaders and supervisors).

Michael is a Fellow of the PR Institute and Life Member of Tuanz, as well as co-founder of the Call Centre Association of New Zealand and designer of the 1998 Call Centre Manager of the Year Awards. He also designed the Road Transport Business of the Year Awards (1995-8) and the First Principles programmes "Six Keys to Effective, Flexible Management" and "Leadership is what leaders do". Michael is a published author and experienced Personal Leadership Trainer.

Other products and programmes

"Leadership is what leaders do" – a self-development programme for line managers, team leaders, supervisors and people who aspire to leadership positions. 60pp, A4 workbook complete with free Leadership Style Profile and three levels of on-line help from a skilled Personal Leadership Trainer (30 days, 60 days, 90 days). A 180-degree feedback questionnaire is also available. Covers the importance of leadership, Leaders v Managers, 7 everyday leadership behaviours, 6 specific leadership behaviours, motivation, and much more. Includes exercises, anecdotes and self-assessment questionnaires.

Training Programmes (in-house or by consortium)

- "Phone Improvement" (telephone skills, half-day).
- "Never let a chance go Buy" (telephone selling, 1 day).
- "One Day Fun Day" (team building and customer service, 1 day).
- "Team building for Management Teams" (half or full day).
- "Customer Service Refresher" (skills for front line staff, half-day).
- "Plain Speaking, Plain Writing" (communication skills, 1 day).
- "Behaving as a Team" (team building, 3 hrs).
- "Six Keys to Effective, Flexible Management" (leadership, 1 day+)
- "Personal Training / Coaching" (by the hour).

First Principles Ltd.,
PO Box 54-168,
Mana 6230,
Porirua City, New Zealand.
Tel: (+64) 4 233 9235.
Fax: (+64) 4 233 9063.
Email: firprin@clear.net.nz

