



PSP Advanced

Being a TSP Team Member

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PSP Advanced: Being a TSP Team Member June 2010



Lecture Topics

Software is a Team Business

Effective Self Management

Working with Teams

Being Responsible

Note: The instructor may refer back to the initial flip charts done at the start of the course. If people talked about individual goals, aspirations, etc, it may help provide a foundation for the lecture. The lecture works fine without that, so the instructor should of course use their own judgement.

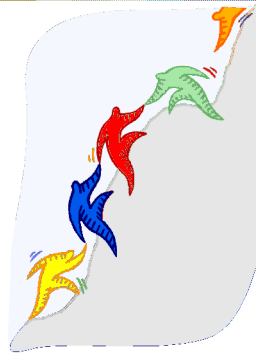


Development is a Team Sport

Most projects are large enough to require a team of people or even many teams.

The following can contribute to people being very successful team members.

- Manage yourself
- Work with team members
- Be responsible




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Software is not a solo business, we work on teams. This small lecture is to provide some of our ideas and beliefs, some pointers to being great team members. When a group of people works together with these principals, what they can achieve is incredible. For this to be true, we need to be great team members. To do this we must:

Be effective at self-management
work well with a team
be responsible.

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Effective Self Management



TSP teams expect team members to do effective self-management. The expectation is that you

- are skilled in the domain area of the development project
- will make commitments you can keep
- will let the team know if any of your commitments are at risk
- will use a process to produce high quality products
- will work to improve

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The instructor will bring up each of these points one at a time. And discuss them with the group.

The instructor may ask questions like this to the students. I would suggest using 1 or 2 of the questions for each point: are skilled in the domain area of the development project

--- have you ever worked with someone on a team who did not know or understand the domain?

--- What do you think that person should have done?

--- What would you do ?

will make commitments you can keep

---- Do you know some people who if you ask to do something and they say "YES", you know it will be done?

---- Do you know some people who are the opposite of this?

---- Which type do others think you are?

---- Do you know how many of your commitments you keep?

will let the team know if any of your commitments are at risk

--- Lets say you are working on a team that made a firm commitment to management.

--- When should you let the team know you are behind and your commitment is at risk?

--- Do you think people usually do this? Why do some people wait until it is too late?

will use a process to produce high quality products

--- How many times have you had to go into a system to work on a serious problem in system test or the customer site?

--- How often was it a simple problem that could have been caught by CR or Inspections Or Unit Test?

will work to improve

---- Do you know which of the above areas you may be weak in?

---- Did your Performance Analysis Report give you ideas of what to work on?



Work with Team Members



Self management as discussed is necessary, but not sufficient.

To deliver great products takes great teamwork.

There are some key areas that are important for you to master to be a great team member for the teams you are on. These include:

- keep a team focus
- be a responsible TSP Role Manager
- use conflicts to help the whole team improve
- help others on the team.

This slide just introduces an overview of working with others. The following slides elaborate each of the above points.




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Keep A Team Focus

An effective team can do more together than the members could do by themselves.

Effective teams establish team goals and plans they are committed to.

Effective team members work to ensure the team's success.



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The instructor could ask “What activities would be helpful for you to do to help your team be successful?”

Some ideas:

- careful inspections of other people's work products
- provide constructive feedback that is focused on helping the other people to build great work products while recognizing the effort they put into it
- pitching in when other people are behind
- giving up work products to others when you are behind
- take on a TSP Role manager responsibility

OTHERS QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- How could someone not be focused on the team?
- How could someone be disruptive or tear down a team?
- have you seen any of these behaviors?
- Have you done any?



Be A Responsible TSP Role Manager




Volunteer to a TSP Role Manager

Learn to be effective in the role manager position

Use the role manager "hat" to ensure the team keeps in mind the activities associated with your role.



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Use Conflict to Improve

When these conflicts are thoughtfully explored, a superior solution often emerges. The following techniques can help resolve conflicts.

- Listen to understand.
- Clarify your position.
- Negotiate towards a win-win solution.
- Work to satisfy team goals above individual positions.

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Before talking about this slide, you may ask the participants if they have seen conflicts on teams they have been on. Were they ignored? Were they dealt with well? Poorly? How?

When teams tackle difficult challenges in a technical domain, differences of opinions will emerge.

Don't ignore conflicts. Although this sometimes works, it usually does not. It is best to try to resolve differences as they arise.

When teams tackle difficult challenges in a technical domain, differences of opinions will emerge.

When these conflicts are thoughtfully explored, a superior solution often emerges.

Clarify your position. Focus on what your goals and your beliefs are and let people know how those lead you to a position.

Listen. Use emphatic listening, with the intent to understand. Let the other person know you understand by telling them what you understand. (When people repeats things, it is usually because they don't know they have been heard.)

Negotiate towards a win-win solution. Be careful not to cling to positions. If people focus on their goals, they usually find a superior solution that works for each participant.

You are on the same team. When teams establish meaningful shared goals in meeting 2, they are often useful in helping reach consensus.

In spite of using these techniques, sometimes it can feel like the consensus process is stuck. The following are suggestions this situation.

- Make a table with the major alternatives being decided
- list the risks associated with implementing each alternative
- list potential mitigations to those risks

-Go around the table of the major players in discussion and see how strongly on a scale of 1 to 10 they feel about their position

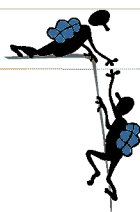
If this does not facilitate a decision, it may be up to a role manager or the team leader to make the decision. This is unfortunate, because it can lead to less optimum decisions and disgruntled team members.



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Help Others On The Team

- Provide support to inspections.
- Provide constructive feedback.
- Provide praise for jobs well done.
- Offer help when others are behind.
- Respect the ability of your team mates.



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Most significant sized teams are comprised of people with varying degrees of experience and skills.

It is important for you to seek help from those more experienced than you to help build your skills and to help the team be effective.

Equally, it is important to help build the skills of others that need help.

On one TSP team, a member “Dan” was struggling. The other team members initially felt he was incompetent and sabotaging the project. They discussed this with the TSP coach who suggested they had a responsibility to help the member. The worried team mates asked “Dan” if he needed help. He said “YES, I Was afraid to ask.” They had a very meaningful discussion about the problem areas. They redistributed the work load to areas that Dan was more familiar with and they helped him in the areas he was not. The team was successful. (NOTE: This is a true story)

The instructor could tell this story or a different one and ask “How would have this true story been different if the other team members just ignored and resented Dan?”




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Be Responsible

When faced with problems that could lead to you or your team missing commitments you must be responsible.

- Understand the situation. Use data to help analyze and understand.
- Work first to solve the problem before escalating.
- When escalating, let people know the facts and what actions have already been taken.

You must be able to interpret data, face the facts and work constructively with others to deal with the problems seen.



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Show this video:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6443066608816955075&q=lighthouse+video&total=11219&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=3>

Or tell the story using this link:

<http://www.snopes.com/military/lighthouse.asp>

This is in Watts book as fact (citing Covey), but in fact it is an urban myth. But I think the instructor can still use this as a joke and a metaphor.

"This an old story, but a useful one.

A battleship is a sea in a heavy fog. The admiral sees a light bearing on the starboard bow. He has the signalman single the ship. "We are on a collision course. Advise you change your course 20 degrees."

The signal came back to the battleship "Advise that you change course 20 degrees"

The admiral had the signal sent back "I am an admiral. Advise you change your course."

The signal came back "I'm a seaman second class. You had better change course 20 degrees soon"

Furious, the admiral sent back "I am a battleship"

The seaman signaled back "I am a lighthouse."

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I think the job of a software engineer is often to act as a lighthouse for the organization. When the sr. managers (the admirals) ask for something, demand something – they have a good reason to do so, it may be urgent to them and the business. However they cannot know the facts and data like you the developers do.

It is your responsibility to be like a lighthouse to your team and the admirals (sr managers) and provide the facts and data so everyone can make the right decisions.





Messages to Remember

Development is a team sport.

The most effective teams are composed of team members working towards common aggressive goals.



