Teamwork

Fluff Disclaimer:
I’m not a fan of fluffy discussion about being nice.

But teamwork is critical to having a successful career

We can all get better at teamwork.

http://go.funpic.hu
Ever had this feeling?

WHEN I DIE, ASK THE PEOPLE FROM MY GROUP ASSIGNMENT TO LOWER ME INTO MY GRAVE

JUST SO THEY CAN LET ME DOWN. ONE. LAST. TIME.
1) Teamwork
   a) What’s a team?
   b) Team rules

2) Habits of Highly Effective People
Why Teamwork?

- **Group**
  - people working on similar tasks,..
  - **Ex:** Some programmers in same office, individually working on similar but different projects.
  - **Ex:** Study group

- **Team**
  - ..
  - ..
  - ..
Successful teams can:

- **Complete more/larger tasks**
  - can divide big tasks into small tasks for individuals

- **Learn and improve**
  - learn from the skills of other team members

- **Respond to change**
  - people join/leave, jobs change: team can react

- **Stronger sense of commitment**
  - depending on each other enhances morale
Basics: Team Stages

- ..
  - polite getting-to-know each other

- ..
  - members compete to voice opinions; conflict normal.

- ..
  - conflicts resolved; relationships allow effective teamwork (norms).

- ..
  - Team has gelled, productive "teamwork"

- ..
  - extraordinarily productive; not usually attained

- ..
  - Done work; disbanding.
Basics: Advice

- **Positive attitude** correlated with success: work harder, cooperate better
  - good skills with positive attitude better than expert with negative attitude
- Big teams (>10 members) less productive due to communication/decision overhead
Exercise

- Who thinks they are a safer than average driver?
- Who thinks they are a better than average team member?

- If we ranked everyone by teamwork skills, there would be the bottom 10 people.
  - What advice could we give them to improve?
Basics: Team Rules

• respect everyone

• ..
  – accept constructive criticism; strive to improve it not defend it.

• ..
  – no BCC to others or forwarding comments without permission

• do the work you commit to;
  – inform team quickly will not complete
Basics: Team Rules (cont)

- **Communication**
  - everyone has their say;
  - each person able to speak: allow equal participation
  - one person speaks at a time
  - no side discussions
  - be brief and on topic

- **Meetings**
  - be on time; be focused: no electronic interruptions (text/email/..)
  - don't do work during meetings
Basics: Team Decision Making

- Agree on how decisions are made
  - how many people need to vote?
  - is majority good enough (breeds discontentment)
- Don't avoid conflict to get a decision
  - .. discuss alternatives.
  - nominate someone to play devil's advocate
- Respect different opinions
  - dissenters may see some aspect you overlooked
  - this avoids group-think
- Use time to soften disagreements.
Habits of Highly Effective People

This may sound like a lot of fluff, but try to see how it applies to you. Make an effort to improve your group work and interpersonal skills.
• **Life doesn't just happen; make choices**
  – You choose engagement or you choose ambivalence

• **Reactive** people are governed by..

• **Proactive** people choose their behaviour.
  – Take responsibility for your actions/situations.
• Success is not based on competition:
  – someone need not lose for you to win.

• Find mutually beneficial solutions.

• Be courageous to express and fight for your ideas;
  – Be considerate of feelings of others.
  – Balance courage and consideration!

• Believe there is plenty for everyone
  – not a zero-sum game
• **Listen.**
  - First listen and try to understand before reacting/judging.
  - **Ex:** PhD candidate misunderstanding questions!

• Listen with an intent..
  - Don't half-listen waiting for a chance to make a point.

• Be able to restate a person's view/questions before replying.
• 2 heads better than one
• diverse group able to create better solutions together
• ..
  – everyone doesn't have to be the same to be part of the team.
• Truly value diversity
  – not "I wish everyone would agree with me faster so we could make some progress!"
Summary

- **Teams**
  - Team stages
  - Team rules
  - Team decision making

- **Habits**
  - Be proactive
  - Win-Win
  - Seek first to understand, then to be understood
  - Synergize / collaborate