Twelve Characteristics of Effective Teams

1. **Clear purpose.** Each member of the team understands the mission or objective, and the team has a plan of action.

2. **Informality.** The working environment is informal. Team members feel comfortable with the project and with each other. No one is either tense or bored.

3. **Participation.** Discussions are lively and each member of the team has a chance to participate.

4. **Listening.** Team members listen to each other. They summarize, paraphrase, or ask questions in order to encourage explanation or elaboration.

5. **Civilized disagreement.** Team members feel comfortable disagreeing with each other. Disagreements are polite and friendly.

6. **Consensus decisions.** The team arrives at its decisions through discussion of each member’s ideas. Team members avoid both formal voting and easy compromises.

7. **Open communication.** Team members tell each other how they feel about the team’s project and the team’s operation. They have no secrets or ulterior motives.

8. **Clear roles and work assignments.** Each member of the team understands the job that he or she is expected to do. Work assignments are fairly distributed and promptly completed.

9. **Shared leadership.** The responsibilities of leadership rotate periodically among the members of the team.

10. **External relations.** The team develops a working relationship with the supervisor and with other teams. It displays to those outside the team a distinct identity.

11. **Diverse responsibilities.** Each member of the team has a special emphasis. The team includes members who emphasize the quality of the document, the setting of objectives, the process of investigating alternatives, and building consensus, and the administration of the team.

12. **Self-assessment.** The team does periodic self-examinations. Each member of the team evaluates how effectively the team is functioning and recommends how it might improve.