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6.005 Elements of Software Construction
Fall 2008

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Lab: Team Management

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In this lab, you will learn how to work better as a team. You will learn how to run effective and efficient team meetings, and you will create a team contract that establishes the goals and conventions your team will abide by.

Effective Meetings

Guidelines

- Never meet without an agenda!
- If you are meeting without an agenda, the first step of the meeting should be to make one up.
- Assign roles, such as facilitator and note taker, for every meeting.
- Rotate responsibilities.
- Keep it simple!

Meeting Planning Checklist

- Why meet?
- Who to include?
- What to discuss?
- How to record ideas?
- Where to meet?

Purpose of Meeting

- Identify problems
- Solve problems
- Brainstorm ideas
- Gather information
- Organize
- Make decisions

Orchestrate the Roles

- Who will serve as facilitator? The facilitator keeps the discussion and decision-making

process moving along.

- Who will serve as note taker?

Set the Agenda

- Specify the purpose and the participants
- Schedule agenda items
- Explain each agenda item
- Decide on the discussion format
- Decide on a decision-making technique
- Distribute the agenda in advance

Opening the Meeting

- Set the tone
- Remind participants of their roles
- Reach agreement on ground rules
- Involve people early
- Use icebreakers with new groups

Ending the Meeting

- Know when to end
- Summarize the meeting
- Confirm the summary
- End on a positive note
- Follow-up to ensure implementation

Meeting Action List

Action lists are one way to record group decisions and track progress. Here is one example of an action list format that your team may find helpful.

- Task:
- Assigned to:
- Estimated Completion Date:
- Actual Completion Date:
- Status:



Starting with the sample agenda below, conduct your first team meeting right now. Add

to the agenda as you see fit (for example, to start discussing the actual project). **Record your meeting minutes** as a text file in the `team` folder of your group's shared Subversion repository for this project.

- Assign a facilitator and a note taker for this meeting.
- Collect everyone's contact information.
- Find out the best way to contact each team member.
- Create your team contract (see below).
- Schedule your second team meeting.
- Create second team meeting agenda.
- Adjourn.

Team Contract

A team contract is an agreement between you and your teammates about how your team will operate -- a set of conventions that you plan to abide by. The questions below will help you consider what might go into your team contract. You should also think back to good or bad aspects of team project experiences you've already had.

Your contract doesn't have to answer all the questions below. Focus on the issues that your team considers most important.

Goals

- What are the goals of the team?
- What are your personal goals for this assignment?
- What kind of obstacles might you encounter in reaching your goals?
- What happens if all of you decide you want to get an A grade, but because of time constraints, one person decides that a B will be acceptable?
- Is it acceptable for one or two team members to do more work than the others in order to get the team an A?

Meeting Norms

- Do you have a preference for when meetings will be held? Do you have a preference for where they should be held?
- How often do you think the team will need to meet outside of class? How long do you anticipate meetings will be?
- Will it be okay for team members to eat during meetings?
- How will you record and distribute the minutes and action lists produced by each

meeting?

Work Norms

- How much time per week do you anticipate it will take to make the project successful?
- How will work be distributed?
- How will deadlines be set?
- How will you decide who should do which tasks?
- Where will you record who is responsible for which tasks?
- What will happen if someone does not follow through on a commitment (e.g., missing a deadline, not showing up to meetings)?
- How will the work be reviewed?
- What happens if people have different opinions on the quality of the work?
- What will you do if one or more team members are not doing their share of the work?
- How will you deal with different work habits of individual team members (e.g., some people like to get assignments done as early as possible; others like to work under the pressure of a deadline)?

Decision Making

- Do you need consensus (100% approval of all team members) before making a decision?
- What will you do if one of you fixates on a particular idea?



Create a team contract, and record it as a text file in the `team` folder of your group's shared Subversion repository for this project. If not all of your team members are present, then consider it a tentative contract for now, and decide how you will finalize it with your remaining team members.

 **Checkpoint.** Find a TA or LA or another member of the course staff, and discuss your team contract with them.

Commit Your Results

This is the end of the lab. Be sure to commit your minutes and your team contract to your group repository, and make sure everybody knows when and where your next team meeting will be.

This lab has been adapted from material created by Diane Soderholm and Lori Breslow.