

## **TEAMS: THE BASICS**

### **What defines a team?**

A team is a collection of two or more people working interdependently toward a common goal that have a common identity. Teams have clear boundaries of membership and have mutual accountability as they work toward their goal.

### **When should a team be formed?**

There are many factors that should be considered as part of the decision to form a team. Consider the checklist below prior to deciding to form a team. If the majority of the boxes are filled, forming a team is probably a good idea.

#### **Form a team if the task can benefit from one of more of the following conditions:**

- Division of labor for increased efficiency
- A context for people to feel connected and valued
- Broader sources of information to apply to the problem
- Greater diversity in background, expertise, and ideas to promote innovation and creativity
- Representation of diverse stakeholder groups to gain broader acceptance of solutions

### **Why does the decision matter?**

Not all situations are a good match to using a team. If used appropriately, teams can help to boost efficiency, productivity, creativity, engagement and communication. However, if not used appropriately, they can also slow things down, create distractions and waste resources. Therefore, it is imperative to only use teams where there is a clear justification for doing so. Start by having a clear understanding of what defines a team. Then consider whether one or more of the conditions for forming a team described above applies. Otherwise, it may not be a good idea to create a team.

#### **Additional Sources**

Baldwin, T. T., Bommer, W. H., & Rubin, R. S. (2013). *Managing Organizational Behavior: What Great Managers Know and Do* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.