Here’s what you said . . .

I did all the work on my teams

If I didn’t do the work, it didn’t get done

I never trusted anyone else to do the work

No one did work as well as I wanted it done

Everyone looked to me to do the work
Here’s the good news: You’re at MIT

But you need to follow 3 simple rules
Sample WBS—Planning a Vacation

Trip to Florida Christmas Break 12/26-1/2

- Research and buy tickets
  - Chien Chi--11/1

- Research places to stay and make reservations
  - Sheryl--11/5

- Find out about things to do
  - Water related
    - Selina--12/1
  - Restaurants
    - Vikram--12/1
Facilitator/Coordinator

• Why?

If everyone is responsible, no one is

• The coordinator/facilitator should
  – Focus the team toward the task
  – Get all team members to participate
  – Keep the team on deadline
  – Suggest alternatives
  – Help team members confront problems
  – Summarize team decisions
Setting Ground Rules

• Goals and expectations
• Work norms
• Facilitator norms
• Communication norms
• Meeting norms
• Consideration norms
High Performing Teams*

- Definition of team
  - Deliverables include both individual results and “collective work products”
  - Complementary skills and mutual accountability
  - More than the sum of its parts
- Common commitment
- Shared leadership

Meeting Guidelines

• Use an agenda! If you don’t have one at the beginning of the meeting, make one

• Small talk is O.K. at the beginning of the meeting, then get down to business

• Do mid-meeting check in

• End with next steps clearly articulated

• See Project Team Productivity Tools
Communication Behaviors to Observe

- Who participates
- Who doesn’t
- How do people take turns?
- Who talks to whom?
- Who responds to whom?
- How are interruptions handled?
- Is silence O.K.?
- Is anyone dominating the conversation?
- How are decisions made?
  - By consensus?
  - By voting?
  - By one person?
And be sure to observe your own feelings, reactions, and behaviors.
It’s All About Communication

Practicing good communication skills

+ Refraining from communication roadblocks

↓ Engaging in dialogue

Building trust

Being productive
Four Principles of Communication

• All communication takes place on the content and relationship level

• We cannot not communication

• Often the problem with communication is the assumption of it

• Metacommunication is very useful
What Makes Teams Troublesome*

• Individual behaviors

• Group social psychology

* Even people with good intentions can get into trouble
Individual Behaviors

- “Ego integrity”
- Self-interest versus group interest
- Inability to observe self and/or use feedback
- Different styles of
  - Learning
  - Interaction
  - Expression
Group Behaviors

- “Defensive routines”
- Us versus them
- Reluctance to test assumptions publicly
- Getting “off task”
- Lack of boundaries
  - Ill defined roles
  - Unclear objectives and/or expectations
Common Problems in Teams

**Hogging**—talking too much

**Flogging**—beating an issue to death

**Frogging**—jumping from topic to topic

Photograph courtesy of Ro Irving on Flickr.

Photograph courtesy of @Doug88888 on Flickr.
Bogging—getting stuck on an issue

Dead buffaloes—tiptoeing around a contentious issue
Handling Difficult Behavior

• If a team member is
  – Talkative
  – Quiet
  – Argumentative or complains a lot
  – A free rider

• Try the following
  – Using the two-minute rule
  – Asking the person a question
  – Being explicit about your responses and reactions
  – Talking through norms at the beginning
Handling Group Problems

• If the group is
  – Foundering
  – Digresssing
  – Deciding too quickly
  – Being indecisive
  – Feuding

• Try the following
  – Use an agenda
  – Use the “parking lot”
  – Use a facilitator
  – Use a voting plan
  – Address the problem or go to a third party