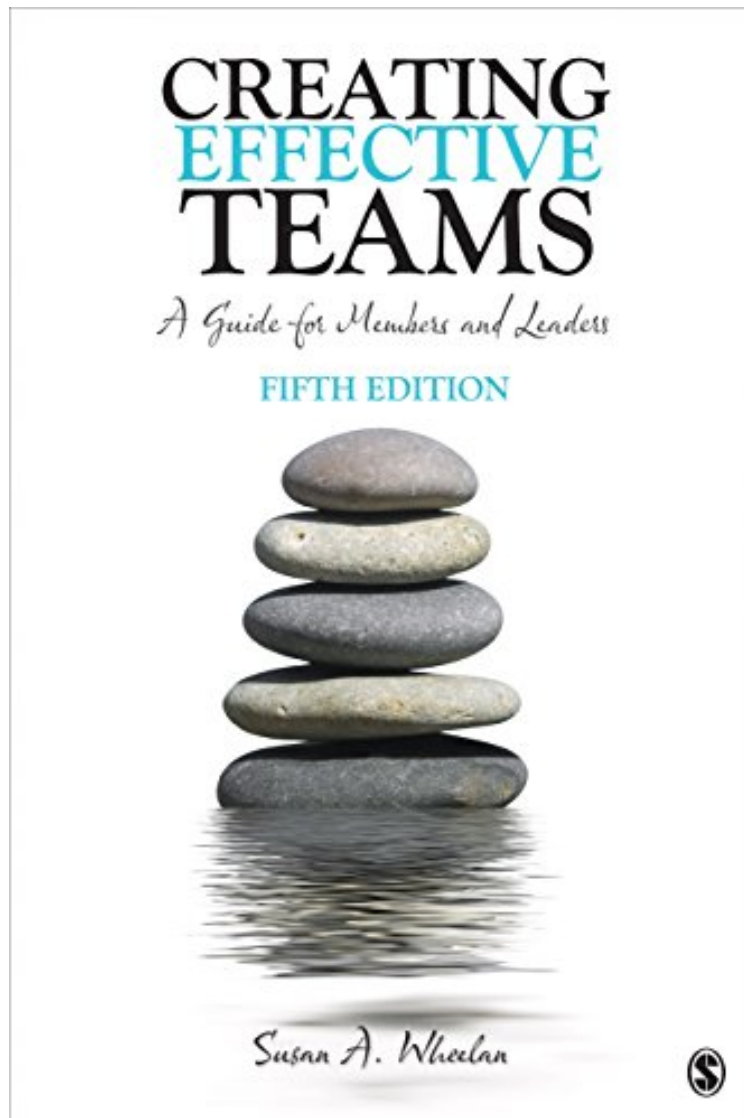


Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders

Susan A. Wheelan

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Susan A. Wheelan : Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders*:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. From a consultant's perspective By The Exhorter Peruse through the average leadership books today and you will find that most of them focus primarily on the top tier of any given team. Corporate America emphasizes management, athletics teams key in on the coaches, and churches center on senior pastors as the problem or solution for anything dysfunctions within the organization. In *Creating Effective Teams*, Susan A. Wheelan contends that the success of any given team is contingent upon the performance of all of its

members. *Creating Effective Teams* is different from much of the popular leadership books in that the author stresses the importance of teamwork. As a bonus, Wheelan shares practical information and stories to move the reader beyond the theoretical and abstract language found in many publications. Wheelan's goal is communicated early in the book as she writes, "The goal of *Creating Effective Teams* is to translate what we've learned about groups and teams into straightforward, user-friendly, practical guidelines for members and leaders." Wheelan explains throughout the work that there is a difference between groups and teams. She promotes the "team" as the goal for any group and suggests definitively that work groups become teams "when shared goals have been established and effective methods to accomplish those goals are in place." It appears the role of the leader has not been devalued by the author — only understood in light of the entire team as they endeavor to be successful. Because group dynamics is a crucial factor in any team, Wheelan suggests that all team members have a good understanding of the stages of group development in order to identify where and who they are as a group. She offers four stages of development every group experiences as they develop. Says Wheelan, "For the first two or three months, groups are dealing with the issues characteristic of Stages 1 and 2. Groups generally enter Stage 3 in the fourth or fifth month, and Stage 4, or high performance, typically begins during the sixth or seventh month." Each stage in the transformation from groups to teams has its own challenges and Wheelan believes nearly all challenges can be resolved using a systematic approach to problem solving and decision making. Highlighting six methods of conflict resolution, Wheelan believes "problem solving" to be the best at yielding results. She purports, "Problem solving... gives the best results because it requires the actual resolution of different perspectives and a new group conceptualization of the issues involved in the conflict." Again, Wheelan points to her theory that team success depends on all the members of the team and not just the leader. The book concludes with the author giving advice concerning seasons of rest, obtaining organizational support, and if necessary, interventions that include goal setting and feedback in order to enhance group productivity. While the information Wheelan shares in this book is incredibly valuable, the redundancy within the chapters can be a challenge to the reader. As an example, Wheelan writes, "Organizations forget to ask training providers some very basic and important questions." She lists the questions and follows up with, "If a trainer is unable to answer the first three questions above, head for the hills." Not even two pages later Wheelan again writes, "Before choosing an intervention to improve group performance, organization members should ask the consultant the following questions." The list of questions is nearly identical to the list on the previous page. Wheelan concludes this list with the familiar statement, "If the consultant can't answer the first three questions or bases his or her responses solely on personal experience, head for the hills." Although the above critique does not take away from the opulence of her message, the redundant paragraphs and lists can be taxing to the reader. Perhaps the best question to ask in antithesis to Wheelan's work is, what should one do if they are assigned to a group whose culture is comfortable with performing as individuals. There are leaders who may even inadvertently award competitive behavior by giving in to the person or group that complains the most. The thrust of this challenge is that in such cases, the group will never become a team until the leadership philosophy changes. Many people bring corporate America mentalities into the church where the ruling paradigm is "dog-eat-dog". The results are devastating in ministry as those who would be and should be co laborers become instead, arch rivals. The group then becomes fragmented and everyone operates as individuals hoping to achieve the group goals on their own and receive the credit and glory by themselves. Addressing these issues would have taken the book to another level.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.
A Guide for Members and Leaders" is a great manual for those beginning new teams or are in ...By Xavier
Dr. Susan Wheelan has made me a believer in the benefits of strong teams. Her book "Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders" is a great manual for those beginning new teams or are in need of salvaging or reviving old teams. This book takes the reader through the various stages of group development and helps them identify various pitfalls to avoid so the team can mature into a high-performance team.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Check your local library
By Lupita
Check it out at the library. Don't waste your money on it. The book is very pricey and the investment is a flop. I am disappointed with the content. For the price (\$50) I expected a lot more. Wish I could return it. The title totally sold me, it has all the buzz words. I should have done more research on it. I found no new value in the material I read.

A practical guide for building and sustaining top-performing teams
Based on the author's many years of consulting experience with teams in the public and private sectors, *Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders* describes why teams are important, how they function, and what makes them productive. Susan A. Wheelan covers in depth the four stages of a team — forming, storming, norming, and performing — clearly illustrating the developmental nature of teams and describing what happens in each stage. Separate chapters are devoted to the responsibilities of team leaders and team members. Problems that occur frequently in groups are highlighted, followed by what-you-can-do sections that offer specific advice. Real-life examples and questionnaires are used throughout the book, giving readers the opportunity for self-evaluation.

About the Author Susan A. Wheelan, PhD, is president of GDQ Associates, Inc. She was professor of Psychological Studies and faculty director of the Training and Development Center at Temple University. She has worked in a number of school, hospital, and clinical settings. Dr. Wheelan received Temple University's Great Teacher Award in 1992. She is coeditor of *The Lewin Legacy: Field Theory in Current Practice and Advances in Field Theory*. She coauthored *How to Discipline Without Feeling Guilty*. Dr. Wheelan is the author of *Facilitating Training Groups*, *Group Processes: A Developmental Perspective*, *The Handbook of Group Research and Practice*, and *Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders*. She has written numerous articles for publication as well. Dr. Wheelan has provided consultation to a wide variety of organizations. She has led workshops and training seminars on such topics as Executive Development, The Role of the Internal Consultant, Working in Teams, Management Skills, Communication Skills, Dealing With Difficult Employees, Leadership, Conflict Management, and many more. She has been an invited speaker in Sweden, Norway, England, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, and throughout the United States. Topics included group and organizational development, diversity, and conflict management.