Figure 13.10   Best Practices for Forming Effective Teams

1. Determine, understand, and contribute to the mission of the team.

2. Start by making a list of the knowledge and skills the team will need to accomplish the mission.

3. Choose people because of their knowledge, skills, and expertise—not because you like them or they "seem like you." If the team is already established, or if the team is appointed by a professor, work hard to get to know the strengths that other members bring to the table.

4. Provide clear expectations of what is expected as the end result.

5. Make sure that you and other members have a clear, detailed understanding of what is expected of each individual and ensure that the workload is adequately divided and covered. Provide sufficient training, orientation, and social mixing to allow team members to learn about each other and to get comfortable with each other.

6. Provide the team a comfortable, environmentally satisfactory place to work, along with the right technology to accomplish the job.

7. When team members are successful, provide incentives to properly reward them.

To become a good team member, one has to be willing to learn and to grow, to compromise, to lead and to take a back seat. Some best practices for participating as a member of a team can be found in Figure 13.11.

Certainly, you must have a great leader to accomplish major goals, but great leaders cannot lead without great team members. According to Maxwell (2002), "Team players are enlargers, meaning they have the ability to see their teammates in the best light and make those around them better." If you are an enlarger, you believe in your teammates and want the best for them. You delight in seeing them grow. If you are a good, solid team player, others will work better

Figure 13.11   Best Practices for Participating Team Members

1. When you join a team or are appointed to a team, make up your mind to be a participating member who gives his or her best throughout the project.

2. Be sure you understand the mission, the objectives, and what end result is expected.

3. Be sure you understand exactly what is expected of you personally and exceed those expectations.

4. Be committed to your teammates; try to appreciate each person's skills and knowledge, as well as their differences.

5. Work hard to establish trust among your team members. Two-way trust is essential for teams to function.

6. Try to be open to working with members of the team who are very different from you and who may not work in the same manner as you do.

7. Work in a cooperative manner with other members of the team; be able to compromise when most members agree.

8. Listen carefully to the ideas and opinions of other team members.

9. If you have a disagreement with a team member, talk to that person; don't let bad feelings mushroom because of a simple misunderstanding. Be able to admit your mistakes.

10. Offer your opinions and suggestions in an inoffensive manner; don't be a know-it-all.

11. Be willing to share leadership responsibilities.

12. Practice effective techniques for giving and receiving praise, feedback, and criticism.

13. In the beginning, establish procedures and guidelines for removing a team member who is inhibiting the success of the overall team.

14. If the team members plan a social event, make every effort to participate.