

**Instruction Sheet**

**Learning Guide 3**

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Method of team building
- Developing team work plan
- Interaction with in a team
- Methods of contributing to team effort
- Standard operating procedure including protocols of reporting

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to:

- Uses and interactions undertaken with team members who contribute to known team activities and objectives with Effective and appropriate forms of communications.
- make to complement team activities and objectives, based on individual skills and competencies and workplace context with Effective and appropriate contributions
- Observe protocols in reporting using standard operating procedures
- Contribute to the development of team work plans based on an understanding of team’s role and objectives and individual competencies of the members.

**Learning Activities**

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets 1”.
3. Accomplish the “Self-check 1” . Request the key answer / key to correction from your teacher or you can request your teacher to check it for you.
4. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 2”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your teacher for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #2.
5. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet 2”.
6. Accomplish the “Self-check 2”. Again you can request the key answer / key to correction from your teacher or you can request your teacher to check it for you.

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7. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 3”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your teacher for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #5.
8. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet 3”.
9. Accomplish the “Self-check 3”. Request the key answer / key to correction from your teacher or you can request your teacher to check it for you.
10. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 4”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your teacher for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #8.
11. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet 4”.
12. Accomplish the “Self-check 4” . Request the key answer / key to correction from your teacher or you can request your teacher to check it for you.
13. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 5”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your teacher for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #11.
14. Read the information written in the “Information Sheet 5”.
15. Accomplish the “Self-check 5” . Request the key answer / key to correction from your teacher or you can request your teacher to check it for you.

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**Information Sheet-1**

**3.1 Methods of building a team**

**Introduction**

A team can be defined as a group of people with a full set of complementary skills required to complete a task, job or project. Team members operate with a high degree of interdependence, share authority and responsibility for self-management, are accountable for the collective performance, and work towards a common goal and share rewards. A team becomes more than a collection of people when a strong sense of mutual commitment creates synergy, thus generating performance greater than the sum of the performance of its individual members.

Businesses have many different components ranging from owners to management to employees. Keeping the lines of communication between these groups open and working properly is one challenge that all businesses face. Fostering a team atmosphere and focusing on good communication among employees and between employees and management can open the doors to success. Communication skills can be addressed through ongoing training and by listening and responding to feedback from both workers and management.

**Applying Team Building Methods**

“We are most effective as a team when we complement each other without embarrassment and disagree without fear.”~ Unknown

Let’s talk for a moment about team building methods. Team building is a necessary part of any business or sport big or small. Without a strong team your business will not be as successful as it could be.

You have chosen the right players or employees for the job now you want them to learn to work together to trust each other and get the job done in the best possible way. The benefits of team building speak for themselves. When each team member feels

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important to the team and trusts the team they will bring their best skills to the game for the team.

### **What is team building?**

Team building teaches your team to trust each other, respect each other and most of all use the strengths of each member to win. Win the game or win the contract it boils down to the same thing to have a championship team you need championship players that can work as one. The value of team building is not just players or employees who work together but it is players or employees that win together.

To have a championship team you must first understand what qualities define a great team. When you understand the qualities that should be nurtured and then learn to nurture them then you will have a good team building definition that fits for your individual team.

**Independence among the team members or players:** All the members of your team should think and act independent from the group as part of the group.

**A willingness to contribute from each player or team member:** Each individual in your team should be willing to work together and trust each other. If you have one person who is unwilling to work as a team you do not have a team.

**Relaxed communication:** A team must be able to communicate with each other. If there is a problem a no blame let's fix this is a much better attitude than He did it.

**Mutual trust:** Team members need to be able to trust themselves and each other and know they are trusted in return.

**Risk taking:** The members of your team need to be willing to step out on a limb and take a risk to get the job done.

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**Goals and targets:** The goals and targets for the team need to be a team effort that every member understands and works toward. Rather that goal is to win a contract or the game. Clearly understood and defined goals that everybody strives for together are the definition of team.

**Defined roles:** Each member should have a role and know exactly what that role is.

**Importance:** Every single member on your team should know they are important to the team.

With our team building methods you will enhance team building through communicating using the best team building exercises.

Teams that are cohesive, productive, and efficient -- and whose members enjoy doing their work and working together -- don't happen by accident.

Successful teams are cohesive because team members work cooperatively, sharing common goals as well as the resources to achieve them. They are productive, not because team members never disagree, but because they have worked out ways to resolve conflicts when they occur. They are efficient because tasks are assigned in a way that takes into account each member's skills and interests, rather than letting the team be dominated by the most verbal, most aggressive, or most popular personalities. Managers play an essential role in developing and leading teams that work in these ways.

Here are 12 ways to build an effective and cohesive team:

**1. Clarify the common goals and purposes**

Make the team's purposes clear. Take the time to articulate the team's performance goals and how the team contributes to the company's success. Even a work group that has existed for some time may never have done this. In any case, the purposes and conditions change over time. If you are a new boss, you will be putting your own stamp on the group's common goal.

**2. Clarify each person's role in achieving the common purpose**

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Define each person's job in terms of its contribution to the group's and the company's overall goals. This must be done in specific terms, not in vague generalities. For example, "We're working under very tight timelines. Joe, you'll be in charge of overall project coordination, so you will set the timetable for each project phase. Betty, can I ask you to take responsibility for writing the brochures and getting them printed? Maribeth and Scott, I'd like you to work together on the transportation requirements, OK? Let's meet again tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 for an update and a progress check. Does that work for everybody?"

### **3. Put team members in touch with the people who use what they do**

Confirm the needs of the team's external or internal customers or clients on an ongoing basis. For example, "Tom, be sure to talk with both Materials Management and the folks in Production to make sure they're aware of the changes we've planned. Our changes could affect their work if we're all not in sync."

### **4. Pay attention to conflicts when they arise**

It's natural for conflict to arise when people work in groups. Conflict, handled well, can actually produce constructive ideas. Sometimes team members will annoy each other, step on each other's toes, or hurt each other's feelings. Honest disagreements can become personal and heated. Work processes that seemed efficient can break down. It's important to recognize that some degree of conflict among co-workers is normal. Let problems come to the surface. Avoid the impulse to demand that your employees "drop it," "forget about it," or "just cut it out." Also, anticipate that more conflicts may occur whenever there are changes that affect the team's membership or goals.

### **5. Work out ways to resolve conflicts**

What works as an effective style of conflict resolution varies from team to team, and may vary over time on the same team. Teams whose members all have similar experience and seniority may be able to settle problems more informally, for example, than a team with more diversity. Here are some ways to successfully resolve conflicts:

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- Make sure each team member involved has a chance to explain the problem as he or she sees it.
  - Establish clear ground rules so that people can have their say without being interrupted, rushed, mocked, or intimidated.
  - Encourage employees to solve problems themselves when they can so that you aren't always in the middle of every conflict between team members.
- However, if they cannot solve them, it's important that they can count on you to coach them through a problem-solving framework that allows them to build conflict resolution skills for the future.

### **6. Remember your leadership role**

While you need to encourage your employees to feel a healthy "ownership" of the team's work, you need to avoid trying to be "just one of the team." You -- not your team -- are the one accountable to your own boss for the team's results. You're expected to get results through your people. Hold each employee responsible for meeting goals and for solving or helping to solve problems.

### **7. Make sure team members interact at meetings**

Do team members mainly address their questions and suggestions to you, or do they interact directly with each other at meetings? Encourage team members to ask each other for help and to offer it to each other, without channeling it all through you. Synergy on teams is achieved when team members feel comfortable speaking up with suggestions that build on the creativity of other team members. This requires collaboration not competition. Dominance of a group by a manager or supervisor can limit the chances a group has to achieve real synergy. Also, competition within the team may increase as members vie for the manager's attention.

### **8. Allow team members to have input into their jobs.**

When you can, give your employees flexibility on how they meet their work goals. Encourage employees to make suggestions about changes in what they do and how they do it, based on their direct and daily experience of what works, what doesn't work,

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and what could work better. Of course, the only way to encourage employees to make suggestions over the long run is to show them that you will act on some of their suggestions.

### **9. Make sure there is room for minority or unpopular views**

Teams can easily slip into “group thinks,” especially when they are successful. Those who see flaws in the way the group does things, or who see improvements that could be made, may be politely ignored or even treated with hostility. Teams where this happens can fail when their environment or requirements change and they can’t adapt. Effective managers build team trust by encouraging a diversity of opinion. Ask, specifically, for other viewpoints. Inquiring into views that may not have been spoken can allow better team performance. By asking the team, “What else do we need to consider here?” you allow perspectives not yet considered to be put on the table and evaluated. Those in the majority must be able to trust that those who disagree do so honestly and with good intentions. Those in the minority must be able to trust that they can speak up without being punished or left out.

### **10. Appraise and reward the team as a whole**

As with an individual performance review, compare the team’s performance to what was expected of it. Plan small celebrations of the team achieving important milestones. Acknowledgments of incremental successes can be more motivating than big end-of-project rewards. Celebrations could range from pizza at lunch, to dinner at a nice restaurant, to a bonus, or to a congratulatory letter from a senior executive that goes in each employee’s personnel file. Keep in mind that the team review can never take the place of individual performance reviews.

### **11. Appraise and reward each employee individually, including a review of his or her teamwork**

As members of a team, the expectations and criteria for their performance include showing a spirit of cooperation, developing conflict resolution skills, engaging in good communication with others, and being willing to help others solve problems or get

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through crunch efforts. If feasible, encourage all team members to provide meaningful feedback to one another. Be sure to give each team member specific feedback about his or her strengths and any unique role that the person served on the team rather than just focusing on problems or performance gaps.

## **12. Communicate team successes**

If possible, let the whole company know what your team has accomplished. Include a specific description of what you did, why it's important to the company, and what challenges had to be overcome.

Name people who made key contributions, including those outside your group. Be sure to include those who are usually left out of such acknowledgments, such as the receptionist who handled the flood of calls after a successful public relations effort or the information technology people who installed the complex software you used.

Remember, a work group begins to become a team when employees see their jobs not merely as what they are supposed to do individually but as contributions to the group's overall success. By following the tips in this article, managers can ensure that their work team develops the synergy needed to move a work group to a new level of cooperation and productivity.

## **Applying Team Building Methods**

"We are most effective as a team when we complement each other without embarrassment and disagree without fear."~ Unknown

Let's talk for a moment about team building methods. Team building is a necessary part of any business or sport big or small. Without a strong team your business will not be as successful as it could be.

You have chosen the right players or employees for the job now you want them to learn to work together to trust each other and get the job done in the best possible way. The benefits of team building speak for themselves. When each team member feels important to the team and trusts the team they will bring their best skills to the game for the team.

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Time started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time finished: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer all the questions listed below.

**Fill in the blanks:** (1 point each)

1. A team can be defined as a group of people with a full set of complementary skills required to complete a task, -----.
2. Team building teaches your team to trust each other, ----- and most of all use the strengths of each member to win.
3. We are most effective as a team when we complement each other without -----  
-----and disagree without fear.
4. Businesses have many different components ranging from owners to -----  
to employees.
5. The goals and -----for the team need to be a team effort that every member understands and works toward.

**True or false:** (1 point each)

1. Successful teams are not cohesive because team members work cooperatively, sharing common goals as well as the resources to achieve them.
2. A team must not be able to communicate with each other.
3. Do not make the teams purpose clear.
4. You have chosen the right players or employees for the job now you want them to learn to work together to trust each other and get the job done in the best possible way.
5. Team building is a necessary part of any business or sport big or small.

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**Short answer questions:** (2 points each)

1. Define mutual trust.
2. Define goals and targets.
3. Define risk taking.

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**Information Sheet-2**

**3.2 Developing team work plan**

**How to Build Strong Teamwork Plan**

Building strong teamwork begins with trust and clear communication. When teams trust all members and communication is clear and frequent, teamwork starts to build. As a small-business owner, each team member must contribute and work well with her peers. You must encourage and recognize great teamwork and quickly resolve any disputes that might occur. Create clear and recognizable goals and objectives and always listen for feedback from your team members. Encourage cooperation and help all team members to secure all the supplies and materials they need to be successful.

**Step 1**

Create a clear goal for building teams. Craft your goals and expectations clearly and specifically. Establish frequent team meetings and other methods of communication. Plan for team-building activities and retreats. Research and create a feedback and measurement system for your teams.

**Step 2**

Build trust and openness with your employees by speaking with them often. Schedule as many one-on-one meetings as possible and actively listen to your associates. Create feedback mechanisms like surveys and focus group meetings. Be visible to your employees and model good teamwork skills.

**Step 3**

Schedule and attend team-building activities. Design your own team-building games or locate a vendor who can conduct them for you. Plan offsite meetings and dinners where you recognize outstanding team players. Establish team-building goals and be certain they are a part of all employee performance reviews.

**Step 4**

Create rewards and incentives for good teamwork. Publicize outstanding team players on your website and all internal company communications. Establish team incentive and reward programs that pay out frequently. Seek feedback from all team members and customers and constantly recognize your best team players.

### Step 5

Implement your programs throughout your entire organization. Publicize your meetings and speak with as many associates as possible during these meetings. Create energy at these meetings and be certain team activities are a part of the launch of your program. Provide your full support and answer all employee questions.

### Step 6

Measure and review your teamwork program often. Obtain feedback from your employees and review your measurement of the program. Adjust your program, based on feedback and measurement. Provide additional rewards and incentives as needed. Constantly communicate your teamwork goals, objectives and program.

## Work plan Development Process

I believe that a work plan is a critical component of process improvement but is often under-resourced in the planning process. For example, I was recently asked to facilitate a meeting for an interdepartmental team that was in the early stages of operational zing a major quality improvement initiative. The described goal of meeting was to develop a clear work plan to guide the group over the next year but the draft materials I reviewed: a) interchangeably used the concepts of goals and objectives, b) assigned multiple people as responsible for the same tasks and activities, c) included no milestones or accountability measures, and d) failed to incorporate any discussion of the approval chain for the deliverables. It was clear to me that the task was much larger than the single meeting, which begs the question, what is a reasonable process for developing work plans? Here is my suggested process:

**Step 1 Assess the Value Proposition.** As I have shared in another post, assessing the value of a task is at the core of any facilitation process (and consulting relationship). There needs to be a clear relationship between the value of any performance improvement process and the effort that goes into designing the process. In the case I briefly outlined above, the operative concept was that the work plan was the basis of a major quality initiative that would ultimately impacting future budgeting processes, performance measures and work-practices. With the expectation of “implementing a

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major quality improvement initiative,” developing a work plan in a single meeting would be a stretch for all but the most experienced teams. So the first step is to assess the task and allocate the resources appropriate to the expected return on the up-front “investments” of time, money and staffing.

**Step 2 Establish Clarity around Goals and Objectives.** Elsewhere I conceptually discuss goals and objectives in more detail. It suffices to say that work plan development begins with being clear about the world-changing goal and the tactical objectives required making the change a reality. In the case described above, the goal was nothing short of a “seismic change in the organizational culture where quality improvement was to become the institutional norm.” The objectives would be the activities and tactics that the team needed to achieve the goal and the work plan would be roadmap to get them to the goal. Typically the clarification process to distinguish the goals from objectives is a two-step facilitation process. In the first step the team needs to come to a consensus around the goal statement. In the second step the team needs to brainstorm and sort the list of tasks required to achieve the goal. At this stage you write the goal that is clear and complete and identify conceptual objectives that you will further detail in step four.

**Step 3 Establish Owners, Team Members.** Resources and Approval Process. The success of work plan implementation is dependent upon someone owning the plan and having the authority to ensure that the plan is implemented. At this point in the process it is critical that for each conceptual objective is assigned an owner who is accountable for the objective and supporting work plan. There are occasions where a task may require co-owners (for example, if there are separate implementation and fiscal functions) but co-ownership is only successful when the co-owner roles and authorities are clearly spelled out. Once an owner is designated, the implementation team, resources and constraints of a task need to be assigned. Finally, teams need to be clear about the decision-making or approval process associated with the objective. The purpose of this entire step is to establish the implementation expectations for each conceptual objective.

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**Step 4 Develop SMART Objectives.** At this point, the team takes each conceptual objective and creates a clear tactical objective statement. One of the most common formatting acronyms for Objectives is “SMART,” where the letters stand for

**Specific:** Answering “who, what, and how much,”

**Measurable:** Defining what it looks like when you get there,

**Achievable:** Ensuing the activity is within the capacity of your organization and the authority of the team,

**Realistic:** The cousin of achievable is ensuing that the resources available to support the objective, and,

**Time-bound:** defining the objective’s ending point.

**Step 5 Create Action Steps.** Teams are now prepared for the hard work of developing actions steps that guide the progress towards the objective. The essential framework is to identify the action steps, due date, team lead, and accountability measures or milestones. Accountability measures and milestones often get left off of work plans but are critically important because these become the monitoring tools for the work plan owner. In the process of creating action steps teams need to develop a common understanding on how detailed and deep does the team go in the action steps? Does the team list primary tasks only? Subtasks? Sub-Subtasks? The balance point will differ from team to team and may take some experimenting by team members. The balance you are looking for is to be able to monitor the forward motion of the process, ensure communication and accountability without creating unrealistic expectations of documentation and reporting.

**Step 6 Create the Work plan.** The final step of the process is to create a formal work plan. In another post I elaborated on the concept of work plan documentation and point you to that entry for ideas and work plan templates.

As the opening step suggests, implementing this six-step process to create a work plan will scale from a 1-2 hour exercise for low value projects to perhaps several hours for high value initiatives. While the six steps outlined here may seem like a lot of work, much of the process can actually be summarized on a single worksheet (such as this template). Whatever the scale of the work plan development process, those teams that

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invest the attention, focus and resources in working through these six steps will reap the benefits of improved performance.

### **Steps in Creating an Action Plan for Team Building**

#### **Step1: - Decide why you want to do team building**

Think about the purpose of your team building activity. What are your reasons for bringing the team together? Do you want to:-

- Address a team deficiency?
- Improve the team's communication and team dynamics?
- Boost team innovation and creativity?
- Help the team strengthen work relationships?
- Discuss and resolve a particular team conflict?
- Recognize your team by celebrating a team achievement?

By deciding upon a goal before you choose your team building method, you will increase the likelihood that the team building activity gives you the result you are looking for.

#### **Step2:- Determine the best team building approach based on the goal**

There are a variety of team building activities and ideas available depending on what you are trying to achieve:

- Team communication assessments and workshops can enhance team communications, strengthen understanding of personality styles and enhance the team's ability to manage and resolve conflict.
- Team building activities and games can boost creativity and innovation and strengthen relationships among team members.
- Team celebrations are excellent opportunities to recognize and reward team milestones and achievements.

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- Team building programs and retreats can help the team to examine and enhance its effectiveness and can result in concrete action plans to improve the team's effectiveness.

Most of these team building activities can be conducted by team leaders or by using other resources in the organization. Team members can even lead some of them. There are many easy-to-use resources available that can assist you in selecting the right team building activity.

### **Step3: - Communicate the purpose of the team building activity to the team**

By explaining to your team the reason for the team building activity and the goals you hope to achieve, you will increase the likelihood that the team building effort will be successful.

This vital step of creating an action plan for team building will focus every member of the team on the objective and ensure that they understand what the team is trying to achieve.

When team members understand what is expected, they are more likely to participate actively and contribute to the process.

### **Step 4:- Identify follow-up steps to ensure the team building goal is achieved**

Follow-up with the team once the activity is over to sustain the team building outcomes that result. Conduct a simple evaluation to gather feedback from the team on the effectiveness of the team building activity and how it has helped them to achieve the team building goal.

Act quickly to implement any actions that were agreed upon in the team building activity and stay in the team building conversation to keep everyone focused on team collaboration and effectiveness.

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While this step is the measure to ensure that the team building activity had a positive and meaningful impact on the team's success, it is often the step that is given the least attention. By completing this step you show the team your commitment to ensuring they succeed.

By implementing these four simple steps, you will create an easy-to-implement action plan for team building that will improve the effectiveness and success of your team.

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Time started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time finished: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer all the questions listed below.

**Fill in the blanks:** (1 point each)

1. By deciding upon a goal before you choose your team -----, you will increase the likelihood that the team building activity gives you the result you are looking for.
2. By explaining to your team the reason for the team building activity and the goals you hope to achieve, you will increase the likelihood that the ----- effort will be successful.
3. -----: Answering “who, what, and how much,”
4. -----: Defining what it looks like when you get there,
5. -----: Ensuring the activity is within the capacity of your organization and the authority of the team,
6. -----: The cousin of achievable is ensuring that the resources available to support the objective, and,
7. -----: defining the objective’s ending point.

**True or false:** (1 point each)

1. Team building activities and games can boost creativity and innovation and strengthen relationships among team members.
2. Team celebrations are not excellent opportunities to recognize and reward team milestones and achievements.
3. Team building programs and retreats cannot help the team to examine and enhance its effectiveness and can result in concrete action plans to improve the team’s effectiveness.
4. Build trust and openness with your employees by speaking with them often.

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5. Create rewards and incentives for good teamwork.

**Short answer questions:** (2 points each)

1. Define “assess the value proposition”.
2. Define “create the work plan”.
3. Develop “smart objectives”

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**Information Sheet-3**

**3.3 Interaction within a team**

**Interaction within Team**

Proper team interaction relies on three main factors of High Performance Teams (HPT) listed in the introduction which include the following:

- Team Leader
- Communication
- Open-mindedness

**The Team Leader**

Team interaction involves team leaders relying on team members and team members relying on team leaders. Effective team interaction is vital for any HPT because it allows for productive work and the free flow of ideas between team members.

The first step in establishing good team interaction is to designate a team leader. The team leader must be able to delegate to the group so that team members knows their roles and tasks within the group. Proper delegation means that the team leaders are able to clearly tell team members several things, such as:-

- The expected results or product from the team's work.
- How the team will approach the task.
- The sub-tasks that will result from the tasks.
- The limits of the authority held by the team leaders.
- The necessary deadlines that the team members must meet.
- How to determine whether the tasks have been completed.
- Knowing the resources that are required.
- The necessary training for each position within the group

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Another component of being the leader of a HPT is maintaining control over the project; however, a team leader must not "smother" the HPT to the point where they feel like they are under constant surveillance and do not have room to take creative liberties. Instead, they should "monitor progress unobtrusively" (How to Delegate Effectively). This means that the team leader helps the team when asked, makes sure that the HPT is meeting its deadlines, and sees that the HPT's team members are communicating well with one another.

## Communication

Keep lines of communication open between team members, team leaders, and anyone else associated with the HPT such as a client. Communication is key to helping an HPT run efficiently and effectively because it allows the team member to...

Know what the other team members are doing: This way, the team members know if one member on the HPT is behind or ahead, or if the entire team is behind or ahead.

Allow the free flow of ideas between team members: Ideas are generated more quickly when working in a group because team members can bounce ideas off one another so that one person's idea sparks an idea in the head of another person and so on.

Unify the team members: Knowing what every team member is doing and how they are doing it while keeping up a constant flow of communication unifies the team into a working unit. This working unit is more efficient than team members working as individuals in a disjointed unit.

Good communication skills involve verbal, non-verbal, written and listening components. Ultimately, good communication is effective communication. It involves understanding what method of communication is best for a situation, clearly expressing your information, intent and goals and following up to make sure that it is understood. Practice good manners, take time to listen to employees, answer follow up questions and prepare ahead of time for involved conversations.

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## Open mindedness

Being open-minded gives team members within an HPT the ability to think abstractly without the fear of being judged by other members. This requires team members to...

**Trust their team members:** Team members must have faith in each other that they will all "honor commitments, maintain confidences, support each other and generally behave predictably and consistently"

**Respect their team members:** For team members to respect one another, contributions must be expected from each member and be appreciated. These expected contributions should be based off each member's role or roles within the HPT. In addition to team members respecting each other, team members must also respect themselves. This means that team members know their role(s) and see how they personally add value to the HPT

**Have a "team spirit" among their team members:** Having "team spirit" within an HPT means that team members are involved in every part of the team. Although every person has a designated role or roles within the HPT, it is important for team members to care for and invest interest in every role within the team, not just their own. On the team. This means that team members must "feel a sense of partnership with each other."

## Other factors:

### Dealing with Conflict

Despite the efficiency of working with HPTs, they may also lead to conflicts when ideas and personalities clash. It is important that disagreements are resolved and allow the team to move on. Usually, if there is a dispute, it is smart to go to team leaders and ask them to mediate the dispute.

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To overcome disputes, it is important that team members see themselves as trying to better the team, and ultimately, the team's project, rather than trying to better themselves. This commitment to the group can only be achieved through communication. HPTs must "communicate effectively and frequently with each other and also communicate clearly and consistently with people outside the team about team activities" since effective communication allows the teams to make the best overall decisions for the HPT and also provide team members with valuable feedback

### **Teamwork**

Small businesses are only as strong as the employees that make up the organization. Good communication encourages productive teamwork. Employees may come from variety backgrounds and have diverse perspectives. Good communication within a team will keep employees on the same page and working to reach common goals despite personal differences. Each person must understand the role that they need to play. This may start with a team meeting that outlines the goals of a project, assigns duties to leaders, delegates what needs to be done and sets a time line for completion. Be clear about the tasks at hand and let employees know who to talk to should any issues arise.

### **Problem Solving**

Running a small business isn't always smooth sailing. Obstacles can crop up. These may range from having to respond to a move by a competitor to dealing with confusion among team members about the direction of a project. Good communication within a team is key to keeping everyone on the right track. Many business owners maintain an open door policy that encourages employees to approach with feedback or concerns. This can help head off issues with poor communication before they become serious problems. Employees that trust each other and feel open about communication are better prepared to tackle business problems. Use their diverse viewpoints as strength and bring them together to brainstorm solutions.

### **Employee Satisfaction**

Encouraging good team communication skills also creates employee satisfaction. Employees like to feel that their input is valued and that they have a role in steering the company forward. Strong team communication recognizes the efforts of the team

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members, acts on their suggestions and lets them build off of each other in pursuit of goals. Good communication and an open workplace environment foster a sense of loyalty and play to the strengths of each individual team member.

### **Team-Building Exercises**

Good team communication is often something that needs to be practiced over the course of time. It does not always happen naturally, especially when you are dealing with a diverse workforce. Team-building exercises create trust between team members and give them tools for communicating with each other. These may include open brainstorming sessions, retreats, games or problem-solving exercises. Team members feel a sense of accomplishment and will carry these communication skills over into their work together.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time finished: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer all the questions listed below.

**Fill in the blanks:** (1 point each)

1. Proper team interaction relies on ----- main factors of High Performance Teams (HPT).
2. Encouraging good team communication skills also creates employee -----.
3. Good team communication is often something that needs to be practiced over the -----.
4. Running a small business isn't always smooth -----.
5. Good communication encourages productive -----.

**True or false:** (1 point each)

1. Team members must have faith in each other that they will all "honor commitments, maintain confidences, support each other and generally behave predictably and consistently".
2. Good communication skills involve verbal, non-verbal, written and listening components.
3. Team interaction does not involve team leaders relying on team members and team members relying on team leaders.
4. Effective team interaction is not vital for any HPT because it allows for productive work and the free flow of ideas between team members.
5. The first step in establishing good team interaction is to designate a team leader.

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**Short answer questions:** (2 points each)

1. Define team work.
2. Define problem solving.
3. Define employee satisfaction.

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**Information Sheet-4**

**3.4 Methods of contributing to team effort**

**Nine Ways to Contribute to team effort**

The world of work has changed. It used to be that most of us worked as a part of a process, whether on an assembly line, managing interactions with customers, or any one of a thousand other processes. Processes are ongoing, repeatable and never have an ending.

While there will always be some jobs and tasks which are process focused, most work now is a project or has a project component to it. Any task that has a distinct beginning and ending, or follows a specific life cycle is a project. Examples include: planning a company meeting, writing a new brochure, implementing the new software system, etc.

If the nature of our work has changed, it is important to think about some of the skills that will help us succeed in this different world. Here are nine ways you can contribute more effectively to make the projects you work on more successful, regardless of your specific role.

1. **Understand the end goal.** Since a project has a defined ending, it is important that each contributor to the effort knows the desired end result. Stephen Covey teaches to "begin with the end in mind." This is clearly important to project team members. By understanding the desired result, you can make better individual decisions and reduce confusion and re-work.
2. **Identify clear roles.** Each person is an important piece in the overall project puzzle. Know your role and the roles of others. If you are a project leader, take the time to clarify these roles for everyone. If you aren't a leader, ask until you really understand how you can best contribute.
3. **Collaborate.** Project work is often fluid and free flowing. Once you understand your role and the roles of others you are in a position to collaborate with them more successfully. This collaboration isn't just a nice thing for you to do. It is

imperative to the ultimate success of the project. Look for ways and be willing to collaborate.

4. **Recognize interdependencies.** The bigger the project, the more linked and interdependent are the people and the tasks. Certain steps need to be done before others can be completed. If you see only your small piece of the project, you may not realize how you finishing two days sooner might have a huge impact on several other things staying on track. Conversely if you fall two days behind on one of your tasks, the effects on the end results could be much longer delays. You aren't an island. Your work products, decisions and efforts affect many others. Recognize and work with the interdependencies between you and the others involved in the project.
5. **Ask questions.** Projects can be complex. Don't be afraid to ask questions to know more about any of the things mentioned above.
6. **Communicate.** Asking questions is communicating, but so is giving updates. Checking in with others. Coordinating schedules. If you are a project leader the importance of communication can't be overstated. If you are any team member other than the leader, communication is just as important. You can't leave it to the leader. Check in with others. Get their input. Find out when the pieces you will need will be completed. Update people on your progress. Communicate!
7. **Break it down.** Take the big project steps and break them down into definable tasks that you can get your hands around. By breaking the tasks down the work won't feel so daunting, you will find the interdependencies and you will be able to stay on track much more successfully. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Break down the overall project, and your individual steps into bite sized pieces.
8. **Look at the past.** If a version of this project has been done in the past, look for the lessons learned to improve your results this time. Think too about other projects you have been involved in. Even if the project was smaller or larger and the goals were very different, there are likely lessons you learned that you can



apply - things you did well that you would want to repeat, and things you could have done better that you can correct on this project.

9. **Look to the future.** Take a little time to document the best practices and ideas that work for you during the project. Whether this is a formal task for everyone on the project, or just your own notes to help you to continuously improve, investing a little time now will make your contributions to all future projects more valuable and efficient.

There are many more ways you can contribute to great project success. Take these nine ideas as a starting point - as a checklist of things you can do, regardless of the role you play. Taking action on these ideas will help you feel more confident and successful in your role on the project team, and will help the project's goals be reached much more successfully.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time finished: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer all the questions listed below.

**Fill in the blanks:** (1 point each)

1. If the nature of our work has changed, it is important to think about some of the skills that will help us succeed in this -----.
2. Here are ----- ways you can contribute more effectively to make the projects you work on more successful, regardless of your specific role.
3. Take a ----- to document the best practices and ideas that work for you during the project.
4. Projects can be -----.
5. The bigger the project, the more linked and ----- are the people and the tasks.

**True or false:** (1 point each)

1. Each person is not an important piece in the overall project puzzle.
2. If you are any team member other than the leader, communication is just as important.
3. If you are not a project leader the importance of communication can't be overstated.
4. Processes are ongoing, repeatable and never have an ending.
5. Once you understand your role and the roles of others you are not in a position to collaborate with them more successfully.

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**Short answer questions:** (2 points each)

1. Define “look at the future”.
2. Define “look at the past”.
3. Develop “break it down.”

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**Information Sheet-5**

**3.5 Standard operating procedure including protocols of reporting**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Overview**

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is a set of written instructions that document a routine or repetitive activity followed by an organization. The development and use of SOPs are an integral part of a successful quality system as it provides individuals with the information to perform a job properly, and facilitates consistency in the quality and integrity of a product or end-result. The term “SOP” may not always be appropriate and terms such as protocols, instructions, worksheets, and laboratory operating procedures may also be used. For this document “SOP” will be used.

SOPs describe both technical and fundamental programmatic operational elements of an organization that would be managed under a work plan or a Quality Assurance (QA) Project Plan

**Purpose**

SOPs detail the regularly recurring work processes that are to be conducted or followed within an organization. They document the way activities are to be performed to facilitate consistent conformance to technical and quality system requirements and to support data quality.

They may describe, for example, fundamental programmatic actions and technical actions such as analytical processes, and processes for maintaining, calibrating, and using equipment. SOPs are intended to be specific to the organization or facility whose activities are described and assist that organization to maintain their quality control and quality assurance processes and ensure compliance with governmental regulations.

If not written correctly, SOPs are of limited value. In addition, the best written SOPs will fail if they are not followed. Therefore, the use of SOPs needs to be reviewed and re-enforced by management, preferably the direct supervisor. Current copies of the SOPs also need to be readily accessible for reference in the work areas of those individuals

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actually performing the activity, either in hard copy or electronic format, otherwise SOPs serve little purpose.

### **Benefits**

The development and use of SOPs minimizes variation and promotes quality through consistent implementation of a process or procedure within the organization, even if there are temporary or permanent personnel changes. It minimizes opportunities for miscommunication and can address safety concerns. When historical data are being evaluated for current use, SOPs can also be valuable for reconstructing project activities when no other references are available. In addition, SOPs are frequently used as checklists by inspectors when auditing procedures. Ultimately, the benefits of a valid SOP are reduced work effort, along with improved comparability, credibility, and legal defensibility.

SOPs are needed even when published methods are being utilized. For example, if an SOP is written for a standard analytical method, the SOP should specify the procedures to be followed in greater detail than appear in the published method. It also should detail how, if at all, the SOP differs from the standard method and any options that this organization follows.

### **Writing Styles**

SOPs should be written in a concise, step-by-step, easy-to-read format. The information presented should be unambiguous and not overly complicated. The active voice and present verb tense should be used. The term "you" should not be used, but implied. The document should not be wordy, redundant, or overly lengthy. Keep it simple and short. Information should be conveyed clearly and explicitly to remove any doubt as to what is required. Also, use a flow chart to illustrate the process being described. In addition, follow the style guide used by your organization, e.g., font size and margins.

### **SOP PROCESS**

#### **SOP Preparation**

The organization should have a procedure in place for determining what procedures or processes need to be documented. Those SOPs should then be written by individuals

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knowledgeable with the activity and the organization's internal structure. These individuals are essentially subject-matter experts who actually perform the work or use the process. A team approach can be followed, especially for multi-tasked processes where the experiences of a number of individuals are critical, which also promotes “buy-in” from potential users of the SOP.

SOPs should be written with sufficient detail so that someone with limited experience with or knowledge of the procedure, but with a basic understanding, can successfully reproduce the procedure when unsupervised. The experience requirement for performing an activity should be noted in the section on personnel qualifications. For example, if a basic chemistry or biological course experience or additional training is required that requirement should be indicated.

### **SOP Review and Approval**

SOPs should be reviewed (that is, validated) by one or more individuals with appropriate training and experience with the process. It is especially helpful if draft SOPs are actually tested by individuals other than the original writer before the SOPs are finalized.

The finalized SOPs should be approved as described in the organization’s Quality Management Plan or its own SOP for preparation of SOPs. Generally the immediate supervisor, such as a section or branch chief, and the organization’s quality assurance officer review and approve each SOP. Signature approval indicates that an SOP has been both reviewed and approved by management. As per the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998, use of electronic signatures, as well as electronic maintenance and submission, is an acceptable substitution for paper, when practical.

### **Frequency of Revisions and Reviews**

SOPs need to remain current to be useful. Therefore, whenever procedures are changed, SOPs should be updated and re-approved. If desired, modify only the pertinent section of an SOP and indicate the change date/revision number for that section in the Table of Contents and the document control notation.

SOPs should be also systematically reviewed on a periodic basis, e.g. every 1-2 years, to ensure that the policies and procedures remain current and appropriate, or to determine whether the SOPs are even needed. The review date should be added to

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each SOP that has been reviewed. If an SOP describes a process that is no longer followed, it should be withdrawn from the current file and archived.

The review process should not be overly cumbersome to encourage timely review

### **Checklists**

Many activities use checklists to ensure that steps are followed in order. Checklists are also used to document completed actions. Any checklists or forms included as part of an activity should be referenced at the points in the procedure where they are to be used and then attached to the SOP.

In some cases, detailed checklists are prepared specifically for a given activity. In those cases, the SOP should describe, at least generally, how the checklist is to be prepared, or on what it is to be based. Copies of specific checklists should be then maintained in the file with the activity results and/or with the SOP.

Remember that the checklist is not the SOP, but a part of the SOP.

### **Document Control**

Each organization should develop a numbering system to systematically identify and label their SOPs, and the document control should be described in its Quality Management Plan.

Generally, each page of an SOP should have control documentation notation, similar to that illustrated below. A short title and identification (ID) number can serve as a reference designation. The revision number and date are very useful in identifying the SOP in use when reviewing historical data and is critical when the need for evidentiary records is involved and when the activity is being reviewed. When the number of pages is indicated, the user can quickly check if the SOP is complete. Generally this type of document control notation is located in the upper right-hand corner of each document page following the title page.

### **SOP Document Tracking and Archival**

The organization should maintain a master list of all SOPs. This file or database should indicate the SOP number, version number, date of issuance, title, author, status, organizational division, branch, section, and any historical information regarding past versions. The QA manager (or designee) is generally the individual responsible for

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maintaining a file listing all current quality-related SOPs used within the organization. If an electronic database is used, automatic “Review SOP” notices can be sent. Note that this list may be used also when audits are being considered or when questions are raised as to practices being followed within the organization.

### **SOP GENERAL FORMAT**

SOPs should be organized to ensure ease and efficiency in use and to be specific to the organization which develops it. There is no one “correct” format; and internal formatting will vary with each organization and with the type of SOP being written. Where possible break the information into a series of logical steps to avoid a long list. The level of detail provided in the

SOP may differ based on, e.g., whether the process is critical, the frequency of that procedure being followed, the number of people who will use the SOP, and where training is not routinely available. A generalized format is discussed next.

#### **Title Page**

The first page or cover page of each SOP should contain the following information: a title that clearly identifies the activity or procedure, an SOP identification (ID) number, date of issue and/or revision, the name of the applicable agency, division, and/or branch to which this SOP applies, and the signatures and signature dates of those individuals who prepared and approved the SOP. Electronic signatures are acceptable for SOPs maintained on a computerized database.

#### **Table of Contents**

A Table of Contents may be needed for quick reference, especially if the SOP is long, for locating information and to denote changes or revisions made only to certain sections of an SOP.

#### **Text**

Well-written SOPs should first briefly describe the purpose of the work or process, including any regulatory information or standards that are appropriate to the SOP process, and the scope to indicate what is covered. Define any specialized or unusual terms either in a separate definition section or in the appropriate discussion section. Denote what sequential procedures should be followed, divided into significant sections; e.g., possible interferences, equipment needed, personnel qualifications, and safety

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considerations (preferably listed in bold to capture the attention of the user). Finally, describe next all appropriate QA and quality control (QC) activities for that procedure, and list any cited or significant references.

As noted above, SOPs should be clearly worded so as to be readily understandable by a person knowledgeable with the general concept of the procedure, and the procedures should be written in a format that clearly describes the steps in order. Use of diagrams and flow charts help to break up long sections of text and to briefly summarize a series of steps for the reader.

Attach any appropriate information, e.g., an SOP may reference other SOPs. In such a case, the following should be included:

1. Cite the other SOP and attach a copy, or reference where it may be easily located.
2. If the referenced SOP is not to be followed exactly, the required modification should be specified in the SOP at the section where the other SOP is cited.

### **TYPES OF SOPs**

SOPs may be written for any repetitive technical activity, as well as for any administrative or functional programmatic procedure, that is being followed within an organization. General guidance for preparing both technical and administrative SOPs follows and examples of each are located in the Appendix.

### **Guidelines for Technical SOP Text**

Technical SOPs can be written for a wide variety of activities. Examples are SOPs instructing the user how to perform a specific analytical method to be followed in the laboratory or field (such as field testing using an immunoassay kit), or how to collect a sample in order to preserve the sample integrity and representativeness (such as collection of samples for future analysis of volatile organic compounds or trace metals), or how to conduct a bio assessment of a freshwater site. Technical SOPs are also needed to cover activities such as data processing and evaluation (including verification and validation), modeling, risk assessment, and auditing of equipment operation.

Citing published methods in SOPs is not always acceptable, because cited published methods may not contain pertinent information for conducting the procedure-in-house.

Technical SOPs need to include the specific steps aimed at initiating, coordinating, and recording and/or reporting the results of the activity, and should be tailored only to that

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activity. Technical SOPs should fit within the framework presented here, but this format can be modified, reduced, or expanded as required. Examples of technical SOPs are located in the Appendices A, B, and C.

In general, technical SOPs will consist of five elements: Title page, Table of Contents, Procedures, Quality Assurance/Quality Control, and References:

### **Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs)**

Standard operating protocols or SOPs are written step-by-step procedures that quality control (QC), quality assurance (QA), and production units use in order to assure the accuracy and precision of the quantitative experimental results and materials that they generate and provide in support of other units such as Research and Development (R&D), manufacturing, etc. SOPs are generally used in support of experimental research whenever there is a need to document the handling of samples, the methods used in their analysis, and the quality of the results generated in the analysis of these samples. SOPs are used by the governmental agencies, private industry, and academic laboratories by scientists and engineers from all of the science and technology, engineering, and mathematical disciplines. Examples of their use include forensic analysis where they are used to establish the chain of custody of evidence and in private biotechnology industry where they are often used to validate new methods of bioanalysis. SOPs can also be extremely valuable in academic laboratories and can be employed anytime there is procedure that potentially more than one person will use in a research group. They can be written to:

outline sampling procedures, describe the proper procedures for the transportation of research materials; standardize the methods of training for often used experimental methods and/or analytical instrumentation; and to document the methods used in data handling and/or analysis.

To be effective, SOPs need to describe not only what needs to be, but who is qualified to carry it out, and under what conditions the procedure can be performed reliably.

How do you know if an SOP works? Test it. The best way is to have someone else in the lab unfamiliar with the technique try to follow the SOP to carry out the procedure. SOPs must be reviewed periodically for accuracy and completeness by other scientists

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who have experience doing the procedure. As such SOPs are invaluable in documenting that the experimental procedure was accomplished properly.

SOPs can be invaluable to students involved in undergraduate research in providing written guidelines detailing how to carry out new/unfamiliar methods reliably. The action of authoring an SOP can be beneficial in helping you to think through the procedures you use in a thoughtful step-by-step manner and document clearly and succinctly in writing your understanding. Thus, the SOP saves you, the author, and those using the SOP precious time and effort since it lays out exactly what must be done in order to achieve the desired results and it provides a timeless means of sharing that information with all who may need it both now and in the near future. Authoring SOPs provides undergraduate students an opportunity to document and showcase their understanding of the methods used in their research and of the quality of their written communication skills.

#### Example SOP

The following are the main sections you will find in most SOPs together with a brief description of the content of each suggested section. Note that not every SOP will have each of these sections. However, in general, the more information provided, the better the quality of the SOP and the more generally effective the protocol will be in the laboratory.

**Title** – a clear, succinct title describing the purpose of the SOP and the conditions under which it can be reliably used.

**Date** – date (including year) of authorship of the current SOP. If the SOP has been revised then a “Date of Revision” and the “Revision Number” should also be included here.

**Name of the Author of the SOP** – self explanatory

**Purpose** – Brief explanation of the purpose of this SOP

**Scope and Applicability** – under what specific conditions can this protocol be used reliably; are there any known interferon’s or other limitations on the protocol’s effective use?

**Introduction** – relevant background information on the system, methods, and instruments used.

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**References** - any relevant references to the peer-reviewed literature

**Materials and Supplies** – list of any reagents including names of suppliers used in this procedure. If the suppliers are obscure sources, a list of addresses and contact information should be provided as well.

**Analytical Instrumentation** – list of any analytical instruments including manufacturer and model numbers that have been used in this procedure.

**Cautions** – are there any specific health and safety precautions that should be considered. For example, should gloves be worn? If so, what kind? How should spills, if they occur, be cleaned up? Are there any special procedures that should be followed in order to safely dispose of waste?

**Personnel Qualifications** – what if anything must the user know or be able to do before being able to carry out this protocol, i.e., is any prior training required and if so what specific kind/form of training?

**Names of SOP Reviewers** - names of those individuals who have reviewed and approved the SOP for use in the laboratory. Signatures and dates should be provided whenever possible as well.

**Actual Protocol** – step-by-step set of instructions for accomplishing the procedure of interest reliably. If calculations are involved in analyzing the data, then an example of the calculation should be provided. Figures and tables showing laboratory apparatus, representative data, etc. can be included here.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time finished: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer all the questions listed below.

**Fill in the blanks:** (1 point each)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a set of written instructions that document a routine or repetitive activity followed by an organization.
2. The organization should have a procedure in place for determining what procedures or processes need to be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. SOPs should be written in a concise, \_\_\_\_\_, easy-to-read format.
4. In general, technical SOPs will consist of \_\_\_\_\_ elements.
5. The QA manager (or designee) is generally the individual responsible for maintaining a file listing all current \_\_\_\_\_ used within the organization.

**True or false:** (1 point each)

1. The development and use of SOPs are not an integral part of a successful quality system as it provides individuals with the information to perform a job properly, and facilitates consistency in the quality and integrity of a product or end-result.
2. SOPs describe both technical and fundamental programmatic operational elements of an organization that would be managed under a work plan or a Quality Assurance (QA) Project Plan
3. The development and use of SOPs minimizes variation and promotes quality through consistent implementation of a process or procedure within the organization.
4. SOPs must not be reviewed periodically for accuracy and completeness by other scientists who have experience doing the procedure.

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5. SOPs should not be reviewed (that is, validated) by one or more individuals with appropriate training and experience with the process.

**Short answer questions:** (2 points each)

1. Define standard operating procedure.
2. Define standard operating protocols.
3. Define the purpose of standard operating procedure.

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