



A team **task** refers to what a team is doing or attempting to accomplish. A team **process** refers to how a team works together to achieve the task. Effective teams are those that find the balance between focus on a task and focus on the process (L. Bendaly in Games Teams Play, 1996).

When a team is too task focused, processes to ensure a quality outcome are overlooked. While the team may believe it's being efficient, decisions may come to closure too early, before all options can be considered. Supports may not be in place to make the decision work.

When a team is too process focused, it loses sight of the task and may start going in circles, never reaching a decision. Teams may become frustrated because something has to be done.

There are situations where you might need to focus more on the task than the process, or vice versa. For example, in an emergency situation you may need to focus on completing the task without putting much consideration into the process.

Team Type	RIGID Highly task focused	FLEXIBLE Balances attention to task and process	LIMP Highly process focused
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions made by most powerful members • Run by rules and regulations • Few meetings, for information only • Lacks openness and trust • Resistant to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared leadership • Self-direction • Open sharing of information • Commitment to common vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over participation • Too little structure • Too frequent meetings • Too few outcomes • Too many sub-committees • Appearance of trust and goodwill
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow to respond • Ineffective at implementing change • Low commitment level • Unable to achieve beyond minimum requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and responsive • Members feel ownership and commitment • Quality, productivity, innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow to respond • Ineffective at implementing change • Low commitment level • Unable to achieve beyond minimum requirements

(L. Bendaly, Organization 2000, 1996, p.33)

Task-focused meeting behaviours	Process-focused meeting behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify objectives • Stay on track and on time • Come to closure or make decision • Present information • Present one's own perspective • Focus on details • Think logically • Focus on the issues • Commit to following through on decisions • Make all decisions by majority rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure everyone's full participation • Ensure open participation • Check for understanding • Focus on bigger picture • Explore individual differences • Ask questions and probe for information • Think creatively • Focus on the people • Look outward for new and different perspectives • Use a consensus process for making important decisions

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