



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Creating Teams That Work

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**ASPAN President 2017-2018**

My first role on ASPAN's Board was Director for Clinical Practice, one of the three missions established to further ASPAN's vision and core purpose. Finding my niche on the Board and understanding how my work related to that of other Board members took a little time.

By the second year, I had formed a mutually beneficial working relationship with the directors for education and research. The three of us realized that we could join forces and work more effectively to meet some of ASPAN's goals. We entered into a dynamic and collaborative relationship which became a foundation for advancing ASPAN's evidence-based practice recommendations, educational offerings and research projects. We played to our strengths and our individuality. Did we establish a working group or a team?

#### **Working Groups and Teams**

A working group has a strong, focused leader who runs the meetings. The group purpose mirrors that of the organization. This group holds discussions, makes decisions and delegates work. Members are individually accountable and are responsible for individual work products. The effectiveness of the group is measured by its influence on others. Work groups "share information, perspectives and insights"<sup>1</sup> so that decisions lead to more effective individual performances.

A team defines its purpose and shares leadership roles. It consists of two or more members working together to produce a result. Meetings involve active problem-solving, and open-ended discussions are encouraged. Members discuss, decide and carry out the actual work together. Team members are individually and mutually accountable. Performance is measured collectively based on assessment of the finished product.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Team Characteristics**

Teamwork and teams are often confused. Teamwork stems from a shared set of values. Characteristics of good teamwork include active listening, constructive criticism, acceptance, support and acknowledgment. All of these are part of effective communication. These values do not ensure a team's performance and are not exclusive to teams. A successful team must also be disciplined.<sup>3</sup>

The five characteristics essential to team discipline include the purpose, goal, skill mix, commitment and accountability. The team's purpose may have been established prior to the formation of the team. However, the successful team should further refine the purpose to make it meaningful and relatable to the members. A compelling goal should challenge, inspire and drive the team forward to complete the project.

#### **What Skill Sets are Needed for Team Members?**

While it may be ideal to appoint team members with a complementary mix of skills, many teams find that additional skills are needed as the project evolves. Often, members can develop those skills as they work together. These skills may include interpersonal, decision-making, problem-solving and technical expertise. Each member must be committed to success. They must establish and honor how decisions are made, schedules, work assignments and timelines. There must be mutual accountability based on trust.<sup>4</sup>

## **ASPAN Teams**

One of the most challenging duties ASPAN's president-elect faces is assigning volunteer members to its committees and strategic work teams. It is also one of the most significant of the president-elect's responsibilities because this duty shapes ASPAN's future. These teams carry out the bulk of ASPAN's work over the following year.

I was blessed to have a plethora of qualified volunteers willing to serve this past year. Their work, skill mix, commitment and accountability are reflected in the amazing work we will celebrate in Anaheim. I extend my gratitude and sincere appreciation to the ASPAN Board, committee chairs, SWT leaders and volunteer members who contributed to another successful ASPAN year. There is greatness in each of you!

## **REFERENCES**

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