



Pepperdine University has been eloquently likened to a tree, rooted in the Churches of Christ, its diverse community seen throughout the varied branches, and fruit borne of the contributions of those who work toward its mission.

For trees to remain healthy, they must regularly receive nutrients through water and mulch. They must also be frequently pruned for health and strength.

Unpruned Trees

Unpruned trees soon become overgrown. Their broad, weak branches cross one another and compete for crowded space near the top. Poorly maintained trees become too heavy, limbs break and sometimes the entire tree falls over and dies before its time.

The Benefits of Pruning

There are different kinds of pruning, used at different times for different purposes:

- Fine pruning – removing small limbs for improved appearance
- Standard pruning – involving a bit of heavy cutting to enhance the branch structure
- Hazard pruning – removing branches for safety

Pruning eliminates dead and dying branches, which draw energy from the trunk, thereby providing opportunity for desirable parts to flourish. Pruning also:

- Reduces the risks of accidents
- Heals wounds
- Shapes the tree for future growth
- Provides health to the tree through increased sun exposure and air circulation
- Promotes the health of other plants, such as those at the base of the tree
- Helps stimulate new growth of leaves, flowers, and fruit
- Improves the size and quantity of the crop
- Saves money by preventing far-reaching, and sometimes irreversible, issues
- Opens up the property and improves the view

Organizational Pruning

Similarly, organizations occasionally need to examine their work and operations. Over time, it is easy to take on myriad tasks and lose sight of the bigger picture. Due to limited time and resources, sometimes not all of these accumulated tasks may be accomplished. If they are accomplished, it is at the expense of something – the quality of the completed task, employee burnout, or the neglect of more important projects central to the organization’s long-term success.

From time to time organizations must dive in to ways in which they spend their time and money, determining the value received for their efforts. When the value is marginal or tangential to the organization’s central mission, perhaps it is time for those tasks to be removed in order to stimulate new growth in more important areas. Such pruning is part of the leader’s role, ensuring the future health of the organization. In the words of Warren Bennis, “The manager does things right; the leader does the right thing.”



WORKSHEET I

Pre-Planning Discussion: Team Purpose

1. What is the core purpose of your team?
 - a. What are your department's primary functions? What are the core duties that must be performed to maintain operations?
 - b. What are your department's secondary functions? What are additional responsibilities that bring value to the Pepperdine community?
2. How well does the team embody this purpose overall?

WORKSHEET II

A: Work/Tasks/Projects

1. What is your work?
 - a. What are the tasks and projects on which your team works?
 - b. Which tasks are ongoing daily/weekly throughout the year?
2. How often do you do this work?
 - a. Which tasks are seasonal? How often do you perform these?
 - b. What is anything that takes time for your team?

B: Relates to Team Purpose

1. How does this project relate to your team's purpose?
2. Does this project well fulfill your team's purpose?
3. Does this project fall outside of the team's purpose?
4. Are these primary or secondary functions of your team?

C: Mission/Strategic Plan

1. How does your work contribute toward the mission and/or strategic plan?
 - a. What work helps achieve the mission and/or strategic plan?
 - b. What work is tangential to the mission and/or strategic plan?

D: Resources

1. What resources are required for this work?
 - a. How much time and energy is spent completing this work?
 - b. What monetary resources are spent on this work?

E: Processes Working Well

1. What systems or processes are working well?
 - a. How/why do they help team members?
 - b. Can similar systems be installed in other areas of work?

F: Process Irritants

1. What systems or processes are inefficient or cumbersome?
 - a. Why?
 - b. What can be altered to make completing work more efficient?
 - c. What are three possible ways in which irritants may be alleviated?

G: Team Players

1. Who works on this task/project?
 - a. Are the right people working on the right projects?
 - b. Do people's work play to their strengths? How?
 - c. Are there ways to structure the delegation of tasks so people play to their strengths?

H: Team Working Well

1. How well does your team work together?
 - a. What is going well?
 - b. What could be improved upon?
2. How would you describe the morale?
 - a. How could it be improved?

I: Team Challenges

1. What irritants does your team experience when completing their work?
 - a. Why do those irritants exist?
 - b. How can the irritants be mitigated or removed?
2. What factors inhibit team cohesion and productivity?
 - a. Do you have the resources needed to effectively complete your tasks?
 - b. Are there team members with excessive absenteeism, unsatisfactory performance, etc.?
 - c. How can these be addressed?

J: Value

1. What is the value received for this task/project?
 - a. Is the value worth the time and energy required to complete the project?
 - b. Which projects are most helpful in regards to value received?
 - c. Which projects yield ambivalent value?
2. What is your constituents' experience with your team and work?
 - a. How do you know?
 - b. What is working well?
 - c. What can be improved upon?
3. At what expense do you do this work?

K: Notes and Considerations

1. Based on this exercise, what are your conclusions or considerations about this work and the way in which this work is completed?
 - a. How can processes be improved?
How may the team be strengthened?
 - b. Are there ways to save money? Is there a better way to spend money?

2. What tasks/projects are worthwhile that you would like to bolster?
 - a. Why?
 - b. How can you increase the value of this work?
 - c. What are three ideas on how to strengthen this worthwhile work?
3. What tasks/projects may not be worth your team's time and effort?
 - a. Why not?
 - b. If the task may not be stopped completely, may the frequency be reduced?
 - c. If the task may not be stopped completely, may the scope of work be reduced?
4. Are there different seasons of busyness due to the different projects and their time of year?
 - a. Should you consider cross-training amongst staff members to help on different projects throughout the year?
 - b. Should you consider task-forces for various projects throughout the year?

A	B
Primary Tasks and Core Functions	Secondary Tasks

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Work/Task	Relates to Team Purpose	Mission/ Strategic Plan	Resources (Time, Money)	Processes Working Well	Process Irritants/Challenge	Team Players	Team Working Well	Team Challenges	Value of Work/Task	Notes/ Considerations