There are different things you can do to ensure your team works well together

Below are some tricks of the trade

You can see what teams that work well together do and some tips on how to get there

Everyone has a clear understanding of the goal of the group and how we plan to achieve it

The goal has been agreed by the group and is written down as well as a list of the steps the group will take to get there (perhaps by filling in the Campaign Bootcamp campaign planner)

When work needs to be done, everyone is clear what the tasks are, who will do what and by when

1. During meetings, make sure that somebody has written down what was agreed to be done, who will do it and by when. This should then be circulated to everyone that needs to know (including those that were at the meeting and those people that couldn't make it).

2. Use an online tool that the whole group can access that lists all the tasks and shows when tasks have been completed (like Trello).

The group has written and agreed a group agreement (or ground rules) that list the things the group needs to do to work well together

1. Set aside time in one meeting to write a group agreement. (For example ask the group to come up with answers to the question 'as a group what things do we need to do so that we work together well?' write what is agreed on a flipchart and hang it up so they can be seen by everyone at each meeting.

2. If somebody starts doing things that do not help the group work well together it's possible for anyone in the group to refer to the agreement when trying to tackle it. For example if someone is dominating meetings, someone else can say 'we all agreed when we wrote the group agreement that we would finish after two hours, so I think we better move on'.

There is a system in place to make sure all group members can communicate with each other outside of meetings

1. Everybody in the group says which form of communication they use most regularly and they feel is best for them in contacting other members of the group (e.g. text, phone, email, Facebook, knock on door). Using this information decide which method the group will use. Check everybody is happy sharing their contact details with each other.
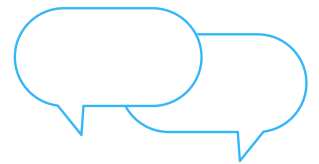
2. Set up a telephone tree. This means that if a message needs to be shared with the group (by phone) there is a set way of doing this e.g. Person A calls Person B, C and D who each call another 2 people etc.

Team members are recognised and praised when they put lots of effort in

1. Say thank you a lot!

2. If you are sharing with others a record of what was talked about at a meeting, make sure you include a written recognition of the work that one particular person has done

3. Send birthday cards thanking people for their work.

4. Nominate someone for a community award.

It is clear how decisions are made (e.g. we discuss things in our meetings until we can reach a decision everyone is happy with, if we can't we vote on it)

1. Discuss and agree as a group how decisions should be made (for example we will talk about this for 20 minutes and if we have not been able to reach a decision everybody can work with, then we will have a vote).

2. Agree that nobody has the power to make big decisions without first talking to the rest of the group. This should be done at meetings but if this is not possible everybody should be contacted with the proposal.

In meetings no one is allowed to dominate so no one else gets a word in

1. At the beginning of meetings agree a very clear agenda (perhaps with time allocated to each item), this will help focus the conversations.

2. If the group has written a group agreement (that list the things the group needs to do to work well together) anyone in the group can refer to these to try and make sure nobody dominates the conversation.

3. Make sure that during a meeting there are plenty of opportunities for people to speak for example:

- divide people into small groups or pairs for some important discussions,

- say: 'This is an important issue for us so let's make sure everybody has a chance to speak and/or 'Does anyone else who hasn't yet had a chance to speak want to say anything?

- Ask everybody to write down what they have to say about a particular issue (in no more than two sentences) and then ask everybody (that wants to) to share what they have written.

Have Fun

Try to make sure that a relaxed mood is created in meetings so people feel comfortable to be themselves. This can usually be done by making sure things aren't too formal, that everybody is valued for what they have to say, no one is made to feel that any question is a stupid question and that it is okay to make mistakes.
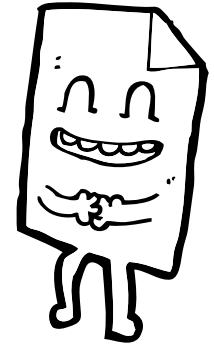
The workload is shared across the team and not just by one or two people

1. In meetings, make a list of the tasks agreed (hung up so that everyone can see). Write clearly next to each task who has volunteered to do it. It will soon be clear if one or two people have got lots of tasks. At this point someone can say 'I see Cheryl and Mia have already volunteered to do lots of things does anybody else want to volunteer to do this next task?'

2. Outside of the meeting, have a word with the person (or people) who are doing most of the work, suggest to them that at the next meeting they step back to allow others (' less experienced') to have a go.

3. Outside of the meeting, have a word with the person (or people) who are not getting a chance to do some of the tasks and ask them if they would be willing to volunteer for something at the next meeting (check if they may need support to do this).

4. Setting up a sub group that will have responsibility for one particular thing is a good way of sharing the work. Make sure the job of the sub group is very clear and that it reports back on what it's doing regularly.

It feels okay for any of us to make suggestions or ask questions without feeling silly

1. Make sure everybody understands there is no such thing as a stupid question. If one person wants to know the answer there is bound to be someone else in the group that feels the same way.

2. Always try to make sure that people's questions and suggestions are treated with respect by everybody in the group.

Time is set aside for the group to reflect on how the group is working and what needs to change

After a particular event (or on a regular basis) set aside time for everybody to work through these questions: 'What went well? What could have gone better? What should we do differently next time? What have we learnt from this?'

Take time to get to know each other

1. Book the meeting room for an extra half an hour for people to chat or, afterwards go to a cafe.

2. Try to make sure that during meetings people get to talk to each other – split people into small groups for discussion and change the groups around so everyone meets each other.

3. Start the meeting with a different question for example 'what have you done in the last year that you are proud of?' 'what's the most embarrassing thing you've said to someone else?'

The group knows what skills its members have (e.g. a skills audit) and people are supported if they want to try doing new tasks and learning new skills

Find out what skills the group has by getting people to do the Everyday Activism 'People Bingo' activity or 'Skills Audit.