Introduction

Timelines are visual depictions of a group's history, and they can be helpful to a team in a number of ways, including:

- Orienting new members or incoming leaders as to the team's history
- Revealing how a team has overcome adversity over time
- Celebrating a team's progress or record of success
- Projecting milestones to ensure agreement and get the team "on the same page"

Steps for Success

1. Post a row of flip chart paper along a wide expanse of wall, perhaps 4-10 pages depending upon the target time frame.
2. Draw a long horizontal line approximately mid-way up the pages so that it is easily reached by members of the team.
3. Place "hash marks" at appropriate intervals to the timeframe being discussed, perhaps one per month over a several year timeline or one per week for a shorter time span.
4. Label the hash marks with year, month, week or day, as appropriate to the timeframe.
5. Distribute colorful or large Post-It Notes®.
6. Invite team members to note "major milestones, turning points, or significant events" during the time period under discussion, and have them note one event per Post-It Note®. They should make a small pile of these events at their seats until invited to post them on the timeline.
7. After a period of individual thinking and note-taking, invite the group to post their notes along the timeline as close as possible to the dates of occurrence.
8. Encourage more events to be added at random during this posting time, and encourage team members to mill about reading the posted items.
9. Ask two volunteers to organize the notes, clumping together like items and placing events in the right order (this may take some consulting with the team).
10. Facilitate a discussion of the timeline, asking relevant questions such as: "What are you proud of?" "What are the main turning points?" "What surprises you?" and "What's next?"