

CREATING SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

“Teams rely on intense, collaborative work to accomplish a specific goal or task that could not be accomplished as well by an individual or a work group. An effective team increases the productivity, satisfaction, and growth of each of its team members, the team itself, and the rest of the organisation.”

Jon R Katzenbach & Douglas K Smith *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High Performance Organisation.*

Our Approach

We start with the premise that the team is a living system, more than the sum of the individual parts. The system has rules of behavior that are mostly unspoken, implicit, and yet strictly observed. Understanding how the system works and how to work with the team as a system is fundamental.

The Model

Dimension One: Productivity

Teams exist to produce results. Productivity strengths support the team in achieving results, accomplishing tasks, staying on course to reach goals and objectives. Seven identified attributes are necessary for teams to achieve high performance:

- Team Leadership
- Alignment around mission and purpose
- Goals and Strategies to accomplish them
- Decision Making process that is effective and appropriate for the team
- Proactive: the ability to take initiative and welcome change
- Accountability
- Resource Management

Dimension Two: Positivity

The culture or atmosphere of the team exerts tremendous impact on the team, positively or negatively. This dimension includes those attributes that create the infrastructure for a team. Positivity strengths focus on the interrelationships between team members and the spirit or tone of the team as a system. The seven strengths are drawn from a number of research sources including Emotional Intelligence, Positive Psychology, and academic research into relationships that work:

- Trust
- Respect
- Communication
- Constructive Interaction: ability to integrate conflict & disagreement on the team effectively
- Camaraderie: the spirit of the team working together
- Values Diversity: team differences are valued; they give the team multiple points of view
- Optimism: the team sees the possibilities, even when it is difficult

The assessment is designed to provide a profile of the Team that will be used as the basis for on-going work with the team. It is a bench-marking tool and a team development tool. When all team members have completed the assessment a report is created that presents the collected data. Individual responses are anonymous and confidential.

The Process

Team members complete the assessment online, usually in 20 minutes. There are 80 standard questions and up to five customized essay-style questions about the current state of their working relationships. When all team members have completed the assessment the data is aggregated and ports algorithmically, to the fourteen factors known from a psychometric standpoint to impact productivity and positivity, into a report. The report provides multiple graphic views of the data, each layer more detailed. With multinational teams it is even possible for each team member to take the assessment in their first language.

The assessment tool is an objective analytical process that eliminates subjective human elements such as personality preferences and personal prejudices, as team members assess the team from the perspective of the whole Team.

In this way, the team itself paints a real-world picture of where it is strong, and where it must be stronger. The report provides multiple views of the team created from the collected data providing different lenses to view the system. Each view adds to the total picture of the team; the different layers allow the team to mine deeply from the instrument. With this accurate baseline and specifically designed training exercises, this sets the team on the path to immediate and sustainable improvement.

The Work

Beginning with an intensive, two-day workshop, the Facilitators provides insight, discussion, collaboration and useful, appropriate tools. Improvements are often immediate. Monthly follow-up sessions ensure that the improvements become ingrained in the fabric of the team system and builds on the strengths of the team as a dynamic organism. At the end of six months, the assessment is administered once again and the results are compared to the original baseline. From real data, ROI may be measured.

Step 1: Discovery – conversations with the Team Leader/Sponsor

Step 2: Team Diagnostic™ Assessment #1: The Baseline

Step 3: Offsite workshop to Reveal the Results – 2 Days with 2 Facilitators

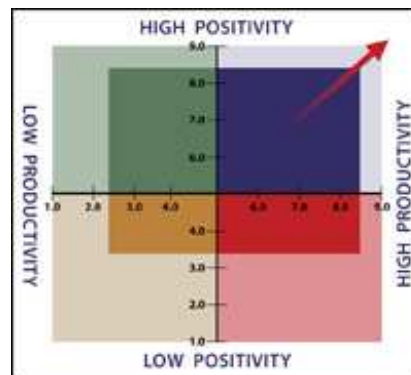
Step 4: On-Going Team Coaching – regular monthly Team coaching calls/Team face to face sessions, 60-90 minutes/session over 6 months

Step 5: Team Diagnostic™ Assessment #2 The Progress Report: Higher commitment to the process because of the second assessment.

Measurable Results

The Assessment performs two functions – a benchmarking tool as a snapshot of the team as it exists today, and a valuable way to measure progress for the team as they focus on areas of opportunity and development revealed by the assessment. The data itself is a starting point for follow-up.

The second function is its value for intervention and clear direction for goal setting and on-going follow-up. The assessment is designed to reveal the system to itself. The Facilitators work with the team to design development plans and structures for accountability.



The Team Diagnostic™ Assessment can also be set up as a regular review for teams as part of ongoing team performance management.

Investment

Contact Sandee to discuss your specific needs.

Special Emphasis: Senior Management Teams

The team at the top sets the example for the organisation. Exceptional team performance at this level is essential. Unfortunately most senior teams under-utilise the power of working together as a team. Instead a work group of independent agents periodically reporting vertical results substitutes for cohesive, collaborative, and leveraged results.

In today's resource-thin and highly competitive world no organisation can afford less than high performance, especially from the team at the top. That team may be the senior management team, or it may be the senior or core team on a major project, or the team that leads a division, agency, or sector. Team leadership from the top establishes the standard for team performance in that organisation. The learning and team development that takes place here is carried down more deeply in the organisation.

Team Members – who is on the team?

Every group is not necessarily a team. Individuals may be on multiple teams, often overlapping with team members.

In the broadest sense, a team is a select group of people with complementary skills, committed to a common purpose, with a set of performance goals and approach. Members of a team hold themselves mutually accountable.

The ideal team size is between 6 and 16 people. A useful question to ask is whether interdependence exists, that is, are all team members necessary to achieve the mission? Or is it a team plus stakeholders?

“When a team outgrows individual performance and learns team performance, excellence becomes a reality.”

Joe Paterno