

Teambuilding

How to turn uncohesive groups into productive teams

Eric Garner



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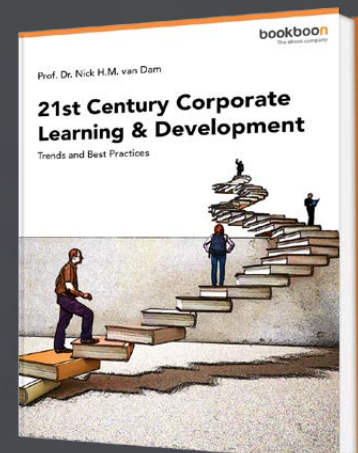


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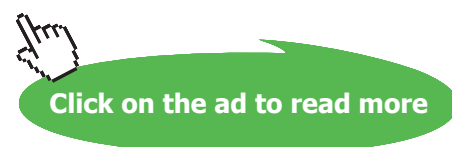
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Preface

Introduction to Teambuilding

In organizations where there is no teamwork, one and one will always equal the same: two separate ones or one single two. But in organizations which have discovered the pluses of teamwork, one and one adds up to more. Like Or Or Or 2Or 10The clever word for this is “synergy”. It means getting more for your money than what each part costs. Seen in another way, it’s what you get when Brazilians play football, the Berlin Philharmonic plays Beethoven, or your kids give their all in the school’s nativity play. It’s also what you’ll get when you apply the skills of teambuilding to your team at work.

Teambuilding means shaping your people into a productive force. It means encouraging them to work co-operatively for and with each other. It means getting them to share, not just “things” but feelings too, such as each other’s successes and each other’s failures. It means letting them grow beyond your control so that they can develop their own special magic. When you transform a group of people from a group of individuals into a winning team, you create something unique and utterly unforgettable.

Profile of Author Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you’re a manager, trainer, or learner, you’ll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.

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1 The Nature of Teams

Our lives are made up of belonging to groups. We are raised in families; learn at school in classes; and work alongside others in organisations. Group membership helps us define who we are. Here are some of the key aspects of being in a team.

1.1 What is a Team?

One of the best definitions of a team comes from John Adair who likened the individuals in a team to the pieces of a puzzle.

“A team is a group in which the jobs and skills of each member fit in with those of others as - to take a very mechanical and static analogy - in a jigsaw puzzle, pieces fit together without distortion and together produce some overall pattern.”
(B. Babington Smith, as quoted by John Adair)

1.2 The Origins of Teams

The drive to be part of a team seems to be instinctive and probably originated when human beings came down from trees to live on the open plains. The challenges early man faced were problems of scale, for example, in facing a threat from a pride of lions, and problems of complexity, primarily in how to handle a range of environmental threats to find food, shelter, warmth, and safety. Leaving everyone to sort things out for themselves had limitations. The answer was to pool resources and co-ordinate what everyone did. The concept of the tribe was born which in due course evolved into the concept of the team.

1.3 Successful Teams

A successful team is one in which the team members not only achieve something special and worthwhile, but feel as if they have participated in something special and worthwhile. Unlike a group,...

1. teams create varying levels of deep and meaningful personal relationships
2. teams arouse feelings in their members for what the team stands for
3. teams provide stimulus and motivation to those in them
4. teams provide various forms of synergy
5. teams are always developing
6. teams have purposeful unifying activity
7. teams feel special to those in them.

1.4 The Emergence of the Workplace Team

The emergence of the idea of workplace teams owes its origin to the groundbreaking studies at the GEC Hawthorne plant in Chicago by Elton Mayo in the 1920's and 30's. Before these studies, the concept of teamwork at work did not really exist. There is, for example, no mention of teamwork in Henri Fayol's principles of management in the early 20th century. However, as a result of Mayo's studies, it became clear that the team has a significant effect both on the productivity of people and how they feel about going to work.

1.5 Teams Are Special

The series of experiments conducted by Elton Mayo showed that when a group is made to feel special, through being singled out as a team, it can produce spectacular results. For example,

- under observation, the assembly room team at Hawthorne was able to produce high output even though the room's lighting had been reduced to a level equivalent to that of moonlight
- under observation, the team's output rose consistently, despite a steady worsening in conditions such as heating, lighting, meal breaks, working hours
- under observation, the absentee rate of the observed team fell by 20%.

1.5.1 Team Needs

Mayo's experiments at the Hawthorne assembly plant foreshadowed the later work of Abraham Maslow who developed the model of motivational needs. In particular, the experiments showed that people are motivated when part of a group (their social needs) and when being recognized by others (their love needs). Here are 9 further ways in which a team can meet people's needs:

1. achievement needs: "the team helps me to do more"
2. social needs: "in the team I can make friends"
3. recognition needs: "the team let me know how well I am doing"
4. spiritual needs: "there is a team spirit in our team which is very special to us"
5. learning needs: "I learn more from being in the team"
6. security needs: "safety in numbers"
7. basic needs: "I can earn more money as a member of the team"
8. leadership needs: "I am able to use my leadership skills as a member of the team"
9. freedom needs: "I can be myself when I am part of the team".

1.6 Team Development

While groups remain largely static, repeating what they do at a fixed or standardised level of performance, teams can grow and change and work towards an excellent level of performance. This development has 5 stages:

Stage the team is just a collection of people with nothing in common other than nominal membership of the organisation

Stage the team is a group of people with loose links, eg sharing a building, meeting occasionally

Stage the team come together on work which has a purpose and a goal that the members all share

Stage the team start to see themselves as a distinct unit with a life of its own.

Stage the team consistently achieve things together and evolve.

1.7 The Laws of the Team

Writer John Maxwell says there are a number of laws that are common to all teams. These include communications, shared values, goals, vision, leadership, challenge, investment in the team, feedback, high morale, and knowing one's value.

Here are the other 7 laws:

- a) The Law of Significance: one person is too small to achieve greatness
- b) The Law of the Niche: all players must add their own unique value
- c) The Law of the Chain: the team is as strong as its weakest link
- d) The Law of the Catalyst: all teams have players who make things happen
- e) The Law of the Bad Apple: rotten attitudes ruin a team
- f) The Law of the Bench: great teams have depth in reserve
- g) The Law of Accountability: teammates must be able to count on each other when it counts.

1.8 Synergy

Synergy is the idea that “whole systems, such as living things, behave in ways that cannot be predicted from the behaviour of their individual parts,” (Buckminster Fuller). In other words, synergy is a natural coming together of “bits” which results in an unexpected and remarkable whole. The human body and the whole of the natural world are examples of synergy at work.

Synergy is also:

- 2 and 2 = 5
- sodium and chlorine (both on their own harmful) = salt
- Lennon and McCartney
- Hewlett and Packard
- Gilbert and Sullivan
- Rolls and Royce
- Marks and Spencer.

1.9 Sam's Wagon

Sam's bull pulled his wagon into a rut. Several of the wagons behind Sam stopped and demanded that Sam move his wagon immediately.

Sam stepped off his wagon, scratched his chin and yelled “OK Blake!” The bull in front of the wagon didn't budge. Sam yelled out again “Let her go Alma!” Still no movement. Then he yelled again, “Pull hard, Franklin!”. But still no movement.

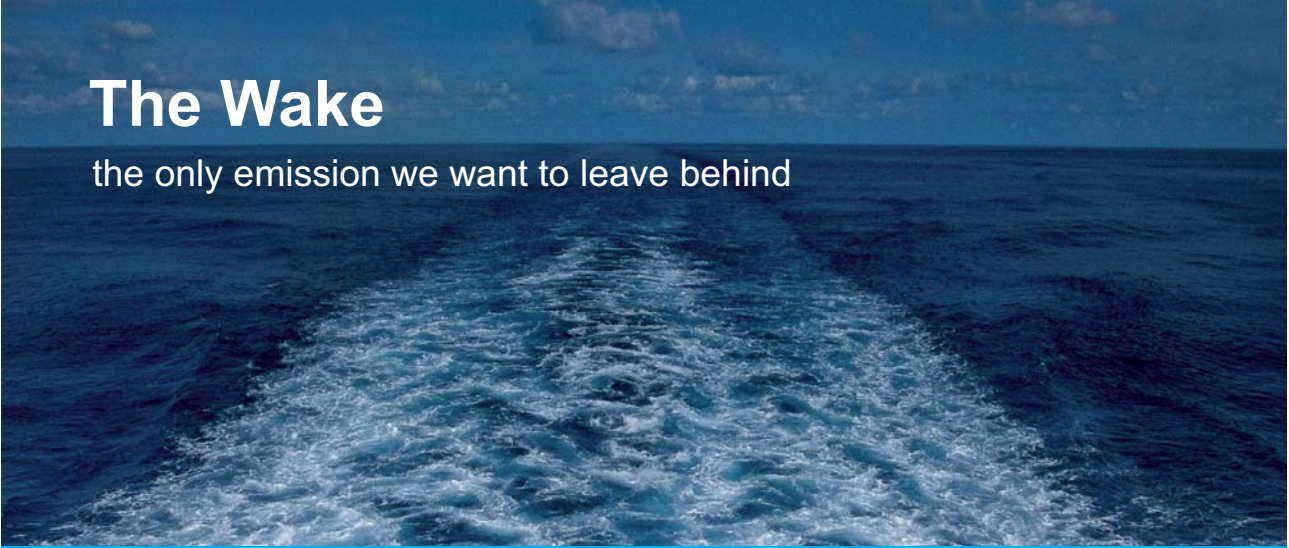
Then, finally, Sam yelled, “Now get going Hause!” and the bull pulled the wagon out of the rut.

Confounded, one of the other wagon drivers turned to Sam and asked him why he didn't call the bull by the right name in the first place.

“Well,” Sam retorted, “if Hause thought he was gonna move that wagon out of that ditch all by himself we'd never have gotten out of here.”

1.10 Key Points

1. Teams are the building blocks of organisational life.
2. A team is different from a group because it shares a common purpose.
3. In an age of global communications, the team can exist without ever meeting one another face to face.
4. Belonging to a team can satisfy people's needs at a range of different levels.
5. The informal workplace team may be of more importance to how we work than the formal team.
6. The distinctive feature of teams is that they can grow and develop.




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2 Team Development

One of the key distinctions between groups and teams is that groups are static while teams are capable of growth. In a group, people are required to carry out laid-down duties. In a team, they work together and, if managed well, this working together enables them to develop as a social and performing unit. Here are features of how this growth happens.

2.1 The Natural Life of Teams

One-off teams are those that are formed in response to special needs, such as a project, an event or a distinct piece of work. They are characterised by having finite life spans and clear objectives. According to research by Bruce Tuckman, one-off teams grow through 5 stages of development:



1. forming: the stage of coming together
2. storming: the stage of working out the team's identity
3. norming: the stage of agreeing how the team will work
4. performing: the stage of harnessing what the team can do for the benefit of others
5. disbanding: the stage of completion.

2.2 Forming

The forming stage of team development is when people come together for the first time. The atmosphere is wintry, cold and formal. Suspicion, distrust, caution and fear may exist. The main direction of interaction is between individuals and the team leader rather than between individuals themselves. Teams can get stuck at the forming stage if trust is low and there is no impetus for development.

2.3 Storming

If the group is led to move beyond the forming stage, it enters the storming stage. This is when the group starts to wonder if they can gain something from being in the group. Instinctive feelings may arise about others in the group and there may be differences about exactly how to proceed and whose ideas will dominate. This is the sorting-out stage of the group's growth and can be characterised by conflict and differences.

2.4 Norming

If the group is led to move beyond the storming stage, it enters the norming stage with agreement on strategies, systems, and structures. People start to see a purpose bigger than their own and there are the beginnings of putting others' needs ahead of one's own within the framework of mutual gain. The norms may include a blueprint for how the team works together.

2.5 Performing

If the group is led to move beyond the norming stage, the group start to see that, in working together, they can achieve something greater than the sum of their individual efforts. The focus now moves from sorting out their own issues to delivering something for the benefit of others, principally their customers or stakeholders. As the performing stage develops, the team become willing to take risks and face challenges that they would never have contemplated before. The team becomes a highly positive, can-do unit.

The advertisement features a central graphic on the left with a circular arrow and gear icon surrounding three stylized human figures. To the right, the text reads: **UNLEASHING CHANGE MANAGEMENT**, **OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2018**, and **DE RODE HOED AMSTERDAM**. The bottom of the ad shows a silhouette of an Amsterdam skyline with a windmill and a bridge. In the bottom left corner, it says 'Global Executive Events'.

2.6 Disbandment

It is tempting to keep a well-performing team going once it has reached a satisfactory level of performance. After all, this is what it was formed for. However, while some teams manage to prolong their success for some time, it is in the nature of organisational life for complacency and self-satisfaction to creep in once a team reaches a winning level. Then it becomes important to look to the future by disbanding and starting the growth cycle once more.

2.7 Helping Teams Grow

The manager of one-off teams can work with the natural process of team development, intervening only to create the right conditions for growth within the team itself.

- forming: emphasise the team's identity and what binds them. Use "we". Accept the team as a unit that can look after itself with your support. Build their confidence. Intervene only if the mix of individuals is not right.
- storming: encourage openness. Promote a safe climate. Allow healthy conflict. Avoid rescuing the team.
- norming: focus on what the team has in common. Link ideas. Seek interaction between the team members.
- performing: ensure people have the skills to perform. Provide regular feedback. Celebrate success.
- disbanding: manage change by looking ahead and moving on.

If a group develops cohesively with the right mix of people and skills and is able to learn its way through difficult times, the group's failures will eventually give way to team successes. This process is not a hit-and-miss one but an inevitable one of team development. The only variable is the time it takes to get there.

2.8 Key Points

1. All organisations change: some grow through phases of development, others decline and die.
2. Organisations need leaders to ensure that teams can grow and managers to ensure that teams can survive.
3. As an organisation moves through its phases of development, it requires different styles of managing.
4. One-off teams have similar phases of development as organisations and are also subject to crisis points.
5. A team's development can be aided if the right interventions are made as it grows.
6. The general direction of team growth is towards interdependence and an outer focus.

3 Teamwork

There's nothing like being in a great team. It is one of life's greatest highs and one of the real pleasures of going to work. Unfortunately, though, for many, it is a dream to be longed for rather than a daily reality. In teams that don't click, the experience is frustrating, painful, and stressful. And for the organization that allows such teams to exist, an unproductive waste of talent.

But all that can change.

With simple acts of teamwork, teams can change from being the source of our greatest anguish into being the source of our greatest joy. Here's how.

3.1 Sharing

If you want to measure the strength of your team, do a sharing audit. Simply record the number of acts of team sharing in any day. That's sharing information, sharing ideas, sharing feelings, values and needs. Or simply just sharing being together. Your score will tell you just how together your group is. The most important feature of team sharing is goal sharing. If your people don't even share the team goal, chances are you have a collection of individuals who happen to work near each other, not a team.

When groups have a clear knowledge of the goal they're working towards, and are committed to it, they become a team.

“When xne key xn the typewriter dxesn't wxrk prxperly, it's like xne persxn in the team nxt playing their full part. It destrxys the whxle effect.”

3.2 Asking for Help

Strong teams are strong because the individuals in it have different but complementary qualities. Sue's a great detail person. John sees the big picture. Ron gets on with everyone. Jill is a loner. And so on. That means that when anyone has to do something they're not particularly gifted at, they can turn to someone else in the team for help. In strong teams, you frequently hear people asking for help. In poor teams, it is considered a sign of weakness.

3.3 The 3 A's

Another audit you can do to find out if you have a team or just a bunch of individuals is the 3 A's Audit. The 3 A's stand for Appreciating, Accepting, and Acknowledging. They are the features of great teams and stand in contrast to the 3 C's of poor teams: Criticising, Complaining, and Condemning. Accepting means letting people know they're valued members of the team. Acknowledging means letting them know they belong. And appreciating means letting them know the team just wouldn't be the same without them.

3.3.1 Geese in Flight

Geese fly in a V shape to protect members of the flock and to conserve energy. As the bird in front travels forward, it leaves a gap behind it called a vortex. This means that its following teammates have less air resistance to fly against. When the leader gets tired, it moves to the back of the V and all the geese move up the formation so that each of them gets a turn at leading. The formation allows all the geese to keep an eye on each other. This care and the technique of flying means that a flock of geese can cover 70% more distance than a bird flying on its own. Because each bird maximizes its strength, it is also much harder for predators to single out any bird for attack. This ensures the survival of the flock.

3.4 Valuing Others

We all need to feel important. When we are valued, we take pride in who we are and what we do. Warren Bennis, professor of business administration at the University of Southern California, describes his campus as “a dry, crack-infested part of LA”. But, he says, every morning is a delight because the grounds of the campus are so fresh and well-kept. He adds: “It makes a big difference to me. But I wonder if anyone has reminded the gardeners of the importance of their work.” Have you told someone in your team lately how much you value them?

3.5 Giving Feedback

Strong teams are defined by the amount of interaction there is between team members. When interaction is low, so is team morale. One essential type of interaction in strong teams is feedback. It can take 3 forms:

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- a) positive feedback given by anyone in the team to someone else when they do something that benefits the whole team
- b) constructive feedback given by anyone in the team to help someone else in the team perform better
- c) requested feedback from anyone in the team when they want someone to help them with their performance.

When there is a constant exchange of these kinds of feedback, given skillfully without criticism and rancour, the team cannot help but grow and develop.

3.6 Building on Others

When management consultant Peter Honey explored the differences between teams and groups, he found that one of the key differences was that teams pick up on each others' ideas and build, whereas groups don't. This feature is also known as convergent listening. Team members are intently interested in what others have to say. Rather than let it go by without comment, they take something from it and develop it into something worthwhile.

3.6.1 Convergent Thinking

In a discussion in which divergent listening predominates, people's views go off into space and are lost forever.

In convergent listening, the team captures everything that is said. They look for and find connections and links between what one person says, what another has said, what has gone before and what might come after. This is because they spend more time listening to others than they do to themselves. Instead of pushing their own viewpoint, as happens in divergent listening, they seek to add to what others say, link it to other viewpoints and so build on it.

"That's an interesting idea, Ann; it ties in with what Jimmy was just saying. It doesn't go as far as Ron's point. Maybe we should hear if anyone else can bridge the gap..."

3.7 Taking Risks

The team's unique capacity for support comes to the fore when the team takes risks and navigates its way through change. Risks and change occur in the natural development of teams but are also an unavoidable feature of the modern world of work. Teams can support each other when changes are imposed from outside. The strength of a good team also means that when change is undertaken from within the team, the burden of risk is shared if it all goes wrong. Teams allow us to take greater and bigger risks than we could afford to take alone.

3.8 A Friendly Climate

A friendly climate is the result of team morale. Morale is a state of mind that radiates confidence in people. It happens by itself when everyone feels sure of their place in the team. Nobody is anxious to prove themselves to anyone else. Nobody shows off. Nobody seeks to be better than anyone else. When this happens, individual egos disappear, and team spirit emerges.

3.8.1 Spoonfeeding

A rabbi spoke with God about heaven and hell.

“I will show you hell,” God said, and they went into a room which had a large pot of stew in the middle.

The smell was delicious, but around the pot sat people who were famished and desperate. All were holding spoons with very long handles which reached to the pot, but, because the handles were longer than their arms, it was impossible to get the stew back into their mouths.

“Now I will show you heaven,” God said, and they went into an identical room. There was a similar pot of stew, the smell was delicious, and the people had identical spoons, but they were well-nourished and happy.

The rabbi looked puzzled. “It’s simple,” God said. “You see, the people here have learned to feed one another.”

This isn’t Utopia. It’s reality in workplaces throughout the world. But it does have to be worked for and it does require commitment from everyone in the team. Whether you’re a team member or team leader, the results are worth that commitment.

3.9 Key Points

Acts of teamwork are the daily habits that encourage the team to work together and rely on each other.


1. The team’s goal should be simply stated and meaningful.
2. Teambuilders re-state the team’s goal at every available opportunity and in every possible way.
3. Strong teams have a positive direction and self-belief.
4. Teams should share not just goals and visions, but also setbacks and failures.
5. Acknowledging, appreciating and accepting each other are the cornerstones of daily acts of teamwork.

4 Team Cohesion




A cohesive team is one which has strong ties of teamwork. In a cohesive team, people have a sense of a common purpose, common aims and goals, and a common way of working together. There are a number of key variables that determine how cohesive a team is likely to be. If you pay attention to these, you will develop a strong, self-supporting team.

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4.1 Team Type

There are three different types of workplace team, each with varying ways in which they bring members together:

1. Formal teams are likely to use rules, procedures and systems to formalise team contact. The objective or end result may not always be clear in a formal team.
2. Ad-hoc teams, such as matrix teams working on projects, are likely to use the special purpose for which they exist as a way of bringing the team together. There is a unity of purpose.
3. Informal teams are the network of friends, colleagues, mentors and role models whom we may only loosely regard as a team. The informal team is likely to have you at the centre of a web of relationships; the members of this team do not have any contact with each other, except via you.

4.2 Team Size

There is no definitive view about the ideal size of a workplace team. Lyndall Urwick believed that 6 was the most a supervisor should be responsible for. Meredith Belbin argued that, to encompass all the necessary team roles, it should be 8 or 10. The Japanese, in line with their group-oriented culture, believe a team leader should be able to handle any number between 30 and 10. When teams become too large, they become more difficult to manage, less united in purpose and less flexible in their ability to change.

4.2.1 Cyrus's Army

The Romans, Incas and Persians all believed 5 to be the ideal number for a team.

According to the Greek writer Xenophon (430-355 BC), this was how the Persian general Cyrus divided up his army:

- 5 men in a squad under the leadership of a corporal
- 2 squads in a sergeant's squad under a sergeant
- 5 sergeants' squads in a platoon under a lieutenant
- 2 platoons in a company under a captain
- 10 companies in a regiment under a colonel
- 10 regiments in a brigade under a general.

In this way, no individual leader had more than 10 people directly under them even though a brigade was composed of 10,000 men.

4.3 Team Structure

A team is likely to be more cohesive when its structure favours close contact. Eric Sundstrom's research in the 1960's found that, if the structure of a team allows for close working, as, for example, it does in a physically-close group, or one working on a large piece of work, then it produces better work than if the structure is loose and there is less contact.

4.3 Tall Structures

Flat structures are team structures in which there is little hierarchical distance between the team leaders and the team. Teams are likely to be more close-knit in such structures than in tall structures.

Tall structures are team structures in which there are many layers throughout the team hierarchy. In the one-time structure of the Devon and Cornwall police force, there were nine levels from top to bottom, comprising:

- 2154 constables
- 455 sergeants
- 135 inspectors
- 47 chief inspectors
- 37 superintendents
- 12 chief superintendents
- 3 assistant chief constables
- 1 deputy chief constable
- 1 chief constable

4.5 Team Affinity

Teams whose members like one another are likely to be more cohesive than those where there is personal disliking, ignorance of others or indifference. Affinity is aided by a number of factors including shared interests in the group, democratic styles of leadership and training together in the early days. In Japan, for example, it is standard practice to start all new recruits at the same time so that they can build an affinity with each other that lasts for years to come.

4.5.1 Emotional Interdependency

The one thing missing from a group as opposed to a team is any form of emotion or need to rely on each other. In a group, you may like the other people but it is not necessary. The result is that, in a group, experiences are repetitive and functional; whereas in a team you go on a journey.

“You should live the journey. You should live it right. You should live it together. You should live it shared. You should try to make one another better. You should get onto one another if somebody’s not doing their fair share. You should hug one another when they are. You should be disappointed in a loss and exhilarated in a win. It’s all about the journey.”
(Mike Krzyzewski, coach of the Blue Devils basketball team)

4.6 Team Make-Up

Teams whose members have something in common are more cohesive than those where people have little in common. The common bond could be age, gender, status, experience, outside interests, qualifications, education, and ambitions. A study of 31 top 500 Fortune companies in the United States found that there was a higher level of turnover when management teams had a high variation in age, service and tenure.

4.6.1 Lucy to Linus

This is taken from a Peanuts cartoon written by Charles Shulz.

Lucy to Linus (who is contentedly watching a TV show): “Change the channel!”

Linus: “Do what?”

Lucy: “CHANGE THE CHANNEL!!”

Linus: “What makes you think I should respond just like that?”

Lucy: (showing her hand) “You see this? These are just 5 little weak fingers. But when they are rolled together into something called a fist, they become a weapon that is formidable to behold.”

Linus: (after contemplating Lucy’s fist, changing the channel and then looking at his own fingers) “Why can’t you guys get organized like that?”

4.7 Team Conformity

While a cohesive team encourages and celebrates the diversity and individuality of its members, it also expects strict conformity to the mission, vision and values of the team. The following is the Vision Statement of the Tar Heels women’s soccer team of the University of Carolina:

“Let’s begin with this. We don’t whine. We work hard. The truly extraordinary is something we do every day. We choose to be positive. When we don’t play as much as we’d like, we are noble and still support the team and its mission. We don’t freak out over ridiculous issues or create crises where none should exist. We are well-led. We care about each other as team mates and as human beings. We play for each other. We want our lives to be never-ending ascensions.”



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4.8 Team Interaction

Interaction is the glue that keeps good teams together. In cohesive teams, people are constantly talking to each other. This happens formally and informally; it includes both trivia and important matters; it is about both work and personal concerns; it involves both give and take; it happens when news is both good and bad; it arises out of concern for others; and it takes place both on a one-to-one and group level. The commitment to ongoing, positive, and other-related interaction is what turns each member of a cohesive team into a team leader.

Cohesive teams are those which have a distinct identity built around commonly-agreed values, aims, and ways of working. They see themselves as a united whole, can work with and for one another and are strong enough to deal with internal and external threats and grow.

4.9 Key Points

1. A cohesive team is one with strong ties of teamwork.
2. A team should never become so big as to lose its flexibility to respond to change.
3. Teams are more cohesive when people are in daily contact.
4. Tall team structures with many layers and levels are likely to lead to less cohesive teamwork.
5. Teams whose members like one another are likely to be more cohesive than those who do not.
6. Teams whose members have things in common are likely to work more closely than those that don't.

5 Threats to Teamwork

Individualism is the hidden threat to teamwork. At any time, the pull towards individualism may outweigh the pull towards teamwork and lead to the break-up of the team. Here are some of the most dangerous threats to teamwork. Learn what they are and, if you care for your team's survival, act swiftly to slay them.

5.1 Individualism

Teams survive and thrive on the individual contributions people make, but unless they are properly channelled into the overall needs of the team, individual effort can become individualism. Individualism means putting one's own needs ahead of those of the team, even by using the team to advance oneself. In this way, the cohesion of the team can be seriously undermined. A good team allows all its members room to breath and space to grow and be themselves.

5.1.1 Tragedy on Mt Everest

In the spring of 1996, dozens of climbers made their way to the top of the world's tallest mountain, Mt Everest. Most of those on the climb were a mix of the wealthy and adventurous. But they were not teams. On the day they were meant to reach the summit, disaster struck. A blinding whiteout storm caught four groups at the top. 8 climbers died including those leading the groups and their guides. The incident illustrated what can go wrong when individualism comes before teamwork. Each climber was in it for their own pride and glory. There was no team training before the climb. No common bond or experiences. No plan, organization, or sharing. The group members hardly knew each other. As a result, when the leaders were killed, the rest didn't know what to do.

5.2 Stars

Stars are those people whose personal contribution in the team is greater than the rest. Stars exist in all sorts of teams. In teams of dogs pulling sledges across the Arctic, it was found that in the best teams, there was usually one dog that pulled up to 20% more than the rest. As long as stars stay team-focused, they can act as role models to others. When stars become self-focused, however, - what some have called the "prima donna syndrome" - they may use the team to promote themselves into higher positions. Research has shown that when stars receive favours, privileges and rewards not available to the rest of the team, overall team performance declines.

5.2.1 "Me First" Attitudes

Here are 10 attitudes that come from the Kindergarten for under 5's but can equally be applied to non-team players:

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If it's in my hand, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If it's mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.
6. If I'm doing or building something, all of the pieces are mine.
7. If it looks like mine, it's mine.

8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you're playing with something and put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If it's broken and no use, it's yours.

5.3 Passengers

Passengers are those who use the team for a free ride. Latané found that when individual contributions cannot be assessed, some people believe they can free-ride. He found that for every new member of a tug-of-war team the rest pulled 10% less hard. Passengers can be carried by the team only for so long: in time the rest of the team will find them out. If passengers' performance is not addressed, others may well follow their example and the team will disintegrate.

5.4 Gender

Research into team performance indicates that there are differences in the way men and women view their teams. Men, for example, like clearly defined team roles; women are happier when they are less clear. Men find difficulty in asking for help from others in the team; women don't. Men feel empowered by rows in the team; women feel diminished. Men enjoy pointing out their teammates' mistakes; women don't.

5.5 Culture

Western culture has a tendency to promote individualism at the expense of teamwork. We believe in the concept of the self-made man or woman and often justify our personal success by arguing that, by helping ourselves first, we thereby help the rest of society.

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Other cultures, notably Japan, rate the importance of the team much more highly. This is reflected in how a typical Western office and a typical Japanese office are laid out:

- in a Japanese office, privacy is unknown, offices are laid out on the touching desk principle and everyone knows what is going on
- by contrast, the layout of a Western office tends to reflect status, length of service and the pecking order. As a result, the business needs a communication system for the team to speak to each other.

5.6 Cliques

A clique is a group within a group, usually formed to pursue their own aims which may be at odds with those of the mother group. The word “clique” is thought to derive from the French word “claquer” meaning “to clap”. A clique was a specially-hired group of people who attended openings of plays and operas and, in return for money, clapped or jeered according to who was paying them. In his research into teams in 1986, Andrew Duchon found a high prevalence of inner and outer cliques, in teamwork. The inner circle, who were often female and senior team members, were more trusted by the team leader and so were given more to do with higher rewards as a result. The outer circle were given less to do and received only ordinary benefits.

5.7 Unresolved Conflict

Conflict between people is inevitable when they work closely together. In strong, well-led teams, conflict can be the basis of win-win solutions which can benefit the team. When left unresolved, however, conflict can undermine the team’s morale.

The following are signs of unresolved and unhealthy conflict:

- counter-dependency, in which authority is opposed or resisted
- domination or power struggling
- pairing-off and clique-forming
- blocking, such as timewasting, petty criticisms, pointing out snags, returning to old topics
- withdrawing from any team involvement, except the bare minimum.

5.8 Lack of Team Rewards

It is often thought that the general conditions of the workplace, such as the facilities and amenities that everyone enjoys, are sufficient to act as team rewards. But they are not. People often take these for granted. If an organisation wants its teams to excel, it must therefore make team rewards as valuable to the individual as individual rewards. Team rewards can include acknowledging and praising examples of good teamwork; diverting resources to teams not individuals and giving teams more say.

5.8.1 The Lion and the Bull

Aesop tells the following fable of the Lion and the Bull.

Four bulls who were great friends always kept near one another and fed together.

A lion had often watched them and wanted to kill them for his dinner but was afraid to attack all four at once. So he began by telling one of the bulls stories about the others to arouse jealousy and bad feeling among them.

In time the bulls started to believe the stories and began to quarrel amongst themselves. Soon they no longer liked each other's company; they separated and roamed alone. Then the artful lion was able to pick them off one by one and devour them for his dinner as he had planned.

Moral: United we stand; divided, we fall.

5.9 The Route to Expulsion

When a team member does not follow team norms, there is a dangerous unbalancing which is felt to threaten the whole team. John Hunt notes the following five steps that lead to expulsion, either officially or unofficially, from the team:

Step 1: Initial tolerance

Step 2: Attempts to correct

Step 3: Verbal aggression

Step 4: Physical aggression

Step 5: Rejection

When they carry out trials of husky dogs for expeditions across Antarctica, explorers eliminate two kinds of dog: the non-workers and the disruptives.

Building great teams isn't so much about finding some magic recipe that will turn an assorted group of people into a team. The desire to bond is a natural one in all human beings. The issue is: are you prepared to put teamwork before individual work? If you are, you will quickly slay the 7 dragons of individualism and create teams that are out of this world.

5.10 Key Points

1. A strong team recognises the individuality of its team members.
2. Individualism begins the moment the team member puts themselves before the team.
3. Conflict is healthy and productive in strong teams and unhealthy and destructive in weak teams.
4. Strong teams unite against outside threats.
5. Team rewards don't have to be in monetary form.
6. Stars can motivate the team as well as destroy it.

6 Team Leaders

As observers of any successful sports team know, the effect of the team leader on the team is the deciding factor in how well the team performs. Unlike managers, leaders do more than just organise and plan and check that work is carried out. They inspire the team at an emotional level, push people to the limits of what they are capable of and create a team that has a reality on an almost spiritual plane.

6.1 Team Leaders

Team leaders have 3 functions:

- a) a. to get the team to perform a given task to the satisfaction of the customer or stakeholder
- b) b. to allow for individuals to find job satisfaction and sufficient motivation to want to continue in the team
- c) c. to develop the team so that, with the same people and the same resources, a higher performance can be obtained.

The triple concerns of Task, Team and Individuals mean that the team leader is constantly faced with dilemmas and paradoxes: should task come before the team or the other way round? Should the leader meet individuals one-to-one or only relate to the team as a group?



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6.2 The Task

In order for the team leader to get the team to carry out the task efficiently and effectively, the team leader may:

- set clear overall task objectives, specific team goals and individual targets
- decide what resources the team needs and provide them
- establish suitable working conditions for carrying out the task
- agree a system of working which will produce the best results
- agree ongoing high standards of workmanship.

6.3 Task Orientation

Some of the features of the task-oriented team leader may be to...

- rule with an iron fist
- focus on how much should be done
- ask for sacrifices for the good of the whole team
- see to it that people are working to their limits
- stress being ahead of competing work teams
- decide in detail what needs to be done
- emphasise deadlines
- emphasise quality of work.

6.4 The Team

In their position of being either slightly outside the team or wholly outside it, team leaders are the best people to see the team objectively as a team. They are able to give the team its shape and reality, making the team more than just a collection of individuals.

They can do this by:

- meeting with the team as a whole, involving the team in discussions and reaching team decisions
- making selections to the team based on what newcomers can add to the team
- removing from the team anyone who unbalances or disrupts the team
- sensing the team's energy and making the necessary interventions to help it move forward
- fostering team spirit
- giving the team its unique identity.

6.5 Team Orientation

Some of the features of the team-oriented leader may be to...

- work on building the team's morale
- back up his or her deputies

- express appreciation of good work
- be easy to understand
- help with personal problems
- treat the team as equals
- put people at ease
- get the approval of the team before making changes.

6.6 The Individual

The route to all effective teamwork lies through managing the individuals in the team. Only through one-to-one contact and management can a team leader develop people who have the skills, motivation and inspiration to fulfil the task needs of the team and develop the team as a unit.

The areas a team leader needs to address in managing the individuals in the team include:

- appointing newcomers to the team
- building up individual skills and realising personal potential through training, coaching, and mentoring
- getting to know individuals well enough to be able to make sensible adjustments to who does what in the team
- individual rewards, pay and conditions
- personal performance appraisal
- dealing with individual performance problems through counselling and discipline.

6.7 Sacrifices

It is an acknowledged principle of leadership that team comes before self, even if it means sacrificing personal glory. Nowhere is this more true than on the sports field where the captain or team leader may sometimes have to ask an individual to put the team first.

John Adair quotes Mike Brearley, former England cricket captain, who was regularly called upon to ask his team to put aside personal glory for the sake of the team:

“Cricket is a team game but as such it is unusual in being made up of intensely personal duels. Personal interest may conflict with the team. You may feel exhausted and yet have to bowl; you may be required to sacrifice your wicket going for quick runs. It is the captain’s job to coax the happy blend of self-interest and team interest from his players.”

6.8 Balance

In a major study of 62 top UK companies, all in the upper quartile of their sectors, the Department of Trade and Industry’s Innovation Unit looked at the characteristics that created successful teamwork.

They discovered that, despite the differences in the companies, - some had as few as 28 employees, others had 60,000, - all the successful companies gave out a buzz the minute you walked through the door. What the researchers discovered was a balance between seemingly contradictory opposites: a demanding yet blame-free culture; a structured yet flexible system; empowered yet controlled people. These opposites created balance, a creative tension and forward motion.


“Teamwork is like riding a bicycle. You can only move forward if you stay in balance.”

6.9 Leadership Style

The three concerns of team leaders for task, team and individuals creates three basic leadership styles:

- task concerns lead to a directive style, in which instructions, deadlines, and quality of output are emphasised
- team concerns lead to a consultative style, in which the team are involved in decisions which concern them
- individual concerns lead to a delegated style, in which the leader will manage the team through devolving tasks and responsibilities to individuals in the team.

In his studies of team leadership, Rensis Likert found that productivity and team satisfaction can vary widely according to the leader's style. Likert acknowledged that there is no one right style; effective team leadership means using the most suitable style for the needs of the team.



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The team leader's concern for balancing task, team and individuals may be likened to the human functions of hand, heart and head. The hand is the technical role, the heart is the emotive role, and the head is the managerial role. When hand, heart and head are all properly cared for, not only is there a whole, but also a healthy balance.

6.10 Key Points

1. Managing and leading teams are different but complementary functions.
2. Team leaders need to constantly balance the competing demands of the team's needs.
3. When the team comes first, it is the team leader who must persuade individuals to give up their own interests.
4. The different needs of the team create different leadership styles in the leader.
5. A team leader may know intuitively what style to use with the team or may use the one he or she is comfortable with.
6. According to research, the best team leaders are those who vary their style to suit the particular make-up of the team and their stage of development.

7 Team Roles



Why is it that some groups of people perform at a phenomenal level and are always on the winner's stand, while other groups always struggle to make it? The answer lies in how people perform their team roles. When you allocate the right team role to the right team player, and ensure that your players are flexible enough to cover all the roles that the team needs, then winning becomes inevitable.

Here are the 9 key team roles that all successful teams need.

7.1 The Co-ordinator

Research has shown that all great teams need someone whose main job is to co-ordinate all the team's activities. This person may or may not be the official team leader. They are like the team's compass, a quiet point in the middle of activity. People gravitate towards the co-ordinator to get their bearings and re-fuel.

7.2 The Go-fer

The team "go-fer" is the person who happily "goes for this" and "goes for that". He or she is perfectly happy to do all the nitty-gritty jobs that nobody else wants to do and without which things would soon break down. Always highly energetic, the Go-fer doesn't mind what they have to do. They even enjoy botched jobs just for the pleasure of re-doing them!

7.3 The Relater

If you don't have a Relater on your team, team life quickly becomes cold and formal. The team Relater is the team's people person. They want everyone in the team to enjoy themselves. With a sixth sense that tells them when someone is not happy, one of their natural gifts is acting as the team matchmaker as they instinctively know who will work well with whom.

7.4 The Maverick

The Maverick is not a natural team player but is still essential to the good health of the team. That's because the Maverick is the person who is not afraid to swim against the tide. He or she doesn't care if they are in a minority of one even when everyone else takes a different stand from them. Such a role is an invaluable defence against groupthink, the tendency of the team to think as one.

7.5 The Observer

The Observer is the team's eyes and ears. They see the big picture, know what's going on, and can foresee problems before they arise. Often team Observers are gatekeepers, possibly receptionists, secretaries, or security personnel. They not only know the official version of events, but the unofficial as well.

7.6 The Checker

Checkers are people who like things to be done in an orderly fashion. When others in the team run away with ideas, the Checker will always call them back to cross the I's and dot the T's. By nature cautious and suspicious, Checkers always search for the safest route for the team to travel.

7.7 The Moralist

Those who fill the "moral" role in teams provide the team with its rules and standards, its musts and shoulds. They are the standard bearers for the right way for the team to proceed. They hate it when others break the rules and insist that the team should act according to plan including a high standard of performance.

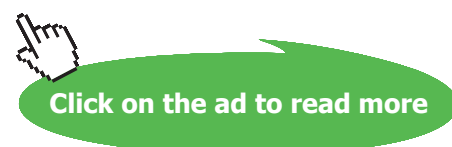
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7.8 The Winner

Winners are the team's stars. They have an instinct for promoting the team and themselves. When others on the team feel down, Winners gee them up. And when the team face tough assignments, they either put themselves forward as the team's champion or rally the team to motivate themselves to new heights.

7.9 The Leader

The Leader role is not always filled by the official team leader. The Leader is a leader by personality and nature. He or she is often the most dominant person in the group and invariably the most confident and most fearless. They can get others to do anything for them which is why official team leaders need these people on their side and not against them.

7.10 Role Fit

The following account of a fictitious team meeting shows how each of the team roles fits in with each other.

Christopher (co-ordinator): We need some ideas on where the new computers are to go. It's been suggested that one stays with Angela and the rest go in the main office. Any thoughts?

Richard (leader): I'm strongly against that. Leaving them in the main office is against the whole point of the system. It's just not fair!

Alan (relater): Steady on. Nothing's been agreed yet. When I spoke to Angela, she didn't see the need to have one but everyone else I've heard thinks she should. Why don't we talk to the specialists?

Ann (go-fer): I can do that this afternoon, if you like. They've got this new programme that's amazing and could be just right for us...

Sharon (checker): Hang on, Ann. We don't have any money for extra programmes. We'd need to check it out with Angela first.

Christopher...so it's back to where to put the terminals. Sue, what do you think?

Sue (moralist): The best locations are Mike, Angela and Sharon's desks. If you think about it, they're the ones that really will use them most. That's the right thing to do.

Mike (maverick): I've an even better idea. Why don't we convert them into network laptops. Then we can all use them whenever we want.

Maureen (observer): I can see what you're saying, but I know for certain Angela wouldn't wear that. I know Bill suggested the same idea last week and she turned it down flat.

Phil (winner): I've got a friend who works on computer installations. I can get him to call in and give us some ideas for free.

When you have a team in which there is an equal mix of all of these 9 roles, it's like belonging to a Dream Team. Everyone's needs are met and the balance of roles ensures that the team moves forward and fulfils its potential.

7.11 Key Points

1. How effective someone is in a team is usually due to the role they play in the team rather than their work role or status.
2. Research shows that people assume various roles in a team to meet their task, team and individual needs.
3. Teams that perform well invariably have a mix of complementary roles .
4. Successful teams require a co-ordinator to keep everyone together.
5. A creative player in the team can play devil's advocate and challenge complacency.
6. No role is more or less important than any other team role.

8 Team Meetings

In weak teams, people often look upon meetings as a chore, an unavoidable evil or an interruption to work. But in strong teams, meetings are looked upon as an outward sign of the team's identity as a team. People take pleasure in being together. This means that team meetings operate not just on a practical level of informing and discussing and planning, but on a personal and interpersonal level as well.

8.1 Manage Your Meetings

A myth has grown up that it is easy to run meetings. It's not. Meetings must be managed. This means thinking them through. Perhaps the biggest consideration is, do you have to have a meeting at all? If you do, then you must consider where, when, and with what outcomes. You also need to think about who needs to attend and how best they can prepare. If you chair, you must run things so that they are efficient as well as open. And if you reach decisions, you need to follow things through. Manage your meetings if you want them to succeed.

8.1.1 Why Meetings Don't Work

In his book, "Meeting", Robert Maddux lists thirteen reasons why people dislike attending badly-run team meetings.

The reasons are...

1. there are too many of them



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2. they go on for too long
3. they can't reach a decision
4. they are badly run
5. the wrong people attend
6. there is bad preparation
7. there is too much paperwork
8. they start late
9. there is no chance to participate
10. the wrong kind of conflict develops
11. they are just rubber stamps
12. they wander from the point
13. they have hidden agendas.

8.2 Vampire Meetings

Meetings can be like mythical vampires sucking the life blood out of otherwise intelligent and creative people. A UCLA survey found that the typical meeting consists of 9 people. A 3m survey found that people spend between 1 and 1.5 days a week in meetings of which at least 2 hours can be wasted. Given an hourly rate of \$2, that's over \$17,000 a year per person wasted.

There are a number of ways to slay vampire meetings.

First, decide if your meeting is really necessary.

Second, set a clear objective and share it with everyone who is coming.

Third, manage the people dynamics. Don't let one or two people dominate. Summarise what the talkative say and then bring the reticent members in.

Finally, summarise the positive things that the meeting accomplished and get everyone to work at progressing action in between the meetings.

8.3 Leave Your Ego at the Door

Paul Rice of Timesource found that the top meeting time-waster was people drifting off the subject, followed by lack of preparation, and, thirdly, not listening. As a result, Rice developed 3 keys to make meetings more efficient, effective, and enjoyable:

- a) Leave your ego at the door. Go in with the aim of learning from others.
- b) Do your preparation. It's unfair to waste time going over old ground.
- c) Stick to the agenda. Shame those who wander off the subject with a bit of humour (eg show a yellow card).

8.4 Using the Triple A's

Team meetings may be held for briefings, decision-taking, or problem-solving. If you are briefing people, then use the following Triple "A" approach:

- Achievements: marking achievements is a way of giving public praise and recognition to team and individual successes.
- Administration: briefing sessions are useful forums for dealing with the nitty-gritty of how the team works together.
- Action: if achievements look back, action looks forward. Agreeing plans at meetings makes work planning public and is the basis for getting support.

8.5 A Good Discussion

It is just as unwise to hurry into a decision or agreement for the sake of winding up a meeting as it is to create unnecessarily lengthy meetings because people cannot agree. A good chair will get a feel for the right amount of airing for a particular subject.

The 1945 British Cabinet of Clement Attlee was an example of a team committed to a clear mission, the reconstruction of the country after the Second World War.

Attlee is reported at one short Cabinet meeting as asking those sitting around the table:

“Are we all agreed, then?”

There were nods and silence.

“In that case,” said Attlee, “we’d better start again.”

8.6 “Did I Miss Something?”

Meetings often make bad decisions because people are reluctant to admit they don’t understand something. This is particularly true when the boss is present at the meeting and people are frightened to show their ignorance.

If you’re making a presentation to the meeting and this happens, there are 2 things you can do to solve it:

- a) tune in to other people, what they say and don’t say, and particularly their body language. Lack of understanding is sometimes indicated when people’s body language is neutral and blank.
- b) when people clearly don’t understand, don’t put the responsibility on them, put it on yourself. So, when you get blank looks in a meeting, don’t ask, “Don’t you follow me?” Instead, ask, “Have I missed something?” or “Would you like me to go through that again?”

8.7 Dialogue

One problem that affects meetings that seek agreement is the pressure to agree. When there is a strong need to agree, arguments may be put more forcibly with people becoming entrenched. The concept of Dialogue aims to avoid this by taking the pressure off the need to agree and focusing on listening instead. It means wanting to know what others think. Paradoxically, there is often more chance of agreeing when you take the need to agree off the agenda. It’s good to have dialogue.

8.8 Solving Problems

There is a difference between meeting with the team to make a decision and meeting with the team to discuss a problem.

A team is an ideal forum for problem-solving simply because the more people who work on a problem, the greater the likelihood of original ideas. Techniques such as brainstorming are good ways to run such meetings. On the other hand, a team meeting is not always the best forum in which to make a decision. This is because, when there is disagreement, teams often prefer to compromise rather than split the team. The resulting decision is therefore watered down and not the best available to the team.

The Quaker movement uses an interesting technique to make a decision: they sit in silence with no leader until everyone agrees. The technique invariably works for them.

8.9 Entrenchment

Entrenchment takes place when people harden their views and resist changing them for others. Curiously, entrenchment is often greater after a team discussion than before. This is because, when we air our views and clarify them, we believe we have to stick to them. We think that changing our minds is an admission of a poor position. Good teams are mindful of entrenchment and so encourage their members to be open-minded and take a wide view.

Lamm and Myers in their research into team decisions found that polarized position-taking is more likely when the team has...

- poor leadership
- political activity
- game-playing
- clique-building
- a need to impress others.



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8.10 Groupthink

Groupthink is a phenomenon of groups who rate unity above honesty. It is also known as the Abilene principle.

A story is told of a group of friends who couldn't make their minds up about how to spend the day. At length, someone suggested going to Abilene. Everyone said that this was a good idea but few really believed it. The journey was undertaken; the trip was a disaster; and team harmony was damaged.

Early in the presidency of John F. Kennedy in 1961, the new president's young and enthusiastic team supported the disastrous invasion of Cuba, known as the Bay of Pigs invasion. Later, looking back on the conformity that led to the fateful decision, Kennedy asked himself and his team: "How could we have been so stupid?"

8.10.1 Features of Groupthink

I. L. Janis has identified eight characteristics of "groupthink" which can appear to unify a team but in fact may result in a disastrously bad decision.

These characteristics are:

1. team members think they are invulnerable
2. they rationalise bad decisions to make them seem good
3. they are blind to the moral implications of their decisions
4. the enemy is stereotyped
5. doubts about the decision are over-looked
6. the decision is kept secret
7. unanimity is demanded from all members of the team
8. any dissent is stifled.

"When everybody thinks alike, nobody thinks much." (Dee Dickinson)

8.11 Complacency

One of the laws of cybernetics, the study of missile programming and robotics, says that any living organism needs contention to keep itself alive and on track. In other words, organisms die through complacency and need continual challenge to achieve their goals. Contention is often simply disagreement and most of us find disagreement disagreeable. When it is openly expressed, divorced from personal feelings and part of an organisation's culture, contention can be the spark that drives teamwork. When Richard Pascale revisited the companies that Tom Peters had singled out five years before as "excellent" in his book "In Search of Excellence", he found that two thirds of them had seriously slipped from their pinnacle through complacency and self-satisfaction.

8.12 Waigaya

The natural sound of teams at work is not order, quiet and harmony. They are the sounds of groupthink, caution and conformity. A healthy team lives through the sound of chaotic communications, lively discussion, open disagreement, enthusiastic backing, laughter and noisy argument.

“Waigaya” is a word invented by one of Honda’s co-founders, Takeo Fujisawa. It is the sound made when people are in heated contention and constructive discussion: “wai-ga-ya-wai-ga-ya”. Its nearest English equivalent is “hubbub”.

Now, at Honda plants, when a team meeting starts to lose its edge someone can suggest a Waigaya session in order to allow participants the freedom not to hold back and set some energy free.

8.13 The Talking Stick

Sometimes, meetings that are too loosely structured can deteriorate into numerous side discussions with everyone talking over everyone else. One solution to such disorganised mayhem is to use a “talking stick”. This is a device that comes from a custom of Native Americans when having a “pow-wow”. When the business of the meeting began, everyone would fall silent, and a talking stick would be placed in front of the first person to speak. He alone would speak without interruption. The stick would then be placed in front of the next person and so on until everyone had had the chance to speak. The magic of the talking stick is that it allows everyone to say their piece and be heard with respect.

8.14 When All Else Fails

If your team meetings still aren’t working, you can try something a bit off the wall. The change might stimulate people to be more focused. For example...

- if you’re meeting for a quick update, clear out the chairs and ask everyone to stand. That way, people won’t settle down for a long, comfy stay.
- another tactic is to use a military style briefing and eliminate the socialising. Keep things focused and regimented and limit contributions to 2-minutes only.
- if your meeting is a one-to-one, take a walk outside in the fresh air instead of meeting indoors. The fresh air will revive you and the change of scenery will set your creative juices flowing. Remember to take a pen and pad with you to record important points.

According to research by the University of California, team meetings can be one of the biggest corporate time-wasters, and hence one of the biggest corporate costs. Run them efficiently and effectively, and you can make them both profitable and enjoyable.

8.15 Key Points

1. Teams cannot function at their best without meeting frequently.
2. A good team meeting requires planning and the involvement of the team.
3. In a team of equal status, the chair can be rotated around each team member.
4. The chair of a team meeting should neither confront nor control.
5. Teams should meet when they need to be briefed and when decisions need to be made.
6. In a team briefing, hold back some good news to the end.

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9 From Unshared Certainty To Shared Uncertainty

The experience of great teamwork is one of life's greatest thrills. Unfortunately, it is also rare and fleeting. If you want to turn your own working group of individuals into a magnificent, all-conquering team, you need to guide them on a journey of 7 steps, from Unshared Certainty to Shared Uncertainty.

9.1 Unshared Certainty



At the first stage of teambuilding, the team are no more than a disparate group of individuals without any close links. Their main aim is to look after number one and they do this by seeking personal advantage in any situation. As a result, individuals rarely stick their necks out. Unfortunately, in many organizations, we encourage safe working by expecting people to go it alone. In these type of organizations, there are no team rewards, only individual rewards; there are no team rules, only individual rules; and there is no team communication, only one-to-one communication. As a result, there is no risk and no teamwork.

9.2 Loose Links

At the second stage of team development, the group starts to find reasons for working together. They may do this initially because they see some personal advantage for themselves, for example, by working with others whom they like, or with others who have information they need, or who have skills that complement theirs. However, the minute they have nothing to gain from joint working, they are likely to revert back to lone working, like a stretched elastic band snapping back to its normal state.

9.3 Shared Purpose

A breakthrough in teambuilding is achieved when the group starts to share a purpose, mission, or goal which can only be realized by working together. This is nearly always a big goal and one that excites and motivates at an emotional level.

The story is told of an unannounced visit by John F. Kennedy to the space center at Cape Canaveral in the mid 1960's. Kennedy toured the complex and met a man in overalls. "What do you do here?" he asked. The man replied, "I'm earning a living." Kennedy nodded and moved on. He met another man in overalls and asked him the same question. "I clean away all the rubbish," the man said. Kennedy smiled and strode on until he met another man in overalls and put the same question again. This time a big smile came across the face of the man who replied, "Mr President, I'm helping to put a man on the moon."

9.4 Team First

At the fourth stage of teambuilding, the group now starts to put the team before themselves. This only happens when they see that they have far more to gain from working together than from working on their own. They start to share not just the goal and mission, but everything else: ideas, thoughts, plans, skills, knowledge, time, and even their feelings. When the group reaches this stage, they are prepared to make personal sacrifices if the team wins out.

9.5 Performing Together

A Case Western Reserve University (Weatherhead School of Management) study of 150 self-managing teams showed that high-performing teams achieve results that in some cases are 3 or 4 times greater than those achieved by mediocre teams. For example, in the 1980's, Honda dominated the Japanese sports car market with 80% of market share. Within just 2 years, Nissan had replaced them by increasing their sports car sales by 500%. They did this by changing the way their internal design teams worked together and used a wider range of age groups, backgrounds and areas within the organization.

9.6 Interdependence

We can measure a team's development by how far it moves from dependence to independence and finally interdependence. These are similar to the stages of human maturity.

1. when the team is young, like children, they rely on the leader for direction and are dependent.
2. when the team break free from their leader, they become independent and are like teenagers.
3. when the team become mature, confident, and outward-looking, they become interdependence with those they serve.

9.7 Shared Uncertainty

Once a team sees themselves as a distinct, cohesive unit with a huge pool of resources to call on and an exciting goal to strive for, they start to realize that they can achieve far more together than apart. That means they can move into areas that they never dared try before. They are prepared to go for the big prizes and not just repeat previous known successes. In organizational terms, this means a high level of attention on the customer and their needs.

Teambuilding is one of the most powerful forces of organizational life. It benefits the individual, the organization, and the customer. But it doesn't just happen by itself or overnight. It takes guidance, patience, and commitment. But the results are well worth while.

9.8 Key Points

1. Groups function from a position of unshared certainty; teams from shared uncertainty.
2. A strong team shares the same aim, goal, and mission.
3. Teams grow up from dependence through independence, into interdependence.
4. The sign of a team is when individuals are prepared to make personal sacrifices for the good of the team.
5. Research shows that teams perform better when they have experienced growth together.
6. The final stage of the team's journey is to take greater risks because of the strength of the team.



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10 Teambuilding Exercises

Team-building exercises are valuable ways to speed up the team development process. By taking the team out of its normal work environment into, say, a workshop or training course environment, the team can practise its interpersonal and task-managing skills. The team can then return to the workplace with a better knowledge of, and affinity for, each other. Here are some of the different types of teambuilding exercise.

10.1 Icebreakers

Icebreakers are so-called because they break through the cold, frosty and hesitant climates of newly-formed groups. Here are 4 formats for icebreakers:

1. introductions allowing members to meet informally
2. enlivener icebreakers to warm up sluggish teamwork. One favourite is the “team breath” in which the team sits and breaths in and out in tune with each other.
3. relaxer icebreakers to calm down an excited group or invigorate a tired group. A favourite relaxer is for the group to imagine they are a feather floating slowly to the ground.
4. quickie icebreakers that inject team spirit. One example is to compete in lifting the heaviest member of the group to the ceiling of the room.

10.2 The Team Exercise

Team exercises are the commonest and simplest kind of teamwork. They involve giving the teams a task, sending them away to carry it out and then reporting back to the full group session on their findings. Here is the format..

1. Teams of 5 or 6 participants are formed.
2. The teams are given a relevant question to discuss and answer, such as “How can we improve customer service?”
3. The rules of the exercise are given, eg how long the teams can take or their method of reporting back.

10.3 Team-Building Exercises

A team building exercise encourages the members of a team to work with each other. The is to give the members of a team parts of a puzzle which they then have to put together to form the whole. The whole cannot be made unless everyone works together. This can work with anything that can be sub-divided, eg a piece of text; a picture; building blocks; a diagram; a cardboard model. The simplest team-building exercise is a piece of text cut up and randomly distributed amongst the team who then must re-assemble it in the correct order. These type of exercises develop problem-solving, leadership, and decision-taking in the team.

10.4 Competitive Team Games

Competitive team games involve forming small teams from a large group and setting them up in competition with each other. Prizes of small value can be awarded to the winners. One example of the competitive team game is the team quiz. Two teams are sent away to devise say 10 questions on a common subject (eg an organisation policy). They then return and quiz the opposing team in turn while the facilitator keeps score.

10.5 Adventure Exercises

Adventure exercises are exercises built around working together as a team on a real outdoors activity such as rock-climbing, abseiling, or orienteering. These tasks require practical hands-on skills, and so can be more “real” than discussion exercises. They are particularly valuable for developing leadership skills. Safety is paramount when people are given any kind of exercise involving physical activity and it is usually best to work with experienced specialists trained to run such activities.

10.6 Team Projects

Team projects aim to carry out a real project in which an end result is achieved in a given time and at a given cost. The facilitator, or someone from another team, can act as a customer to whom the project is presented at the end of the exercise. A typical format is for the team to choose a leader who is then given a job for the team to carry out. Examples are: building a tower of bricks, or creating a team logo, within a given time and at a given cost.

10.7 Team Performance

Team performance exercises are often used at the end of a workshop on team-building to let the team perform by themselves. No task is set; the team decide what they want to do. The only rule may be that the team’s presentation of their work must involve all the team members. Examples of team performance might be an unspoken presentation on the themes of teamwork; a role play on the same theme; a mime.

Teambuilding exercises are physical activities that engage people in interactions that strengthen the bonds between them. As a result, the team is enabled to solve tasks and problems and, almost without noticing, creates a spiritual identity and presence.

10.8 Key Points

1. In a team-building workshop, a team exercise should be chosen to meet the team’s current development needs.
2. A team exercise should have a sufficient level of challenge in it.
3. The most valuable team exercises are those where the team has the greatest amount of control over design, implementation and review.
4. A team-building exercise is any exercise where the members of the team must work together to achieve a result.
5. A team role play is an opportunity for the team to practise for the real thing.
6. A self-assessment exercise can be given to the team at any time to measure its development.

Web Resources on Teambuilding

The following instantly-accessible website resources provide more in-depth information on some of the tips, techniques, and features in this book.

Take the free e-course on Teambuilding from ManageTrainLearn here:

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/products-info/teambuilding-ecourse/>

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Browse through our top 40 Teambuilders and download exactly the teambuilding game that's right for your course here:

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