

Team Behaviour

A team is a collection of people who are committed to common goals and who depend on one another to do their jobs. High performance teams demonstrate the following characteristics and behaviour:

Clarity of Team Purpose - Shared Vision: All team members are clear about what the team is trying to achieve and share and support a common vision that the team is working towards. The vision describes a future state that team members find personally appealing and exciting. Developing an inspiring team vision is an essential first step to achieving high performance.

Teams need both hard and soft visions for the future: A hard vision would involve a written statement that describes what the unit will perform like when it is achieved. For example: The production team will be the most efficient and effective provider of quality XYZ goods within the organisation. Soft visions relate to the 'soft attitudinal' aspects of the team and what it means to the team members to be part of the team. The best way to establish the soft vision is by asking, "Why are we aiming for that vision" (what does it mean to the team members?). For example: We are aiming to be the most efficient and effective provider of quality XYZ goods so that:

- ❖ Our team members have sense of satisfaction and achievement in a job well done.
- ❖ We have happy, satisfied customers and managers who constantly tell us what a good job we do, which in turn makes coming to work enjoyable and ensure that we have a fun, positive environment in which to work.

With the vision ask yourself what you want to achieve (what's my outcome), why do I want to achieve it (what's my purpose), how can I go about it (what's my action plan).

Clear Roles and Responsibilities: A high performing team has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the team and individuals within the team. Members of high-performance teams work hard to ensure that every member of the team is involved.

A Robust Working Approach: A high performance team has clear guidelines or rules that it follows when conducting its work. A high-performance team tackles problems efficiently and effectively, it makes effective and timely decisions, and meetings are run to an agenda. A high-performance team operates under specific deadlines for achieving results.

Established Team Norms: The establishment and adherence to team norms helps to build team discipline, trust between team members and supports a safe environment.

Interpersonal Skills: A high performance team makes extra-ordinary efforts to make sure that everyone on the team understands the team action plan and is kept informed as to progress towards its completion. Team members recognise that they have a strong obligation to keep themselves informed. A high-performance team has high co-operation between team members, handles conflict effectively and ensures that communication is open, honest, timely and effective.

Achievement Orientation: A high performance team has clearly defined and measurable objectives and operates under specific deadlines for achieving those objectives/results.

Fact Sheet – Team working

Review of Team Effectiveness: A high performance team stops at appropriate times to check the quality of its work, and to evaluate how effective it is. Evaluation is done to determine where the team and/or process could be improved and what learning can be shared with other team members. A high-performance team asks: "What are we doing well, what can we do better, what will we do differently in the future?"

Understanding Group Norms

It is useful to remember that any group will generally follow four stages of development. You can expect your own team to pass through these stages and therefore you can be prepared for and control what is controllable.

Forming

The group first gets together with its common aim:

- ◆ Some confusion
- ◆ High ambiguity
- ◆ Impersonal
- ◆ 'Why are we here?'

Storming

A short while after the group forms, aims and objectives are questioned and the group experiences conflict from within:

- ◆ Frustration
- ◆ Competition
- ◆ Opting out
- ◆ Resistance
- ◆ Cliques form

Norming

Because of the conflict, policy and procedures are drawn up and agreed by the consensus of the group:

- ◆ Acceptance
- ◆ Team spirit
- ◆ Confronting issues

Performing

The group adheres to the policy and procedures and works effectively towards its aim:

- ◆ Close teamwork
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Open and trusting
- ◆ Confidence
- ◆ Flexible and Creative

Fact Sheet – Team working

Management Teamwork

Management teams can be complex and sometimes competitive environments, in some cases competitive behaviours are encouraged, sales and marketing for instance, however, most teams only work, when there is co-operation, rather than competition. The most obvious example of this is a sports team, football for instance. The backs competing with the forwards, rather than the opposing team, is not a situation that is likely to end well. So, it is in most management teams, high performing teams can only come about when there is a high degree of co-operation.

Depot management is most likely to succeed, only with high degrees of co-operation, amongst the managers and functions they managed. Processes will breakdown without co-operation and a purposeful intent.



The importance of acting together

Managers are encouraged to challenge, in fact one of leader's key values is to challenge the status quo, "shake it up" are the actual words he uses. It is vital that managers are engaged and constantly challenging present paradigms and looking for better, more efficient, faster, cheaper etc. ways of performing. Don't accept what you have! However, that does not mean you can fail to co-operate, or adopt inappropriate behaviours. Challenge in this context is about innovation, development, and growth in a co-operative environment.

How we do this is as important as the act itself. Our behaviours and approach will have a very large effect on those around us, two leaders openly challenging each other can result in what appears to other to be a conflict even if that was not intended. That doesn't mean to say you must agree all the time but challenge them in the right way and in the right environment, the open office is not likely to be an appropriate environment for this.



Fact Sheet – Team working

One useful concept in challenge is the difference between ‘and if’ and ‘but’

Using ‘but’ is the proposition of an alternative, however, using the word ‘and if’ is called a build. It takes someone’s idea or view and extends it. This will be perceived as much less confrontational than using ‘but’ all the time

A second and as important point is to ensure all parties really do agree the outcome. You have not agreed anything, if someone walks away saying yes, if they do not buy-in to the action, they have merely walked away to have the argument again another day. Buy-in is much more than saying yes, it is all the non-verbal and engagement cues that indicates a real yes.

Nothing will destroy your authority and your team’s respect for you quicker than saying, “The Boss has asked we clear this rubbish up!” This is called deferred authority, in other words, you are doing as you are told, not exercising authority in your own right. This undermines your position as a leader.

A management team has one voice only

Another role of being a manager and a leader and for some, the most enjoyable part is shaping the future. This is not without a degree of risk, however, accepting and managing risk is an essential part of management. At the highest levels in a company, the Board; risk management is the essence of their activities. How to grow the business in new and innovative ways, with a reasonable and proportionate degree of risk. For a board this is often the exposure of capital to grow the business with the potential for that capital to generate income.

Every level of management involves some element of risk management, and response to external drivers. Even if change is small within an organisation, the business environment it operates in is subject to considerable change and for an organisation to succeed it must successfully respond to these changes in a timely and effective way.

