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How to hold a High- Performance Team Discussion

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It is recommended that rather than just impose team training on your team that instead you invite them to join you in attaining high-performance, that is, throw out a challenge to see if the team feels they can achieve it. You can explain at the outset that high-performance process has already commenced with the introduction of Psychological Safety and Team Engagement. These behaviour changes should have resulted in team members feeling more confident about you as their manager and more confident about themselves.

What is a High-Performance Team?

A high-performance team can be defined as a group of people with specific roles, skills, and complementary strengths, aligned with and committed to a team vision. The team practices open communication, high levels of collaboration, interpersonal skills, and a personalised high-performance leadership style. The team is innovative, produces superior results and is regarded as tight knit. These characteristics enable any team member to surmount any barriers in achieving the team's goals.

Over the past 20 years, organisations have been restructuring themselves to make better use of high-performance teams. More and more organisations are moving away from Traditional/Contemporary hierarchical work-based structures and toward flat, self-managing team-based approaches. These teams offer many new benefits, including increased business knowledge, team member empowerment, more effective work practices and far better use of team member talents, skills, and capabilities. They employ formal problem solving and decision making; they are more creative and innovative and use improved work practices.

High-performance teams are an evolution of Traditional and Contemporary teams having a higher sense of who they are, why they exist and how they operate. There is a strong commitment towards the objectives or mutual purpose, which defines the existence of a team. In a high-performance team, each team member plays the role of a partner in achieving outstanding and measurable outcomes.

Due to its initial success, many organisations attempted to copy the high-performance team's model. However, most of these attempts failed because there was a lack of understanding about the underlying dynamics that create them. With this failure, high-performance teams fell out of general favour by 1995, and the term high-performance began to be used in a promotional context rather than a performance-based one.

Recently, some private and government sector organisations have placed a new focus on high-performance teams, as further studies and understandings have identified the key processes and team dynamics necessary to create all-around high-performance teams.

Within the high-performance team, people are highly skilled and can interchange their roles. Also, leadership within the team is not vested in a single individual. Instead, the leadership role is taken up by various team members according to the need at that moment in time. High-performance teams have robust methods of resolving conflict efficiently so that conflict does not become a roadblock to achieving the team's goals. There is a sense of clear focus and intense energy within a high-performance team. Collectively, the team has its own consciousness, indicating shared norms and values within the team. The team feels a strong sense of accountability for achieving their goals. Team members display high levels of mutual trust towards each other." Source: Wikipedia.

High-performance teams comprise a group of highly talented and motivated individual professionals aiming to achieve a team vision. Ordinary teams do not leverage business resources or use their best talent, whereas high-performance teams do, assuring the highest levels of performance and productivity. Such teams drive business excellence, grow profits, and achieve business outcomes due to cohesiveness, single-mindedness, and a collective consciousness.

High-performance teams are critical in helping organizations thrive and survive in today's intensely competitive business landscape. But building them is an art and not a science. Firstly, a manager must be trained in High-Performance or Transformational Management, creating the conditions necessary to develop a high-performance team. Secondly, a full assessment of a team's capabilities, identifying its strengths, understanding its roles, and determining how to exploit its diversity is necessary. Thirdly, a team can then be trained on high-performance producing a team that collaborates well and complements each other with differing talents, skills, and attributes to create a holistic team solely focused on business strategy and objectives.

High-performance teams are driven by the need to be more competitive and by changes in business technology. Team members have complementary skills. In a high-performance team, the manager acts as the role model who aligns commitment with a team vision and individual performance goals. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and behaviours and team members are fully empowered and held accountable.

There are six high-performance team training steps with training being carried out in fortnightly Workshops.

Step 1. Team Discussion.

Step 2. Team Evaluation.

Step 3. Team Vision.

Step 4. Open Communication.

Step 5. Mutual Accountability.

Step 6. Effective Work Practices.

Benefits

There are substantial benefits from completing high-performance team building training. Team members should expect more expansive career opportunities, comradery, and being the best in their chosen field. The team will over time become increasingly better at whatever is being done and will develop abilities to overachieve in comparison to other teams. They should expect a significant increase in job satisfaction flowing from a greater sense of achievement.

For the organization, high-performing teams bring knowledge and independence with greater flexibility.

Teams are more motivated to innovate and take risks. The organization can become an employer of choice, with higher staff loyalty, increased competitiveness, profits, ability to rapidly expand markets and having a team focused on business needs.

Employees who work in high-performing teams are more engaged, and there's no feelings of being disheartened because they're carrying team members who aren't pulling their weight. Everyone is pulling in the same direction, and this allows team members to enjoy their jobs, which is half the battle in any career. Team members create a team vision with shared values, they share complementary skill sets and carry out work that capitalizes on their individual strengths. The team manager undergoes the same training accepting that managers also need to change and that some control must be given up as the team becomes self-managing. Here are some additional advantages:

- Renewed inspiration and self-motivation to achieve team goals.
- A working environment where every team member can speak their mind and be fully listened to, even on sensitive issues.
- A team who can dissolve sources of conflict before they become damaging issues.
- The eradication of a blame culture - now everyone takes responsibility for effective teamwork.

- Effective communication at all levels with the ability to give and receive constructive feedback
- The creation of a highly productive environment with every team member working together on shared objectives.
- A team fully motivated to achieve success, with passion and pride in their work.
- Substantially improved job satisfaction.

Summary

1. **Team discussion.** - It is recommended that rather than just impose team training on your team that instead you invite them to join you in attempting to reach high-performance team status, that is, throw out a challenge to see if the team feels they can achieve it.
2. **Schedule a two-hour team Workshop to discuss High-Performance Team building.**
- Explain what has been achieved to date. Explain to the team that Psychological Safety and Team Engagement are precursors to building a high-performance team and that these have now been successfully implemented. Explain the advantages of achieving high-performance team status. Agree a list of goals to be achieved. Explain the high-performance team training steps. Briefly explain that training is carried out in fortnightly Workshops with either yourself or a facilitator as the training lead. Then briefly describe that the High-Performance Team training involves six steps:
 - Step 1. Team Discussion.
 - Step 2. Team Evaluation.
 - Step 3. Team Vision.
 - Step 4. Open Communication.
 - Step 5. Mutual Accountability.
 - Step 6. Effective Work Practices.
3. **Decision to go with high-performance building.** - Ask the team what they think about all this, have a team discussion, aim to address any fears or misgivings team members may have, but most of all be reassuring, stating that they have already completed the groundwork, that they are all capable of making the grade and that you have faith that they can do it. Ask each team member one by one, “are you prepared to give it a go?”. If you get a negative or unsure response

(which is rare) try to address it there and then, otherwise state that you will speak with that team member outside the meeting.

4. **Appoint a team training secretary.** – The training secretaries' job is to schedule workshops, make meeting room arrangements and to prepare Handouts. Workshops are best held fortnightly as this gives team members time to absorb new learnings and to start to put them into practice.

Consider the Stockdale Paradox: You must maintain unwavering faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, and at the same time have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.

<p>Team Discussion Workshop</p>	<p>2.0 hours</p>
<p>Create a workshop handout.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a copy of the notes on 'What is a High-Performance Team' and use as a Handout. 	
<p>Arrange a team workshop.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Schedule a 2.0-hour team workshop to discuss High-Performance Team building training. 	
<p>Open the workshop</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Open the workshop by suggesting that the team considers becoming a high-performance team, in line with high-performance standards. 4. Have the team read the Handout. 	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Explain what has been achieved to date.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Explain to the team that Psychological Safety and Team Engagement are precursors to building a high-performance team and that these have now been successfully implemented. 	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p>Explain the benefits for the team members and the organization.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. There are substantial benefits from completing high-performance team building training. Team members should expect more expansive career opportunities, comradery, and being the best in their chosen field. The team will over time become increasingly better at whatever is being done and will develop abilities to overachieve in comparison to other teams. They should expect a significant increase in job satisfaction flowing from a greater sense of achievement. 7. For the organization, high-performing teams bring knowledge and independence with greater flexibility. 8. Teams are more motivated to innovate and take risks. The organization can become an employer of choice, with higher staff loyalty, increased competitiveness, profits, ability to rapidly expand markets and having a team focused on business needs. 	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p>Achieving high-performance – what does it mean?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Employees who work in high-performing teams are more engaged, and there's no feelings of being disheartened because they're carrying team members who aren't pulling their weight. Everyone is pulling in the same direction, and this allows team members to enjoy their jobs, which is half the battle in any career. Team members create a team vision with shared values, they share complementary skill sets and carry out work that capitalizes on their individual strengths. The team manager undergoes the same training accepting that 	<p>15 minutes</p>

Management Guide

<p>managers also need to change and that some control must be given up as the team becomes self-managing. Here are some additional advantages to talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed inspiration and self-motivation to achieve team goals. • A working environment where every team member can speak their mind and be fully listened to, even on sensitive issues. • A team who can dissolve sources of conflict before they become damaging issues. • The eradication of a blame culture - now everyone takes responsibility for effective teamwork. • Effective communication at all levels with the ability to give and receive constructive feedback • The creation of a highly productive environment with every team member working together on shared objectives. • A team fully motivated to achieve success, with passion and pride in their work. • Substantially improved job satisfaction. 	
<p>Agree a list of goals to be achieved.</p> <p>10. Open this part of the workshop by talking about recent problems your team has faced. Talk about what went wrong but focus more on best practices for the future. Next refer to the Professional Goals you set for yourself that relate to the team, then ask team members to make note of the things that prevent them from doing quality work, as well as the things that make doing quality work easier. Discuss what the roadblocks to excellence are and encourage everyone to contribute ideas about how to remove them. Next ask team members to come up with their own goals for wanting to move to high-performance. Create one shared goal list and against each goal assign a 'measure', something that will act as evidence that the goal has been achieved.</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p>Explain the high-performance team training steps.</p> <p>11. Briefly explain that training is carried out in fortnightly workshops with yourself as the training facilitator. Then briefly describe that the High-Performance Team training involves these six steps:</p> <p>Step 1. Team Discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This step to discuss high-performance, benefits and advantages and team goals. <p>Step 2. Team Evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of five questionnaires (evaluation tables) covering different team member characteristics, abilities and strengths are completed by each team member for presentation to the whole team. This educates everyone on each team members value and contributions 	<p>20 minutes</p>

Management Guide

<p style="text-align: center;">to the team allowing team members to better understand each other and the teams' capabilities.</p> <p>Step 3. Team Vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most teams exist with little understanding of why they exist, what their actual purpose is in terms of how they contribute to the larger organization. Therefore, a team needs to define a meaningful, measurable team vision, something that acts as a target and gives direction to all the team's activities. This step asks team members to create a common team goal that supports the organizational vision, describes what the team is aiming to achieve and how they will achieve it. <p>Step 4. Open Communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication means practising mutually beneficial honest communication which is a higher form of communication-based on listening, trust, and mutual respect. It extends to sharing fears and seeking counselling from fellow team members. It is a transparent and open communication framework based on directness, and frankness, characterized by sharing of experiences, trust and a willingness to embrace conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving. It engages team members to discover newer, improved ways of reaching goals and prevents groupthink whilst spurning innovation. <p>Step 5. Mutual Accountability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual accountability is when all team members equally share in the teams' outcomes, the collective responsibility of the team towards generating results, achieving success, or suffering a failure. This irrespective of whether a single team member was responsible. Mutual accountability implies an implicit acknowledgement of the joint accountability of all team members towards the team vision or some other initiative such as a project, in addition to individual obligations. An important measure is how accountable team members are to each other, meaning that team members accept that everyone's successes or failures fall on all their shoulders. <p>Step 6. Effective Work Practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This step introduces a set of work practices common to high-performance teams. The practices include email, decision making, problem solving, process and intranet, timeboxing, motivation ad workload Management. 	
<p>Decision to go with high-performance training. (10 minutes)</p> <p>12. Ask the team what they think about all this, have a team discussion, aim to address any fears or misgivings team members may have, but most of all be reassuring, stating that they have already completed the groundwork, that they are all capable of making the grade and that you have faith that they can do it. Ask each team member one by one, "are you prepared to give it a go?". If you get a negative or unsure response (which is rare) try to address it there and then, otherwise state that you will speak with that team member outside the meeting.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

Management Guide

<p>Appoint a team training secretary. (5 minutes)</p> <p>13. This team members job is to schedule workshops, make meeting room arrangements and to prepare Handouts. Workshops are best held fortnightly as this gives team members time to absorb new learnings and to start to put them into practice.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
<p>Close the workshop.</p> <p>14. Ask for any questions or if anything needs to be clarified. 15. Arrange for a copy of the team rules to be made accessible to everyone.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

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