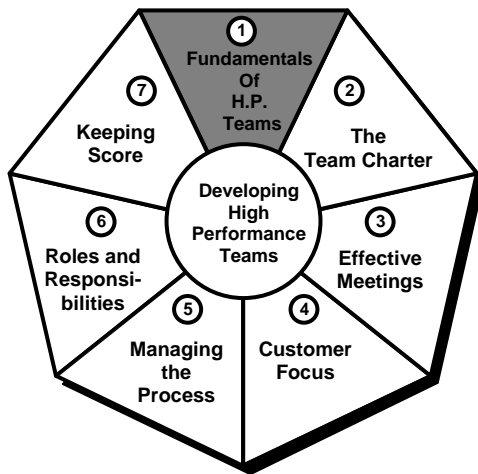


Principles of High Performance

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*This is a whitepaper that focuses on helping you and your organization to develop High Performance teams. I encourage you to share this article with others within your organization and discuss the concepts in it. Use the **Conquering Moments** sections of the article as action steps to help your organization become an Optimized High Performance Team.*

Fundamentals of High Performance



In this section, you will learn the fundamentals of developing High Performance teams within your organization. Specifically, you will learn:

- The definition of a High Performance team and how it differs from the traditional work group
- The three elements of High Performance teams
- Four types of teams
- The stages of team development

Conquering Moment

What is your definition of a team? This may seem like a relatively simple task, yet it plays a vital role in developing a High Performance team. So, really take a moment before continuing to define a team in your own words, remember, teams are more than just a traditional work group.

Characteristics of a High Performing teams include:

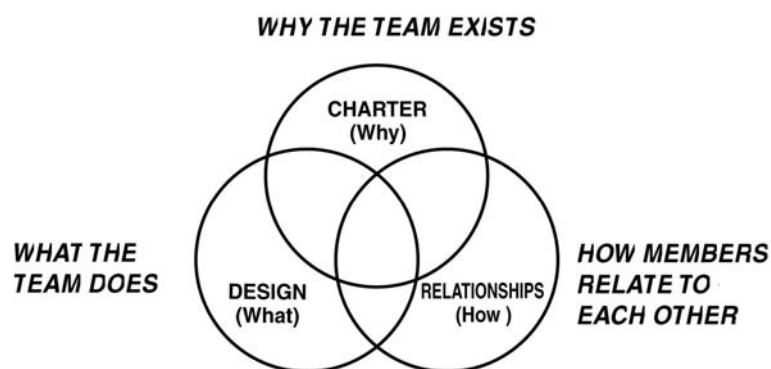
- A shared mission
- Autonomy and authority
- Interdependence and shared leadership
- Broadly-defined jobs
- Meaningful participation in decisions
- Higher performance

A High Performance team is defined as, “A self-managing, multifunctional group of people organized around a whole process and empowered with full responsibility for their success.”

In order to better understand the High Performance team, it is helpful to realize two flaws of the traditional work group.

1. Employees are grouped by similarity of function. This fragments the work so that people over-identify with their own jobs and don't have a clear understanding of the overall good they provide to the company or customers they serve.
2. Power is centralized at the top. Employees who are closest to the work have little authority to make significant decisions. Managers are the thinkers and planners and employees are merely the doers.

The Team Model



The model represents the relationship between the most important elements of team performance. It includes why a team exists, what it does, and how people relate or get along with each other.

The CHARTER includes the why:

- Customers
- Purpose
- Team Goals
- A Team Vision

The DESIGN includes what:

- Core work processes
- Roles and responsibilities
- Procedure/Norms
- Systems

The RELATIONSHIPS include how:

- Trust and respect
- Communication
- Cohesion
- Synergy

The elements of the model are interdependent and yet there is a sequence that must drive their development. The **charter** must be clear before a team can be designed, and a team must have a good **design** to reduce problems with **relationships**.

Conquering Moment

In which areas is your organization strongest? Weakest? What steps could you take to make improvements in each of these three areas?

Four Types of Teams

Although all High Performance teams share certain characteristics in common, there are also some important distinctions between them and organizations need to recognize these distinctions to prevent the problems that can and do result from a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Some of the problems that can arise are:

- Poor performance as team members try to use a structure that doesn’t fit with the nature of their work process
- Frustration at the difficulty of working together productively
- Disillusionment with the team concept as relationships grow difficult and people think fondly of “the good old days before those nuts in management put us into this crazy team.”

Type I team - *The Swim Team*

- Highly specialization; low coordination
- Work divided up between various specialties
- Each specialty consists of a distinctive set of skills
- Little coordination needed between specialties
- Examples: a geriatrics team providing care for an elderly person, teachers in a high school

Type II team - *Football Team*

- Made up of people from different disciplines
- Requires a high degree of coordination
- Examples: hospital emergency room, executive leadership team

Type III team - *Bowling Team*

- Low in both specialization and coordination
- Team members share same skill set but have little need to coordinate or communicate
- Examples: phone operators, bank tellers

Type IV team - *Volleyball Team*

- Members share common skills
- High need for coordination
- Generally organized around completing a “whole task” and cross-trained to do one another’s jobs
- Example: manufacturing settings where people are building a product

Conquering Moment

Think about your organization, which teams or work groups would you classify as:

- *Type I, Type II, Type III, Type IV*

Stages of Team Development

How is it that teams actually develop? Few teams are able to go from the first steps of formation to becoming fully effective without some “growing pains.” Research indicates that the development of teams go through a series of sequential stages as they develop towards High Performance and synergy. B.W. Tuckman identified four primary stages of team development.

FORMING → STORMING → NORMING → PERFORMING

FORMING: *Why are we here?*

Common themes:

- Getting acquainted
- Cliques form
- Group identity low
- Stereotyping takes place
- Some excitement and pride about being a member
- Suspicion and fear about the job ahead
- Attempts to define the task and how it will be accomplished
- Abstract discussion of concepts and issues; for some, impatience with these discussions
- Discussion of problems or complaints about organization
- Sizing people up and the roles they will play

STORMING: *Bid for power!*

Common themes:

- Internal competition for influence
- Conflict, voting, and compromise
- Win/lose interactions
- Hidden agendas
- Resistance to the task
- Fluctuation in attitude about their likelihood of success
- Questioning the wisdom of the team or their project
- Unrealistic goals
- Perception of lack of progress

NORMING: *Cooperative group action*

Themes:

- Active listening
- Group identity high (Group Think)
- Shared leadership
- Open-mindedness
- Constructive expressions of conflict
- Relief that things are working out
- Acceptance of membership on the team
- More friendliness and sharing of personal problems
- Discussion of the team's dynamics
- Maintaining ground rules

PERFORMING: *Team Synergy*

Themes

- High performance levels
- High creativity
- High spirits/morale
- Constructive handling of conflict
- Decision making by consensus
- Understanding and ability to use multiple problem-solving methods
- Insight into group and individual dynamics
- Self-responsibility
- Cohesion and synergy

Conquering Moment

Think about the teams and work groups within your organization. What stage of development are they in?

Just like building a house, having a firm foundation is important. This article was written for that purpose. To give you a firm foundation of understanding as it pertains to building highly functional and effective teams, in other words, High Performance teams.

For additional information on this topic, or on how Optibility can help you, or your organization, please contact us at: (937) 427-2777 or email us at: info@optibility.com
