



WHITEPAPER
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TEAM BUILDING MAGIC
THE SECRET BEHIND HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

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TEAM BUILDING MAGIC

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1 :: INTRODUCTION

The concept of team building is largely misunderstood in business today. Many organizations view team building as buying team hats, t-shirts and jackets, hiring motivational speakers to “pump up” the group, ad hoc team building workshops, occasional team dinners, golf games, boat trips, BBQs and pool parties.

These activities by themselves do not constitute team building. They are often a reactive, one time response that hopes to “fix” an underperforming team. These activities do not support the creation of meaningful, long-term change that both strengthens and builds teams. If poor leadership or an adverse environment hinders a team, then team building, as a recreational endeavor, certainly won’t cure the underlying illness.

Organizations bear an increasingly high cost of hosting underperforming teams. Low productivity, low morale, high confusion, apathy, and rapid turnover are all signs of underperforming teams. If these conditions are pervasive throughout an organization’s teams, its financial performance is sure to suffer.

Building an effective team isn’t as simple as waving a magic wand, but it is also not an overly difficult process. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of individuals, the role each person plays in a team environment and how they complement each other, setting clear goals and teaching team members how to function more effectively, or “play” well together, is all part of effective team building.

This is not to say that team building shouldn’t include team recreation. It certainly is important to play hard as well as work hard. But at best, recreation-based team building activities are a treatment, not a cure. They should take healthy teams to a higher level of vitality, not attempt to cure underperforming teams.



- Does your company “talk a good game” or “play a good game”?

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2 :: DO YOU REALLY HAVE A TEAM?

The first step in the team building process is to determine if you really have a team.

If you have to tell your people that they are part of a team, then they probably aren't. Teams aren't simply created by having regular meetings with the same group of people. A group of people brought together for reporting purposes or information sharing is also not a real team.

So what is a real team?

"A real team is made up of a group of people who share a passion for a common and collective goal. They know that achieving the goal demands a high level of interdependency amongst team members, as it is something that can only be accomplished together. There are also clear and stable boundaries so that membership is not constantly changing, and it is easy to tell who is on the team."

- Adapted from J. Richard Hackman,
Groups that Work (and Those that Don't)

3 :: WHY A TEAM?

When teams are working well, they create synergy by having multiple people with different skills and abilities converge on a specific problem or opportunity.

Simply translated, synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When a team is put into place - especially a team dialed-in for success - it increases the chance to maximize synergy. Maximizing synergy gives your organization the opportunity to accomplish more with the same number of people.

When teams aren't functioning well, not only do organizations lose synergy, they actually find the whole to be less than the sum of its parts. This situation has a suffocating effect on productivity that directly affects bottom-line performance.

4 :: THE RARE AND COVETED "HIGH PERFORMING TEAM"

A high performing team is a team that performs at an elite level, achieving extraordinary results, time and again. Team building is not seen as a separate activity but is integrated into every action, interaction and communication.

HIGH PERFORMING TEAM

- Has a clear and unifying goal for which each team member has passion
- Each member of the team is doing what they love to do - leveraging their gifts and talents
- Is solution focused—always asking the question, "How can we?"
- Consistently achieves extraordinary results
- Positive, exciting, engaging team culture that supports the free flow of ideas and creativity
- Team members regularly acknowledge each other's contributions and also deliver honest, timely feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement
- Team members make the effort to get to know each other very well
- Demonstrate high levels of trust in each other

UNDER-PERFORMING TEAM

- Team goal is unclear so individual goals become paramount (e.g. getting a promotion)
- Work is not enjoyable; it becomes a boring, necessary evil
- Problem focused; always looking for what will go wrong and all the reasons for "why we can't"
- Business results are mediocre at best and often go unmeasured
- Negative, blame-based culture that stifles new ideas due to the fear of "looking bad"
- Team members regularly engage in "closed door sessions" and complaining around the water cooler about the work and each other
- Team members stay distant, choosing not to get to know each other outside of roles/functions
- Demonstrate low levels of trust in the motivations and intentions of other team members

5 :: HOW TO CREATE A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM

Whether you are forming a new team or looking to improve existing ones, there are three overriding questions that must be answered:

1. Does the team have a clear, unifying goal identified?
2. Does the team have the right people in place, especially the right leader, to achieve this goal?
3. Does the team have the tools and skills to "play" well together?

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Let's look at each of these critical questions in more detail.

CLEAR, UNIFYING GOALS – WHAT ARE WE HERE TO CREATE?

“The establishment of a goal is one of the most important processes an individual team should perform.”

- Greg Hendrix,

“The Importance of Goals to the Success of Work Teams”

Clear, unifying goals give the team a reason for being, and bringing individual members together for a common purpose. They also provide a sense of direction and a reference point from which to measure their progress.

It is important to understand that in a team setting, both individual and group goals exist. The group goals must be relevant to the individual goals of members. Team members try to achieve both individual and team goals. The degree to which they can accomplish this has a positive effect on the success of the team.

Without a common, unifying team goal, people often work for their individual goals (job promotion for example) in order to fulfill personal satisfaction. Teams without goals have higher stress, are more error-prone and uncooperative. These conditions lead to frustration and, ultimately, to team breakdown.

INSIGHT

To find out if your team has a clear, unifying goal, ask the individual members to write down on a piece of paper what they believe is the most important goal of the team. Collect all the papers and read out what has been written. If the answers are consistently the same and aligned with what you believe the goal of the team to be, you are well on your way. If not, then you need to establish a clear, unifying goal that is universally understood.

GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN PLACE - “WHO’S ON FIRST?...”

“Leaders of companies that go from good to great start... by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats.”

- Jim Collins, Good to Great

A thriving team - one that creates magic - has the right people in place, doing the right things. Using a sports team analogy, players are selected with specific skills and attributes that

enable them to play their roles perfectly. In football, offensive linemen are picked for their strength, size and agility, all to enable the quarterback (picked for his judgment, throwing ability and courage) to excel in his position. When the quarterback excels, the team usually does very well.

Similarly, in business teams there are specific roles that must be fulfilled for a team to maximize its success. According to research conducted by Drake, there are eight necessary roles (or types) individuals can play within a team:

1. THE PRACTICAL TYPE

This role is about turning ideas that come from the team or individuals into practical, workable and well-organized outcomes. People in this role are very effective when the tasks have known precedents; clear-cut guidelines and the outcomes of the work are usually concrete and measurable. This role is useful when the team needs a plan quickly to get started on a project.

2. THE CONSULTING TYPE

People in this role have a prime concern for how the team works together to achieve its goals. Their focus is on ensuring that the gifts and talents of the individuals within the group are optimized. This role is needed when the team has become over-reliant on a few individuals and needs to draw out the contributions of everyone.

3. THE DRIVING TYPE

People in this role push hard and drive their team towards objectives they believe are important. This is a role especially needed when the team needs to perform on a very tight schedule.

4. NEW IDEAS TYPE

In this role, individuals derive considerable satisfaction from the process of finding new ways of doing things - often dreaming up innovative angles, concepts and techniques. They are likely to be unconcerned with practical details. This role is needed when the team's objective is to develop a product or service requiring unusual solutions.

5. THE CATALYST TYPE

These individuals are essentially lively communicators who easily make contact with many different people - finding out who is doing what, who knows what, who controls what - and drawing upon them as resources. They are likely to be enthusiastic starters of projects, and when enthused, are likely to be excellent at enthusing others. This role is needed when the success of the team is predicated on

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their ability to work with and access support from other internal organizations or external parties.

6. THE CRITICAL JUDGE TYPE

This is the calm critic. They have sound judgment, understand what makes things work and what stops them from working, and will be quick to point out the flaws in plans and ideas. This aptitude makes them a major source of quality control. This is a needed role on projects where there is a high cost to mistakes. They will have a particular contribution to make when the work process or product is at a stage where it must be checked out to ensure that it is realistic, practicable, consistent, of high quality, and immune to logical criticisms.

7. THE SUPPORTIVE TYPE

These people gain considerable personal satisfaction from maintaining and improving human relations within the group, thus promoting team spirit. They will normally be somewhat outgoing, supportive, considerate, and good listeners. They will draw the best from individuals and; indeed, teams that contain several Supportive types are often very effective teams, even where their level of expertise is low. This role is useful when the team works together on a long-term basis - when the possibility of losing momentum increases with time.

8. THE DETAIL TYPE

These people tend to be highly attentive to detail, and generally tidy, meticulous, orderly and conscientious. Their major drive is to get things 'just so', and they will spend much of their energy keeping an eye on detail, the small print, and time urgencies. The Detail Type is needed in those situations requiring particular attention and quality control.

There is no one ideal mix of roles that applies to every team. The ideal mix is predicated on the goal of the team. For example, when a project is subject to an extremely tight timeline, it is important to have the Driving Type present to ensure the team keeps running hard. However, when the objective of the team is to make a significant impact in the marketplace - with a significant downside, should mistakes be made - the Critical Judge Type is important to be sure that anything that can go wrong has been thoroughly examined.

There are many excellent assessment tools available to optimize team composition. They involve taking the results from various testing methodologies to arrive at conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of current teams, or who best to have on newly formed teams. The best assessment

tools do this in the context of the team objective, since the goals of the team should drive the mix of roles required.

One such tool is **Drake Picasso**, a computer-based assessment tool that optimizes team composition based on the goals of the team. It can be used to select the right people, from those in your organization that have already undergone the testing; or, understand the exact new hire profile that is needed to create the ideal team. Imagine having a computer able to determine which people would be best suited to a team task - based upon proven scientific testing - by using the eight necessary team roles, to evaluate the results of the selected team members. This assessment tool analyzes the six core functions a team needs in order to work effectively together. For example, all teams need members that are strong on strategy/vision as well as on execution and quality control. Imagine if you had a team that was high on strategy/vision but low on execution and quality control. Ultimately, they would be unable to deliver. **Drake Picasso** allows you to evaluate the percentage breakdown of the team's strengths and developmental areas to review what is needed, ensuring that their strengths are balanced and developmental gaps are addressed.

This tool also allows team members to understand how they can leverage each other's strengths. For example, the assessment is able to align the individual's role (i.e. Practical Type to Supportive Type) to the team function (i.e. strategy/vision to execution). Going forward the team is able to leverage the correct individuals to develop or implement a specific initiative in order to achieve the higher return on investment. Overall this tool brings a new level of science to team building.



- Do you have the right people in place on your team to maximize team effectiveness?



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Choose the Right Leader

There is no such thing as a high performance team without great leadership. Teams need a framework of ground rules for which to operate. They want clear direction.

It is the job of the leader to create an environment where the team members can do their best work. What makes a great leader is the right balance of task and relationship orientation.

Task Orientation is the ability to get the job done.

Relationship Orientation is the ability to consistently motivate people to do their best work.

Leaders with a balanced task and relationship orientation know that the team is in place to deliver results for the organization. They also know that work gets done through people. They understand that motivated people know that they are doing important work that is appreciated in an environment that is enriching and enjoyable. As a result they are great at achieving consistently extraordinary results through their team and their teams enjoy working with them.

To learn more about developing great leaders, don't miss Drake's September 2005 white paper and webinar Develop Great Leaders.

TASK AND RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION IN LEADERS

HIGH TASK ORIENTATION

The "task master" gets the job done at any cost but burns bridges along the way. Success is difficult to replicate.



BALANCED LEADERSHIP

Moves task and relationship forward with velocity to achieve consistent extraordinary results.



HIGH RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION

The leader is loved by the team. Creates an enjoyable team environment, however the job doesn't get done as well.



CHEMISTRY – GETTING THE TEAM TO PLAY WELL TOGETHER

Once the right people are in place, with a clear unifying goal and strong leadership, the way to keep a team strong is to be clear on how the team will work together and how their success will be measured. All too often teams miss the important step of defining a way of working together. With no defined way of working well together, they often head toward breakdown.

SIXSENSE'S RELATIONSHIP LIFECYCLE™

	HONEYMOON New team working together	HAIRLINE FRACTURES Teams have worked through more than one project	BREAKDOWN Teams have been working together for an extended period of time
WHAT'S HAPPENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the tone for the relationship Testing to see if promises will be kept Belief that things will be better this time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work is satisfactory Frustrations more noticable Confusion Unmet expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work is never good enough Meetings are unproductive Scrutiny and control emerges Win/lose arguments and blame
TYPICAL ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We haven't worked together long enough to work on our relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Things should improve on their own Avoid honest dialogue Sidebar and complaint sessions emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guarded conversation Withdrawal Look to change personnel Look to someone else to fix things Arguments get personal

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6 :: FIVE STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

STEP 1: CREATE A “CHARTER OF AGREEMENTS”

A Charter of Agreements is the glue that holds a team together. It outlines behaviours that are acceptable and unacceptable as the team works together. Consider creating agreements around common pressure points including:

- How often will meetings happen?
- How long will they be and what if someone is late?
- Is full attendance a requirement or is it acceptable to skip meetings?
- Is bad news as valued as good news?
- Do the members of the team hold themselves and each other accountable for keeping commitments? What happens if an agreement is broken?
- Are there people on the team who are treated differently than others?
- What are the roles in team meetings?
- How will the team deliver feedback to one another and how often?

Remember that while it is important to set agreements, in order for them to become the norm in behaviour, they must be practiced and enforced consistently.

STEP 2: BUILDING TRUST

“Great teams exhibit high trust... without it, teamwork is impossible. Trust is the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good, and there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. As a result, they can focus their energy and attention completely on the job at hand, rather than on being strategically disingenuous (insincere) or political with one another. Teams that lack trust waste inordinate amounts of time and energy managing their behaviours and interactions within the group.”

- Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Trust isn’t something that occurs naturally in teams - each member of the team must build it with every action. The best model we know for measuring trust is the trust account. Based on the work of Steven Covey from the book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, the trust account works like a bank account. In a bank account, there are withdrawals and deposits. The obvious goal is to have more deposits in the trust account than withdrawals otherwise the account is overdrawn. When the trust account is flush with deposits there is high trust and when it is flush with withdrawals, there is low trust.

THE TRUST ACCOUNT

WITHDRAWALS

- Breaking promises
- Unkindnesses, discourtesies
- Violating expectations
- Disloyalty to the absent—gossip, rumours
- Pride, conceit, arrogance
- Defensiveness
- Placing blame

DEPOSITS

- Keeping promises
- Kindnesses, courtesies
- Clarifying expectations
- Loyalty to the absent
- Acknowledgment
- Sincere apologies
- Being open to feedback

Adapted from “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” - Steven Covey

One great thing about the trust account is that an inadvertent withdrawal by one team member is not a deal breaker in the relationship. A subsequent deposit can overcome a withdrawal. For example, someone who breaks a promise can offset the withdrawal by acknowledging their mistake and apologizing for it. Within high trust relationships, a withdrawal is just a minor speed bump, not a deal breaker in the relationship.

ACTIVITY

An easy step to increase trust is to build familiarity with your team. At your next team meeting, ask a non-business question to allow people to learn more about each other. Examples of familiarity building questions are: Who is a mentor or role model in your life? What is your favourite place to travel? What inspires you? Remember to share something about yourself as well.

STEP 3: BE PROACTIVE

Proactivity is about taking actions that move the task and relationship forward. Proactive people don’t wait for others to do something or for the circumstances to change. They take actions themselves to achieve goals and build relationships. They stay focused on the desired result even in the face of challenge, always making things happen. Proactive people take personal responsibility for their situations and understand that they always have choices.

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Reactive people blame their circumstances on others, make excuses and often withdraw or give up in the face of challenging situations. Reactivity is often found in language. Using words like “There’s nothing I can do” and “If only” are announcements that reactivity is present.

Magical teams exhibit high levels of proactivity.

Using powerful questions like: “If we could do something - what would we do?” or “How can we overcome that roadblock...?” This helps teams flex their proactive muscles.

STEP 4: GENERATING FEEDBACK

“You cannot improve your life, your relationships, your game, or your performance without feedback.”

- Jack Canfield, *The Success Principles*

Giving honest, open and timely feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement is the lifeblood of working well together. Without feedback on how we’re performing, and the impact we’re having, we’ll continue to play the same game and produce the same result.

It is critically important for leaders to give individuals feedback on their performance and vice versa. However, as a leader, you must have consistently demonstrated your ability to accept and act on feedback to be able to guide change. Leaders who are defensive around receiving feedback or unwilling to make changes in themselves are seen as hypocrites when they deliver feedback to others.

People tend to complain about the things they can change to people who can’t do anything about it. If conversations are beginning to happen behind closed doors or around the “water cooler”, this is an announcement that there is a breakdown in your team feedback mechanism. Address it right away, before it drains energy from the team.

STEP 5: HEALTHY CONFLICT

As uncomfortable as conflict can seem for some, healthy conflict is very much a part of team building magic. Healthy conflict is a sign that the team is working to find the best way to achieve its goal with team members fighting for a cause they believe in.



- **Is the conflict your team is having healthy or unhealthy conflict?**

Healthy Conflict

- Conflict over ideas on how to achieve the team’s goal
- Questions spring from genuine curiosity
- Mutual respect is maintained

Unhealthy Conflict

- Conflict over personalities
- Questions are more like cross-examinations
- Ego-based personal attacks

If your team is embroiled in destructive, unhealthy conflict, here is a simple model to get the team back on track:

1. Reconnect to the team’s goals - what are we here to accomplish?
2. Understand all perspectives in the situation.
3. Together, identify solutions to achieve the desired result.

“Raise objections, engage in conflict over ideas, but if the group decides to go forward anyway, act in a manner that supports rather than undermines the initiative.”

- Hay Group - *Top Teams: Why Some Work and Some Do Not*

7 :: WHERE TO START CREATING MAGIC

If you are leading or a member of your organization’s executive or leadership team, take action to transform your own team. Nothing speaks louder than the action you take. You cannot expect your organization to have high performance teams if the team you are on is consistently struggling. Start by role-modeling the desired behaviours you want in your own team. Know your own team’s strengths and weaknesses by assessing your team’s composition and personality profiles. Your actions will speak volumes throughout your organization.

8 :: RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A successful team building program will result in employees who are more engaged and committed. In addition to many other benefits, including increased productivity and morale, the minimum outcome will be a reduction in turnover.

The following example highlights a sales-focused organization with 300 employees that, after implementing an effective team building program, reduced their turnover by 20% in the first year.

Most companies believe that approximately 60% of their operational costs are spent on human capital. This emphasizes the importance of optimizing this valuable resource to its utmost.

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A. COST OF STAFF LEAVING:

The following chart highlights a range of typical costs associated with a sales position worth \$65,000 per annum who reports to someone earning \$85,000 per annum. These figures are based on an actual case study.

HIRING ACTIVITY	HYPOTHETICAL COSTS
Advertising	\$600
Screening	\$870
Interviewing	\$1,100
Orientation	\$800
Equipment/Administration	\$3,000
Training	\$10,571
Total Cost of Recruitment	\$16,941

Below are a few additional, often hidden factors, that should also be taken into consideration when calculating the total cost of recruitment.

- legal fees
- settlement
- loss of moral from other staff

B. RESULT OF A REDUCTION OF TURNOVER IN YOUR SALES TEAM

Number of employees in Company	300
Multiplied by the average annual employee turnover	x 40%
Equals the actual number of sales people that depart your company annually	= 120
Multiplied by the reduction % of staff turnover that an effective team building program can produce	x 20%
Equals the number of people Team Building can 'save' per year	= 24
Multiplied by the average cost of replacing a sales person	x \$16,941
Equals the Team Building Program Savings	= \$406,584
Less cost of program	- \$175,000*
Return on Investment (132.3 %)	= \$231,584

* Cost will vary depending on the customized program created for your company

The example highlighted represents a conservative estimate of a reduction in turnover of 20%. We estimate this to be the minimum savings for a company of this nature. A reduced turnover of more than 20% coupled with an expected increase in productivity of 2–12% will vastly increase the return on investment of this program.

9 :: CONCLUSION

Team building magic isn't about waving a magic wand. Real team building is a process that works - starting with the definition of a clear, unifying goal. With a goal in place for your team, it is critically important to have the right people in the right roles.

Remember, when teams aren't functioning well, not only do organizations lose synergy, they actually find the whole to be less than sum of its parts. This situation has a suffocating effect on productivity that directly affects bottom-line performance.

If you are unsure if your team has the optimal composition, then use a proven assessment tool like **Drake Picasso** to help you understand your team's strengths and weaknesses. With clear goals and the right people, you'll be able to teach your team to function at their maximum potential - to play well together. Creating a Charter of Agreements, building trust, being more proactive, and generating feedback are all aspects of playing well, when done in the spirit of continuous improvement.

ABOUT DRAKE

Members of The Drake International Group of Companies are global leaders in the field of human resources, consultative management, staffing and technology solutions. For more than 50 years, Drake International has helped North American businesses solve productivity problems and recruit the best people. We begin with a business needs analysis which pinpoints the optimal way in which we can help your organization achieve its strategic objectives and overall workforce optimization strategy.

Using a partnership approach to deliver measurable results, Drake optimizes a company's profitability applying a blend of flexible staffing, permanent recruitment and technology solutions. Using innovative strategies, Drake reduces costs, increases revenue and customizes HR solutions including outsourcing of non-core business functions. Our unique vision plans to hire the right people for our clients the first time, thus saving them money by reducing their need for recruitment.

Drake's operating philosophy is based on the principle that organizations and people are at the highest level of productivity when they are working with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours, using the best processes and technologies.

We aim to assist your organization in achieving heightened productivity, performance and profit standards through the effective use of people and the application of proprietary technologies to help match workforce levels to workload. Allow Drake to help you and your company Outperform.

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