



Creating and sustaining high-performance teams

Highlights from modern research of team performance



Different types of teams and their typical challenges

Teams must grow in accordance with their purpose



1. Teams that produce or do things

Need to have strong skills for managing themselves. Developing self-empowerment, self-organization and self-management skills are some their challenges.

Teams especially need the ability to define and take responsibility for the “How”.

2. Teams that recommend things

Need to learn to become constructive quickly and then pass their findings off to those who do the implementation. Developing role clarity and strong communication and interface management skills are some of their challenges.

Teams especially need the ability to get going quickly and successfully manage the hand-off.

3. Teams that lead or manage things

Need to deal with hierarchical/territorial boundaries and enable others to concentrate on operative tasks. Developing diplomatic transparency, a wide focus, and good delegation skills are among some of their challenges.

Teams especially need the ability to create a fertile environment while embodying and transporting the “What”.

The two pillars of high performance teams

Great teams are all about clarity in goals and the norms used to get there



All teams have the potential to be effective, high performance teams.

However, many teams **fall short** of this potential because they have **little sense of purpose**, and even **less clarity around what needs to be done and how they are supposed to do it**.

Why do some team experiences work well and others not? What are the necessary elements and aspects to **make synergy and collaboration come alive** and help a team become a high performance team?

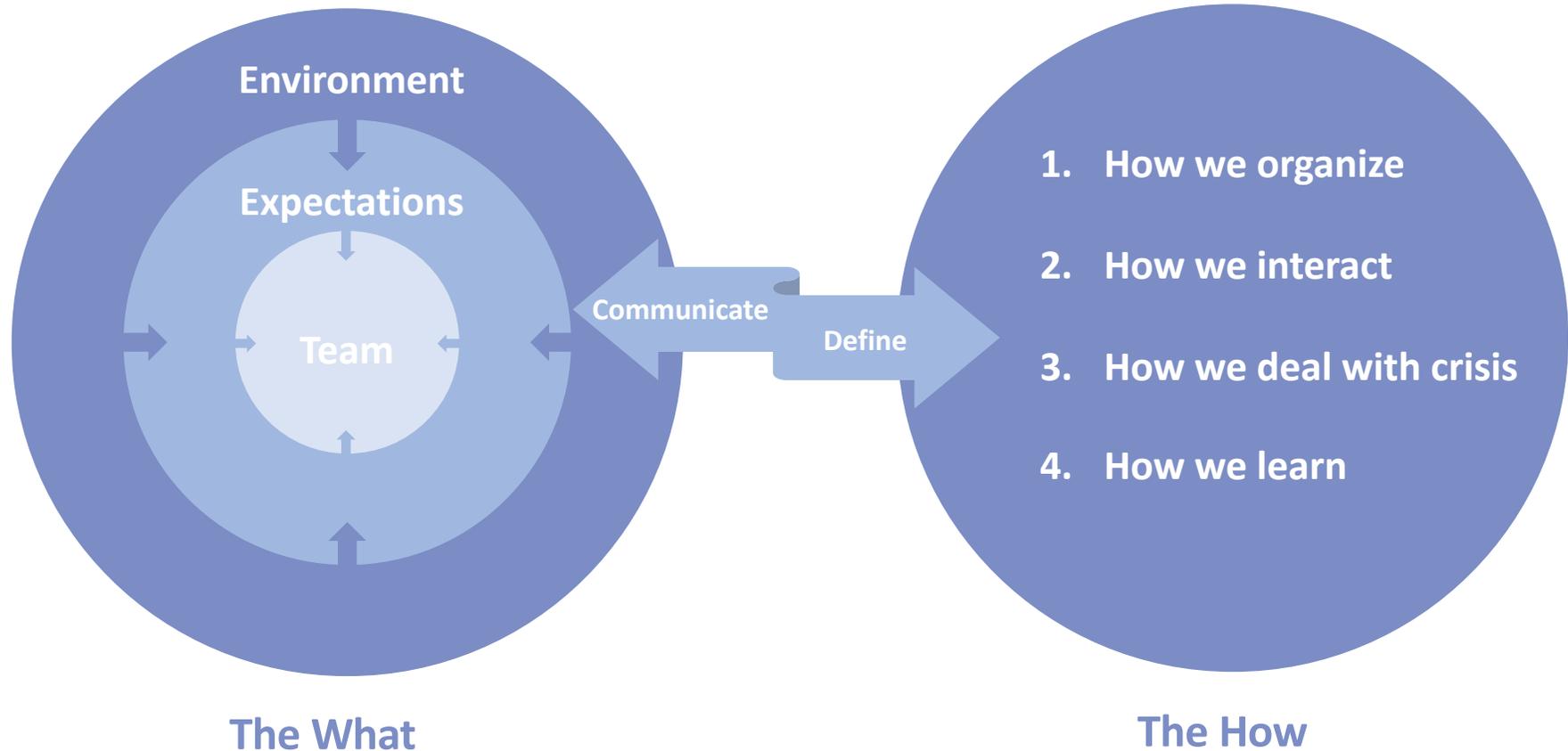
The two pillars of high performance teams:

- Clarity of goals, expectations and outside influences: The "What" (regularly communicated by the leader)
- Standardized behavioral norms concerning how to fulfill these goals: The "How" (defined and agreed by the team)

Communicating resp. defining these two aspects is a reiterative process, to be done each time the need arises.

Knowing the What – defining the How

The What and the How form the basis of high performance



Additionally, focusing on key aspects further fosters excellence

The specific characteristics of high performance can be promoted by team leaders



Ensuring **clarity of goals and expectations** and allowing the team to define their **behavioral norms and standards** forms the foundation of excellence, but alone is not sufficient to guarantee sustainable high performance in teams.

This necessary foundation must be further built upon to promote the development and sustainment of **personal engagement, motivation, openness, commitment and accountability** - the hallmarks of excellence and the common characteristics of well functioning teams. By focusing on four key aspects of the team, leaders and companies grow and sustain excellence.

Four key aspects of high performance:

- Safe Space
- Interaction
- Challenge
- Progress

Focus on these aspects in an ongoing process.

Team coaching

Promoting the collaboration needed to thrive in complexity and/or during critical phases



Team coaching is particularly valuable for **teams in complex environments**. The more **complexity a team faces**, the more important a **collaborative approach becomes**.

Examples of complexity⁵:

- The team has never done this before and needs to work out a new solution
- The team must interact with three or more key stakeholders
- The task is business critical and has a high degree of urgency
- The people needed to complete the task are located in three or more different locations
- The task requires specialist input from up to four or more technical specialists

Additionally, team coaching is valuable for:

- Forming phase, critical project phases
- Performance improvement
- Conflict

Bibliography and recommended reading



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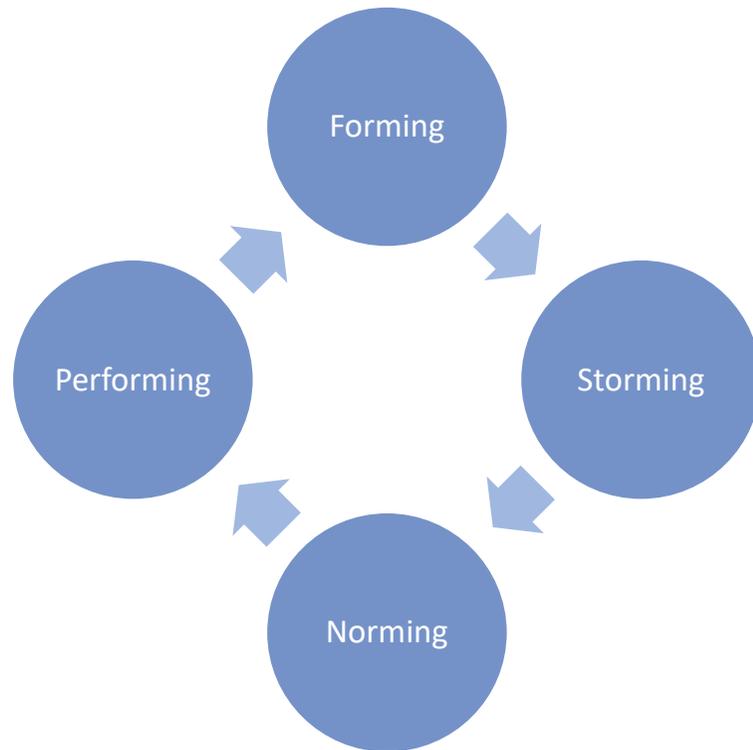




Appendix

Tuckman's stages of team development

Understand your team's development to better facilitate growth



Forming – the foundation phase: High dependence on leader for guidance; Roles and responsibilities unclear; Processes often disregarded, Team's purpose, objectives and external relationships/context unclear; **Leader directs, assigns tasks.**

Storming – conflict over different objectives:

Decisions difficult; Team members vie for position; Team members challenge leader; Team purpose clearer; Cliques form; Power struggles; Focus on goals is weak; Relationship and emotional issues. Compromises may be required to enable progress.

Leader coaches, fosters relationships

Norming – decision and compromise:

Consensus forms; Roles and responsibilities become clear; Big decisions through group agreement/compromise; Commitment and unity strong; Social activities; Processes and working style develop; Leadership is shared by team. **Leader facilitates, enables.**

Performing – the work phase:

Strategic awareness; Team purpose understood; Shared vision in place; High degree of autonomy; Disagreements occur and are resolved positively within the team; Necessary changes are made by the team; Team members look after each other; Team no longer needs to be instructed or assisted; Team members look to leader for personal and interpersonal development. **Leader delegates, oversees.**



Model: 5 Dysfunctions of a Team

Teams fail to achieve high results due to a lack of trust (safe space) which leads to further deficits

