The Myths and Realities of Teamwork

David Wright

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David Wright

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The Myths and Realities of Teamwork
1st edition
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ISBN 978-87-403-0585-2

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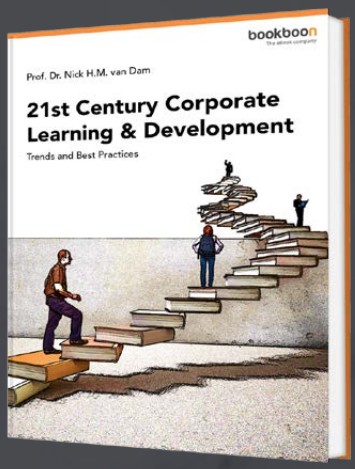

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About the book

In this book, the author, David Wright, sets out to share 30 years of his team building experience in organisations both large and small. The book focuses on the key milestones that mark a team's journey to high performance, without being naïve to the challenges and the pitfalls; hence the title **The Myths and Realities of Teamwork**. The most common myth is that there is no **'I'** in team; however, there is a **'me'.** The reality is that the reader can never ignore an individual's needs, even within a strong team environment.

The myths and realities of teamwork will be told through a series of milestones (chapters) on a journey to high performance using 32 case studies, 37 illustrations and one joke, but it is a good one.

The milestones highlighted within each chapter, will aid the reader to check the team's progress. The initial part of the team journey will focus on basic steps in building the team and this may feel mechanistic; however, as the book unfolds, you will experience more challenging skills and processes that will enable you and your team to achieve high performance.

The myths and realities are visited throughout the book to assist the reader to be realistic in approach.

The book also aims to help mature teams recapture that early enthusiasm and respect you may have witnessed when the team was new. Building a really effective team is akin to taking a journey and members of the team must experience the journey together. I will refer to the team journey a lot throughout this book. In order for the team to have a fruitful journey, the following milestones must be reached:

- Burying the myths and raising the realities
- Understanding organisation culture and the team's potential starting point
- Establishing team goals and vision
- Establishing ground rules for effectiveness
- Meeting skills and positive contributions
- Recognising the team processes including the journey from 'Ritual Sniff' to 'Maturity'
- Developing team skills that will aid success
- Defining the team roles beyond pure functional roles and predicting future success or failure
- Understanding empowerment and its place, especially in self-directed work teams
- Having the level of openness and trust to share feelings and take responsibility for change
- Embracing high performance, celebration and fun
- Understanding the practice of leadership for all

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Author's profile

David Wright was born in Ireland at the mid-point of the last century and educated at Trinity College Dublin.

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His career began with manual work including the laying of white and yellow lines on roads, a surprising activity for the product of a privileged education. Eventually David was encouraged to get a 'real job' and he duly joined the Human Resources team of the Engineering Industry Training Board in the United Kingdom. David later returned to Ireland to work in Donnelly Mirrors, a manufacturing business which in the 1970s had a teamwork culture linked to profit sharing. It was a very innovative company and it was here that David's love of teams and teamwork really began.

David later acquired the clumsy title of 'Personnel Policy Development Manager' with a government training agency and after three years was put in a position which allowed him to practice what he was preaching with 100 staff and a large operational budget. As a line manager, David relished the opportunity to build his own teams.

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In the economic recession of the 1980s, David and his twin brother Ken established Wright Consultancy to help diverse teams achieve high performance.

Today David combines this consultancy role with working as Group Human Resource Manager with Horse Racing Ireland as well as volunteering with charitable organisations.

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Preface

I dedicate this book to my family, to Daphne, my coach, and daughters
Diane and Catherine who encourage me not to act my age.

I also thank John Donnelly, Donnelly Mirrors, who provided the initial interest in teams, Ken Wright, my twin brother, who encouraged me to work with teams and take the necessary business risks and Sexton Cahill of Aughinish Alumina who suggested using the outdoors as a team building and learning environment for self-directed work teams.

I thank the many companies and organisations I am fortunate to work with
who trust my ability to deliver fun and high performance teams.

Gratitude to Helen Colleton and Eilish Rafferty for sound advice on the book's content.

Finally to Bookboon who asked me to fulfil my ambition to write about my experiences of teams, thank you. I have enjoyed writing the book. My hope is that you will enjoy the read and take the learning to your teams.

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Introduction

In the 1980s there was rapid growth in multi-nationals investing in Ireland and through this growth I had the privilege of working with some of the best companies in the world. This time coincided with an interest in using the outdoors as a learning experience for teams sprang up. Wright Consultancy was the pioneer and market leader in Ireland in using the outdoors to advance team learning with organisations such as Apple, Guinness and Auginish Alumina. The combination of teamwork and the utilisation of the outdoor training worked as a learning resource when the facilitator or programme designer focused on the original team objectives and the transfer of the learning to the workplace.

After ten years the media of the outdoors proved so popular that many providers were focused on activities and the learning objectives were often ignored; this gave the use of the outdoors for teamwork training a poor reputation.

The establishment of Self-Directed Work Teams (SDWT) and High Performance Teams in some traditional industries was a key focus of the team development programmes in the 1990s. In the 'noughties' the challenge came under the heading of seeking a step change in organisation productivity, embracing quality and customer service. The additional challenge for teams was the growth of customer service centres and the retention of a high level of enthusiasm for the customers.

Teams need to refresh and reinvent themselves from time to time and this has been the main challenge of the late noughties and beyond. It is my wish in this book, to share with you thirty years of experience of what works and does not work for team development and growth.

The book brings you on a journey that encourages you to pursue or enhance your own teamwork, while avoiding being naïve about the team journey. The Chapter **Myths and Realities of Teamwork** is only one of a series of chapters. When all seven chapters are brought together in this team journey you should be better assured of team success.

David Martin Wright,

Wright Consultancy Limited

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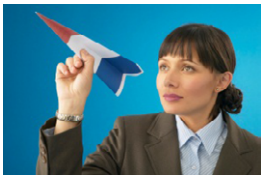
1 Myths and Realities of Teamwork

The purpose of this introduction is to ensure the reader is not naïve about the challenges and the rewards that lie ahead. Teamwork, when introduced for the right reasons and managed in a challenging way, is one of most rewarding processes any manager or leader can experience.

Myths and realities of teamwork are examined under six headings:

The Myth	Teamwork	The Reality
Teams are **harmonious people** who compromise of their needs for the sake of the team		Good teams are made of **diverse people** with specific needs to be met. The team's diversity can be a strength There is no "I" in TEAM but there is a "ME" and ignore the ME at your peril
Team conflict is unhealthy		**Conflict can be healthy** and should be harnessed for the common good, rather than suppressed Conflict is an energy source so harness it
Most people like teamwork		**My observations suggest that about one third of the working population enjoy teamwork**, one third are indifferent and one third prefer to work solo
Teamwork is essential to business success		**Teams thrive on complexity**; however, if a task or process is simple an organisation can cope without teamwork
Teams are easy to influence and manage		**Teamwork requires courage and high levels of personal awareness from its leaders**
Senior Managers encourage teamwork		**Most senior managers are anxious about teamwork** and the potential loss of power or control

To aid understanding, the six myths will be explored by focusing on the realities of teamwork in the paragraphs below.

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Myth 1 – Teams are harmonious people who compromise their needs for the sake of the team

Good teams are made of **diverse people** with specific needs to be met within the team. When the diversity is recognised and utilised appropriately the team's diversity can become a team strength.

A starting point for working with any team is to understand the individuals that work in the team. There are many instruments on the market to help identify a team's profile. The key is not to label people or the team but allow the team to:

- Identify the range of talents within the team and encourage the team members to recognise and use that talent to help the team succeed
- Predict the team's overall performance and identify strengths and weaknesses
- Write a set of team ground rules for operating as a team that will aid success

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Having a team of the same profile is often a barrier to future success. When any one profile type dominates a team, the team usually underperforms. For example, it is easy to predict what will happen when a team is dominated by any of the four main team profiles (see **Fig 1.1** under myth 3):

Task focused team: if planning is defined as quality of thought before action, the task dominated team will fail to do the right thing and a team's high level of activity is often confused with success.

Ideas focused team: experience low follow-through on ideas or innovations and become distracted by the excitement of the next new idea, rather than relevant outputs.

Analytical focused team: often demonstrate poor differentiation between important and unimportant tasks leading to poor decision making and inflexibility.

Socially focused team: demonstrate great fun and concern for each other; however, they can lack a sense of urgency leading to low output and missed deadlines.

If the diverse profile within a team can be recognised and utilised appropriately, the team members will deliver team success. This diversity is to be seen as a strength. Failure to recognise the diversity can lead to team chaos.

Myth 2 – Team conflict is unhealthy

Conflict within teams needs to be recognised as a positive energy source, especially if the whole team can embrace the team's primary goal or mission rather than individual goals.

A good definition of a team is: **A group of individuals who are passionate about a common goal**.

The word passionate is important, because it is the passion for the common goal that is the 'glue' that keeps the team together. The passion for a common goal allows conflict to be seen in a positive light, as the 'fight' is about achieving the objective and not with each other.

Choosing the right goal is important to success. Also the goal should be challenging so that the team recognises that it will only be achieved with the engagement of the full team.

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Conflict within a team should be seen as positive and can help a team progress and grow. Examples of reasons why conflict should be seen as good for the team progress and growth are:

There are a number of ways teams can anticipate conflict and deal with it early and appropriately:

- As a first step we encourage teams to write a set of ground rules for how the team will operate. Inevitably the word 'respect' will appear, however, in support of respect the team needs to learn the skills of giving and receiving feedback and take responsibility for their actions.
- Regular and open reviews of how the team is progressing on its goals and adhering to its ground rules must be put into place.
- Direct and unambiguous language is also important. For some teams in their early stages of formation I recommend only using the word 'we' when celebrating success and use the words 'I' and 'you' when talking about their own and the team's performance.
- Personal conflict around individuals should not be tolerated as it breaches the respect ground rule and possibly the passion for the common goal.
- Conflict is an energy source of excitement and it should be harnessed for the common good. The opposite of conflict is apathy and this is the real danger to a team.
- Conflict helps the thinking within the team, removing the blinkers and on occasion leading to creativity.
- Conflict increases the level of engagement of individuals and releases the true feelings of team members

Occasionally a team member will no longer be passionate about the team or its goals. This is no different as to why people leave organisations and is a natural process. New team members adopt the culture and values of the established team very quickly, so some turnover can be healthy for the team.

Myth 3 – Most people like teamwork

About one third of the working population enjoy teamwork, one third is neutral and one third prefers to work solo (source: Wright Consultancy).

It is obvious to say that not everyone will respond to teamwork in the same way; each person is different and should be recognised as such. Some people have a preference for working by themselves and the team needs to accommodate this without compromising the team objectives or values. It is possible to create a team environment that caters for the work preferences of each individual.

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It is best to illustrate this with a simple team profile model. The four segment model (**Fig 1.1**) based on a combination of Meredith Belbin's *Management Team* and Carl Jung sets out to:

- Identify those people who have a preference for expressing themselves (tell) and those who have a preference for listening/reflecting (ask) or extrovert and introvert
- Identify those people who generally supress their feelings (deadpan) and those who are comfortable expressing their feelings (demonstrative)

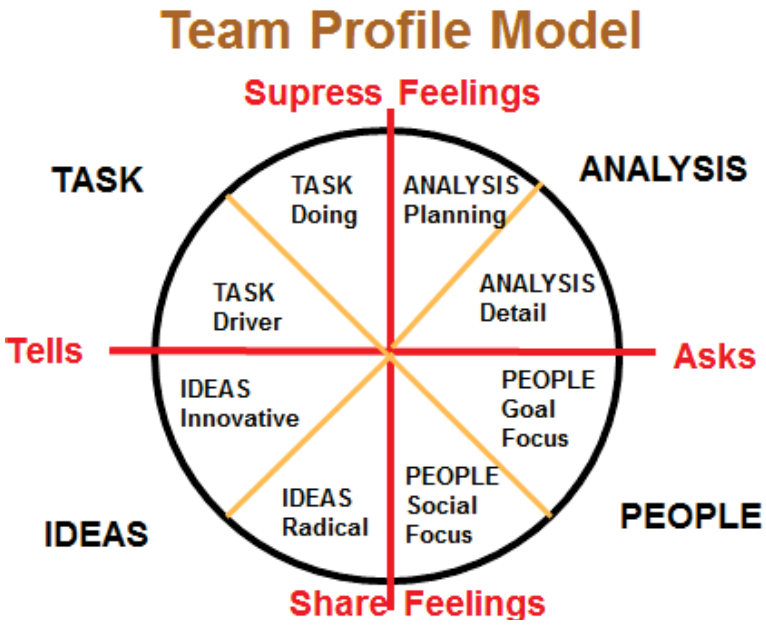

Fig 1.1

By examining the eight profiles highlighted here, we can identify those who in all probability will like, be neutral or dislike team environments.

People who like to work in teams

People Focused – ---------	Positive supporter of teams and the people who make up the team
Team Social Focused – ---	Strong supporter of the team concept, especially the socialisation
Ideas Innovative – ---------	Likes teams, as as as a source of stimulation and networking

People who are neutral to working in teams

Task (Do) – ----------	Can take or leave teams depending on role and challenges
Analytical (Planning) –	Has vision but can work solo or in a team environment

People who dislikes the team environment

Task Driver – ---------	Only likes teams if they are in control of the team ('Solo Leader' See fig 1.2)
Analytical (Detail) –	Preference for working on their own
Ideas (Radical) – -----	Becomes bored with the team and only needs the team as an audience

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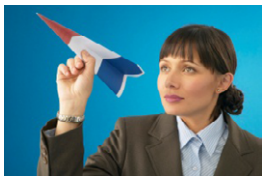
The glue for most teams for such potentially diverse people is the passion of a common goal, the opportunity to express themselves and be recognised for their strengths within the team.



Myth 4 – Teamwork is essential to business success

Teamwork is *not* essential to all businesses. **Teams thrive on complexity**; however, if a task or process is simple an organisation can cope without teamwork and continue to be successful working in silos or a task environment.

Fast-moving organisations, where the product life is short or where the market rapidly changes, need a team environment if they wish to stay in business. It is this complexity in these types of company's experience that demands teamwork and gives sufficient challenge to the individual members of the team. When the individual feels quite overawed by the task they really appreciate the help and support from other team members. This includes appreciating the diversity of talent and ideas that comes from the team.

Give teams unchallenging tasks and they become bored, allowing individual needs to come to the fore and over time the teamwork will disintegrate to working in silos.

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There are teams which work well on simple tasks, where the high morale and motivation of the team is the goal; this is particularly true of customer service environments. While the task is simple the focus of the team leaders is on team communications and empowerment of the team if the teams are to be successful. To illustrate this I have briefly outlined two short case studies.

Case study 1 – Failing to challenge the team in terms of complexity

The company hired consultants to advise them on how to use teamwork to increase the level of productivity in the manufacturing plant. After a significant investment the company decided to test the teams by asking each team to undertake simple tasks not directly related to the manufacturing issues, of which there were many. They wished to continue the cosy feeling that emerged from the team training programme. One example of a chosen task was to ask the team to re-design the layout of the employee car park to increase safety and ease the traffic flow.

The challenge had little relevance to the major issues facing the business and a great opportunity, including the initial investment, was lost. Real, complex tasks build strong teams.

Case study 2 – Quality System in a large multi-national hard and software organisation

The organisation had outsourced many of its tasks and had insisted on very high internationally recognised quality systems from its supplier. However the organisation itself did not have the quality systems in place that it demanded of its suppliers.

To address this anomaly, a volunteer team from across the whole manufacturing site was set up and given the task of embracing the same high quality standards as they demanded of their suppliers. The team had to achieve this without plant disruptions and within a twelve month time scale, while maintaining productivity in their full time jobs. The task seemed an impossible ask given the 'part time' nature of the assigned team. However, with some basic training in teamwork and quality systems, the team which had bonded extremely well, set about its task. The whole team became enthusiastic through the training programme and would meet early morning for 'breakfast' to plan activities and to avoid significant interference with their regular full time roles.

The team achieved the quality system targets within six months. This was the fastest and most successful implementation across all the organisation's international plants.

In conclusion, teams thrive on a challenging tasks and it is this complexity businesses should tap into by embracing teamwork.

Myth 5 – Teams are easy to influence and manage

Leading teams requires a very different skillset to that required for normal day-to-day management. In fact there is, for some managers, significant unlearning of habits and processes. The contradictions between 'normal' leadership and team leadership are illustrated below from Meredith Belbin author of Managing Team (**Fig 1.2**)

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Fig 1.2

On many occasions managers and supervisors frustrate teams by failing to share relevant information with the team and directing the solution without engaging the team members.

Case Study 3 – Giving Control to the team

A large multinational manufacturer of electronic boards. The company had introduced self-directed work teams. The plan I had established for a continuum of empowerment was going well, until the first unforeseen crisis hit.

The crisis was a major recall of defective boards, the senior managers wished to step in and sort out the crisis. The team supervisor (now called team facilitator) objected and asked for time to help the team to come to terms with the problem. The team set about defining the problems and allocating responsibilities among the team members for delivering solutions.

As a result the team demonstrated almost 40% better performance than previous re-call crisis managed under the old management process.

Myth 6 – Senior Managers encourage teamwork

Senior Managers encourage teamwork

Far from encouraging teamwork, senior managers are uneasy with the loss of control that teamwork appears to bring with it. An old European study of senior managers in the 1990s discovered that while senior managers outwardly supported teamwork in their organisations; they were uncomfortable with the process and the potential for exposing their own weaknesses and loss of control.

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Teamwork is a continuous process, there needs to be constant learning from the process accompanied by a high level of openness among team members. This will inevitably require strong review processes to aid learning and may include 360 degree feedback. In true teamwork there must be transparency and there is nowhere for senior managers to hide their weaknesses when leading teams. Weaknesses can be overcome by tapping into the strengths of the team members.

One Chief Executive Officer/Vice President of a software multi-national became so frustrated with his line managers, he felt that the managers were blocking real productivity by being territorial and playing "who is in charge" games. In part he is right; however, there is a major team role for managers in defining the future and its challenges and to resource the teams to meet the new demands of teamwork.

For the overworked manager there are three questions to be posed:

- Are those who report to you or service your team's needs working as hard as you are? If the answer is 'no', then you are failing as a leader to manage your team or suppliers
- Are you aware as a manager of the individual working styles and talents within the team?
- Are you devoting time to thinking about the future and developing strategies to grasp future business opportunities for the company and the team? If the answer is 'no' or 'not enough time', then who is? Remember this becomes more critical in businesses that work in complex markets or with products that have short life cycles

Senior managers have little to fear if they focus on the important things. This includes seeing yourself as someone who empowers individuals and teams to generate exceptional results. In our experience many organisations have too many layers of managers, who compete for limited resources.

With teamwork there needs to be collaboration, sharing resources and high levels of empowerment, rather than duplicating or fighting about resources. It is little wonder there is unease within many organisations around teamwork.

Summary

This chapter is just the first of seven chapters to help you come to terms with teamwork in your organisation. The purpose in chapter one is to ensure you are not naïve about the challenges and rewards that lie ahead. Teamwork, when introduced for the right reasons and managed in a challenging way, is one of most rewarding processes any manager or leader can experience.

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2 Signposting a Team Journey

The team journey through this book will be marked by a series of 'milestones' that the team should pass on its way to achieve high performance. The milestones are akin to Chapters 2–7 of the book.

The journey (or chapters) moves from identifying the culture or the environment the team is operating in, moving on to establishing the team on a sound foundation (mechanics) through a number of stages, such as, building relevant skill levels, exploring the team's profile and predicting the potential for success. The final chapters look at the empowerment process and the underpinning communications skills and emotional awareness that prepares a team for embracing high performance.

The final part (chapter) of the team journey will examine leadership for all the team members and the capacity for sustaining high performance. Leadership at the early stage of the team journey is similar to normal line management behaviour or chairing a meeting (mechanics) to the leadership in high performance mode, where leadership is unobtrusive and empowering.

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When a brand new team meets it can be very exciting, there is great enthusiasm for the task ahead and even respect for each team member. The early stages of a team's development can look like a mature effective fun loving team. We will later refer to this as the 'Form' stage of the team's development journey. However, a team at the end of its maturing journey can recapture that early enthusiasm and respect for each other with the major advantage of being equipped to tackle the difficult issues ahead.

I have repeated below some of the milestones on the team journey you will pass in this book and they are listed in the order you will encounter them:

- Burying the myths and raising the realities
- Understanding organisation culture and the team's potential starting point
- Establishing team goals and vision
- Establishing ground rules for effectiveness
- Meeting skills and positive contributions
- Recognising the team processes including the journey from 'Ritual Sniff' to 'Maturity'
- Developing team skills that will aid success
- Defining the team roles beyond pure functional roles and predicting future success or failure
- Understanding empowerment and its place, especially in self-directed work teams
- Having the level of openness and trust to share feelings and take responsibility for change
- Embracing high performance, celebration and fun
- Understanding the practice of leadership for all

2.1 The milestones.

The elements above will now be captured in the milestones of Chapters 2 to 7. (**Fig 2.1**)

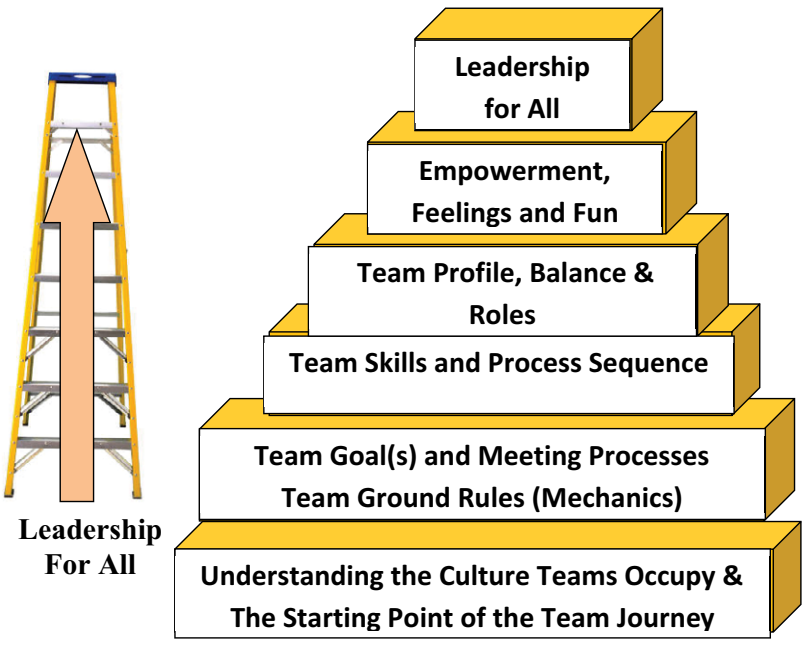

Fig 2.1

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If you and your team successfully navigate the milestones you will be ready for empowerment and the final drive to high performance goals.

The journey looks complex, some teams make it through in a matter of months and some teams become stuck and never emerge. Those that make the complete journey will experience and sustain high performance and have the "Aha!" feeling that comes with belonging to a high performance team.

The team journey is symbolic of a speedboat moving through water.

Some boats have their hulls designed to sit on top of the water when they reach a critical speed; it is called planing. With the right engine (team passion) and hull design (team balance and design fit for purpose) the boat will eventually sit up on the water and effortlessly glide across the top of the water. However, to get to that position the boat coming from a standing position will plough into the water, the engine will be a full power and a large bow wave of resistance will be push along in front of the boat. The boat needs to go through this energy sapping stage to reach the critical speed that allows the boat to rise up over the bow wave and sit on the water and plane on top of the water at speed.

The chapters 3 and 4 represents the start with high effort and low output and may be seen as building the foundations for teamwork , that getting the processes and skills right.

Chapter 5 looks to the talent you have within the team and predicts performance.

The last two Chapters 6 & 7 represent the fine tuning that enables teams to perform at the highest level.

Team are found everywhere and some are naturally great by the 'accidental' talents and characteristics found in the team and in all probability a love of the team task and each other (respect). A change in the team's purpose, membership or environment can knock a naturally talented team off balance. Teams who understand the team journey can adopt and know how to fix problems as they consistently sustain high performance.

Case Study 5 – Quick team audit questions

I have asked frequently to undertake a quick audit of team in organisations. This is the team audit you will read about in the clothing factory case study (**7**) later in the book. I suggest you use the questions listed for your own team. Because those audits are often limited by time and resources, I have come up with a series of eight robust questions, the answers to which should provide a guide to the team's success.

Test your own team against each of the questions.

- Is the team passionate about a common goal and what is it?
- Has the team achieved breakthrough performance in terms of output?
- Is there evidence of high levels of innovation and creativity in the team?
- Are team communications open and transparent so that the team makes informed decisions?
- Are the team members empowered to act with authority on significant issues?
- Reflecting as a team member, do you believe the individual talents in the team are recognised and utilised?
- Does the team undertake an honest appraisal of events and learn from their successes and failures?
- Does the team have fun and celebrate success together?

Ask your team colleagues to reflect on the above questions and note their answers.

If you can say 'yes' to all eight questions, congratulations; it is time for you to write a book and share your team experiences!

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2.2 Starting point

Understanding the culture and the business environment that teams occupy, defines the starting point of the team journey

Is it necessary for all teams to make the high performance team journey?

No, it is not necessary for all teams to make the high performance journey. Teams with simple tasks do not need to make the full team journey and should focus on building relationships. This e-book is designed to assist teams to reach their preferred destination from the simple tasks to delivering on complex tasks and the achievement of high performance on a consistent basis.

I will look at the cultural environment that teams often have to occupy and this will give some sense to the starting point of the team journey.

There are many models for looking at organisation culture and environment that the team may be trying to work in. The author's favourite model is an old tried and tested model called Blake and Mouton's Management Grid. Further reading and material may be found on www.managementgrid.com.

For the learning purpose here we will stick with the simplicity of the original grid model for its ease of understanding.

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2.2.1 Blake and Mouton's Management Grid

The model operates on a two dimensional axis that is:

The **West to East axis** represents the level of concern for productivity/output from the organisation.

The **South to North axis** represents the level of concern for the organisation's employees and their development and empowerment. However, this axis has the potential to become a concern for harmony and industrial peace and can lead to high salaries and low productivity.

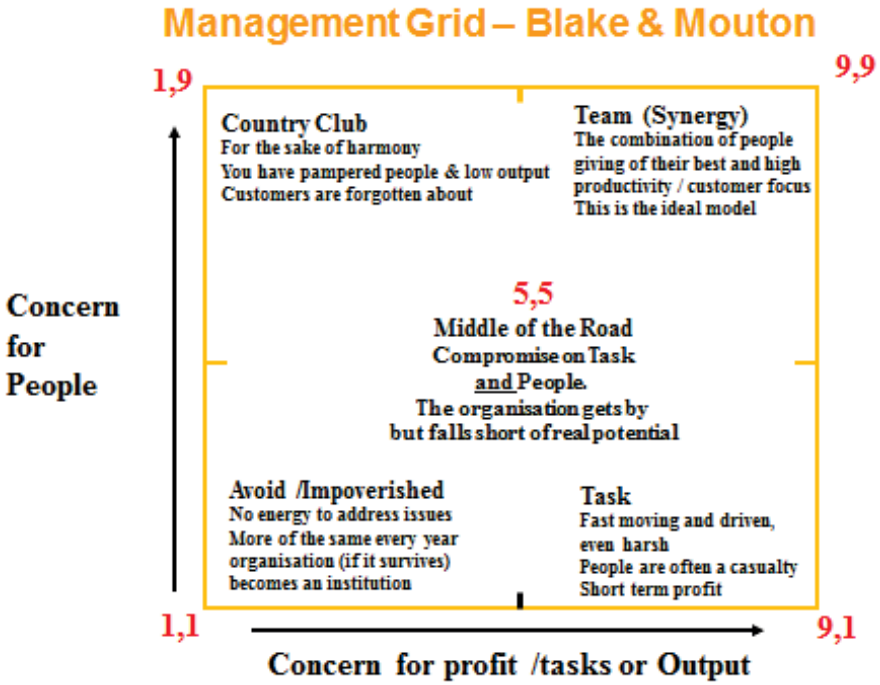

Fig 2.2

Each axis is given a scale of 1 to 9 with the score of 5 marking the mid point in the axis. The lowest point is point one on both axis represented by 1,1. I will offer an opinion of the types of organisation that fits the grid positions; however, you, the reader, will need to draw your own conclusions from the environment that you and your team work in.

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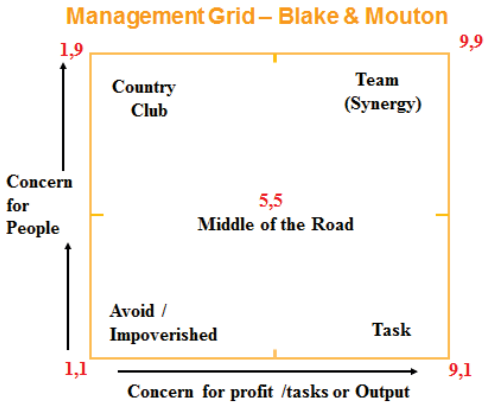
Position 1,1 on the bottom left corner (Avoid/Impoverished). These are organisations that more properly fit the description "institutions", where the original purpose and passion has faded and the focus is on doing enough to survive. Often there is an income stream from government (Civil and Public Service) or from members (established churches, universities) that allows the organisation to survive but deliver low levels of service. The people become lethargic and focused on their position, increments, rank and time/days off, including high levels of absenteeism and very little though is given to the end users of the service.

Interest in real teamwork is low. While the status quo remains, teamwork is about retaining harmony and good relationships without embracing the potential for change. However, with a new mission and passion, teamwork can bring real change to such organisations and institutions.

Position 1,9 on the top left corner (Country Club). This is where the productivity remains low but where the concern for people (or self) is high. In real terms the focus is on industrial harmony and fails to challenge people (employees) to give of their potential. The employees end up with excellent terms and conditions that need to be paid for; these types of organisations often have a monopoly without competitors where the income streams remain high to pay for the terms and conditions. Good examples may be, air traffic controllers and utility workers in gas and electricity sectors. It used to exist in state monopoly airlines and telecoms.



There can be high expenditure on team development programmes under the guise of people development, which contributes little to productivity or customer service.

The privatisation of many state owned organisations or the end to the monopoly positions can bring rapid change to these organisations when new benchmarks for profit and customer service are imposed. Teamwork supported by training and significant change management can deliver exceptional results in a very short time once the imperative for change is recognised and championed.

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Case Study 6 – Public Utility providing electricity

With a mandate to be ready for launch on the stock market, the organisation prepared a business plan that would give sustainable profit for the years ahead and a change management programme that would deliver best benchmarked practice for the industry, based on European and world standards.

The change programme, led by Wright Consultancy and one other independent consultant, focused on productivity and the customer needs. The initial changes were made resulting in a successful stock market launch within two years and a highly motivated workforce within five years. The organisation has delivered sustainable productivity and share value up to the present day and has won many 'best in class' awards when benchmarked with other European companies and utilities.

Teamwork and communications with customers and staff played a large part in the change process and the organisation's success. Because the consultancy team was small with limited resources, a large element of the change process was undertaken by the local champions at all levels of the organisation. These empowered leaders embraced the change with their teams and delivered exceptional performance and staff motivation. Fifteen years later, the change programme is still ongoing, with the objective of improving continuously the value to the customer while retaining a motivated staff.

In terms of the team journey on the grid, the organisation moved from **1,9** to **7,7** and is targeting 9,9 and beyond. In the early days of the change management process, the staff, because of the organisation's history as a sheltered monopoly, the employees thought the organisation had suddenly leaped from a **1,9** Country Club to a **9,1** Task culture. In fact, at that early stage, the organisation scored 5,5, but to the employees the change had felt harsh as they moved away from a historical sheltered work environment.

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Position 9,1 on the bottom right corner (Task Culture). This is where the productivity appears high, however, the concern for people is low. People are regarded as units of production. There is a strong focus on profit and low attention is given to employee issues. It is too easy to stereotype these organisations to include the catering industry, construction and retail. Although in those industries there are companies who defy the stereotype and achieve great results through employee engagement. However, the majority of these type of organisations fall within the **9,1** quadrant. A key feature of these organisations is piece work, low basic salary and 'high' bonuses or commission reward systems.

There is a 'hire and fire' attitude among the leadership and only the toughest survive. There is a strong top down command structure. The notion of team is seen as an unnecessary layer of complexity on what is a simple business model.

Case Study 7 – Part A – clothing factory in Europe that operated on piece work.

Wright Consultancy was asked to carry out a quick audit of a clothing manufacturing site which operated a piece work (employees paid by the number of garments they produced). I had a half day to carry out the audit, as the organisation was not in the habit of spending money on consultants. I used the eight 'quick team audit' criteria as described at the start of this chapter. Over lunch the production manager asked me what I thought. My starting point was to say that he was everything on the production floor except 'manager'. He worked extremely hard to ensure the employees where kept busy, he was the material manager, the quality manager, the maintenance crew, production re-scheduler, problem solver but he certainly was not the production manager. My question was, why did he have all these people to do these tasks yet he carried them out, while at the same time he was failing to fix the bigger and longer term production problems?

His first thought was to start delegating to his staff; however, I guided him towards building teams and empowering them to make decisions without referring to him.

A year later when I was visiting another factory in the clothing manufacturing group I hear a person standing next to say "I am now a manager**"**. Quite startled by the interruption, I looked up and he repeated the statement "I am now a manager". It was then I realised it was the production manager from our conversation one year earlier. The business was firmly in the 9,1 culture of task management; however, the seeds had been sown for a change in culture.

See **Part B, Chapter 6** – It is a case study of establishing self-directed (empowered) work teams in the same clothing factory group and outperforming the piece work arrangements.

Position 5,5 on the halfway point of both axes (middle of the Road). This is where the productivity appears good, although everyone knows it could be improved, and the concern for people is good, although it falls far short of its potential. The organisation is marked by many compromises. Neither the full potential for people nor output is realised. Many organisations fall under the spell of compromise, and they therefore languish in this zone.

These are organisations in which good money will be spent on training and development and some change management processes will be adopted but to no avail due to a lack of passion for the people and/or the output.

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Position 9,9 on the top right corner (Synergy/Teamwork). This is the ideal team zone where innovation and high performance form a team of highly motivated and empowered employees. This is the zone to aim for if you are serious about getting the absolute best from the organisation and its people. Essentially, this eBook is about the journey to the team zone from any of the other zones described by the Grid Model.

In the team zone, people are passionate about the business and the quality of what they do. People are innovative and creative and will go the extra mile. People are united by the common goal and mission; high on customer focus. Good profits and innovative products emerge from employees who feel challenged and appreciated. Apple is the best example of a **9,9** organisation I can think of.

In high performance companies like Apple, the team journey is never over. There is no sense of "we have arrived", rather a journey of a continuous improvement and innovation.

To represent this attitude, we show the grid model with the performance target beyond the 9,9 position.

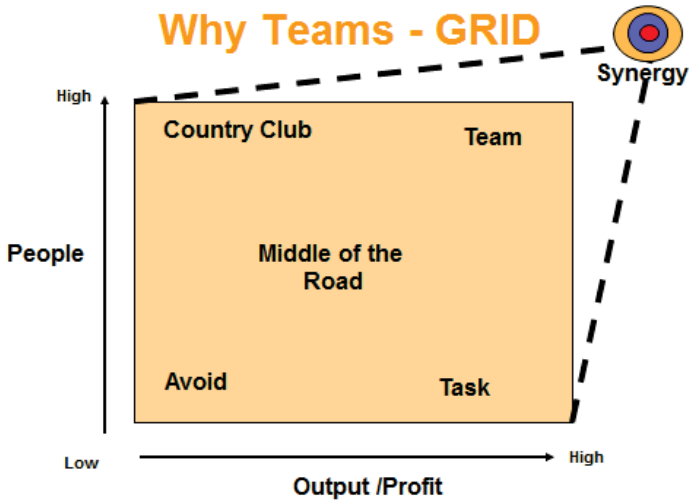

Fig 2.3

Is the Grid too simple and too basic to be of value in modern organisation cultures?

The early appeal of the Management Grid was its simplicity; people quickly assimilated the theory and understood the model and how it identified specific team cultures.

I agree that the model is too simple because it does not recognise that every organisation is different and there is probably more complexity than the model allows for. However, in communicating with employees, it provides an excellent visual representation of the journey of change and enables employees engage in the change debate.

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In **Appendix 2** you will find some individual behaviour for each of the five primary zones to enhance your understanding of the grid.

If you combine the Management Grid model with Bruce Tuckman's team maturing model you add a significant behavioural element to the whole process, resulting in:

1,1 & **1,9** as FORM
9,1 STORM (high level)
5,5 NORM, STORM and Re-NORM
9,9 as PERFORM

2.3 Bruce Tuckman's team journey

To add a useful second dimension to the Blake & Mouton grid journey, we present here the team maturing model from Bruce Tuckman (1965) as it will help you understand the need to signpost the team journey.

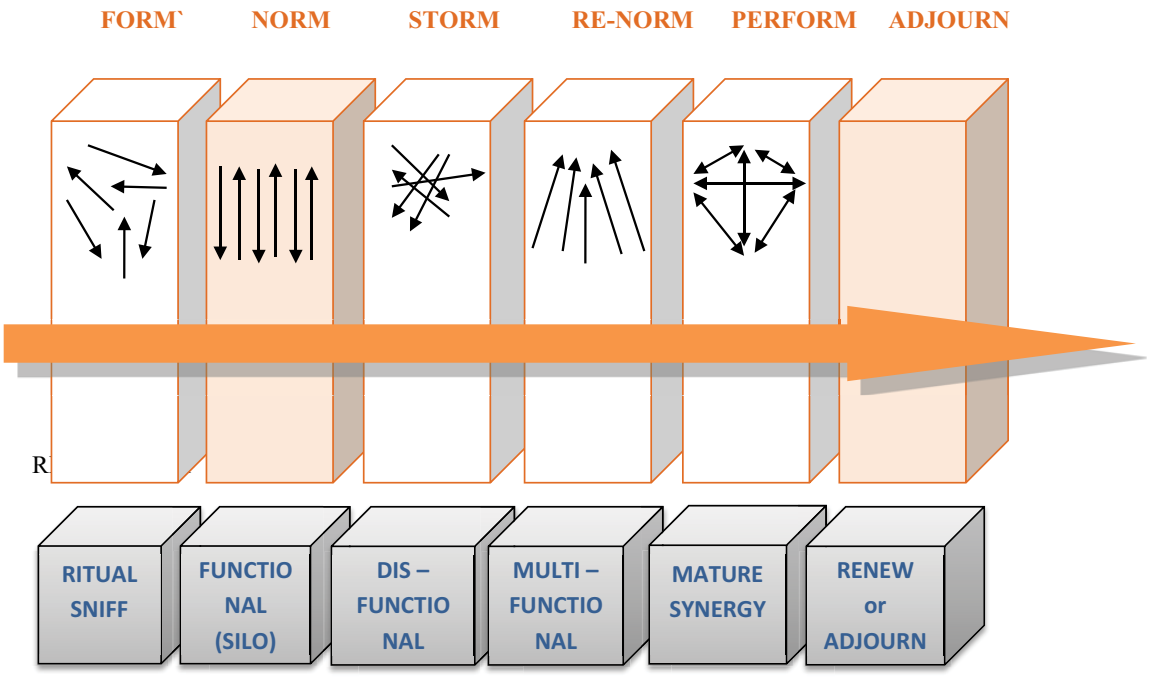

Fig 2.4

The original team maturing model by Bruce Tuckman (1965) featured Form, Storm, Norm and Perform. Mary Ann White and Tuckman added Adjourn (1977). Timothy Briggs replaced Norm with Re-Norm and placed Norm before Storm. **Fig 2.4.**

At the end, with short product cycles and new challenges, teams often need to Adjourn (Tuckman & White) and begin a new life, most probably in a new team.

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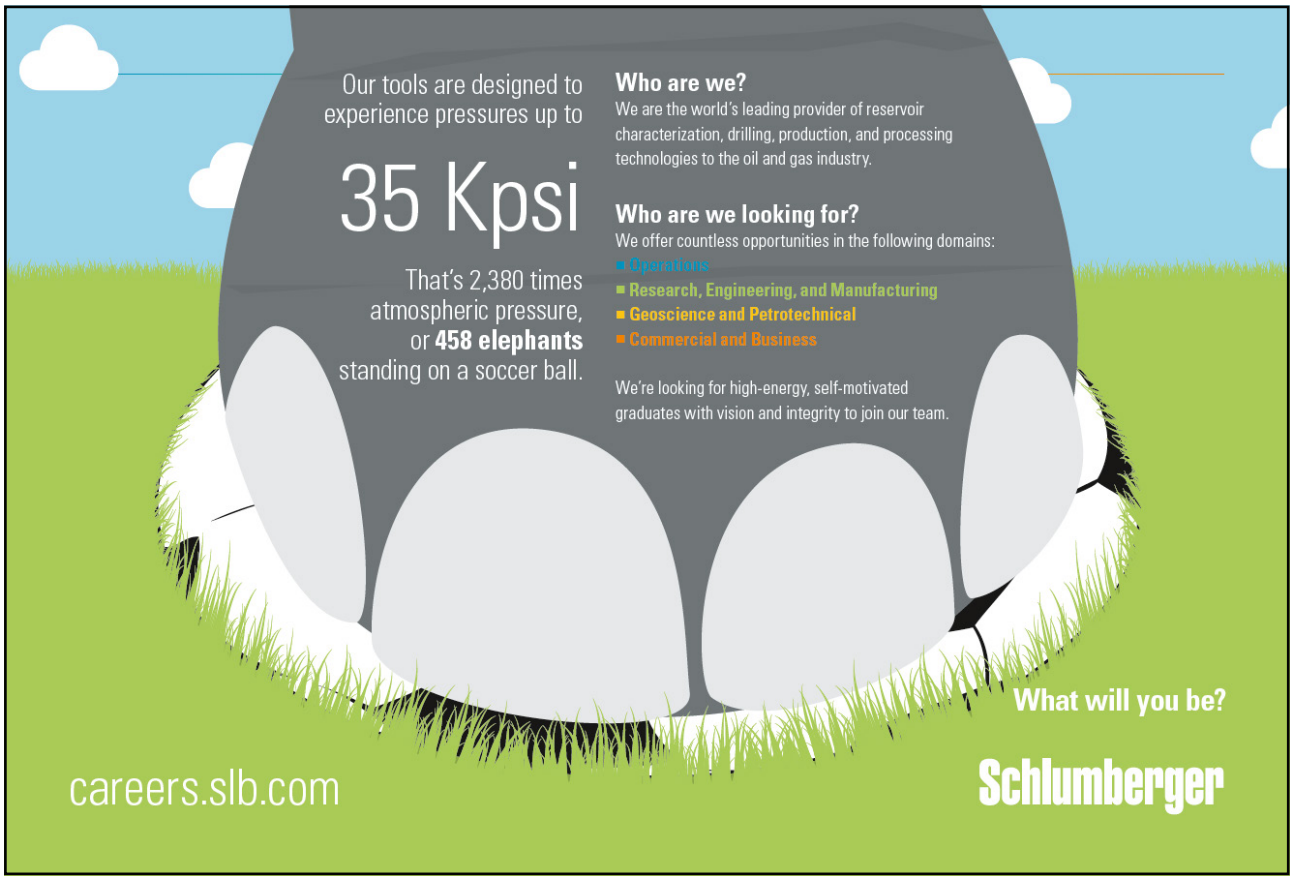
In the sub-titles of the Tuckman model, you'll see the Wright Consultancy's way of defining the stages (grey boxes). Form is similar to dogs meeting on the street, hence the label **Ritual Sniff**.

Perform is, to me, a phase where the team is constantly producing results that surprise the team, enjoying the experience and hoping that it will last. I called this phase **Mature Synergy**. While there may be early glimpses of synergy when teams start working together, aided by politeness and manners, Mature Synergy is sustained through good team processes, even in times of crisis.

Form/Ritual Sniff

The first stage of team development is the coming together of 'strangers'. The objective of each team member is to get to know the others and to create a good impression in the eyes of their fellow team members. There is a high level of politeness and listening that may not be seen again until after the Storming phase. Conflict, or anything that would create a sense of tension among the team members, is avoided. The team can give the impression of being productive; however, if the team is given a challenging task, it will in all probability fail to deliver.



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Case study 8 – Form looking like a mature team

I was facilitating a new team who were in the early days of teamwork and they were experiencing excellent results, assisted by politeness and their determination to impress each other. When asked to identify their position on the team development model in terms of Form, Storm, Norm or Perform, they selected Perform.

After five days of team training, the team believed, through having to manage complexity and deal with conflict, they are only emerging from Form and moving towards Storm. The team's understanding of the challenges and teamwork itself had increased significantly in a short space of time and with it came a more realistic view of its own maturity.

Norm/Functional Team (Silo)

After Form, the team begins to settle into a routine; however, the members have a high focus on task achievement and operate as individuals adhering to their functional roles such as operations, marketing, finance etc as dictated by their job titles. As routine establishes itself, the members can predict how each will behave in specific circumstances and because they begin to anticipate one another's behaviour, they stop listening. Alliances and unwritten rules begin to form. For example, "I will not criticise your area of responsibility if you don't criticise mine". Without realising it, the team is getting ready for Storm. A team may never get to Storm because there may not be enough passion around the goal (it's not worth fighting for) or the conflict that does arise is suppressed early.

Case study 9 – Norm without reaching Storm

I worked as team facilitator with a management team for almost three years. The team would not move away from its purely functional roles. Members avoided conflict and remained extremely polite to each other at all times. As a result the team became stuck and was failing to reach its full potential.

On investigation, I discovered that the previous chief executive had been ousted by a revolt by the senior management team and this had caused great upset. The board appointed a new chief executive who was 'a safe pair of hands' in order to avoid a repeat of history. The unwritten rule of the team, post revolt, was to avoid conflict and this was made easier by a 'nice' CEO. While the membership of the team changed over the years under the same CEO the team became stuck on the Norm. Without the desire for change or dissatisfaction with the status quo, there was very little the facilitator could do to change the team's behaviour and therefore to help the team to achieve more.

Storm/Dis-functional Team

The stage of Storm arrives when the team is familiar with each other and sufficiently passionate to care about the team, team goals or their status within the team. Some individuals may wish to exercise more control over the other team members. The team members begin to challenge ideas and assumptions and with this tensions grow within the team. At the Storm stage the team has not differentiated between healthy and unhealthy conflict and so a mixture of personal conflict and conflict about goals and processes emerges. This process can last a short time or become the standard *modus operandi* for the team's life. It can be a painful process and can lead to high team turnover and energy being wasted on conflict about who has control of the team and its resources. The Storming stage, though part of the maturing process, frequently demands that the team seek external help.

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(Re–)Norm/Multi-functional team

The team becomes re-focused, even passionate, about the common team goal. There is an understanding that the team's goal is more important that any individual within the team. It is hoped that in the maturing process, especially through storming, the team will have learned to appreciate people's differences and deal with conflict in a positive way. To be successful at this stage, the team needs to learn good problem-solving skills and to take on roles beyond the normal functional (job) roles; roles such as communications, creativity, innovation and planning. This enables the team to start multi-tasking and with that good results begin to show when tackling complex tasks, giving the team encouragement to perform even better

Perform/Mature Synergy

This is a stage that not all teams reach, that is, consistently achieving high performance (synergy) and occasionally breakthrough (setting new benchmarks) performance. In the next few chapters, I will suggest some rules, skills and process to help teams reaching the Perform (Mature Synergy) stage on a sustainable basis.

If you were a fly on the wall observing a Perform team, it looks almost like a Form (Ritual Sniff) team with the significant difference being a higher level of team skills. The team achieves the task without fuss, making task achievement look easy. Conflict is seen as a positive energy. Leadership (taking responsibility) is demonstrated by the whole team.

This stage can be difficult to sustain; the team will often slip back to earlier stages as the team begins to experience routine and become bored or under challenged. To prolong this phase, it will be necessary for the team to revisit the team's objective, ground rules and the role allocation among team members, hopefully the team emerge from this with new enthusiasm and challenges.

Adjourn/Adjourn or Renew

In the age of short product cycles and fast-changing technology, teams come to a natural end and need to be disbanded. This is common in the software and technology industries, where the end of the cycle is marked with a 'wash up' meeting. That is, a recording of the learning experience and, hopefully, a celebration of success! The purpose of the 'wash up' meeting is for the individuals in the team to bring the learning from the experience to the next team event.

If the team is staying together it is often time for renewal and challenging the goals, ground rules and assumptions. The temptation is to say "if it ain't broke, why fix it?", however in teams there is a need for re- evaluation and new challenges. If the team does not take this step is will be adjourned by external forces.

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Blake Mouton & Tuckman

You now have in the grid, with its bolt-on(s) from Tuckman a powerful cultural model, without the cultural naivety. Where you start on the grid as a team or an organisation will have a significant influence on how you approach the team building process and the distance to be travelled on the team journey.

2.4 Summary of Chapter 2

The milestones (**Fig 2.1** – repeated) move through from understanding of the culture, basic team mechanics to predicting success and on to achieving high performance (synergy) through sound processes. *See Chapters listed below.*

Understanding the culture in which your team sits is important to defining where you start and to predicting some of the milestones and sometimes road blocks you may meet along the way.

The team maturing model will also allow you to recognise if the team is moving towards high performance at a satisfactory pace.

In Chapters 3 to 7 the book will begin to dispel the myths and embrace the realities of teamwork for reaching high performance.

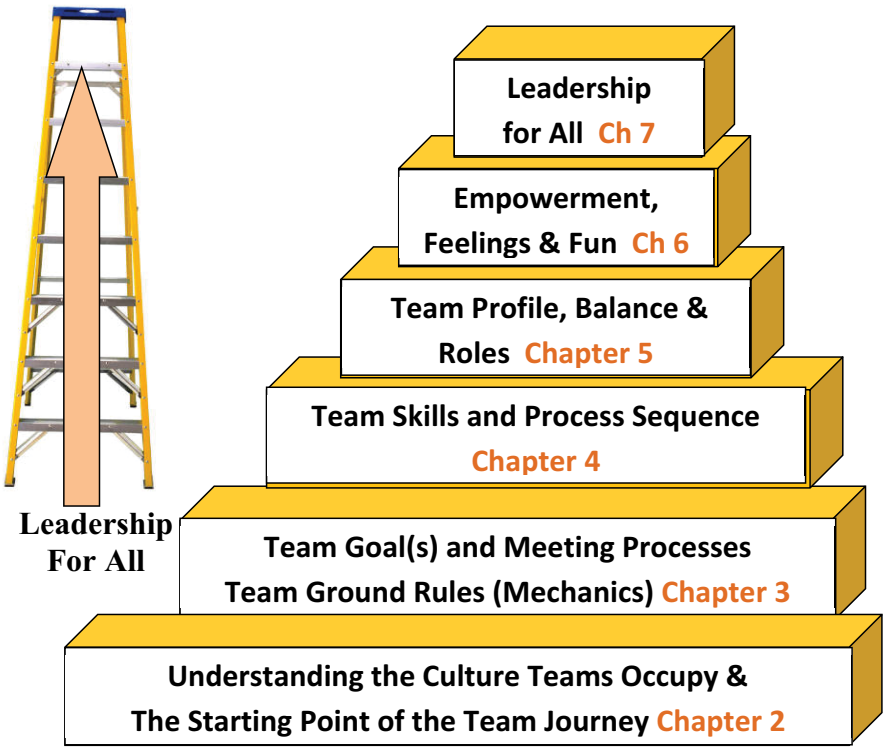

Fig 2.1 repeated

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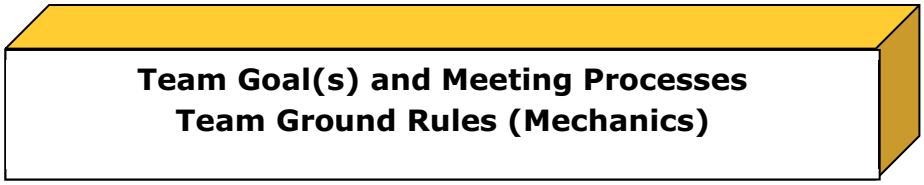
3 The Basics, Including Meeting Processes



This chapter deals with the basic skills for teamwork including meeting skills, which play a significant part in a team's success. However, good meeting processes should not be confused with good team skills as teamwork operates far beyond the meeting room and meeting processes.

The most important starting point for any team is the defining of the team goal. It is the team goal that provides the 'glue' for the team's cohesion and enables a diverse group of people to come together for a common purpose.

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3.1 Team goal

If I return to the team definition; **a team is a group of individuals who are passionate about a common goal**. As the team goal is a key part of the team's identity and the source of the team's passion, it is important for the team to establish its purpose (goal) early in the team's formation.

The team should choose high-performance goal(s) that have the hallmark of breakthrough performance. Breakthrough performance may be defined as a level of achievement that sets a new benchmark for the business or for international comparisons. New teams are generally modest in their aspirations, whereas maturing teams are ambitious and when underpinned by talent and good processes can achieve exceptional results. The chosen goal should inspire the whole team and create a sense of passion for the achievement of the goal. Devoting time and energy to this task at the start of the team-building process is very important. In fact the team goal should be revisited at least annually as the team and its processes mature.

Team purpose and culture on goal choice

The goal should sit well with the culture and purpose of the organisation. For example, if you belong to a team of volunteers undertaking unpaid work, the goal will focus on values and relationships.

If you are part of an innovative team in a cutting-edge technology industry you might have a team goal around generating and converting ideas into market-leading products.

If you cannot find a team goal to be passionate about why bother with the team process? Too many 'teams' exist because they exist. What I mean is, they have no purpose and often undertake work that can be managed by a competent individual very well without the complexity of the team process.

Case study 10 – Product cycle and the Sigmoid Curve

I worked for a business that made rear view mirrors for the car industry called Donnelly Mirrors. In choosing the organisation mission statement, the senior management team avoided the word 'mirror', recognising that technology could change and so its mission was to be **world market leader in automotive rear vision**. There was a clear belief that at some future date this may not be delivered by mirror technology. This compelled the company to invest in new technology and creative processes while at the same time excelling in automotive mirrors.

The other element that kept the company fresh in its thinking was to recognise that it was in all probability at the end of its life cycle of its current products. This assumption helped the businesses to invest in identifying the next business model. It was years later that I recognised that the company was behaving as if had understood the significance of the Sigmoid Curve.

Almost 20 years later, when reading the 'Empty Raincoat' by Charles Handy (published 1995) I discovered the Sigmoid Curve, which described the life cycle of products, businesses, even empires. It was then I realised that businesses and teams needed to challenge the businesses and 'future thinking. The strength of the curve was to assume you were at the top of the product cycle and you should now invest in the next business model.

A good description of the **Sigmoid Curve** may be found in Peter Dalgleish's You Tube video.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJmvTJ4VSxo

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3.2 Team ground rules

We encourage each team to generate a set of ground rules for the operation of the team in terms of task allocation and working methods (the team's behaviour). Newly formed teams tend to produce very task-driven rules and neglect the soft rules, pertaining to people or behaviour. Mature teams tend to have a balance in the rules between task and people/behaviour rules.

The ECG (electro cardio graph) illustration of the team's pulse

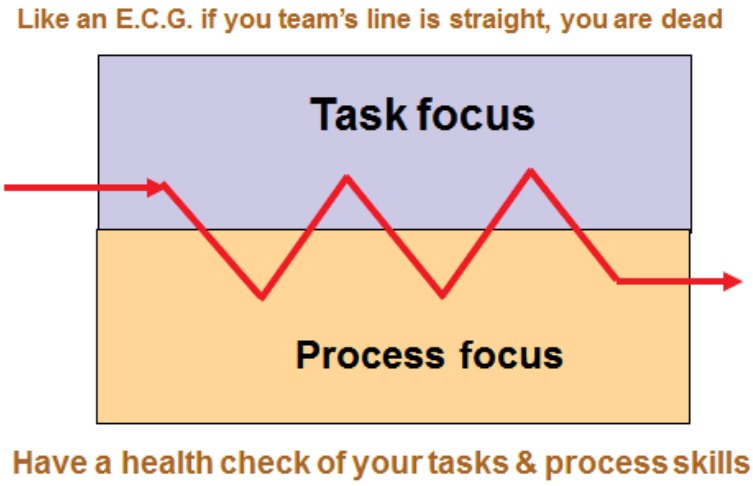

Fig 3.1 (source: unknown)

If the team is only **task focused** it can become a very dry affair (like eating Weetabix without milk!). If the team is all about **relationships and feelings**, setting task achievement aside, it can become like a group therapy session.

Striking the balance so that the team's ground rules aid production (task) and behaviour (how) is important in developing the maturity of the team and delivering results.

Suggestions for generating ground rules:

1) Ask the individual members of the team to reflect on their experiences of the team at work and suggest what the team needs to do to be effective. Sort the items into Task Items and Behavioural Items
2) Ask the individuals to pool all their suggestions, without any evaluation
3) Now ask the team to reach consensus on four to six key rules that will sustain the team
4) You may take the option to allocate responsibility for specific rules to specific team members and/or one individual team member to take responsibility for publishing and reminding the team of the rules

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The list of rules for a new team should be regarded as a *draft* until the team has a significant level of experience against which to test the team ground rules. Experienced teams will review the ground rules for effectiveness and/or relevance at milestone dates (say every six months to one year).

Example of team ground rules

- Establish a clear task objective
- Engage the team in generating ideas and suggestions before evaluating ideas
- Allocate tasks and responsibilities for all team members
- Show respect by listening, by empowering each other, sharing leadership and delivering on promises
- Review success and failures to learn for the future
- Have fun and celebrate success

Case study 11 – Ground Rules for a church leadership team

It will come as no surprise that the word **respect** featured high on the church leadership team's ground rules. Over time, the church leadership team replaced the word respect with the word **honour** as it was well grounded in scripture. In a practical sense the members became good at giving feedback to each other and in their definition of honour they included "Not criticising or bad mouthing another team member, but to deal with all issues within the team feedback/review process". Their experience underlines the importance, in the early days of any team's lifecycle, of regular reviews of the ground rules and challenging their effectiveness.

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3.3 Team meetings processes

There are underlying rules for bringing people together to meet. Before calling a meeting, it is valuable to consider:

> If the meeting is about information sharing and this can be achieved adequately through other forms of communication, there is no need to meet.
>
> If the meeting purpose is simple and an individual is quite capable of completing the tasks on their own, why engage the team?

Most people are busy people, so ask yourself, "Is this a good use of each person's time?" before you assemble the team. On occasion it is good to get the team together to network, encourage each other, to celebrate and have fun; however, wasting people's time and boring the team is inexcusable. The Meeting Cycle illustrated in Fig 3.2 (source: Wright Consultancy) is provided to give emphasis to Value Added activities before, during and after the meeting though purposeful agenda, effective chairing and commitment to action.

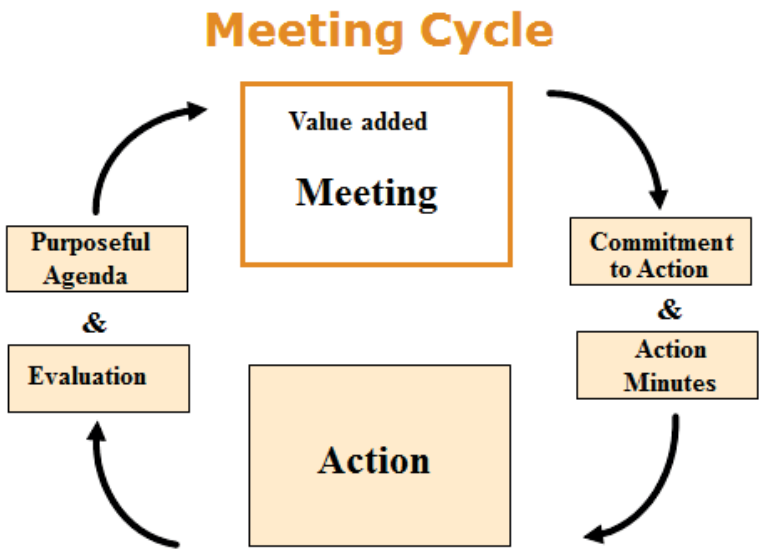

Fig 3.2

To avoid wasting time and, more importantly, to ensure meetings add value, I have set out **eight good practices** for effective meetings listed in points 3.3.1 to 3.3.8 below. The practices, if applied properly, can achieve up to an estimated 50% increase in productivity on meeting time and task effectiveness (source: Wright Consultancy). A lot of the good meeting work is in the planning process prior to the meeting event.

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3.3.1 Check the meeting's purpose against the agenda

Purpose should always drive agenda; however, due to habit and sometimes laziness, the agenda sometimes sets the purpose. To avoid this happening, the agenda should always be checked against the original objective of the meeting originators. Drawing up the agenda can become routine – how often have we used the previous month's agenda with the date changed? Depending on the frequency at which teams meet, you should set aside time at key milestone dates to review the success of the meetings and challenge the agenda. Always ask if the meeting is adding value? You'll find a meeting review questionnaire in **Appendix 3 Part 1** (Part 2 is for advanced teams).

3.3.2 Make participants aware of their role based on agenda categories

When preparing a meeting agenda, it is important to define the role you are expecting team members to play at the meeting. We suggest three possible categories that define the meeting participants' roles, namely:

Information items (passive listening)

Discussion and/or problem solving items (engagement)

Action items (taking responsibility)

I call this the **IDA agenda model** (Source: Wright Consultancy).

Here I expand on the attributes of each of the three agenda categories of the model, that is, Information, Discussion/Problem Solving and Action.

I INFORMATION MEETINGS

An **information meeting** shares relevant information on key issues which are difficult to communicate by means other than a meeting.

Example: The up-to-date production figures and the underlying reasons. This can be presented as an information item on the assumption that the team 'needs to know'. The assumption is that an information item does not need discussion nor is it a problem to be solved. It may require clarification rather than discussion.

Time: Allocate time according to the length of the communication (approximately five minutes).

Chair: Allows for clarification questions, avoiding a discussion.

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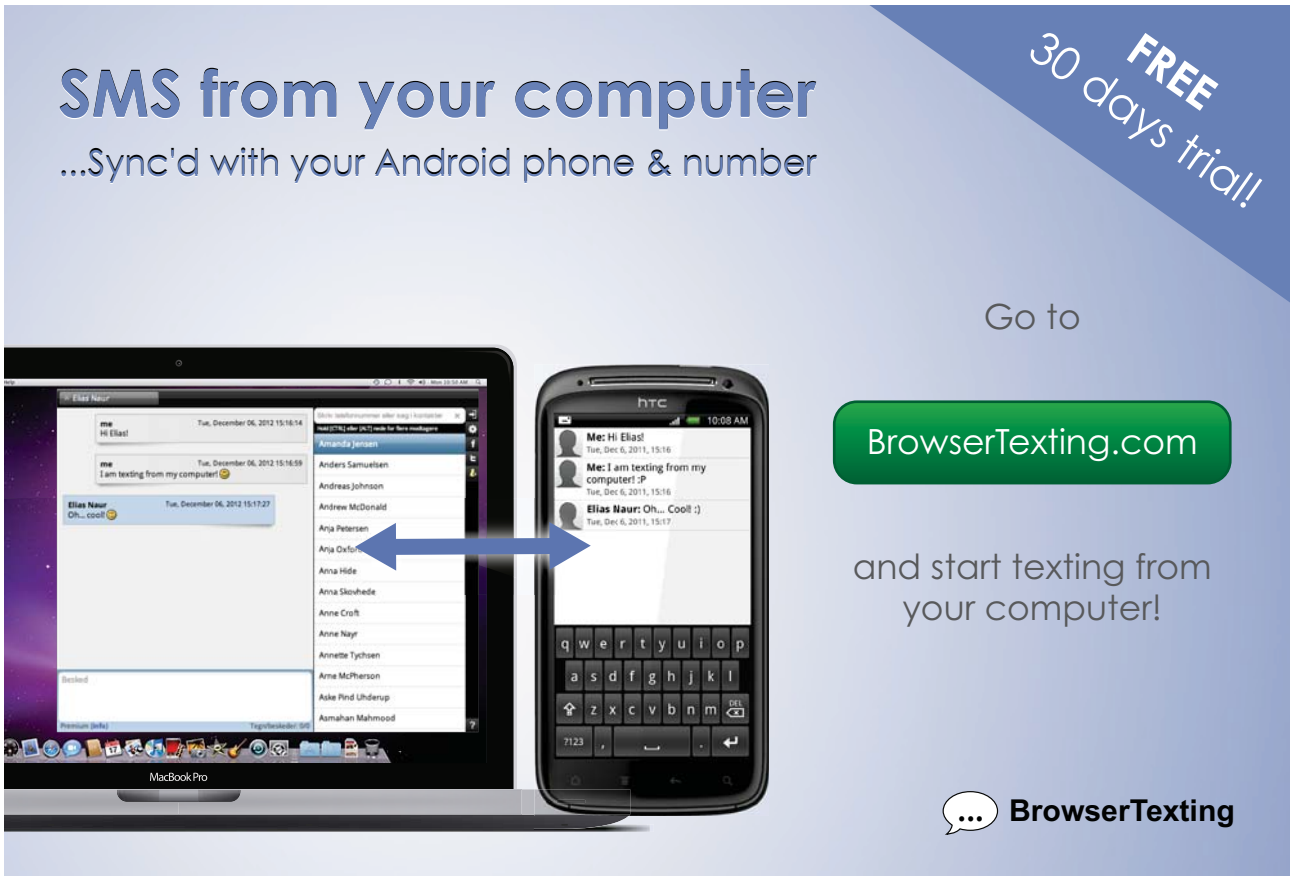
D DISCUSSION/PROBLEM SOLVING

The purpose is to gather a wide range of participants' views on a topic through discussion, aiding problem solving and/or decisions being reached. The Chair would preferably seek consensus and the commitment of the team to action. *More on consensus in* ***Chapter 4***.

Time can be saved by insuring the discussion is informed discussion, therefore it is good practice to circulate information before the meeting. In the preparation of the agenda it is usual to state the desired outcome of the discussion or problem-solving agenda item.

For example:

Agenda – Productivity (category: Discussion/Problem Solving item) Purpose Statement: To identify ways to reduce the time taken to have a new customer 'live' on the network system, while being assured of the customer's credit status.



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Problem Solving Tools: It is desirable for the team to have been trained together in common problem-solving tools or techniques such as De Bono's Six Thinking Hats and to have a clear sequence to follow, leading to a decision e.g.

- Clear definition of a successful outcome
- Facts before opinions
- Ideas without evaluation, individual thought before team thought
- Evaluation of best ideas
- Summary and review

Time: Discussion/Problem Solving needs good time, from at least twenty minutes up to half a day or indeed one full day if the issue is complex.

Chair: Leading the discussion using appropriate problem-solving tools and facilitation skills.

A ACTION and DECISIONS

Decision items assume that people are familiar with the topic. If they are not, they may drag the meeting out and repeat what has been said in the past. Decision meetings are appropriate where the topic is well understood. It is possible to break a single agenda item into parts e.g.

a) **Information** – leading to informed discussion
b) **Discussion** – leading to solving problems
c) **Action/Decisions** – leading to action statements and who will own the action

Where high commitment is necessary to implementation it is good to have a high level of involvement of participants in the decision making.

Remember, when asking people to participate in decisions, be clear on the parameters of their influence and your ability/resources to implement the decision.

Time: Short, as most of the work is completed under Information and Discussion/Problem Solving. Say 5 minutes.

Chair: allocates specific responsibilities among the team members for task delivery.

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3.3.3 Operate meetings mainly in Box 2 and Box 3 levels of management activity

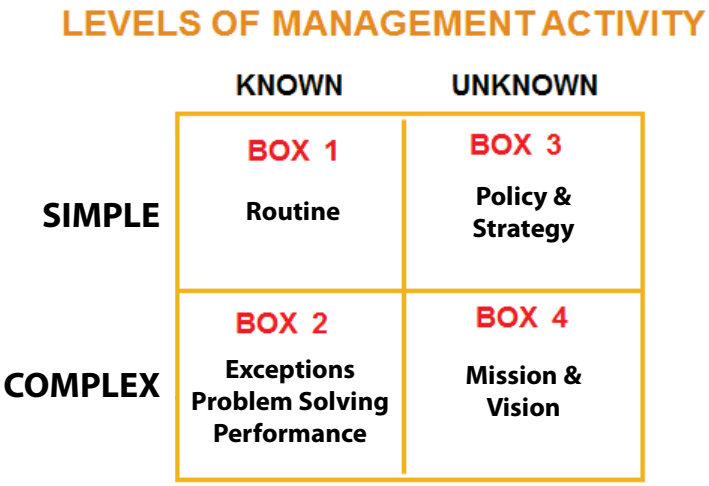

Fig 3.3 (source: unknown)

Box 1 Represents working with known matters that are simple. These can be communicated before the meeting or listed as information items only (no discussion). Such items, while sometimes necessary, seldom challenge the team. On the contrary; the team becomes bored with such items.

Box 2 Represents working with known matters which, contain some complexity. This is the bread and butter of meetings and teamwork. These items should test the whole team's experience and competency. Well understood problem-solving methods should be adopted and documented.

Box 3 Represents working with the unknown and the simple and is an important element of teamwork in that it introduces complexity to the team. This is not the stable diet of daily meetings; it should, however, be visited a number of times each business year.

Box 4 Represents the unknown and the complex. This is where the team needs to challenge the business it is in and what the future might hold. This is the material which generates three to five year strategic plans. It is not the stuff of routine meetings.

3.3.4. Check the agenda for future focus and level of participation from the attendees

Is the agenda past or future focused? While it is recognised we can learn from the past, teams work best on generating future actions. Look at the agendas for the last few meetings you have attended and identify if the time was spent looking backward (history) or to the future. Also assess whether the meetings were dominated by information sharing rather than problem solving.

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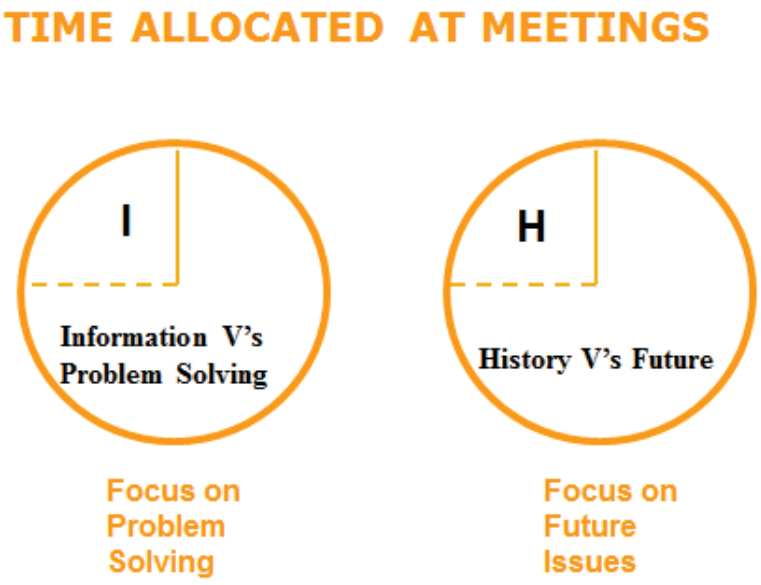

Fig 3.4 (Source: Wright Consultancy)

Examine the example below to assess the quality of the planned agenda.

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Item	Agenda description	Category	Time	Who
Item 1	The up-to-date production figures and the underlying reasons	Info	6 mins	Tom
Item 2	To identify ways to reduce the time taken to have a new customer 'live' on the network system, while being assured of the customer's credit status	Discuss, problem-solve	4 mins 30 mins	Ian
Item 3	To decide on best quotation for upgrading the web site	a) I b) D c) A	5 mins 15 mins 4 mins	Janet
Item 4	Agree date of next off-site team workshop	Decision	5 mins	Chair

Check list questions

Is the meeting adding value and challenging?

Is the time allocated to future needs?

Is there good cross-team participation?

3.3.5 Set the boundaries on decisions and the participation level

As leader, when you bring an issue to a meeting or a team process you need to be clear on why you are asking for the team's participation and what will be the level of influence the team will have on decisions made?

a) **Where high commitment is necessary to implementation** it is good to have high involvement of participants in the decision making
b) **Establishing the level of empowerment** Often team members are confused by discussion items, because their role in the formal decision is not known. The purpose of the discussion and level of impact of the participants in the final decision process needs to be declared via the leader or in the purpose statement.

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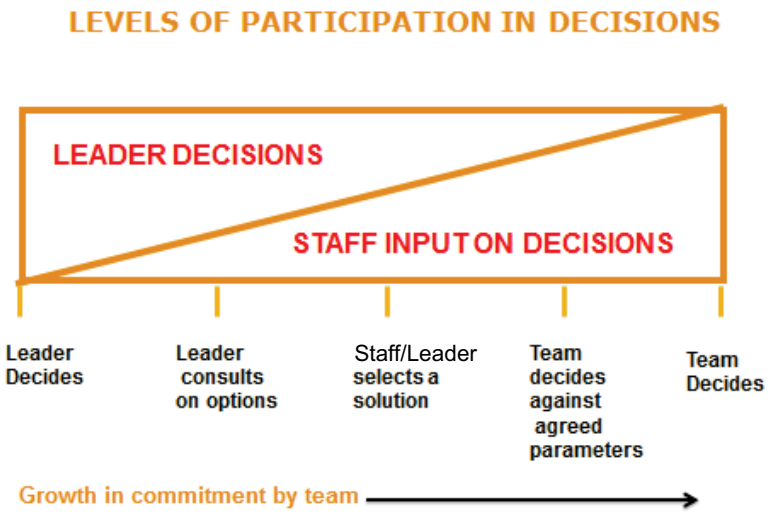

Fig 3.5

3.3.6 All meeting participants can choose to be positive in their contribution

Team members choosing to be positive in their contributions is one of the first building blocks of a team's success. One of the best tools for helping a team in this early stage of its development is a tool called **Interactive Analysis** developed by Rachem, Honey and Colbert. If the **Interactive Analysis** portrayal looks and feels very mechanical, don't worry; the emotional interaction and the skills surrounding the team processes will come in later chapters. Here, the focus is on the basic mechanics of behaviour.

The principle of Interactive Analysis is: Every time a team member says something at a meeting it can have one of three levels of impact, that is:

Positive Contribution Neutral Contribution Negative Contribution

The category into which a contribution falls is influenced strongly by what that participant says, how they say it and when they say it. Some inputs can fit into all three categories.

Positive Contribution

Make a suggestion
Generate an idea
Build on an idea
Acknowledge what someone is saying
Bring in or encourage another person to participate
Share information (facts)
Summarise
Test understanding
Declare you don't understand (open and honest behaviour)

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Neutral Contribution

Give or receive information
Share information (opinion)
Humour (see Chapter 4 on Conflict)
Test understanding

Negative Contribution

Give/share information (opinion or opinionated)
Humour that puts down
Humour that kills creativity or smooths over conflict
Cut people off or shut them out (verbal or non-verbal)
Interrupt
Dominate by talking too much

You may develop your own list; the above are only suggestions.

Non-verbal interventions can have the same impact, such as:

Positive: Acknowledge or smile in encouragement

Negative: Frown, roll eyeballs, laugh at rather than laugh with someone

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To assist your understanding of the idea, we present the table below containing the observed behaviour from a range of meetings (always with the permission of the participants). You are asked to draw your own conclusions form the observations below about the behaviour of four participants.

Participant	Type of interaction	Frequency of interaction	Your summary conclusions
John	Makes a suggestion Generates an idea Builds on an idea Gives information (facts) Summarises Brings someone in	IIIIII IIII II I I III	
Tommy	Gives information (facts) Gives information (opinion) Uses humour Generates an idea Interrupts	IIIIIIIIII IIIIIII IIII IIIIIIIII III	
Sue	Gives information (facts) Builds on an idea Catches others' idea Brings in someone Admits difficulty	II II II I I	
Mary	Seeks clarity Seeks information Tests understanding	III IIIIIIII II	

What would your own profile look like based on your contribution to meetings?

How could you generate a positive profile for yourself at meetings and add value?

Case study 12 – Interactive Analysis

David was an enthusiastic member of the team and threw himself behind both the team and the project. The problem was he dominated the team with constant talk, offering opinions, interjecting with humour and enjoying a debate when the time for debate was long over.

When David was made aware of his interactive profile, he was quite shocked by how much talking he did and how little value he actually added to meetings. He became determined to make each contribution add value or at least be neutral. He also asked a friend in the team to use a 'magic word' that only David would recognise to remind him to stay quiet and listen. This was difficult for David, however, over time the team began to take David more seriously and his creativity was recognised, having been previously buried in a mountain of words.

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3.3.7 Review the meeting processes to learn for the future

The objective is to learn for the future, assessing the team's performance against the team's ground rules. This review and learning process will aid the team on its path to maturity. This is expanded on and developed as a skill under critique in Chapter 4.

3.3.8 Finally, issues action minutes

Issue action minutes, preferably by email, immediately at the end of the meeting. These can be written during the meeting. Displaying the action minutes on a large screen is great way of summarising and testing the team's understanding of the outcome of each agenda item.

It can be useful to resend the minutes with the agenda for the next meeting as a timely reminder of the actions agreed. If the meeting process is working well then most of the actions will have been completed before the next meeting. Poor teams find themselves repeating the listed actions over and over again!

3.4 Summary Chapter 3

Establish a team goal, about which the whole team is passionate

Establish the team's ground rules and review their performance in terms of task and behaviour

Eight good practices for effective meetings

1. Check the meeting's purpose against the agenda
2. Operate meetings mainly in Box 2 and Box 3 levels of the management activity
3. Make sure your agenda adds value
4. Check the agenda for future focus and level of participation from the attendees
5. Set the boundaries on decisions and team influence on decisions
6. All meeting participants can choose to be positive, neutral or negative in their contribution
7. Review the meeting (learn for the future)
8. Issue action minutes

Meetings are not teamwork; however, the discipline of running good meetings is a great starting point for teams.

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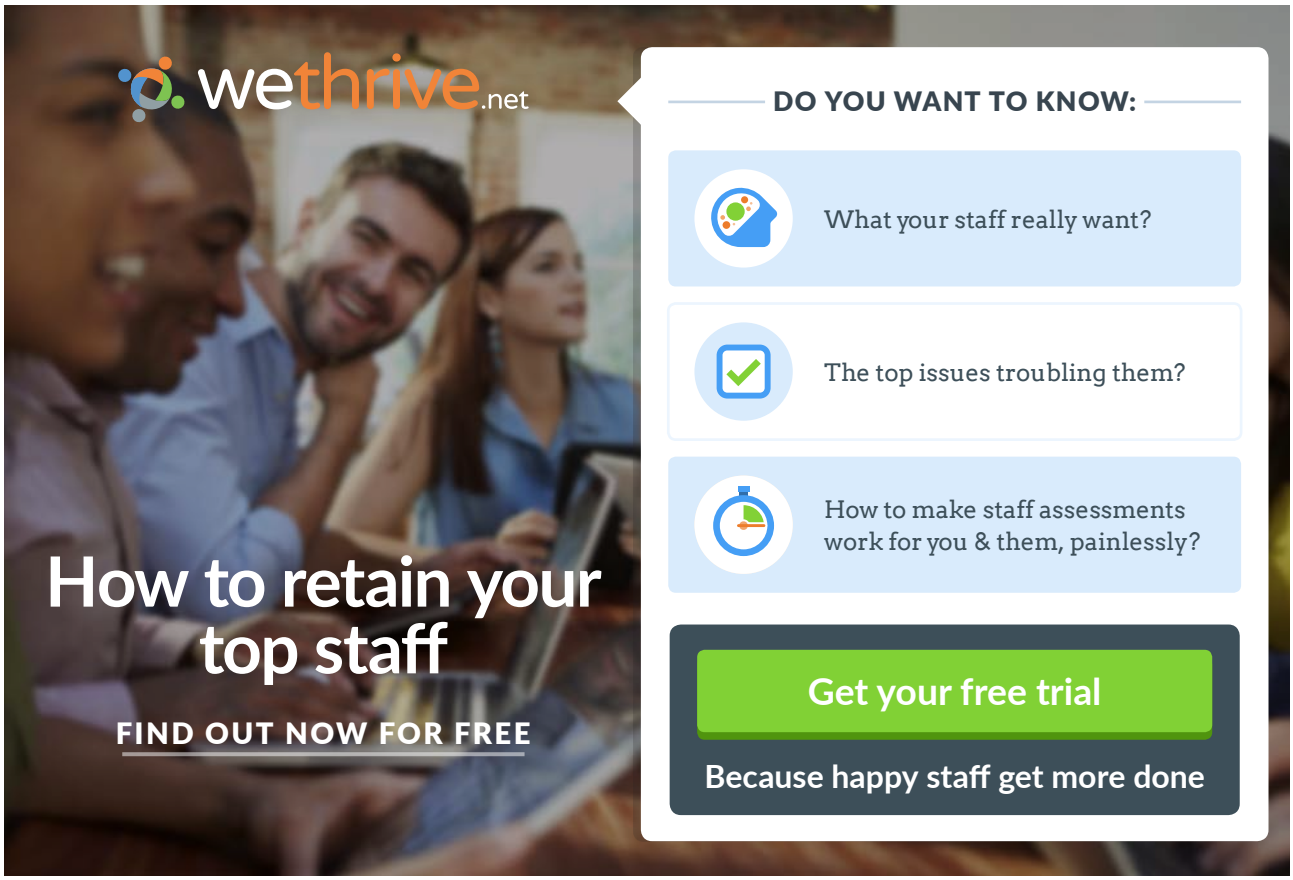
3.5 Myths and realities of Chapter 3

Myth	Reality
A team goal is essential to all teams	Not always. Some teams, especially those in voluntary organisations, may have a strong unexpressed social need rather than specific goal requirements
Having an agreed goal that the team is passionate about will assure the team of long-term success	If the wrong goal is chosen; regardless of the passion, the team will go out of business
Good meeting process and discipline is key to a team's success	While the meetings are important starting point for teams but it is not teamwork. Teamwork is a much more intense relationship than is witnessed around meetings It is in the pre-planning and post-meeting follow-up actions where meeting success is carved out
Interactive analysis will bring benefits to most teams	If the team is mature and already socially aware, the Interactive Analysis will prove clumsy and even set the team back in terms of maturing
People who have an analytical approach to problem solving find Interactive Analysis helpful in improving performance	More often true that not!



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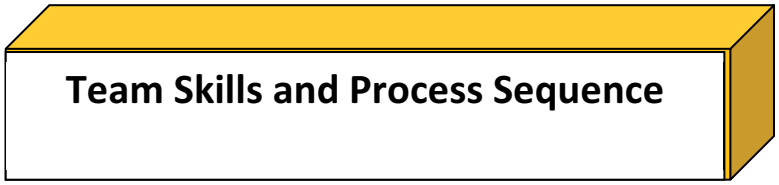
4 Team Skills



Chapter 4 introduces a range of skills and processes that quickens and underpins the team maturing process. The six skills defined in this chapter help the team achieve synergy (adding value) on a consistent basis.

4.1 Team synergy; adding value consistently

Assuming there is a sufficient level of complexity and challenge in the team task, good teams will always produce a better result than individuals would achieve by working on their own. In other words, for complex and challenging projects, the key to the team's advantage over the individual is **synergy**.

The acceptable definition of synergy is that the results of the team are equal to or better than the best individual working on their own. When all the members of the team are committed to creating and implementing the solution, synergy is achieved.

Fig 4.1 represents the team coming together and the complex collaboration that delivers synergy (source: Wright Consultancy)

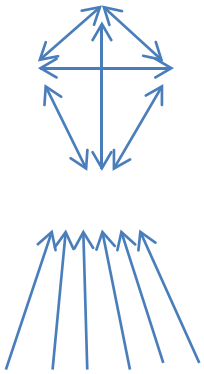


Fig 4.1

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Synergy cannot be guaranteed on every occasion even with excellent teams. In all probability good teams will add value on a consistent basis. It is this consistency that brings pride and enthusiasm to the team. When synergy is not achieved on a consistent basis, it will impact on team morale, leading the team members to lose confidence with a consequent falloff in commitment and performance. The leader may lose faith in the team and make more and more decisions on his or her own or start working with the stronger team members on a one-to-one basis. This sometimes leads to the establishment of a team within a team, causing resentment.

In my experience, weak teams which fail to achieve synergy consistently are characterised by compromise. Compromise is a real danger to the team as it sucks the passion out of the team, leading ultimately to failure. Compromise creeps in by voting on problems, rather than decision-making through open communication and debate leading to consensus. Voting is a failure to use the intellect and talents within the team. Consensus engages the diversity and talents of the team and with the engagement comes commitment to action.

The objective of this chapter is to present the skills and practices that will ensure teams always add value or achieve synergy on a consistent basis. By the time you complete your journeys at the end of this book, it is my hope that you will have a better understanding of the true meaning of synergy in teamwork and achieving it will be the team's *modus operandi*.

4.2 Six team skills

These six team skills and processes will help the team consistently achieve high results

I chose the six skills below because I know they have helped many teams on their journeys to high performance. While the skills may be witnessed in everyday line management, they have a high impact when applied to team processes and team member interactions. The chosen six skills or team processes are illustrated in **Fig 4.2** (source: Wright Consultancy):

Fig 4.2

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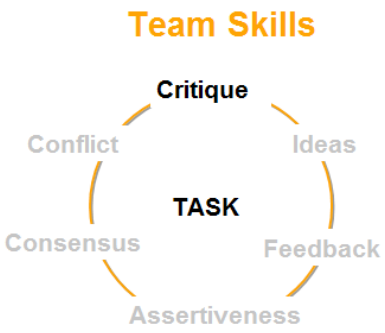
4.2.1 Critique



CRITIQUE

Critique is not defined as criticism but as a review of the team's actions and outputs for the purpose of learning for the future.

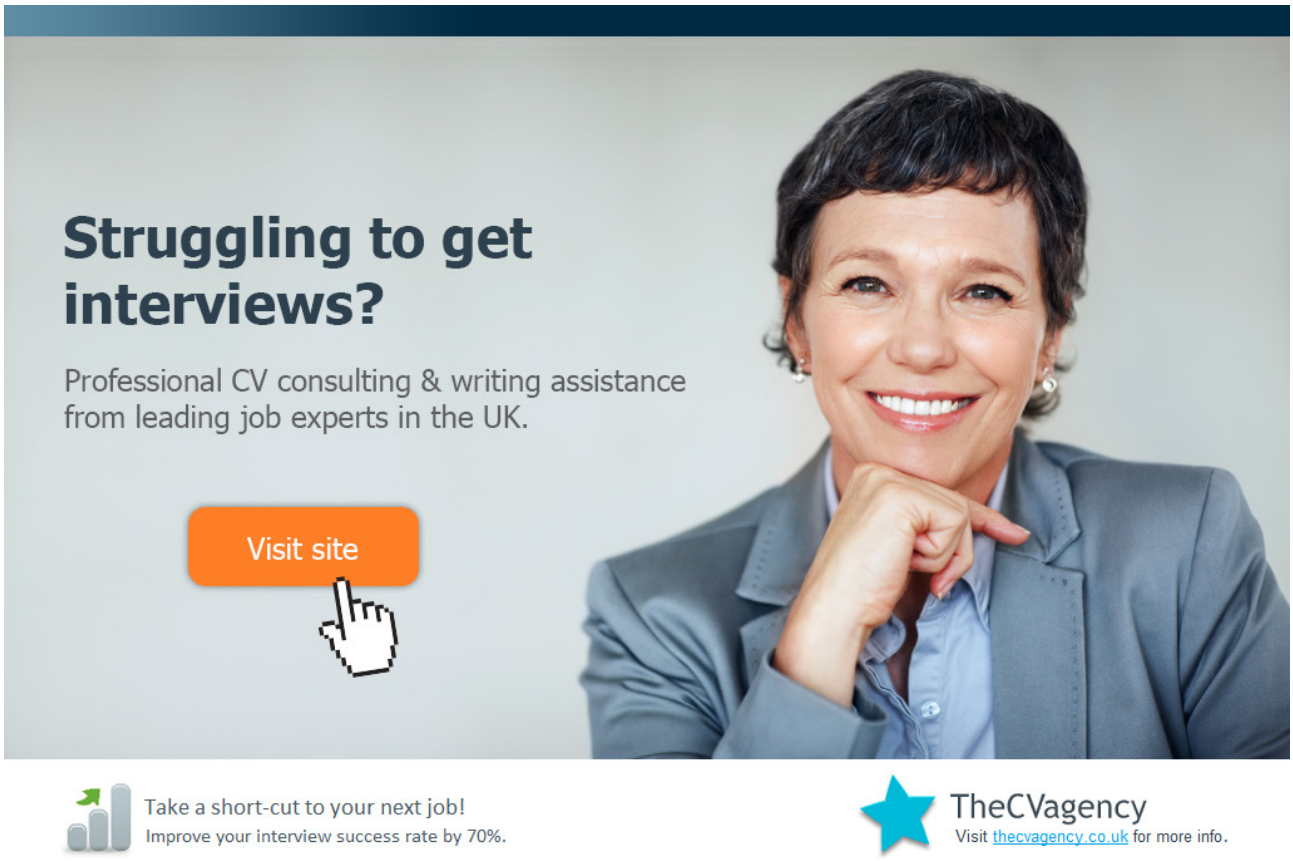
Critique as a skill helps the team mature by creating a state of constant learning.

I recommend that three levels of critique should be applied if a team is to mature quickly. I introduce them briefly below and elaborate on them in 4.2.1.1 to 4.2.1.3.

Concurrent Critique – applies as the team task unfolds, often marked by a short 'time out'

Summary Critique – takes place at task end or at the key milestone dates of a primary task

Evaluative Critique – this is the final and most in-depth type of critique and usually takes place at the end of the project or as part of an annual review or away day



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4.2.1.1 Concurrent Critique – Calling time out

Concurrent critique is best represented by short time outs while the task is being carried out. The critique often only lasts for a few minutes. Good teams will plan these reviews to take place, for example at the halfway mark of a new task. The team seldom calls time out reviews on tasks that are routine or familiar. When concurrent critique is applied properly it can help the team make progress in terms of task and behaviour.

Skills required for concurrent critique:

Know when to call a review/time out that adds value to the team's working. In other words making sure that the time out is not disruptive to the team momentum or enthusiasm. Generally, as part of the team's ground rules, team members are empowered to call a time out when they feel the team is not working or behaving as intended.

Recognise the need for behaviour review as well as task reviews. New teams will generally review only the task and avoid the people element of the critique. It is important for the team to learn to review task achievement **and** behaviour. That is, how the team members feel about the teams working method and level of engagement of all the team members.

Case Study 13 – Test laboratory productivity

A team had the task of generating ideas to deliver higher volumes through the Research and Development (R&D) laboratory to meet product release deadlines.

The team agreed that it would, at key intervals, call time out and review team progress, as suggested in their team's ground rules. The team leader sought a volunteer to call the time outs and manage the critique/reviews at key milestone times during the problem-solving process. In addition, the ground rules stated that any team member could call time out if they felt the team was failing in its objective or that the level of teamwork being displayed was falling short.

The team, which was familiar with problem-solving techniques, did as planned and was able to describe progress against the task objective during their time outs. However, no one reviewed the team's behaviour in the problem-solving process which meant that some unhelpful behaviour was ignored, namely:

- The process was dominated by the input of three of the team of eight, leading to low levels of participation, including idea generation
- The team allocated very little time to planning the task and idea generation, leading to the generation of a very low number of suggested solutions
- One of the team members excluded the suggestions of others by interrupting and suggesting alternative ideas without giving other team member's ideas sufficient 'oxygen' so they could be explored and evaluated

As a result of these behaviours, five members of the team felt disengaged in the generation of the solutions and uncommitted to the implementation of the team's plans for the R&D lab's productivity. Consequently, the final solution ended up being a poor compromise with low team commitment.

The impact on the lab was that it lost two weeks of productivity due to the fact that the solutions put forward by the team were not based on the full input of the members. The team had ignored in its concurrent critiques the behaviour element of the team's functioning and focused only on task issues.

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4.2.1.2 Summary Critique – Takes place at task end or at key milestone dates

In the software industry, summary critique is often witnessed at end-of-project reviews and is referred to as a 'wash up'. The objective is to capture the learning points by posing questions such as:

- What was good about the team and its activities?
- What did the team learn from the process?
- What would the team do differently if the team had to repeat the task?

For some teams, summary critique is applied at the end of meetings. Frequently it is the last item after AOB (Any Other Business). In the meeting environment the summary critique can be managed in two ways:

A short three-minute review with each participant sharing how they felt, that is, what was good and not so good about the team process. To achieve this within the three minutes, there should be no comment (verbal or non-verbal) by other team members; the person's views are simply recorded during the feedback process. After the meeting it is up to the team leader to decide on the appropriate actions to address the issues raised by the team before the next meeting.

Longer reviews that last from an hour up to a whole day. These reviews are sometimes known as **milestone reviews**. The meeting process needs, at key moments, a serious, in-depth review of the **what** (task) and the **how** (behaviour). These reviews can be facilitated by someone from outside the team as the team leader needs to be part of the review process rather than controlling it.

Often a team questionnaire is useful and one is suggested in Appendix 3. The questionnaire is in two parts, that is, Team Task Review and Team Behaviour Review. To avoid 'group think', it is advisable for the individual team members to complete the questionnaire before sharing the results, thereby encouraging individual thought before collective thought.

Case study 14 – Accelerated team maturity through excellent critique

A software team with an eighteen month project team life cycle laid down a number of review processes with the objective that the team should achieve high performance quickly. The team adopted a number of good practices:

- Ground rules made provision for a complete review process and allocated a team member to oversee the review process on behalf of the team
- Time outs were a feature of the team. In addition, it was acceptable for a team member to declare they did not understand and seek a time out review
- The three-minute summary critique was adopted

As a result of the thorough critique process it had put in place, the team evolved into a mature, high-performance team within six months. A key to its success was that members no longer made assumptions about one another's feelings and views because beaviour was covered under the review as well as task performance.

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4.2.1.3 Evaluative Critique – The 'annual' review

This may be viewed as the team's annual 'away day' to challenge the team's direction, ground rules and general processes. An external facilitator may be used for some or all of the evaluative critique. It is useful to include some fun and relaxation into the event without diminishing the importance of the evaluative critique process.

The team should come away from the review process refreshed and determined to sustain high levels of achievement and to identify new challenges for the team and the business.

Case Study 14 – Annual away day output failure

A team of Executive Directors of a large company having had an away day, decided that they devoted too little time to strategic thinking, which was a key part of their role as directors.

As a solution, the directors were asked to devote 5% of their working time to strategic issues and especially to thinking about the future of the business. To kick start the process, Thursday mornings were devoted to strategic thinking; no meetings, appointments or interruptions were allowed on Thursday mornings to facilitate 'directing' or strategic thinking time.

After three months the Thursday morning 'directing' time was evaluated. It emerged that the Executive Directors hated the thinking time and found it difficult. They recognised it as a good idea and an appropriate task for directors, but it was difficult. Isolating time for directing raised the directors' consciousness about the role but produced very little in the way of results.

My experience would tend to indicate that senior managers spend too little time on thinking and strategic issues and that it is a process they dislike, preferring to be in the cut and thrust of day-to-day activities.

Should a team adopt the critique process in all its forms? A wholehearted '**yes**'! This will speed up the team's maturing process and give the it a real chance of becoming a high-performance team.

4.2.2 Ideas

IDEAS

Teams are a great source of creativity and innovation; however, because of a team's possible diversity there is also potential for chaos.

In this section I will suggest a way to instigate a sense of order, without killing the enthusiasm for creativity and innovation.

There are three elements to consider:

The profile of the team and the potential level of creativity or innovation

Understanding process sequences (mechanics)

Letting creativity blossom

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4.2.2.1 The profile of the team and the potential for creativity

This simple profile (**Fig 4.3**) is broken into four major team behaviour types, that is, **TASK** (very results orientated), **ANALYSIS** (attention to facts and detail), **PEOPLE** (enjoys the social interaction) and **INNOVATION/IDEAS** (creative, excited by the possible). While a team member will major on any one of the above, they will demonstrate elements from the other quadrants in their profile as well. Any team can have a balance of all four quadrants (similar to the entire population). However, the job selection process and the nature of the industry (engineering, finance etc) can distort the norm to give a bias within the team, for example, in the finance industry; everyone in the team could fall into the **ANALYSIS/PEOPLE** or **PEOPLE/ANALYSIS** quadrants. This comment is based on observations within a large bank over a seven year period of conducting training programmes where the profiling took place.

By asking each member to define where he or she stands on the two axes in **Fig 4.3** below, it is easy to assess the team's profile balance. In the example in **Fig 4.3**, standing on the East-West axis, the person in question sees themselves as closer to the **tell** side (marked with **X** on the West). On the North-South axis the same person **shares feelings** rather than suppressing them (marked with a **Y**). You can therefore assume that this person falls into the **INNOVATION/IDEAS** quadrant.

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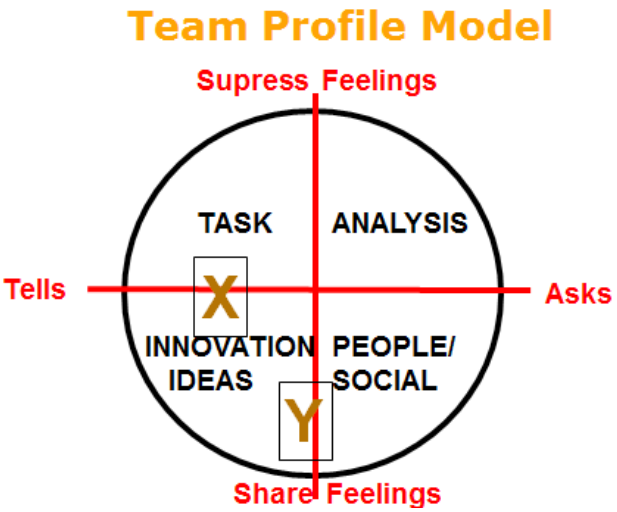

Fig 4.3

Plot the positions on the axes for the whole team to see if the team is Task, Analysis, People or Ideas dominated, which may impact on the team's creative process. Your team may, of course, be perfectly balanced with all four profiles equally represented. I will examine the impact of a dominant style from each of the four quadrants on the creative process.

Top left quadrant – TASK Team

They generally become impatient with processes and want immediate results – the words "Fire, Ready, Aim" could be used to describe them! They devote too little time to creativity and are impatient with evaluation processes, wishing to draw conclusions before generating sufficient ideas or gathering the evidence.

Top right quadrant – ANALYSIS Team

They generally engage in the evaluation process too early, without giving sufficient importance to the creative process. They can be overly negative and can deprive new ideas of sufficient oxygen, preventing them from being explored or developed.

Bottom right quadrant – PEOPLE Team

They generally like the concept of creativity and enjoy the fun of creativity. However, they can be less than thorough in terms of evaluation and implementation, resulting in fewer successful products or services coming to fruition.

Bottom left quadrant – INNOVATION/IDEAS Team

They become excited about the future and ideas. This team is great at idea generation; however, they can become bored with the hard work associated with evaluation and implementation.

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Creative teams will be successful provided, having been creative, they give sufficient time to the evaluation process and the stamina to see ideas brought through to a product or service. This has a good chance of success if the team builds on the diverse talent within the team to aid to capture the creativity, analysis/ evaluation and implementation to give a terrific result.

4.2.2.2 Understanding process sequences

The process sequence is the order of events required to bring the team from clarity of objectives, through creativity to evaluation and implementation.

Fig 4.4 is a simple representation of process sequence.

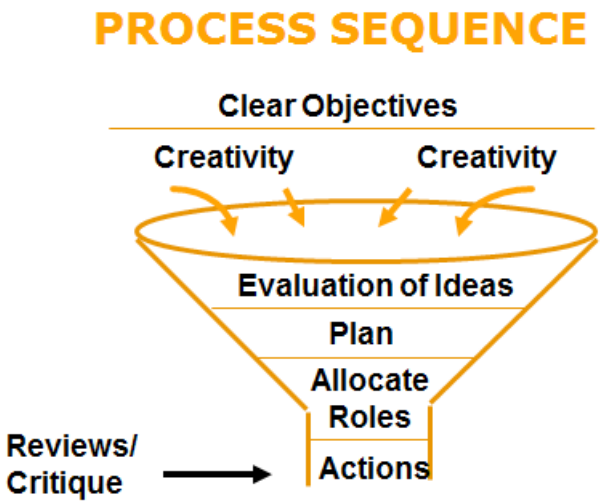

Fig 4.4

Additional simple process sequences are:

- Quality of thought before action
- Individual thought (ideas) before shared thought (ideas); avoiding 'group think'
- Ideas separated in time from evaluation

The best example of process sequence is Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* (1985), with each hat representing a different part of the thinking process. **Fig 4.5.** It is useful for teams to read also de Bono's *Six Action Shoes* (1992).

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Fig 4.5

SIX THINKING HATS – Aids good problem-solving through process sequence

The order of hats is determined by the type of problem being solved. Hats can be repeated or excluded as the team deems appropriate for its purpose.

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A typical order is:

BLUE HAT – **Seen as the sky (Blue).** Representing overview, setting the overall purpose or objective. A key hat when bringing the whole process sequence together (see summary).

RED HAT – **Depth of Feeling (Red**). Only used if there are high emotions around the topic being discussed. Stick with feelings and avoid speech-making, offering opinions or allowing the pessimism of black hat to appear during red hat phase.

WHITE HAT – **Facts and Objectives (White).** A 'fact' is a statement that is not disputed by the team (not to be confused with opinions).

YELLOW HAT – **Benefits from Success.** Represents optimism. Identify the benefits in solving the problem or in coming to a consensus on the topic. Yellow Hat can also be used to carry out optimistic evaluations.

GREEN HAT – **Representing fertility of ideas.** Generate ideas without evaluation. That means accepting 'off the wall', even outrageous, ideas.

BLACK HAT – **Logic or negative evaluation.** Caution and conservativeness; why it won't work**.** A key logical hat when all ideas have been gathered.

BLUE HAT – Hats may be repeated or excluded depending on the task. Blue Hat is good for summarising the events that have taken place under the other five hats.

An undisciplined team will jump from hat to hat without observing any particular order. For example, it will evaluate ideas before they have been fully formed; fail to differentiate between sharing facts and opinions; allow emotions to cloud thinking. Individuals within the team may have favourite hats which they will not change for the whole process. For example, they could be emotional throughout the process, be negative no matter what is said or persist in producing ideas when the team is in the evaluation stage, depending on whether they favour the red, black or green hats.

Teams which understand the Six Thinking Hats can recognise when team members are wearing their personal hats without regard to the process sequence. This allows the team members to safely give feedback, such as, "Anna, you are wearing your black hat today" or "John, you are using a lot of red hat" and so on.

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Case Study 16 – Giving order to chaos

When introducing Six Thinking Hats to a Works Council for a large beverage manufacturer, made up of management and trade union members, the team members were asked what problem they had been unable to resolve, despite working on it for years. The Works Council's ground rules allowed for agreement through consensus only. They replied that in the previous 10 years they could not come to agreement on the issue of making the whole site a non-smoking workplace – this was in the 1990s, well before the Irish government introduced workplace smoking bans into law.

Having explained the work of Edward de Bono on the Six Thinking Hats the team chose the following sequence of hats to drive the consensus discussion.

Hat Colour	Comments and Observations
Yellow Hat	What would be the benefits to the employees and the business if successful in achieving agreement on the non-smoking initiative? A benefits list was drawn up by the team
Red Hat	Because there were strong views held on the matter; emotions were running high. It was important that feelings were expressed early in the process otherwise the team's emotions would prove disruptive to the process sequence Feelings, even anger, were given full expression and this gave a sense of order to the rest of the process as everyone had been given the opportunity to let off steam
White Hat	Everyone was asked to share facts. Opinions were put aside. Interesting facts emerged, such as the fact that 100 years previously no staff member was permitted to smoke within one mile of the factory and was never to smoke while wearing the factory uniform in public
Green Hat	What ideas did the team have to help bring the issue to a conclusion? No evaluation of the ideas was allowed, not even non-verbal evaluation, such as frowning, rolling the eyes, even laughing
Black Hat and Yellow Hat	The team was asked to evaluate the ideas by defining those ideas that would not work (black hat) and those ideas that had strong immediate merit (yellow hat). The top ideas were evaluated. However, in the interest of time, the rest of the ideas were evaluated at a separate meeting
Blue Hat **Outputs**	The outputs in terms of consensus were summarised. The manufacturing unit became one of the first businesses of its kind to have a strict non-smoking policy in the workplace, long before it became law
Blue Hat **Process**	The team was asked to review the Six Thinking Hats process sequence The team fed back that it was amazed at the speed of the process. The team recognised that having feelings and facts expressed early in the meeting allowed the other hats in the process to be addressed in a calm and objective way

4.2.2.3 Let creativity blossom

This is the third element in the IDEAS process for teams.

In the first part we explored the impact of team balance on creativity.

The second part was to understand process sequence with emphasis on creativity.

You are now ready to let the team's creativity blossom.

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Let creativity blossom with four suggestions

Suggestion 1 – Innovative organisations need to put creativity at the heart of the business processes

Organisations that are in the business of innovation need to undertake a number of initiatives to foster creativity, such as exposing staff to creative training led by great creative thinkers. For me this started in the late 1970s through my employment with Donnelly Mirrors Limited, led by Professor Bob Schwartz from Purdue University, USA.

Innovative organisations need to build creativity and innovation into the annual goals of the company. Conservative organisations seek a few creative ideas per employee per year; however, this is nonsense, for in reality, to generate an innovative culture in an organisation you need lots and lots of ideas; the phenomenon is described as the funnel effect (**Fig 4.6** Source: various).

Case study 17 – Creating a creative/innovative culture

The MD (Managing Director) of a communications software company with 1,200 employees had set the target of 1,200 ideas in the next twelve months, or one idea per person. My belief was that for an innovative company, creativity should be at the heart of everything. If this was the case, I suggested the MD should think in terms of generating at least 12,000 ideas. The MD thought this suggestion to be 'off the wall' and didn't change the target and while there was some innovation there were no radical, market-leading ideas generated in the following 12 months

I suggest, to be at the forefront of creativity and innovation, creativity needs to be central to everything the organisation does and not an activity peripheral to the business need.

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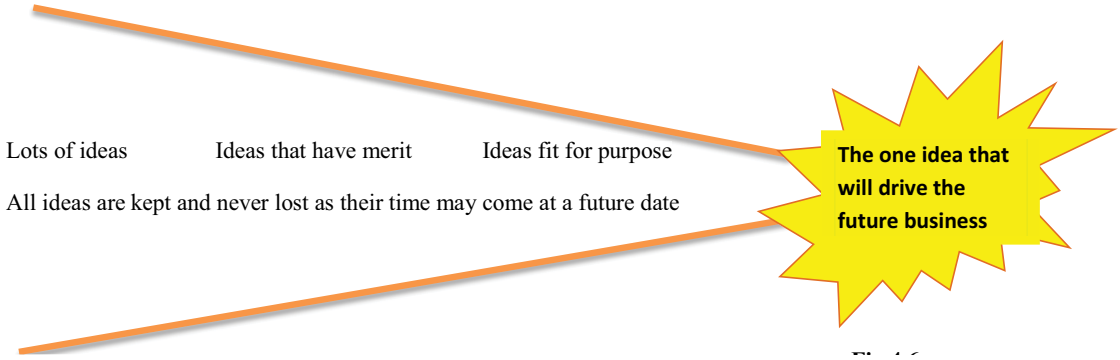

Fig 4.6

Suggestion 2 – Set an objective for the creative process without being too formal

At meetings, in order to break the formal environment, I ask everyone to stand-up and walk around the room in order to let the creative juices flow. I suggest you help the team envisage the solution (benefits) for the next generation product or service. It is the vision that will inspire rather than a dull objective defined in management speak.

The idea in setting the objective is to give a sense of direction rather than restrict the thinking. The secret is to do this without killing the idea generation process by being too formal.

Suggestion 3 – Brainstorming process

Alex Faickney Osborn, an advertising manager, popularised the method in 1953 in his book, *Applied Imagination*. Ten years later, he proposed that teams could double their creative output with brainstorming (Osborn, 1963).

Some brainstorming tips

In order to give the process some momentum, it is useful to ask each individual to generate some ideas on their own for a short while. Independent ideas with lots of diversity will give the brainstorming a boost whereas rushing into group brainstorming could encourage narrow 'group thought'.

Getting the team members to stand up and walk about shouting their ideas out until an appointed scribe has recorded them avoids the dulling of creativity that can arise from a static, formal setting.

Encourage team members to build on other people's ideas with their own ideas; as other people's ideas can act as a trigger for new thinking.

If generating or designing product ideas, for example, a coffee-making machine, think big! Increase the object's size to that of a bus and ask the team members to imagine they are walking about the workings and mechanism as if they were the size of an insect.

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If ideas are drying up, start combining ideas that seem to have no connection, for example, a brick and a wire clothes hanger. Or think about strange associations, for example an ice cream and the London Eye; you may be surprised where the idea could lead.

Suggestion 4 – Evaluation

There are two types of evaluation, formal and informal.

Formal takes place at the end of the brainstorming process and it is helpful if there is a deliberate time gap between the **Brainstorming and Evaluation**.

The danger is that the informal evaluation happens during the brainstorming process, causing disruption to the creative processes. This happens by laughing at ideas and suggestions, giving non-verbal cues to suggest the rejection of an idea; rolling the eyes, ignoring what was said and so on.

4.2.3 Feedback

FEEDBACK

Feedback is a skill that needs to be learnt by everyone from an early age. It is needed in every management or supervisory role.

Feedback is a critical skill to individual member's growth in maturity. Previously under critique the focus was on the team's growth and maturity. However, good critique assumes the ability to give individual feedback.

Feedback needs to be direct and unambiguous. The purpose here is to establish the rules for feedback.

The key to good feedback is to focus on what a person does (behaviour) and avoid feedback on personality. An example of negative personality-based feedback would be to say "You are lazy". This is judgemental feedback that gives the person a negative label and gives no clue as to what they need to do to change.

However, if the focus is on the person's observed behaviour (what they **do**), the feedback would look like:

> "You are missing deadlines for your work on a frequent basis and you seldom offer help to other team members. In fact, the team occasionally finishes the work you have not completed on time."

This feedback allows the individual to consider what they can do to meet deadlines, offer help to colleagues and complete work on time.

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In **Fig 4.7,** the left hand column shows behaviour-based feedback. The right column is the sort of personal feedback to be avoided.

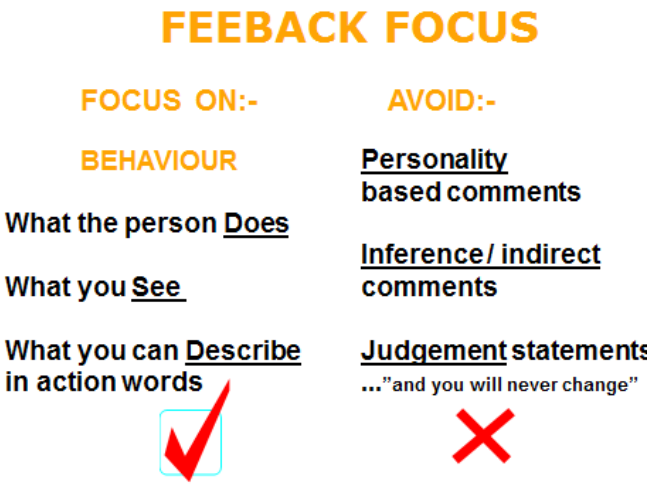

Fig 4.7 (source: Wright Consultancy)

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Giving praise

An important element of feedback is to have a balance between praise and corrective feedback. The saying, "Catch people doing something right" was made famous in ***The One Minute Manager***, a book by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson written in 1982.

By catching people doing something right and praising them, there is a strong probability that they will demonstrate more of the positive behaviour in the future. It is important in any feedback to be specific in describing the behaviour, for example, rather than saying "You are a good team worker"; better to describe the specific behaviour you have observed and would like to see continue; "Thank you for taking the time to train the new team members. You demonstrated great skill and patience".

It is the description of the specific behaviour that makes the feedback both believable and relevant.

One of the best models for feedback is known as **BIF or BIFF** (source: unknown).

> **B is for Behaviour**. This refers to what the person *does* and must be observable. "Thank you for staying back to give John and Ann help with the shipping the product on Friday evening".
>
> **I is for Impact**. This refers to the consequences of the person's behaviour. "As a result, the shipping target was met and you generated a very happy customer".
>
> **F is for Feeling.** The feeling the behaviour provoked in the person giving the feedback. "I was proud of you and the team".

BIF model is sometimes better known as **BIFF** with the last **F** representing **Future. Note**: I avoid the second **F** as I believe the team leader, after delivering BIF, should shut up and listen. Out of the listening, encourage the team member to adopt behaviours and actions (preferably their solution) against specific timelines and review theses at a declared date. The second F can lead to judgement statements or jumping to early conclusions without facts. It can also lead to giving advice too early leading to diminish ownership of the behaviour or the solution.

Using the first three elements of the **BIF** feedback model gives a strong, believable message to the recipient that will create more of the desirable behaviour in the future. See **Fig 4.8**.

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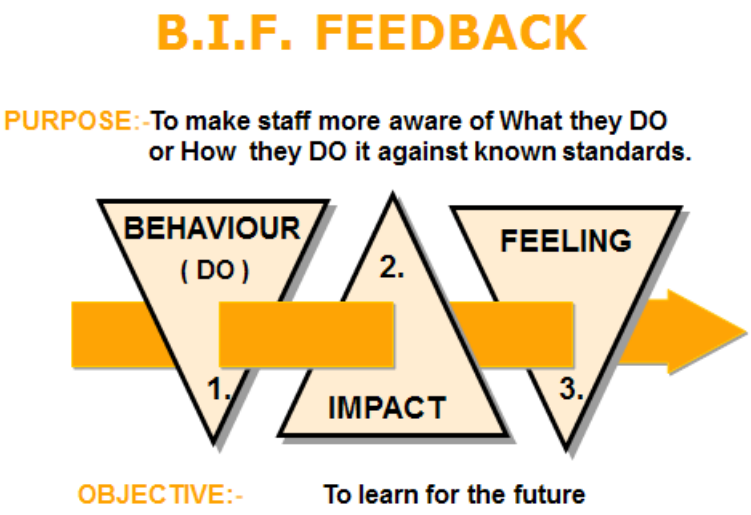

Fig. 4.8

BIF works best for the spoken word; the written message can look clumsy. How the message is delivered in the spoken word (tone, volume and timing/circumstances) are important parts of the feedback process.

Good behaviour feedback (positive or negative) should always be based on observation and fact, the **Behaviour and Impact** elements help to avoid many of the pitfalls of judgemental or personality feedback.

The sharing of the **Feelings** of the person giving the feedback can be the least used element of **BIF** but the most powerful, especially if shared by the leader. This is because most people wish to please their leader. However, leaders often fail to let individuals or team members know how they feel and the team members are left guessing at best and at worst assuming that they are doing fine, assuming the team leader would let them know if there was a problem.

Case Study 18 – Poor record of positive feedback

Leaders are often very slow to give meaningful, positive feedback and this situation was demonstrated to me when I conducted a communications survey in a small manufacturing unit of an international business.

Under feedback, the participants were asked, "When was the last time your manager praised you?" The participants had a choice of i) Last week ii) Last month iii) Last 6 months iv) Last year. The survey questionnaire failed to give the choice of 'Never'! 19% of the participants added in the comment of 'Never' to the survey document. When I asked the managers the question "When did you last praise your employees?" the answers were dominated by the choice of 'Last week'. On exploring the difference between the perception of the recipients and the line managers I discovered the problem was in the manner of the message. Managers confused "Thank you", "Well done" with real and memorable feedback.

The message of real, positive feedback was not heard as it did not describe any specific behaviour nor give positive examples of the consequences of the behaviour nor how the behaviour impacted on the manager's feelings.

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The whole team needs to learn the skills of feedback including all the elements of **BIF** (Behaviour, Impact and Feelings). Leaders need to encourage the feedback process and should, on a regular basis, have one-to-one meetings with each team member with the primary purpose of listening and seeking feedback. The questions I most encourage from leaders are "What do I do as your team leader that you find good and helpful and what do I do that you find unhelpful". The "do" element in the question helps the team participants to focus on the team leader's behaviour. The leader can add "and how does that make you feel?"

So far I have focused on positive feedback process; however, the same rules of the **BIF** model apply to negative feedback. By spelling out the Behaviour and Impact, the objectivity of the process is upheld. Sharing the feelings provoked by the negative behaviour is key to the feedback process, because if the recipient of the feedback ignores the fact that he or she is hurting or offending the team leader or the team members, he or she is essentially choosing to continue the hurt.

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When giving negative or as I prefer to call it "corrective feedback", the key is to stick with the observable facts of what the individual did, the consequences of their action and the feelings it generated in you. No element of the feedback can be disputed if to stick with BIF. For example:

> **Behaviour**: "You failed to bring the weekly statistics to the meeting on two of the last three occasions"
> **Impact**: "As a result this impacted negatively on the quality of the discussion and the decision-making"
> **Feeling**: "I am annoyed"

After delivery of BIF feedback it is important that the team leader listens to what is being said. However, it may be necessary to reiterate the feedback in which case, stick with the message of the original BIF and repeat if necessary.

A team that is skilled and well-practiced in critique and feedback is more likely to reach the high-performance state early in the team's journey.

4.2.4 Assertiveness for all

ASSERTIVENESS FOR ALL

One person's assertiveness can be another person's aggression. My experience is that most people fail to understand assertiveness. They see it as having the courage to speak up and get one's own way.

There is plenty of material written on assertiveness and the purpose here is to set down the fundamentals in terms of rights and respect and its importance to teamwork.

It is important to recognise that assertiveness training is for everyone; the non-assertive and the aggressive, be they exhibitors of high or low aggression.

When assertiveness is built on the two pillars of Rights and Respect you have the basic foundation for building the skill into the team's behaviour.

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Fig 4.9

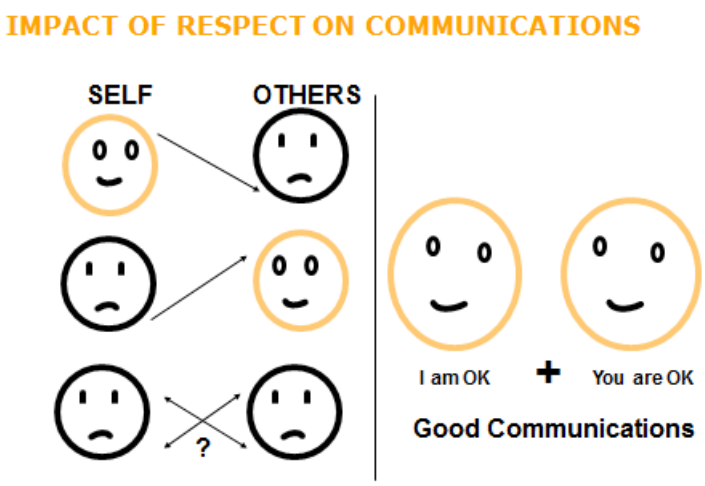
Failure to respect yourself or others sets the tone and the balance of the communications and have particular importance in the close encounters that arise in a team environment. Therefore assertiveness and the behaviours around respect and rights are essential to successful teamwork.

Respect and impact on communications (**Fig 4.10**)

Respect for self and not others can lead to arrogance or aggression

Lack of respect for self, while respecting others can lead to poor expression and denial of one's own point of view (non-assertive behaviour)

Lack of respect for self and others can lead to chaos in communication



Source: In part Eric Berne and TA Harris – Transaction Analysis

Fig 4.10

It is important for the team to be positive about its members and see talent in the entire membership. Rather than using 'if only' statements, such as 'this would be a good team if only Martin was not a member'.

In examining the rights of team members, the team must recognise that only when there is equal weight given to one's own rights and the rights of the other team members, is assertiveness being achieved. Contrary to popular perception, it is not about getting one's way or winning an argument.

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Aggression

A team members who put their rights ahead of other team members or denies fellow members their rights are known as aggressive. Aggressive types can be broken into two groups, that is, high aggressive and low aggressive. High aggressive is very obvious by its loudness, demanding tone and sometimes harsh words, even bad language. Low agressives are often hard to spot in that their language can be pleasant. An example of low-level aggression is, "Tom, you are very good at spreadsheets. Can you complete these calculations for me? It should only take a few minutes". This could be viewed as low level aggression because:

> There was no attempt to establish if Tom was busy and had time. Tom was praised because something was being sought (false praise). The 'few minutes' was understated to assist with engagement.

And if we have been witnesses to the event, we might well see additional low level aggression behaviours at play, such as, tone and body language.

In teams, assertiveness is a skill for all team members and not just the non-assertive and the aggressive (high and low).

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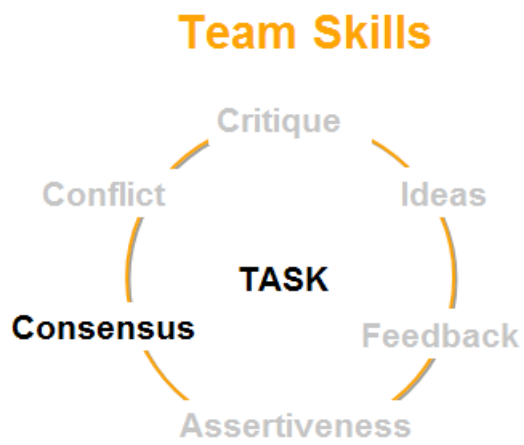
4.2.5 Consensus



CONSENSUS

The enemy of team consensus in decision-making is compromise. Without consensus there will be a belief held within the team that there was a better answer to be found. Because of conflict or time constraints, a compromise is reached sometimes without understanding the long-term implications for the team. Compromise can be acceptable on occasion but if it is the pattern of the team's behaviour, it will lead to death of the team purpose and process.

Skilled consensus is the team's life blood, leading to high performance. See **Fig 4.11** for consensus definition.

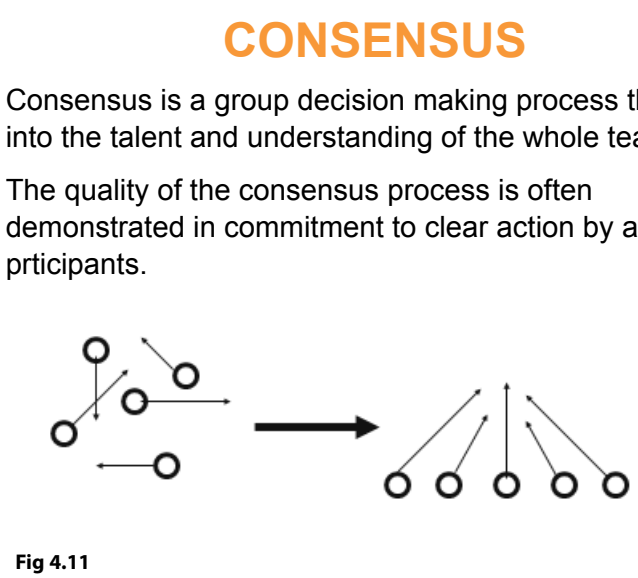


Fig 4.11

The quest for consensus seeks out the best solution to deliver the team's goals. For consensus to work, the team needs to be open to many solutions and to possess a willingness to recognise the best solution rather than the solution that meets any individual team member's purpose. Blinkered thinking needs to be challenged and team members need to recognise when they need to hold or relinquish their position.

Consensus gets things done

When consensus is reached, the implementation of the decision is seldom in doubt. How often in your experience have you assumed a decision had been made and the team had committed to implementation only to find that nothing happened and the topic reappears on the team's action list? Why is this? When true consensus is not achieved, the team members will distance themselves from the decision by inaction or communicating ('gossiping') with employees or colleagues about the decision.

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It is better to deal with this conflict within the team, by delaying the decision process, than have destructive comment and inaction outside the team. Where commitment to action is important, then the extra time spent seeking consensus is time well spent, as implementation through commitment to action will be assured. The team over time will generate the habit of seeking the best solution and of dealing openly with the inevitable conflicts, thereby giving long-term cohesion to the team and its decision-making process.

Many people see majority voting as consensus; however, in my view, it is better to avoid voting as it represents averaging or compromise. What team wants to be known as "average" in terms of performance? In the end, no one team member should block the decision, provided their voice has been heard and they cannot put a better alternative to the team that is acceptable to the team. Most of the committees and teams of which I've been a member seldom vote but seek consensus and that includes commitment to action. This requires good meeting chairing or team leadership skills.

Case Study 19 – Consensus on a mountain top

During an outdoor team exercise there was a debate as to which route the team should take to reach the summit of a mountain. The choice was between the short route which required high levels of navigation skills as there were very few landscape features to guide the team. The alternative route which was longer but which was marked by a boundary fence 80% of the way. The team leader asked for team consensus as to their choice of route. The team was split 50–50 on the decision and the members asked the leader to make the decision. The leader felt this suggestion was not consensus, however the team indicated that they were committed to the leader's decision. The leader choose the longer but less testing route and the whole team ran up the mountain demonstrating full commitment to the decision.

Later, at the difficult part of the navigation, the team became disorientated and time was getting short. Some of the team wished to return to base and avoid penalty points for being late but other team members wanted to push on. The leader decided to press on to reach the original destination, without understanding the team split or concerns. The suggestion to push on only got lukewarm agreement. As a result the team was not committed to the decision to reach the navigation goal. Half the team followed the leader with commitment and the rest dragged their feet, causing the team to physically and psychologically split.

On the first occasion the leader failed to understand the commitment to action by consenting to be bound by the leader's choice. On the second occasion the leader failed to understand the team's views and where the commitment to action lay. Commitment to action is the true test of team consensus. Failure to come to consensus leads to 'foot dragging' (delaying implementation) in everyday business situations.

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4.2.6 Conflict

CONFLICT

In positive terms, conflict should be seen as an energy source for the team. The skill is how to recognise it and tap into the energy source early in the team process for positive results.

In teams, the opposite to conflict is apathy. Most team members and leaders would rather work in or manage a team with excitement and energy (conflict) rather than apathy. Read more Csikszentmihalyi, M., Finding Flow, 1997.

What is Apathy? "*I don't know and I don't care*"

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Many of the ideas from the start of this book have prepared you to deal with conflict, for example:

- Within the definition of a team, it is the passion for a common goal that unites the team. The skill is to have the whole team passionate about the goal. Conflict about how to achieve the goal is seen in context and welcomed
- The team's ground rules allow the team members to remind people of their obligations to the team and each other. I have suggested that the concept of **honour** be added as part of the team's ground rules, to encourage the level of individual respect that encourages dealing with personal conflict early
- Regular and open reviews of how the team is progressing on its goals and adhering to its ground rules must be put into place. Such reviews should take place at milestone dates, this includes reviewing success. This can catch potential conflict early before it spirals out of control
- Rackem, Honey and Colbert's interactive analysis enables team members to make their contributions more positive. The instrument recognises that humour could be negative in terms of put-downs and that involuntary evaluation can kill creativity
- The Red Hat in de Bono's Six Thinking Hats enables the team members to let off steam by giving them an opportunity to share feelings and emotions. Team members often feel safe in providing a feedback description of the hat the team member might be displaying during an exchange of views, for example, "*Tom, you are wearing a lot of Red Hat today*"
- Having the key skill of feedback-giving enables team members to give feedback on behaviour and not the person. The skill also enables members to express their feelings. It is safe to share feelings, including anger. No one can deny your feelings. This prevents personal conflict building up within individual team members
- Assertiveness for all is an important skill for recognising potential conflict in high and low aggression
- Direct and unambiguous language is also important. For some teams in the early stage of formation I recommend only using the word 'we' when celebrating success and to use the words 'I' and 'you' when talking about performance. For example, a team member may be saying 'we' are not doing very well 'we' need to improve. It is much better when team members say "**I** believe the team is underperforming and here is what **I** am willing to do; however, I am not happy with…". Being specific with what team members are doing or not doing is important. This is expanded upon in Chapters 6 and 7 of the team's journey to high performance

Personal conflict around individuals should not be tolerated as it breaches the respect ground rule; however, it is acceptable to describe a person's behaviour in terms of what they do or don't do. It is important to remind team members that the team's goal(s) take precedence over individual goals.

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4.2.6.1 Possible causes of conflict within a team

There are many causes of conflict and it is important that the team not only recognise the conflict early, but they must be aware of the underlying cause. The leader needs to be skilled to harness the conflict for the common good and to uncover the underlying causes. Where the conflict involves a number of team members it can be dealt with by the team as a whole. If there is a sustained pattern of conflict across the team, then it may be a good time to revisit the team goal/mission and the general ground rules. If it is one individual team member on a repeated basis, then it will require direct intervention from the leader with that individual outside of the team.

Where the conflict is personal or the result of a personality clash then it has no place in the team environment and must be brought to an end. If this personal conflict is sustained conflict, this may mean the departure of a team member from the team, as the team's ground rules, to which the individual and whole team signed up, must be upheld.

Where the conflict is about the team goal and the individual feels he or she can no longer support the team's aspirations, this can also lead to the departure of a team member.

The leader must be capable of recognising the individual's right to challenge the team before rushing to any conclusions. The team may be passionate about the wrong business goal, for example. In some organisations, great business people have been 'expelled' to become founders of new businesses to witness their old team/business slip into oblivion.

Teams can become passionate about an out-of-date goal, for example, the print industry. Printers and publishers who have failed to embrace digital media and social media as well as print, may be wasting their time if they think that restructuring alone will help the business survive in the long term.

A team should always challenge their own thinking before kicking a team member out; on many occasions it is the right decision. The skill is in knowing when it is the right decision.

Sigmoid Curve

A video on the Sigmoid Curve was mentioned previously in Chapter 3 when discussing the establishment of team goals. It is reintroduced here to demonstrate that there is a time to ask a team or business to rethink its long term mission and business plans. This challenge starts generally with one person and may at first be mistaken for individual conflict or dissent when it could be in reality the team's or organisation's salvation or key to its future survival.

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My way or the highway

A key issue for many teams is when the team leader is the source of the conflict, especially when it is borne out of arrogance or an opinionated position. Where you have a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or leader with a strong personality or strong views, the team is in danger of turning into a 'Yes' team. The objective for the team members becomes survival and that often changes the focus to pleasing the CEO. This soon becomes a pretend team, with the members adding little value to the decision-making process. Decisions are made by the CEO alone. Eventually, people leave and the team retains those who have adapted to the pretend culture.

Case Study 20 – Chief Executive Officer conflict as team leader

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had in the early days of the organisation rescued the business by strong, decisive action. The business now needed a different type of leadership, one that fostered high levels of innovation and productivity. The senior team members had come to the conclusion that it was a team of one, that is, the CEO. I was invited to facilitate the team to review its effectiveness and preparedness for future business challenges.

Over a number of days, the team was taken through the team facilitation programme including understanding the team profile, building the goal/vision and establishing ground rules for behaviour.

To his credit the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) did ask for feedback, but the team members were fearful of the consequences of expressing how they really felt. The team members didn't want to upset the CEO by expressing views different from his. This lack of feedback only reinforced the CEO's belief that he was a good leader.

As team facilitator, based on the CEO's behaviour during the programme, where he had an answer for everything and placed little value on the other senior managers' input, I declared my wish was for the CEO to say "I don't know" and listen to the input from the team. However, the team members remained silent and failed to grasp the opportunity created, by suggesting business solutions or by giving feedback to the CEO.

Within six months the corporate head office had expressed its frustration at the poor levels of productivity and the slowness of the implementation of suggested changes.

There is a saying that success has may fathers (or mothers), however failure is an orphan. On trying to determine why the team was unproductive, the head office found little or no support among the senior team for the CEO. He was shown the highway and almost half the team with him. The team members thought they were protecting their jobs by not confronting the CEO; however, they lost their jobs for failing to show courage in a business crisis.

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Some additional sources of conflict in the workplace or teams (**Fig 4.12**):

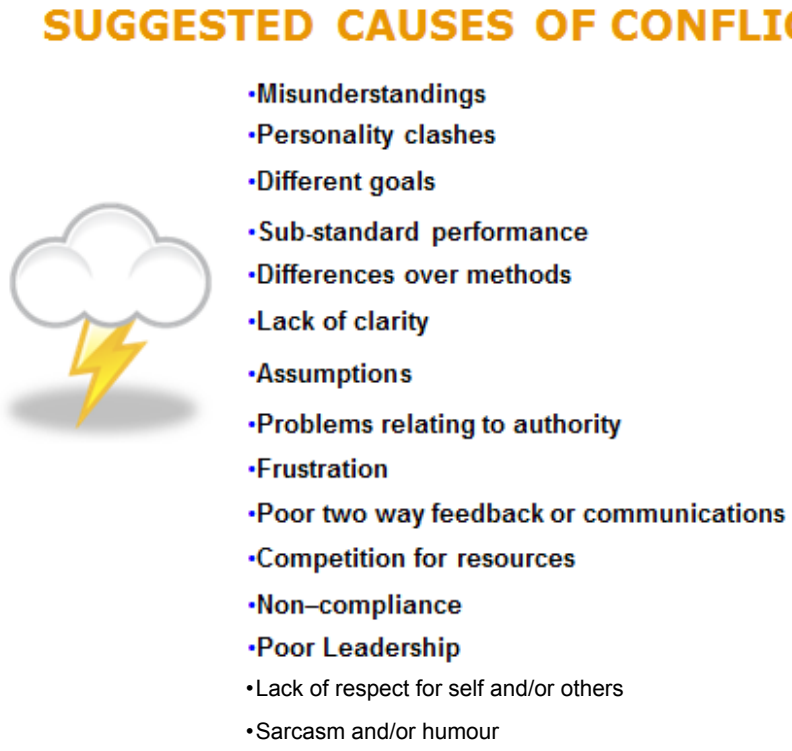

Fig 4.12

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4.2.6.2 Benefits of conflict

The benefits of conflict were outlined in **Chapter 1 under Myth 2** and repeated here for completeness.

Conflict within a team should be seen as positive because:

- Conflict is an energy source of excitement and it should be harnessed for the common good. The opposite of conflict is apathy and this is the real danger to a team.
- Conflict helps the thinking within the team, removing the blinkers and on occasion leading to creativity.
- Conflict increases the level of engagement of individuals and releases the true feelings of team members.

4.3 Summary Chapter 4

It is the added value, expressed as synergy, that will give a team the feeling of wellbeing and confidence to deliver a sustainable high performance.

The chapter introduced the team to a range of skills and processes that brings the team quickly through a maturing process towards breakthrough performance. Without the six team skills illustrated, the team will become stuck.

These six skills, when used by line managers, have particular relevance in team situations.

Critique describes three opportunities to progress the team's maturity, that is: **Concurrent Critique** – calling 'time out' during a task to check task and process against original intent; **Summary Critique** – takes place at task end or at key milestone dates and **Evaluative Critique** – the annual review which has the potential to challenge the fundamentals of the team including its goal/mission and ground rules.

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Generating **ideas** and creativity is what good teams do best. The chapter explored the profile of the team and the potential for creativity within it**.** Process sequence was introduced and De Bono's Six Thinking Hats was given as a prime example of using process sequence to help solve problems. Finally, under ideas, the focus was on letting creativity blossom by implementing the basic steps of putting creativity at the heart of innovative organisations; setting direction, generating ideas through brainstorming in an informal environment and finally evaluation.

Feedback is a fundamental skill for everyone in the workplace. The importance of focusing on behaviour and not the person is emphasised. Behaviour is best described as what you see the person **do**. The BIF (Behaviour, Impact and Feeling) Model enables a clear message of feedback to be given and the opportunity to express the impact on you by sharing the feelings generated by the behaviour. The BIF feedback should encourage the positive behaviours and change the negative behaviours over time.

Assertiveness for all is a key component in generating the respect (honour) required for oneself and others and underpins strongly the team's ground rules for effective working.

Consensus is fundamental to the decision-making process if the team wishes to be assured of achieving commitment to action and the best results on a consistent basis.

Conflict that is generated by a passion for the goal and the team's actions is a positive source of energy. Conflict should be recognised as a source of energy and utilised within the team and not be ignored or smothered. The real enemy of the team is apathy! The real problem arises when the leader is the source of the conflict. Each chapter of the team journey has been encouraging the reader to embrace positive conflict.

4.4 Myths and Realities of Chapter 4

Myth	**Reality**
A team will mature over time	Some teams never mature and never discover what high performance really looks or feels like The skill of critique and feedback is an essential ingredient of the maturing process
The skills required to manage/lead a team are no different for the skills used in everyday management	There are specific processes that are essential to groups and especially teams Skills such as critique, creativity, consensus leading to action and team conflict resolution are primary team skills that need to be added to the tool box if a team is to grow and add value
Creativity just happens in a moment of brilliance – an 'Aha!' moment	Creativity and innovation need to be part and parcel of the business culture if your organisation is endeavouring to be a leader in bringing new products or services to market This needs time and effort and is helped by lots of fun

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Myth	Reality
Team decision-making always lead to compromise	If synergy is a goal of the decision-making process, that is, the team consistently reaches outcomes equal or better to the best individual in the team, then the team needs to embrace consensus in its proper sense (not voting or compromise) A real danger is that the leader becomes the decision maker. Team members will quickly feel that their time is being wasted by engaging in team processes that do not deliver synergy
Everyone can be accommodated in a team for the sake of harmony	The accommodating of contrary goals or destructive personality clashes cannot be sustained in the team without destroying the team It can be a real problem if the person who is generating the conflict is the Chief Executive Officer or team leader

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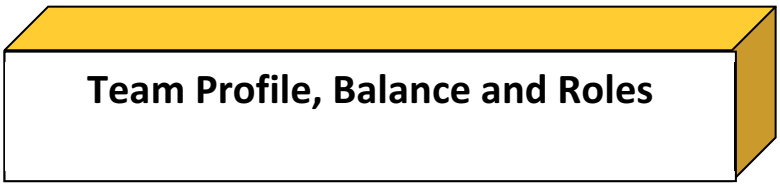
5 Team Profile, Balance and Roles



You will have witnessed in Chapter 1 that diversity within a team was important to the team's strength and in Chapter 3 how team balance can influence the team's creativity and other aspects of its functionality. In this chapter I will examine the profile of teams in more depth.

This chapter will give you the tools to identify the team's profile, balance and the roles team members may adopt to help the team achieve exceptional performance. By understanding the team's profile, the team will be able to predict its future performance against the team's goal. Armed with this understanding the team will be able to allocate additional roles to team members to give greater assurance of team success.

5.1 Potential team profiling instruments

There are many behaviour and personality measurement instruments in the market to aid the identification of the team's profile. I make reference here to five instruments I have used when working with teams, they are:

Personal Style Indicator (PSI) tool, a good example of style preferences fine-tuned by Dr. Terry Anderson utilising some of Carl Jung's theory.

The **DISC type tool** is a behaviour assessment tool based on the theory of psychologist William Marston. Marston's theory centers on four different personality traits and their associated behaviours: **D**ominance, **I**nducement, **S**ubmission and **C**ompliance. This was further developed by Walter Vernon Clarke and John Geier.

MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator): Katherine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers developed this model, which has its roots in Jung also.

Joint authors CJ Margerison and DJ McCann**,** observing an individual's work preferences, represented a team's profile as a **Team Management Wheel**, first published over 20 years ago.

Meredith Belbin: In his 1981 book, *Management Teams*, based on over seven years of observing teams at work, Belbin outlined eight observed roles, with a ninth role added in 1988. They are not personality types, just observed behaviour in a team.

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I usually base my decision on which instrument to use by making reference to what an organisation or team is already familiar with; rather than impose a new instrument and therefore additional learning or unlearning.

My conclusion from using team profiling instruments is that it is not which instrument you use but how you use it to help a team reach success that is important. I have been alarmed at how some teams have used profile instruments only to give inappropriate focus to labelling, leading to reinforcing stereotypes.

I will in this chapter refer mostly to the work of Meredith Belbin. I will describe the nine team roles as suggested by Belbin and in doing so, I will be asking you, the reader to:

- Predict performance
- Make best use of the team members' current talents
- Identify gaps in desired behaviours and address these
- Enable the team and its individual members to develop through the adoption of expanded team roles beyond their normal functional roles

A team understanding its own profile and adopting appropriate team roles and ground rules, it can overcome potential weaknesses and reach high levels of performance.

5.2 A team's profile using Belbin's nine Team Roles

Belbin groups his nine team roles into three families, that is, Social, Thinking and Action. However, I have a preference for splitting Belbin into the four families of Task (Action), Analysis (Thinking), People (Social) and Ideas. This is to help readers who are familiar with Carl Jung's work to recognise the characteristics more easily. Although Belbin used psychometric instruments in his research work (Cattell's 16 Personality Factors) he was not attempting to describe personality types but observed behaviour in a team environment, hence the emergence of his nine team roles.

Belbin uses short abbreviations (**SH, IMP, MF** and so on) to aid instant recognition and we also use these in the team exercises provided in this chapter.

Free notes/handouts on the roles and their application in teams are available on the Belbin official web site. http://www.belbin.com/rte.asp?id=396 The nine team roles are:

Task-focused roles

Shapers (**SH**) are challenging individuals, who provide the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum. The Shapers can be impatient for results. They can have low regard for people's feelings.

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Implementors (IMP) provide a practical, workable strategy and carry it out as efficiently as possible. They can have the ability to turn ideas into practical applications. They may, by becoming overly task focused, become inflexible and lose sight of the big picture.

Analytical roles

Monitor Evaluators (ME) provide a logical eye, make impartial judgments where required and have the ability to weigh up the team's options in a dispassionate way. At times the Monitor Evaluator can be overly critical and slow moving.

Completer Finishers (CF) are most effectively used at the end of a task, to 'polish' and scrutinise the work for errors, subjecting it to the highest standards of quality control. They could be accused of taking their perfectionism to the extremes and of being negative.

It was only after the initial research had been completed that the ninth team role was defined by Belbin, that is, the **Specialist** (SP). Where there are significant technical demands in the business, Specialists are valued because of their in-depth knowledge. **Specialists** may have a tendency to focus narrowly on their own subject of choice and 'turn off' when the topic of focus changes.

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People-focused roles

Co-ordinators (CO) tend to focus on the team's objectives, draw out team members and delegate work appropriately. **Co-ordinators** may over delegate and fail to get their hands dirty.

Teamworkers (TW) help the team to gel, using their versatility to identify the work required and helpfulness towards fellow team members. Teamworkers may smooth over conflict by overdoing the socialisation.

Ideas-focused roles

Plants (PL) are so-called in the initial team study because when one such individual is 'planted' into the team it can change the dynamic of the team. Plants certainly make dull teams sparkle! They tend to be highly creative and good at solving problems in unconventional ways. Plants can be unorthodox and their ideas and behaviour and can be disruptive when the team has moved on to the evaluation or implementation stages of their task.

When a team is at risk of becoming isolated and inwardly focused, **Resource Investigators** (RI) provide great insight and make sure that the team's ideas will carry to the world outside the team. **Resource Investigators** are great networkers and are first with the news; however, they may become bored and lose interest once the initial enthusiasm has passed.

One of the most important phrases Meredith Belbin used when reflecting on the diverse range of characters or characteristics in the team was **"Nobody was perfect but a team can be"**. When you consider the demands and requirements of a team working on complex tasks, then it is impossible for one person in the team to be successful on their own. However, if you explore the team's membership, somewhere within the team all the characteristics for success are present.

Belbin's team profile questionnaire will rank an individual's team role preference from the most preferred to their least preferred across all nine team roles. This can then be summarised for the team as a whole, highlighting sameness or diversity (balance) across the team members.

The Belbin model or indeed any other team profile should not be used to stick labels of convenience on individual team members, for this can be a limiting factor to the range of roles for which team members have a capacity. Even team members with the same first preference, demonstrate that the second preference can make a difference to their behaviour in a team. For example a **Shaper/Completer Finisher** can be defined as a 'task master' profile, whereas **Shaper/Resource Investigator** would come across as a demanding but streetwise, even mischievous, profile. If you add a team member's third preference out of the nine the complexity grows. In fact if you apply all nine combinations you can generate 362,880 combinations (factor of nine!) for any one team member's behaviour. The general convention is to work with the first two or three preferences. In the illustrations and the team exercised provided below we will work with the first two behaviour preferences for individual team members.

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Using Belbin's team profile in particular and other team profiles in general, helps the team to:

- Predict the team's performance when undertaking specific tasks
- Take on additional roles (multitask) that will assist the team plug gaps and overcome potential team weaknesses
- Recognise the potential team strengths and weaknesses for the planned team task

It is important never to use the team profile to label or stereotype people, which only serves to restrict the potential of the individual.

5.3 Predicting the team's performance when undertaking specific tasks

As Belbin's team profile is used in these examples, you will get most out of this section of the book if you familiarise yourself with the Belbin material.

The examples used here and throughout the book are from real teams I have encountered.

Case study 21 – A research and development (R&D) team

The team was responsible for bringing small, electric, domestic products to market. As external consultants, Wright Consultancy was asked to examine why an R&D team had failed to bring one major idea or innovation to the manufacturing stage over a four-year period. The organisation was very upset at the level of expenditure and potential loss of future earnings due to the lack of new products coming on stream. The team itself was very frustrated by its own lack of success.

As part of the team review and re-motivation process we profiled the team using Belbin's instrument.

This is an organisation chart of the team showing their primary and secondary roles:

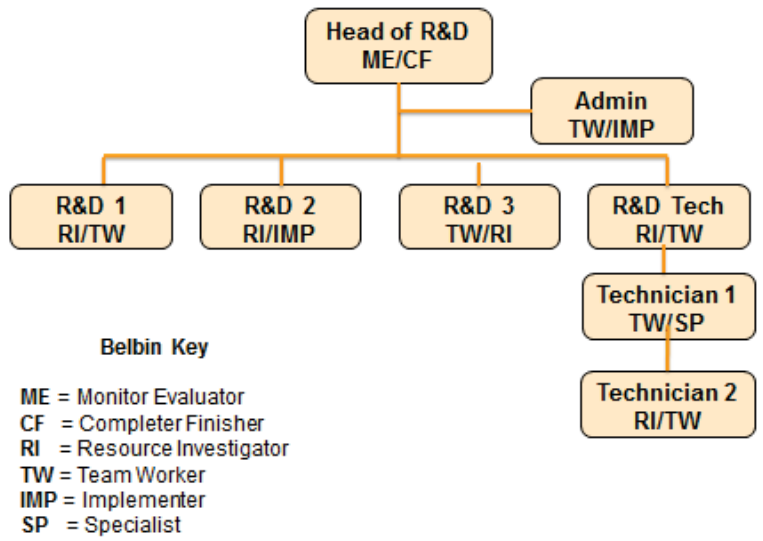

Fig 5.1

Your prediction based on the Belbin team profile against the task requirements

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The ability to predict a team's performance against a specific task is the power of the Belbin instrument and Meredith Belbin became very good at predicting team outcomes.

Consultant's observations on the R & D team's profile

The team was innovative, but did not have the creativity for radical ideas that comes from the **Plant** profile. The team also lacked the sense of urgency that comes with the **Shaper** and to some extent the **Implementor** roles. The department head, influenced by his **Monitor Evaluator** and **Completer Finisher** profile, was cautious and took few risks. Overall there was poor evaluation of ideas due to a lack of analysts within the team except the department head. The prevalence of the **Teamworker** profile gave the team a sense of loyalty and thoughtfulness. It was a 'nice team' that experienced very little conflict, being more comfortable with harmony. Part of the solution was to relocate the R&D Department beside the manufacturing and seek interaction with the production personnel. Also to introduce a Plant to help with radical ideas.

Another simple way of looking at a team profile and its probable impact on the team's task is to utilise the Task, Analysis, People and Ideas families along with Belbin's roles to give a visual view of a team's profile.

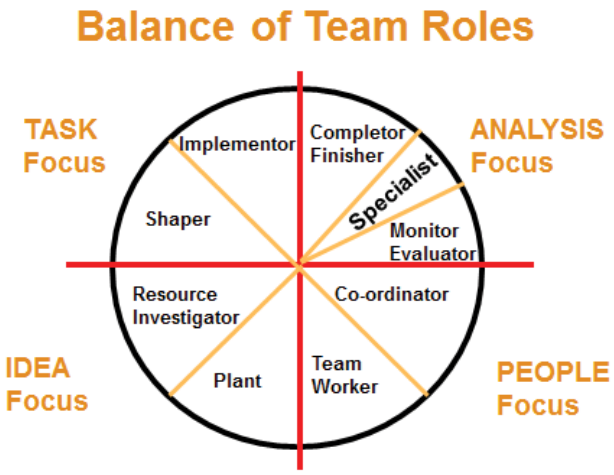

Fig 5.2 Source Wright Consultancy diagram, based on Belbin's team roles

To demonstrate the team balance I frequently use a simple scoring system by placing a **red dot** on the outer edge of the team role diagram to represent a team member's primary preference role and **blue dot** on the inner part of the circle to represent the secondary preference role.

To calculate the weight of the team in terms of Task, Analysis, People and Ideas, we award two points to a **red dot** (primary preference) and one point to a **blue dot** (secondary preference). This is demonstrated below with two examples – a sales teams (**Fig 5.3**) and a senior team in an electronics business (**Fig 5.4**).

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Sales Team of high value computer goods

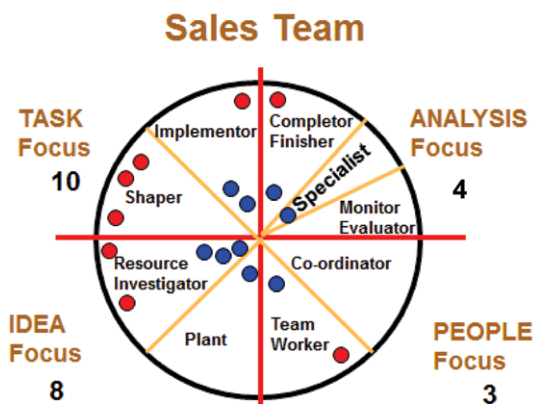

Fig 5.3

Senior Team of a small electronics business

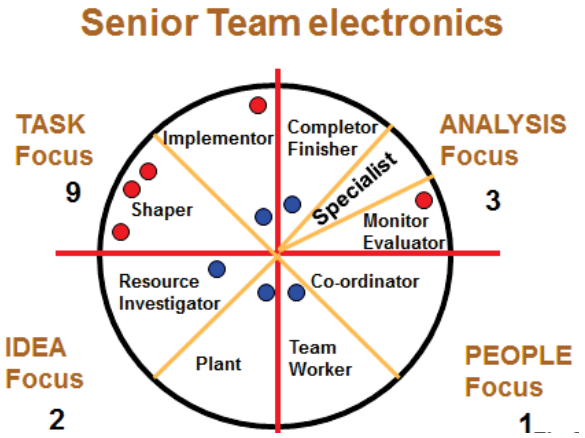

Fig 5.4

Three questions for you to be applied to each of the teams above:

- What would the general behaviour be if you observed the team (fly on the wall)?
- Can you predict each team's success for the task assigned to them?
- What suggestions would you make if writing team ground rules to aid success?

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The Wright Consultancy's general findings on the two teams

Sales Team of high value computer goods	**Senior Team of an electronics business** – design and manufacturing prototypes with volume product manufactured in Asia
The team was lively with plenty of talking and high energy The team profile suggests they are very competitive and it was unlikely they would collaborate on big sales or pass each other leads. The profile also suggests that they are impatient and do not pay attention to detail Selling high-value goods can require patience to build relationships with customers. Attention to detail is necessary, so that all technical questions are dealt with, giving the customer confidence in the sales transaction	The team was an action team and everything moved at a fast space Planning, a necessary requirement for a senior team leading a company composed of many engineers who required detailed briefings and follow through, was poor The team demonstrated very little empathy with the general workforce. Initially the team was good at getting product to market but, on occasion, over promised what could be delivered
Recommendations	**Recommendations**
The team needed to learn the detail of the products being sold and to give time in the selling process to technical matters There were gains to be had if the sales team could collaborate on major sales assignments and pass leads to the best equipped sales person to deal with them The team needed to work more closely with and respect the technical help in the sales process	Initially the team consisted of four owner-managers. They were encouraged to appoint a **Monitor Evaluator** profile to help create diversity and to functionally help the team work out sound business processes. However, the additional team member was in danger of being seen as obstructive when asking obvious questions around planning and detail The team needed to embrace quality of thought before action as they were in danger of being busy fools and frustrating the engineering staff who were in reality the key asset of the business

5.4 Encouraging team members to take on additional roles that will assist in the team's success

People are generally members of a team because of their functional competence; they are engineers, technologists, accountants, scientists, in marketing, sales, scientists, procurement, human resources and so on.

According to Belbin, team members have a capacity to take on additional roles that assist the team to function. And I have always when working with teams encouraged the adoption of additional roles.

When distributing such roles, you should consider:

- Roles that underpin the team's ground rules such as communication, critique, respect etc.
- Roles that fulfil additional functional gaps that are often not addressed in smaller organisations or where resources are scarce, such as quality, resource management, documentation

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5.4.1 Roles that underpin the team's ground rules and ways of working

In the early part of Chapter 3, I gave an example of a typical set of ground rules. To illustrate the potential additional roles team members can take on, I will use those ground rules to show how team roles can successfully be employed to underpin the ground rules. Ground rules can quickly be forgotten by teams. However, when you allocate responsibilities among the team members for aspects of the ground rules, they can become a living and a well-practiced process, rather than a set of words on a page, long forgotten after the team formation stage.

Example of team ground rules from Chapter 3	Potential team roles to be allocated to the team members
• Establish a clear objective for the task	Someone who can remind the team of its overall objective as well as specific task objectives
• Engage the team in generating ideas and suggestions before evaluating	Someone to look after creativity and idea generation before the team gets stuck into solutions too early in its thinking
• Allocate tasks and responsibility	Someone, generally the leader for tracking progress; however, someone can be responsible for tracking progress
• Show respect by listening, by empowering each other, sharing leadership and delivering on promises	Someone to ensure behaviour is high on the team focus as well as task achievement
• Review (critique) success and failures to learn for the future	Someone to lead 'time out' reviews giving attention to detail
• Have fun and celebrate success	Someone to ensure the team knows how to enjoy itself and organise fun

Roles can be allocated based on the team's experience of how it works. The team may have discovered that it fails to plan and is too quickly into action. Therefore the team leader may ask a team member to remind the team about 'quality of thought before action' and to lead the planning element of the team's activities. Also a team may rush into solutions with giving sufficient thought to creativity and generation of a range of options; therefore the team wish appointment of a team role covering the creative processes.

Allocating team roles based purely on team profile should be avoided as it can have the effect of labelling or pigeon-holing a person. The team's role profile should be used as guidance in allocating roles, nothing more. Far better once the team understands the ground rules to seek volunteers for team roles that support the ground rules and/or enhance team performance. An old proverb says 'one volunteer is worth twenty pressed men'. Some may choose specific team roles in addition to the function role as a challenge and/or a development opportunity. You can switch roles at key milestone review dates if some of the allocated roles are not effective.

The benefits of understanding how your team is made up, through profiling, will help you predict the probability of success and you will be able to identify gaps in the team's behaviour. By intelligent allocation of additional team roles, a team can build on its strengths and plug its weaknesses.

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5.4.2 Team roles that fill functional gaps in small organisations

There is an opportunity to fill functional gaps that are often not present in smaller organisations or where resources are scarce, such as quality, resource management and documentation. I will share an example from a small manufacturing plant in Case Study 22.

Case Study 22 – Keenan System, Ireland

The team consisted of six fabricators (welders) and a team leader. The team's primary role was to take pre-cut steel sheets and fabricate them into a machine that mixed farm feed to a high-quality balanced diet for the agriculture sector. The type of feeder model they were fabricating varied due to specific customer specifications.

The team's functional roles were well defined; six welders and a team leader.

As part of a team leader development programme, the teams were empowered to take on additional team roles besides welding, such as:

Team **Quality Officer** who accepted or rejected the steel from the steel cutters and oversaw the general quality of the work carried out by his colleagues, in preparation for a hand over to the next manufacturing team.

Team **Materials Coordinator**, responsible for ordering materials to meet up to a maximum of two days' scheduled work. These included steel, welding rods, gigs, fixtures and parts against the machine specification. The overall objective was that there should be no interruptions or delays to the fabrication process due to materials shortage.

Team **Planner**, who worked to the factory schedule but could change the order of fabricated products to keep re-tooling and re-gigging to a minimum, while meeting customer expectations on delivery.

Team **Health and Safety Officer**, who checked work practices to ensure appropriate protective clothing was worn. He reported on accidents and near accidents and worked closely with the factory health and safety team.

Team **Communication Coordinator**, who kept the team informed of what was happening across the factory, including details of sales targets, new products and developments. He was also responsible for seeing that team's ideas and suggestions were brought to maturity and had a chance of implementation.

The **Team Trainer** ensured that the team members were regularly up-skilled and could perform a range of tasks, facilitating work planning and job rotation within the team.

The **Team Leader**, who initially was nervous of his role being eroded, finally had a chance to deal with the bigger issues that confronted the team.

In summary, the team continued to have six welders (seven if you counted the team leader) but each one carried out a secondary role in the area of quality, materials, planning, health and safety, communications, training or leadership.

With training and exposure to best practice nationally and internationally, these dual roles led to the team taking enormous pride in the quality and productivity of their work output. There was a step change in performance for each of the participating teams. The team process was extended to additional teams within the plant.

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In larger teams I ask a team member to take on two additional roles on top of their functional role of accountant, scientist, engineer and so on. These additional roles are non-functional roles that assist the team's overall performance and productivity. Additional roles may be responsible for quality, materials, planning, team health and safety, training, or service level agreements. The chosen roles usually found outside of the team or do not exist elsewhere in the organisation.

The second additional role can be based around the team ground rules or 'soft' team processes, for example, idea generation, goal focus or goal keeper, evaluation/challenging assumptions, communications (within team and with other teams), and fun and celebrations.

The memorandum in **Appendix 1** was written to a team in the highly technical environment of a computer business in 2005. The purpose of publishing the memo is to give you a feel for the adoption of a range of team roles in a self-directed or empowered team environment.

The topic of empowered or self-directed work teams will be dealt with in the next chapter.

5.5 Summary Chapter 5

Knowing your team profile and the balance or imbalance within the team is very useful in terms of predicting team success against known team tasks.

The instrument used to profile the team is not really important, rather how it is used. It is important not to label team members or restrict their potential team roles. Team profiling helps us to understand diversity. In a well-balanced team, all the attributes necessary for most tasks can be found, but seldom, if ever, in a single person.

"***Nobody is perfect but a team can be***" Meredith Belbin

The team balance can greatly influence the way a team works.

Diversity of team roles can bring many talents; however, if not recognised it can bring chaos. Sameness of team roles can bring oblivion.

Meredith Belbin's work and the development of the team profile (behaviours) led to accurate prediction of team performance.

The wheel, combined with scoring, gives a good visual representation of the balance of roles within the team (**Fig 5.2** repeated)

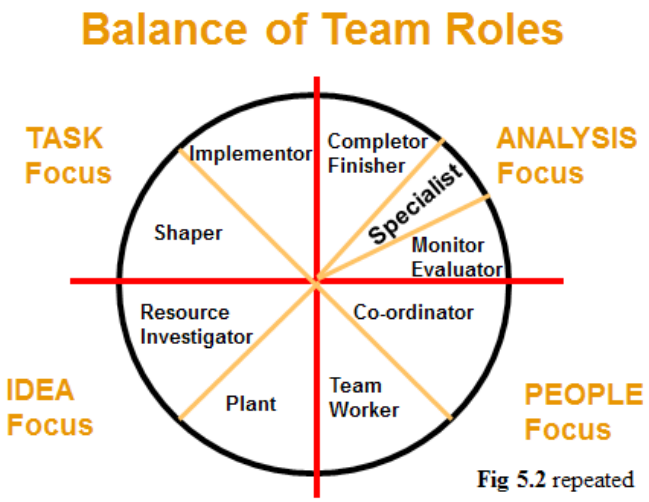

Fig 5.2 repeated

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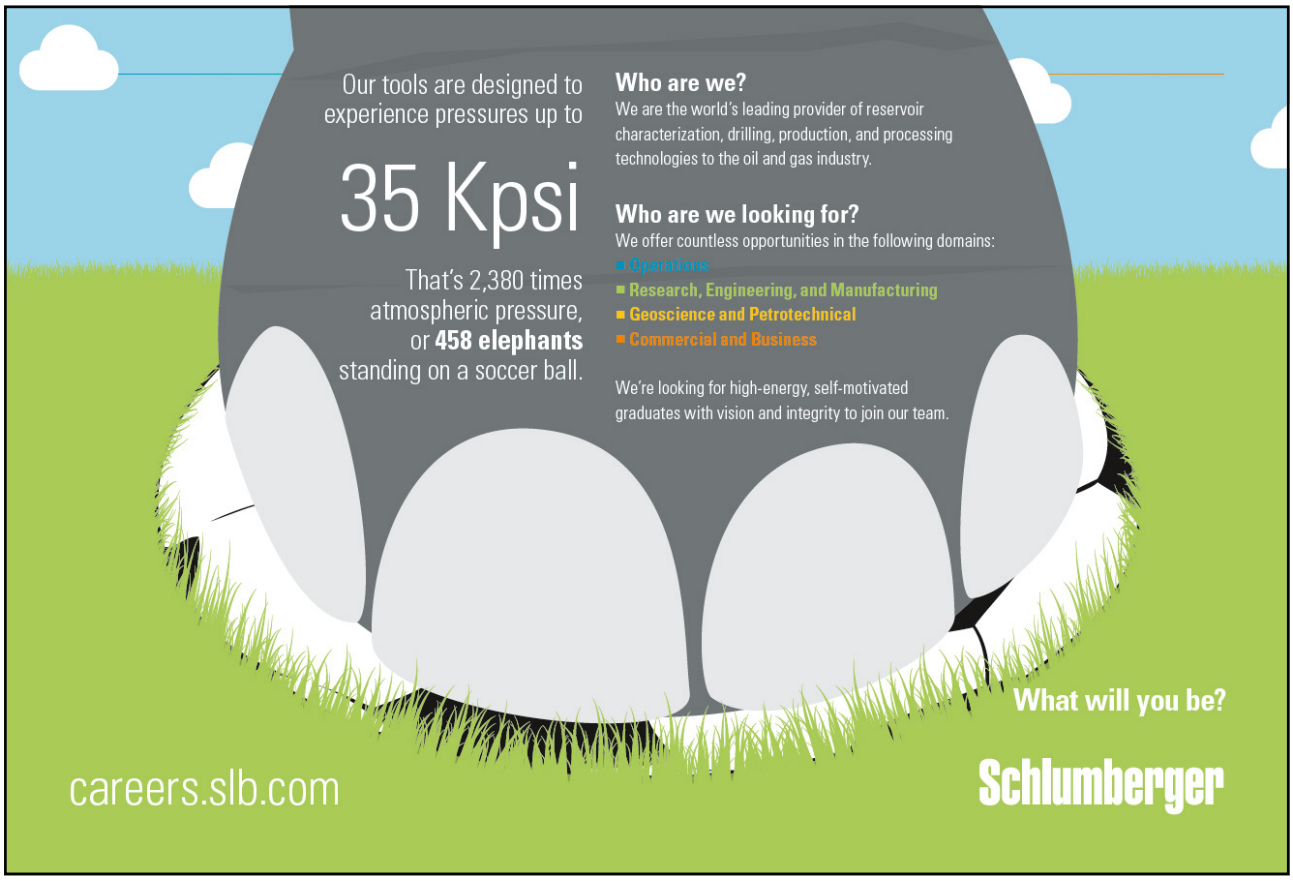
Team roles in high-performance teams are more than the functional roles. Two types of roles can be added to each team member:

- Roles that pick up additional tasks that help the team perform (quality, materials, planning). This can have great benefit in small organisation with limited resources.
- Roles that ensure the ground rules come alive and encourage some positive behaviours, by making team members responsible for communications, fun, quality of thought before action, challenging team assumptions and urgency (energy).

Most teams do not have much choice when it comes to the team's profile as they have been put together for the functional roles of their members. In that case, the team has to work with what it has and make the best of it. The team can overcome gaps with the aid of good ground rules and additional role allocation that can address known weaknesses, such as, creativity or overplayed strengths, for example, task focus killing quality of thought. All can be addressed with reasonable success by the allocation of additional roles to individual team members. Allocated roles can we reassessed at key milestone dates and be adjusted or reallocated to give assurance of success.



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5.6 Myths and realities of Chapter 5

Myth	Reality
A team must have a balanced profile to be successful	Most teams are formed based on the job/functional role of their members and little attention is given to the team's profile or balance. With the team's ability to predict outcomes, underpinned by ground rules and regular, robust reviews, teams can overcome imbalances. In time the team can recruit new members that will address persistent imbalances
Choosing the right team profile instrument is important	Understanding the profile and having the skill to predict performance and adapt is the key. If the instrument is based on sound research and helps the team predict performance then it is the right instrument for your team
Letting people do what they are best at, is the best guide to selecting team roles	Individuals will always do what they like doing so the natural roles will emerge. Team members can generate growth, development and learning opportunities by adopting team roles to which they are less well disposed This also avoids the labelling or pigeon-holing of team members, which can stifle an individual's and a team's development On occasion a team member will volunteer for a most inappropriate role; it is best to redirect their good intentions
Having ground rules and role allocation will overcome most team shortfalls and weaknesses	Generally yes, however, the team may still eventually fail if there is no robust review process to build on strengths and address weaknesses
Team seek out diversity when recruiting new members	Teams have a habit of recruiting more of the same profile. This is just like adding petrol to a fire and it can lead to team imbalance and failure

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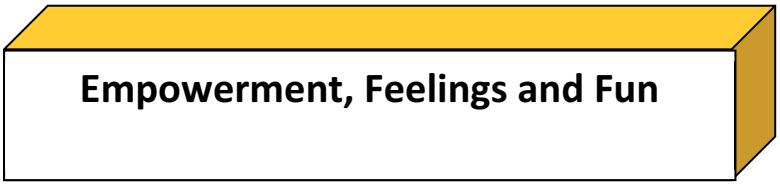
6 Empowerment, Feelings and Fun



In fact with the combination of empowerment, feelings and fun, we are describing a mature team performing at its best. It is the combination of clear operational criteria balanced by sufficient attention to the people that leads to the best teamwork. The best teamwork comes from paying attention to the emotional side of the people, underpinned by open two-way communications; leading to high achievement giving good reasons for the team to celebrate and have fun.

I will commence the chapter by exploring empowerment.

6.1 Empowerment

I generally find that employees in the organisations I work with are not empowered. There seems to be too much information and authority to act remaining with the line managers. For example, in the retail industry in particular, it is often the case that front line staff can't exchange goods or give discounts and frequently leave the customer waiting while a busy manager comes and gives authorisation without engaging with the staff member or the customer.

I believe that in many organisations, supervisors and managers are working at least one level of authority below where they should be. The organisations described in the many case studies in this book have flattened their structures and as a result witnessed higher levels of productivity and employees satisfaction.

A word of caution: there is a world of difference between empowering people and dumping tasks. Care needs to be taken that there is a work-life balance for staff in re-engineered organisations or you will move to a system of 'dumping', causing exhaustion and stress, rather than delegation/empowerment of employees.

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Case study 23 – Call centre helpline

The organisation was a utility call centre to deal with customer queries and complaints, which occasionally happened when connections where delayed or appointments not kept by its field engineers.

The employees in the call centre tried to satisfy the customer with reassurance and a pleasant manner. On occasion the situation demanded a gesture of goodwill or some form of compensation in the form of a credit or a voucher. Such matters were referred to the line supervisor. In an effort to empower staff the supervisors' authorisations levels were given to the front line employees and the supervisor was given the senior line manager's authorisation level.

The supervisor was also given the important role of team facilitator, to help the call centre employees come to terms with the authority. This was simply done through the regular communication meetings, initially held on a weekly basis. The team discussed case histories of how the team handled customer issues and where vouchers or refunds were awarded. Soon norms of understanding emerged as the colleagues shared what they had done in similar situations.

Over a period of six months, the level of vouchers and refunds awarded to customers had dropped by 30%. Subsequent customer and employee satisfaction surveys showed a very significant increase in satisfaction levels.

I have seen this simple empowerment process work on many occasions; however, the process needs to be revisited on a regular basis to keep the team fresh and interested.

I am a strong advocate of empowerment for individuals and teams and in particular "self-directed work teams" (SDWT). A self-directed work team is an autonomous team who share the responsibility and the authority to act among the team members without direct reference to a line supervisor or a manger. Managers with good facilitation and coaching skills would work with the team at pre-agreed milestone events and/or times or when the team sought help to aid its progress. In addition the team had to be trusted to know when to seek out help by calling "time out". For newly formed self-directed work teams a continuum of empowerment (illustrated in chapter 7, Fig 7.1) would we mapped out to assist the team to act with authority on key decisions in a relatively short period of time (months).

The concept of empowerment was wholeheartedly embraced by Auginish Alumina, now owned by Rusal, when its then Human Resource Director, Sexton Cahill, asked Wright Consultancy, in the mid 1980,s to assist with self-directed work teams. The organisation in Ireland needed to become a low-cost producer of aluminium from bauxite. The organisation change programme was to remove the layers of management and establish empowered or self-directed work teams. This was a significant challenge in a very highly regulated environment in terms of process, health and safety. From the work with Auginish Alumina and other multinational organisations (some of whom are defined in the case studies listed below) a model for empowerment or self-directed work teams known as the Wright Freedom Model was born.

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Case study 24 – The birth of a team empowerment model (Wright)

A senior manager who was about to leave Ireland for the parent company in the USA for two months, requested from his reporting managers, a system for better utilisation of the software test laboratory for handheld communication devices to meet production demands. The Software Test Laboratory (lab) had required a major capital spend and was only used across a normal five-day, eight-hour shift. Demand for the test lab was growing and the lab had become a 'bottle neck' in the meeting of production targets.

The test lab needed the hours of use to be extended significantly. The senior manager thought he was empowering his line managers by giving them such a brief.

On the senior manager's return to the production and lab facility two months later, he was distraught to find two eight-hour shifts in place, with a significant premium added for the shift arrangement and a workforce that was very unhappy with the new arrangements and in particular the way the change was handled.

The senior manager in his debrief stated he wanted a voluntary shift pattern of working as there were sufficient staff who would appreciate starting early morning and those who had a preference for a late start. He did not want any additional cost in the agreement. The learning for everyone through the debrief was to recognise the intent to empower; however, the parameters of needs, resources and how success would be judged were not defined.

Out of this incident and from work with self-directed work teams, the **Wright Freedom Model** was born.

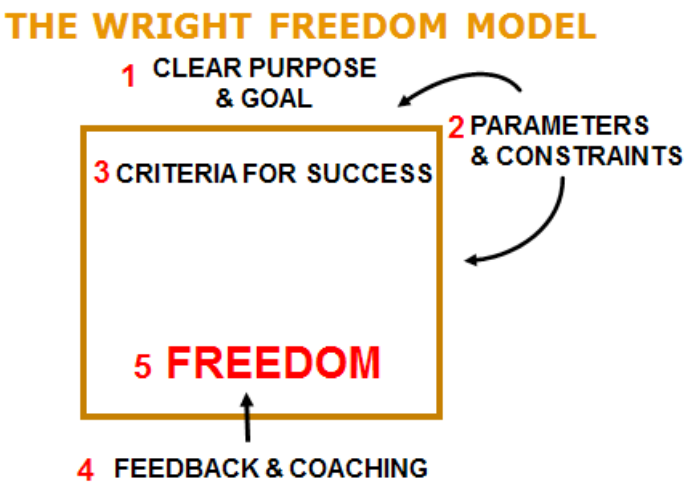

Fig 6.1

The Steps that enable empowerment to teams from the Wright Freedom Model

Step 1 – Establish the end goal. Be clear what the end should look like and share that vision with the team. In the case study above it was "Increase the throughput of the software test laboratory to match production demands".

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Step 2 – Establish the boundaries or parameters in terms of resources including time that will apply. In the case above they were:

- It should be a voluntary arrangement with the employees, without union engagement
- No additional cost to be incurred in the arrangement
- Quality of the test process must be upheld

Step 3 – Establish clear criteria of how success will be measured (note: *you can have some duplication with Step 2 but the emphasis here is on measurement*), for example:

- Test lab output was 'matched' to the production output in terms of time and volume
- There should be zero missed deadlines as a result of the software testing process
- There should be no change in costs but a minimum of 35% improvement in capital utilisation
- Absenteeism was to remain below the 2% target

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Step 4 – Establish what will be reported on and how to give assurance of progress. This should allow for good two-way feedback with the line manager. Where transfer of learning or coaching is required, it should be specified here also:

- Current lab quality and throughput reports will be sufficient
- Transfer of learning coaching to take place at 2.00 pm every Thursday for 4 weeks
- The standard monthly 'team brief' and monthly two-way individual feedback sessions to remain in place
- Whole team process review after six months. Although the review date is six months away you should always agreed the review date an time in order to turn good intentions into specific actions

Step 5 – You are ready for empowerment or **FREEDOM**. Freedom without the key steps is either an abdication or careless dumping of tasks at best and promiscuous management at worst.

We have applied this process to a number of self-directed work teams. It is important the whole team is part of the defining process and engaged in the target setting that goes with setting the criteria for success.

Case study 25 – Electronic self-directed work team 'experiment'

I was invited to give input on the status of a newly established work team and to look at the work layout of a small electronics assembly team that was about to commence production on the Monday. I had concerns about the significant level of supervision and low level of authority the team would have to make decisions.

On visiting the new work area, the engineer was asked how much team engagement there was in the design of the work area. The engineer had undertaken the whole design without team involvement. Immediately the penny dropped for the engineer and the organisation felt embarrassed by its approach to teamwork in terms of lack of engagement or empowerment. It was a self-directed work team in name only.

After the metrics (measurements) are established, the three most important things in developing a self-directed work team are **relationships, relationships and relationships**. It would be equally true to say engagement, engagement and engagement. The Wright Freedom Model was enhanced by the inclusion of the relationship element which brings engagement and trust into the mix.

The Wright Freedom Model would be a very sterile model if not enhanced by the relationship dynamic. With this addition, the self-directed work team goes from a hierarchical organisation of 'command and control' represented by the left triangle, to the inverted triangle on the right (See **Fig. 6.2** and **Fig 6.3**) representing empowerment where the customer is at the top working directly with the front line employees who interact with the customer.

The inverted triangle is explained further in the chapter and illustrated by **Fig 6.3**.

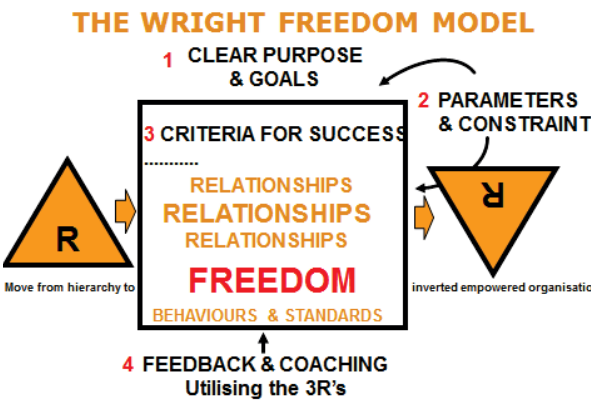

Fig 6.2

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Below you'll find three case studies showing the **Wright Freedom Model** at work.

Case study 26 – New hi-tech printing machine installation

The Managing Director wished to bring new technology to the company's printing processes through the purchase of a new printing press costing an estimated €2.5 million euro. The master printers had resisted the introduction of new technology in a highly unionised work environment. To compound the problem, with five unions involved, there was a very high level of demarcation of work routines.

The Managing Director sought a group of six printers who would work the new machine, gave them a budget of €2.8 million including airfare and expenses, a deadline of eight weeks by which to have the procurement process completed, a machine specification and a list of three suppliers. Two engineers were assigned to assist with questions on the specification and technology.

It turned out be the fastest and smoothest investments in the history of the company worldwide. The Master Printers were proud of their achievements and took ownership for the installation. As as result they trained the existing workforce on the new technology and issues of demarcation disappeared into the background.

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Case Study 27 – Self-directed work team with '28%' productivity in 12 months

The company, a major international supplier of high value electronic boards, had experienced a significant downturn in business due to a worldwide recession and had terminated the employment of approximately 30% of the workforce, causing significant disruption and expense. Experiencing a sharp upturn in business it sought major productivity increases before attempting to rehire.

Wright Consultancy was asked to assist in setting up a 'pilot' self-directed work team in the debug and re-work areas of the assembly business with a view to achieving higher productivity. Our first response was we don't do pilots with empowered or self-directed work teams, as they demand 100% commitment from management and there is no going back to the status quo.

I asked what the company's productivity target was. They replied that they had no specific goal in mind. Based on Wright Consultancy's experience and belief in breakthrough performance we suggested a 30% target. The figure represented what teams can achieve in a well-organised manufacturing environment where management feel the team is close to full capacity. However, what is often missing is the genius and engagement of the team. To verify the productivity gain, the company's finance department independently audited the productivity before the assignment and again after 12 months.

We recommended the establishment of one supervisor where there had been up to three to ensure it was impossible for the supervisor to 'supervise' in the traditional sense. She therefore had to delegate both responsibility and authority to team members across the three shifts to make decisions. I also established a training schedule which allowed each team member have a number of key roles and specialisms by:

a) Becoming the lead operator in one specialism and the backup operator in another
b) Taking on at least one additional role that assisted production or the workings of the team, for example: metrics, reports, SLAs (Service Level Agreements) with internal suppliers, SLAs for external customer feedback, inventory/material requirements, tool/jig and fixtures care, housekeeping including health and safety, internal quality control, suggestion coordination, training and development including matrix updating for team members, coaching, communications and meeting co-ordination, and team fun

The memorandum based on my audit (**Appendix 1**), post establishment of the self-directed team gives a good insight to the team's working and a part of the established team role and skills matrix.

The team was fortunate in its choice of supervisor as Jackie was not precious about authority having come from the shop floor. Jackie understood the capacity of operatives and how to coach and delegate. The Wright Freedom Model was used to ensure the correct processes and metrics were in place.

After twelve months Finance were asked to check if the 30% productivity target had been met. They confirmed a 28% productivity increase over the twelve months for which the business was delighted, even if I was a little disappointed.

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Case Study 28 Part B – Self-directed work team in a European clothing factory

This a continuation of the **Case Study 7** highlighted in **Chapter 2**.

Alas the situation we describe here no longer exists as all the manufacturing has now been moved to Morocco, India and China with the loss of over 2,000 jobs. One country's loss is another country's gain; that said, the team processes extended the life of the business in Europe.

The business had operated along typical clothing manufacturing lines for almost 50 years with a primarily female workforce all operating on piece work (paid by the number of garments produced). The problem arose when, despite high unemployment, the company experienced difficulty in recruiting new employees.

Wright Consultancy had worked with the organisation's graduate programme for almost ten years and we had challenged the company to operate under the model of self-directed work teams. Two of the factories that were experiencing difficulties recruiting new staff, we set about offering the Wright Freedom Model of empowered teams where the 'old' supervisors became a resource to the team (See note 1 below). The whole team process was voluntary and initial uptake was slow. Key elements of the piece work system were retained within the new working arrangements. Under the old system, across the plant only two or three staff employees out of every eight earned good bonuses and the remaining members received basic pay only. However, under the new system it was the whole team (six to nine members) who earned the bonus rather than an individual team member. In the self-directed work teams, everyone earned a bonus consistently, giving a higher level of production production for the factory and good team satisfaction.

It was initially a challenge for the mature workers to bring on the whole team to bonus level, however, they too benefited from the support and sometimes fun of teamwork in what was previously a tough 'look out for yourself' manufacturing environment.

As the team became established, people began to seek work but only in team operations, avoiding the individual piece-work environment. Recruitment no longer became an issue for the company.

Note 1: The whole process was a challenge to the previous supervisors, maintenance and work schedulers as they needed to become a service to the team rather than a source of conflict, competing for limited resources. In the self-directed team environment teamwork could not end with the garment makers, it had to be inclusive of those who controlled and allocated the resources to the teams.

6.2 Self-Directed Work Teams (SDWT)

Within this book I interchange the phrases 'Empowerment' and 'Self-Directed Work Teams'. If I was forced to make a distinction between the two terms, I would suggest that empowerment is part of a journey for a team and to assist that journey we set out a plan or continuum of empowerment (See **Fig 7.1** in Chapter 7). I would tend to use the phrase 'Self-Directed Work team' post an audit when the team has reached a critical point in its decision making without reference to line management. SDWT, when adopted by an organisation has a major impact on the business and the culture. I have a preference for showing the organisation's adopted culture as an inverted triangle, to show the step change that has taken place through empowerment or self-directed work teams.

The whole process of implementing self-directed work teams (SDWT) is really very simple; once the purpose, metrics and the feedback cycle (See Wright Freedom Model) are put in place the team will almost self-manage the change.

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It helps when the organisation has ambitious expectations and builds strong, empowered teams. In the empowerment process I never separate authority to act with the responsibilities for task execution; senior managers retain ultimate accountability ("the buck stops here!"). With SDWT comes the establishment of a matrix of responsibilities in which the team will do most of the figuring out themselves. You do not need to spoon feed the team; they can become very resourceful as to who does what, where and when.

> ***"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity"***. – General George Patton

Middle management and services specialists need to see the frontline team as their immediate customer and up their service processes to meet the productivity demands made by the empowered team.

The inverted organisation structure triangle is symbolic of what is good in empowered organisations and self-directed work teams.

Inverted organisation symbol/logo

I like to represent the organisations that embrace empowered teams with an inverted triangle.

In fact the inverted triangle symbol is a trade mark I use on much of our team training materials.

The inverted triangle is symbolic of putting the most important people and resources to the top of the organisation for the real success of the organisation. In most cases this is the customer and the employees who serve and interact with the customer. In the illustration below, I represent the organisation with three categories of employees. That is Front Line, Line Manager/Specialists and Senior Manager. The 'screw' at the bottom that holds the inverted organisation in place is very fragile and failure to empower the front line and those who resource them can, in the first business crisis, return the organisation (180 degrees slippage) to the old fashioned 'command and control' hierarchy.

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THE INVERTED ORGANISATION (Empowered)

Front-line employees are those who are hands-on in terms of dealing with the customer or delivering products or services. These are very important staff in any organisation.

Line managers/supervisors and service specialists are there to empower and service the front line. Self-directed work teams will make large demands on the organisation services due to their productivity; so those in quality, scheduling, material planning and sales would need to step up their activities to meet the team's demands.

Senior Managers need to provide leadership and direction for the organisation, anticipating future business needs.

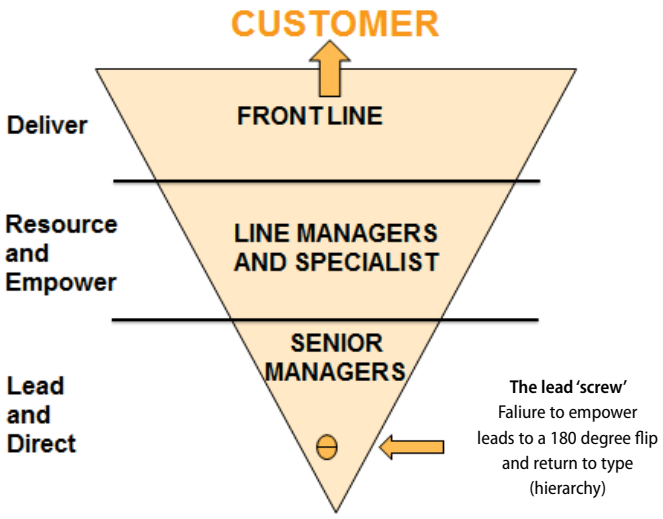

Fig 6.3

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Here are two case studies that demonstrate opposite teamwork positions in a crisis

Case Study 29 – Walking away from team hypocrisy

I was working with a leading beverages manufacturer on the introduction of empowered teams, however, implementation was very slow mainly due to the reluctance of line managers to 'let go' of tasks with which they were comfortable. The Line Managers still wished to control the detail of the operations.

In the middle of the team-building process, the company lost a major customer accounting for 25% of its production. My first reaction was to ask "How did you mobilise the team to deal with the crisis?"

The Managing Director told me he suspended the team process until the crisis was over!

I told the Managing Director that the company had, in the middle of the crisis, missed an opportunity of empowerment. There was no enthusiasm for teamwork for a number of years after the event as the organisation remained hierarchical in culture.

So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work. – **Peter Drucker**

Case Study 30 – Teamwork embracing a crisis

While I was working with a large software and component manufacturer on teamwork, the company, having just spent several million dollars on a new extension to the manufacturing plant, was told to close the manufacturing unit within six months and ship the process to Asia.

The Managing Director wished to buy time to increase his software development capacity and fade out the manufacturing process without disruption or job losses. He asked the whole site to engage in how they could achieve a 25% saving on current manufacturing costs. The organisation achieved an increase in productivity of approximately 30% and the transfer of manufacturing was postponed for over two years. In those two years an international software and European service facility was grown and a smooth transition was assured securing almost all of the jobs albeit in very different roles.

The Managing Director showed belief in the employees and great courage. He achieved this result by embracing both teamwork in a crisis.

6.3 Feelings, the highest form of team communication

When studying history at college I was told the ordinary degree students studied the industrial revolution and the honours students knew there wasn't one! In a similar way there are arguments and debate about emotional intelligence. I will leave that argument to the intellectuals and focus on the reality of my experience within teams. In this section of the book I will explore the individual's and the team's ability to be comfortable with the emotional state of the team at all times and sharing their feelings.

It is said by many authors that feelings are neither right nor wrong. It is important that the culture to emerge at this stage of the team journey is that each individual believes that his or her view of things matters to the team and that it is safe to share how he or she feels on issues. It is the team leader that can create that climate for this. In fact if the early reviews/critique deal with behaviour, then the sharing of how one feels will become a natural element of the team's working and expression.

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If utilised properly, the emotional side of each of us, sometimes called 'gut feeling', will act as an early warning system to the team of things going wrong. It is all part of the openness that was being suggested in Chapter 3; sharing that you don't understand takes courage, but it is very important to the team that you express it.

Feelings are an important part of the team's communication process and many experts would say that expressing feelings is the highest form of communication (See **Fig 6.5**).

I suggest that when communicating in teams it is best to avoid the word "we". "We seem to be confused" … "We are not doing so well" … "We should review" and so on. Statements within teams are more powerful when we take ownership of what is communicated. "I" and "You" statements avoid the confusion caused by "We". For example, taking the three statements above, but applying "I", they should read as, "I am confused" … "I believe the team is not doing so well" … "I suggest you review…" and so on.

If the language is kept specific and the sharing of how one feels about team tasks and processes is adopted and encouraged, the team will be dealing with reality and there will no significant gap between the results of a review and team member's perception.

A sample behaviour review questionnaire (Part 2) may be found in **Appendix 3**, can be used to identify if there are significant gaps among the team when they openly share feelings and perceptions on how the team is working.

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Case Study 31 – TV crew videos team chaos

Taking responsibility for how one feels about the team and taking actions as a result

One of the team exercises I use is a complex search and rescue task. The team is provided with lots of information (in fact too much information) of which only 15% is relevant to the task. The exercise of sifting through the information can become very frustrating as the whole team cannot engage fully, yet if leadership were being demonstrated, there are other tasks that the rest of the team could be doing such as planning and preparing in anticipation of clarity on the final task instructions.

In the meantime, team facilitators arrive with video cameras representing the local TV news channel. They call individual team members out at 10 to 15 minute intervals. With the TV camera rolling the facilitators ask what is happening about the search and rescue task and what is the team doing.

The first few interviewees would describe the chaos and say the team members were operating like headless chickens. At the end of the interview the team member would return to chaos saying nothing about their opinion to the team.

Midway through the exercise the TV interviewer would ask "What contribution have you made to the teamwork?" At the end of the interview most of the team members would do nothing on returning to the team. While some team members might ask questions, but without conviction, so no change would be made by the team to their working methods.

Towards the end of the exercise the TV interviewer would ask "What are you going to do to bring order and stop the chaos?" This is would generally lead to a stronger intervention on the return of the team member to the team.

The key point here is that individual team members failed to take responsibility for how they felt and did not intervene to change the team process.

When the video is played back to the whole team they are shocked at their strength of opinion and their lack of intervention in the task on their return to the team.

This exercise was repeated with many teams with very similar results. It is important that team members feel empowered to act and influence the team outcome.

Taking responsibility Fig 6.4

At the mature stage of the team's journey, members should have experience in leading the team when their talent is required. There should be no sense of waiting for the leader or others to take the lead. There is an expectation that every member will take leadership at appropriate times in any major task. When things are not going to plan and a team member feels this is the case, they are encouraged to speak up and take responsibility for calling a 'time out' for a review if necessary. Leadership should be practiced by all. This will be expanded on in the final chapter of the team's journey.

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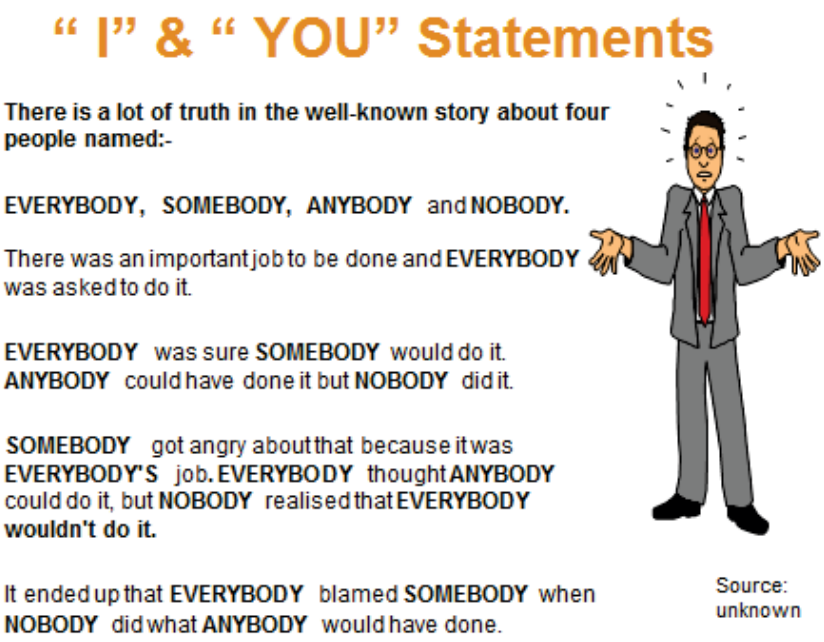

Fig 6.4

6.3.1 OTI Communications

Sharing feelings must be built on a good solid communications strategy. I have encouraged companies to adopt a communications model I have named as **OTI**, that is, one which takes account of communicating at three levels:

- **Organisation**
- **Team**
- **Individual**

Organisation: top-down communications on key strategic issues with good upward feedback channels that include engagement on the strategic and business planning processes. On occasion this would include staff opinion surveys.

Team: communications usually organised by business units, sometimes called 'all hands' meetings in which relevant information is shared and views are sought. This can also be supported by 360 degree surveys and feedback to give good insights to line managers and team health. A 360 degree survey is one where a line manger seeks the views of his/her boss, team colleagues and direct reports, occasional customers, on their delivery of tasks and especially their behaviour. When good two-way communication becomes a natural element of what people do, such surveys become less important.

Individual one-to-one communications by the line manager/facilitator every month is important, even in a strong open team environment. The focus should be on two-way feedback and include conversations on the work and the worker, to build of trust and relationships.

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6.3.2 Hierarchy of team communications

There is in team a maturing process in terms of quality, relevance of the team communications. This maturity can be represented by a hierarchy (**See Fig 6.5**) and in part can run in tandem with Tuckman's team maturity model (Chapter 2).

Reading the descriptions from the top (mature) to the bottom (immature).

Top ↓

The team is at its most confident and is open to sharing ideas and feelings.

The team members are skilled in feedback and using their feelings as a trigger to say how they feel.

Cliques form and reputations are won or lost.

There is a formality about communications that hides true creativity and feelings.

When a team meets for the first time (Form) there is polite conversation accompanied by good listening.

Bottom ↑

Fig 6.5
Source: multiple

6.4 Fun

Great teams have great fun, not only in the execution of the task but also by setting aside time for the team to celebrate success.

The fun should not be at the expense of a team member as this may breach the dignity and assertiveness ground rules.

To bring balance to a team, they are encouraged to allocate time to creating opportunities for fun. Fun is one of the suggested team roles when building a team matrix. Fun is just as important as many of the other team roles and a key to the team staying healthy and vibrant.

Fun is also one of the seven measurements used when auditing teams as described in case study 1 at the start of Chapter 2.

Fun will prove difficult for traditional industries. Yet in many new businesses the office design, work stations, special food days, fun health programmes and away days are all part of celebration of continuing success.

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6.5 Summary of Chapter 6

Most organisations frustrate their front-line staff by not giving them the authority to act with allocated responsibilities.

Line managers have an important role in coaching and empowering their staff, especially in self-directed work teams (SDWT).

A Freedom Model (Wright) with good metrics (measurement), coaching and feedback can deliver empowered people and teams. However, good relationships and/or engagement give the model the necessary human touch.

Freedom without good metrics can lead to chaos or promiscuous management.

Authority must be given with responsibility to act and make decisions; accountability rests with the senior manager (the one who empowers).

The well-briefed team will successfully work out many of the issues themselves. Managers do not need to have resolved all the issues before empowerment takes place.

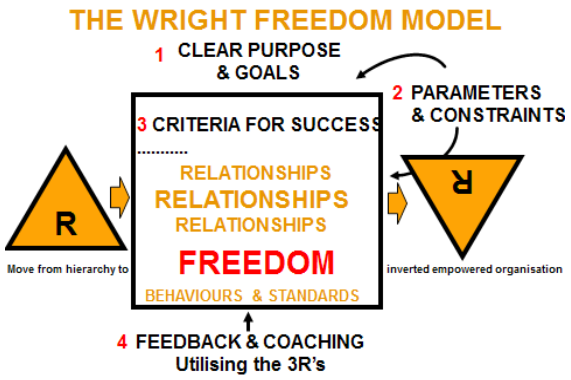

Fig 6.2

The inverted triangle is a good representation of an empowered organisation. It provides the front line with dignity, respect and the authority to act, especially with customers. Middle managers need to change their role to serving the productivity gain and to remove potential road blocks. Senior managers need to show leadership and provide a sustainable future for the organisation.

There must be a willingness to act, based on feelings to take responsibility for one's own and the team actions.

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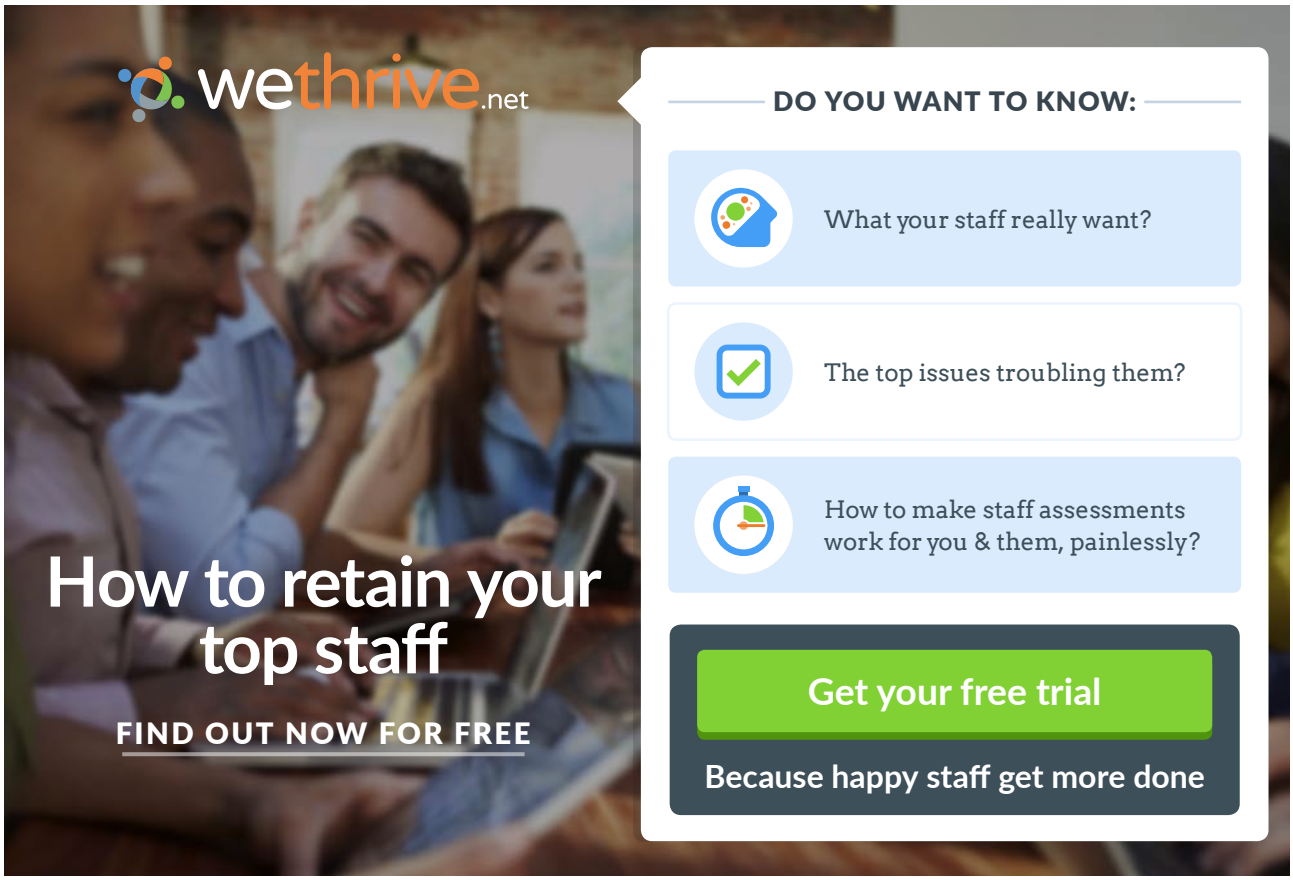
Communications are a key to success and most successful, empowered organisations invest in communications at **O**rganisation, **T**eam and **I**ndividual levels (OTI).

The openness of mature teams, aided by good process reviews, allows team members to share how they feel. This gives a sense of reality to the actual health of the team, as gaps between reality and perceptions are closed.

Communication is happening when individuals take responsibility for their own statements by using "I" and "you" statements and avoiding "we", until the team is celebrating success.

It is important for teams to have fun and celebrate success.



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6.6 Myths and realities of Chapter 6

Myth	**Reality**
Line managers lose authority and status once you introduce self-directed work teams	The control and command style of management needs to die in the team environment. However, there is much work for the line manager to do in terms of keeping the team serviced and acting as a facilitator and coach As facilitator he/she must be fully aware of the standards of output and behaviour that is acceptable at all times and use a wide range of skills to help the team members come to terms with the requirements
The Freedom Model and good metrics will keep a team in check	Without the relationship element the model and the team will become stale and clumsy
It is important to sustain a high level of communication to use instruments such as 360-degree feedback	The team is well beyond the clumsy mechanics of 360 degree feedback, which has its place in the earlier stages of the team's formation The team is now mature, taking responsibility for its behaviour. The process of reviewing both task and behaviour gives a natural rather than contrived feeling to the team's feedback and communications
"We" statements help build a cohesive team	"We" is great for the celebration of success, however, when used in the team's own communications it causes confusion in terms of ownership and what is being really said
Team celebrations and fun events build team morale	Celebrations do not make wrongs right or fix things There are only short-term gains from celebration unless the day-to-day team working processes are good

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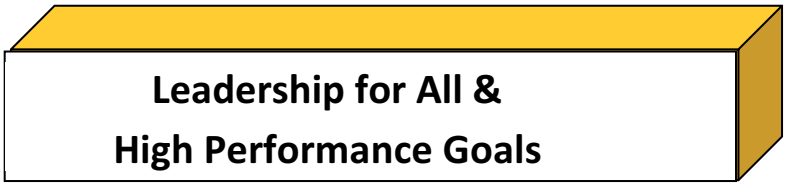
7 Leadership for All



Within high performance teams the appointed team leader empowers the whole team to take on leadership roles, therefore, the 'leader' at any time will be based on the skills and expertise required by the team at a moment of time. This sharing of leadership allows the team to prosper under the coordination, facilitation and direction of the appointed team leader. In self-directed work teams a leader, who behaves as a coordinator, is rotated among some the team members. Some team members will opt out of direct leading, however, will demonstrate leadership as when required, based primarily on their specialist skills. In this chapter we will explore leadership in teams which is very different from other forms of leadership.

7.1 Team leadership

When you consider the people who are regarded as great leaders it can be confusing and often contradictory. Margaret Thatcher, for example; she was a great leader, lifting Great Britain out of the economic doldrums, in her later years her failure to change and adapt to new demands and her style of leadership made her redundant. In golfing terms she played golf with one club in her bag, the driver. When she needed to adjust and use different clubs she failed. When it came to teamwork, it is worth noting that Margaret Thatcher had almost 100% turnover in her cabinet team over her 10 years in office.

The only thing all world leaders have in common is followers. A definition that describes a leader as one who has followers is an unsatisfactory definition for team leaders. This chapter will look at what is expected of a team leader and the team members in terms of leadership. Successful teamwork never happens in the long-term due to a strong leader. Leaders of teams can inspire but they must also empower the team members to take on leadership.

> ***I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.*** – Ralph Nader

The Guru Guide by Joseph and Jimmie Boyett, published in 2000, is a guide to what the world's best management authors say about leadership. The authors, on your behalf, have read hundreds of books and thousands of articles and distilled them into one book. Their book is a good starting point for readers interested in leadership. Our purpose here is to focus on the leadership required for high performance teams.

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There are many quotations on leaders and leadership and I will start with sharing some of my favourites that have relevance to teams and the experiences shared in this chapter. You have already read quotations from General George Patton, Peter Drucker and Ralph Nader. (Source: Forbes Top 100 Leadership Quotes):

> *A leader is best when people barely knows he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.* – Lao Tzu

> *The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant.* – Max DePree

> *Become the kind of leader that people would follow voluntarily; even if you had no title or position.* – Brian Tracy

> *The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.* – Kenneth Blanchard

> *No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself, or to get all the credit for doing it.* – Andrew Carnegie

The quotes immediately give you a feeling of the requirements for leaders within the team environment. A part of that leadership process is the behaviour of the team members and how they accept responsibility and share leadership with the team leader: hence the subtitle 'Leadership for all'. In many self-directed work teams the leader can be outside the team, only visiting on occasion; the actual team members share leadership among themselves.

The contents of this chapter are primarily based on my observations and experience in developing leadership within teams among all the team members, not just the appointed leader.

The leadership journey started in Chapter 1 and continued in each chapter with the leadership focus on the whole team. This chapter simply builds on the insights to leadership the team would experience on its journey to high performance. Some of those leadership insights on the journey thus far are:

> Chapter 1 explored the myth that managers encourage teamwork. The reality is that managers feel uncomfortable about teamwork because a new set of leadership skills are required over line management skills, with its emphasis on empowering others. The requirements of **team leadership** over **solo leadership** was expressed in **Fig 1.2** and repeated here (**Fig 7.1**).

> Chapter 2 questioned the organisation culture into which the team and its leadership occupied. These diverging cultures can explain why there is such divergence on what leadership is. The book will only focus on team leadership and its search for synergy, requiring the whole team's engagement.

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Chapter 3 explored team meetings and setting the agenda with the emphasis on participation and individuals leading on specific topics.

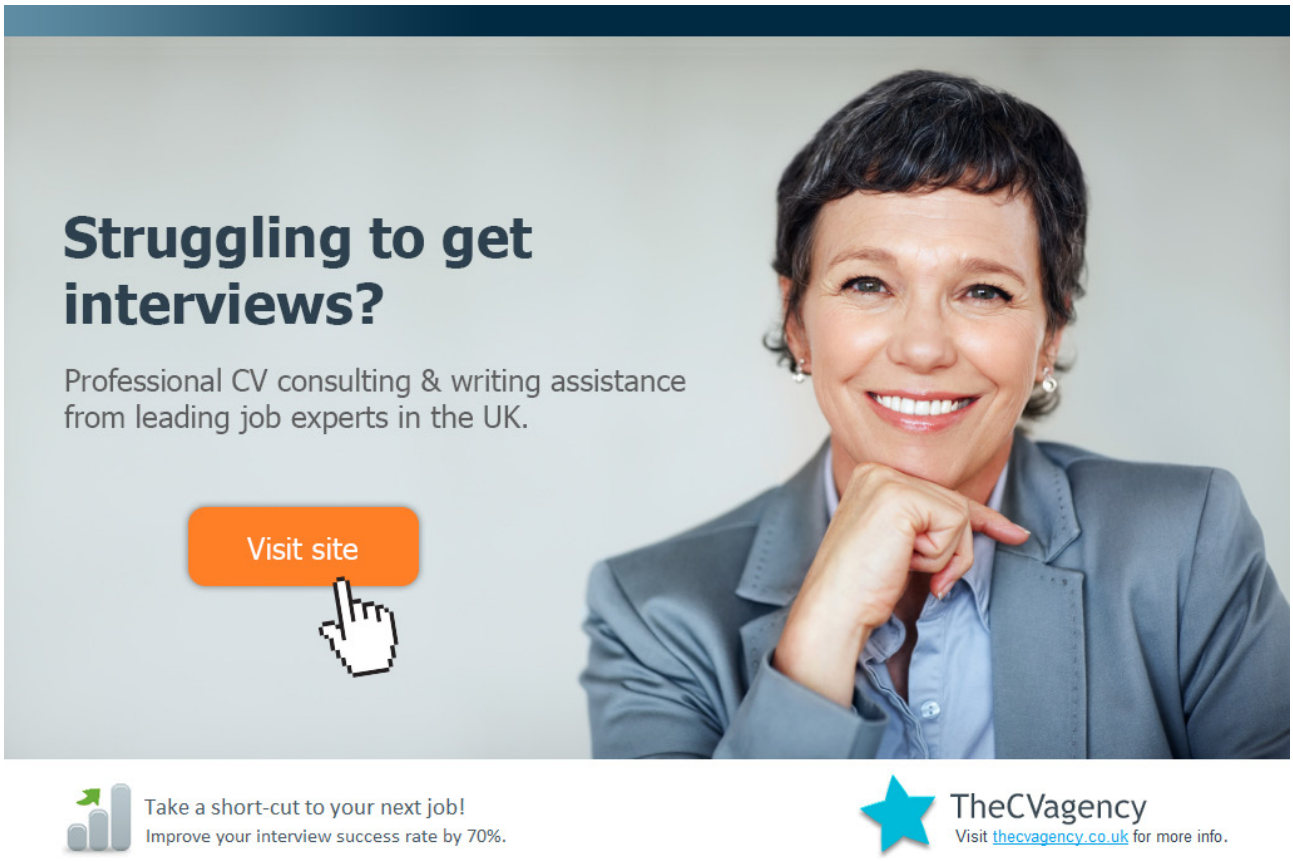
Chapter 4 endeavoured to equip the leader and the whole team with the skills of influence through respect rather than the old-style command and control approach.

Chapter 5 demonstrated that responsibility should be widely shared through team members taking on additional team roles, while building up a matrix of skills and resources, including leadership through expertise.

Chapter 6 saw the importance of empowering the team and the need for individuals to take responsibility for sharing their feelings early, without waiting for someone else, including the leader, to act.

It is important for managers who are setting out on the team journey to understand the change in their role accompanied by the skill and behaviour adjustments that are necessary to lead and participate in teams.

Let that be the starting point of this chapter.



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7.2 Solo leadership versus team leadership

The difficulty in stepping across from solo leader to team leader should not be underestimated (**Fig 7.2**). I have found that managers who are not precious about their power, ego or status make the transition best. For other managers, it is hard work, and a large amount of unlearning of poor management habits acquired over the years is necessary.

A good starting point is the empowering of the team members to take on leadership roles within the team. The appointed team leaders will need to redefine their own role. This is best achieved when the new team role is described in totally different terms. Two good examples of this significant change for the manager occur when developing self-directed work teams:

- A manager moved from leading one shift team to leading three shift teams who worked a span of approximately120 hours each week. His old job became impossible and the only option was for him to empower the team and the development of leadership among all the team members
- A manager witnessed a substantial jump in productivity levels with the new team and discovered other parts of the manufacturing operation where found wanting. She established SLAs (Service Level Agreements) with all the internal and external suppliers to meet the new demands. The manager's new role as team leader was to be the primary link between the team and the 'suppliers', while keeping the team focused and interfacing with the customers

In both these situations there was a need for facilitation skills from the 'line manager' to help the team to help themselves and not be manager dependant. This was achieved by defining a continuum of empowerment. I usually publish a continuum of empowerment with the old line manager(s) and the team members; however, ensuring that the timelines are both short and realistic.

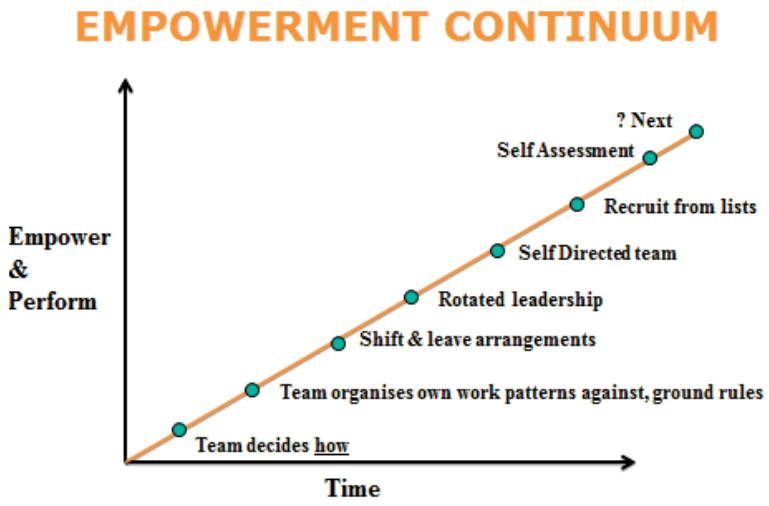

Fig 7.1

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Most managers can make the transition to team leaders by embracing the new role and not being precious about their old, redundant powers.

Fig 7.2 (Fig 1.2 repeated)

In great performing teams the team leader is sometimes indistinguishable from the team members and only comes to the fore when necessary. It is important to know when to let the team resolve issues themselves and when they need help. It is helpful to regard the team leader role as a facilitator with the purpose of building leadership throughout the team while retaining accountability.

In the chapter on empowerment we differentiated between the words 'responsibility', 'authority' and 'accountability'. When empowering individuals or a team you must give authority to act and make decisions with the allocated responsibility; however you cannot delegate or give away your accountability.

I have been accused when leading teams of applying the three **Ds**, that is, **Define, Delegate and Disappear**! There is an element of truth in that description of my own leadership style and I believe that it is okay, provided I don't abdicate my accountability or dump unwanted tasks.

Having been a rugby referee for many years, I learned the best referees were the ones you cannot remember. In many ways I feel that could be said of a good team leader, that is, they are unobtrusive yet the team experiences high achievement. This process of leadership of helping the team to think for self is examined under the heading of **Intervention Levels** (section 7.3).

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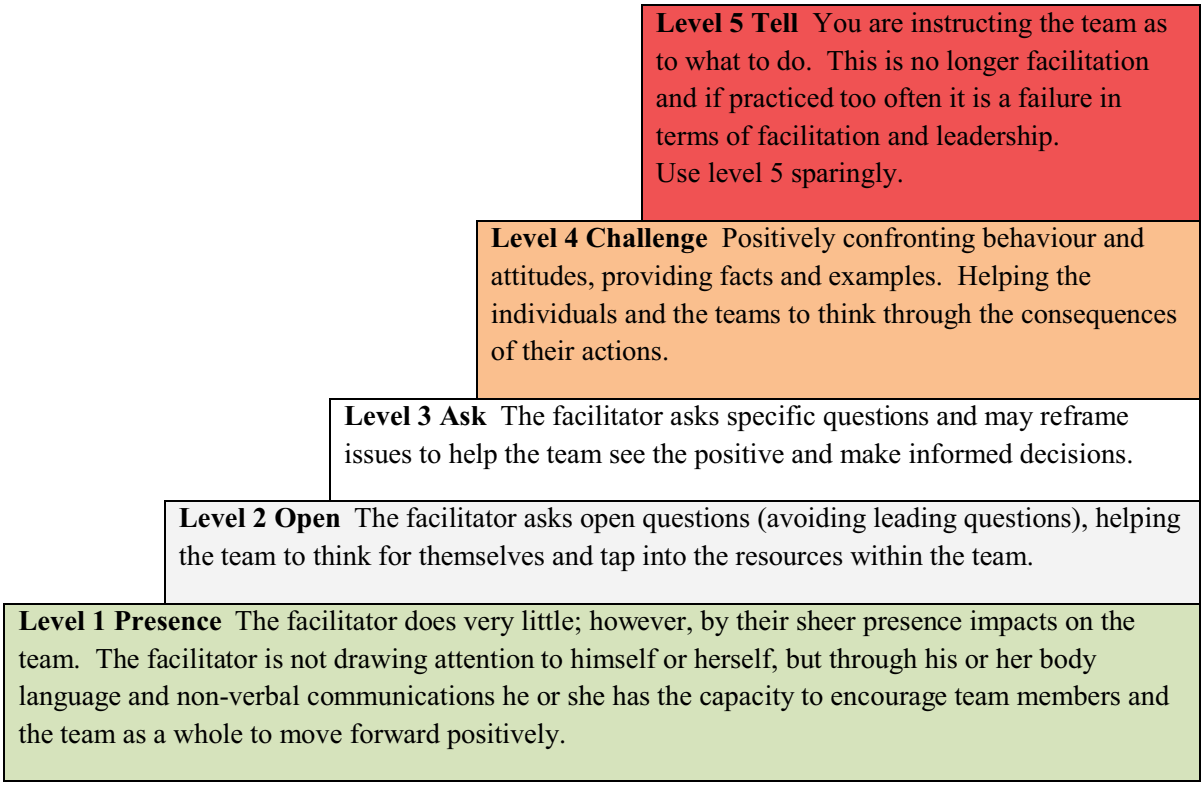
7.3 Intervention levels

Let me expand on what I mean by a team leader being a facilitator with accountability. I have a rule about choosing from the five levels of intervention when leading or working with teams. Low levels of intervention are best and at the highest level of intervention you are probably failing in your primary purpose of helping individuals or teams to help themselves.

Moving from left to right, and from bottom to top, the model illustrates the low-level interventions of **Presence**, **Open**, **Ask**, **Challenge** and the high-level intervention **Tell**.



While as leader you should adopt the facilitation tools listed above, a simple model for working as leader in a team is to take up an appropriate position from those described as **Position 1, 2 & 3** (**Fig 7.3**). Source: Wright Consultancy et al. The team leader needs to alert to the many roles and/or positions required of the leader. The emphasis in the model (Fig 7.3) is to demonstrate that Position 1 enables the leader to make good choices about appropriate levels of intervention or roles. Positions 2 and 3 require high levels of engagement from the leader making suitable choices more difficult to the team's needs.

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Leader Position 1 is encouraging you to focus on the future issues and network with other teams in the organisation. It is also the best position for choosing when to move to position 2 or 3.

Leader Position 2 is being a team member and participating fully while leaving leadership to the relevant experts within the team.

Leader Position 3 is claiming back some control and exercising discipline similar to a functional manager. If you need to do this on a frequently, then you should question the choices you are making, as it will kill the team spirit in the long run.

Fig 7.3

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Case Study 32 – Intervention level 1

Team frustration was caused during an outdoor team exercise when the team goal was unclear but evolving slowly. It was this vagueness of the team goal that was causing some conflict in the team. One of the team members was a very strong character (a Belbin **Plant**) who was more senior in the business than the rest of the team members; however, he was not the appointed team leader. His behaviour was generally unorthodox and he began asserting his authority and expressing his dislike of teamwork using expletives.

Out of frustration after one hour of wandering almost aimlessly around the hills of Connemara, he called the team exercise off and convinced the team to head for base, four kilometres way. The team looked for me, the exercise facilitator, to intervene as they wished to continue with the team task. I did nothing but walk with the team, trying to show no reaction. After one kilometre, I suggested that I call for transport on the two-way radio to bring the team back to base and I asked the team to wait at the road junction. I was hoping the waiting period would give the team a chance to assert itself and confront the senior manager's behaviour.

After a few minutes the silence was broken with one of the team members saying the team was making progress and why should he (Plant) dictate what the team did next. A second voice joined the chorus and within moments the team was on its way back to complete the task.

My intervention (level1) was to give the team space and time to confront the behaviour, which the team did, with a positive outcome.

The learning around taking responsibility for your own feelings and recognising that feelings are often the trigger for action was picked up in the summary review/critique session at the end of the task.

7.4 Leadership for all

During Wright Consultancy's longer team programmes, where individual team members had an opportunity to experience leadership roles, we would pose a question to team participants The question was a 'double-edged' question, that is, "What did you want a team leader to **do** to effectively lead you?" We also asked the question of team leaders, "What did you want a team member to **do** to support leadership?" The **do** part of the question was important as it moved the participants away from describing characteristics of their ideal leader and asked them to focus on the behaviours that impacted the most on them, as team members.

The question(s) was asked of approximately 2,500 programme participants over a number of years and the outcome is surprisingly simple (See **Fig 7.4**).

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Fig 7.4

It is the simplicity of the Leader behaviours and the Team Member behaviours that put leadership into the reach of the nominated Leader and of all the Team Members.

When you have team members taking responsibility for their actions, including feelings, leadership can become a lot easier.

This makes passing the leadership among team members almost a seamless activity as members in charge of specific activities come to the fore and then pass leadership on to others.

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7.4.1 Ernest Shackleton, an exemplary team leader

The reason I wish to single out Ernest Shackleton, Antarctica explorer, is for his style of leadership and how he related to his officers and men. While he never reached his goal of the South Pole, he brought all his men safely home and in particular his 16 day 800 mile (1,200 km) journey in an open boat to South Gerorgia in 1916 and his crossing of the island, a difficult feat by any standard.

The particular features of Shackleton's team leadership were:

He recruited people with a 'can do' attitude

He recognised talent and put ability before status

He choose wisely when putting people into positions of trust and empowered them

He put his men's safety and 'comfort' before his own ambitions

He led by example

He understood the need for high morale and grasps opportunities for fun and amusement, even in a harsh environment

Recruitment advert for Shackelton's expidition to the South Pole

MEN WANTED

for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.

Ernest Shackleton

7.5 High performance

When teams are working at a high performance level, the best of everyone's contribution is appreciated and synergy is the norm, delivering consistent high outputs. Sustainable high performance acts as a catalyst to the team members and increases their desire to remain within the team structures.

You have read of those breakthrough performances in a number of the case studies, for example:

Case study 2 – Quality system delivered within 6 months
Case study 4 – Giving control to the team to break a re-work record by 40%
Case study 22 – Step change in quality and productivity in fabrication shops
Case study 23 – Call centre help line, with customer and employee satisfaction
Case study 26 – Fastest and most productive installation of printing press
Case study 27 – New Self-Directed Work team productivity of 28%
Case study 28 Part B – Clothing factory whole team productivity
Case study 30 – Whole site delivering 30% cost saving in a crisis

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While the number of occasions in my own career where I felt I was a member of an exceptional team have been rare, there have been Aha! moments, when you realise this is as good as it gets as a team member or leader. Like a good dream you wish it will last and pinch yourself to see if it is true.

It is my wish that you the reader will embrace fully the team concepts and skills and you will have your own Aha! moments. Better still the whole team have it at the same time and the 'moment' will last for months or years.

7.6 The team journey

This book, with each of its chapters acting as milestones on a journey to high performance, has been preparing you for the exceptional output that comes from teamwork. A reminder of the listed milestones that were signposted in Chapter 2 and of the journey you have taken to high performance is repeated yet again!

- Burying the myths and raising the realities
- Understanding organisation culture and the team's potential starting point
- Establishing team goals and vision
- Establishing ground rules for effectiveness
- Meeting skills and positive contributions
- Recognising the team processes including the journey from 'Ritual Sniff' to 'Maturity'
- Developing team skills that will aid success
- Defining the team roles beyond pure functional roles and predicting future success or failure
- Understanding empowerment and its place, especially in self-directed work teams
- Having the level of openness and trust to share feelings and take responsibility for change
- Embracing high performance, celebration and fun
- Understanding the practice of leadership for all

On this journey you have explored 32 case studies, 37 illustrations and the one joke that pointed to the real enemy of teamwork, 'apathy' or at least complacency.

Sustaining this high level of performance and shared leadership is a difficult position to maintain. However, with the continuing use of the tools of critique/review, good feedback, especially praise, the high performance can be sustained. Eventually the team must be aware that all products, even teams have a life cycle. The end of the team's journey (adjournment) can be planned by the team rather than thrust upon it by outside forces.

Appendix 1, my memo to a self-directed work team is my encouragement to all of you who have a love of teams and who wish to see their growth and sustainability. The memo also acts as suitable summary to this book. Appendix 2 and the grid 9,9 (team) behaviours are recommended also.

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In honour of the team journey I conclude with a traditional Irish blessing.

Go n-éirí an bóthar leat

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

7.7 Summary of Chapter 7

Team leadership is very different from other forms of leadership. The broad definition of a leader as "having followers", makes a poor definition of a team leader.

Much unlearning may be necessary for line managers to move from being Solo Leaders to being Team Leaders. The task of making the transition to being a team leader is a lot easier if the leader is not precious about power and control and does not possess a large ego!

Applying the tools at the lower levels of the five intervention options is very appropriate to team leadership. The five levels of intervention are: Presence, Open, Ask, Challenge and Tell.

Practical leadership is very simple when it is understood what the team's expectations are of the leader and the leader's expectations are of the team. This is the true practice of leadership for all.

By the time the whole team matures, high performance even breakthrough performance (meaning establishing new benchmarks of excellence) become the norm and should be sustainable.

Even the best of teams have an end of life cycle; however, this should be determined by the team and not by others.

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7.8 The final myth

I will end with one myth, leaving the last word to Warren Bennis.

> **"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born – that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."**
>
> **– Warren Bennis**

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Memorandum of action and encouragement for self-directed work teams

Appendix 2 Recognising Grid Behaviours

Appendix 3 Critique Questionnaire

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Appendix 1

Memorandum

To: Jackie, Liam and Don

From: David Wright

Date: 3rd January 2005

Subject: Evaluation of progress on 15th December

Happy New Year to you all. It's time for some new-year resolutions.

The purpose of this memo is to highlight some actions from my visit. In part I will sound like an old record that is stuck in the grove, in that some of the issues in my September memo are highlighted here. At least I will be consistent with my message!

I am concerned about the slow pace of implementation. I recognise you (managers and supervisors) are busy and you know what you wish to achieve but the team members may have too little to show at this point of time.

I get the feeling that the SDWT (Self-directed Work Team) is being 'done' to the team rather than a stronger engagement/involvement process. As long as you have in place the following (as defined in the previous memo), you have little to be concerned about. Be sure you have:

Clear team and productivity goals

Establish good metrics (hard and soft)

Excellence in one-to-one coaching and development

Obviously both teams (Re-work and De-bug) are at different stages, so for the next part I will focus on Re-work. Also rather than be long winded in this Memo I will write this as a check list with a couple of appendices especially around meetings, one-to-one coaching and PDP (Personal Development Plans).

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Action checklist

1. The number of co-ordinator roles in too low considering the size of the team and the purpose here is engagement of the team. (See appendix)
2. The roles that have been defined are all on the 'task' side; process roles need to be defined
3. The supervisors are largely doing the same type of work they were doing before the SDWT process started. There needs to be a continuous shift to a different type of work for the supervisors, with the team picking up on supervisors' current tasks. For example the supervisors need to:

    - Undertake less checking and measuring. The team needs to do that and report exceptions to the Supervisor along with their proposed actions
    - More quality one-to-ones building the functional and team matrix
    - Revisit matrix and PDPs (Personal Development Plans)

    - Establish and enhance SLAs (Service Level Agreements) with internal and external services to the team

    - Get involved with Liam on providing the training
    - Help the teams agree their Ground Rules (hard and soft rules) and aid regular reviews of the rules (by 'soft' I mean relationship rules)
    - Introduce problem-solving tools that will help the team, for example De Bono's Six Thinking Hats and Six Action Shoes
    - Help establish the effectiveness of meetings but slowly withdrawing, however, ensuring there are milestone meetings to evaluate progress on the empowerment continuum and measure the team's feelings

As you can see from the list there is a role shift for the supervisors; that won't happen while the supervisor is caught up in the day-to-day routine. So some headroom (time) needs to created by passing on more responsibilities to the teams.

Contractors are a bigger and bigger feature of the modern workforce and you need to invest equally in their training & development and give them some of the co-ordinator roles also.

You do need to set out an empowerment continuum with specific dates for achievement and milestone reviews. You have a plan but it appears to be very 'controlled' and slow which runs contrary to the SDWT approach.

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Meetings

The points about meetings are mainly directed at the De-Bug Team who is well advanced on the empowerment continuum.

a) Can you re-visit the meeting notes from the Facilitator programme, where the agenda is divided into Information, Problem-Solving and Action items?
b) Define how you wish to spend your time, preferably on problem-solving items as this will engage the team (rather than just listening to others – Information items)
c) Spend time at the end of each meeting to critique and build the critique habit for the whole team process (later aids two-way feedback)
d) Apply known team problem-solving tools such as Six Thinking Hats
e) Ask the 'chair' to adopt the leadership role rather than a control role
f) Develop a l2-month key issue agenda based on the co-ordinator roles. See matrix below and suggested dates marked with an 'X'

Continue to build and strengthen the team matrix with a timetable for review

Coordinator Role ↓ & month →	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mh**	**Ap**	**May**	**Jn**	**Jly**	**Au**	**Spt**	**Oct**	**Nv**	**Dec**
Quality			X			X			X			X
Metrics	X			X			X			X		
SLAs		X						X				
Teamwork	X			X			X			X		
Health & Safety					X						X	
House keeping					X						X	
Fun				X						X		
Communications Internal team		X						X				
Communications Other teams & web		X						X				
Training & Development			X						X			X
Matrix Development			X			X			X			X

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This is where each item is dealt with in a substantive way while on other occasions the topic may just an information item and noted by the team.

The scheduled occasion should see milestone improvements, good presentation and everyone should be engaged in problem-solving and committing to action.

I hope the above points are useful. There is plenty there for you to adopt as New Year resolutions.

Contact me if you have any questions on david@consultwright.com

David Wright

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Appendix 2

Recognising Grid Behaviours

RECOGNISING 1.9 HARMONY BEHAVIOUR (NON-ASSERTIVE)

The following words and phrases give the flavour of the 1,9 oriented manager as described in daily activities

* Agreeable
* Appreciative
* Avoids negatives
* Can't say no
* Deferential
* Dislikes disagreement
* Excessively complimentary
* Overly eager to help
* Over trusting
* Remorseful at unintended slights
* Says nice and thoughtful things
* Sensitive, easily hurt
* Supporting and comforting
* Sympathetic and soft
* Thrives on harmony
* Uncontroversial
* Unlikely to probe
* Waits to hear what others think before speaking
* Withholds controversial convictions
* Yields to gain approval

RECOGNISING 1.1 AVOID BEHAVIOUR (NON-ASSERTIVE)

The following words and phrases give the flavour of the 1,1 oriented manager as described in daily activities

.

* Apathetic
* Bystander
* Defers
* Delays
* Disclaims responsibility
* Feedback doesn't register
* Gives up easily
* Inconspicuous
* Indifferent
* Lets things run their course
* Likely to miss new things that need to be done
* Neglects task responsibilities
* Noncommittal
* Non contributor
* "Putting in time":
* Resigned
* Stays out of the line of fire
* Volunteers few opinions
* Waits for others to take action
* Weak follow-through

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RECOGNISING 5.5 COMPROMISE BEHAVIOUR (NON-ASSERTIVE)

The following words and phrases give the flavour of the **5.5** oriented manager as described in daily activities

* Accommodates
* Cautious
* Compromises
* Conformist
* Evasive when challenged
* Expedient
* Indirect
* Likes the tried and true
* Negotiates
* Prefers middle ground
* Prefers to act on precedent
* Pulls punches
* Sandwiches bad between good comments
* Soft-pedals disagreement
* Stays on majority side
* Straddles issues
* Swallows convictions in the interest of "progress"
* Tests the wind
* Waffles
* Waits to see where others stand

RECOGNISING 9.1 TASK BEHAVIOUR (AGGRESSIVE)

The following words and phrases give the flavour of the **9,1**oriented manager as described in daily activities

* Controlling
* Cuts people off
* Decides and then tells people what to do
* Decisions are final
* Demanding
* Expects compliance
* Fault-finding
* Gets into win-lose fights
* Hard driving
* Has all the answers
* Impatient
* Interrogates
* Others keep their distance
* Overpowering
* Pushy
* Quick to blame
* Sees things in black/white terms
* Stubborn
* Taskmaster
* Tells people what to do but not why

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RECOGNISING 9.9 TEAM BEHAVIOUR (ASSERTIVE)

The following words and phrases give the flavour of the 9,9 oriented **team leader** as described in daily activities

* Candid and forthright
* Confident
* Decisive
* Determined
* Enjoys working
* Fact finder
* Focuses on real issues
* Follows through
* Gets issues into the open
* Has a "can do" spirit
* High standards
* Identifies underlying causes
* Innovative
* Open-minded
* Positive
* Priorities are clear
* Reflective
* Sets challenging goals
* Speaks mind
* Spontaneous
* Stands ground
* Stimulates participation
* Unselfish

Note for all five descriptions listed above:

Source: Blake and Mouton's Management Grid

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Appendix 3

CRITIQUE CHECKLIST

Part A MEETING STRUCTURES (Mechanics)

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Don't Know	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Circle the number which represents your view

I am notified of meetings in sufficient time to prepare for meetings	l 2 3 4 5
I understand why the meeting adds value	l 2 3 4 5
There is a clear agenda and timetable for each item listed	l 2 3 4 5
The meeting is the appropriate forum for the agenda	l 2 3 4 5
I understand what role is expected of me as a participant	l 2 3 4 5
Sufficient papers are sent out in advance to aid informed discussion	l 2 3 4 5
Ground rules are referred to and respected	l 2 3 4 5
Good summaries are provided at the end of discussions or topics	l 2 3 4 5
I feel my time at the meeting was time well spent	l 2 3 4 5
The right people were present	1 2 3 4 5
Minutes are live (on screen) or circulated at the end of the meeting	l 2 3 4 5
Clear action items are highlighted	l 2 3 4 5
Individual responsibilities for action are identified	l 2 3 4 5
I am clear about the outcome	l 2 3 4 5

Open comments on meeting/team mechanics:

Appendix 3 source: Wright Consultancy Limited

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CRITIQUE CHECKLIST

Part B MEETING PROCESSES AND BEHAVIOURS

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Don't Know	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Circle the number which represents your view

The attendees are enthusiastic about a shared goal	l 2 3 4 5
Each person contributes and regulates their input	l 2 3 4 5
There is good listening	l 2 3 4 5
Decisions are based on sound information and understanding	l 2 3 4 5
Consensus was reached and commitment given to the outcomes	l 2 3 4 5
Most items from previous meetings have been delivered	l 2 3 4 5
Good listening with very little cross talk takes place	l 2 3 4 5
Ideas, feelings and opinions were expressed with conviction	l 2 3 4 5
Differences were worked through to sound understanding	l 2 3 4 5
The team examined its working methods and initiated improvements	l 2 3 4 5
Everyone participated, both in functional and team roles	l 2 3 4 5
Individuals are challenged for non-delivery of tasks	l 2 3 4 5
Ideas added value and synergy	l 2 3 4 5
People take responsibility.	l 2 3 4 5
Leadership is practiced by all	l 2 3 4 5

Open comments on meeting/team mechanics:

Based on the 'mechanics' and 'process' scores, the team should compare individual results and identify the gaps. It is not about changing an individual's score or perception but to focus on what needs improvement.

Appendix 3 source: Wright Consultancy Limited

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