

High-Performance Teams

Keep it Simple

If you have ever worked on a great team, you can easily recall the personalities, the struggles and the way the team came together to achieve success. In my work, I see all kinds of teams. Some are in trouble and need immediate mitigation. Many are doing well but know that they could be doing even better. Then there are the select few who are hitting all cylinders. The high performing teams.

As organizations strive to remain competitive, high performance teams have become even more critical to our success. You may have the best technology, the most cost-effective processes, or you may have deep financial resources, but none of this will produce desired results unless you have people.

The research has been done and the results are clear. People engaged in a common goal will easily out match advantages in resources, processes, and capital. As we look to the future, this will not fade away like so many other management fads because no matter what the organizational goal, teams are paramount to success. With every person required to consciously contribute directly or indirectly to company goals, it is important to rethink how we work as teams and focus on high performing teams as integral parts of competitive companies' core strategy.

For example, teams have been at the core of organizational efforts to:

- Reduce product development time, costs and waste.
- Provide quality customer service and speedy turnaround time on customer requests.
- Collaborate with business partners around the world.
- Re-engineer work processes and improve the quality of products and services.
- Increase sales and improve after sales support.

Keeping It Simple

Although they function extremely well on many levels, high performing teams find the sweet spot of art and science as they are strategically created so that team players can achieve their professional and personal goals. Having worked with numerous organizations to develop or strengthen their team, I have seen that there are three key, yet simple actions great teams do consistently:

1. **Clarify**
Where are they going: personally, professionally, as a team and organization.
2. **Identify**
What are the potential roadblocks and obstacles that will hold us back.
3. **Address**
Create ground rules, expectations and best practices that allow for success.

Clarify

Create conversation within the team to ensure clarity and accountability are tied to the team's purpose. Importantly, make clear to the team what success looks like and ensure that they are empowered to achieve it. As a result, you may wish to focus the team on overall purpose and achieving results by setting explicit goals at personal, team and organizational level.

Identity

Once team purpose and goals have been generated, it is important to develop critical processes that ensure the team has the vital framework to achieve their goals. In addition, break through any existing or new barriers that prevent these processes from functioning effectively. Ensure that the team embraces a:

- What is working for us – as a team?
- What is not working for us – as a team?
- What is missing for us – as a team?

Asking these types of questions – *on a regular basis* - listening to your team and reflecting internally will help you identify where changes are needed to ensure the team remains high performing and focusing on the issues that matter most.

Address

Ensure the team regularly review progress against their team goals and make the vital adjustments to ensure success. Review each major team experience and share these across the business, then record the output and review, prior to any new team coming together. For example, the review process might include open questions such as:

- 'What contributed most to our team outcome?' as well as...
- 'What could we do differently next time?'

Consider where your team is now and the best steps to help them progress towards being a high-performance team. Importantly, you will achieve your goal more quickly if you bring your team along with you, so keep reviewing your teams progress.

With change as the only constant and globalization as a given, the successful teams will be the ones who can quickly adjust and work effectively with new and different people. Great teamwork will be adaptive, creative, visionary, supportive, flexible and candid. More will be expected and the people that thrive in this new world will both work and think outside of the box"... and at a *consistently high-performing* level.

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Corey's focus is to deliver meaningful and measurable strategies for organizations to harness team potential and create engaging leaders.