



Team Building for Rapid Results:

Improve Relationships & Remove Barriers

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Author of Managing B2B customers you can't afford to lose



\$9.99

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Published by Bennelong Publishing Pty Ltd
PO Box 500
St Ives NSW 2075
Australia

Editor: Jill Thain
Design and page layout: Hannah Kozicki

Author: Gary Peacock
Title: Team Building for Rapid Results: Improve Relationships & Remove Barriers
ISBN: 978-0-9945795-6-0
Subject: Problem Solving, Account Management
Other Authors/Contributors: Stephen Kozicki

This ebook is distributed internationally through Bennelong Publishing Pty Ltd. The authors can be contacted at www.bennelongpublishing.com for further information or inquiries on conferences, keynotes or workshops.

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Team Building for Rapid Results: Improve Relationships & Remove Barriers

Introduction: The Importance of Diverse & Motivated Teams

Organisations aren't getting the performance they need from their teams. Leaders are failing to effectively tap diverse work styles and perspectives.

Teams that bring different styles together enjoy many benefits of cognitive diversity; increased creativity and innovation; improved decision making.

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.

Michael Jordan

Successful teams need to be small, between six and ten participants. If you need a larger team, then break it down into smaller groups for regular problem solving sessions. When choosing the participant for each group, consider what complementary skills and attitudes each member brings.

Do participants:?

- Recognise opportunity
- Feel accountable for the entire companies success?
- Have the energy to persevere when the going gets tough?

When people start working together, the character of the team is revealed. The right team dynamics will enable the team to achieve great things.



Example of a successful diverse team

Within an executive team in Deloitte there are two individuals with very different styles, who managed to create a successful working partnership. The managing director valued expansive thinking and rapid advancement and led a large team dominated by extroverts. A lead researcher, processed things deeply, insisted on rigor and wouldn't be rushed.

For the managing director working with the researcher felt like trying to thread a needle in the midst of a hurricane. For the researcher working with the managing director felt like running in deep water. Initially things didn't always go smoothly. But with time they realised they were stronger working together.

The managing director always had the big picture in mind and trusted that the researcher would consider every detail. She provided a protective enclave so that the researcher could take cover to do what he did best.

Benefits of a Team

In a team, members are interdependent, they interact and depend on each other to achieve shared goals.

There has been much research about the benefits of teams. Wellins, Byham and Wilson (1991) summarise the benefits as:

- Improved service or product quality as employees have the authorization to troubleshoot any problems.
- Enhanced ability to deal with complex problem solving due to sharing information and the varying perspectives of the different team members.
- Creativity and innovation due to the varying ideas from a diverse team membership.
- Flexible and dynamic organisational responses as the team has the authority to make decisions and act on them without sign-off from different levels of organisational bureaucracy.
- Economic benefits from motivated and productive employees.



What makes an all-star team?

What's the difference between a team of all stars and an all star team?

1. Alignment on direction: each individual must have a shared belief in the end goal.
2. High-quality interaction: participants must trust each other and openly communicate, with a willingness to accept conflict.
3. Team members are energised to take risks: this will create an innovative environment, where individuals will learn from each other and outside ideas.

Deciding which problems to tackle is an important part of a successful project team. Choose issues that need a collective, cross-boundary expertise. Avoid issues that could be handled by individual business units or functions, as these problems or opportunities can be addressed as part of business-as-usual.

Each team member must have an appreciation of the value each other team member can bring to the team, and how a diversity of opinion and some conflict will lead to better and faster decisions.

Many project teams can benefit from having an impartial observer/facilitator in the initial sessions to help to identify and improve the team dynamics and initially keep the project focused.



So if motivated teams increase our companies productivity, how do we motivate our teams? Researchers at Cornell University have found a deceptively simple method: encourage teams to eat together. Check out their research here:

[Team Building in the Cafeteria](#)

ARTICLE

If you are looking a fun team building event involving food – why not learn how to ferment and gain extra health benefits for your team while improving your productivity, motivation and relationships:

[Corporate Team Building Events](#)

IDEA

What makes a team effective?

Effective teams are more than teams that accomplish their mission, or meet their goals.

Judge the effectiveness of a team by:

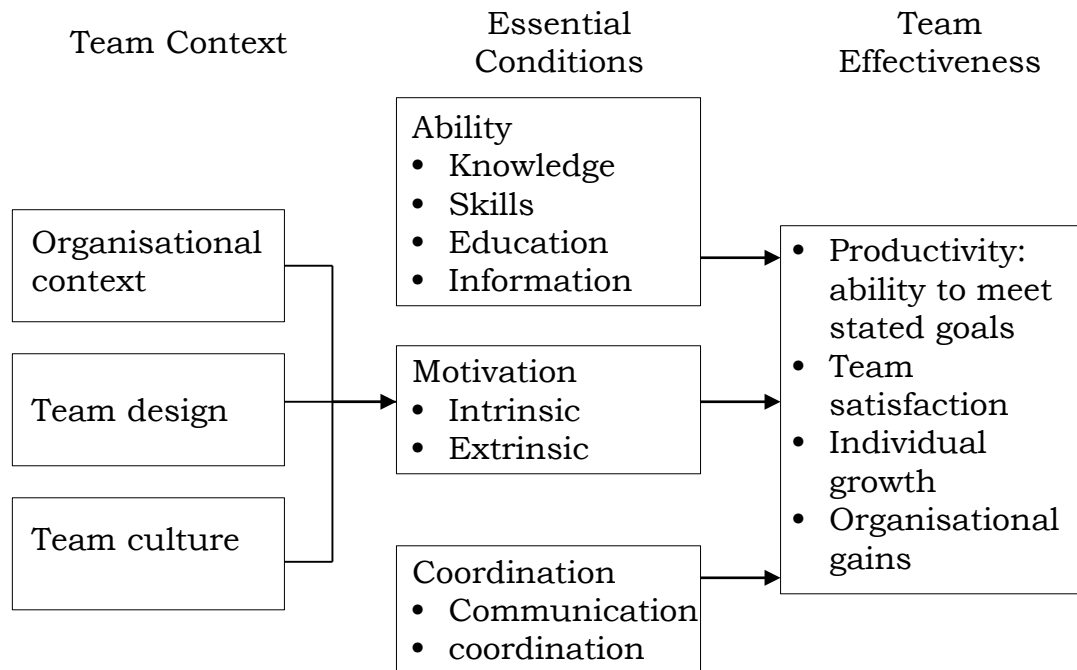
- The consequences the team has for the members. (Are the team members learning? Are they satisfied?)
- The long-term viability of the team. (Is the team sustainable or are members continually leaving?)
- Implications for other teams and departments. (Is the team integrating and coordinating its efforts with other teams and departments?)

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

Helen Keller



Team effectiveness model



Adapted from Thompson (2000)

This model specifies three essential conditions for a team to be effective:

- Team member ability
- Team member motivation
- A coordination strategy

You can do what I cannot do.
I can do what you cannot do.
Together we can do great things.

Mother Teresa



You need to put together a team that has the required knowledge, skills and ability to complete the tasks. The experience and skills possessed by members of a team affect team performance. Career and job-related skill performance leads to higher team performance.

Team member ability, however, is not enough on its own. Team members must also be motivated to apply their knowledge and skill. Including individuals in the process of deciding which problems to tackle, which solutions are best and the actions to be taken going forward motivates team members for the good of the team.

Highly capable and motivated team members are not sufficient unless they coordinate their activities. The benefits of team working are only realised if individuals work collaboratively. Coordination strategies such as goal-setting and good methods of communication need to be in place to ensure the team works effectively.



When a team outgrows individual performance and learns team confidence, excellence becomes a reality.

Joe Paterno

Training teams

To ensure a team is successful you will need to provide some training. Training teams together rather than individually is preferred because:

- It helps teams develop, test and run processes such as coordination
- It enables team members to build trust, which is necessary for sharing information and knowledge
- It develops a shared memory of the awareness and ability of the team to identify and process information. Teams develop an awareness of which team member has knowledge on which topic. Shared memory is also important in creative problem-solving.

Developing Leadership in Organisations

Organisations have spent billions of dollars on leadership training for their staff, but you can be forgiven if you haven't noticed any difference.

After the 2007 crash, journalist Philip Broughton (author of *What They Teach You at Harvard Business School*) reflected, "It should be a profound embarrassment to the faculty of Harvard Business School that, for the second time in less than a decade, it failed to identify an economic catastrophe in which its alumni played a starring role... if the business school's faculty is so smart, how come they didn't see all this coming?"

It's perhaps a bit unfair of Broughton to pick out Harvard Business School, these comments would equally apply to any of the business schools from around the world. When we add the wave of corporate scandals over the last couple of decades in which their alumni have featured, one might question how effective their leadership programs have been too?



What's the use
of running
if you are
running along
the wrong way.

German Proverb



Why are so many top leadership programs failing?

Well, firstly much 'leadership' training has really been 'management' training. Management training will improve your ability to dictate and manage individuals but not motivate, engage and develop individuals. While this is helpful you shouldn't expect an improvement of leadership from it.

Secondly, leadership programs have relied purely on 'behavioural' training with the assumption that practice makes perfect. While this is important, it takes time and reinforcement to change with this mechanism, and reinforcement has often been missing.

Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management thinks possible.

Colin Powell

There are two impactful ways to change behaviour. One is changing a person's paradigm (way of thinking) so it reflects reality better, and this can work instantly. The other is helping people understand how their brain works and so what feelings they are responsible for.

Let's look at the history of leadership development:

Successive approaches to try to improve leadership in corporations

**Trait Approach
(1930-50s)**

Leaders are born not made and effective leadership show common traits.

If you were a leader you would rise to the top. This was a neat black and white approach. If any organisation was going to buy into it (and they did), it would be the British Army. Even they gave this up 100 years ago.

**Behavioural
Approach
(1940-60s)**

Effective leaders adopt certain styles or behaviours.

This was the start of realising that leaders are made not born, and different behavioural schools adopted different 'key' behaviours. Unfortunately, when you realise that behaviour is not random but 'caused' by something internal (intention) and external (the environment), you realise this approach is missing too much to be effective on its own.

**Contingent
Approach
(1960-80s)**

What makes a leader effective depends on the situation.

This approach can be helpful but focuses solely on the external behaviours which makes it more a 'management' approach. It misses the key internal (intentional) part of the process and so misses the core part of leadership (self-leadership).

**Emotional
Intelligence
Approach
(1990-2010s)**

Emotional Intelligence has a far greater impact on the leader's performance than their intellect (or IQ).

Recognising that leadership is about relationship first, and 'no relationship then no leadership' was a big step forward. However, it still misses too much, such as level of complexity. Also, few would call someone a good leader who had high EQ which they used to manipulate others.

**Motivational
Approach
(2010s -)**

There is no known universal set of traits or personality styles which predict a good or great leader but what distinguishes leaders is their ability to motivate themselves and others.

This means that developing leadership and leadership intelligence is best helped by giving people a clear and insightful understanding of the fundamental levels of human motivation.

The Motivational Approach

Mark Oliver, the CEO of MarkTwo Consulting, has identified seven fundamental human motivations in a structure called the Universal Hierarchy (UHM).

UHM Level	Leadership / Management Approach	Drive for ...	Definition & Key Attribute Our motivation to ..	Focus
7	Inspirational Leadership	Meaning	Go both within ourselves and beyond ourselves (<i>self-transcendence</i>)	Selfless (focus on others)
6	Coaching Leadership	Wisdom	Understand fully and get the best outcome for all others in the long-term (<i>imaginative guidance</i>)	
5	Gallant Leadership	Courage	Knowingly risk ourselves, whether it is physically, emotionally, or mentally, to defend others (<i>determination to save others</i>)	
4	Service Leadership	Compassion	Put others' emotional needs before our own and help others (<i>generosity</i>)	
3	Persuasive Management	Power	Dominate others or our surroundings for our own sake (<i>control</i>)	Selfish (focus on ourselves)
2	Participative Management	Pleasure	Enjoy ourselves (<i>passion</i>)	
1	Directive Management	Survival	Stay alive (<i>safety</i>)	

Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in.

Alan Alda

Importantly there is no right or wrong, correct or incorrect motivation. However, the higher up your motivation is, you will have more impact on your life and more impact on the lives of those around you. Also, at times, you have to operate at lower levels – for instance everyone needs to eat, which is a level 1 (*survival*) motivation.

If you assume that leadership is done for others sake not your own, then leadership is altruistic and links to the top four UHM levels. Conversely management is more about getting what you want.

This explains and predicts much of human life and experience, and there is much more information in Mark's book:

[The Seven Motivations of Life](#)

BOOK



How can a Process Help?

Organisations cannot improve unless they consistently seek out and resolve their problems.

Most leaders pride themselves on their problem-solving ability. But if you watch how they work, you'll see that most behave instinctively rather than following a constant problem-solving approach.

Too often, they fail to define the real problem, rely on instinct rather than facts, and jump to conclusions rather than stepping back and asking questions. They confuse decisiveness with problem-solving and rush, before taking time to reflect, into action. Leaders need to commit to approaching problems methodically.

Have an openness to problem solving

Great problem solving begins with being able to acknowledge problems without judgement. Hidden problems don't get fixed and keep organisations from reaching their objectives. You need to understand that small problems matter as much as large organisational problems.

A true problem-solving organisation will have the ultimate goal for everyone in the organisation to own the responsibility and take the initiative to solve the problems that are most relevant to them. In these organisations people build capabilities more quickly and collaborate across internal boundaries more effectively.

For more information, read this McKinsey article:

[Building a problem-solving culture that lasts](#)

ARTICLE



Frontline employees come to see their role as to improve the way they work and own the processes they use everyday.

Taking part in team problem-solving gives people's jobs more meaning and creates an ethos of ownership, pride and trust.



The pressure to solve problems better and faster

Solving problems in a team often leaves many feeling frustrated. When working on complex problems in teams, teams take too much time or too little time. Teams take too much time because they do not have an agreed method to generate ideas or to select the best ideas. Teams take too little time because they generate too few solutions and then approve solutions quickly, without exploring all the possibilities. Teams that take too little time rarely challenge accepted ways of doing things.

Using a process allows teams to move faster, avoiding competition or conformity. When people compete, instead of looking for ways to develop ideas they look for ways to destroy ideas. When people conform it's usually because of social pressure or the status of some people in the room. Through the process you will generate more ideas faster and select ideas faster.

Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.

Edward de Bono

Take a Different View

If you find you always get the same results from your problem-solving/ innovation meetings – maybe it is time to take a different view.



Creativity arises from our ability to see things from many different angles.

Keri Smith

Companies are hampered with innovation by something that causes people to overlook simple solutions hidden in plain sight – Functional Fixedness.

Functional Fixedness

In the 1930s, the German psychologist Karl Duncker demonstrated the phenomenon of functional fixedness with a famous brainteaser. He gave subjects a candle, a box of thumbtacks, and a book of matches and asked them to find a way to affix the candle to the wall so that when it was lit, wax would not drip onto the floor.

Many people had a hard time realising that the answer was to empty the box of tacks, attach the candle to the inside of the box with melted wax, and then tack the box to the wall. The box acts as a shelf that supports the candle and catches the dripping wax.

Because the box had been presented to subjects as a tack holder, they couldn't see it any other way.

Tony McCaffrey and Jim Pearson use this example and the disaster of the Titanic to show how you can find innovation where you least expect it:

[Find Innovation Where You Least Expect It](#)

ARTICLE

Reframing your problem and looking at it from different perspectives or viewpoints can help you to find different solutions – many of them different to the usual raft of solutions.

There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception.

Aldous Huxley

Eric Knight explains how to solve the world's trickiest problems, based on his book with the same name. He explains how a change of focus can reveal a solution that was lying just outside your frame of vision.

[Reframe: how to solve the world's trickiest problems](#)

BOOK



Barriers to innovation are pervasive and predictable, but not that strong. The simplest and easiest way to overcome them is to help people notice what they have been overlooking. Take a different view and see what is right in front of you.

Why teams don't work?

There is a complexity to teamwork that is often overlooked when pulling a team together.

Hackman (1990) from Harvard, identified some reasons why teams don't work – he calls these 'trip wires'.

Trip wire #1: Call the unit a team but manage members as individuals

If the career and reward system only assesses individual performance, then there is no incentive to work collaboratively. Action must be taken to build a team and establish boundaries, giving the team authority to manage their internal processes and relationships, internally and externally.

Finding good players is easy.
Getting them to play as a team is another story.

Casey Stengel

Trip wire #2: Fall off the authority balance beam:

There needs to be a careful balance between managerial and team authority. Managers need to provide direction (where the team is aiming) and set outer limit constraints on team behaviour (things the team must never do). However, the team must have full authority for the methods to accomplish their tasks.

Great things in business are never done by one person.
They're done by a team of people.

Steve Jobs



Trip wire #3: Assemble a team, inform them of the goal and leave them to sort out all other details:

Teams must have an enabling structure to succeed. Teams cannot be left to develop their own internal processes. An enabling structure has three elements:

- A well-defined team task that engages and sustains team members' motivation.
- A well-composed team (as small as possible) with clear boundaries, including members with technical and interpersonal skills. The team should be a good mix of different types of people.
- Clear and specific expectations of the extents and limits of the teams accountability and authority limits.

Trip wire #4: Give challenging team objectives, but minimal organisational support:

Providing reward, training and information systems that don't align with teamworking. Failing to ensure the team has the necessary resources to succeed (equipment, tools, space, money and staff).

Trip wire #5: Assume members are competent team workers

Teams need coaching and development to obtain the skills required to work successfully as a team.

Virtual Teams

Virtual teams are becoming more common as more team members are not located together, or have members from outside your organisation.

Definition of virtual teams by Townsend et al (1998):

Virtual teams are groups of geographically and/or organizationally dispersed co-workers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organisational task. Virtual teams rarely, if ever, meet in a face-to-face setting. They may be set up as temporary structures, existing only to accomplish a specific task, or may be more permanent structures, used to address ongoing issues, such as strategic planning. Further membership is often fluid, evolving according to changing task requirements.



Why is there an increase of virtual teams

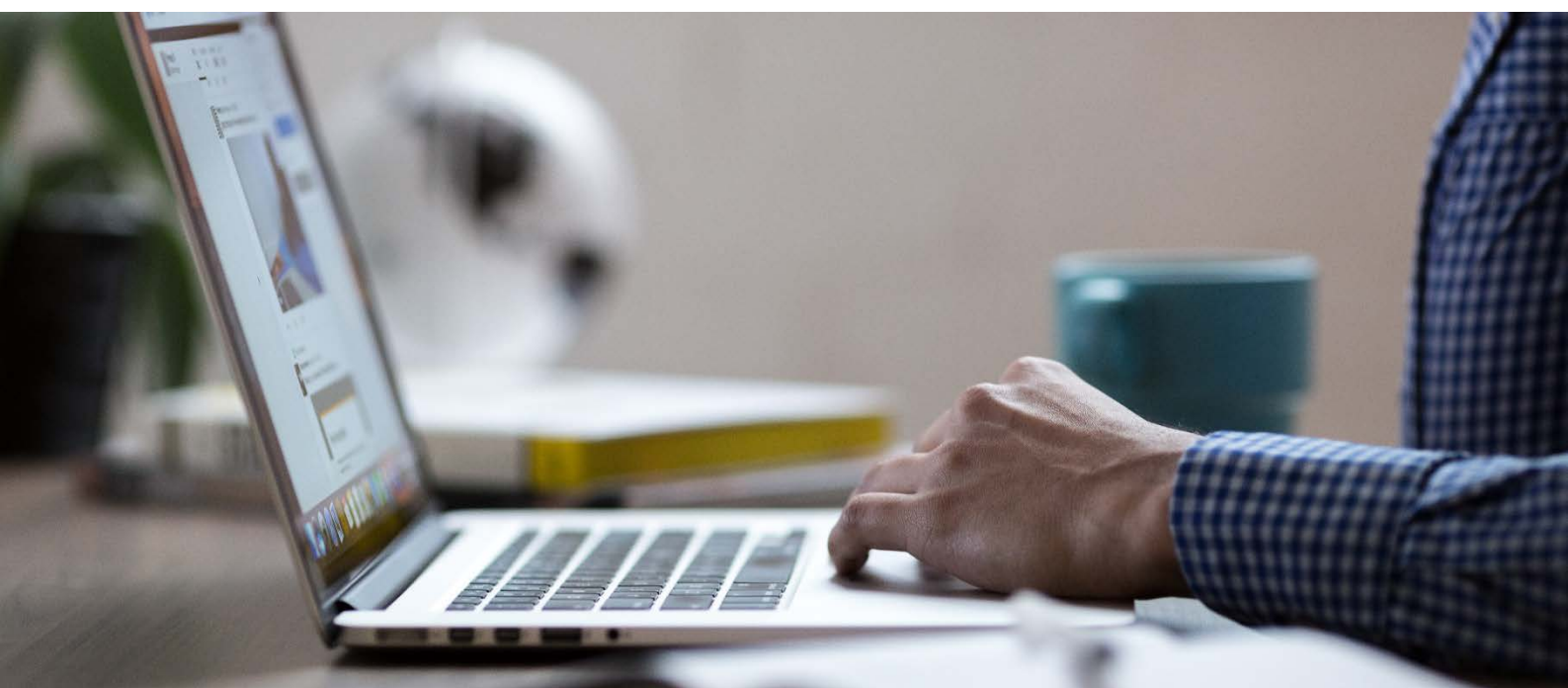
There are a number of forces that have driven the increasing use of virtual teams. With an increase in the complex and disruptive nature of our work environments, that is a need for inter-organisational cooperation and synergy. Individual workers have changed their expectations and many more now expect to be able to work remotely. There has been a shift from production and manufacturing towards service and knowledge work. The world of business is also becoming more global.

Virtual team members require great skills

Challenges facing virtual teams highlight how traditional performance factors (goal clarification and communication) are even more important in virtual teams.

Team members:

- will be more diverse (including different cultures) requiring greater communication skills.
- will be challenged to adapt to the new technologies that link the team.
- will need to be adaptive to a changing variety of assignments.
- might have many alliances outside their virtual team.
- must learn new ways to express themselves and communicate.
- will need to quickly assimilate into the virtual team as the team membership will be fluid.





Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

Charles Mingus

Chapter

Questions to Challenge You

1. Do your staff feel accountable for the success of the whole organisation?
2. Do you have a process for problem-solving in your organisation?
3. Do you reward your teams as individuals or teams?
4. Do you support your teams for success in your organisation?
5. Do your teams have the necessary authority to succeed?
6. Do you use virtual teams in your organisation? Do you support the technology as well as the traditional requirements of teams?

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The Problem

The products and services of many organisations are becoming commoditised, with the emergence of niche competitors that can provide true value to customers.

To get competitive advantage, organisations need to solve problems internally and externally with fewer departmental barriers.

The Future

To succeed and grow in this new disruptive world you need to bust silos, engage your teams and ensure everyone feels responsible for the success of the whole organisation.

Improving the problem-solving skills of your people while improving relationships and removing barriers is the quickest way to increase your business results now and into the future.

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