

Making Teams Successful

**Product Genesis Symposium
October 18, 2005
(Tuesday, 10:45 – 11:45)**

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Groups Offer Both Advantages and Disadvantages

- More varied experiences and perspectives
- Multiple interpretations
- Greater openness to new ideas
- Increased flexibility
- Increased creativity
- Improved problem solving
- Improved understanding of diverse views
- Increased ambiguity
- Increased complexity
- Increased confusion
- Increased mistrust
- Potential miscommunication
- Difficulty in reaching agreements
- Difficulty in reconciling diverse perspectives
- Difficulty in reaching consensus

Cross-Functional Teams Must Be Effective and Responsive In Both Their Creative And Implementation Modes

Some Effective Team Characteristics

- Compelling/articulated vision or mission
- Alignment of priorities
- Energizing work
- Uniform effort, commitment, and competency
- Assigned vs. self-selection
- Team-established norms
- Problems and resources are "owned" by all members

Some Common Team Problems

- Team apathy (biggest complaint my project team managers)
- Continuity of key talent or sponsorship (biggest inhibitor to the development process)
- Dealing with "disruptive behavior" (biggest problem in building team norms)
- Ability to function collaboratively (biggest discrepancy between leaders and team members)
- Added-value sponsorship (biggest concern of team)
- Organizational rewards (biggest oversight by management)

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- Why do we have teams in organizations – what is the purpose of a team – why do we need them?
- What is a good set of criteria for judging team success?
- How are high performing teams created and can they sustain their creative performance as their members continue to work together and if so, how?
- How do we manage creative individual contributors in a team playing context?
- Are teams likely to make riskier or less risky decisions than the average team member would have made?
- Are teams likely to amplify or lessen individual performance and creativity?

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- Why do we have teams in organizations – what is the purpose of a team – why do we need them?
 1. Common problem formulation and definition
 2. Identify key assumptions
 3. Early identification of problems
 4. Overcome fundamental attribution error

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- What is a good set of criteria for judging team success?
 1. How well does the team's performance meet the expectations of those using, reviewing, or benefiting from its output?
 2. To what extent is the team more capable and in a stronger position to maintain its creativity and overall effectiveness?
 3. Does working on the team contribute to each individual member's learning and well being?

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- How are high performing teams created and can they sustain their creative performance as their members continue to work together and if so, how?
 1. Motivation is not a constant – it changes over time.
 2. Understanding the affects of *team aging*.
 3. Managerial and leadership implications.

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- How do we manage creative individual contributors in a team playing context?
 1. Exciting potential or frustrating disruption.
 2. Relative importance of teams versus creative individual contributors.
 3. Managing, shaping, clarifying the role of creative individual contributors and teams of creative individual contributors.

Making Teams Successful: Some Important Questions

- Are teams likely to make riskier or less risky decisions than the average team member would have made?
- Are teams likely to amplify or lessen individual performance and creativity?
 1. Influence of team member characteristics and abilities
 2. Influence of leadership
 3. Influence of rewards
 4. Influence of culture

If People, Groups and Organizations Function to Reduce Uncertainty, Then High Performing Teams Need:

- "Marshaling" events that generate uncertainty

coupled with

- Leadership activities that turn anxiety into purposeful energy

Six Preliminary Observations of "Marshaling" Events

1. Combinations of "real" performance gap and opportunity information
2. Team no longer confined by prior business assumptions, beliefs, and/or practices
3. Team's leadership proactively changes senior management from passive reviews to active sponsorship
4. Team takes on an "on a mission" mentality—no safety net
5. Interdependence achieved through stretched goals and stretched resources
6. Team members had prior experience "playing" with the enabling technologies

Problem Categorization

1. **Current Performance Gap**
e.g., loss of market share, being late to market, revenue gap
2. **Current Opportunity Gap**
e.g., products or service weaknesses, changes in products or service's functional characteristics, new customer segments, degree of market penetration
3. **Future Performance/Opportunity Gaps**
e.g., changes in market demographics, changes in market conditions, changes in government regulations, technical advances