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*Leading4Success*<sup>®</sup>

# *Leading Teams*

*“The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.” - Kenneth Blanchard*

# Leading Teams

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iSpeak® prepared this workbook for use in the area of Professional Development and Training for continuing education. It is intended that these materials will be used to assist participants in the learning process during a training workshop, after the workshop for review, and continued learning as a reference guide.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Curriculum Contributors:

Kevin J. Karschnik  
Cynthia Oelkers  
Russ D. Peterson, Jr.

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## Unit One: The Foundation of Teams

*“It is better to have one person working with you than three people working for you.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower*

**T**he word team itself is an acronym for Together Everyone Achieves More. In the 1930’s Babe Ruth said, “The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don’t play together, the club won’t be worth a dime.” Whether the focus is on service, quality, cost, value, speed, efficiency, or performance, most organizations use teams to achieve their goals.

There is no magic formula for building a high performance team. When team members know the goals of the organization, understand their roles and responsibilities on the team, agree with the methods for communication, coaching and giving feedback, and are inspired to pursue the team goals over their own, success is imminent. The figures below exemplify the importance of team development.

- The Journal of Management, David Day and Robert Lord found that the differences in the quality of leadership explain as much as 45% of a team’s performance.
- In the book “Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us”, by Daniel H. Pink, he examines the three elements of true motivation in the workplace:
  - The desire to direct our own lives: \_\_\_\_\_
  - The need to get better at something that matters: \_\_\_\_\_
  - The yearning to do something larger than ourselves: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dysfunctional Teams

*“The ratio of We’s to I’s is the best indicator of the development of a team.” - Lewis B. Ergen*

The perfect team does not exist. The goal of the team leader is to create an environment in which all the team players are willing and able to step up to meet the defined challenges.

### Apollo Syndrome

Dr. Meredith Belbin is a highly recognized professor of Team Building. In his book *Management Teams (Belbin, 1981)* he documented a phenomenon he called the Apollo Syndrome. When teams composed of highly analytical and intellectual individuals were asked to compete in their area of expertise against other teams, they finished poorly or near the bottom of the rankings. The initial perception was that if you could create a “dream team” of intellectuals for these competitions, you would be guaranteed to outperform every other team. Why did they often fail? The answer lies in the operational procedures of the teams:

- **Egos:** The team seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time in negative debate. Members took pride in pointing out weaknesses in the other members’ arguments.
- **No consensus:** Because of their tendency to argue for the sake of argument, decision making became a difficult task and members could not reach consensus on the issues.
- **No leader:** The team was without an obvious leader and they were difficult to manage. Each member pursued their own lines of interest without considering the work of others.
- **Over-compensating:** Even when the teams did recognize that they needed to compromise and come to a decision, they still avoided confrontation and conflict.

### Dysfunctions of a Team

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni explores the fundamental causes of organizational politics and team failure. His model has become the standard for eliminating the natural tendencies which derail teamwork and create costly, organizational politics. The five dysfunctions are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Team Exercise

*“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” - Andrew Carnegie*

Communicating and working as a team involves a level of trust, as well. In our workplace we represent many different teams, our department, our geographic location, our corporate function, our corporate division, and our company as a whole. We all work on our teams with the best of intentions. What can make teamwork a struggle is when the goals of one team you represent are in direct conflict or contrast to another team you also represent. This can create internal struggles as well.

In some corporate situations, conflict can be reduced to the most negative extremes causing poor performance and ill-feelings toward others. In reality, conflict can be positive and play a beneficial role in the development of the ecosystem the teams reside in.

### Exercise: Red and Blue

Follow the facilitator’s instructions to participate in the group exercise. Use the blank lines below to record your thoughts as the scenario progresses. Share your thoughts during the debrief time.

What did you think was most difficult about this scenario? Why?

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What can you learn from this exercise as it relates to communication and teamwork?

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Exercise: Leader Assistance for each Phase

For each Team Phase listed below, define what the leader should do to assist their team in this phase.

**Forming Phase:** As the leader, what should you do to assist the team?

In this stage, motivation for the team is typically high and technical skills may be low for many or all the team members. The team leader's role will be one of heavy direction. She will set the agenda, provide background, help set up procedures, provide training, and give frequent feedback related to performance.

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**Storming Phase:** As the leader, what should you do to assist the team?

Once the team reaches the Storming stage, disillusionment may set in. Members may see the tasks ahead as insurmountable because their skills and relationships are not yet developed. This may cause them to lose motivation. A team leader's role in this stage is more mixed: she will still provide heavy direction and feedback in terms of technical skills, but she will also begin to move into the encourager role. This is accomplished by recognizing the team's efforts, rewarding small victories, removing roadblocks, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and mediating conflicts.

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## Unit Summary

Not all teams work well together. Managers and leaders are responsible for a group of individuals and will ultimately deal with certain problems. There are common types of problems that teams encounter which could lead to wasted energy, poor outcomes, loss of confidence, a sense of frustration and poor productivity.

- Teams can fail for many different types of reasons.
- Functional Teams are teams that do the following:
  - Implement a framework for discussions
  - Focus attention on setting objectives, prioritizing and shaping team efforts
  - Are tough and discriminating without dominating the group
- Bruce Tuckman's phases of team development include four key phases:
  - Forming – Where teams are coming together. This is called the infancy of the team.
  - Storming – Where teams are in their adolescence and begin to bicker amongst themselves.
  - Norming – Is the young adult phase of the team development where team members become more comfortable with each other
  - Performing – Is the mature adult phase of the development process. Teams in this phase have found their stride and work well together.
- At any point, a team can revert back to a previous phase of the team development process.
- Synergy is the term used to describe a situation where different entities cooperate advantageously for a final outcome.
- Synergy results with a team that uses problem solving methods, has trust with interpersonal skills and has valuable individual expertise to pull from.

## Unit Two: Team Infrastructure

*“We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately.”*  
- Benjamin Franklin

**T**eams are formed on a daily basis in business. Some teams are short-term project teams that will only be together for several weeks. Other teams come together as more permanent fixtures, such as work groups that are a part of the official organizational chart. In either case, the beginning of a team marks the Formation Phase. In this phase, team members learn about each other, individual styles are discovered, and roles, responsibilities, and processes are established.

In the Forming stage, team members will often feel anxiety as the team is learning about itself. The role of the leader will be to direct the team by establishing a clear initial objective and rules for working together.

### **Unit Objectives:**

- Learn how to build relationships on a new team
- Learn the key elements of a meeting agenda
- Learn the important elements of team contracts
- Assess your team’s readiness
- Conduct a team player assessment to recognize team player styles

**Exercise: Create a Team Agreement**

Follow the facilitator's instructions and individually define the important elements of a team agreement in your MAP.

How will you know when the team is successful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the team communicate with each other? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will the team deal with conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What will be the process for meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How and when do you want the team to involve you?? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Team Communication

*“The genius of communication is the ability to be both totally honest and totally kind at the same time.” - John Powell*

Executives of Fortune 500 firms that were surveyed on the most beneficial skills for excelling in professional business have year in and year out ranked communication skills at the top of the list. Effectively communicating with peers, subordinates and the executive management team eliminates wasted time, effort and expenses.

While we speak and communicate with others with the best of intentions, our messages can be misinterpreted if not delivered effectively. This delivery will include emphasis on three vital areas called the Visual, the Verbal and the Vocal. Our messages are most powerful and persuasive when all three of these areas are in alignment and sending the same message.

### Consistent Communication

It is vital to the success of the team that the defined objectives be measured and progress communicated regularly. The team must be able to identify how their current performance is measuring up to the standards set for the group. The consistency of the communication achieves several objectives:

- The team will have a sense of how their performance measures up
- It will exemplify a sense of urgency and importance
- It shows that management is truly concerned with the metrics and performance
- It will ultimately lead to improvements in performance

### Barriers to Effective Communication

We are all human and sometimes it may be difficult to stay focused on the communication exchange with your employees. Some factors that can get in the way of effective communication may be:

- Not allowing enough time to deal with the person or situation
- Your mood or personal feelings about the person or situation
- External distractions (other employees, music, talking, crowded environment, etc)
- Multitasking (working on other tasks while communicating with another person)

### Exercise: Modes of Communication

List examples of when you should and should not use each of the modes of communication.

Mode of Communication	Should	Should NOT
Email		
Text message		
One-on-one phone call		
Conference call		
One-on-one in person conversation		
Team Meeting		

**Exercise: Understanding Team Player Styles**

As a group, write and perform a public service announcement from perspective of your team player style. Be creative! Illustrate your type through your presentation. Include information on your team player style and incorporate the answers to the questions below.

What are you like at your best (strengths)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are you like at your worst (trouble spots)? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can other team member types maximize your style in our teams?

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## Communication Traps

*“There are no facts, only interpretations.” - Friedrich Nietzsche*

Older communication models were based on the theory that messages were transferred from one person to another by taking an idea from one person and directly transferring it to another. No interpretations or other variables were considered.

Modern day communication models take into account numerous other variables that can affect the interpretation and the impact of a message. Each variable must be considered to fully understand and appreciate the many ways a misunderstanding (and therefore a conflict) could occur.

- Sender encoding** The sender of a message may choose to utilize certain grammar, vocabulary, body language, eye movement, punctuation, visual aids, or props to communicate her message. Depending on the choices made for encoding, the same message can be interpreted many different ways.
- Channel medium** The channel medium selected for delivering a message can dramatically affect the impact of the message. If you are being laid off, you would appreciate the message being delivered in person as opposed to a printed letter mailed to your house or an email.
- Receiver decoding** When the receiver obtains the message it goes through a decoding process. The message is digested by the receiver as it passes through several filters that may include past experiences, biases, education, assumptions, emotions and distractions. All of these will affect the meaning of the message.
- Frame of reference** Both the sender and receiver interpret messages through a filter of his or her own biases, education, and experience. Conflict can arise when each person looks through a different lens to draw meaning from the message.
- Context** The context in which a message is received can dramatically alter the interpretation and meaning. The same statement made to someone at the end of a business meeting could have dramatically different interpretation if made to someone sitting next to you at a bar.
- Feedback** Once a message is transmitted, we depend on feedback from the receiver to know if he or she understood the message the way we intended it. Without feedback, chances are higher that they receiver could misinterpret our meaning or intentions.
- Noise** Noise is the definition for all of the distractions that may affect the encoding or the decoding process. Distractions that cause a sender to leave out one crucial word, like “not” may completely change the meaning of the message.

## Conflict Defined

*“The silence often of pure innocence persuades when speaking fails.”*  
- William Shakespeare

Since you can't prevent conflict, the most important thing is to learn how to handle or manage it in productive ways. In many industries, the amount of time spent on conflict management is surprisingly high. A study by the American Management Association says that managers spend at least 24% of their time on managing conflict. Hospital administrators, school administrators, mayors, and city managers spend even more time on this problem area.

Conflict comes in good (functional) and bad (dysfunctional) forms. Conflict does not have to always be viewed as something that is bad. Conflict creates tension, and tension creates motivation for change. The motivation to change spurs us on to improve. With each conflict you encounter, focus on creating a functional result. In other words, look for positive outcomes to avoid dysfunctional conflict. Recognizing and dealing openly with conflict creates the greatest outcomes.

### Conflict Defined

Webster's dictionary defines conflict as a competitive or opposing action of incompatibles or a mental struggle resulting from opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands. During class we will refer to conflict as a **disagreement** through which the **parties involved perceive a threat** to their **needs, interests or concerns**.

### Exercise: Pros and Cons of Conflict

In the spaces below, list the positive and negative aspects and outcomes from conflict.

#### Positive Aspects of Conflict

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Negative Aspects of Conflict

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

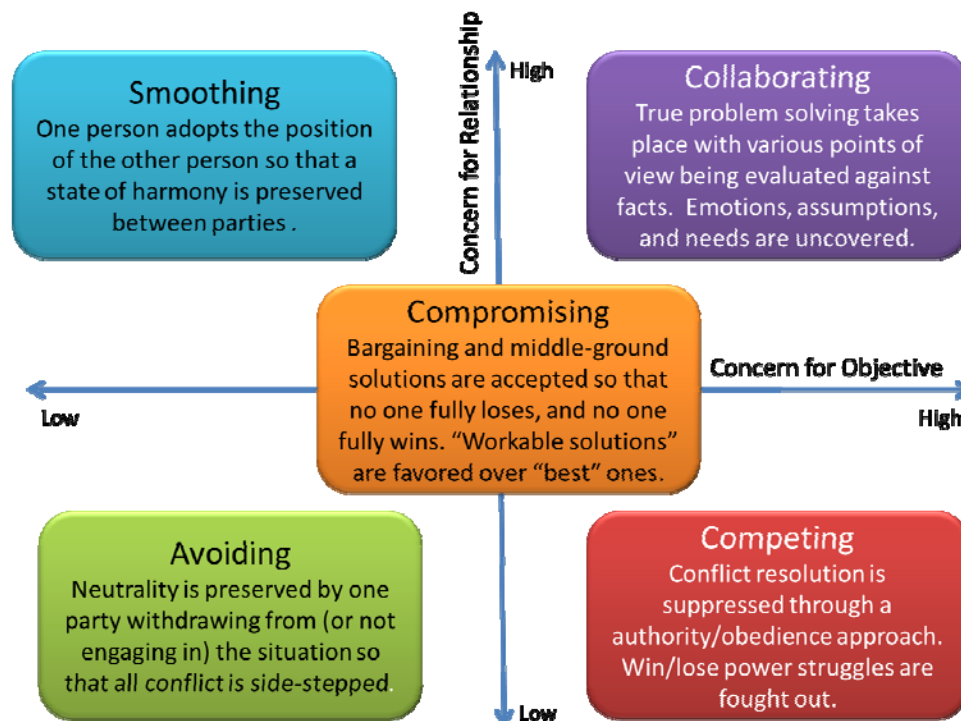
## Conflict Response Strategies

*“Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.”*  
– Ronald Reagan

In 1974, Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann introduced their Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. This instrument is referred to as the TKI and it popularized conflict style inventories.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument uses the Jane Mouton and Robert Blake axes, one axis defines the “concern for people” while the other axis defines the “concern for the task.” Plotting a style on these two axes will identify which of the five different styles of dealing with conflict is preferred. The five conflict styles are:

- **Competing** (assertive, uncooperative) Forcing an issue to one’s own way.
- **Avoiding** (unassertive, uncooperative) Staying away from or withdrawing from a conflict.
- **Smoothing** (unassertive, cooperative) Giving in to the other party and ignoring one’s own goals.
- **Collaborating** (assertive, cooperative) Focusing on one mutually satisfying outcome.
- **Compromising** (intermediate assertiveness and cooperativeness) Giving in on one need in order to get another satisfied.



Exercise: Conflict Response Strategies

Read the scenarios and identify the best conflict response strategy for each situation.

“That is the third call I’ve taken this week where one of the sales people has promised a delivery date that is inaccurate!” said Jeff. Jeff worked in the customer service department and was very aware of the backorder on certain products, as was the rest of the company. The production department posted weekly updates for the entire company on backorders for different products. Jeff knew that the sales group was aware of these shortages, but they seemed to be making promises that could not be kept, just to make a sale. Jeff notified his manager, Lori. “Typical. That is just typical. I will schedule a meeting to speak to Sharon, the VP of sales. This has got to stop before we ruin our reputation. I’ve worked with her for over three years and I know we can get sales, production and service in synch.”

What conflict response strategy would be best for this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What conflict response strategy would be worst for this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Clay walked into his manager’s office and threw a proposal on his desk. “Ray, if I don’t get someone in legal to look over this proposal by the end of today, I’m afraid this business is going to go to our competition.” Clay was disappointed in his manager’s ability to provide him with the tools and support he needed to get his job done properly. Ray looked up at Clay and asked, “Have you sent it to legal already?” Clay responded by saying, “Of course I did. And a typical response... ‘I’ll get it to you in a week!’ I can’t sell in an environment like this! Either you start cracking the whip with the legal group, or I’m going to start updating my resume.” Ray was tired of the constant whining that he got from Clay. This seemed to be a rerun of his weekly rant. Ray was tempted to do nothing and call Clay’s bluff about updating his resume. As an experienced manager, he knew better. He asked Clay to shut the door and sit down.

What conflict response strategy would be best for this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What conflict response strategy would be worst for this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

## Assertive Acknowledgement

*“The basic difference between being assertive and being aggressive is how our words and behavior affect the rights and well being of others.” - Sharon Anthony Bower*

In some cases, you will initiate the conversation with another individual to address a particular issue. This is called assertive acknowledgement of an issue. You must be assertive in raising the issue for discussion.

### The Formula

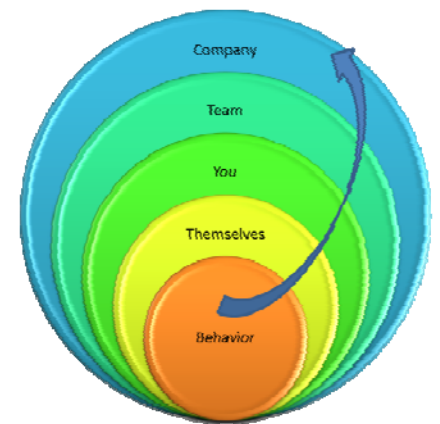
1. “When you...”  
Describe a specific behavior in a non-judgmental way
2. “The effects are...”  
Describe the practical problems or issues caused by the behaviors
3. “I feel...”  
Describe how you feel as a result without saying “you make me...”
4. “I prefer or would like...”  
Describe the new behavior you would like the person to do

### Behavior

Describe the behavior in a specific manner. By making the feedback specific the individual knows that you understand exactly what they are doing and that you are being sincere.

### Effects

Describe the impact of the person’s behavior on several levels, if possible. The diagram on the right shows how the behavior could affect them, you, the team, or the company.



### Feel

Describe how the situation makes you feel. Descriptions could include words like disappointed, let down, frustrated, or disrespected.

### New behavior

Describe the new behavior you would like the person to do, again being specific so they understand exactly what is expected of them moving forward.

### Example of Assertive Acknowledgement

“When you arrive late to the Monday morning meeting, the effects are that the flow of the meeting is disrupted, the speaker has to repeat information to catch you up, and you may miss important information you need to do your job. I feel disappointed that it happened again today after we spoke about it last week. I would prefer that you arrive 10 minutes early each Monday to help me set up the room.”



Exercise: Brainstorming

Work as a group to brainstorm potential solutions for one of the member's conflict issues. Utilize the previously defined tools with your facilitator's guidance to generate as many solutions as possible.

**Problem or issue:** Students in the Business Presentations course would like to take their classroom videos home after class, but the mini-DVD recording technology is become obsolete.

Ideas from the student's point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas from the instructor's their point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas from the CEO's point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Problem or issue:** Reducing travel costs.

Ideas from the employee's point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas from the manager's their point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas from the CEO's point of view: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Selecting a Solution

*“It is better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong, than to be always right by having no ideas at all.” - Edward de Bono*

Now that we have several solutions in mind, it’s time to evaluate the solutions to see which are feasible. Since there are many processes for evaluating the ideas you have generated, take care to make sure that the group is in agreement on which one they will use. Establishing the decision criteria up front is essential to ensuring the group’s acceptance of the best solution.

Once the decision criteria have been defined, a weighted score can be applied to each criterion according to its importance to the overall solution. A weighted score of 1, 3 or 9 in order of increasing importance is oftentimes utilized in decision making. Once the criteria have been weighted, each item is then scored for selection. The same 1, 3 and 9 scoring system can be utilized or the number of votes for each idea can be counted as the score. Then, the weights are multiplied by the scores to produce the overall score for the idea. The largest score is the winning idea.

Weighted score can be customized in a myriad of different ways. Total scores, averages, weighted averages, and fraction values can all be used to create a logical score for each potential solution. Then, based on pure logic, the solution with the highest score is selected as the most desirable.

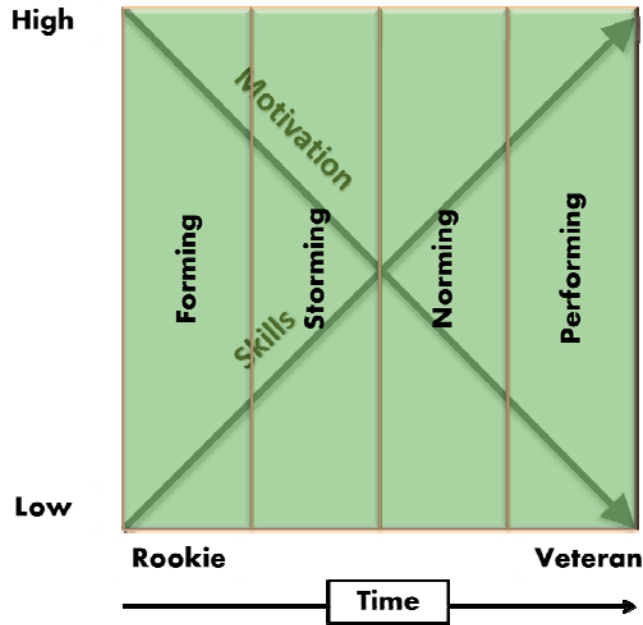
Decision Criteria (weight)	Solution #1: Outsource IT Support	Solution #1 weighted scores	Solution #2: Create in-house help desk	Solution #2 weighted scores	Solution #3: Ask the client to handle it	Solution #3 weighted scores
99.99% uptime (9)	5	45	4	36	3	27
Low cost (3)	3	9	2	6	5	15
Ease of implementation (3)	4	12	1	3	5	15
Highest client satisfaction and retention (9)	4	36	5	45	1	9
Ability to implement within 90 days (9)	5	45	2	18	2	18
Least amount of oversight of personnel (1)	4	4	1	1	5	5
Totals		151		109		89

## The Challenge for Performing Teams

*“When a team outgrows individual performance and learns team confidence, excellence becomes a reality.” – Joe Paterno*

At first glance it may appear that once a team reaches the Performing Stage of team development that the team leader’s job is done. In reality, this is when the role of the leader can become more difficult. Think about a sports team that has just won a championship. The coach’s role is to keep the team motivated to want the championship again next year. Teams may dominate so much that the week-to-week work becomes boring. In addition, a team that has reached the peak of performance may feel that they can “take it easy” now and not push so hard. This will cause a decrease in performance.

Over time individuals and teams will naturally continue to improve their skills. That is a benefit to working with the same team over time. On the other hand, mature teams may also start to lose some of their initial motivation and momentum. As a result, while the team performs at a high level of skill, they may fall short of their true potential because they have lost the motivation to continue.



### Managing Teams

Team leaders must think of their team’s health along two planes: skill and motivation. To sustain a performing team, the leader should assess each plane and implement strategies to meet the team’s needs.

#### **Skill**

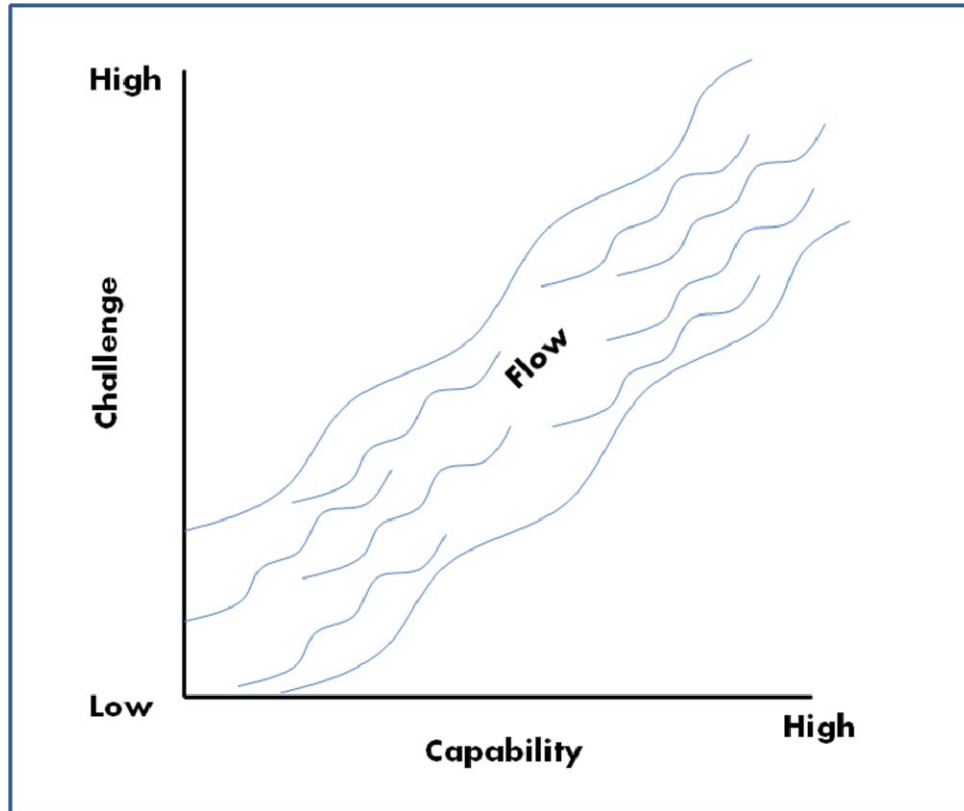
A technical skill that can be easily measured. For example, if a job requires that you know how to calibrate a pressure gauge, you can be tested to see if you have that skill.

#### **Motivation**

This dimension is more difficult to measure, but it is just as important as assessing technical skill. Motivation refers to the team’s commitment and understanding of the goal. How ready are team members to subordinate personal goals for the sake of the team’s goals? How much excitement does the team have to work together to accomplish the goal? What sacrifices is the team willing to make for the team goal?

Exercise: Plot your team's motivation

In the diagram below, plot your current team on the flow diagram. Then answer the discussion questions.



Why did you plot your team in that location?

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As a leader working with a team outside of flow, which side do you think is easier to work with? Why?

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## Recommended Reading List

*“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” - Dr. Seuss*

### Leadership & Coaching

*Coaching Questions, A Coach’s Guide to Powerful Asking Skills, Tony Stoltzfus, 2008*

*The One Minute Manager, Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, 1983*

*The Art of Leadership, Bothwell, Lin, 1983*

*Leadership Skills for Managers, Caroselli, Marlene, 2000*

*The Leadership Challenge, Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner, 1987*

*Four Competencies for Success, Portnoy, Robert A., Leadership, 1999*

*The Fifth Discipline, Senge, Peter, M., 1990*

### Communication

*Conversational Magic, Les Donaldson, Prentice Hall, 1981*

*You’ve got to be Believed to be Heard, Bert Decker, St. Martin’s Press, 1992*

*The Articulate Executive, Granville Toogood, McGraw-Hill, 1996*

*Secrets of Successful Speakers: How you can Motivate, Captivate & Persuade, Lilly Walters, McGraw-Hill, 1993*

*Success Secrets of the Motivational Superstars, Michael Jeffreys, Prima, 1996*

*Messages: The Communication Skills Book, Matthew McKay & Martha Davis & Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger Publications, 1995*

### Sales

*Cut the C.R.A.P. and Make the Sale, Russ Peterson, DC Press, 2003*