

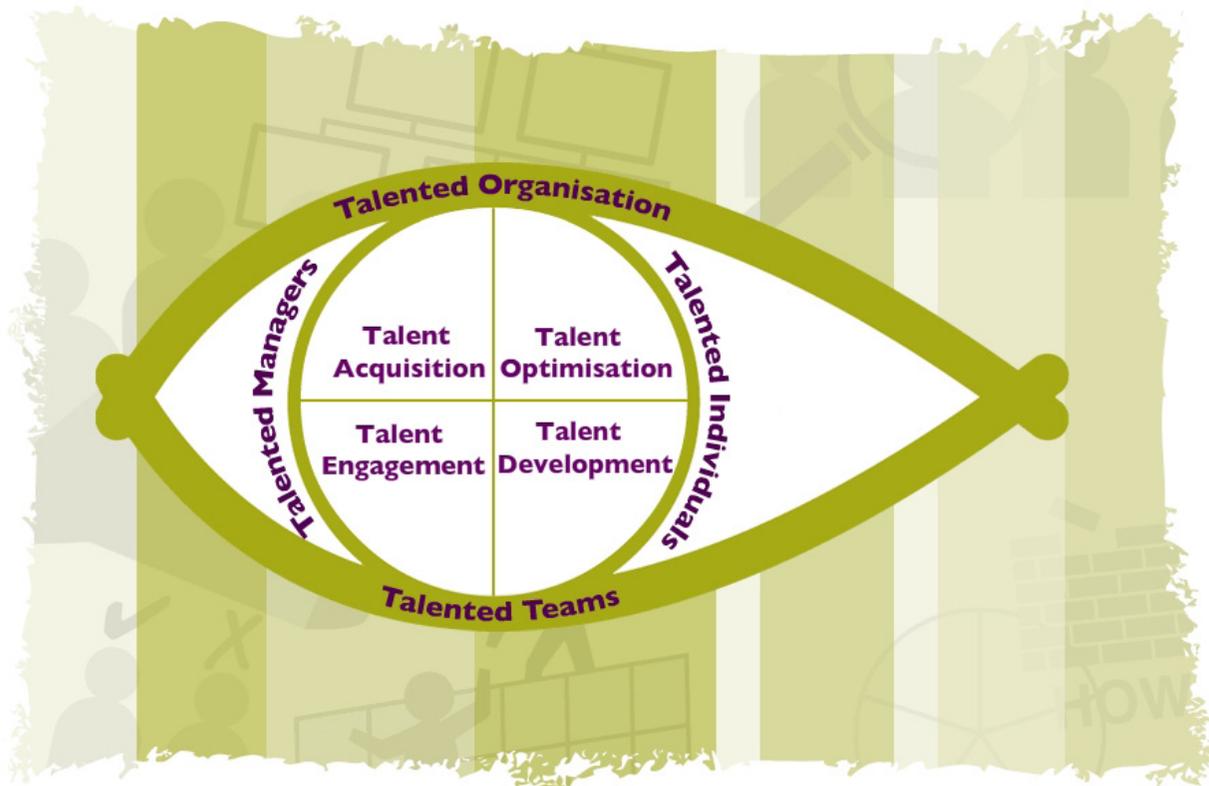
Team Effectiveness

- an Element of Talent Utilisation

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HR **in**sights

 Learning Partners



Introduction

When considering whether the talent in your company is performing at its best, one of the most productive areas to focus on is on team effectiveness. Given that many people work as part of a team, you can realise many benefits by improving how well a team is performing. By improving team effectiveness we mean:

- Improve communication
- Build trust within the team
- Minimise and manage conflict effectively
- Increase efficiency and save time and effort

What is team effectiveness?

Before we consider how to improve team effectiveness, let's consider how we can first measure overall team effectiveness by looking more specifically at 3 key areas in the team:

1. Goals, roles and responsibilities
2. Methods and procedures
3. Values, behaviours and relationships

A team that is working effectively in these areas has certain characteristics, such as:

Goals, Roles and Responsibilities

- The right people are in the right roles, all fitting neatly together yet sufficiently flexible to accommodate change and promote learning and development.
- There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability aligned to the 'big picture' of the organisation.

Values, Behaviours and Relationships

- As needs for leadership arise, various members meet them (distributed leadership), anyone feels free to volunteer as s/he sees a group need.
- Members trust one another; they reveal to the group what they would be reluctant to expose to others; they respect and use the responses they get; they can freely express negative reactions without fearing reprisal.
- Team is flexible, frequently seeking new and better ways; individuals can be creative and are supported in making changes and developing themselves.

Methods and Procedures

- Team members know who needs to know what and how best to communicate; there are no gaps in communication and no wasted time and effort.
- Team members recognise when a decision is needed and follow a clear process; they seek and test consensus; readily use alternatives to improve decision making; fully support decisions made.
- Team members follow up actions and commitments and review projects/activities/successes quickly for learning.



First area to consider

What level is your team within the organisation? – This may well have a bearing on your organisation’s investment of time, effort and money in improving team performance and certainly on the type of intervention. With over 18 year’s experience, Learning Partners has helped to maximise talent with a number of Europe’s leading specialist companies, by working on team effectiveness at many levels within the organisations and with teams of many types, as the slide below illustrates.

Context and Experience

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GROUP OF PEOPLE

Levels of Teams	Types of Teams	Client Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">BoardsPublic Sector Boards (NEDs)ExecutiveSenior LeadershipGlobal TeamsMiddle ManagementProfessional/ FunctionalSupervisoryGraduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Global ProjectSalesHRFinanceManufacturingMarketingEngineeringProductionCustomer ServicesProfessional ServicesConsultantsField EngineeringSIW DesignersProcurementAsset ManagementProperty DevelopmentNursingConsultants NHSEducationAnd others...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SAPBOMBARDIERNOKIA Connecting PeopleStockport NHS NHS Foundation TrustDavis LangdonHammersonObjective CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMITTED.

Don't assume that all teams are the same. Each team is made up of a different group of individuals, each with unique experiences, skill sets and attitudes to working within a team. Some people enjoy working and can only function as part of a team. Others hate it and find team-based work stifling or frustrating. The mix of these individuals can cause different behaviours that are unique to each team. Therefore, a blanket 'one size fits all' approach to team effectiveness will not produce positive results overall.

Team Effectiveness Process

We recommend following a simple 3-step process to improve team effectiveness:

1. Diagnose team – using Team Effectiveness Questionnaire (TEQ) and Team Personality. The TEQ process collects data confidentially from team members in the three key areas of team effectiveness mentioned above and produces an analysis, which highlights strengths of the team and issues within the team. The Team Personality is diagnosed by using a reliable psychometric personality test for each team member and analysing the balance of results within the team (More on this later).

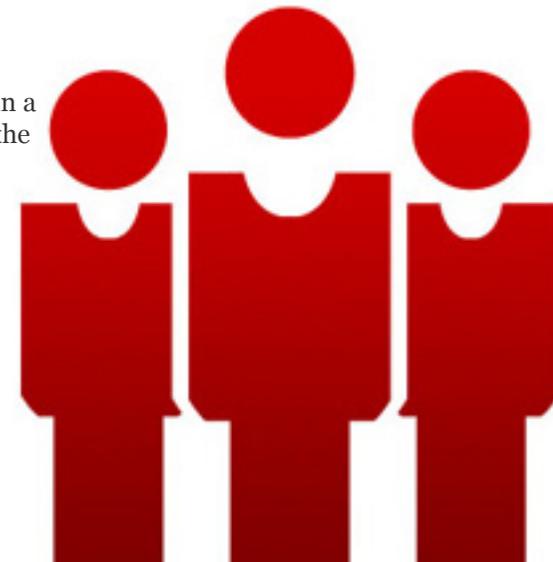
2. Apply targeted solutions – from a toolkit of options. The toolkit is a range of different activities with outcomes to improve specific areas of team effectiveness, e.g. defining the team's common goals, clarifying roles, reviewing successes, agreeing team decision priorities.

3. Measure team results – e.g. saving time, increasing productivity, profitability, client relationships, cash flow, quality and reliability etc.

In our experience the first step in developing team effectiveness is to diagnose two areas:

1. Team personality
2. Team issues

From these results you can put together in a workshop a series of interventions from the toolkit, which address specific areas that team members perceive as important to create the targeted solutions. After all, to have a whole team out of work for any length of time starts to get difficult and expensive, so it is essential to use the time effectively.



Team Personality

We have found the Myers Briggs Type Instrument (MBTI) easy to use, quick to explain and very relevant to team performance. The MBTI questionnaire is a highly researched and valid approach to help you understand personality as 'preferences', focusing on the likely strengths and positive qualities of different personality styles. It does not measure intelligence or effectiveness. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. It helps you understand yourself, appreciate the difference in others and respond constructively. It covers work style preferences that underpin team performance, namely:

- Team Interactions – meetings, emails, conference calls etc
- Processing and exchanging information
- Decision making and prioritising
- Planning and organising

What team doesn't do any of these?

Understanding that all team members perform these tasks differently, whilst learning how to handle these differences is crucial in minimising conflict and improving efficiency. We use the analysis of preferences to highlight strengths and potential blind spots in a team's behaviour. For example, a team in which most people focus on specific steps in a process can sometimes lose sight of the big picture, losing sight of whether the process will meet future business needs.

We go further in the diagnostic process by linking these preferences to individual motivation and subsequently to team values. This step achieves the goal of getting the team to pull together and create the underlying team culture. Here is an example of team values from a team where the members reported a high degree of commitment to the team and are very successful.

Successful Delivery – adding value and leading to Customer Satisfaction

Teamwork – good relationships within the team and with other teams

Achievement – delivering practical results, managing workload effectively and being reliable

Appreciation – giving feedback, praise, thanks and recognition to others

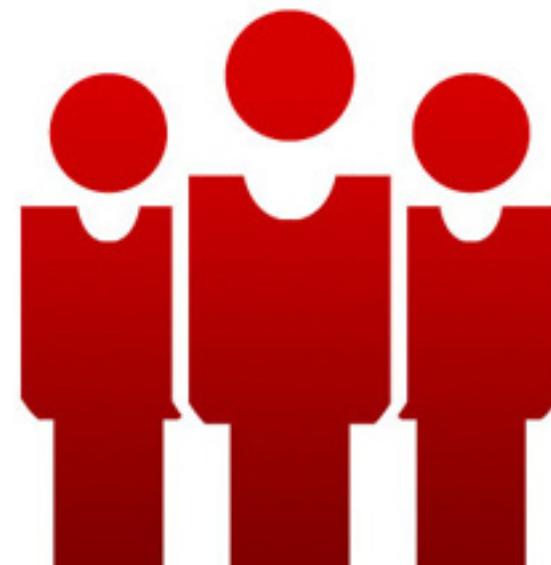
Openness – showing transparency, honesty and integrity

Respect – listening to and showing empathy for others

People Development – learning and sharing knowledge and experience

Quality – in all areas of our work

Challenge – meeting challenges with a positive can do attitude



Team Issues

This area requires careful and thoughtful handling. You don't want to spend a lot of time in a free-for-all complaining session, which creates further discord amongst team members. Instead, we apply a structured analytical approach to this which provides anonymity so that real issues surface and force teams to face up to what they want instead of the issues. To do this we utilise a Team Effectiveness Questionnaire covering 3 areas in the team:

1. Goals, Roles and Responsibilities
2. Methods and Procedures
3. Values, Behaviours and Relationships (covered in depth by the Team Personality)

This provides a breakdown in more detail and helps the team to prioritise the issues and quickly get to work fixing them. Some examples of issues and toolkit solutions are:

Goals, Roles and Responsibilities

- Lack of Clarity about Roles and Responsibilities – Role Profiling
- Lack of Engagement with the 'Big Picture' – Pie Chart Process

Methods and Procedures

- Poor Decision Making – Team Decision Grid
- Clash of Priorities – Team Decision Grid and Values
- Ineffective or too many Meetings – 'Wire' Diagram of Meetings
- Poor Communication – Communication Exercise

Values, Behaviours and Relationships

- Too much detail covered in Meetings – 'Chunking' Technique
- Some Team Members don't contribute in Meetings - Group Rapport
- Problems not Tackled – Feedback Model
- Blaming Others – Empathy Technique
- Lack of Trust – Work Style Clashes
- Personality Clash – Work Style Preferences and Values

By focusing on the areas important and relevant to the team, you gain their buy-in to the solutions and can fix on some follow up actions to keep up momentum in the process of bonding the team and improving performance. The team becomes more resilient and team morale improves so that the team can deal with tough challenges and still remain motivated and productive.

Leadership Style

A final area to consider is the leadership style of the team leader. Does it suit the team? Again, using some structure to the diagnosis can really save time and make a big difference to the interactions. We recommend Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence leadership styles, as they are practical to use – see Leadership Styles checklist on the HRInSights website. With an external and balanced view of the dynamic between team and team leader you can increase awareness of this important relationship, highlight the strengths, raise some tough issues, and put some actions in place to deal with poor or mediocre interactions so that your team is willing to follow their leader.

A final note, we believe that empathy is the glue that holds teams together and makes them strong. So, if you are looking for somewhere to start to build your team, this is the technique to master.

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