



# Creating High Performing Teams: The 'Secret Sauce' of Performance Improvement






**It's often said that people are your most important asset. We broadly agree with that but with a purposeful 'twist'.**

**As Jim Collins says in his book, "Good to Great", we argue that the right people are your most important asset.**





## Trusting Teams:

- Openly admit weaknesses and mistakes; they act without feeling that they need to protect themselves
  - Actively seek help and constructive criticism
  - Give the benefit of the doubt (without being naïve)
  - Focus on what's really important to them
  - Don't play 'office politics'!
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## Teams with an absence of trust:

- Are resource hungry and inefficient; team members waste time and energy managing behaviours and playing 'office politics'
- Are defensive; they hold grudges
- Conceal weaknesses and mistakes
- Are insular and readily jump to conclusions about others
- Fail to recognise and utilise their inherent skills and experiences




## Teams that embrace conflict:

- Understand that they can confront issues without being confrontational
- Solve problems much quicker
- Have passionate debates that are positive and non-judgemental
- Depersonalise
- Follow the adage that says “be hard on issues but soft on people”



## **Teams that fear conflict:**

- Don't have stimulating meetings
  - Avoid crucial but controversial or challenging topics
  - Procrastinate; they don't solve problems quickly
  - Don't actively seek views and opinions from other team members
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## Teams that are committed:

- Find ways of achieving buy-in even when agreement is not unanimous
- Are unambiguous regarding decisions and allocation of responsibilities
- Are agile; they are prepared to change course in order to achieve their objectives



## Teams that lack commitment:


- Breed uncertainty about direction and priorities; they lack buy-in
  - Strive for consensus where it's not really necessary
  - Waste opportunities
  - Are indecisive
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## Teams that embrace accountability:

- Generate respect amongst team members who are held to the same high standards
- More readily identify opportunities for improvement
- Implement simple but highly effective performance management tools
- Share incentive and reward mechanisms
- Believe that the debrief is 'the breakfast of champions'!



## Teams that avoid accountability:


- Don't hold their peers to account
  - Avoid difficult conversations
  - Create resentment amongst team members who have different standards of performance
  - Tolerate mediocrity
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## Teams that are focused on collective results:

- Celebrate their successes but are diligent and objective in examining the reasons for poor performance
- Are not distracted by individualistic behaviours
- Commit to the open publication of results



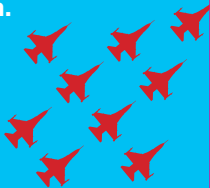
## Teams that are not results oriented:

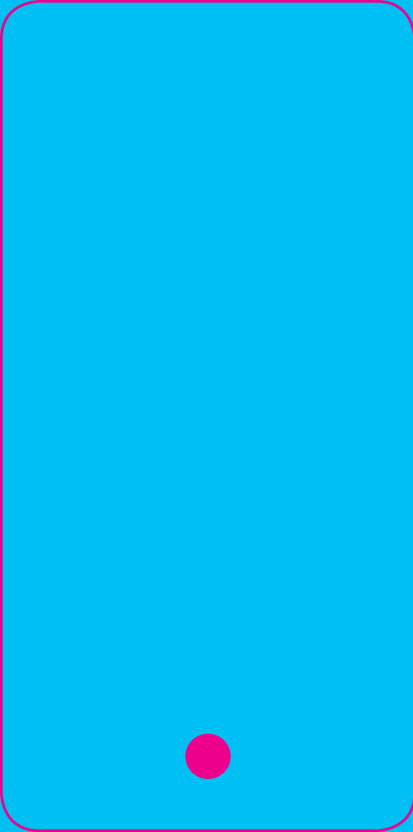
- Are focussed more on individual goals and achievements rather than those of the team as a whole
  - For some team members, merely being part of a team keeps them satisfied (the 'lure' of status)
  - Stagnate and are easily distracted
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**From time to time,  
remind yourself of  
how it is that the  
Red Arrows can:**

- Change the leader every three years
- Change three out of their nine display pilots every year
- Change the positions in the team of the remaining pilots every year

**Yet still operate as  
an elite team.**







## References:

- Adapted from Patrick Lencioni, The FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS of a TEAM: A Leadership Fable, Jossey-Bass, 2002
- Jim Collins, Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't, Random House, 2001





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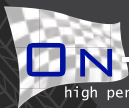
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