



Developing Teams

An Introduction



Dalmau
CONSULTING

About this booklet

This is the first in a series of handbooks on team development.

When complete, you will have a collection of straightforward guides that provide you with just enough context and background, a framework for an approach, combined with practical suggestions that you can implement to build your team so that it flourishes and performs.

The material is drawn from the literature, personal experience and the experience of all at [Dalmau Consulting](#).

Feedback or suggestions are welcome.

Jill Tideman

June, 2018

© Copyright 2018 Dalmau Consulting.

Any part or all of this document may be copied if it is for training or educational purposes only, not for resale or profit, provided due acknowledgment of its source is included on each page.



Developing teams

Teams are the core operational unit of all organizations – no matter how small or large. Forming, building and sustaining functional and high performing teams is at the heart of managers' roles, and yet is a constant dilemma for them – how to effectively develop teams?

To assist, this is the first in a series of articles about team development which provides a framework and practical suggestions for work you can do with your teams.

However, before launching in it is wise to remind ourselves about what makes a team?

[Jon Katzenback seminal work on teamwork and performance](#) says that,

“A real team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and for which they hold themselves mutually accountable”



Katzenbak goes on to say that “The reality is that teamwork is not the same as team performance”, and we must be aware that not all work in organizations is done or needs to be done in teams.

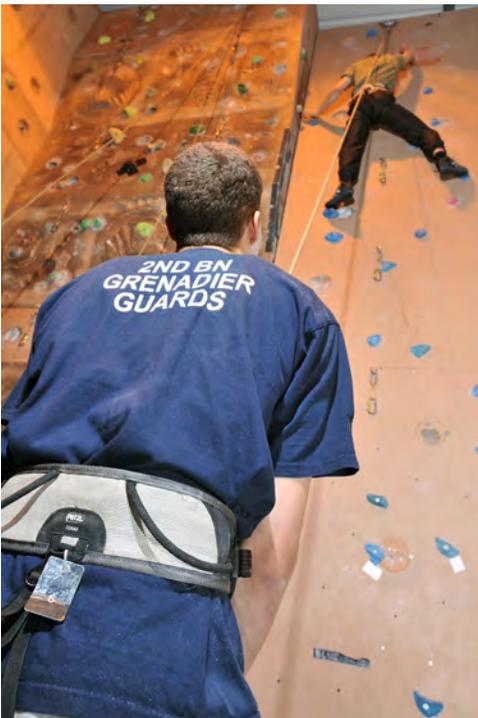
Developing teams is not a once off activity. Not only is the business and organizational environment constantly changing, teams are dynamic. Even if your organizational environment is relatively stable and healthy, improving performance of your team is a [“holy grail”](#) for leaders and managers. Compounding this, team members come and go. In some situations, the organization may be expanding or growing in new directions and you find yourself with a whole new team to recruit and build or you have to integrate a significant proportion of ‘new starters’ within your existing team.



What makes for effective team development?

If you are a team leader or manager, and particularly if you are new to the role, how to approach team development might seem a bit baffling. There is a plethora of management literature and tools available, all which may seem useful to some degree, but without a framework or roadmap may be confusing or even unintelligible.

What does it really mean to develop your team, where do you focus, how do you do it most effectively?



1. Lead by example: Model the attributes you want to see in team members
2. Share a vision and engage in meaningful conversation
3. Foster and install effective behaviors and approaches



1. Lead by example: model the attributes you want to see in your team members

[Daniel Goleman](#) would argue that managers and team leaders need to have and model the following characteristics. Indeed, this list provides a guide to what needs to also be developed in the individuals that make up the team.

Self-awareness – knowing one's strength, weaknesses, motivations, values and the impacts of these on others

Self-regulation - controlling or re-directing what are unhelpful impulses or emotions

Motivation – being driven to achieve

Empathy – understanding others feelings, especially when making decisions

Social (inter-personal) skills – building rapport with others so that you are in a position to influence



2. Share a vision and engage in meaningful conversation

Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan in their management classic, [The Three Laws of Performance \(2009\)](#) outline what they believe is a practical behavioral approach to team development.

They outline three approaches to adopt, which can unlock improved performance and develop teams.

1. To outline a vision for the future and, through conversation, encourage others this vision

2. Encourage authentic conversation across the organization, including 'the undiscussables' and acknowledge, apologize if necessary and resolve past issues or problems

3. Initiate and engage people in meaningful conversations, valuing contributions and give them an idea of a future - which excites and motivates them.

When we engage in possibility thinking that allows us to create a different set of thoughts and images of the future, then it is possible to achieve extraordinary increases in performance, i.e. to re-write the future.

In an organization the top team will need to start with themselves and lead by example.

Nurturing team performance starts with regular commitment and support for reflection and improvement of team functioning – valued family cars need regular servicing and so it is with groups; they need time out on a regular basis to improve their functioning.



However, it is more than this; it is establishing habits for regular conversation among team members. Leaders need to create an environment that makes it the norm in the team to have frequent and diverse conversations concerned with,

- Organizational and team goals, and the shaping of shared targets
- Clarification of the context for the work
- Surfacing tensions and issues, encouraging non-defensiveness and ways of resolution
- Encouraging collaboration to address challenges
- Understanding barriers and blockages and seeking ways to remove them
- Clarifying expectations and encouraging the development of accountability mechanisms
- Individual's aspirations and team's hopes for the future, exploring ways to support these becoming a reality
- Fostering shared responsibility
- Recognition of leadership, initiative and performance among the team



It is when this happens consistently, trust, interdependence and self-organization flourish.

Conversations between and among leaders and their teams should be held in different settings and using different formats. They may be one-on-one, sub-groups and whole team conversations with objectives of the conversation clear in the mind of those involved.

These conversations will be so much more effective if supported by visuals. By that it is meant that points or key agreements are noted up on the board, screen or on paper (if one-on-one) for all to see, and that other supporting visuals (such as diagrams) are also used to help create meaning and understanding.



3. Foster and install effective behaviors and approaches

There are some key behaviors and approaches, that [Katzenback and Smith](#) identify as important for team leaders to model, foster and install among team members. These are summarized on the following page.



Purpose

- Engage whole team in regular conversations about the organization and team goals and objectives
- Ensure real achievable stretch targets that value add

Meaningful contribution

- Regular conversations with team clarifying / providing context.
- At individual performance discussions identify how their work contributes to the higher objectives.
- Encourage collaboration and create safe environments for surfacing difficult issues

Connectivity

- Create an environment for frequent conversations among the team and outside the team. Always use visuals.
- Authentic, non-defensive communication modeled and supported by the leader.
- Pay attention to social aspects of team engagement

Empowerment

- Provide individuals with the resources (financial, time, effort, will, skill) to help them make their contribution to the team
- Remove barriers for them.
- Foster support from within the team to overcome blockages and solve problems

Growth

- Provide opportunities for individuals to lead, take on new tasks, and have professional development.
- Encourage open conversations about each individual's aspirations and hopes for the future
- Foster connectivity to help individuals achieve these dreams

Mutual accountability

- Clarify expectation and encourage mechanisms by which team members will hold each other accountable.

Shared leadership

- Foster shared responsibility for leadership
- Reward and promote initiative that comes from within the group

