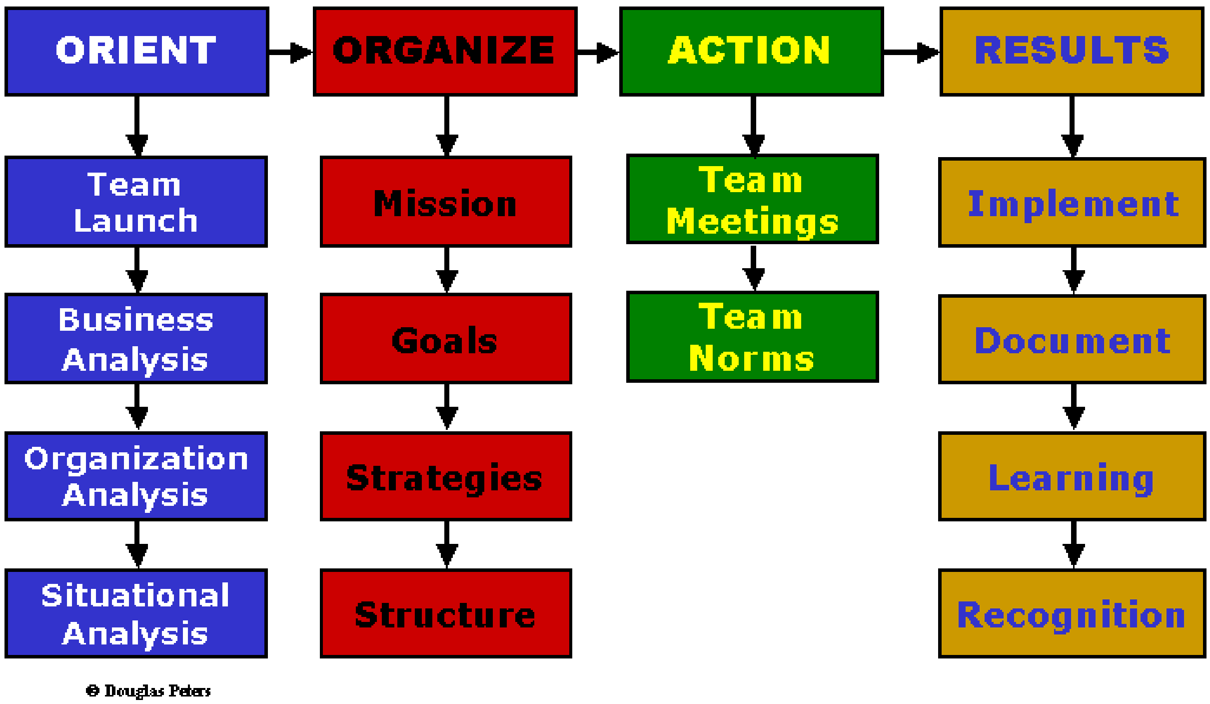
TEAM LAUNCH SYSTEM

Phase & Milestones



"From zero to high performance in six weeks!"

New Product Teams - Major Project Teams
Business Teams

DS Performance Group
An Innovative Leader In Human Performance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

The Team Launch System (TLS) is a comprehensive system that consistently develops high performance teams within six weeks of team launch. TLS accomplishes this by organizing team development into four phases with specific milestones, tasks, and deliverables for each phase. This creates a defined process - with high levels of accountability for performance - that can be Defined, Measure, Analyzed, Improved and Controlled.

WHY

Teams are complex. They typically operate within highly complex organizational and political dynamics and start out in a somewhat chaotic situation due to lack of consensus on team rules, roles, and structure. Teams are intense. Motivation and commitment among team members can vary widely, with some not even attending the initial team meetings, and others remaining passive until they are able to get an accurate assessment of the situation.

Our research on teams has identified ten team dynamics that are key success factors in predicting team performance. Any one team can have all, none, or some of these variables. This creates over 1200 different combinations of variables that any one team may start with. And these variables are not binary – they are not necessarily just "present" or "absent." This means that within these 1200 combinations, each team can have a different range of performance on each variable. In short – team dynamics are extremely complex.

In addition to this internal complexity, each team also faces a different set of external variables that will affect its performance. And these variables will be different for every team, even teams within the same organization. One product team may find, for example, that a given function is uncollaborative because it pays a high price for supporting the team. Another team may find that same function highly collaborative because it benefits from that team. Therefore, what the team is doing, and the costs and benefits it creates for others in the organization, will combine to create a different set of circumstances for every team.

Given this extreme level of complexity, the answer to every question about team development is the same – *It Depends!* In this environment there is usually great variation in team performance within and across organizations, and it is not unusual to take months to develop a high performance new product team. By organizing these dependencies into Phases, Milestones and Tasks, TLS creates high performance teams faster, better and cheaper.

DESCRIPTION OF TOOL

TLS was developed through over 20 years of applied research into high performance teams in 75 different divisions and staff groups of 3M Company. The best practices have been applied to a wide range of teams, companies, and industries to validate their general applicability. Based on the learning from over 400 team training and teambuilding sessions, TLS captures best practices of high performance executive, business, new product, and major project teams.

TLS is not rigid set of rules, but a set of guidelines that provide a team with a clear roadmap for achieving high performance. Each team must decide how much time and effort it should invest in each task, and teams should add or delete tasks based on their unique situations.

Regardless of the size, composition, or purpose, all teams go through four phases of development to achieve high performance. Figure 1 shows the four phases of the Team Launch System and the major milestones in each phase.

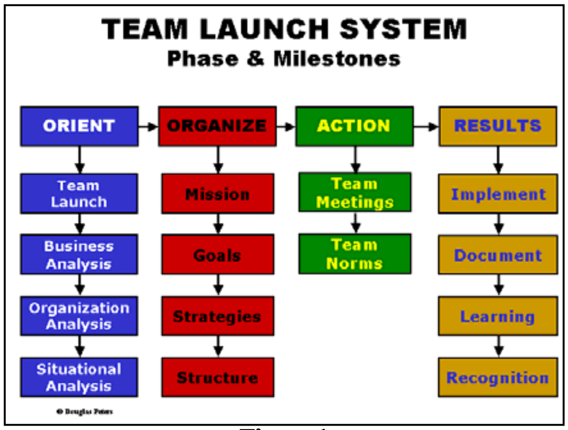


Figure 1

The Orienting Phase is focused on creating a situational analysis to determine the importance of the team to the organization, the urgency with which the team must act, and the level of power, influence and support the team will have within the organization - the team figures out what they are "really getting into" and what challenges lay ahead. The learning from this phase will determine how much time and effort the team should put into the next phases of team development.

In the Organizing Phase the team gets organized by defining its mission, goals, strategies and structure. These activities turn a 'collection of individuals' into a *Team*. This Phase builds ownership and commitment to the team through active participation in the team building process.

In the Action Phase the team starts implementing its goals and strategies. The team becomes the integration point for all new product activities and a driving force for overcoming the many obstacles and challenges that will arise throughout the new product development process. It establishes a collaborative relationship with management to resolve conflicts and manage the inevitable trade-offs between costs, quality and cycle time.

In the Results Phase the team maximizes its results by assuring its plans, decisions, and solutions are fully implemented. The team maximizes the return on the organizations investment in the team by documenting results, sharing learning and providing recognition for contributions to the team success.

The Orienting and Organizing Phases require a significant investment of time, energy and resources to complete, but they do not yield any tangible results in terms of developing the product. Therefore there is often a great deal of pressure to skip or move quickly through these phases to get to the Action Phase. Skipping or short changing these first two phases typically results in false starts, inconsistent performance and a great deal of scrap and rework in the form of bad decisions, damaged relationships and wasted time and energy.

The Team Launch System expedites teams through the Orienting and Organizing Phases and maximizes team performance in the Action and Results Phases. This White Paper provides an overview of the tasks associated with each Milestone.

PHASE ONE – ORIENTING A TEAM

Phase 1 gets "everyone on the same page" by creating a common orientation to the business, the organization, and the situation. The first thing people want to know when they are assigned to a team is why are we doing this and what's in it for me? To answer these questions team members must understand where the team fits into the business, the organizational dynamics that will support and inhibit team efforts, and the importance and urgency of the situation.

In the beginning the team is much like a jig saw puzzle; each team member has different pieces of the puzzle, some pieces of the puzzle are missing, and no one has a picture of what the final puzzle should look like. Therefore the first thing the team must do is to get everyone to put their pieces of the puzzle on the table. The team may also have to reach outside the team to gather other pieces of the puzzle. The team does not need to reach agreement or consensus in this Phase, they only need share their perspectives to create the most accurate and complete picture of what they are getting into. Once the picture is completed it is likely that there will still be different interpretations of it, but at least the team is all looking at the same picture.

From a process standpoint, most of the tasks in Phase 1 are best accomplished in work sessions that are focused on in-depth discussions. Some teams may be able to accomplish all of the tasks in Phase 1 in a single session, but most will require several work sessions.

During this first phase there is a strong dependency on the leader to get things going. Therefore the team leader must establish a clear process for moving the team through the milestones and tasks in the Phase. The team leader must also actively facilitate the group discussion that must take place to achieve the tasks in this Phase. It is the team leaders role to keep the team focused on the task and to create balanced participation in order to maximize ownership and commitment through active participation in these teambuilding activities.

MILESTONE 1 – TEAM LAUNCH

A mandatory and formal team launch process demonstrates management's commitment to the team and ensures the team gets off to a good and quick start. This first Milestone has tasks for both management and the team leader. Together the team leader and management can give the team a "running start" and establish an action orientation for the development of a high performance team.

TASK 1 – TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Management controls resources, therefore management must assign members to the team who are willing, able, and have the opportunity to perform. Since it is easier to remove people from the team than to bring on new team members, it is strongly recommended that management err on the side of assigning too many people to the team at the beginning of the team development process. The team will adjust its membership at the end of the Organizing Phase, so team members that are not needed on the team can exit the team at that time.

Task 2 – Schedule Work Session

To accomplish this task the team leader must schedule the initial team meetings. The leader must organize the first team meeting by creating an agenda and scheduling work sessions to achieve Milestones 2,3, and 4 in Phase One. The agenda for the work sessions is made up of personal introductions and the Phase One Milestones. It may take several work sessions to complete the agenda.

WORK SESSION AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
2. **Business Analysis**
3. **Organizational Analysis**
4. **Situational Analysis**

Scheduling work sessions can be extremely difficult, especially when team members have major responsibilities in addition to the new product development team. A typical new product development team will require two to four work sessions of four hours each. Scheduling ½ day work sessions every other day allows team members time to digest information and think about issues in between work sessions. This format should allow most teams to complete Phase One in one week.

Task 3 – Team Member Preparation

To accomplish this task the team leader must prepare team members to participate in the first meeting and work sessions. These sessions will be dominated by in-depth discussions about the business, the organization, and the situation. Typically team members have a range of knowledge and understanding about these topics depending on their position and experience. Therefore sharing information such as business plans, technology plans, marketing presentations, and organizational charts prior to work sessions will establish a more uniform understanding and eliminate the need to bring some people up to speed while others sit through information they already know.

Many of the activities in this Phase start with brainstorming, list building and sharing initial thoughts and reactions. Soliciting and sharing this type of information prior to a work session dramatically increases productivity. Instead of spending time sharing initial thoughts or building lists, the team can focus on higher-level discussions to create greater understanding. This shortens the time needed to complete Phase One.

Web and software based document sharing tools can significantly increase the productivity of work sessions. They allow team members to interact in a virtual environment sharing thoughts and influencing each other’s perspectives prior to the first work session and between work sessions. They make the best use of peoples’ time by allowing them to participate when it is most productive for them.

Task 4 – First Meeting Introductions

To accomplish this task the team leader must prepare team members to introduce themselves during the first team meeting. Starting the first work session with personal introductions initiates a relationship building process among team members. Providing a format for personal introductions in advance reduces stress by allowing team members to prepare in advance.

The following questions share information team members will need in order to understand each other and make accurate judgments about the team's competence and commitment.

Past Experience
What has been your past experience with this business, product, and/or technology?
What are your major areas of expertise and experience?

Knowledge Base
What have you heard, been told of, or know about this new product?
What thoughts, conclusions, or opinions do you have about this new product?

Motivation
What about this team excites you? Why?
What about this team concerns, worries, or scares you? Why?
What do you want out of this team for yourself? Your Function?

Actions
What experience have you had with other teams like this?
What actions are you taking now that will affect this team?
What plansor commitments do you have in the near future that will affect this team?

Some participants will find the level of self-disclosure in these personal introductions to be risky and uncomfortable because of their personal situation. Inexperienced team members, for example, often find this uncomfortable because they cannot answer many of the questions. This may create the impression they are a liability because they will have to go back and check with someone before they can actively participate in team discussions or decisions, causing delay when the team is under pressure to make a decision or take action. But issues like this do affect team performance; therefore it is better to deal with it upfront than to have it explode when the team is under pressure to take action. This will require a great deal of skill and tact on the part of the team leader.

The team must take risks in order to build trust. Personal introductions create the level of risk taking necessary for the team to start building trust and strong work relationships. It begins to establish a norm that the team will talk to each other about issues and not about each other. This activity will be the first real test of the level of work relationships within the team – do people trust each other enough to risk sharing and discussing issues that put team members at risk?

MILESTONE 2 – BUSINESS ANALYSIS

The second milestone of Phase 1 – Orientation is conducting a business analysis that results in a "compelling business reason" for the team's existence. An accurate business analysis empowers a team to do the "right thing for the business" and to become self-directed in its actions. To achieve this milestone, the team must achieve the following tasks.

TASK 1 – MARKET ANALYSIS

To accomplish this task, and assure the team does the "right thing for the business," the team must analyze current market dynamics including customers, competition, opportunities, and the metrics used by the business to measure performance. This understanding turns each team member into a "business person."

- **Understanding customers** - Who are our customers and how will this new product affect them?
- **Understanding competition** – Who are our competitors and how will this new product affect our competitive position?
- **Understanding opportunities** – What current or future opportunities will this new product address or create in the market?
- **Understanding the key metrics** – What are the key metrics we use to measure this business and how will this team affect those metrics?

Routing these questions to team members for response prior to the first work session will allow the leader to assess the level of business understanding among team members and determine how much time will be required to get everyone at the level of understanding necessary to achieve this milestone. Initial responses should be summarized and routed back to team members for thoughts and reactions. Several rounds of summarizing and sharing can move the team a long ways towards creating a common orientation prior to the first meeting.

TASK 2 – STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

To accomplish this task the team must analyze its alignment with larger business plans and strategies. Organizations that chase every good opportunity often spread themselves so thin they fail to take full advantage of any one opportunity. To avoid this problem, organizations develop strategic plans, business plans, and functional plans and budgets to set organizational priorities and maintain focus. Teams must be aware of where they fall into these larger plans and strategies to assess their importance to the organization.

To prepare for this discussion team members should be provided with copies of relevant business plans and strategies and be asked to answer the following questions. Responses to these questions should be gathered and shared with team members prior to the first work session.

The First Why – Project Level
Why is this project important to each of the organizational units involved? How does this effort align with the plans and tactics of each organizational unit?

The Second Why – Business Level
Why is this new product is important to the business? How does this effort align with larger business plans?

The Third Why – Strategic Level
Why is this new product important to the organization's long-term strategies? How does this effort align with the organization's long-term strategic plan?

By understanding their alignment (or lack thereof) with larger strategies, business plans, and tactics, the team can estimate the level of priority, power, influence, and support it will have in the organization. Strong alignment indicates the team will be working with organizational units that are already in alignment with the team, and can justify providing the team with significant resources and support.

TASK 3 – COMPELLING BUSINESS REASON
To accomplish this task the team must draw on the learning from Tasks 1 and 2 to articulate a compelling business reason that justifies the investment of time, energy and resources into this project. A strong compelling business reason creates high levels of motivation to make the team successful. For example, if it is clear that this is not just some management program designed to find someone to blame for failure, but is really addressing a critical need for the organization, then clearly this team can make a difference.

A good way to start this process is to ask team members to answer the following question.

> If challenged by your boss, how would you explain the business reasons that justify your investment of time and energy into this new product team?

Answering this question requires team members to synthesize all of the information and understanding they gained through the business analysis. Putting the question in the context of responding to a challenge from their boss forces people to put the compelling business reason into their own words. This assures this is not something that is just written down and soon forgotten.

MILESTONE 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

The third milestone of Phase 1 is to accurately assess the organizational dynamics the team will experience as it develops the new product. This analysis allows the team to assess what they are "really getting into" and how much time and effort it will require to successfully launch the new product.

TASK 1 – KEY STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

To accomplish this task the team must identify the key stakeholders it must work with to achieve success. In practical terms, key stakeholders are "the larger team", and the people assigned to the Product Team are the "Core Team". The role of the Core Team is to involve the right key stakeholders, at the right time, and in the most efficient manner in order to maximize collaboration and performance throughout the new product development effort.

Key stakeholders are those who are put at risk, who have to contribute resources, or absorb the costs and/or benefits of team actions. To prepare for this discussion the team leader can create a table to route to team members prior to the first work session (Table 1). Several rounds of sharing should quickly identify major key stakeholders and allow the team to focus on fine-tuning the list during the work sessions.

	Table 1. Key Stakeholder identification		
	Function	**Person**	**Why?**
1			
2			

TASK 2 – COST & BENEFIT ANALYSIS

To accomplish this task the team must analyze the costs and benefits that will flow to key stakeholders. This analysis identifies who benefits from team actions (winners) and who pays the costs (losers) of team actions. The team can call on those who benefit from team actions for support. The team can provide those who pay a price for team actions *with* support and protection from the negative consequences of doing the right thing for the team. But the team cannot do either unless it knows who the key stakeholders are and how the costs and benefits will flow to each key stakeholder.

The prepare for this discussion the team leader should select out those key stakeholders that appear on most participant's lists and create another table that asks team members to identify the costs and benefits that will flow to each function and/or person (Table 2). The team leader should make this a confidential activity - they share the results, but not who said what. Confidentiality often creates more open responses, especially negative responses about specific functions or individuals.

Table 2. COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS			
	Key Stakeholder	**Costs**	**Benefits**
1			
2			

TASK 3 – FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

To accomplish this task the team must analyze the organizational dynamics (culture and infrastructure) that will support and inhibit team performance. These dynamics can be seen as a set of driving and restraining forces. Driving forces such as management support, rewards, recognition, adequate resources, etc. help move the team forward by supporting and encouraging its efforts. Restraining forces such as lack of prioritization, punishing reward systems, inadequate resources, etc. create obstacles to team performance and success.

Understanding the balance of driving and restraining forces provides team members with a clear idea of "what they are getting into", how much effort will be required to achieve success, and what is the probability of this team achieving success. It helps answer the question "What's in this for me?"

The following directions and model can be routed to team members prior to the first meeting to begin building the list of drivers and restrainers. Since this process may raise politically sensitive issues, it is best if confidentiality of responses in maintained. Several rounds should of sharing will allow the team to spend time in its work session assessing the consequences of these dynamics.

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS INSTRUCTIONS

Looking at our organizations culture (the way we do things around here) and infrastructure (e.g. people, processes, rewards, measurements, structure, politics), what forces do you see that will support this team and what forces do you see that will create roadblocks to our performance and success? Create the following table:

Support (Drivers)	Inhibit (Restrainers)

MILESTONE 4 – SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The fourth milestone in Phase 1 – Orientation requires team members to draw on their learning from the previous tasks to create a situational analysis. Developing a high performance team requires a significant investment of time and energy by team members and by the organization. Team members must have an accurate assessment of the importance of the team, the urgency with which the team must act, the strength of team dynamics, and the probability of achieving success to determine, and to justify, the level of time and energy they will commit to the team.

TASK 1 – PROJECT IMPORTANCE

To accomplish this task the team must determine the importance of the team to the organization. This analysis will help determine the level of effort and resources that the project will likely justify. The more important the effort is to the organization – the organization has much to gain by success and/or lose by failure – the higher the priority the project will be given by team members and by the organization.

The leader can initiate this discussion by routing the following questions to team members prior to the work session in which this topic will be discussed.

> What would be the impact on the organization if this new product effort fails?
> What would be the impact on the organization if this new product effort succeeds?

TASK 2 – PROJECT URGENCY

To accomplish this task the team must determine the urgency with which it must act. The more urgent the situation, the faster the team must act. In situations where there is very little urgency the team can work more slowly to achieve results. Adjusting the level of effort to match the urgency of the situation contributes directly to the organization's productivity by freeing up resources that can be used on other critical and urgent projects.

The leader can prepare team members for this discussion by routing the following questions to team members prior to the work session in which this topic will be discussed.

> **Fixed Dates**
> Are there fixed dates that will significantly affect this project such as trade shows, successor project launch dates, customer deadlines, marketplace events, or a specific sales cycle?
>
> **Window of Opportunity**
> How large is the window of opportunity for this project to succeed? New product efforts often address specific situations that have a window of opportunity that is limited in time.
>
> **Predecessors/Successors**
> Are there other organizational efforts that are predecessors or successors to this effort and, if so, how does this affect the timing of this project? Consider what projects or efforts are predecessors or successors to this project. Predecessor projects may be

counting on the team to take advantage of a limited window of opportunity they have created. Or other projects may be waiting for this project to be finished to build on its success or utilize its resources when the project is finished.

TASK 3 – TEAM DYNAMICS

To accomplish this task the team must analyze its personal, interpersonal and group dynamics. Teams that have strong dynamics can aggressively move through each phase. Teams with weak dynamics will need to invest more time to strengthen team dynamics before they will be able to become a high performance team.

The following team dynamics are critical to team success:

- **Personal Acceptance** - Teams with high levels of personal acceptance will understand and value individual differences and eliminate unproductive conflict over personality and style.

- **Professional Respect** - Teams with high levels of professional respect will understand and value functional differences and minimize turfiness over conflicting functional goals, objectives, and priorities

- **Strong Work Relationships** - Teams with strong work relationships establish high levels of trust and personal risk-taking. This creates an environment where the team can create a norm of open, honest, and direct communications.

Some teams will discover they are "set up for success," and little time and energy will be required to build strong team dynamics. Some teams will find they are set up for failure, and will require a significant degree of repair before they can even begin to operate as a team. Most teams will be somewhere between these extremes.

TASK 4 – PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS

To accomplish this task the team must is assess the probability of achieving success given the unique business, organizational, and team dynamics the team finds itself in. This activity requires each team member to think through and synthesize all of the information and analysis generated in Phase 1.

A process that works well for achieving this task is to have each team member summarize their view of the probability of success by picking a percentage between 0% and 100% – 0 represents no chance of success and 100 represents certain success. The team leader should place individual responses on a flip chart and lead a discussion to understand differences in ratings.

Teams that see a high probability of success can feel comfortable moving forward to the next Phase of Team Development. Teams facing a low probability of success will want to make management aware of the level of risk the team will be taking to ensure there are no surprises if the team runs into trouble. Teams that have a wide range of responses on this activity are clearly seeing things differently and have not yet reached a common orientation to the situation. They will need to have more discussions before moving forward.

PHASE TWO – ORGANIZING A TEAM

Phase 2 organizes the team for success. In this phase the team must reach *consensus* on its mission, goals, and strategies and then organize the team in a manner that provides it with the best chance of accomplishing them. Achieving consensus through highly participative processes that balance participation and create open and honest communications will maximize ownership and commitment to the team and ensure the team does the right things.

MILESTONE 1 – MISSION

The first milestone in Phase 2 – Organization is to establish a team mission that limits the scope of team action and defines ultimate success for the team. The team mission statement creates focus and determines what the team will do and what the team will not do. Without it the team becomes a "wandering generality" that chases every "hot issue". It will appear to be arbitrary and capricious in its actions and it will be subject to the forces of personality and politics. Eventually, it will become caught in an "activity trap" where it does more and more to achieve less and less!

The team mission statement should contain the following elements:

Action Verb:	**To expedite**
Subject:	**Development of product x**
Measurement:	**To thwart a competitive attack on our core business.**

ACTION VERB

New products will be developed with or without teams. Therefore the action verb defines what contribution the team will bring to the product development process. Will the team expedite, integrate, coordinate, define, monitor, or drive the new product development effort? In this example the action is to "expedite" the development of product X. The scope of the team, therefore, is to consider any actions that will expedite the development of this new product.

SUBJECT

The subject determines the focus and scope of the team. The subject of the team in the example above is "development of new product X." Contrast this with a team whose subject might be to "commercialize a portfolio of X solutions." The scope of this second team is much broader and might include the development of several new products.

MEASUREMENT

The measurement in the example above is to "thwart a competitive threat." This measurement indicates that team success will be measured not by a fixed date, but by hitting a window of opportunity. If the team succeeds in launching this product, but it does so too late to thwart the competitive threat, the team will have failed to achieve its mission. In contrast, the measurement for "developing a portfolio of X solutions" might be the number of new products that the team can generate from the technology.

A final check on the mission statement is to make sure the measurement and action verb match. For example, if the action verb is to expedite, but the measurement is sales volume (100 million dollars in sales), the mission statement sends a mixed message as to what the team is trying to accomplish – is it to expedite development or to maximize revenue?

PROCESS

The following process is recommend to balance participation and maximize ownership and commitment when developing a team mission statement:

1. Break the team into groups of two to four depending on the number of team members
2. Provide each group with a flip chart and ask that they identify each element of the mission
3. After each group has their initial thoughts down, put all of the flip charts next to each other and conduct a trends analysis
    a. Ask each group to explain what is on their flip chart
    b. As each group presents, the leader should underline areas of agreement on each flip chart
    c. Encourage questions, comments and reactions to move thinking forward.
4. Create a new flip chart that captures the areas of agreement from round one.
5. Put team members back into their groups and, using the new flip chart, try again to reach agreement on the mission.
6. Repeat process until consensus has been achieved on major items.

This same process can be used for the development of team goals.

MILESTONE 2 – GOALS

The second milestone in Phase 2 – Organization is to establish specific goals that must be achieved in order to fulfill the team's mission. Successful teams, like successful individuals, are goal driven. Goal setting, therefore, is a critical step in organizing the team and getting the "butterflies in formation."

Team goals create a foundation for action upon which the team will build its structure. Decisions on membership, leadership, meetings, core teams, extended teams, and sub- teams are all made based on developing the best structure to achieve the team goals. Without a strong foundation of clear goals, it is extremely difficult to build a high performance team.

If the team does not agree on goals in the beginning, it will argue about them later on. Typically, these arguments take place during team meetings, in the heat of the moment, and at a time that destroys team productivity.

When possible, it will be more efficient for the team leader to start with the goals recommended in this section and lead a discussion on modifications or changes. The following process questions should be built into the discussion of each recommended goal - What about this goal do you agree with? What about this goal do you disagree with? Would you support the team adopting this goal? If not, what changes or alternatives would you suggest? If the suggested goal is widely rejected the leader can use the same process for developing each goal that was used to develop the team mission.

TASK 1 – PLANNING GOALS

To accomplish this task the team must achieve consensus on a goal that will result in the development and implementation of a planning process that organizes and coordinates all new product activities and actions across organizational boundaries. Without a plan no one in the organization can see the big picture and how all of the pieces fit together. Typically this will require a project plan with a critical path. In some instances, such as a line extension, the team may get by with a much simpler Gantt chart.

Project planning must be an on-going process to assure the plan contains the most accurate and current information available. Product development requires inventors to put "creativity on a timeline", therefore plans must be regularly updated to capture and apply the learning that will take place as the project moves forward. Organizations are also dynamic and circumstances can change over the life of a new product effort. Therefore plans will also have to be updated to reflect changing circumstances and priorities. The level of project planning required varies greatly depending on the complexity of the effort.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING GOAL – NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Action Verb: To establish
Subject: A project planning process
Measurement: That maintains an accurate and current project plan with a critical path.

TASK 2 – IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

To accomplish this task the team must achieve consensus on how it will assure the project plan is fully implemented and to protect the critical path. A project plan does not yield results until it is fully implemented. Implementation of the plan is the responsibility of functional management because they control resources and have the authority to get things done. In some cases, management may delegate this authority to the team or specific team members, but that authority can be revoked at management's discretion.

A major team responsibility in the implementation of the project plan is to hold management accountable for the commitments it made in the project planning process, and to resolve any issues – problems, decisions, opportunities – that may *delay*, *inhibit*, or, in the case of opportunities, *expedite* implementation. If management commits resources and does not deliver, or takes actions that negatively affect the project, or refuses to take action that will significantly enhance the effort, the team can hold management accountable by demonstrating the effect of the function's actions on the cost, quality, or cycle time of the project.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION GOAL –NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Action Verb:	To identify and resolve
Subject:	Critical issues
Measurement:	That affect the critical path or have a significant effect on cost, quality, or cycle time

Note how this goal puts the team in the position of monitoring functional performance to identify any critical issues that may "fall in the cracks" or are ignored by the responsible function. This avoids a "teams vs. management" relationship that pits teams against management for control of resources. Instead it creates a situation where teams are focused on doing the right things for the business and functions are focused on doing things right the first time.

TASK 3 – COMMUNICATION GOALS

To accomplish this task the team must achieve consensus on how it will communicate both internally within the team and externally with the larger organization. Communication is the lifeblood of teamwork. Good communication can establish trust and build credibility. Poor communication can damage credibility, destroy trust, create conflict, and dramatically increase the team's workload.

Organizational Communications

High performance teams gain access to a wide range of information. When they consolidate this information it creates a considerable amount of knowledge – the team will know more than anybody in the world about the product they are developing. This information and knowledge can be very valuable to others in the organization when they are making decisions and solving problems. By establishing a goal of sharing this information and knowledge, the team is improving organizational decision-making and increasing the return on the organization's investment in the team.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS GOAL

Action Verb: To ensure
Subject: Key stakeholders receive information that could impact their actions and performance
Measurement: In a timely fashion

Internal Communications
Interpersonal communications is the action level of teamwork. How "things" get from our head to the flip chart is the process of interpersonal communications. Interpersonal communications is, therefore, the action level of teamwork.

RECOMMENDED INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS GOAL

Action Verb: To create shared understanding
Subject: On complex and emotional issues
Measurement: To ensure all perspectives on an issue are understood and valued.

These communications goals are clearly "softer" than the other goals. But establishing them up front empowers the team leader to hold team members accountable when their behaviors negatively affect team communications.

TASK 4 – TEAM DYNAMICS GOALS
To accomplish this task the team must achieve consensus on goals for developing positive team dynamics. Establishing this process ensures the team makes the right investments, at the right time, and in the most efficient manner.

Strong team dynamics create the ability for teams to achieve high performance. A team with poor team dynamics is like a car with a bad engine. It is inefficient, it wastes a lot of energy, and it breaks down when it is put under stress. Therefore to maximize its performance and achieve success the team must make an investment in its team dynamics to create the ability of the team to perform.

RECOMMENDED TEAM DYNAMICS GOAL

Action Verb: To establish an on-going process
Subject: Of team development
Measurement: That results in positive personal, interpersonal and team dynamics

TASK 5 – OTHER GOALS
To achieve its mission, a team often will have to achieve goals beyond the recommended planning, implementation, communications, and team dynamics goals. To ensure the team remains focused on high priority activities, the team should establish specific goals for any additional actions it will undertake. This rigorous focus dramatically increases team productivity and performance.

For example, one new product team was asked to go back and determine why previous product development efforts on this product had failed. This was a significant undertaking that could consume a great deal of time and effort. Therefore, to control the level of effort it would make, the team set the following goal:

Action Verb: To analyze
Subject: Past new product development efforts
Measurement: To identify technical reasons for failure of these efforts.

Notice how the goal measurement limited the effort to focus on technical reasons for failure. The team decided it did not want to get into analyzing non-technical issues that may have contributed to failure such as lack of priority, lack of resources, lack of market information because the organization was in a "different spot" and these issues no longer existed for this team.

To accomplish this objective the leader will want to start by having team members brainstorm a list of potential goals and prioritize them in terms of action. Once a goal area has been identified the team should use the same process for establishing the goal that was used to develop the team mission.

MILESTONE 3 – STRATEGIES

The third milestone in Phase 2 – Organization is to establish specific strategies for each of the team's goals. The mission defines team success, the goals define what a team needs to do to achieve success, and strategies determine how the team will accomplish its goals (Figure 2).

The pressure to achieve results, combined with the action oriented personalities of some team members, often results in the team initiating action before reaching consensus on *how* they will take action. This typically results in false starts as team members charge off in different directions and creates unproductive conflict as blame is assessed for the false start. When this occurs it reduces team productivity and wastes precious time and energy. Worse yet, the team may have to make an additional expenditure of time and energy to repair damaged relationships.

Recommended Planning Strategies
New Product Development Team

Recommended Planning Goal

Action Verb:	To establish
Subject:	A project planning process
Measurement:	That maintains an accurate and current project plan with a critical path

Objective 1	**Plan**
Result:	Develop a project plan with a critical path
Measurement:	This is accurate and optimized
Deadline:	by March 1, 2006
Key Participants	(list functions an individuals)
Leader:	(determined by team)
Objective 2	**Plan Revisions**
Result:	Provide major plan revisions
Measurement:	That incorporate learning and reflect changing circumstances
Deadline:	At beginning of a new phase or when learning and changing circumstances require
Key Participants	(list functions an individuals)
Leader:	(determined by team)
Objective 3	**Review Plan Assumptions**
Result:	Review planning assumptions, concerns
Measurement:	to determine if plan is still valid
Deadline:	at least monthly
Key Participants	Core Team Members
Leader:	Core Team Leader
Objective 4	**Progress Updates**
Result:	Provide progress updates to key stakeholders
Measurement:	To identify any slippage in tasks
Deadline:	at least monthly
Key Participants	Key Stakeholders
Leader:	Core Team Leader

- Figure 2 -

Developing specific strategies to achieve its planning goals provides the team with several benefits:

1. A well-defined strategy that establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities is more likely to be efficient and successful.
2. The consensus seeking process avoids false starts by assuring the team views possible actions from many different perspectives.
3. The range of opinions expressed in a consensus seeking process often results in innovative and creative approaches that increase team productivity and results.
4. Achieving consensus on strategies through active participation increases team member ownership for each strategy. Instead of doing what the team leader tells them to do, they are doing what they believe is the right thing to do.
5. High levels of ownership translate into high levels of commitment to follow through - team members will tend to work longer and harder to achieve success.
6. The process of developing strategies requires the team to establish a measurement for each objective that provides a tangible way to determine if the team succeeded in its efforts.

7. Clear roles and responsibilities, combined with clear measure of success, allows the team to hold those responsible accountable for their performance.

A simple and very straightforward way to think about strategies is to break them into objectives that contain the following five elements:

Result:	Develop a project plan with a critical path
Measurement:	that is accurate and optimized
Deadline:	by March 1
Key Participants:	Key resource allocators, major individual contributors, and those who are put at significant risk. (Team will list people and functions)
Leader:	Name of team member who will lead the effort. This is not necessarily, and should not always be, the team leader.

The Core Team would have to reach out to the larger team before taking action on this objective. In essence the team is creating a sub-team composed of Core Team Members and Larger Team members that will achieve this objective. Reaching outside the team to involve key participants increases ownership in the process and commitment to fully implement the results of the process.

To achieve this milestone the team must develop strategies for goals in each of the following areas.

TASK 1 – PLANNING GOALS
TASK 2 – IMPLEMENTATION GOALS
TASK 3 – COMMUNICATIONS GOALS
TASK 4 – TEAM DYNAMICS GOALS
TASK 5 – OTHER GOALS

Figure 2 presents the Planning Strategies to achieve the previously recommended team planning goal. Notice how the strategies essentially break the goal down into its components parts, and then assigns specific responsibility to a leader and sub-set of team members to achieve the results. This division of labor allows teams to "multi-task" and work on several goals and strategies in parallel. This dramatically increases team efficiency and productivity.

MILESTONE 4 – TEAM STRUCTURE

The fourth milestone in Phase 2 is to organize the team. With clarity on its mission, goals and strategies, the team can now establish a team structure that will provide it with the best chance of success. This final step completes the transition from a collection of individuals to a high performance team.

Up to this point, the team has been focused on effectiveness – doing the right thing. They have established the right mission, the right goals, and the right strategies. Now the team must focus on efficiency – doing things right the first time. To maximize its efficiency the team must adjust its membership, establish team meetings, create a team structure, choose methodologies and processes, and define leadership roles.

There are no rules for organizing a high performance team. The downside of this reality is that the team cannot simply copy what other teams have done. The upside is that the team has a great deal of flexibility and freedom to organize itself based on its specific mission, goals, and strategies. The answer to every question about how a team should be organized is the same – ***It Depends!*** It will require a great deal of discussion for the team to identify all of the dependencies.

TASK 1 – MEMBERSHIP

To accomplish this task the team must adjust its membership based on its Mission, Goals and Strategies. Consensus on the team mission, goals, and strategies defines the scope and action of the team. With this level of clarity, the team is now in a position to determine if it has the right team membership to achieve its mission and goals.

Often teams will find they have redundant members (too many people from one function) or members that could just as easily contribute to the team effort without being a full time member and attending meetings. Remember, the team that is going to actually develop the new product is composed of many dozens of people (experts) across the organization. The "New Product Team" is actually a core team of people who reach across organizational boundaries to assure the right people are involved in the product development process at the right time, and in the most efficient way.

Reduction of team membership typically increases team productivity. With fewer members, it takes less time to discuss critical issues and less time to reach consensus on those issues. Since the team can gather input from people outside the team, removing a team member does not necessarily mean the team will lose access to his or her information and input.

When teams are able to reduce membership, without negatively affecting performance, it frees up people to take on other higher value activities within the organization. This contributes to overall organizational performance and resource utilization.

In some instances, the team may find it needs to add members to meet a specific need. Since the new member did not participate in the Orienting and Organizing Phases the team will need to establish a process that will allow them to gain ownership and commitment through participation. A good way to accomplish this is to have the new member conduct a review of the team by reviewing documentation (Business Analysis, Organizational Analysis, Mission, Goals, Strategies) and interviewing team members and than presenting their review in a team meeting. This assures the new member develops ownership and commitment through participation and may well identify issues the team has missed.

When adding members, the team must balance the resource needs of the functional organization with the resource needs of the team. Management has a responsibility to maximize its resource allocations to get the highest return on the organization's investment in its people. And it must also ensure that individuals do not become overloaded and cause a delay in any project. Allocating resources is critically important to both teams and management. Therefore, the team will need to work closely with management when making adjustments to team membership. The goal is not for teams or management to "win," but for teams and management to do the right thing for the overall business.

In most situations, there are good reasons why people are assigned to a team. But there are situations where this process does become politicized or distorted. For example, some teams will have several people from one function assigned to the team as a way of increasing that function's ability to control or "out vote" other functions. Sometimes a manager and his or her subordinate will both be on the team so that the manager can maintain control.

In highly political situations such as those described in the last paragraph the team leader should first work behind the scenes to reach a resolution with those who are directly involved in the issue. The leader may want to seek the advice and support from their boss, a team sponsor, or others they trust. If issues cannot be resolved behind the scenes the leader will need to bring the issue up to the larger team for discussion and action. Brining the issue to the full team creates a great deal of visibility. In the case where the boss and subordinate are on the team, it will force the manager to defend the continued participation of both boss and subordinate on the team. This can create a great deal of peer pressure to do the right thing for the business. Situations such as these can have a very negative effect on team dynamics and may require extensive teambuilding to fix or to pick up the pieces after a resolution has been reached. But, if they are affecting performance, it is best if they are addressed sooner rather than later when damage has been done and blame will be assessed.

TASK 2 – MEETINGS

By their very nature, teams are inefficient. Rules, roles, and structure must vary greatly between teams in order for teams to adjust to the specific needs and dynamics of each situation. In the beginning this somewhat chaotic situation creates an advantage because it allows the team to avoid preconceived notions and determine right way to run this team. But once the team's mission and goals have been set, the team must now focus on creating the efficiency necessary to get things done.

In the search for efficiency, team meetings play a critical role in team success. Teams cannot achieve high performance when they run inefficient meetings that are unfocused and time-consuming. Meetings of this type dramatically decrease team productivity and performance while seriously eroding the ownership and commitment of team members who begin to see team meetings as increasingly frustrating and a waste of time.

Establishing a formal agenda that reflects the team's mission and goals ensures the team remains focused on what is important to the success of the team. It ensures that the time spent in team meetings advances the attainment of the team's goals and strategies and avoids the tendency of many teams to get side tracked onto the latest hot issue.

Regular Team Meeting Agenda	
1.	Planning a. Review pan assumptions b. Review concerns
2.	Implementation a. Identify and priortize critical issues b. Develop action plans c. Review current action plans d. Celebrate completed action plans
3.	Other Goals a. Update by objective leader
4.	Communications Goals a. Open Discussion b. Key Stakeholdeder communications
5.	Other (specify):
6.	Team Dynamics a. Team meeting evaluation

Figure 3

High performance teams establish a regular schedule for team meetings that goes out as far as possible. It is often difficult for team members to clear their schedules to attend team meetings when they are done on a month-to-month basis. Scheduling meetings out for one year or until the team is completed -whichever comes first- makes it much easier for team members to work their schedules around team meetings. In the unlikely event that a team meeting is not needed, it is much easier for team members to use this gift of time to do work than it is to clear their calendars each month to schedule a meeting.

A monthly meeting schedule typically meets the needs of most new product teams. Keep in mind that there can be many meetings between monthly meetings – subgroup meetings, problem solving meetings, decision meetings, etc. – that involve some or all of the teams' members. The purpose of the regularly scheduled meeting is to keep the team focused on its mission, goals and strategies, and to make changes in them based on learning and changing circumstances.

The final decision for a meeting schedule should be driven by the team's analysis in the Orienting Phase. A team that is critical, urgent and faces a lot of organizational roadblocks may have to meet more often. A team that is less important and not urgent may find monthly to be way too much.

Figure 3 presents a suggested agenda for routine team meetings. Notice how this agenda keeps the team directly focused on its mission, goals and strategies. The team should schedule additional meetings to take specific actions that come up during team meetings such as making a decision or solving a problem. This will assure the team completes its routine agenda and stays on course.

Task 3 – Structure

Teams are a collection of individuals until they organize themselves around a team structure that "gets the butterflies in formation"! A defined team structure identifies and focuses on key integration points within the team that are critical to achieving success.

One of the strengths of a high performance team is its extreme flexibility to organize itself in response to its task. Functional organizational units with job descriptions, chains of command, offices, and compensation plans are extremely cumbersome to reorganize. In contrast, the high performance team should be like a chameleon that adjusts to the situation it finds itself in.

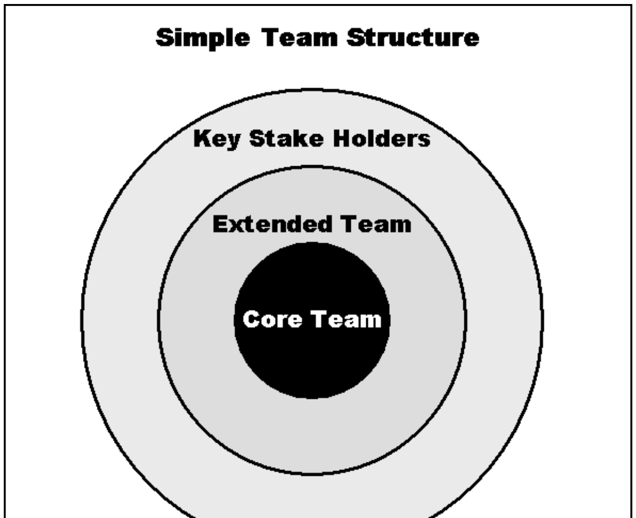
There is no "right way" to organize a team. How a team should be organized depends on the complexity of the project, the importance of the project, and the resources available to the project. Therefore, one of the major strengths of a high performance team is its ability to consider these variables and create the right structure for its specific situation.

For example, establishing a sub-team for developing a "new liner" (a liner is the backing on a tape product) indicates that liner development is key to this team's success and the development effort will require a great deal of focus and integration of activities to be accomplished. The increased focus and integration provided by a sub-team will allow liner development to progress at a faster pace because sub-team members are not constrained by having to wait for Core Team meetings, and they do not have to get consensus from Core Team members who add no value to liner development.

Simple Team Structure

Figure 4 provides an example of a team structure for a project that is limited in scope and complexity. This structure recognizes that the "team" that will develop this new product is made up of a great many contributors from across the organization. It then organizes this larger group into three smaller groups.

The Core Team is comprised of the "full time" members who attend all meetings and whose responsibility it is to ensure that the right people are involved at the right time and in the most efficient manner. An ideal core team is 6 to 8 people whose combined experience creates a broad understanding of the various aspects of the new product development effort.



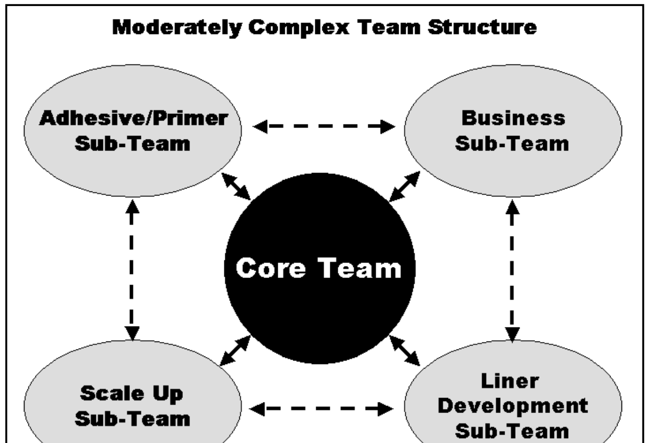
- Figure 4 -

In this structure, when a critical issue arises the Core Team's first action is to identify who from the extended team and/or key stakeholders needs to be involved in the issue. The Core Team will then organize a process for resolving the issue that actively involves non-team members and may exclude some team members who will not add value to the process.

The commitment of the Core Team to involve the right people at the right time, in the most efficient manner, reduces the need for everyone involved in this effort to be part of the formal team. Keeping the Core Team down to a small number dramatically increases its efficiency, because key people are spending more time working on product development and less time in team meetings.

Moderately Complex Team Structure

Figure 5 presents an example of a structure for a team of moderate complexity. This team felt the project required action on several different efforts, each of which required high levels of focus and teamwork and basically involved different people. Therefore, the team established a structure where sub-teams had the freedom to actively pursue their areas of responsibility without having to be constrained by gaining approval from everyone on the team.



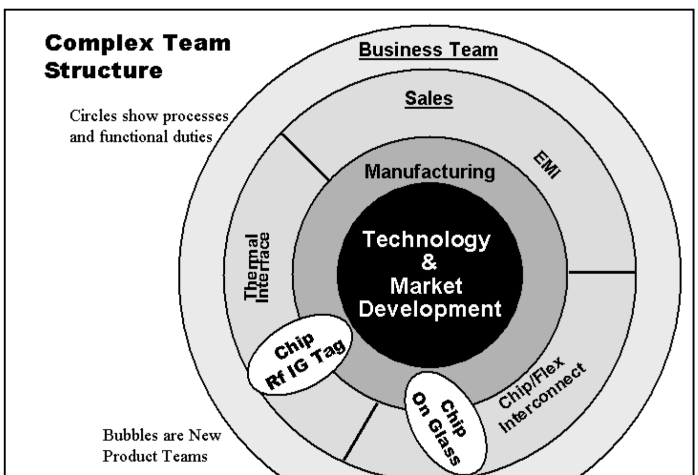
- Figure 5 -

This team also recognized that it was not part of the core business for this division, and therefore was not getting a lot of business direction. To address this situation, the team established a business sub-team to provide additional focus and collaboration on business-related issues.

The Core Team was then composed of the leaders of each of the sub-teams and the team leader for the project. This small five- person team could efficiently integrate and coordinate the activities of the sub-teams with a minimum of effort.

Complex Team Structure

Figure 6 represents a complex Team Structure. Creating a complex team structure can clarify roles and responsibilities for teams that are working on more complex projects. For example, the team structure in figure 6 was developed to recognize the complexity of the task and the many key integration points within the project. This team had to integrate market segments, technologies, existing products, functions, a business team, and several product development teams into a single effort. Members of this team can see at a



- Figure 6 -

glance where they fit into the larger project.

Since this project was implementing a technology platform, several new product development sub-teams were initiated within the large team framework. In many ways this complex team structure is like a mini-operating division within a larger organization. The flexibility provided by this team approach allowed the organization to develop this business without having to re-organize its basic functions until initial successes were achieved.

TASK 4 – TEAM PROCESSES

To accomplish this task the team must identify the specific tools and processes it will use for decision-making and problem solving. Over the course of their existence, teams will make many decisions and solve many problems. Therefore, efficiency and effectiveness in team decision-making and problem solving will have a significant effect on the team's overall performance and results. Failure to first define the process to be used will dramatically reduce team productivity and create unproductive conflict between team members.

There are many different methodologies for decision-making and problem solving. The team will increase its efficiency if it selects a specific methodology for these processes. If the team does not do this, team members will tend to operate out of their past experiences, and since these experiences will be different, team members will be working different processes. If you ask team members, for example, how many steps there are in a decision making process you will get a range of answers. The team must agree on the steps first, or fight about them later as they are working on the process.

The team should also pick a common software package with collaboration tools to increase their performance. Web based software tools increase team productivity by allowing it to operate asynchronously in cyber-space to gather and share information and thinking. Many of these tools also increase productivity by providing easy documentation and communication of the content of the decision making process. Once a decision is made one simply clicks on an Icon and the software creates a Word document or a Power Point Presentation.

The team will have to modify the process for each decision and problem. Complex decisions that involve a great number of people may require a formal, detailed process to yield the right decisions. Simple decisions that involve a few people may be handled very informally in a single meeting. Most decisions will fall somewhere between these two extremes. Adapting the decision making process to the situation assures the team spends the right amount of time to achieve success – no more, and no less.

TASK 5 – LEADERSHIP

To accomplish this task the team must define the leaders roles and responsibilities. Typically, management appoints the team leader based on its own criteria. But, since the team leader typically does not have authority over all team members, the team does not have to follow its leader. Therefore the team needs to define the leadership role and legitimize the ability of the team leader to lead.

There may be a wide range of perspectives on the team leader's roles and responsibilities, resulting in a wide range of expectations on what the team leader should and should not do. Until the team comes to agreement on what they expect from their team leader, each member will judge the leader on his or her own criteria.

By agreeing on basic team leader roles and responsibilities, the team will legitimize the ability of the team leader to lead and dramatically reduce the bid for power over leadership. For example, if the team decides it is the team leader's role and responsibility to keep the team focused on its agenda, they are legitimizing the team leader's authority to hold team members to the agenda. If a team member gets upset by this, the team leader can remind them that he or she is only doing what the team has already agreed needs to be done.

Agreement on the leader's roles and responsibilities also increases the ability of team members to hold the leader accountable for his or her performance. If a team leader is responsible for keeping team meetings focused on the agenda, and the team leader fails to do this, the team can hold the leader accountable for this failure in performance.

To complete this task, the team must define the team leader's role. This should include at least the following areas:

Facilitation
What are the team leader's roles and responsibilities in facilitating team interactions in meetings and work sessions? Keeping the "butterflies in formation" during team meetings and processes often requires the leader to make decisions and confront disruptive behavior.

Decision-Making
What are the team leader's roles and responsibilities in making decisions and in breaking ties when the team cannot reach agreement? Does the leader make the decision or facilitate the process? When the team cannot achieve agreement does the leader break the tie or does the team use another approach such a majority rule? Clarifying this role minimizes personality and politics and increases support for the final outcome.

Representation
What are the team leader's roles and responsibilities in representing the team to the larger organization? The team leader is in a very visible position within the organization. This often leads team members to feel like the team leader is taking credit for the team's results and is using this access to increase his or her own personal power. To avoid this problem the team should define the leaders role in representing the team.

Bid for Power
The team will also need to deal with bids for power over leadership among different elements within the team. For example, product champions, Six Sigma Black Belts, and people with strong personalities often via for power and control over team's actions. The team must agree on how the leader should handle these bids for power and control.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Confidence in the team leader is critical to team performance. Typically, team members will have different perspectives on the leader's competence, based on their experiences and what they have "heard" from others. To maximize confidence in their leader the team should objectively assess the leader's perceived strengths and weaknesses and initiate an on-going process of feedback and support to ensure the leader's success.

PHASE THREE – ACTION

In the first two Phases of the Team Launch System the team is making a major investment in getting itself Oriented to the task and Organized to take action. The return on this investment in the action phase is:

1. Self-Directed team members who are willing to step outside their functional roles and responsibilities in order to do the "right things for the business".
2. An accurate assessment of the level of power, influence and support the team can expect within the organization.
3. An accurate assessment of the time and effort it will require for this team to achieve success.
4. Clear roles, rules and structures for achieving maximum efficiency and effectiveness
5. A high degree of ownership and commitment on the part of team members to achieving the teams mission, goals and strategies.
6. A team that is very focused and well organized to achieve maximum performance and success

In Phase 3 the team begins to take action focused on its goals and strategies – it begins to build the product. To maintain focus and maximize performance the team does not take on any activities that do not directly related to their mission, goals and strategies. This will assure the team does not "chase" every "hot issue" that comes up along the way.

But the team must also be responsive to learning and changing circumstances. This means the team may have to periodically return to the Orienting and Organizing Stages when learning and circumstances require the team to make changes. A change in market conditions, for example, may require the team to update its business analysis, which in turn may cause the team to change its sense of urgency, which may in turn cause the team to change some of its goals and strategies. This ability to quickly adjust to learning and changing circumstances creates a more versatile and responsive organization.

The need for versatility, flexibility and responsiveness during the Action phase means the team cannot operate with one rigid set of rules, but instead must rely on establishing a set of ***norms*** that will allow them to run efficient and effective processes in a variety of situations.

MILESTONE 1 – TEAM MEETINGS

To accomplish this Milestone the team will need to establish a routine meeting schedule. Team meetings are one of the most time-consuming elements in the team process. In addition to the direct costs of salaries and benefits that meetings consume, every minute spent in a team meeting is one less minute spent back on the job getting things done.

"Best Practice"

1. **Stick to the agenda**
   Every team meeting should have an agenda, and the agenda should be adhered to. When it is necessary to adjust the agenda during a team meeting the team must reach consensus before changing the agenda. Teams that fail to stay focused on their agenda are unproductive and become reactionary and crisis- driven over time. This creates a bid for power that can result in unproductive conflict that damage team dynamics.
2. **Complete the agenda for each meeting**
   The team's agenda is established based on meeting the team's mission and goals. If the team consistently fails to complete its agenda it increases the risk of not reaching its mission and goals because critical issues will not be addressed in a timely fashion.
3. **Start and end on time**
   When team meetings start late and run late, they waste resources, disrupt people's schedules, and punish those who show up on time.
4. **Have all team members in attendance**
   Members that routinely fail to show up for team meetings deprive the team of the benefit of their participation, cause the team to have to revisit issues to bring the missing members up to speed, and often inhibit the team from taking timely action. If a team member cannot regularly attend team meetings, the team should strongly consider replacing him or her or find an efficient way of bringing the person up to speed that does not waste the time of all team members.
5. **Apply the team's learning and experience to continuously improve its performance in running efficient and effective meetings**
   The complexity of the team situation makes it very unlikely that any team will start out with highly efficient and effective team meetings. Therefore, it is critical that the team establish a norm of continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of team meetings. This is especially true when the team starts to violate its norms of staying on and completing its agenda. These situations must be addressed and fixed before they can seriously affect team performance.

6. **Make frequent process checks throughout the meeting**
   The team must regularly adjust its time frames during meetings to ensure it spends meeting time on the most important issues. Since meetings tend to take as much time as they are allowed, the team should have a norm of establishing time limits for discussions and topics. Once these limits are reached, the team must either move on or agree that this discussion or topic is of sufficient importance and urgency that the team should stay with it for a longer period of time – and an additional time limit should be established.

MILESTONE 2 – TEAM NORMS

To accomplish this task the team must run highly participative processes that involve the right people, at the right time and in the most efficient manner. Team processes for planning, decision-making, problem solving, and conflict resolution dominate Phase 3–Action, and Phase 4–Results of the Team Launch System.

To maximize these efforts the team must focus on team processes. Edward Deming, an expert in statistical process control, points out that you do not "do" a result – you do a process that gets you a result. A decision-making process, for example, that starts with a preconceived outcome and selectively gathers information and criteria to support that preconceived outcome, cannot be trusted to have delivered the best result or do the right thing for the organization. The quality of the process will be determined by the quality of the result.

The credibility of the team and the trust that will be placed in its plans, decisions, solutions, and recommendations will be directly related to the quality of the process the team runs. But as with all other things in the team setting, there are no hard and fast rules on how to run a team process. Therefore, the team must again establish strong norms that guide the team's actions and individual behaviors when running any team process.

"Best Practice" Team Process Norms

1. **Be highly collaborative**
   Highly collaborative processes increase innovation and creativity and assure the team comes up with the best results. Processes should involve the right people at the right time, and in the most efficient manner.
2. **Be action-oriented**
   Team processes should be action oriented. A process that is dominated by discussion and inaction will achieve minimal results and is an extremely poor use of time and resources.
3. **Build ownership and commitment to the results through active participation**
   Active participation by key stakeholders builds ownership for the results and willingness to follow through on commitments.
4. **Maximize information and analysis and minimize personality and politics**
   Focusing on information and analysis dramatically reduces the level of personality and politics in the process. High levels of personality and politics tend to distort information and analysis, create winners and losers among key stakeholders, and unnecessary conflict between organizational units (turf wars).
5. **Have a high degree of truth-telling**
   Withholding, distorting, or select use of information to support a particular position destroys the credibility of the process and trust in the results of the process. The computer metaphor of "garbage in–garbage out" holds true for team processes.
6. **Be open to a wide range of opinions and ideas**
   Team processes that are open to a wide range of opinions and views find the most innovative and creative solutions to complex situations. A norm of openness minimizes the possibility of doing the wrong things and maximizes the possibility of finding innovative "breakthrough" ideas.

7. **Manage costs and benefits to key stakeholders**
   When costs and benefits flow unequally to key stakeholders, it creates win/lose situations. Those who win typically support the result of the process, and those that lose typically resist implementing the result of the process. By raising costs and benefits to a visible level and providing recognition and protection to those who will bear the cost of team actions, the team can dramatically reduce conflict, increase collaboration, and maximize support for its actions.

8. **Maximize the results of the process**
   Team processes often consume a significant amount of time and energy to achieve results. The team can maximize the organization's investment in this process by fully implementing the results and capturing and sharing its learning.

Team Leadership Norms
Team leaders play several different roles on a team. They play the facilitator role to ensure discussions are efficient and effective. They play a team member role when they contribute to team discussions. They play their functional role when they consider the effect of team actions on their function. They must also pay attention to the content the team is working on and the process the team is using. In this environment, expecting one person to see everything is asking for the impossible.

Team leaders often do not notice when team members are violating a team norm and are negatively affecting team performance as a result. If team members see this but do not speak up, the team will have missed an opportunity to increase team performance. Since there will be hundreds of these types of situations over the life of a team, this represents a tremendous opportunity for every team member to contribute to team performance and success.

"Best Practice" Team Leadership Norms

1. **Delegate leadership of specific strategies, actions, and processes**
   The team establishes shared leadership by assigning team members to lead specific team strategies. Sharing leadership responsibility allows the team to accomplish more and removes the team leader as a constraint in the amount of work the team can efficiently and effectively take on.

   Some teams delegate facilitation of team meetings to a team member who has excellent facilitation skills in leading meetings. This approach allows the team to take full advantage of the different skills sets of team members, and provides an opportunity for a team member to maximize his or her contribution to the success of the team.

2. **Enforce team norms**
   When every team member takes responsibility for enforcing team norms, it creates a very strong group dynamic that will influence individual behaviors. Team members soon learn that if they violate a norm, they will be called on it. If they do not show up for meetings, for example, they know someone on the team will be bring this violation of team norms to the attention of the team. Team members quickly learn there are consequences for violating team norms.

3. **Support the team leader's actions**
   Shared leadership also ensures that when the team leader holds team members accountable for following team norms, the leader will have the support of team members. In fact, the team leader will be held accountable if he or she fails to hold people accountable for violation of team norms.

PHASE FOUR – MAXIMIZING RESULTS

Teams require a significant investment of organizational resources to achieve high performance and obtain results. When a team's plans, decisions, and solutions are not fully implemented the organization gets a minimal return on its investment.

MILESTONE 1 – FOLLOW-THROUGH

When key stakeholders fail to follow through on commitments, it is the team's responsibility to hold them accountable. There are many factors that cause key stakeholders to fail to implement their commitments, or implement them in a timely manner. This is especially true when these actions are not central to the key stakeholders' priorities and must, therefore, compete with other commitments that are central to the key stakeholders' priorities and agenda. In these situations, the team may have to provide follow-up to keep the pressure on for results.

When consensus cannot be achieved and/ or a key stakeholder refuses to implement a plan, decision, or solution, the team must escalate the issue to the appropriate management for resolution. For example, a function that is under pressure to reduce costs may back off on a resource commitment. In some cases it may be best for the organization to reduce costs and not support the team. In other situations it may be best for the organization to absorb the costs and support the team. Balance the needs of the team with the needs of functional organizations is a strategic decision that will have to be escalated to the manager that has the authority to make the decision.

The escalation process recognizes there is a balance of power between teams and management that forces both sides to collaborate to do the right thing for the business. When an escalation occurs, the final outcome is less important to the team than getting a decision made. Whether the decision is in favor of the team's position is less important than getting a decision, and getting a decision that is best for the business.

MILESTONE 2 – DOCUMENTATION

High performance teams document their results and the process used to obtain those results in order to create a transparent process that can be reviewed by others. This allows others to determine the validity of the results by looking at the quality of the process used to generate them. Documentation is also often required to satisfy legal or corporate policies.

Documentation creates a "public record" that increases the pressure on those who made commitments to follow through on them. It is not unusual in the hectic and fast paced environment of business for a decision or solution to simply be forgotten or sometimes even ignored as memories fade and people change. Documentation and publication of results creates an incentive for key stakeholders to follow through on their commitments. If, after documentation and communication a key stakeholder does not follow through, the team will have to escalate to management for resolution.

The quality of the results is most often determined by the quality of the processes used to achieve those results. Documentation allows others to examine the quality of the process. A brief review of the documentation will show, for example, whether a team approached a decision with a preconceived solution and then gathered information to support only that conclusion. If this is the case, the results should be viewed with suspicion. On the other hand, if the documentation shows a wide range of alternatives and criteria, the results will be much more credible.

MILESTONE 3 – LEARNING

The third milestone of Phase 4 – Results is to capture and share learning about the content and the process with those who can use this learning to increase their performance. By sharing learning, a team can also help create a higher performing organizational culture and infrastructure. When an organization stops learning, its culture and infrastructure often become outdated and low performing.

Teams expand the organization’s knowledge base and its intellectual properties when they capture and share what they have learned about the content (e.g. technology, processes, opportunities, short comings, etc.) of the team effort. Sharing this learning with the appropriate organizational units can increase both individual expertise and organizational core competencies.

Sharing learning on process avoids having to reinvent the wheel to discover the same learning on other teams. This learning often leads to the identification of systemic roadblocks in the organization’s culture and infrastructure. For example, if teams consistently identify a reward system that consistently inhibits team performance, the organization may decide to “eliminate” this roadblock or provide additional support when working through it.

MILESTONE 4 – RECOGNITION

The last milestone in Phase 4 – Results provides recognition to those individuals and organizational units that made a significant contribution to the team’s actions, performance, and results. Providing recognition to individuals and organizational units that make significant contributions to the team dramatically increases collaboration and trust. If individuals and organizational units know they will get credit for their ideas and contributions, they will be more willing to share them and make them. If the team fails to provide recognition for the contributions of others, whether intentionally or not, it will be seen as taking that credit for itself.

SUMMARY

The complexity of new product development teams means that the answer to every question about team development is the same – it depends. The Team Launch Systems (TLS) expedites the development of high performance teams by defining the major dependencies that are critical to team success. TLS organizes these dependencies into four Phases of team development and with specific Milestones and Tasks for each phase. This provides a clear roadmap or checklist for developing a high performance new product team.

The Team Launch System should be used as a guideline for team development. Therefore the team will need to determine the level of time and effort they should invest in each milestone and task. Teams that already share a common orientation to the business, for example, can simply check this milestone off and move to the next one.

Due to space limitations this chapter did not address the personal and interpersonal dynamics that will affect the team as it moves through each Phase of development. In many cases these dynamics will dramatically affect the ability of the team to move through these phases of development. Lack of trust, for example, may cause people to hold back information that is critical to team success.

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