

TEAM LAUNCH SYSTEM (TLS)

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Team Launch System is a phase/gate system for developing new product and project teams. TLS increases the productivity and efficiency of team development just as phase gate systems have increased the productivity and efficiency of product development and project management. By creating a phase/gate system, TLS provides a defined process with clear milestones and tasks.

Team Launch System Overview – 1 day

The overview workshop teaches the basic elements of the Team Launch System. It is ideal for team leaders, team members and those who would like to evaluate the Team Launch System for their organization.

The workshop overviews the three main elements of the system:

1. Team Tasks – A phase/gate system that defines **what** tasks a team must do, and the sequence in which they must do them. This creates an extremely clear roadmap to high performance
2. Team Processes – Defines **how** tasks within the system should be accomplished to maximize results and build ownership and commitment.
3. Productivity Tools – Worksheets that can be loaded into organizations collaboration and document sharing tools to increase the productivity of teams.

Organizations can use this workshop to institutionalize a defined process for team development that establishes a common language and productivity tools to develop teams faster, better and at lower cost – every time.

Team Launch System: Leader Training – 2 days

The Leader workshop is designed for team leaders. Leaders learn how to implement the Team Launch System to build a high performance team and lead it through the team lifecycle. This skill building workshop focuses on the three main elements of the system:

4. Team Tasks – The leader learns exactly **what** they have to do to build a team and how to adjust the system to the type of team they are leading.
5. Team Processes – The leader learns **how** to facilitate the team through each task in the system to create strong team dynamics – personal, interpersonal and group – and maximum results.
6. Productivity Tools – The team leader learns how to use Worksheets to prepare team members for team work sessions, reduce time in meetings, and make meeting far more productive.

This workshop dramatically increases team leader confidence and performance. The leader goes into the team development process knowing exactly **what** they must do and **how** they must do it. A well organized and confident team leader quickly builds credibility with team members and legitimizes their ability to lead.

Team Launch System: Leaders Guide

The Leaders Guide provides an overview of the Team Launch System and a step-by-step process for building a product team or major project team and leading it through the team lifecycle. Even an inexperienced team leader can create a high performance team by using the Leader Guide.

FEATURES

1. DEFINED PROCESS FOR TEAM DEVELOPMENT

TLS is not a teambuilding activity; it is a defined process for team development. TLS organizes the Team Lifecycle into four phases and defines the milestones and tasks that must be achieved to move a team through each phase in the system.

ORIENT Phase – Creates a Situational Analysis to determine the importance, urgency and probability of team success.

ORGANIZE Phase – Establishes the teams mission, goals and strategies and organizes the team for success.

ACTION Phase– Creates a collaborative relationship between teams and key stakeholders in team actions. Assures the team adjusts to learning and changing circumstances so that it is always doing the right things.

RESULTS Phase – Assures the team implements its actions to achieve results. Maximizes the organizations return on its investment through documentation, capturing and sharing learning, and providing recognition for contributions.

The milestones and tasks are sequenced according to their predecessor and a successor relationship to assure the team does the right things, and does them in the right order to maximize performance. The first two phases accelerate team development and the last two phases maximize team performance over the team lifecycle.

Benefits of a defined process:

- Reduces inconsistency in team performance. TLS consistently develops high performance teams to drive new products and major projects.
- Eliminates false starts on products and projects due that increase cost, lengthen cycle time and can reduce quality.
- Eliminates the need to re-invent how to build a team every time a new team is established.
- Eliminates personal conflicts between team members on how to build a team.
- Assures team members know exactly what has to be done, and what they have to do, before they walk into the very first team meeting.
- Allows a new team member to walk into any team, in any business unit, and quickly understand what they are doing and where they are in the process
- It can be defined, measured, analyzed, improved and controlled for continuous improvement.

2. Clear Deliverables

TLS defines specific deliverables at the end of each phase of the team process. Documentation of deliverables creates a team history that can be reviewed to understand the rationale behind team development decisions and actions. Management can position deliverables as “gates” and require approval before the team moves on to the next phase of development. This creates a high level of accountability that team leaders can use to motivate team member participation and contributions to the team.

3. VERSATILITY IN APPLICATION

TLS is a highly versatile system that can be adapted to a wide range of product and project teams. It provides a strong set of guidelines, not rigid rules and a bureaucratic process. By adding, modifying and deleting tasks, and adjusting the time spent on each task, a team leader can adjust the system to fit the type of team and complexity of the task.

Benefits of versatility:

- Recognizes differences in complexity and size between teams
- Avoids the pitfall of treating all teams the same
- Allows users to easily adapt the system to different types of teams

4. FACILITATOR GUIDES

TLS provides facilitator guides for leading the team through each task in the system. These processes create strong team dynamics through high levels of participation among all team members. High levels of participation provide more information, encourages critical thinking and increases team member ownership and commitment to the actions that result.

Benefits of facilitator guides:

- Team leaders know exactly how to achieve each task in the system
- Creates balanced participation so individuals or groups do not dominate the team process
- Builds strong team dynamics by valuing contributions of each team member
- Creates strong interpersonal dynamics by focusing on understanding differences in opinions
- Increases communications within the team
- Maximizes team member ownership and commitment to the results of the process

5. Cyber Space

TLS provides Worksheets that are used by team members to prepare and share their thinking prior to each team work session. Loading the worksheets on document sharing and collaboration tools dramatically increase team productivity.

TLS is also designed to work with Engage Thoughtware “Thought Trees” that move thinking into cyber space. Unlike document sharing tools that share information, “thought trees” allow teams to share thinking in a free flowing manner. Thought docs are confidential to encourage honesty and can be rated by other team members to provide feedback on ideas.

Benefits of productivity tools:

- ‘Front loads’ information so team’s don’t spend time going around the room listening to people share their initial thoughts
- Team members come to team meetings prepared to participate
- Team members understand the initial thinking of other team members before the meeting
- Team members can raise high risk issues in confidence
- Provides the team with access to more information
- Allows more time in meetings for critical thinking and action
- Creates balanced participation across team members

5. BEST PRACTICES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAMS

TLS is based on the best practices of high performance teams in excellent organizations. Development started with the implementation of Action Teams in the OH&SP Division of 3M Company. A Harvard Business School study found Action teams reduced new product development cycle time by 50%. Over the next twenty years we work on teams in 75 Divisions, conducted over 300 team sessions, and made a Study of Pacing Plus teams in the I&C Sector. This long term relationship with 3M allowed us to follow teams for up to 10 years to institutionalize them into a division infrastructure and to create a collaborative relationship with management.

We applied our learning to a range of business and industries including pharmaceuticals, retail consumer, electronics, and telecommunications. As a result we have identified the best practices of high performance teams and the 10 key success factors for team performance.

Benefits of best practices:

- You can learn from the best. 3M is a recognized leader in innovation and new product development.
- Proven content and processes
- Non-academic and extremely practical activities and processes

BENEFITS

KNOWLEDGE BASED TEAMS

Without a defined process teams are people centered – what the team does and how it does it will be determined by the people on the team. This approach subjects team development to all of the people problems that can reduce performance. TLS creates a knowledge based approach to team development. Everyone knows what to do and is focused on the process, not each other.

Benefits of knowledge based teams:

- Reduces dependency on personality and style of team leader
- Creates a common entry level of knowledge among team members
- Reduces dependency on past team experiences which can vary greatly between team members
- Focuses team members on building the team instead of arguing about how to build a team

STRONGER TEAM LEADERSHIP

TLS dramatically increases team leader confidence and performance. The leader goes into the team development process knowing exactly **what** they must do and **how** to do it. A well organized and confident team leader quickly establishes credibility and legitimizes their ability to lead.

Benefits of strong team leaders:

- Inspires confidence and credibility of team members
- Reduces the bid for power between leaders and members on how to build the team
- Allows the leader to pre-plan tasks and focus on facilitating team processes
- Increases the performance and success of new leaders
- Accelerates team leader development

CREATE STRONG TEAM DYNAMICS

The processes used in TLS create strong Personal, Interpersonal and Group Dynamics through high levels of participation in the team building process. Instead of jumping off poles and playing games, team members directly interact with each other on team building tasks to build trust, increase risk taking and improve communications

Benefits of creating strong team dynamics:

- Reduces conflicts over personality and style
- Strengthens work relationships between team members
- Increases trust and personal risk taking
- Increases communications and reduces miscommunications
- Creates shared understanding on complex and emotional issues.

SELF-MAXIMIZING SYSTEM

Product development and project management are dynamics processes – things change, and sometimes they change a lot. TLS creates action oriented teams that are constantly adjusting to learning and changing circumstance. This turns each team into a self-maximizing system that does the right things, right the first time.

Benefits of self-maximizing system:

- Assure team applies learning to constantly increase its performance
- Assures team adjusts to changes in the business and organization
- Assures the team is always doing the right things for the current situation

BETTER RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Not every team is high priority and not every team deserves the same level of investment. TLS adjusts the time and energy invested in a team based on the team's priority and probability of success. Teams that are high priority and high risk typically justify the highest level of investment to succeed.

Benefits:

- Assures the team makes the investment necessary to achieve success
- Assures the team does not make more investment than the team justifies
- Assures each team makes the right level of investment – not too much, not too little, just right.

SHORTER CYCLE TIME

TLS avoids false starts, drives a dynamic planning process, and assures the team adjusts to learning and changing circumstances. TLS makes teams make each team a driving force to get products to market and projects completed in the shortest time possible, without taking unreasonable risks.

In the 1980's 3M estimated that the average cost of delay for a new product was about \$22,000 per day for Class 5 new products (new technology to new market). Teams that failed to make the necessary investment usually crashed at about six weeks and had to go through a re-start. This typically added a minimum of 60 days to the cycle time of the project and created a cost of delay of \$1,320,000.00! With that much at stake, team building is free!

Benefits:

- Accelerate products and projects
- Reduced costs
- Increased competitiveness

THE RIGHT LEVEL OF INVESTMENT

Each phase in the Team Launch System is designed to determine the level of investment that is justified in team development. The investment in Phase 1 creates a Situational Analysis to establish the team's level of priority based on its importance, urgency and probability of success. The team's level of priority determines the investment a team should make in Phase 2 - ORGANIZE. The mission, goals, and Strategies established in Phase 2 determine the level of action that is justified in Phase 3. This ensures that each team receives the right level of investment: not more than the team can justify and not less than what is necessary to achieve success.

BETTER RESOURCE UTILIZATION

False starts, unproductive meetings, and inefficient team process waste organizational resources. Teams that achieve high performance, and achieve it sooner, work more collaboratively with management to make better decisions about resource utilization. Quickly adjusting to learning and changing circumstances throughout the team lifecycle allows resources to be more quickly reallocated to higher priority activities.

INCREASED COLLABORATION BETWEEN TEAMS AND MANAGEMENT

TLS positions planning as a collaborative work process that gets teams and management working together better to do the right things for the business. It establishes clear responsibilities for estimating time and resources, approving resource allocations, and implementation of the project plan. It creates a partnership where teams lead the way in determining the right things to do, and functional management leads the way in doing those things right the first time.

INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE TEAM PROCESS

It is management's responsibility to allocate resources to the team (team member time to participate in the teambuilding process) and a team's responsibility to meet the deliverables at the end of each phase of the system. Management holds teams accountable for the deliverables and teams hold management accountable for creating the conditions that allow them to accomplish the deliverables.

INCREASED MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT

TLS maximizes team member motivation and commitment through highly participative team building processes. Phase 1 maximizes team member motivation by establishing a "compelling business reason for the team" and determining the level of power, influence, and support the team can expect in the organization. Phase 2 maximizes ownership for, and commitment to, the team's mission, goals, and strategies through high levels of participation in establishing them. In Phase 3 the builds support for its actions by reaching outside the team to involve key stakeholders. TLS gets everybody involved in the product or project "*Working Together Better*".

MORE AGILE AND RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Building high performance teams creates a more agile and responsive organization. High performance teams respond quickly to learning and changing circumstances. Secure in knowing they are doing the right things. They do not wait for direction or ask for permission, they take action. They move a product or process @ the speed of thought, not the speed of the "chain of command".

CONTACT US!

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