

TEAM Model™ Summary

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As we entered the nanosecond-nineties, changes in the marketplace, global competition and drive to be “leaner and meaner” created an unprecedented rush to reorganize companies into teams. Thus, to remain competitive, the playing field must be leveled by changing to a team-based organization.

The effect of teams sounds almost too good to be true and raises many questions. For example, what is a team? If this concept is so successful, why haven't more companies embraced the team concept? In the purest sense, a team is:

An interdependent grouping of individuals organized around a process, each performing a critical function required for process success.

The answer to the last question is that there have been many more companies than you have read about that have tried the team concept. You don't hear about these other companies for two reasons: the team concept did not work and, companies don't boast about their failures. The team concept seldom meets management's expectations because management very often doesn't understand three key factors. First, *teams are made of people working in a coordinated effort to perform a particular process.* Second, the team concept must be *integrated throughout* the organization in such a manner that it becomes the organization's *culture*. Success also depends on a thorough understanding and application of the *Team Principles*.

Teams exhibit behavior along two primary axes, commitment and trust. Commitment is defined as the individual's level of motivation and willingness to belong to the team. The motivation component provides the direction of the commitment and willingness provides the level of intensity.

Trust is defined as the individual's de-

gree of confidence in and reliability on the team members. The interaction of commitment and trust produces four distinct person-team interaction arenas; *determining identity, establishing control, building relationships and working together.* The resultant observable behaviors are categorized as stages of team development and are labeled *Targeting (T), Exploring (E), Awakening (A) and Mastery (M).*

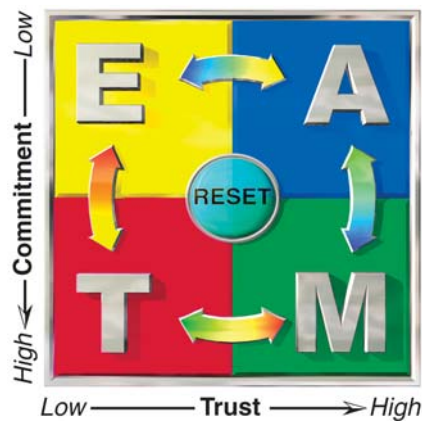


Figure 1
Team Developmental Stages

A team's developmental stage is the average location of the team members' focus at a particular point in time. It is important to note that contrary to most team development theories, *teams may have team members spread across all four stages simultaneously.* The team can be seen to disperse over the four primary stages similar to a *glob*. Just as electrons are smeared around the nucleus of the atom, so are the team members smeared around the team.

Progression through these stages is *normally* in a serial fashion; that is, the team moves either forward or backward from one stage to the next. Newly formed teams typically begin in the Targeting stage and move forward sequentially through Exploring, Awakening and Mastery. Each stage has its characteristic issues, concerns and resultant behaviors.

Targeting. When a team is in the Targeting stage it is analogous to a system on the verge of chaos. It is unstable and vacillates. Team members are trying to decide if they are going to

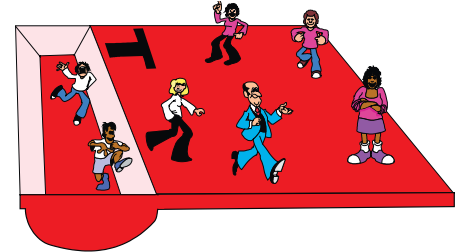


Figure 2
Targeting Behavior

be in or out of the team. The team is in a very loose and ambiguous state. Membership is provisional; norms are not in force; the structure is weak; and ability to perform as a team is very low. Even so, most team members are motivated to attempt to perform. Those who are not motivated to exert the minimally required effort tend to be quickly excluded from the team. The most effective leader style for this stage is Limiting because it provides the team members with the structure and direction needed to turn their motivation into performance.

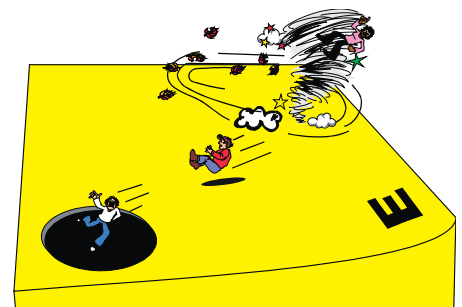


Figure 3
Exploring Behavior

Exploring. During this stage teams become chaotic and produce unpredictable and difficult-to-control behavior. Everyone and everything is challenged. It is

similar to “the gunfighter days of the old West.” Everyone is a target and fair game.

The most skilled gunfighters (power players) normally acquire the dominant positions within the team. The smoke and chaos resulting from the gunfights obscure the vision and lower the motivation of team members. To evolve from this stage requires the coaching and enforcing behaviors of the Encouraging style of leadership.



Figure 4
Awakening Behavior

Awakening. At this stage the gunfights are over and the smoke and haze have cleared, allowing the team members to see how the survivors are arrayed and to begin building close relationships. The chaos has come under the influence of a strange attractor (commitment and trust) which begins to pull the team together into an organized and efficient pattern. The strange attractor manifests as bonding among team members as well

as clearly defined and accepted boundaries. Team performance and motivation increase along with willingness and ability. This stage is best suited for the Assisting leadership style.



Figure 5
Mastery Behavior

Mastery. During this stage a new order (team) forms out of the disorder of the previous chaos. The quantum leap that occurs in the Mastery stage produces a *synergized* team operating at a much higher performance level than before. Team members are very willing, able and highly motivated. The boundaries are much closer now, roles are established and team members make significant personal sacrifices to ensure the continued success of the team. The most appropriate leader style for this stage is Developing.

In the center of the TEAM Model™ is a *reset button*. The reset button is a metaphor for *catastrophic events* which propel the team through the various stages.

For example, a team operating in the Awakening stage can be suddenly shoved backward *or* forward to a different stage by certain events. These events can include a major deadline change, adding a team member, losing a team member, a change in the team’s mission, a new team leader or new technology. Any of these events will cause the team to move rapidly forward or backward. Most team members will discover they have the ability to press the reset button themselves. When the team member is not happy with where the team is, he might intentionally push the button in an attempt to move the team to where he is more comfortable.

The transition to the team concept is difficult both mentally and physically. Mind sets have to be reorganized; *paradigms changed*. Most executives, managers and workers have years of experience in Newtonian thinking and application and find it difficult to change.

The key to organizational success in the 21st Century is the development of high performing teams. Teams work if the top leadership of organizations believes in and models the team concept from the top down. It is not an easy journey, but a worthwhile one if executives and managers have the determination, persistence and innovation to leave the machine behind and make the **quantum leap!**

