

DREXLER/SIBBET TEAM PERFORMANCE™ MODEL

Allan Drexler and David Sibbet spent nine years refining a comprehensive model of team performance that shows the predictable stages involved in both creating and sustaining teams. The **Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance™** model illustrates team development in seven “lenses,” four to create the team and three to describe levels of performance. The lenses are:

- Orientation
- Trust Building
- Goal Clarification
- Commitment
- Implementation
- High Performance
- Renewal

The Architecture of the Model

The predominant feature of the Model is the array of seven circles. Each circle represents a group of predictable issues that a team must recognize and master to become a high-performing team. The circles can be thought of as lenses through which one might look into the workings of a team.

Each lens of the Model has the same format. Each one contains:

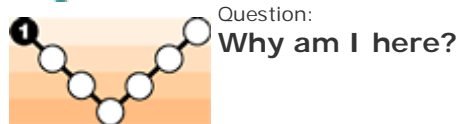
- A title or label, for example, "Implementation," with a numerical identifier for ease of reference.
- A central question that sums up and encapsulates the issues for that lens, such as "Why am I here?" "Who are you?" or "What are we doing?"
- The heading "Resolved" above each lens, followed by three bulleted items. For example, for lens 2, "Trust Building," the items are "Mutual Regard," "Forthrightness," and "Reliability." These bulleted items are the keys to resolving the central issue captured within that lens. So for lens 2, Trust Building is considered resolved when team members' behaviors display mutual regard, forthrightness, and reliability.
- The heading "Unresolved" below each lens, followed by two or three bulleted items. For example, when "Commitment" is uncertain, the kinds of behaviors that tend to occur are dependence and resistance.

The Model presents both a picture of the foundational aspects or challenges critical to the development of new teams, and a comprehensive set of performance lenses for established teams. The seven lenses are arranged with the most fundamental on the left. In fully formed teams, all seven aspects are active and integral to high performance.

Although the issues represented in the various lenses of the Model are all in play simultaneously in a developed team, they also have a natural order. Illustrated in a linear fashion, the earlier more fundamental aspects are the most important for beginning teams, but the seven issue areas are cumulative. All issues work in concert in fully formed teams. The idea is not that a team deals completely with orientation issues, moves to trust issues, and then gets clear about goals, never to return to orientation again. The process of enhancing team performance is organic. Over time, teams may work on and cycle back to all of the Model issues as needed. At one point, a team might be clear about its purpose, and then lose its way, or add members who aren't clear. It may have a lot of trust and then lose it. It might have to change goals. Sometimes, issues in one area become more pressing and call for attention. At other times, another area may demand attention. But all issues are constantly in play, and should be monitored.

The Seven Lenses of the Team Performance Model

Stage 1: ORIENTATION

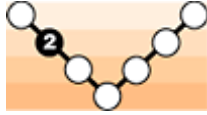


The primary meaning of the word "orientation" is finding your place relative to other reference points. It is about getting your bearings. Just as it takes time, attention and learning to become comfortable and move around easily in a new town, a work team is a world of its own in which members have to find their places. They need to know what their charter is, how and if they fit in with other members, and how integral they are to the team's efforts. The capsule question is "Why" The keys to answering that question are:

- **Purpose:** Team members being clear about their purpose and the team's purpose;
- **Membership:** Getting team members tightly connected as a coherent whole; and
- **Team Identity:** The team developing a sense of shared identity.

In some respects, the "Why" question is an individual one: Why am I here? This includes both the issue of why the organization chartering the team wants me here, and why I want to be here. Is it important to me? Does it have any meaning? Are important values served by my work on this team? There is also a collective question: Why are we here? What does it matter to us, and what might we make of it? In answering these questions, teams find that part of the answer is given, but part of it is also created. Teams can add to and deepen their own sense of purpose by answering these questions.

Stage 2: TRUST BUILDING



Question:
Who are you?

By definition, the people on teams have to depend upon one another to do their part of what is needed for the team to succeed. Their interdependency demands that they trust one another. The central question is "Who are you?" The keys to Trust Building are:

- **Mutual Regard:** Having team members regard one another in a generally positive light;
- **Forthrightness:** Enabling the people on the team to speak candidly with one another; and
- **Reliability:** Team members behaving in a way that develops enough confidence among them that they feel comfortable relying on one another.

Trust is the bond that connects people on a team. On work teams, the trust needed isn't the same as that between friends, where people may confide their personal fears and hopes. Work teams need professional trust, which is the willingness to let go and place your fate (at least partly) in someone else's hands. It enables team members to share information freely about what they intend, what they can or can't do, and what they need from the others. It also enables them to get the information they need to depend upon one another: information about their competence, good will, and reliability. Trust is built through truth telling and consistent follow-through. When team members are competent, honest and dependable, trust inevitably develops. When team members don't share these attributes, trust will not develop.

Stage 3: GOAL CLARIFICATION



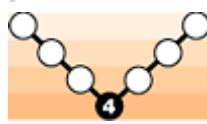
Question:
What are we doing?

The summary question of Goal Clarification is "What are we doing?" In both the long and short term, team members need to have the same idea of what they are trying to achieve together. These are the keys to getting clear on what the team is to do:

- **Explicit Assumptions:** Bringing to the surface the underlying beliefs, values and assumptions team members make about what the team is to do;
- **Clear, Integrated Goals:** Being clear about the outcomes, milestones and measures of success the team is aiming for, and seeing that they make sense together; and
- **Shared Vision:** Team members sharing the same picture of the future they want for the team, beyond the immediate performance cycle.

The result of resolving these issues is that everyone on the team has the same, clear idea of what the team is supposed to do. They have the same image of what success means for them and the team. If team members don't have at least the same picture in their heads of what they are trying to accomplish, it is nearly impossible to see how they will succeed together.

Stage 4: COMMITMENT



Question:
How will we do it?

The lens at the turning point of the Model is Commitment and it presents some of the thorniest issues that teams have to face - issues that have to do with power, control, and politics. This lens represents the point at which teams have to face the limitations of what they can do with what they have. It is the point of greatest constraint represented in the Model. The keys to forming a focused team Commitment are:

- **Assigned Roles:** Team members being clear about what part they each play, and how responsibility is shared;
- **Allocated Resources:** Priorities being established, and resources being distributed in a way that is clear, equitable, and proportional; and
- **Decisions Made:** Being clear on how decisions are made.

Commitment is at the bottom line of the Team Performance Model. No team can be committed to everything; there just isn't enough of everything to go around. So Commitment first involves making decisions, choosing this or these instead of that or those. It means setting priorities and being willing to invest in one course of action over alternatives that are competing for priority and attention. It means defining roles and assigning responsibilities to team members. Commitment is not a vague sense of obligation to the team but to specific objectives and actions. On a team with Commitment, team members have made a clear and positive choice. They have selected a course of action and let all of the others go. They are resolute to get to the end of their road, and make their vision a reality.

Stage 5: IMPLEMENTATION



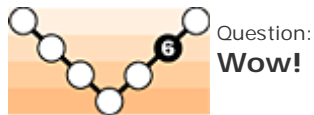
Question:
Who does what, when and where?

The summary question of Implementation is "Who does what, when, and where?" It is about the unfolding of the work, and having the planning, scheduling, and monitoring processes in place to keep things running on track. The keys to implementation are:

- **Clear Processes:** Enabling operations to stay on track through mechanisms for planning, executing, and monitoring work;
- **Alignment:** Team members having what they need to work in synch;
- **Disciplined Execution:** Consistency and reliability in carrying out work operations.

During the Implementation stage, a team focuses on what it takes to get the job done. What is the sequence of activities, what technologies do we have to use, what materials are needed and how do we get them? Essentially the team is striving to realize its goals. It is trying to get all elements to come together smoothly in space and time. When Implementation is well handled, materials show up when they are supposed to, action is coordinated, and processes are in control. Timing is the primary concern, and when things go well, one can say it is like clockwork. The telltale characteristic of good Implementation is smoothness.

Stage 6: HIGH PERFORMANCE

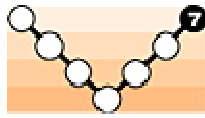


When people on a team trust one another, the quality of the relationships flows over into their performance and elevates it. At times, a team might reach High Performance, whose keys are:

- **Spontaneous Interaction:** Ease of interaction among members;
- **Synergy:** Multiplying the impact of the individuals through the effect of their working relationships; and
- **Surpassing Results:** Achieving extraordinary outcomes.

High performance is defined first by the quality of the outcome. It is a sizable cut above merely "OK." it is something to behold. New heights are reached, impassable obstacles overcome, seemingly impossible goals achieved. What a high-performing team produces is unique and superior, in part defined by the character of the team. Beyond the work products, the *process* of high performance in action looks different. People on the team are at ease with one another. They are OK with conflicts, dislikes, or mistakes, because their fundamental relationships are so sound. Individuals are not slowed by self-consciousness about themselves and the team. They get lost in the work. They turn to one another without giving it a thought, assuming the other will be there. It is this easiness in the relationships that enables the synergy, flow, flexibility, and intuitive communication among members. Through these, the team can reach high performance, infusing its work with its own spirit and creativity and lifting it to a level that is its own.

Stage 7: RENEWAL



Question:
Why continue?

The central question presented by the Renewal lens is "Why?" the same as in Orientation. In Orientation the question is "Why form as a team?" Whereas in Renewal the question is "Why go on?" The keys to team Renewal are:

- **Recognition and Celebration:** Adequately recognizing and celebrating team members and their work;
- **Change Mastery:** Managing and coping with changes as they occur within and without; and
- **Staying Power:** Sustaining the team's energy for its work.

Asking "Why continue?" happens not only at the end of a project or cycle, but almost continuously: at returns from breaks in the work, at transition points, upon the completion of milestones or phases of the work, with fundamental changes in direction, with changes in membership, or with shifts in external circumstances. In addition to staying in touch with the question "Why am I here?" Renewal is about doing what it takes to maintain a positive answer to the question. It's about coping with changes in oneself, team membership, the nature of the work, and the environment. The Renewal stage is about acknowledging and appreciating the energy invested in the work thus far, but also about sustaining and renewing.

For more information on the Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model and other tools available from The Grove Consultants International, call them at 415/561-2500 or visit http://www.grove.com/services/tool_modeltp.html