

SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

TOPIC THIS ISSUE: HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

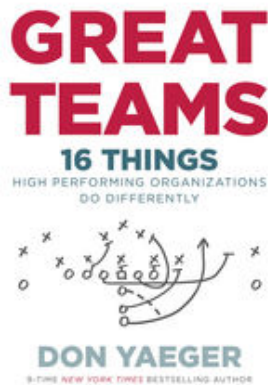
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**“Great Teams are
driven to create a
culture of greatness.”**
Don Yeager



GREAT TEAMS

By: Don Yeager



There is something special about watching a Great Team at work. Whether it is on the gridiron, on the diamond, on the hardwood or in a corporate setting, when a group of people “click,” the environment feels electric and the outcome is often extraordinary.

Great Teams are driven to create a culture of greatness. Trendy offenses, tricky defenses or “hot products” often get the credit for success, but the truly amazing organizations don’t stay at the top of their marketplaces without building a team-first culture.

Therefore to achieve that culture can be broken down to four essential pillars that set a truly Great Team apart from one that simply performs well:

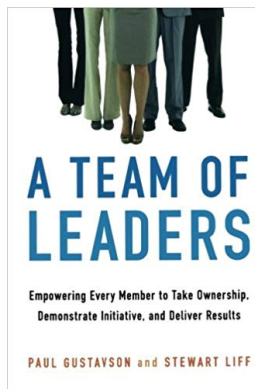
- **T**argeting Purpose: The team is connected to a greater purpose. Members understand whom they are serving and why that matters.
- **E**ffective Management: The team is able to think creatively and act dynamically in order to stay fresh, effective and relevant.

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- **Activating Efficiency:** Each member of the team brings a unique set of talents, experiences, perspectives, work ethic, personality traits and know-how that melds with and complements those of the other team members.
- **Mutual Direction:** There is a strong sense of understanding, appreciation, shared responsibility and trust that unites and motivates the team to work together.

Creating Advantage Through the Five-Stage Team Development Model

By: Paul Gustavson and Stewart Liff



Key Principle: Leadership always exists in a team; however, everyone becomes a leader once a team achieves Stage Five of the model.

A successful self-managed team generally evolves through a series of discernible stages. At the **first stage**, your team will start o with virtually every key decision being made by the supervisor or team leader. Because the transition to self-management is going to require a lot of change, the team needs an enormous amount of support.

Some of the initial enthusiasm often gives way to sarcasm as things will not go as smoothly as many people expect. This is why the team leader must be more involved than ever — to ensure that people understand how teams evolve, to address areas of uncertainty, and to deal with issues that the team is not capable of handling.

Slowly your team will become less leader-focused. As the team moves to **Stage Two**, it will start to grapple with what its goals and objectives are and try to ensure that everyone is on the same page. The team leader will still have to do a lot of coordinating and mentoring as the team begins to take baby steps while the leader begins to gradually move away from exercising full authority.



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Stage Three is the midway point in your team's evolution. While there still may be some frustration, members will start to learn their roles and come together. The "big picture" starts to become clearer to the team and its members, and a few individuals will even step up and provide some limited but real leadership. Moreover, the team will start to focus on performance. This is also the stage where your team will start to deal with difficult people issues.

At **Stage Four**, your team will really start to hum. Most of the team members are able to step up and lead in at least one specific area. People will communicate quite well and learn from each other. They will also take a serious interest in performance and try and actively achieve many of their goals and objectives. The level of engagement will clearly rise, and the team will look to take charge of all its key processes and procedures. There will still be work to do, particularly in the areas of problem solving and conflict resolution.

You must also continue to work on ensuring that all the team members have the requisite skill sets. At this stage, the supervisor will now be more of a coach and be on a more equal footing with the other team members, and the primary focus becomes training and developing the team members. He will have time to begin to focus on higher order work and contributions.

Reaching Stage Five

Once your team reaches Stage Five, you will now work together as a unit to set and achieve a challenging set of goals and objectives. Individual team members will no longer be followers — they will be leaders who look down the road and at their environment in order to get and stay ahead of the curve. Meanwhile, your team members will only accept excellent performance and beyond.

Finally, the energy level of the team will be extremely high as its members will know what they need to do, will be committed to doing it, and will work together to provide the best performance possible. Now the leader becomes more of a peripheral member of the team and is free to work on larger issues such as analysis, planning and cross-functional concerns.

The principles and evolution of a self-managed team are the same regardless of whether you are dealing with a senior team of managers, a football team, a white-collar team, a manufacturing team or even a family. If you want to have a self-managing team, you must progress through a defined series of stages toward self-management. But in order to do this, you must have the requisite design, processes, tools and support systems in place — otherwise, frustration and chaos are likely to ensue.



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Team Value Creation Model

By: Paul Gustavson and Stewart Liff

Key principle: People are much more likely to become leaders if they understand the value they contribute to the team.



For your team to run as a self-contained business, with everyone being a leader, everyone must know his or her success in creating value for the organization. And for people to know their success in creating value for the organization, they must have **two vital pieces of information: their cost for the process/team, and the value of the output they produce.**

With these two figures built into a model and some basic business management skills, you can determine how much value the team and each team member generates. This information will ensure that team members understand their value and will prod the team to look at its outputs and processes from a more practical, business-driven perspective. Moreover, it will help identify weaknesses within your team and suggest opportunities for productivity and efficiency improvements.

For your team to truly succeed, it must take a whole-brained approach to managing the team operation. That is, while team members must know how they are doing and whether they are creating an increase or decrease in value for the organization, they must also be connected around a sense of purpose.



Developing and Managing Knowledge Is Key to Team Performance

By: Paul Gustavson and Stewart Liff

Key principle: To build leaders, you must determine the knowledge they need, decide how to acquire it, and then manage its distribution.



It is said that knowledge is the purest source of advantage for high-performing teams. To deliver that extraordinary value, teams must manage the speed of discovery and diffusion of key knowledge better than any other alternative source. It is especially important to recognize that the diffusion and application of fresh

ideas are inherently *social* activities. How well your team uses knowledge is dependent on the quality and extent of the social networks within and surrounding the team.

The team knowledge needed to deliver outstanding performance includes tacit values, attitudes and expertise. A design cannot be complete, nor can we be confident that it will be successful, until we consider the full range of team knowledge to achieve performance goals and make plans for developing that knowledge.

Tacit knowledge refers to knowledge that one has but cannot explain. It is difficult or impossible to put into words.

Codifiable or explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is knowledge that can be explained and organized into rules or policies. *Know-that* refers to knowledge that is a fact or a truth, including an idea or a belief that's held as true. *Know-how* indicates the ability to perform tasks or operations either "in your head" or "in action."

High performance teams are more conscious of tacit (noncodifiable) knowledge. If you have ever played basketball, you know that when the team is playing at a high level, it feels as though everyone knows what the other player is doing. They are in the now and can anticipate each other's moves.

Teams need to develop all types of knowledge and expertise so that it becomes second nature, thus enabling them to be able to make many rapid but sound decisions. The best teams possess and capitalize on the tacit knowledge that helps differentiate them from their competitors.



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Tacit knowledge is more likely to be developed with unstructured methods, while codifiable, explicit knowledge is learned best in conventional, structured settings. Know-that is learned just fine through cerebral methods such as study, conversations and reflection, while know-how is best learned through action-oriented methods.

