

CREATING A ROADMAP

to accelerated team performance

Team alignment and performance can make or break your success as a leader. Linked to everything you aim to achieve, team performance proves to be one of the most elusive challenges to decode.

Since team effectiveness isn't episodic or based on a particular event it can be overwhelming to approach. It's similar to getting in shape. You don't go to the gym and expect to be in shape within a day or even a week – this would just leave you overworked and sore. The same is true of becoming a high performing team – it's a process that takes courageous effort.



Map out the journey to accelerated team performance by asking three simple questions ...

1 Where are you now?

Understanding the current state of your team and its culture can be challenging. If you have been on the team for some time, you probably have existing views and knowledge of your specific team dynamic and skill sets, as well as a good idea of the broader company talent and its culture. If you're new to the team or the organization, you may have a high-level understanding of these things, but, in either situation, you probably don't have the full picture.

Step back and take the time to listen, observe, and understand the big picture before making long-term, strategic plans. Your plans must consider:

- Organizational objectives and goals
- Culture from both macro (organization as a whole) and micro (their team's unique culture and how it fits into the broader one)
- Team effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- Individual team member gaps and expertise



Cutting through bias and organizational baggage can make it difficult to get to the truth. It's best to start with performance data first. Then, schedule time to talk with key stakeholders from various departments that interact with your team often. Listen for the stories that can help you get to the heart of your team's challenges and help make clear the reality of expectations others throughout the company have for your team's performance.

Once you feel you have a good grasp on this, schedule a time to meet with each of your team members individually to know them a bit better. What motivates them? How do they define their strengths? What do they identify as their areas for development?

Then, bring them together as a team. Provide opportunities for them to bond and deepen their understanding of one another.

Research has shown that teams with a sense of identity and purpose have a stronger sense of psychological safety, which allows them to outperform teams that lack empathy and safety. Consider adding a layer of science to your process by introducing assessments like the Hogan Assessment, Myer's Briggs, or DiSC to provide additional insights on how individuals behave under stress, how they prefer to communicate, and how you can empower the team to work more effectively together.

Where do you need to be?

Armed with your new knowledge, you can develop a roadmap for executing on the goals you have put in place. It's imperative to link your vision for supporting organizational goals with your strategy for execution so that your team members can easily connect it to their daily objectives. This allows them the latitude and knowledge to make sound decisions and take calculated risks.

But before they can take action, you'll need to outline the challenges, gaps, and strengths your team will encounter during execution of the plan. Consider the following possible approaches to aligning your team around your vision:

- Clarify or reconfigure roles to leverage strengths
- Add a new role to fill gaps and/or free up time for existing team members to shift their focus
- Design stretch assignments for those that need more exposure
- Outline and set completion goals for any development that's needed

Setting expectations and clarifying roles will enhance your team's sense of purpose and ultimately affect their ability to increase their performance. Now, you can set your sights on the future.

How will we get there?

With goals and execution strategy set, as well as role clarity and development plans in place, the final step is to create a roadmap for how the team will work together. Start by having a team discussion about how you will work differently together a year from now. Ask questions like:

- What will team meetings look like?
- How will we leverage differently our strengths?
- What will success look like?
- What challenges to achieving our goals do we foresee?
- How will we overcome them?

Then, work together to define your rules of engagement and your core purpose. Also, decide how you will measure success. It's best to create goals that have objective metrics attached, otherwise you may find it tough to determine what worked and what didn't. Be sure to set a cadence for checking in on your goals. Creating milestones as part of your roadmap will give you ample time to adjust course and amp up in any areas that are lagging behind.

Your team's performance will benefit from consistent updates to the roadmap and keep everyone on track. Many things create speed bumps, which will slow your process, but if you have the psychological safety to be vulnerable and work as a team you will easily maneuver through to success.

