



Dawson Consulting Group

# Developing the High Performance Team

## OVERVIEW

Creating a high performance team is a primary task for any leader. Not all teams may need to be truly high performance, but the executive leadership team charged with leading an organization absolutely does. Sadly, it is more the rule than the exception, that executive leadership teams are fragmented 'tribes'. Rarely do they have the two essential ingredients of a high performance team: trust and shared objectives. When a team achieves these two things - no easy feat - a multitude of benefits will follow. A team without these two ingredients may crawl, but it will never run.

As above, so below. The executive team is a microcosm for all the dynamics in the organization - indeed it is the prime mover – the 'DNA' of the organization's culture. Optimize the executive team, and you are more than half-way to optimizing the entire organization. The actions of the executive leadership team translate into the organizational culture. How this team solves problems, takes risks, rewards, collaborates, makes decisions, and communicates will be modeled throughout the organization.

Dawson Consulting Group also works with a variety of other cross-functional leadership teams that are charged with major implementation or execution tasks and must operate at a high-performance level.

- Implementation of enterprise technology enabling
- Large scale process improvement and re-design initiatives
- Strategically-linked special projects such as merger/acquisition or culture transformation.

## Common Team Issues:

- Helping a new team gel quickly so it can get to the work of leading.
- Getting the leadership team to take more of a 'shareholder', and less of a 'parochial' and functional, view of their role as 'officers of the company'.
- Optimizing the team's operating environment to ensure high-performance decision-making, communication, and collaboration.
- Resolving a 'toxic' conflict that paralyzes the team's ability to get its' work done

## EVERY TEAM IS THE SAME, YET DIFFERENT

All teams are faced with a universal set of challenges which are met more or less successfully – the *GRIP* model is a simple, but useful, framework within which to understand this: **Goals, Roles, Interpersonal dynamics, Processes:**

- What are our shared objectives and how will we measure long-term and short-term success?
- How will we use our formal and informal authority in the surrounding organizational system to accomplish these objectives?
- How clear are roles, responsibilities and related authorities for each team member?
- What kind of operating environment and 'team norms' do we need to function effectively?

## APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

The Dawson Consulting Group *High Performance Team* process begins with rapid cycle assessment of the team so that we are focusing attention on the most urgent issues. We share that assessment with the team's leader and the team, using it as the basis for a plan of action. We have a 'toolkit' that includes dozens of proven methods and tools to create focused results. In some cases, the team may need a quick 'tune-up' around roles or problem-solving, in other cases there may be legacy interpersonal issues that need to be resolved offline. In every team situation, there is benefit for the leader in a fresh set of objective eyes. Team leaders are in the difficult position of being part of the team system, yet they must understand the team's strengths, weaknesses, and value-add as though looking in from the perspective of external stakeholders.

## METHOD

Every team development circumstance is unique, but common elements of the Dawson Consulting Group method include:

- Team assessment with our research-based tools
  - ◆ Individual discussions with team members
- Contracting milestones in which we clearly delineate focal areas, interventions, timeframes, and outcomes.
- Application of proven team effectiveness methods, tools and exercises to quickly move the team to its' goal
  - ◆ Action steps, implementation and measurement of results to baseline

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

We will always demonstrate measurable improvement, linked to a strategic initiative, imperative or capability. Specific outcomes will vary as a function of the nature of the focal issue and the scope of the engagement.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Consider having one of senior Dawson Consulting Group consultants walk you through our *High Performance Team Assessment* to get an initial sense of where the issues might be – and what kinds of solutions are available.
2. Pose these few questions to your current team: *Given our business strategy and objectives, kind of team do we need to execute on these? What are the gaps that hold us back from successfully executing?*

Dawson Consulting Group is an organizational effectiveness firm, founded in 1989, focused on helping organizations align culture with strategy through optimization of executives, leadership teams, and the key processes and structures they are responsible for. The firm is composed of senior professionals with background in psychology and human resources. Office locations in Honolulu, Silicon Valley and New York.