

Developing Team Leadership Capability

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Organizational life is complicated. A shifting competitive landscape, information overload, and the need to do more with less all contribute to the dizzying pace and ambiguity. In an attempt to deal with these challenging demands, most organizations have embraced teams as a way to structure work, relying on them to forge success. As the saying goes, “All of us are smarter than any one of us.” Teams have become ubiquitous in organizations around the globe. Automotive production teams assemble the cars we drive; research teams develop new drugs that save lives; airline crews transport millions safely; surgical and firefighting teams save lives with skill and feats of heroism; governmental negotiation teams decide the fate of nations; sports teams thrill (and sometimes disappoint) us with their feats on the field of play; and top management teams make the decisions that can have a profound impact on organizations and their workers.

But it is not enough to simply put a group of people together and point them toward a dimly imagined goal. Although human beings have been working together to accomplish vital outcomes since the beginning of humanity, teamwork does not come naturally to most people. Several key questions about successful teamwork persist. For example, one of the hallmarks of teams is that they are often given considerable autonomy or discretion in performing their work and making decisions. They then must manage many of their own activities or otherwise self-regulate their behavior. So how do teams effectively lead themselves? Despite the relative autonomy they may enjoy, most teams report to a formally designated sponsor outside the team and are never given complete autonomy. What is the role of such external leaders in promoting team effectiveness? Finally, sometimes teams succeed and sometimes they fail. What causes one team to succeed and another to fail?

Just as individual leaders are faced with the challenge of generating direction, alignment, and commitment (DAC) among their followers (see the Introduction), teams must also have appropriate DAC. This chapter describes a model of leadership in teams: the challenges teams face, the team needs that arise from these challenges, and the role of leadership in teams. Throughout the chapter, we discuss how to develop team leadership capability (TLC) and, consequently, DAC.

Developing TLC involves increasing the collective capacity for satisfying key team needs in order to meet the challenges they are facing. There are many ways to develop this collective capacity, ranging from increasing knowledge and awareness of the components of team effectiveness to deliberately intervening to fill specific team needs. Before we get to our model of team leadership, however, we describe some basic issues of teams and their leadership processes.

THE NATURE OF TEAMS AND TEAM LEADERSHIP

Teams or work groups are composed of individuals who to some degree (1) share a social identity as a unit, (2) possess common goals, (3) are interdependent in terms of tasks or outcomes, (4) have distinct roles within the team, and (5) are embedded in a larger organizational and societal context that they influence and are influenced by (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). In the spirit of inclusiveness, we use the terms *group* and *team* interchangeably. Although some people distinguish teams from groups, the differences tend to be ones of degree rather than kind (Guzzo and Dickson, 1996). Thus, all teams or groups will vary along these dimensions, and there is no precise point at which a “group” becomes a “team.”

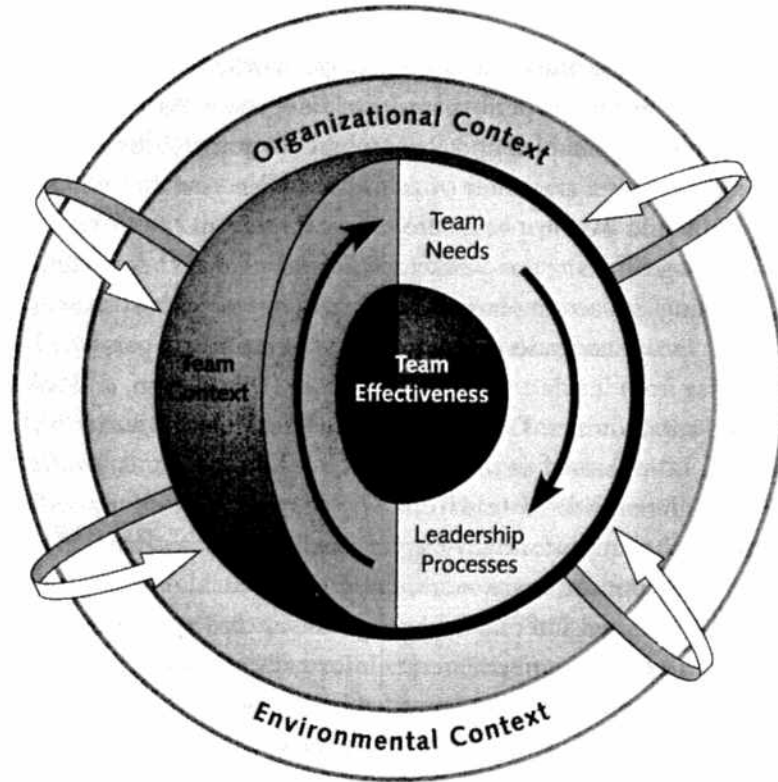
As teams work together over time, they move through two interrelated kinds of performance cycles. The first occurs with the passage of time as team members gain experience working with one another, and they move through a set of fairly universal experiences. What matters early in a team's life is likely to differ from what matters later, in part because of the accumulation of experiences and the history of the team. The second kind of performance cycle is episodic. As teams interact, they cycle through distinct planning and action phases (Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro, 2001). Planning phases are times of transition when teams evaluate and plan for upcoming work. Action phases are times when teams perform tasks in the fulfillment of a goal. As teams work together over time, they cycle repeatedly through planning and action phases, and their needs vary across these phases.

Finally, we view team leadership as a process rather than a person. Thus, leadership can arise from inside and outside the team (Day, Gronn, and Salas, 2004) from four potential sources. The first source is formal internal leadership: a single team member is appointed as the leader. The second source is formal external leadership: a leader outside the team (one who does not perform any of the day-to-day tasks with the team) is formally responsible for the team. External leaders are often called team sponsor, team coordinator, team coach, or project leader. The third source is informal internal leadership: this includes emergent leadership, meaning that one team member emerges informally as a leader in the team; and shared leadership, meaning that team members either share leadership responsibilities equally or dynamically trade off the leadership role. The fourth source is informal external leadership, which occurs when individuals outside the team take it on themselves to act as mentors to the team champions for the team's ideas.

TEAM LEADERSHIP MODEL

We now articulate our view of leadership in teams. Figure 10.1 depicts our overall view. At the center of the model lies team effectiveness. In our view, a team's effectiveness can be gauged by assessing the team's actions, feelings, and learning. Action-oriented indicators of effectiveness include achievement of team goals, how much members behave in prosocial supportive ways toward other members and the team as a whole, and how much the team as a whole behaves in prosocial supportive ways toward the organization. Feeling-oriented indicators of effectiveness include how satisfied team members are with the team and fellow team members and how committed to and identified members feel toward the team. Learning-oriented indicators of effectiveness include the efficiencies

Figure 10.1
Team Leadership Model

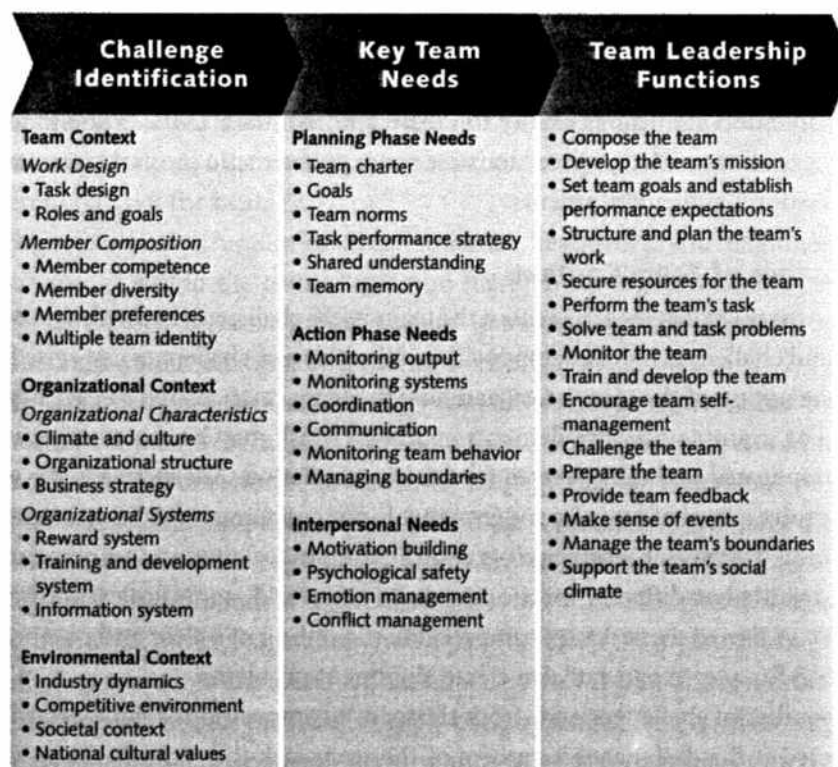


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created by the team, the extent to which effectiveness improves over time, and how effectively a team's approach adapts to changing conditions.

In order to be effective in the action, feeling, and learning domains, certain team needs must be satisfied. By "team needs" we mean the things that enable a team to regulate itself as it plans and executes in service of a goal. As Figure 10.1 suggests, these needs are shaped by the team and its organizational and environmental contexts, which create a number of challenges to a team's DAC. The challenges arise as team members work together, cycle through planning and action phases, and operate in different contexts. Team leadership, also shaped by context, is a significant force in satisfying team needs (Hackman and Walton, 1986). Over

Figure 10.2
Challenges, Needs, and Team Leadership Functions



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time, team needs and team leadership processes come to influence each other dynamically (as suggested by the inner arrows in Figure 10.1).

Figure 10.2 identifies the specific types of team challenges, needs, and leadership functions that we spend the rest of the chapter discussing. It complements Figure 10.1 in summarizing our view of team leadership and can aid teams in answering the kinds of team leadership development questions discussed later. We first discuss the myriad challenges arising from the team, organization, and environmental context. We then describe the needs that can arise in a team as it encounters challenges and cycles through the planning and action phases and offer extended examples about how to develop leadership capability in a team.

TEAM CHALLENGES

The internal context of a team and its broader organizational and environmental context are subject to shifting events. In innumerable ways, the resulting challenges have an impact on the team's needs, leadership processes, and effectiveness. Challenges are barriers or obstacles to team effectiveness and can directly or indirectly affect the team's ability to create and maintain DAC. Some kinds of challenges all teams face; other kinds are more problematic for particular teams, organizations, and environments.

Challenges of Team Context

Two primary challenges arise within the team itself: challenges in the design of the work and challenges in team composition. Work design challenges can arise from both the nature of the team's task and how the team is structured to perform the tasks. For example, the key elements of a team's task may be too ambiguous or too complicated and multifaceted for ready assimilation. Alternatively, the work may require a level of interdependence that is not consistent with how the team is structured. If the work requires close coordination in real time and team members are distributed at different locations around the world, communication will be difficult. A flawed work design can preclude the setting of a clear and compelling direction for a team and can also create alignment problems.

A number of challenges arise from the team's composition. Teamwork will be hampered if the designated members of the team lack the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience for the team's task. Outcomes will also be suboptimal if team members lack both needed teamwork skills and successful prior team experience. Team member diversity (in values, ethics, beliefs, training, seniority, education, and expertise) provides the potential for the development of robust solutions to the team's task; however, it can also lead to substantial conflict and difference of opinion about the team's direction and working methods, thereby threatening team alignment and commitment. Too little diversity in the team can preclude creative, innovative outcomes.

Finally, if members of the team are also working on demanding projects on one or more other teams and thus identify with multiple teams, they can be distracted by the demands of these other obligations and get caught in conflicting loyalty binds, thereby threatening team commitment.

Challenges of the Organizational Context

The organization within which a team resides can also challenge the team in many ways. For example, the climate and culture of the organization may be an issue. Some organizational cultures do not support team-oriented work. In such cultures, silos rule, and competitive individualism is the dominant operating style. Diversity of thought and experience are not valued, and there is little collegial interchange among organization members operating in different locations and different parts of the business.

Organizational structure also can threaten teamwork and alignment and commitment within the team. Rigid and hierarchical organizational structures hinder the work of cross-functional and cross-level teams. Trust issues and conflicting loyalties continually undermine effective work.

An organization's business strategy can thwart teamwork. Some business strategies, by their very nature, are inconsistent with work structured around teams. If the organization's fundamental strategy has core elements of speed, cost reduction, and simplicity, teams within the organization will have difficulty contributing to these strategic goals. Teams are most effective in doing complex, ambiguous, interdependent tasks. In order to work effectively, teams need resources: time, money, technology, talent, and access. If the organization provides insufficient resources to the team, does not effectively deploy the resources where they are needed, or cuts the team's supply of resources while it is under way, team commitment will flag, and team performance will suffer commensurately.

It is a truism of organizational life that human beings will expend great effort in the pursuit of desirable rewards. If the organization's reward system focuses on individual performance only, members of a team will be more likely to devote their time and energy to activities that will contribute to their individual performance. The needs of the team will often conflict with their individual needs. Such dilemmas cause both alignment and commitment to deteriorate.

An organization's training and development system can create challenges for the team. If the organization forces ill-equipped members onto teams, places little value on developing effective teamwork skills, provides no training in effective team functioning, provides no training in effective team leadership functions, and provides no training in working effectively across diverse team member demographics, productive teamwork is unlikely to occur except inadvertently.

Challenges of the Environmental Context

Arising outside the organization, environmental challenges can have a broad impact on it and its teams. Changes in the competitive environment tend to have a dramatic impact. If the economy surges or plunges, market conditions shift, competitors enter or leave the market, the dynamics of competition shift dramatically, or the organization's strategic initiatives fail to gain traction, the organization must react. To keep its direction and alignment, the team must accurately read these reactions and adapt accordingly.

When team members come from different national cultures, their diverse values can pose numerous challenges to the functioning of the team. Different cultures have different values, which are reflected in the expectations individuals bring to the team. The domain of these diverse expectations is vast; it ranges from how decisions are made to how authority is exercised, how members address each other, and how rewards are distributed. For example, when global virtual teams are created, some team members likely will be from individualist cultures and others from collectivist cultures. These differing cultural values are likely to produce differences in how individuals orient themselves toward the team and approach the team's work. Such differences can make it hard to reach consensus on direction and alignment. Conflicts arising from such sources have stymied the performance of many multinational teams.

A FRAMEWORK OF TEAM NEEDS

These challenges make it difficult to establish DAC in a team. In addition, they produce certain needs in the team that must be satisfied in order for a team to perform effectively. These needs can be thought of as more specific examples of DAC across the planning and action phases of a team's performance cycle, as well as needs related to interpersonal processes. These team needs are summarized in Table 10.1 and briefly discussed. Following each section, we provide an extended example of how team leadership capability was developed (in relation to the needs) in a team we have worked with in the past.

In considering these needs, it is important to keep in mind that leadership is the primary mechanism through which these needs are satisfied. A variety of leadership functions can satisfy them (see Figure 10.2 and Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam, in press). Some leadership functions are typically performed by the

Table 10.1
Definitions of Team Needs

Team Need	Definition
Planning phase needs	
Team charter	Overall objectives, resources, and constraints are defined by or for the team
Goals	Identification of measurable team output and related milestones
Team norms	Agreed-on standards of behavior that regulate team member performance during and between interactions
Task performance strategy	Development of overall approach to the task and key actions to achieve goals
Shared understanding	Identification of key assumptions and beliefs that will affect performance to create a common perspective
Team memory	Inventory of relevant knowledge, information, and skills available to the team (and gaps)
Action phase needs	
Monitoring output	Tracking and communicating progress toward task completion and goal accomplishment
Monitoring systems	Tracking resources available to the team (people, budget, information) and tracking the external environment (stakeholders, changing conditions)
Coordination	Prioritizing and orchestrating the sequence and timing of key activities and events
Communication	Ensuring high-quality communication within the group
Monitoring team behavior	Providing feedback and coaching to help members perform tasks or ensure others complete those tasks
Maintaining boundaries	Ensuring high-quality information flow with other groups or units, including acquisition of resources, coordinating activities, and advocating team interests

(continued)

Table 10.1
(continued)

Team Need	Definition
Interpersonal needs	
Motivation building	Generating a sense of personal accountability for individual and team performance, team cohesion, and motivation toward task accomplishment
Psychological safety	Developing a shared sense of trust so team members can openly speak their minds without fear of rebuke or retaliation
Emotion management	Ensuring that setbacks and frustration (and even overconfidence) do not undermine team performance
Conflict management	Ensuring that differences of opinion do not prevent task accomplishment; helping team have healthy debate without personal acrimony

nominal team leader or team sponsor, but many can be equally well performed with initiative and savvy by a capable team member or a coalition of team members. This is in keeping with the idea that team leadership resides in a set of processes or functions, not necessarily a person or a position.

Planning Phase Needs

A team is in a planning phase whenever it is planning actions it is about to take or evaluating the impact of actions it has just taken. During this phase, six team needs arise (see also Table 10.1):

- *Team charter.* This includes making sure that the overall purpose of the team is clear, the key tasks to be performed by the team are understood, the key challenges and opportunities facing the team are identified, and the resources the team needs are identified and available. Having a clear team charter is essential for teams because it helps focus energy, enables effective resource allocation, and can serve to inspire extraordinary effort.

• *Clear and specific goals.* Key goals must be identified, potentially competing goals must be prioritized, and individual goals or team subgoals must be aligned with the team's broader goals. For team goals to be effective, they should be set in such a way that all team members are committed to them (for example, participatively), be difficult but achievable (realistic), and be time bound such that there are deadlines for goal accomplishment. Having clear, specific goals is essential for teams because goals help team members regulate their task-related effort. They provide direction to team member behavior, encourage team members to exert additional effort, and foster task persistence when difficulties arise.

• *Team norms.* Team norms are expectations about appropriate team behavior. This includes agreed-on standards that regulate team member behavior before, during, and after task performance. Clear norms have at least two important benefits. First, team norms prescribe how routine interactions among team members will occur. This might include how the task work is divided, how disagreements are to be resolved, and the kind of participation expected of team members. Second, effective norms provide guidance as to how team members should act when they find themselves in ambiguous or novel situations.

• *Task performance strategy.* Formulating strategy includes developing an overall approach to the task, deciding what actions are needed to accomplish the team's goals, and revising existing (possibly ineffective) approaches. Having a task performance strategy is critical to team success because it enables the team to have a coordinated and integrated approach to the task. It also allows the team to more systematically harvest the ideas and plans individual team members might have. Not only do teams commonly fail to develop task strategies prior to performing, they typically encounter difficulties in adjusting or revising the plan of action when under way. Having a task performance strategy is critical to team success because it enables the team to have a coordinated and integrated approach to the task. It also allows the team to more systematically harvest the ideas and plans individual team members might have.

• *Shared understanding.* Shared understanding within the team must cover such things as the tasks to be performed, the challenges the team faces, the tools or resources at the team's disposal, the desired interaction patterns in the team, and the working relationships among team members. By possessing a shared understanding, team members are better able to coordinate their efforts and respond to the variety of expected and unexpected challenges the team might

face. This occurs in part because having a common understanding enables team members to know what to expect of the other team members and anticipate their likely responses and actions.

- *Collective team memory.* Collective team memory is the sum total of knowledge, information, and skills the team members possess. It is the distributed expertise within the team and how this expertise is accessed and combined when the team performs. This includes both what the team as a whole knows and what the gaps in its knowledge are. An accurate team memory is essential to tapping into relevant knowledge when situations arise and knowing when to solicit experts outside the team.

Developing Team Leadership Capability: Planning Phase Needs

Several years ago, a Fortune 100 company was launching a team of human resource (HR) professionals whose charge was to develop a new HR process. The team members were seven highly rated directors from different divisions in the corporation, selected because of their experience and executive potential. The team sponsor was the top HR officer in the company, the executive vice president (EVP) for HR.

The team members' biggest challenges occurred during the first meeting. The sponsor called them together to thank them for agreeing to work on the project. He acknowledged that the work of this team would be an additional burden to each person, because they would not be relieved of any of their existing responsibilities. The EVP also said that although this project-launching meeting was face-to-face, there would be only one more opportunity to bring them all together again. The project recommendation was due in six months. When it came time for the sponsor to tell the team about the goal, he was vague. One team member asked about a more specific, measurable goal: "How will the team know when it is successful?" The EVP responded, "I'll know it when I see it."

Combining vagueness about the outcomes with the selection process for the team's composition (based on high potential rather than specific skills and knowledge for this work) resulted in a lack of clarity for the members. Numerous key team needs in this planning phase were unmet. There was no team charter, so the purpose and key tasks of the team were unclear. The long-term goal was unknown, and this precluded effective setting of short-term goals, milestones, and actions. The team members could not even begin to develop a shared

understanding of their task. They did attempt to create team memory of each other's knowledge, skills, and abilities, but that process collapsed because of a complete lack of direction. Without the necessary clarity of purpose, goals, roles, and responsibilities, the need for creating a task performance strategy was unfulfilled.

After struggling for a couple of hours, the team members asked the sponsor to return. Through a focused discussion, facilitated by one of the HR professionals who was an organizational development (OD) practitioner, the sponsor and the team members were able to gain clarity. The sponsor translated the corporation's performance expectations for the team members. Once these were made clear, agreement was reached about the team's purpose, and a charter was written. Through a lengthy dialogue, the sponsor and the team were able to align the team's goals with the organization's expectations, set realistic goals, and agree on specific deliverables.

After the sponsor left the meeting, the OD practitioner continued to facilitate and helped the team to structure a work plan. Once the team received clear direction, it worked diligently to create alignment and gain commitment from its members. It developed team norms about how members would work together. These were especially important because subsequently, members would be working with each other primarily virtually. They also reached agreements on who would be responsible for each phase of the project and how they would support each other if one of them fell behind on a commitment. These agreements were critical because each of the team members was also on other teams, and all of them knew that any one of them might become overextended at some time during the team's work.

With members subsequently working virtually from their offices on two continents, the team succeeded in part because its planning phase needs had been addressed in the beginning. The project recommendation was delivered to the sponsor on time, the new HR process was successfully implemented across the corporation, and the team honed its leadership capability. An added benefit of this team's experience was the development of best practices that several of the team members then employed with other teams. These lessons learned helped the other teams become clearer on purpose, goals, norms, and roles and responsibilities. This type of team benchmarking can be an effective way to propagate innovation throughout an organization.

Action Phase Needs

As the label implies, action phases are times when the team is engaged in activities that directly lead to goal accomplishment. During this phase, six team needs can arise:

- *Monitoring team output.* This refers to tracking the progress the team is making toward goal accomplishment and communicating that progress to team members. The collection of accurate information about team output is essential for team members to regulate their actions, in part because it enables adaptive adjustments in team tactics and behavior. In addition, feedback about goal progress has positive motivational benefits, particularly as the team approaches goal accomplishment.

- *Monitoring systems.* This includes tracking the resources available to the team—for example, personnel, budget, and information. This is particularly important because these resources are consumed during action and may be subject to frequent change. Monitoring systems also include tracking the environment outside the team for such things as the occurrence of potentially novel or disruptive events and the current requirements and opinions of key team stakeholders.

- *Coordination.* Coordination of activities within the team includes prioritizing and orchestrating the sequence and timing of key activities and events within the team itself. As teamwork presumes some level of task interdependence, the coordination of team member actions becomes critical to prevent rework, redundancy, and performance gaps.

- *Communication.* Teams need high-quality internal communication. This includes team members communicating openly with one another, ensuring all team members have the opportunity to express their opinion or viewpoint, and a high-quality exchange of ideas and information in the team. Because team members must collaborate to accomplish work tasks and must manage the inevitable interpersonal challenges that arise, effective communication is essential.

- *Monitoring team behavior.* This includes examining the behavior of team members to ensure that tasks are being performed correctly and efficiently and to determine if assistance is needed. If performance is not up to standards, team members are expected to provide some sort of assistance. This can

include providing feedback or peer coaching, helping or otherwise assisting the team member, or performing the task for the team member. Thus, monitoring team behavior typically leads to a constellation of behaviors designed to support fellow team members. It therefore reflects some of the advantages of structuring work around teams compared to individually designed work.

- *Maintaining team boundaries.* This includes gathering, interpreting, and communicating information from sources outside the team. It also involves representing the team to key stakeholders, advocating for the team, updating others on the team's accomplishments, and buffering the team from outside pressures. Finally, it includes coordinating the team's activities with other teams, managers, or clients the team may work with or might be the source of needed resources. This need reflects the fact that the team is embedded in a larger system and that team effectiveness is partly dependent on effectively interfacing with others within that system.

Developing Team Leadership Capability: Action Phase Needs

A large multinational company asked us to help one of its product teams, in the process of launching two new products in North America and Europe, become more effective. Our assessment of the team revealed a number of challenges. The company had recently reorganized, and the new organizational structure emphasized business units rather than the previous functional entities. There was tension among the new business unit heads, the functional leaders, and the country managers, and it caused divided loyalties on the team.

The team had eighteen members who were geographically dispersed across three continents. Given the organizational tension among the team members, they were not open with each other, and consequently communication among them was poor. The team leader did not communicate well either. He often did not give timely information to team members and seldom gave team members feedback. Although he was seen as a good strategist, he did not pay attention to details and did not inform the team about changes in his strategic intentions. Intrateam communication needed to improve.

The team's meetings were poorly organized. The team members did not plan ahead, they had difficulty making decisions, and they often did not know who was responsible for important tasks. All of them reported being overwhelmed with work. They also voiced concern that although the team's work was important, they were not being compensated for it. Their rewards came solely from their

jobs back in their functions and countries. These challenges triggered many of the team needs in the action phase.

Monitoring output was problematic because the team did little to track its progress toward its goals. Team members did not have the opportunity to adapt their actions in a timely manner because they did not have the information they needed to enable them to do so. A steering committee of six of the team members knew in more detail what was happening, but the dispersed team members did not. In the new organizational structure, the team should have received all the necessary resources, but because no one was centrally monitoring the team's requirements, each of the team members was independently pursuing resources.

Monitoring team behavior, coordination, and communication were all poor. Team members did not know exactly what others were doing. There was little planning in advance of the team meetings, which themselves were infrequent and not well run. The team had a difficult time making decisions and often did not know who was responsible for which decisions. Activities were not prioritized or synchronized properly.

Finally, boundary management was a big problem for this team. Team members rarely shared information they had obtained outside the team. In addition, they did not represent the team's work positively to their functional departments. This left all external communications to the team leader, and he was personally unable to represent the team in the company's various functions and geographies as effectively as the team members could have.

After our interviews with people on and off the team, we intervened to help the team get back on track. First, we had each team member complete a team assessment survey, and the data were summarized and reported to the team. Next, we facilitated an action planning process that helped the team create processes to monitor their performance; procure resources; and improve their communications, coordination, and decision making.

As a part of this process, we had the steering committee conduct a meeting in the presence of the rest of the team. After the meeting, we coached the team leader and other steering committee members to help enhance the performance of the committee and the larger team. This coaching covered the following areas: sharing the information they had with the rest of the team members; creating and following more comprehensive agendas; facilitating team problem-solving and decision-making discussions; and identifying, clarifying, and resolving disagreements on the team. This team coaching of the steering committee was

conducted in the presence of the entire team so that all team members could benefit from and apply the information.

Subsequently the team leader challenged the other team members to be more open with each other and to support and represent this team back in their respective functional organizations. The team members conducted role plays and coached each other so they could go back and confront some of the more difficult functional leaders and country managers. The team committed to more systemically securing resources for the team by assigning the responsibility for coordinating the accumulation of resources to one of the members of the team. The team members also agreed that they would alert each other about potential problems from the organizational environment and that they would advocate for the team in the face of organizational challenges.

For his part, the team leader committed to a more open and communicative style. He began by communicating results of the steering committee meetings to the rest of the team and held more meetings for the larger team. He also agreed to help change the reward system so that the team members could be recognized and rewarded for their contributions on this team. At last report, the team was working together more effectively, and the products had been successfully launched.

Interpersonal Needs

Four types of interpersonal needs arise across the planning and action phases that must be satisfied for a team to be effective:

• *Motivation building.* A major problem in team settings is social loafing (the withholding of effort when working with others). This can happen when team members believe that their contributions to the team's work cannot be identified. Motivation building includes generating motivation toward task and goal accomplishment, building a sense of cohesion and self-confidence in the team, and generating a sense of accountability for team performance in both individual team members and the team as a whole.

• *Psychological safety.* This refers to developing a shared sense of trust in the team so team members can openly speak their minds without fear of rebuke or retaliation. Having a sense of psychological safety in the team creates an

environment where team members feel comfortable bringing up problems and tough issues, as well as taking risks to innovate.

- *Emotion management.* This includes the regulation of team member emotions across the planning and action phases. It entails ensuring that setbacks, frustration, and even overconfidence do not undermine team performance. Emotions are contagious within a team. Team members can literally “catch” the positive or negative emotions of fellow team members. It is important that teams effectively manage their emotions.

- *Conflict management.* This includes proactive conflict management tactics that strive to avert, control, or manage conflict before it occurs. It also includes reactive conflict management tactics designed to minimize and resolve the range of task and relationship disagreements that do occur. Conflict in a team is inevitable, so its effective management is essential to team effectiveness.

Developing Team Leadership Capability: Interpersonal Needs

We were working with a global, cross-functional senior team in a large company. The team members were part of a multicultural organizational climate that was competitive. The company had a matrixed organizational structure. The team had multiple solid-line and dotted-line reporting relationships within it. Its members were functional and business unit leaders and some direct reports. Team members wanted to be on the team because of its high exposure, but none wanted the other team members to interfere in his or her own division or functional area.

Agendas for the meetings had too many initiatives with not enough time to fully discuss them. There were twenty people on the team, and all the team meetings included all members able to be present. The team members focused on managing details rather than on leadership activities such as providing direction, gaining alignment, or maintaining commitment.

The team had little formal training or development with regard to interpersonal processes. Psychological safety on the team was low, and trust and loyalty issues often surfaced. The more junior members of the team seldom spoke and usually were not listened to when they did. Team members typically avoided conflict during the team meetings and seldom surfaced disagreements with each other. Sometimes team members would make sarcastic remarks about each other, but no one on the team would take the risk to challenge an offending team

member. The need for conflict management was clear. The need for motivation building demonstrated itself as team members routinely wrote e-mails and conducted side conversations during team meetings. Members sometimes left meetings in progress to attend to other issues.

When the team leader spoke, everyone else shut down as if his was the final word. Consequently, to keep the dialogue going, the team leader did not speak much, nor did he provide needed direction, with the result that team members became confused and misaligned. In addition, decision-making responsibilities were unclear, so few decisions were made during the meetings. There was much advocacy and little inquiry, and team meetings often degenerated into filibusters. Significant internal competition, pointed barbs, and little attention to espoused norms characterized the team. There existed little accountability for positive interpersonal behaviors among the team members. The team had originally focused on its needs in both the planning and action phases, but because the team members ignored the interpersonal needs in play, the team quickly became dysfunctional.

We were asked by the team leader to help the team become more effective. We began by observing the team in action and then sharing our observations and evaluations with everyone. Our comments helped the team members see how they were being dysfunctional with each other. We then taught them several process-debriefing techniques and coached them in the use of these techniques. As the team began to incorporate process debriefs into all of its meetings, the attention and participation in the meetings significantly improved. We used feedback from a variety of assessment tools to help the team members know themselves and each other better, including personality, 360-degree feedback, and team assessment instruments. We used experiential exercises and feedback as ways to assess individual behavior and team effectiveness. This process gave the team an excellent benchmark of the team's current effectiveness.

Following the assessments and feedback, we were better able to challenge and support the team members in their efforts to be more effective. Each team member worked with an executive coach. The team adopted a new norm of more inquiry and open disclosure and less advocacy. Led by the team leader, the team members became actively involved in solving team and task problems. This included creating and following agendas that had fewer items; giving information and providing direction in a shared leadership manner; breaking into subteams to better engage all team members and more efficiently accomplish

the team's work; and creating a decision-making process that allowed clear lines of authority and accountability. They learned to use an anonymous electronic voting process to help surface opinions and make decisions. Using a peer feedback model, the team leader and team members began to give each other supportive feedback during team meetings. They challenged each other, but not in a competitive manner. The team has subsequently become highly effective in running its meetings.

BUILDING TEAM LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

We now describe in more detail the key intervention approaches we recommend. We close with an integrative example of how these elements have been used in practice.

As noted at the outset of the chapter, TLC refers to the team's collective ability to satisfy key team needs in the course of meeting whatever challenges arise. It therefore covers a team's capability to determine its current level of effectiveness, identify its pressing challenges and the resultant needs triggered in the team, and select and execute appropriate leadership functions to address these needs. TLC is the engine of high performance in a team. Developing team leadership capability is most effective using team training, team coaching, and team benchmarking. Although we recognize that teams are composed of individuals and that individual development is often necessary for enhanced team participation and contribution, we focus on team-level development processes; the other chapters in the handbook provide ample discussion and suggestions for individual development.

Team Training

Formal team training initiatives are one of the most common techniques for developing team leadership capability. The most effective team training involves the entire team. It begins with helping the members become more aware of their individual operating styles, preferences, and impact on others. In addition, team members can obtain a clear understanding of how they fit with their fellow team members in terms of the competencies they share and the unique competencies they bring. This is aided by gaining knowledge of their fellow team members and otherwise understanding their role within the team. Training then progresses to examining and understanding the interrelated task and social roles and relationships within the team. This includes a clear understanding

of who does what in the team, as well as the status of the interpersonal relationships among the team members. Teamwork requires highly coordinated efforts, so it is critical to clarify how different roles play out as team members work together.

Finally, team training moves to exploration of team-level factors such as how the team processes information, makes decisions, exercises authority, handles inevitable conflicts, and otherwise regulates its collective behavior. Key to this team self-regulation is how the team balances its workload, engages in mutual performance monitoring, and adapts to changing task or environmental demands. Training thus focuses on how to enhance the collective leadership capability to be autonomous and self-managing (with a minimal need for outside assistance). For each of these elements of team training, useful concepts are presented, discussed, demonstrated, and practiced to increase the inventory of working skills and knowledge within the team.

Team Coaching

Another means of enhancing TLC is team coaching, which can be most effectively provided by a skilled teams expert who is not an integral part of the team in question. Although team coaching alone can be very helpful to developing team leadership capability, its effectiveness is enhanced when combined with team training.

Team coaching has several components. The first is observing a team as it works on its nominal tasks. During such observation periods, the coach notes aspects of team behavior and processes that are effective and aspects that are less so. Next, the team coach talks through the observations of the team's work in a nonjudgmental and detailed fashion. During this process, the coach ties his or her observations to individual, interpersonal, and team concepts with which the team members are familiar (usually from prior team training). This connecting of observations to concepts helps the members assimilate the observations in a more objective fashion. The team coach then facilitates a discussion by the team of his or her observations and encourages the team members to divulge their own observations of the team's work. Best practices are identified, and lessons learned are incorporated into a list of intentions for modifying the team's behavior and processes during its subsequent work periods.

The ultimate goal of a team coach is to enable the team to coach and develop itself as its team leadership capability increases over time. The effective

team coach adjusts his or her methods accordingly. By initially demonstrating effective coaching observation and analysis and then shifting over time to doing more eliciting and facilitating of the team members' observations and analysis, the effective coach reduces the team's need for his or her assistance. Through this process, a team develops its own leadership capability and increases its independence and effectiveness.

A particularly useful method for the team coach to employ is the process debrief or after-action review. The aim of this method is to instill in the team a consistent norm of team self-assessment and feedback exchange. Most teams initially see little use in such a practice and resist adopting it. Only when a coach (or experienced team leader or member) persuades a team to experiment with this and the team members see the tangible gains in their performance as a team as a result of this time and energy investment does the team begin to incorporate this method into its typical work period agenda.

One way to structure after-action reviews is to use the assessment, challenge, and support (ACS) model described in the Introduction to this handbook. A team's current level of TLC must be assessed, the team must be challenged to increase this capability, and support must be provided for the team to do this successfully. Team coaches are often ideally positioned to help the team with each of these aspects.

Assessment A team must identify its current level of TLC. This requires taking a snapshot in time of the team's functioning and addressing five interrelated questions (they are listed in Table 10.2). First, the team should evaluate how well it is performing, ideally on a broad range of criteria (actions, feelings, and learning). Second, it should identify the top challenges it has faced during its recent period of performance. Third, it should identify the top needs it experienced as a result of these challenges. Fourth, it should note what leadership was displayed in the team. Finally, it should evaluate the effectiveness of this leadership at satisfying its needs and meeting the challenges it faces. The various challenges, needs, and leadership functions identified throughout this chapter can serve as a guide for what to be looking for when answering these assessment questions.

Numerous methods are available for performing this assessment (optimally this assessment should include input from those outside the team who are stakeholders in the team's performance). The methods most commonly used

Table 10.2
Key Team Assessment Questions

Domain of Inquiry	Key Question
Team effectiveness	How did the team do?
Team challenges	What were the top two or three challenges the team faced?
Team needs	What were the top two or three needs the team had?
Leadership displayed	What leadership was displayed in the team?
Leadership effectiveness	How effective was the leadership?

are team surveys, simulations, and guided discussions. A team survey could be selected or constructed that taps the components of TLC. It could then be administered individually and anonymously to the team members, tabulated, and the cumulative results provided to the team for examination. Alternatively the survey could be completed by the team in a discussion format with a drive toward a consensus judgment about each of the survey items. Many team simulations are available that could be adapted to focus on the components of TLC. Such simulations hold the possibility of not only giving the team feedback on its current TLC but also allowing the team to practice the components in a purposeful way. Finally, guided team discussion of the TLC resident in the team will enable the team to use this framework to examine its functioning. A facilitated discussion can create awareness in the team of its current capability and simultaneously stimulate thinking about options for increasing it.

Challenge Challenge involves encouraging the team to think or act differently than it has in the past. This pushes the team outside its customary limits, established routines, and comfort zone. It involves getting the team to work with the feedback derived from the assessment activities engaged in, identify its TLC strengths and weaknesses, and formulate action plans for nurturing those strengths and remediating those weaknesses. It also can involve pressing the team to prepare for future events likely to unfold. Such opportunities to anticipate and rehearse critical junctures in the team's journey in advance can greatly strengthen a team's TLC.

Support Support for the development of TLC can come from team members, the nominal team leader, a team sponsor, or a team coach. The nature of the support needed will determine which of these sources is most effective. Common types of TLC development support are creating space and opportunity for team practice and rehearsal and providing positive feedback, developmental feedback, targeted TLC training, and information about emerging events likely to challenge the team. Each of these forms of support can enable a team to increase its team leadership capability.

After-action reviews guided by the ACS framework can be used by a team for a quick assessment at various natural junctures in a work period, at the end of a work period, or at the beginning of a subsequent work period. Effective after-action reviews are one of the most powerful methods for teams to develop their team leadership capability.

Team Benchmarking

A final way to enhance team leadership capability is team benchmarking. This approach deserves more use in the organizational world than it seems to be receiving. Team benchmarking involves identifying the teams in one's organization that are the most effective and creating ways for other teams in the organization to observe and learn their effective practices. Through the decades that learning has been studied with academic rigor, observational learning has continually surfaced as one of the most powerful methods for acquiring new skills and behaviors in a wide array of human endeavors. Yet in organizations, and particularly in teaming environments, little use has been made of this powerful method. Effective teams could be videorecorded, members of other teams could attend effective teams' working sessions as observers, and knowledge management tools of various sorts could be created to capture and disseminate best practices of the most effective teams. In every organization that employs teams, some are much more effective than others. Yet little is done to leverage the strength of the most effective teams to the benefit of those struggling.

A CASE STUDY OF DEVELOPING TEAM LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

We were asked to help launch a new senior team in a small, privately held, international company. The team had been told by the company owner to dramatically increase sales revenues and profit margins for the company. The team consisted of six senior vice presidents from different functional areas. The owner

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asked us to help create a high-performing senior team as well as help develop several existing product teams that would soon report to this senior team.

Our interviews during the initial needs assessment phase revealed a number of challenges for both the senior team and the product teams. The organization's culture did not totally support teams. Historically, the company's culture was very polite and nonconfrontational. For all the advantages of that culture, the disadvantages of not enough pressure for performance, complacency leading to mediocrity, and being more of a family than a meritocracy hamper all teams' effectiveness. Still, the expectations for results had now been set quite high by the company's owner.

On the senior team, roles and goals were unclear. For instance, the senior team's autonomy and authority in relation to the owner were ambiguous. There was disagreement about who should be on the team and who would be the nominal leader of this senior team. Within the organizational structure, product team members were still owned by their functions, which often caused conflicting loyalties and agendas to emerge.

Because the senior team was just beginning, many of their initial team needs revolved around the planning phase. The team did not have a team charter, so members did not have a shared understanding of their team's purpose, goals, tasks, or methods. This enabled the senior team to get mired in detail rather than taking a larger strategic view. The members did not have agreement about team norms, and they behaved erratically with each other, sometimes talking negatively about team members when they were not present. Problems with trust and respect were apparent. Two interpersonal needs in play were conflict management and psychological safety.

Because the product teams had been in existence for a year and some attention had already been paid to their planning phase needs, we discovered that the action phase needs of these teams were more salient. Although the product teams shared several team members, they did not effectively maintain team boundaries. The teams lacked good alignment with company initiatives, and they did not collaborate, coordinate, or communicate well with each other. Accountability, speed, and agility were issues on all the teams. Communication within a couple of the teams was also poor. Those teams did not meet frequently or for long, and the meetings mostly consisted of quick informational presentations, with little time left for dialogue, monitoring team behavior, or decision making.

Emotion management and psychological safety were issues within a couple of the product teams. Many of the product teams' members did not trust some of the senior team's members. As a result, they felt uncomfortable openly disagreeing with them in joint meetings. Some of the product team members were so upset about ongoing issues that they spent some of their valuable meeting time complaining about the senior team.

The first leadership function the senior team performed was to provide training and development for all the teams. We designed and facilitated individual and interpersonal leadership development processes for the senior team and all of the product teams. First was a series of interventions geared to help each of the team members better understand themselves and each other. To conduct a comprehensive assessment, we used psychological and 360-degree feedback instruments, experiential exercises, and observation of team meetings. We then conducted team training programs to challenge and support the team members as they individually and collectively received feedback and team coaching.

After the senior team members had a better understanding of themselves and each other, the next step was to launch the senior team more formally. The team members decided on the final team composition and then agreed on a leader. The nominal leader repeatedly demonstrated openness and challenged the other team members to do the same. Because of his modeling of a willingness to admit mistakes, openly and caringly challenge others, and firmly state his opinions, many of the team members' interpersonal issues began to be surfaced and resolved. To a considerable extent, this was due to the greater psychological safety in the team. After receiving challenging feedback from the team leader, the senior team members agreed to discuss their disagreements with each other openly and not to use other channels to attempt to get their way.

With external facilitation and coaching help, the senior team members developed their team's mission, set goals, agreed on team norms, and structured and planned the team's work. The senior team then discussed their mission, goals, norms, and work plans with the product teams. This was an informal use of team benchmarking. This process helped the product teams better understand their relationships with the senior team. Senior team members also made progress in improving their interpersonal relationships with the product teams' members. For instance, the senior team met with the product teams to share their feedback from a key assessment instrument. All parties as a result better understood the others' preferences and how these preferences were acted on and often misunderstood.

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To help the product teams function more effectively, the senior team created a resource prioritization and allocation process, streamlined an approval process, and created a one-stop issue resolution process. These steps were intended to improve speed and agility, as well as collaboration, among the product teams. The senior team continued to monitor its own progress as well as stay in close contact with the product teams.

For their part, the product teams had to improve their internal leadership processes in order to address their teams' needs. By using feedback from the team coaching process and a team assessment survey, the teams first revisited their team goals and set performance expectations. They then worked to improve team communication and team coordination so that team members could keep track of the teams' performance. This allowed them to challenge their performance and set higher expectations for themselves and their teams. It also enabled product team members to help each other focus on what they could control. The teams began to monitor all the teams and manage team boundaries. The leaders of all the product teams began to meet regularly, shared best practices (engaged in team benchmarking), and kept each other better informed of their product team's progress and needs. Also, the team members who were on multiple product teams began to more openly inform each of their teams about what was happening on the other teams. All of the teams began to share meeting agendas and minutes with each other. Both face-to-face team coaching and follow-on individual phone coaching helped the team members and their teams to be more effective.

Although individual, interpersonal, and team development were all necessary, in aggregate they were not sufficient because of organizational culture challenges that had not yet been addressed. Once the core challenge of organizational climate and culture was identified, the teams were better able to work with and help each other. The senior team called the members of all the product teams into several joint sessions to make sense of what they faced. With external coaching, the senior team helped the product teams define the existing culture and clearly identify their preferred culture. Using an organizational culture model, the product teams' members collectively identified cultural issues that were impeding their progress. All teams were unanimous in seeing the current culture as being more dependent and conforming. If they were going to meet their aggressive growth and profit targets, a much more collaborative and innovative culture would have to be created. The senior team members asked the product teams what needed to change in the organization in order to develop and launch more profitable new

products. The teams identified nearly fifty changes to the culture that would help move it from being more conforming to more innovative.

The senior team then worked with the owner, the product team members, and other leaders in the company to begin to transform the culture. The list of proposed changes was prioritized, and the first several of the changes were implemented.

This example demonstrates how the team leadership model can be applied using the three developmental approaches. As a result of the interventions undertaken, the teams became more effective, and their overall team leadership capabilities were strengthened.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a model of team leadership that can be used to not only understand how well a team is performing but also to articulate some of the reasons that teams perform well or poorly and the role of leadership in fostering team effectiveness. The model highlights the importance of understanding the context within which teams work and the specific planning phase, action phase, and interpersonal needs that all teams have. Satisfaction of these needs is a central task of leadership and an important factor in determining whether teams will be effective. As we discussed, leadership is a process rather than a specific person, and anyone on a team can perform the leadership functions we describe. In this way, team leadership is quite different from individually oriented leadership. But like individual leadership, team leadership capability can be built. Team training, team coaching, and team benchmarking are the major methods for developing this important capability.

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