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Assessment Tools for Developing and  
Leading Effective Teams

# Assessment Tools for Developing and Leading Effective Teams

Randel S. Carlock \*

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\* Berghmans Lhoist Chaired Professor of Entrepreneurial Leadership and Senior Affiliate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Enterprise at INSEAD, 1 Ayer Rajah Avenue, 138676 Singapore. Email: [randel.carlock@insead.edu](mailto:randel.carlock@insead.edu)

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## **Abstract**

The complexity of organizations and the dynamic nature of the environment mean that teams are becoming an increasingly important organizational structure. Environmental pressures like globalization and the need for innovation create a demand for work groups that combine diverse skills, capabilities, and cultures. Social networks and communication technologies that better link individuals, teams and organizations offer new approaches for solving business challenges in real time.

The development and leadership of teams requires new planning and tactics to successfully exploit the advantages of team-based work structures. The controls of traditional chain-of-command organizations are lost with self-directed work teams. Additionally teams create new challenges related to functioning (morale) and productivity (results). This paper explores how teams develop and the leadership activities required to ensure their performance.

## **INSEAD Working Paper**

### **Developing and Leading Effective Teams**

*My model for business is The Beatles. They were four guys who kept each other's negative tendencies in check. They balanced each other. Great things in business are never done by one person they are done by a team.*

*Steve Jobs*

#### Introduction

Developing and leading teams is an essential organizational skill in today's dynamic and global world. The increased complexity of today's organizations means that teams are an important organizing structure. The reality is that 21<sup>st</sup> organizations require a new collective approach to planning and decision-making because the issues are too complex for one person (Simon, 1957). The team at the top has replaced the heroic leader working alone and this structure has cascaded down through the organization. Even if a single man or woman can complete the thinking tasks involved there are still the challenges of executing to effectively implement the actions required. As personal experience teaches us, many teams fail to meet their full potential because of the human or leadership issues.

The leader's role is to address the inherent social and technical challenges to utilize the combined talents of a team of smart or skilled people. The collective team has the intellectual resources needed and the leader's job is to help the team learn how to perform. Developing and leading an effective team requires thinking and planning, as the team journeys from being a group of strangers to becoming a united team with shared goals and aligned purposes. Whether a sales team launching a new product or a board-and-management team crafting a new business strategy, it has to create its own identity and its own way of working together

#### Factors Influencing Developing Teams

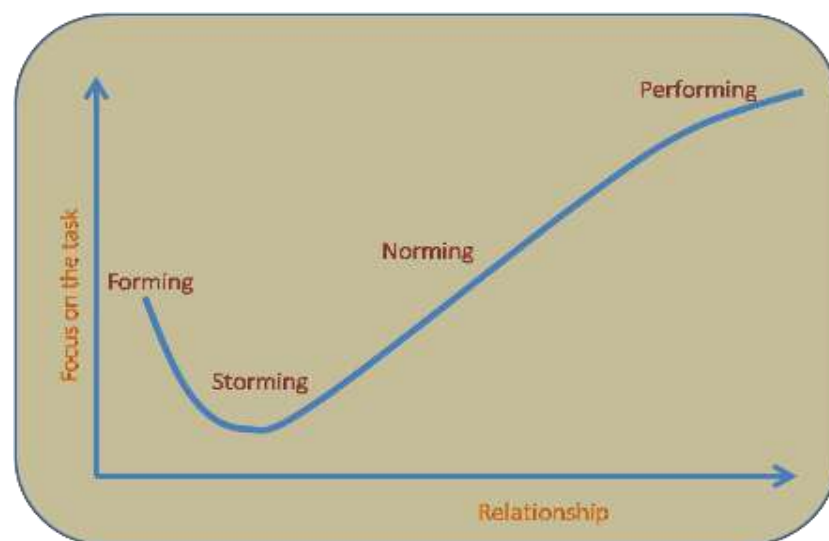
##### Considering Team Life Cycle

"Life cycle" is a biological model of how living organisms evolve through different developmental life stages. Erikson (1950) found that people go through predictable life stages that present a different developmental crisis and task that needs to be accomplished before moving on to the next stage. For example, the adolescent phase is characterized by rapid growth and highly reactive decision-making. This thinking can be applied to organizations and teams.

Teams, like biological organisms, face socially constructed issues and tasks over time as they form and begin to function. Tuckman (1965) has developed a widely used team life cycle model that includes four phases:

- **Forming** is the set-up phase where the team is founded. There is no shared history and limited work experience together. In this stage the morale is high (honeymoon effect) and the productivity is low.
- **Storming** is the phase where the team attempts to work together but usually experiences conflicts. At this stage it becomes clear that the team lacks the tools or even agreement on what they want to accomplish together (goals).
- **Norming** is an important stage for learning, planning and decision-making together. The team agrees on a shared goal (or goals), roles and responsibilities.
- **Performing** is the team's productive stage, where work tasks are accomplished. The team's efficiency and efficacy improve (Drucker, 1985). The team's shared success builds a feeling of commitment and trust.

Figure 1: Tuckman's Team Development Model



This model posits that teams or organizations have predictable developmental phases with different levels of morale (functioning) and productivity (results) that improves over time if the team develops its social and technical capabilities. It also suggests that the tasks in each phase must be successfully completed before moving on to the next phase if the team is going to perform at a high level (Erikson, 1950). This means that a team that has individual rather than shared goals will have a hard time optimizing its performance even if it works hard on the remaining behaviors, because goals

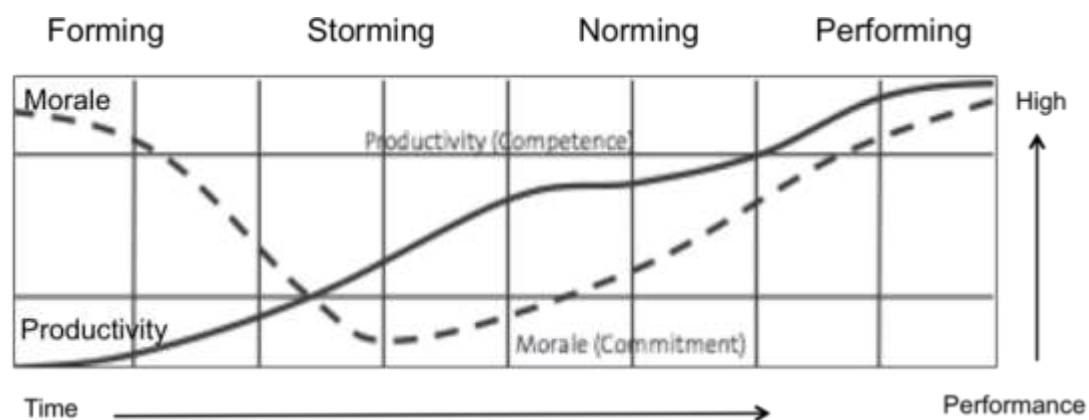
shape the entire teamwork activity. Finally, this model suggests that an overriding task for any team is getting to the *performing* stage.

### Why Teams and Organizations Struggle to Perform

This paper uses two measures to describe and assess teams: team functioning and productivity (Tuckman labels them “morale” and “productivity”). These measures are based on the socio-technical model, which stipulates that all work is composed of two dimensions: the social or human tasks and activities and the technical or results-driven activities (Trist, 1978). Typically the social dimension is measured in qualitative terms like satisfaction, relationships and communication, while the technical tasks are measured in quantitative terms such as profits, expenses and revenue growth.

A high-performing team or organization is one that has success on both of these dimensions (see Figure 2 below). A team with great human and interpersonal relationships but no technical results is a “social club”, and a team with great technical results but no concerns for human motivation or relationships may perform highly in the short term but is highly unlikely to build the organizational commitment or culture required to succeed in the long term.

Figure 2: Socio-Technical Tasks of Teams: Morale and Productivity



### Liability of Newness

All teams or work groups struggle as they learn to work together. The challenge that new working groups face is identified as the “liability of newness” by Stinchcombe (1965). He argues that any new organization has difficulties because they lack the technical and social skills to work together effectively. The specific issues that Stinchcombe has identified as limiting performance include:

- Unclear or lack of shared goals
- New agendas and tasks
- Untested roles and responsibilities
- Steep learning curve to develop process and procedures

- Lack of credibility
- Performance inefficiencies
- Lack of trust among the members
- Uncertainty about stakeholders or clients.

The Tuckman model of team development further focuses on the issues of new working relationships by identifying the specific issues that occur at each phase of development (see Figure 3 below). The act of leadership is orchestrating this group developmental process.

Figure 3: Stages and GRPI Tasks of Team Development

Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing
Unclear goals	Multiple goals	Shared goals	Shared success
Untested team roles	Role conflicts	Clear roles	Interchangeable roles
No working experience	Developing processes	Trust developing	Trust-We orientation
Anxiety/excitement	Personal conflicts	Team norms	Open and willing to take risks

### GRPI and Team Performance

Teams function more effectively when they manage how they work together to accomplish their goals. Beckhard (1972) offered a simple model that described team effectiveness based on managing four activities: goals, roles, processes and interpersonal relationships (GRPI). Beckhard's model provides a hierarchy of activities because activities like goals define and influence the other actions.

The GRPI framework provides an approach to planning and leadership that moves beyond reacting to the confusion and conflicts that working teams often experience. The GRPI model focuses the leader and team on concrete behaviors that enable them to improve the overall quality of their performance based on effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency. The model assumes that these tasks have a hierarchy of importance, for example, agreeing on shared goals is a highest priority for team functioning because the team's goals define the direction, scope and nature of their work together (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: The GRPI Hierarchy of Activities



Using the GRPI model improves team efficiency and efficacy by enabling the leaders and team members to focus directly on the most critical actions for strengthening team performance. Instead of attempting to work on the team's stated tasks (and possibly failing), the team and leader can focus on creating an agenda that requires the team to explore individual and shared goals and to clarify roles and responsibilities. This planning means that, by consciously forming the group and agreeing on norms, the team can be more effective than if it followed a trial-and-error method followed by diagnoses and problem solving.

Tichy (2007) found that 80% of team conflicts were the result of unclear goals; so ensuring that the team shares an overriding goal or goals is a powerful step to improving performance. He further reports that the next most important factor is clear *roles and responsibilities* at around 15% and that the remaining two behaviors, *processes and procedures* and *interpersonal relationships* accounted for less than 5% of team failure. The major themes are as follows.

### Goals

Goals provide the foundation for any effective team or organization. Whether they are described as "shared values" or "shared vision", there is some sense of purpose that the team shares. Goals provide a clear focus and direction for the team, an understanding of the current situation, and unify team members.

- Unity of purpose – develop shared rather than individual goals
- Members should learn to ask early for what they need from the team

### Roles and Responsibilities

Roles can be described as both formal and informal positions of authority or responsibility. They usually involve specific tasks, and each role within the team needs to be coordinated to support the achievement of the team's overall goals. An important aspect of roles is that each team member needs to have a clear understanding of who is doing what, who is responsible for what and what the limits of their authority are. When team members have a clear understanding of roles, it makes the team more effective.



- Plan and train on critical activities
- Assign roles based on capabilities and complementary skills

### Processes and Procedures

Processes are agreements that guide how the team works together in accomplishing its goals. Processes can include communication, training, decision-making, problem solving, and planning. There is usually also an informal process of communication, which helps the team to understand its activities and progress, and to evaluate its performance against its goals. It is very important that formal or informal processes are in place and agreed, so that the team can avoid conflict over these critical activities.

- Developing a sense of Fair Process as a guiding principle
- Planning, problem solving and decision-making
- Accountability and learning
- Developing talent and new competencies
- Review what has happened and the agenda before each meeting

Fair Process is a philosophy that is the foundation of organizational fairness and supports the development of trust and commitment. Fair Process is an approach to communication, planning, and decision-making that supports the development of committed relationships by ensuring that all team members “participate” and “own” the team activities.

The thinking behind Fair Process is that organizations can never be fair in term of outcomes (known as “distributive justice”) but that they can be perceived as fair if they practice procedural justice. Kim and Mauborgne (2003) identified three factors that create the perception of fairness:

1. Engagement is allowing full participation and a voice in the planning and decision-making process
2. Expectation is sharing accurate and timely information about goals
3. Explanation is sharing the rationale for decisions.

Processes and procedures build the tools for completing the tasks and activities of the team. It makes sense to create and agree on processes both for generic team activities and specialized processes related to the technical tasks or goals of the team. Some examples of generic team processes are as follows.

- Communication: If the team cannot communicate then it is impossible for it to develop and complete either its social tasks or its technical tasks. Teams must understand communication channels, their linkage with other parts of the organization and how they prioritize the sharing of important information. Communications can be technology based, such as a website or email, or there may be regular individual coaching sessions, as well as team meetings to share information and updates.

- **Decision-making:** Who makes decisions is closely related to the roles and responsibilities within a team. The team leader usually has the formal responsibility to take decisions but it is important to consider Fair Process (see above) and engaging the entire team. It is also critical for many technical tasks that the full team be involved, because individual team members may bring specific expertise that is essential to making the best possible decision.
- **Conflict management:** Conflicts are a natural part of any structured activity and it is important for the team to have an agreement on how these conflicts are resolved. Again, Fair Process is a powerful tool for preventing or minimizing conflicts.
- **Planning:** Planning is a fundamental activity for a team, enabling it to identify the action steps required to accomplish its goals or to complete its technical tasks. The first question of planning is: How are we going to address the activities we are going to complete? This can involve assigning responsibilities and also allocating resources needed, whether human, financial or intellectual. Effective plans are anchored in the deliverables or goals that the team has agreed to. They are measurable in the sense that, either quantifiably or qualitatively, a team and its leader are able to assess performance and give feedback on achievements. Goals need to be realistic and they need to be timely. Effective goals should include specific deadlines and milestones for measuring progress.

Discussing and agreeing on team processes is important because it improves efficiency and builds a shared understanding of how the team members will work together. If the team has an agreement on how it is going to do things, a source of potential conflict is eliminated. Having clear processes also enables team members to substitute for each other or to support each other if a given team member is not available or engaged in another task.

### Interpersonal Relationships

These are about how members of the team interact with each other and people in the larger organization. The leader's style influences the interaction of the entire group and is critical to building trust and accountability. A leader who listens and provides timely feedback creates an environment where communication is encouraged and valued.

- Share and explore heterogeneous experiences and backgrounds (differences)
- Purposeful socialization: Meet together as a team regularly and sometimes for socializing
- Discuss and manage serious conflicts

Interpersonal relationships are really about the long-term motivation of team members rather than the specific accomplishment of team goals. Teams with limited concern for interpersonal relationships can be very effective, particularly in highly disciplined or competitive activities like sports or the

military, because there is total agreement on goals, the chain of command is clear, and there are clear rules and procedures.

Teams that require high levels of cooperation and individual creativity, demand a greater concern for interpersonal relationships. This is especially true in work contexts that involve a high degree of worker independence and cooperation such intellectual or creative pursuits. A new software or product may fully meet its stated performance goals but miss a breakthrough idea that could change an entire industry, unless there is a high degree of trust and cross fertilization of thinking – or what Lehrer (2012) calls “collective creativity”.

Interpersonal relationships are an essential part of the goals in a family business team or a social service activity. In these teams it is critical to consider the more measurable technical outcomes and the team development through social activities that encourage and facilitate the creation of deeper interpersonal relationships.

One important tool for strengthening interpersonal relationships is a code of conduct. If the team discusses its specific agreements about how members are going to treat each other and interact on a social basis, it has an additional tool to help develop stronger emotional bonds. Some examples of behaviors that might form part of a code of conduct are: respecting commitments; honoring Fair Process; sharing air time during meetings; demonstrating respect in communication to others; valuing differences of opinion; keeping team activities and deliberations confidential; agreeing to honor the decision-making process and to support and implement decisions; sharing personal feedback in an appropriate setting; and being careful about using humor. If a team discusses these critical, social factors, it not only provides another way to understand what is important to each team member but also helps the team to socialize formally around conduct that is acceptable to all.

It is not possible to enforce effective interpersonal relationships but activities that can help a leader of a team to build this trust include:

- Spending time informally with other team members in order to get to know them and something about them on a personal basis
- Making it a norm to be supportive of each other and making additional effort to help each other during times of challenge or difficulty
- Showing concern for individuals and the importance of relationships
- Making it a point to apologize when there are disagreements or mistakes made.

Lehrer in his book *Imagine: How Creativity Works* identifies 3M as a company recognized for encouraging strong interpersonal relationships through “all sorts of frivolous activities, such as playing pinball and wandering around the campus” to stimulate thinking. 3M engineers are regularly rotated around the organization to stimulate an “outsider’s perspective” that encourages *what if* questions and forces the exchange of ideas.

What this means to team leaders is that they must think about how to fast track the development of trusting and mutually supportive interpersonal relationships. Aron (1997) clearly demonstrates that exercises such as *reciprocal self-disclosure* (pairing up to ask and respond to selected questions) can accelerate the development of feelings of closeness and friendship.

Again, these kind of procedures and thinking can be formalized in a culture or code of conduct that highlights positive behaviors that team members expect from each other and defines negative behaviors to be avoided in order to protect performance and relationships.

### Assessing Team Performance: Strengths and Weaknesses

It is important to provide team members with feedback on the team's performance beyond the business results in order for the team to grow and develop. Assessing the team's performance using the GRPI Model provides a framework that can help the team recognize areas of strength and weakness. The leader and team can then address the issues of how the team members work together with a shared vocabulary and understanding about what constitutes an effective team.

The following worksheet (see Figure 5 below) can be used to assess team performance using the GRPI framework. The assessment results then form the basis for a team workshop based on the data collected.

### Team GRPI Shared Feedback

Place the members of the same team together. (Divide participants into groups of four to six if the team is too large.) Have the members of each group engage in a quick exercise by asking them to share their individual scoring (1–4) for the team's performance on Goals: "The shared goal is clear and individuals are committed." Put the scores on a flip chart, and compare and contrast the differences, discussing why there are differences. Give the groups 20–30 minutes to discuss the results of their feedback within the group and ask each group to prepare a short comment to share with the entire team. The discussion should address differences between team members' impressions of their goal performance. Possible questions to explore could include:

- What do you believe creates the different impressions about the goals?
- Given the team performance scores, what do you see that contributes to the team's effectiveness?"
- Is there anything that we should do to improve the team's understanding of its goals?"

This small-group and shared-feedback process can then be completed for roles, processes and interpersonal relationships to provide the full team with multiple perspectives on its shared performance. The concluding activity can be a team discussion facilitated by the leader to identify the team's most important concerns or issues for action planning.

### Team GRPI Action Planning

The second phase of the process is action planning on specific topics identified by the team discussion as needing additional exploration and planning. For example, if roles are frequently seen as an issue the following activity could be organized.

This individual activity provides individual team members with 10–15 minutes to think about their roles and how they relate to the other team roles. Each team member would then describe for 5–10 minutes the role he or she plays on the team, the team's role configuration, and how well the team is currently functioning. Team members should answer these types of questions:

- What role do you play on your team?
- Are you clear about your responsibilities? Is your role clear to the team?
- How well do you think your team's current role configuration is working?
- Which responsibilities or activities are not being practiced?
- How well do your team members support one another's roles?

After each participant has had an opportunity to speak the team takes 30–60 minutes to discuss ideas for improving the team's role performance. Following the discussion the leader summarizes the key issues and improvement ideas identified by the team. The leader then frames the specific actions for improvement: "Now that you've examined how the team is handling roles let's see if we can come up with two specific developmental actions on which the team can work during the next three months." These two activities are then included in the team's code of conduct and role descriptions. This activity can be completed for processes and interpersonal relationships.

Figure 5: GRPI Team Assessment

<b>Goals</b> 1. The shared goal is clear and individuals are committed	LOW HIGH 1 2 3 4
<b>Roles</b> 2. The work is organized in a way that clearly leads to achieving the team's goal 3. Everyone is clear about his/her responsibilities and the job he/she has to do 4. There is balanced use of the different leadership talents	1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
<b>Processes</b> 5. Decisions are timely and effective 6. Conflict on the team is addressed openly and constructively 7. The leader monitors team performance and makes adjustments to assure team and individual effectiveness	1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
<b>Interpersonal</b> 8. There is trust in communication and relationships 9. Flexibility and creativity is encouraged 10. Capabilities are developed and used	1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
<b>TOTAL SCORE FOR YOUR TEAM</b>	

#### Team Assessment Danger signs

While it is not possible to categorize all of the potential threats to team performance, there are some generally accepted organizational principles that tend to indicate a team will have difficulty in completing its technical tasks or in forming long-term and effective social relationships. Some of these danger signs include:

- Individual rather than shared goals
- No clear processes or procedures
- Weak leadership and decision-making
- Excessive focus on technical tasks
- Failure to work on interpersonal dimensions
- Lack of individual ownership (sometimes categorized as free riding)
- Lack of accountability and rewards
- Selection of wrong team members based on skills or team functioning
- Too large a team.

Again, these points do not necessarily mean that a team cannot function, although they indicate weak GRPI and leadership performance. They simply suggest that the team will face additional challenges and conflicts. Perhaps the most important thought in working with teams is that they are always a leadership challenge, but it is the only structure that organizations have for dealing with the complexity and dynamism of the modern and globalized world.

### Leading High-Performing Teams

Tuckman's four phases of team development are helpful for team leaders because they provide a simple and actionable way to think about how we humans interact when working in teams. First, the model clearly illustrates that teams have an organizational life cycle with predictable challenges. Second, it highlights the leader's role in orchestrating different aspects of the team's learning at different stages of development. Third, it provides teams with an action plan for thinking about the social and technical tasks they will need to address.

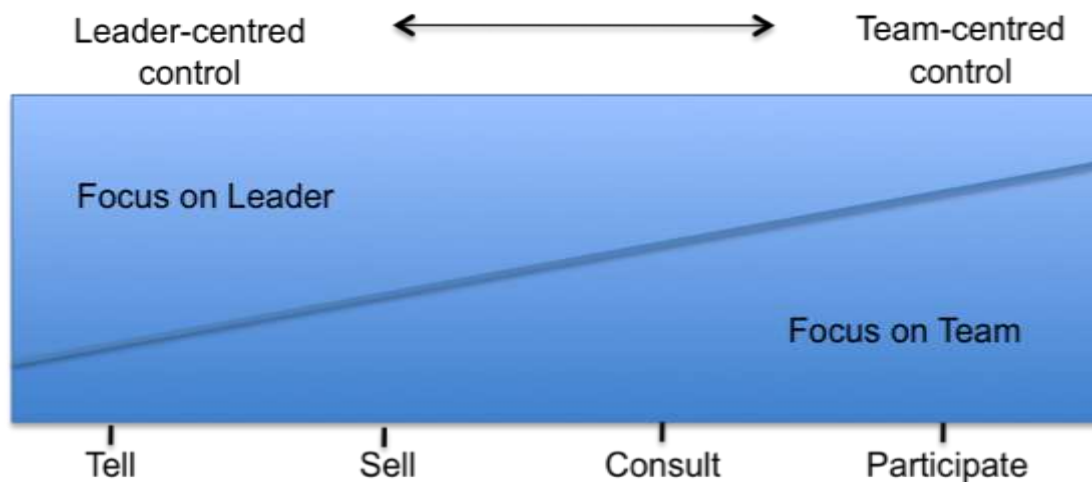
#### Situational Leadership

Tuckman's model (1965) suggests that a "situational" leadership approach (Hersey, 1985), reflecting the team's environment and growth stage, would be most effective. Successful leaders are those who adapt their behavior to the specific needs of the situation. According to the situational perspective, the uncertainty and unpredictability of a new team requires more leadership control and problem solving. As the team develops maturity by defining goals, taking roles and creating processes, the leader's style moves towards coaching. After moving through coaching, then sharing decision-making, and delegating, the leader's role can become very *laissez-faire* or detached.

Leadership style can be seen as a combination of directive (task) and supportive (social) behavior. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) describe the relationship between the amount of freedom of action that the leader chooses to allow a team and the level of authority that the leader maintains. Shared control is a zero-sum game so, as the team's control is increased, the leader's authority is reduced.

The Tannenbaum and Schmidt model assumes that control is delegated to a work group based on their capabilities. The team leader's challenge is to develop the team in order to empower its members to share control. Figure 6 shows how the leader's role changes as he or she delegates control to the team. There is a rising scale of levels of delegated freedom that can be used when leading a team.

Figure 6: Four Styles of Leadership Behavior



#### Leadership and Team Development

Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model expands on Tannenbaum and Schmidt's continuum by identifying specific leader behaviors (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977). This model suggests that the leader's control or direction of tasks and social or emotional support is determined by the team's "level of maturity".

According to Hersey and Blanchard, the leader's task behavior is directive (one-way communication) regarding the identification of goals, the assignment of roles, and the explanation of processes. However, the leader's relationship behavior (two-way communication) includes listening, facilitating, and supporting. The team's maturity is the variable that determines the leader's response and includes the team's willingness and ability to take responsibility for directing their own behavior.

Tuckman's four stages of team development, when overlaid on the Hersey and Blanchard model for determining the appropriate team leadership style, suggests four levels of leadership to support the four phases of team development:

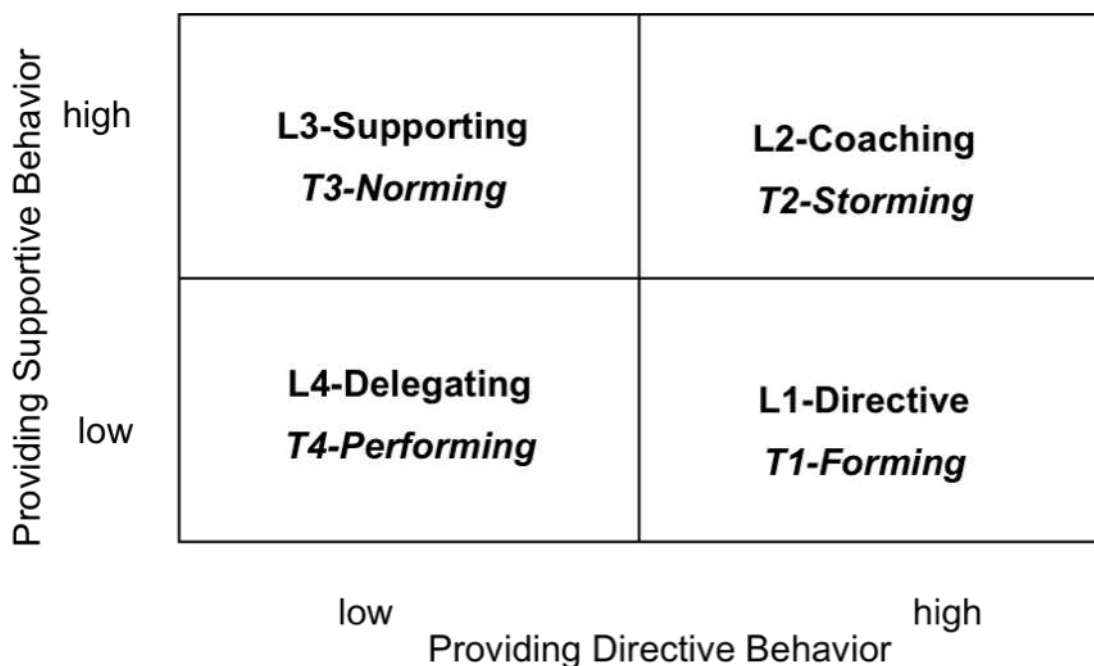
- Forming-Directing:** The leader maintains control and provides clear direction on goals and roles. At this stage there is high morale and necessarily low productivity.
- Storming-Coaching:** The leader encourages two-way communication to help the team take ownership of its shared goals and developing roles. The leader maintains responsibility and controls decision-making. The coaching style supports teams in balancing their declining morale and improving productivity.
- Norming-Supporting:** During this phase the leader reinforces the



team's actions and decisions to build confidence and encourage socialization. The leader and followers share decision-making and no longer need or require the leader to be directive. A participative style is best matched to teams with increasing morale and productivity.

•**Performing-Delegating:** This style is appropriate for leaders whose team is functioning at a high level and is both competent and motivated to work together. The delegating style is best matched to teams with high morale and high productivity.

Figure 7: Hersey and Blanchard Leadership Styles at Different Phases of Team Development



#### An Example of Leadership Style and Team Development

This paper argues that the four Hersey and Blanchard leadership styles (L1–L4) should correspond to the team's development based on their productivity (competency) and morale (commitment) (T1–T4).

For example, a new marketing team is formed and you are asked to lead it. You organize the first meeting and start with an introduction exercise and creating a code of conduct. The new team is at level T1, Forming, and you are working at L1, Directing.

At the next meeting the engineers and marketing people on the team strongly disagree with the two members from the finance department over the goals and budget. At the last meeting you listed the team's goals (L1, Directing) but at this meeting you let the team struggle over their priorities, assuming a

Coaching role (L2). The team is Storming or (T2). The team may reach some agreements at this point, and when that happens the leader needs to monitor the team carefully and share more leadership responsibilities with them.

By the fifth team meeting there have been several task force reports and the team is starting to gel. The group is starting to function based on shared goals and roles and processes (Norming Phase, T3) and the leader should work to support and reinforce their progress (L3). The leader can begin to act as a resource for the team by helping them secure resources or shielding them from external pressures.

The team's tenth meeting is significant because the draft plan for the new product is finished. The team is now performing at a high level (T4) and must now make the final decisions about the timing and action steps. The leader has delegated (L4) these tasks to the team and will review their work and provide support for their plans. This meeting should mark a celebration to recognize the team's efforts and further motivate their shared commitment to each other and the next tasks.

By aligning the leader's style to suit the team's development level, the goals are achieved, roles are performed, and relationships are developed, and most importantly, the team's contribution to the organization's goals is on track.

### The Leader's Role

We have carefully discussed how the leader's role is adjusted to reflect the team's competence and commitment. For example, while the new team may require a directive leadership style, the capable and high-performing team will require a participative approach that delegates responsibilities.

Some questions that the leader can ask about the team to identify the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style are listed below:

- How does the leader identify when the team is progressing through a developmental stage?
- How does the team address chronic conflicts among team members?
- How do the team's environment and organizational setting influence development and performance?
- How does the team address unplanned contingencies or other outside influences?
- How does the leader assess the team's readiness to perform using GRPI?

### Empowering Leadership Behavior

Leaders are a critical element in team performance because their support is needed to form teams, monitor performance, and encourage team development and empowerment. The leader's expanded role in empowering

teams often requires new and more supportive leadership behaviors that demonstrate concern, build trust and openness, encourage initiative taking, and provide information. This leader as a supporter replaces the leader as the boss. Empowering teams requires a shift from a directive leadership style to more social leadership behaviors.

Research has shown that effective leaders empower teams by practicing five behaviors that develop the team's talents, motivate commitment and encourage shared leadership (Arnold, 2000). These behaviors are: Leading by Example, Coaching, Participative Decision-Making, Informing, and Showing Concern/Interacting with the Team.

- **Leading by example** is demonstrating – through action – the leader's commitment to developing and empowering the team. It involves communication, openness, feedback and professionalism. (Sample behavior: Checking results against performance targets on a regular basis and asking for suggestions for improvement.)
- **Coaching\*** refers to a set of behaviors that develop the team members' talents by improving their self-awareness. It includes exploring a team member's ideas about performance improvements to help the team be more self-reliant. (Sample behavior: Listening to team members.)
- **Participative Decision-Making\*** means eliciting team members' participation in planning and decision-making activities. This includes encouraging team members to express their ideas and opinions, that is *engaging* them. (Sample behavior: Getting team members to set priorities for decision-making on timing and action.)
- **Informing\*** refers to the leader's dissemination of timely and accurate information about goals, performance, the larger organization's strategy, and other important issues. It includes explaining *expectations* to the team. (Sample behavior: explaining a change in timing for a new product launch.)
- **Showing concern/Interacting with the team\*** is a collection of behaviors that communicate a regard for the team's morale and contribution of the team as a whole. This includes taking time to discuss team members concerns, monitoring the team's activities and work, and patient *explaining*. (Sample behavior: Knowing what the team is doing.)

\*These actions support the Fair Process philosophy discussed earlier in the paper.

### Empowering Leadership Behavior Assessment

As the team leader, your awareness of how your leadership style impacts the team is important knowledge for improving your personal effectiveness. The assessment tool included in this paper (see Figure 8 below) is designed for self-assessment in order to improve the leader's self-awareness of his or her

impact, to identify training opportunities, or to prepare for formal performance evaluations. The information included in the five categories can be very useful for assessing and improving leadership effectiveness in teams and has possible applications in any leadership situation. The categories of the assessment were derived from research with empowered (autonomous or self-managing) teams (Arnold, 2000).

The Assessment of Empowering Leadership asks you to assess your own performance on the five categories of attitudes, behaviors and skills that support effective teams. Score yourself 4 points if you answer “Frequently,” 3 points if you answer “Usually,” 2 points if you answer “sometimes” and 1 point if you choose “Seldom, needs improvement.” Total your score when you finish to determine how effectively you empower teams.

Figure 8: Empowering Leadership Behavior Assessment

	LOW	HIGH
<b>Leading by Example</b>	1	2 3 4
1. Sets high standards for performance by his/her own behavior	1	2 3 4
2. Works as hard as any team member	1	2 3 4
3. Sets a good example by the way he/she works with others	1	2 3 4
4. Leads the team by example	1	2 3 4
<b>Participation</b>		
1. Encourages team members to express ideas/suggestions	1	2 3 4
2. Listens to the team's ideas and suggestions	1	2 3 4
3. Uses team's suggestions to make decisions	1	2 3 4
4. Gives team members a chance to voice their opinions	1	2 3 4
<b>Coaching</b>		
1. Suggests ways to improve the team's performance	1	2 3 4
2. Teaches team members how to solve problems on their own	1	2 3 4
3. Helps the team focus on its goals	1	2 3 4
4. Helps develop good relations among team members	1	2 3 4
<b>Informing</b>		
1. Explains how the team fits into the organization	1	2 3 4
2. Explains the company's policies and expectations to the team	1	2 3 4
3. Explains his/her decisions and actions to the team	1	2 3 4
4. Tells the team when they perform well	1	2 3 4
<b>Showing Concern/Interacting with the Team</b>		
1. Treats team members with respect	1	2 3 4
2. Takes the time to discuss team members' concerns	1	2 3 4
3. Gives team members honest and fair answers	1	2 3 4
4. Knows what work is being done by the team	1	2 3 4

The purpose of the Empowering Leadership Behavior Assessment is to systematically analyze the leader's current behaviors in order to identify areas of strength and opportunities for personal development – on the five leadership empowerment dimensions important to effectiveness in any leadership setting. The five dimensions are: Leading by example, participation, coaching, informing and showing concern/interacting with the team.

### Assessing Self and Team Member Performance

This assessment process involves each team member evaluating his or her own contribution to the team's activities (see Figure 9 below) and that of colleagues. The assessment asks for a rating and narrative comments on the self-rating, and a four-category rating on other team members. The assessments made by team members of their own contribution and performance have strong motivational value, because only the individual knows his or her level of commitment and effort invested. However, one weakness of any self-assessment is that the responses can be influenced by the individual's assessment of intentions rather than the results achieved.

The peer assessment is designed to encourage feedback among the team members. Peer assessment can be anonymous but the real value is when the team discusses the individual feedback so that each team member receives different perspectives on their performance and contribution. One powerful outcome of well-facilitated peer feedback is that team members develop trust in each other and learn to share information.

Figure 9: Self and Team Member Performance Assessment

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. How would you rate the team's accomplishment of its goal(s)?**

- A. The team fully achieved its goal(s).
- B. The team partially achieved its goal(s).
- C. The team struggled and did not achieve its goal(s).

If you feel the need to explain your answer to question one, do so here.

**2. How would you rate your contribution to the team's achievement of its goal(s)?**

- A. I fully contributed to all of the team's activities.
- B. I completed all the tasks assigned to me, but was not otherwise involved.
- C. I completed most of the tasks assigned to me but other team members contributed more than I did.
- D. I did not fully contribute to the team.

If you feel the need to explain your answer to question two, do so here.

**3. Did you fully understand your role and the other team members' roles?**

- ☐ Yes, fully understood  
☐ Yes, understood most of the time  
☐ No, there was role confusion

If either the above answer is "no" or "most of time," explain why there was uncertainty about your role, do so here.

**4. For each team member: How would you rate this person's contribution to the team?**

- A. This person was fully involved and contributed in each phase of the team's activities  
B. This person completed all tasks assigned to him/her.  
C. This person completed most of the tasks assigned to him/her, but other team members contributed more than he/she did.  
D. This person did not fully contribute to the team.

Please write the team member's name, a letter rating (A, B, C, D) your comments on the back of this page.

Conclusion

The overall goal of this paper was to integrate organization and leadership models to suggest approaches for effectively developing and leading work teams. To support this effort, we proposed applying the GRPI model and recommended three assessment instruments for team-based work groups. The team, individual member and leader assessments offered in this paper are designed to provide actionable feedback for the three key elements contributing to the team's performance.

The team development model proposed by Tuckman (1965) assumes that teams evolve in a linear process of birth to death. This model reflects the outdated assumption that teams were *ad hoc* or at best standing teams assigned to regular task. Tuckman even suggested a fifth phase, *Adjourning*, to describe what happens when teams wind down. Tuckman argued that after the team had completed its tasks there was a need for a formal emotional closure and perhaps some type of shared learning for the organization.

While there is no accurate long-term information on team usage, the current data suggests that significant numbers of small and large firms are organizing with a team-based structure. Research by the Center for Effective Organizations on the U.S. Fortune 1000 indicates that the use of self-managed work teams and problem-solving groups increased from 27% in 1987, to 47% in 1990, and then to 68% in 1993 (Devine, 1999). A 1995 study conducted using the *Dun & Bradstreet's Directory of U.S. Businesses and*

*Training* subscription lists of firms with 100 or more employees reported that 31% of the firms surveyed used one or more self-managed teams (Devine, 1999). This data could indicate that the nature of team usage has changed in the last 40+ years and that teams are now a more permanent part of the organizational structure. If this were the case thinking about teams should also be updated to reflect the need to regenerate rather than adjourn teams.

Beckhard (1972) in his work on GRPI mentions the importance of teams. He looks both internally at their functioning (with tools like GRPI) and externally at environmental influences (and specifically the impact of the larger organization and the outside world on the team). When the team's context changes, goals change and this creates a need to regenerate the team's roles, processes and interpersonal relationships. A change in the larger organization's mission or the demands of stakeholders that the team serves can alter expectations and goals. A disruption, such as implementing a new strategy, can even make a well-functioning team stumble and require regeneration and reforming (see Figure 10 below).

Figure 10: The Team Transforming and Reforming Phases



One thing seems certain: In the future, teams will be formed in a wider range of varieties, with new forms being developed through cross-cultural efforts and new organizational demands. Such diversity suggests that leaders need to learn to think how their leadership experience prepares them to rebuild and redevelop a team that has performed well but faces new organizational or environmental challenges. When conditions are dynamically changing, leaders will need to increase their attention to how they engage with their team.

There is an African proverb that sums up the importance of teams: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others."

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Europe Campus  
Boulevard de Constance  
77305 Fontainebleau Cedex, France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 60 72 40 00  
Fax: +33 (0)1 60 74 55 00/01

Asia Campus  
1 Ayer Rajah Avenue, Singapore 138676  
Tel: +65 67 99 53 88  
Fax: +65 67 99 53 99

Abu Dhabi Campus  
Muroor Road - Street No 4  
P.O. Box 48049  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
Tel: +971 2 651 5200  
Fax: +971 2 443 9461

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