



# Your team but better!



Your guide to cultivating and sustaining high performing teams throughout your business

**Frankly.**

A common sense approach to developing leaders

**It's all too easy to think about organisations as one big, anonymous entity. But delve deeper and those organisations break into departments, teams and, ultimately individuals, with their own quirks, motivations and challenges.**

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The success of teams depends on the complex blend of how those individuals work together and the cultures they create.

We love working with teams, developing unique strategies to help individuals to thrive – and the team to perform effectively.

Here's our three-step process to cultivating your own high-performing team.

**Jennifer Potter, Founder Frankly**



**Check your  
organising principles**



**Pay attention  
to dynamics**



**What to do when  
it's not working**



## 1. Step One

# Check your organising principles

Go through these effective team ingredients and tick all that apply.

This will help you to identify the gaps and understand where to focus. For a team to be working really well together, you will need to have all boxes ticked confidently.

### Is your team

- A small group of people – no more than nine? Team with more than nine people? This is a working group, with slightly different conditions. By all means use this workbook but pop an email to [jennifer@wearefrankly.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@wearefrankly.co.uk) and we'll send you our upcoming working group guide as soon as it's available.
- United by a common purpose that everyone is clear about? Purpose not defined? Get your team together and prioritise answering this question: What's the work that you come together as a team to do, that the business needs, that no other team in your organisation can, or is, doing?
- Made up of people with complementary skills that, together, achieve the team's purpose? Not got the right team mix? List out the gaps and look at internal training or recruit new people to your team.
- All committed to their roles within the team? Some people not truly committed? Check they understand the team's purpose and their role within the team. Consider reassessing how you're distributing tasks and responsibilities.
- Signed up to a set of agreed and clear measures? Is your team unclear about what success looks like? A team only survives for as long as it takes to achieve its purpose. Once that's achieved, the goal evolves or the team disbands. Having clear measures and goals is essential.
- All agreed on a way of working together? Make sure everyone is clear about defined processes, decision-making systems, theirs and each other's roles and what they're accountable for. This aspect is crucial but it's often overlooked and is where most issues arrive in teams. Take a look at Step 3 for more support on getting this right.
- Happy to hold themselves mutually accountable? It takes a lot of grown-up skills and respect within the team to hold each other accountable. If some people are struggling with this, individual or team coaching is the best way forward. Email [jennifer@wearefrankly.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@wearefrankly.co.uk)

(Based on Katzenbach and Smith)



## 2. Step Two

# Pay attention to dynamics

Teams are formed under all sorts of conditions. There are leadership teams, fire-fighting teams, project teams and lots more.

Like it or not, there will always be team dynamics that need attention. Left unattended, these dynamics are likely to cause headaches.

There are three common team dynamics that need attention to have a healthy performing team. Review these descriptions and make sure you've answered all the questions. Have you communicated these answers to the whole team?

### 1. Inclusion – Who's in, who's out?

When a group is forming, there is always an element of who's in and who's out. This can bring up inclusion and exclusion challenges you'll need to take care of in the team and in the wider organisation.

How do you decide who's in?

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What skills do you need to achieve the team's purpose?

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### 2. Control – Who's in charge?

Once you've decided who's in the team, how do you decide who has the power?

How do we agree to make decisions?

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Who gets the final say? Is it unanimous, majority or something else?

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### 3. Belonging – Can I be myself?

Once people know they're in, and understand where the power sits, they need to know if they can be themselves without any risks.

Do people feel they can be themselves? Have you asked if they feel they can show up, speak out – and still feel safe that they'll be welcome to stay?

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Do people feel they can get things wrong and still feel welcome?

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### 3. Step Three

## What to do when it's not working

You can have all the right intentions and still end up with trickiness playing out in teams. Because teams involve humans and we're simple and complex beings at the same time.

We often use Lencioni's model if we're working with teams in difficulty, it's a great way of triaging the root cause of what's gone off piste.

To diagnose what's going on with your team, take a look at the five elements Lencioni says can go awry with teams.



### 1. Trust

Or rather, an absence of trust. If there's no openness and limited trust, there's no room for honesty, vulnerability and openness. If a team isn't being honest, it won't be able to tackle difficult challenges.

- Is there trust within the team?
- Do people feel safe enough to speak out? (Especially around tricky topics)
- Do people feel able to try things and fail (within reason) and keep learning?
- Are people open?

If a lack of trust is the problem in your team, the first step is to turn up the dial on honesty. But first you'll need to create a culture where people feel psychologically safe and the best way to do that is through a focus on the quality of your relationships with each other as well as creating boundaries to try things, fail and take the learning forward.

### 2. Conflict

Conflict helps us to innovate and teams need to be able to explore different points of view if they want to make great decisions. But fear of conflict can paralyse teams.

- Are people afraid of being honest? Do people feel able to try things and fail (within reason) and keep learning?
- What happens when there's a difference of opinion?
- Do people have the skills and resources to work out their differences and come to a consensus?

If the people in your team fight shy of conflict, working on relationships and trust will help. And if it's really paralysing the team, bring in an outside facilitator to lend support. Conflict and challenge is often the key to innovation.

### 3. Commitment

A team needs to know they each have each others' backs and that they're fully bought in. If at least one person or more isn't fully in, the rest of the elements of high-performing teams start to wobble.

- Are people completely committed to the team?
- Do they look out for each other?
- If people say they're going to do something, do they do it?

If everyone on the team isn't fully committed, review who's in the team and how you're managing accountability. Do you have the right people, with the right skills for the team's purpose?

(Continued on the following page)



## 4. Accountability

An effective team commits to decisions and standards, and holds each other to account. They don't rely on a team leader as the primary source of accountability; they take the initiative together.

- Do people hold themselves accountable for reaching certain standards?
- Who sets those standards?
- What happens if something – or someone – falls short of those standards?

If people lack collective accountability, consider training in giving effective feedback and in coaching skills.

## 5. Results

To achieve the team's goals, individuals might sometimes need to set aside their different needs. The team's success comes first.

- Do people understand the outcomes they're working towards?
- Do they understand their role in the overall purpose of the group?
- Does everyone understand how success is measured?

If a failure to focus on results is the challenge, publicly declare your desired outcomes and make your team accountable to each other and external stakeholders.

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# And remember

Teams that work, learn and socialise together usually perform better. Here are three top tips you can implement now with your own team to make steps towards better'

### Has flexible or remote working negatively impacted your team?

Consider mandating certain times together in the workplace. This can be as little as a monthly one-day meet up.

### Does your team have the opportunity to learn together?

Think about courses and workshops that will improve the team's skills, as well as acting as a bonding experience. Regular time to review how the work is going and how the team is working together will also help cultivate development time.

### Is fear and a lack of cohesion affecting relationships within the team?

Regular social events can help to break down barriers between individuals. They don't have to be elaborate – just a shared cuppa once a fortnight is better than nothing.

If you think that your team could be performing better together and you feel you'd benefit from an outside independent perspective, let's have a brew and a chat.

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