

Introduction

This book is written for all those who are excited by the challenges of leading or coaching teams that can provide effective collective leadership. Never has this task been more urgent or more demanding. In Chapter 1 I will show how the world has moved beyond the time when the major challenges could be met by the great individual leader, or the complexities of transformation in companies could be solved by the heroic CEO. Human beings have created a world of such complexity, global interdependence, of continuous and fast moving change, that leadership is beyond the scope of the individual and requires more effective collective leadership and high performing teams.

Traditionally, leadership development has been about cognitively educating individuals through theories and case examples. Over the last 40 years there has been a move to much more experiential, real-time action learning, on the job facing real challenges, which has focused on affect as well as cognition. But the emphasis has still been on leader development, not collective leadership. The field of individual coaching has expanded exponentially over the last 30 years, with hundreds of new books, courses, accreditations, etc; but the field of coaching leadership teams has been relatively neglected.

The team development that has been carried out has often been time-limited pieces of facilitation, over-focused on the team members relating better to each other, or on team structure, selection and processes. There has been a lack of an integrated approach that brings together the best of coaching, consultancy and team development approaches, providing an extended relationship over time that helps the team work, relate and learn better together.

What limited research there has been on efforts to help teams (Clutterbuck, 2007; Wageman *et al*, 2008), shows that team-bonding and team-building exercises do not deliver sustainable and lasting improvement to team performance, but that a sustained coaching approach, whether delivered from within the team by the team leader or by an external coach, can create sustained performance improvement.

Teams need to know what high performance looks like in order to plan and commit to their own journey to raise their team performance. In Chapters 2 and 3 I outline the key elements of a high-performing team. In Chapter 3 I present the ‘Five disciplines of team performance’ which comprise:

- 1 *Commissioning* – being clear about the commissioning of the team.
- 2 *Clarifying* – the team clarifying and committing to their own mission, purpose, strategic aims, values, goals, roles and processes.
- 3 *Co-creating* – the team being more effective in how they collectively work together to co-create generative thinking and action, which is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.
- 4 *Connecting* – engaging with the staff the team leads, the customers and investors it serves, the suppliers, partners, regulators and local communities it relies upon to do its work. Leadership lies in the ability to transform relationships and inspire, motivate and align those wider parts of the system necessary to transform the contribution of the team.
- 5 *Core learning* – unless the team is learning and unlearning at a rate equal to or greater than the rate at which the environment is changing around it, it cannot thrive, so the last and central discipline is the team’s commitment, not only to core learning but learning how to learn more effectively.

In Chapter 4 I outline and define the new craft of Team Coaching, which – although it has historical roots in the fields of organizational development, consulting, team facilitation, coaching and sports psychology – is distinct from all of these.

In Chapter 6 I illustrate ways of coaching each of these five disciplines and how they each require a different focus and skill set from the team coach or team leader. In Chapter 5 I show how the relationship between the coach and the team he or she is working with needs to develop through a number of key stages. I use the CID-CLEAR model to illustrate each of these stages.

In Chapters 7 and 8 the book broadens out from leadership teams to consider a variety of other sorts of teams:

- management;
- project – for which I supply a new stage model of development;
- virtual;
- international;
- customer or client account teams;
- the board.

The final section of the book begins in Chapter 9 with guidance for team leaders and those resourcing team coaching in their organizations, on

finding, selecting, assessing and working with team coaches. Then there is a series of chapters focused on the training, development and supervision of team coaches:

- the key capabilities and capacities and how to develop them (Chapter 10);
- supervision approaches for supervising team coaching (Chapter 11);
- key additional models, tools and methods for team coaching (Chapter 12; others are scattered through the rest of the book and Table 12.2 on page 204 shows where they are located).

In the final chapter, I offer an agenda for the field of team coaching, and how it might develop to better meet the growing needs of teams and team leaders throughout the world.

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