

## 5 Skills for High-Performance Teams By Deanne DeMarco

A whopping 46% of Fortune 500 companies cannot be found on the current list- just fifteen years later. Business failures can be due to a variety of reasons, however the bottom line is organizations must be able to adapt to change, changing markets, and changing times. Standing still doesn't work. Embracing and mastering the challenge of changing conditions is key to long term growth and corporate success.

### The KEY is INNOVATION

Working together in groups and teams is more important than ever. Today's generational diverse workplace creates an additional challenge in developing strong teams. Successful team managers and leaders must be able to identify and value the 5 key skills that are required to achieve high-performance teams.

Individuals all contribute a natural set of teaming skills. A high performance group is balanced with individuals that command one of these unique, but vital skills. Without this balance; conflict, dissension, and lack of trust occurs. The balancing of these skills in the team environment allows organizations to not only conceive great ideas, but to successfully advance, refine and implement those ideas and solutions.

Research clearly tells us three key facts:

**First**, that we as individuals are less effective in innovation than we are as a team. **Second**, that our individual strengths in the innovation process can cause stress and conflict with other team members. And **third**, all team members need a way to balance their strengths so innovation not only is created but refined and delivered successfully.

For example: some team members may be great at starting a project team while others are best at refining and executing the vision of the team. Two very different skills sets.

#### **Without Balance: Problems can emerge.....**

- \* Creativity for new ideas and concepts can be inadequate or never created
- \* Implementation is either blocked, and/ or not advanced in a timely fashion
- \* New concepts and ideas are not explored and details are overlooked
- \* Stress and conflict increase among team members

Research also tells us that people use a combination of team approaches. It is this combination that results in the 5 necessary skills needed in successful project teams. In the following discussion it is important not to stereotype each skill or pattern.

**The 1st skill is Initiation.** Initiation is all about creating new ideas and fresh concepts. Team members who are apt in this skill simply LOVE the process of creation. This individual brings fresh perspectives, bold approaches, "big picture vision," a sense of optimism, excitement and energy. This skill is important in getting the group moving forward in the creation of new ideas and "out of the box thinking."

**The 2nd skill is Promotion.** The team member who demonstrates this skill is able to recognize a good idea in its infancy stage and champions and advances the idea to others. Often their first thought is “ How can we implement this great idea?” The promoter brings the most efficient methods to achieve results or objectives. They are positive and bring energetic support to the team’s desired outcomes and goals. The strength of this skill is to get the new idea started down the path toward implementation.

**The 3rd skill is Clarification.** The Clarifier often plays the “ devil’s advocate”. This vital role often forces team members to inspect the realities they might have overlooked. The clarifying skill is instrumental for improving the process and pointing out weak spots of an idea or concept. Thereby, ensuring that the outcomes are viable, and well thought out. The person demonstrating this skill often times is the practical sounding board for ideas with a focus on planned implementation.

**The 4th skill is Implementation.** The Implementation skill is focused on execution of the process for tangible results. The Implementer ensures that the idea and details are thoroughly carried out. They are independent, and assertive in following directions and completing tasks.

**The 5th skill is Facilitation.** The strength of this skill is in building team consensus, smoothing over conflicts, and the ability to negotiate with all types of people. The facilitator ensures that all team members, even those with conflicting approaches, contribute to the innovation process. They often identify what is missing in the process, what opinions have not been heard, and keep the team calmly moving forward.

Clearly successful high performance teams need team members that represent **ALL** the skills and approaches to innovation. Successful teams have members that are able to bring each of these skill sets to the group **and** all team members respect the contribution each brings to the group. All the skills are important, and each serves a purpose in the innovation process. Therefore, one is nor more important than another. The strength of the team lies in the balance of the 5 skills. If interested in the team identification assessment, or for more information contact the author.



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