

The 8 Components of Extraordinary Leadership Teams

Leadership is a team game, not a solo pursuit. Leadership teams are critical to every organisation's success – and they exist at all levels of an organisation.

Leadership teams set the strategy, are responsible for the delivery of the strategy, create the culture and set the tone and the example for how everyone in the organisation behaves. Dysfunctional leadership teams can bring an organisation to its knees. Extraordinary leadership teams enable organisations to thrive.

In my many years of working with leadership teams at all levels of organisations worldwide, I have determined that there are 8 key traits that successful leadership teams possess and every single trait can be developed.

Building a leadership team is like building a house – or in this case, a temple.

The foundations of a successful leadership team are two-fold:

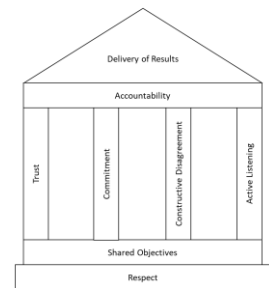
1. **Respect**, for without genuine respect for one another, no team can possibly succeed. Not merely respect for one another's title and position but respect for the individual beneath the title. Respect for their values, their expertise, their challenges, their viewpoints.
2. **Shared Objectives** – a clear strategy with clear outcomes that are shared by every single member of the team.

Most teams consist of members who respect one another's title and position, but deeper respect must be developed if the team wishes to succeed. Most teams have a strategy, but often the outcomes are unclear, difficult to measure or how they are to be achieved is uncertain.

There are four pillars to our temple:

3. **Trust**. Respect enables Trust, the first of the four pillars of our temple, the pillars of an extraordinary leadership team. A team where every member trusts that their colleagues are coming from a good place, that they have the best intentions for the team and the organisation - no matter what they may say or even how they may say it. The members of an extraordinary team trust that their colleagues have their back and that they want them to succeed personally - because the success of the entire team depends upon it.
4. **Commitment** is the second pillar. Genuine commitment to the team and what it is seeking to achieve. In the case of Senior Leadership Teams, an acknowledgment that this team is your 'first team'. Cabinet Responsibility. Plus commitment to helping one another to succeed.
5. **Constructive Disagreement** is the third pillar: the ability to have ego-free, robust debates; discussions that can even get heated and emotional at times. Team members are not afraid to engage and disagree. In fact they are eager to seek out a diverse range of views to arrive at the best result. No-one is afraid to be proven wrong, because being wrong helps the team arrive at the right decision. Their debates, discussions and disagreements are all conducted with respect. In heated discussions, every team member plays the ball and not the person, to use a sporting parlance.

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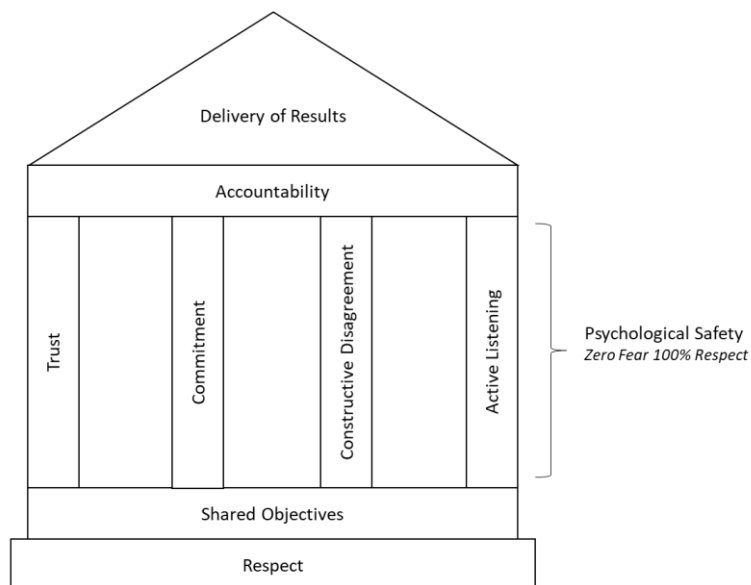
6. **Active listening** is the final pillar: the ability to listen to understand not merely to reply. Highly-effective team members listen closely to the other person and play back what they have heard in a quest to build a deeper appreciation of the other person's perspective and challenges. Enhanced understanding leads to better and shared solutions to critical issues.

These four pillars are the key behaviours of an extraordinary leadership team. When combined, they create an environment of **Psychological Safety**, otherwise known as "Zero Fear 100% Respect"¹, where every single member is sufficiently comfortable and confident enough to air their concerns, point out errors, suggest new ideas and say precisely what they think, in a respectful way, in the full knowledge that they, too, are respected. An atmosphere where they can raise concerns, ask questions and voice opinions without ridicule or punishment.

The last two components sit atop the pillars:

7. **Accountability.** On top of the pillars and enabling the roof to be built is: *Accountability*. Each member must be personally accountable for playing their individual role to the best of their abilities, for delivery of the collective strategy, for the behaviour of the team as a whole and the behaviour of every single one of their fellow team members. The last one can be the toughest challenge of them all.
8. **Delivery of Results.** And finally we have the roof, completing our temple diagram and making it whole. Delivery of Results is the culmination of every single one of the other attributes in the diagram. It is why the team exists. And when it comes to results, there is no individual triumph without a collective triumph. Either the team wins or no-one does.

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How does your team fare on each of these critical elements?

¹ A brilliant quote courtesy of David Chiem, CEO Of MindChamps, Asia's Most influential Entrepreneur in 2022

The Spectrum of Leadership Teams

Leadership teams exist on a spectrum: from dysfunctional to extraordinary, and they exist at all levels of an organisation. Each team must function as well as they possibly can if the unit, division, department or organisation is to succeed.

Organisations with dysfunctional leadership teams never live up to their full potential; they consistently under-perform. Some are weakened so much by the actions and inactions of their leadership team that they have to be rescued. Some become take-over targets. So many go under.

Dysfunctional leadership teams are eventually and inevitably replaced - starting from the top. But so much damage has been done in the meantime that these organisations can become shadows of their former selves. One reason is that dysfunctional leadership teams create dysfunctional cultures that mirror the tribal, warring behaviour at the top of the organisation. Another is that dysfunctional leadership teams are too busy fighting one another to appreciate what makes their business special or to recognise the opportunities, let alone seize them.

But even dysfunctional teams can be transformed – as long as the team leader is ready, willing and able to do so. They can move across the spectrum – first to ‘Fragile’, then onto ‘Developing’ and finally to ‘Extraordinary’.

The Spectrum of Leadership Teams	Dysfunctional	Fragile	Developing	An extraordinary leadership team
	(A collection of warring individuals)	(Cease fire descends)	(A new dawn)	(Delivering together)

Transforming dysfunctional or fragile leadership teams is challenging, but the alternative is far worse – as so many leaders have discovered. No transformation is easy and there will inevitably be casualties along the way, but it is critical for the success of the organisation or department, the success of every employee and, of course, for the success of the leaders themselves.

While you go through every line of the spectrum on the following page, ask yourself the following:

- Where would you place the team you lead on the spectrum?
- Where would you place the team of which you are a member on the spectrum?
- Where would you place your organisation’s leadership team?
- Why?

Would you like your leadership teams to become more extraordinary?

Our Extraordinary Leadership Teams program does just that.

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The Spectrum of Leadership Teams		Dysfunctional	Fragile	Developing	Extraordinary Delivering together
Delivery	Delivery of Results	My individual performance is the most important thing	Yes, the team needs to perform – but not at my expense.	Both team and individual performance are important.	Team performance is #1: we all win or no-one wins.
	Accountability	Be accountable for as little as possible. No accountability for team behaviours. No consequences for poor team results.	Clear personal accountabilities and responsibilities.	Clear interdependencies among team members.	Accountable for own and team performance and team behaviour. Genuine cabinet responsibility. Clear decision-making process.
Culture and Behaviours	Psychological Safety <i>Zero Fear 100% Respect.</i>	Every member for themselves. Winners v losers. Focus on weaknesses. Keep concerns to myself. Cover up mistakes or apportion blame elsewhere.	Factions. Some nervousness about airing concerns. When mistakes happen we find out why.	Concerns able to be aired. Still a little nervous to ask the 'dumb question'. We implement learnings without shame.	Strengths offset your weaknesses Diversity of thought, new ideas, challenge. OK to be wrong. Continuous improvement.
	Active Listening	Members tend to opt for silence or talk over one another.	Mainly listen to reply.	Listen to understand.	Listen to understand and actions taken as a result.
	Constructive Disagreement	Discussions are superficial or adversarial. Too many elephants.	Different opinions can be perceived as criticism.	Detailed discussions but careful not to offend.	Constructive discussions and disagreements based on respect
	Commitment	My function's team is more important because I lead it.	Reluctant to commit to this team fully until it improves.	Both teams are important.	Fully committed - this is my 'first team'.
	Trust	Little genuine trust in fellow team members.	Not all team members' motives can be trusted.	Seems like a strong level of trust – but has it been fully tested?	Every member is coming from a good place. Colleagues want you to succeed.
Foundations	Shared Objectives	Every executive with their own objectives.	Team objectives don't affect individual incentives.	Team objectives form a part of each member's incentives.	One set of objectives to deliver together.
	Respect	Little genuine respect for fellow team members.	Respect for some members: those who earn it.	An underlying respect among team members.	Full respect among the team underpins every interaction.

Change & Strategy International (CSI) enables leaders to become extraordinary leaders of change – starting with themselves. We help leaders to align their people to deliver, build extraordinary leadership teams, develop extraordinary leadership skills, build change-ready cultures and lead successful change.

88% of change initiatives, business strategies, mergers and acquisitions fail.
We enable leaders to be the 1 in 8 that succeeds.

CSI's Principal, Campbell Macpherson, is an international business advisor, change leadership expert, keynote speaker and award-winning author. He is also an Executive Fellow of Henley Business School.

3 Key Leadership Papers:

- The 12 Traits of an Extraordinary Leaders
- The Chequerboard of Leadership: when EQ meets Delivery
- The 8 Components of Extraordinary Leadership Teams

3 Key Leadership Programs:

- 'Leading with Influence' Program
- 'Extraordinary Leadership Teams' Program
- 'Leading Change' workshops and webinars

Campbell has been advising organisations worldwide since 2011. A selection of the client list can be seen in the column on the right. His multi-disciplined executive career spanned three decades with organisations across Australia, UK, Europe, US, ME and Asia. He was the founder of one of Australia's first multimedia companies. He started his career flying jets (badly) in the RAAF.



Campbell is on the books of several keynote speaking agencies across the UK, US and Australasia, and gives speeches worldwide on change and leadership.

He is the author of three books – and runs programmes on each of them:

- 'The Change Catalyst' (Wiley 2017), the 2018 Leadership & Business Book of the Year. It is about leading change.
- 'The Power to Change' (Kogan Page 2020), which was a Runner Up in the 2021 Business Book Awards. It is about embracing personal change.
- 'You: Part Two - thriving in the second half of your life' (Hachette 2021), co-authored by his yogi wife, Jane. Enlightened organisations use content from the book to empower their invaluable Second Half employees and forge even closer relationships with their lucrative Second Half customers.



New! Campbell's fourth book *Transforming Olympus* will be published in 2024. A 2-part leadership fable: In Part 1 the Greek Gods realise they must change the way they lead if they are to avoid the devastation of eternal irrelevance. In Part 2 a (fictional) company in the real world needs to enhance its leadership swiftly if is to survive in today's fast-changing world.

**Business Advisor,
Facilitator, Speaker,
Lecturer, Author, NED
and Change Catalyst.**



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Senior Adviser, ADIA

Strategic change advisor: IFDS, Aviva, IPF, Friends Life, Cofunds, Gocompare, Centaur, Openwork, ...

NED, BP Northbound

Strategy Director, Zurich Global Life EM

Board & HR Director, Sesame (IFA Network)

Strategic Change & OD: Misys, BBC, Capital Radio, Telewest, Sesame

Marketing Director: Virgin Wines

Head of eBusiness, AMP

Snr Mgr, Change, Andersen Consulting

CEO & Founder, InterMark Multimedia

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