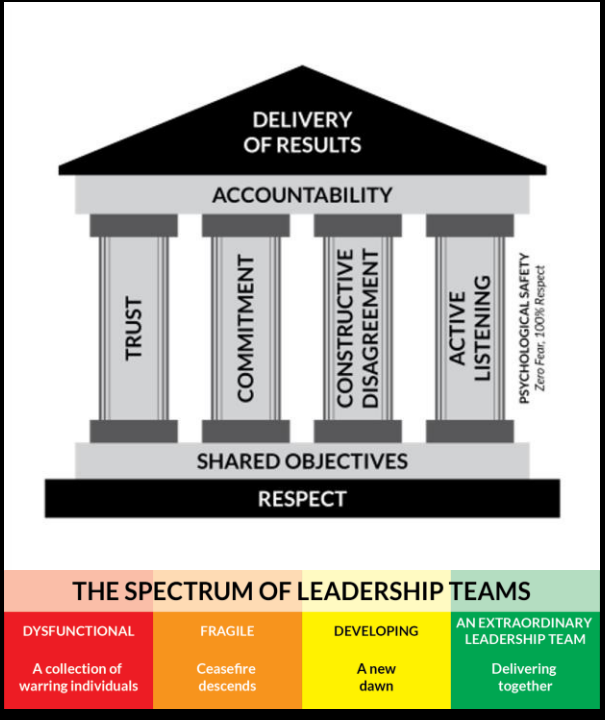
THE CHANGE CATALYST SERIES™

THE 9 COMPONENTS OF AN EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP TEAM



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Your leadership teams need to be as strong as they can possibly be – starting from your Exec Team at the very top of your organisation.

Why?

An ineffective leadership team can destroy a business. An extraordinary leadership team can enable a business to soar.

"Leadership teams are critical … but mine is ineffective," says 2/3 of Executives.

Organisations with strong leadership teams experience **3.5 times higher revenue growth** compared to those without (McKinseys), and yet 65% of senior executives say their top team is ineffective (Center for Effective Leadership).

Leadership teams are critical to every organisation's success – and they exist at all levels of an organisation. They set the strategy, are accountable for the delivery of the strategy, create the culture, and set the tone and the example for how everyone in the organisation behaves.

For an organisation gets the culture that its leaders create.

We have used so many development models with leadership teams over the year, and there always seemed to be something missing. So, together with our clients, we created the ultimate guide with which to help leaders develop and maintain a truly extraordinary leadership team.

We have determined that there are 9 key traits that successful leadership teams possess and every single one of them can be developed.

The 9 Components of an extraordinary leadership team

The foundations:

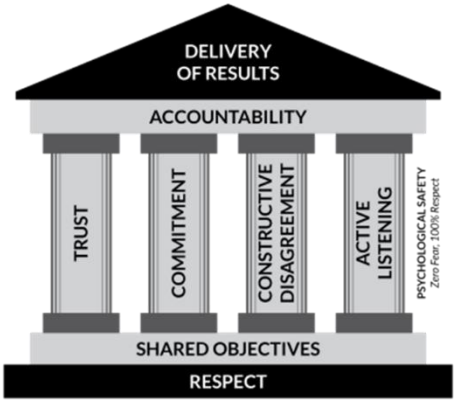
1. Respect
2. Shared Objectives

The pillars:

3. Trust
4. Commitment
5. Constructive Disagreement
6. Active Listening
7. Psychological Safety

The outcomes:

8. Accountability
9. Delivery of Results



How does your team rate in each one of these nine categories?

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The Foundations

Building a leadership team is like building a house – or in this case, a temple. Let's start with the foundations. The foundations of a successful leadership team are two-fold:

1. ***Respect.*** The bedrock of every successful team. Without genuine respect for one another, no team can possibly succeed. Not merely respect for one another's title and position but deeper respect for the individual beneath the title. Respect for their values, their expertise, their challenges, their perspectives, their viewpoints.
2. ***Shared Objectives***. If a team is to achieve extraordinary results, it must be working together to deliver the same shared objectives. Every single member of an extraordinary leadership team is focused on achieving a single set of results that the entire team is measured against.

The Pillars

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 that can even get heated at times. Team members are not afraid to disagree - 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.
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.

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7. ***Psychological Safety.*** The 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 ask questions and voice opinions without ridicule or punishment.

The Outcomes

The last two components sit atop the pillars:

8. ***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.
9. **D*elivery 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.

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

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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'.



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?

Conduct an online assessment of your team
and take a look at the Extraordinary Leadership Teams program at
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Where does your team sit on the Spectrum of Leadership Teams?

The Spectrum of Leadership Teams		Dysfunctional	Fragile	Developing	Extraordinary
The Outcomes	**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.
The Pillars	**Psychological Safety** ***Zero Fear 100% Respect.***	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 is focused on 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.

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Designed and produced by Campbell Macpherson,
author of *The Change Catalyst*, 2018 Business Book of the Year.

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