

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a rowing team in a blue and white boat on a blue lake. The team consists of several rowers in dark blue singlets, viewed from behind. They are all pulling their oars in a synchronized motion, creating a rhythmic pattern of splashes and ripples in the water. The boat is long and narrow, with a blue stripe along its side. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the overall scene conveys a sense of teamwork and athletic performance.

# HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

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**IN EVERY TEAM THERE ARE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE TEAM BEHAVIOUR, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IMPORTANT ELEMENTS CAN LACK THE TEAM. THERE IS ALWAYS POTENTIAL, BUT MANY TEAMS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THIS. DIVERSITY IS OFTEN NOT USED SUFFICIENTLY, WITH AVERAGE RESULTS AS A CONSEQUENCE. REAL CONNECTION BETWEEN TEAM MEMBERS ISN'T ALWAYS ACHIEVED EITHER. OFTEN PEOPLE DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER VERY WELL AND THEY DON'T TAKE THE TIME TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.**

Under pressure however team members are often very aware of how different people can act and react, but they will rarely engage in conversation about this. Teams that succeed in reflecting on their effectiveness and that are open to improvement, unleash their true potential. This way everyone's qualities will be used more effectively. More creativity is being shown and team members show more commitment to the organisation. Team members derive more satisfaction from their work and experience less stress. (New) energy and trust is developed: the most important building blocks for success. This will lead to better plans and decision making, a more efficient execution and therefore: success! When a team like that has to face difficult challenges, it will utilise the existing talents and brainpower quickly and successfully.

By nature people want to work well together. When they have the feeling they will get something in return (like success, collegiality, new insights, better solutions and companionship), they will be willing to invest in it. Especially in a changing world with increasing ambiguity and with younger generations 'what's in it for me?' plays an important role.



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A high-angle, low-perspective shot of a rowing team in a long, narrow boat on a body of water. The rowers are wearing white t-shirts and dark shorts, and are captured in the middle of a stroke. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is bright and clear. The boat is moving towards the right of the frame, leaving a wake behind it. The rowers are in a line, with their oars dipping into the water. The overall mood is one of teamwork and focus.

Building an effective or High Performing Team starts with creating awareness of what is important within a team. Truly take a look for a moment at how your own team performs. An effective team always starts with effective individuals. People that have self-knowledge and accept how they function. Who know their qualities, but at the same time also know what their (potential) pitfalls are. They are able to stay closer to themselves, which makes them happier and makes them have more impact. They are aware of the effect their behaviour and communication has on others. They also dare to look at themselves critically and they are open to feedback. They are not afraid to make mistakes and will always try to learn from things that don't go well.

By creating insight in how individuals and team dynamics work, issues which hinder High Performing Team-behaviour will become discussable. There will be more understanding of each other and more deepening will occur in the mutual contact. Other ways of thinking and acting will be considered complementary instead of obstructive. This way a stronger 'we'-feeling will appear in the team. Team members know how to find each other easily and realise all the more how much they need each other every day in order to achieve their team targets. They will succeed in joining their forces and be strong together.

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In sports you often see that winning teams are not the richest, biggest of most famous ones. Not the most experienced or the best managed ones, but the ones with a High Performing Team-mind set. They know how to continuously get the most out of the team, to exceed themselves and to conquer their competition. Good examples are the English Football Club Leicester City a couple of years ago, Greece during the 2004 European Championships or the American sailing team which made a legendary comeback on New Zealand in the America's Cup in 2013.

In High Performing Teams you see that everyone knows really well which team goals they have to aim for and is fully committed. If somebody notices, for whatever reason, he or she does not favour an idea or plan completely, this will be discussed openly. It will be looked into what the team or the person him/herself can do to make sure doubts are removed and someone will then come 'on board' fully. Or not, which can also happen and is important to find out in an early stage.

In effective teams team members realise how much they need each other to be able to be successful. Hardly any energy is lost on mutual misunderstandings. They entirely know each other and utilise the differences in personalities and competences within the team.



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They always presume each other's good intentions and stand by each other, whatever happens. It is especially remarkable that you don't find strong egos within strong teams (or that individuals know how to put these aside) and that they are happy for each other when the other succeeds. Team members listen to each other unprejudiced and find it important and pleasant to reflect regularly on how they could improve their cooperation. They dare to address sensitive issues to each other and keep each other sharp, to become better as a team. Another distinctive feature of High Performing Teams is that all individuals dispose of reflection power. They dare to cross thresholds in order to learn new things and don't become insecure of continuous change. They embrace this as a chance.

Additionally they are aware of the balance between give and take and they address each other without it being taken personal. They know how to give and create trust with others. They place themselves in vulnerable positions, but at the same time they can get on at crucial times and show ownership. We talk about showing leadership in any role, from an intrinsic drive to make themselves and others better.

When people are part of a High Performing Team, they often describe this as an intangible, strong positive flow they experience. A flow which makes sure every team member feels confident, respected and proud. Like when you get wings together and things unfold naturally. This way individuals and teams exceed themselves, achieve the maximum from themselves and others and feel on top of the world. They will emit all of this to other teams and externals, which always works infectious.



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The effect on the business is still often underestimated, because it is often intangible and hard to explain which factors lie at the bottom of this. Nevertheless, there definitely are characteristics which differentiate a High Performing Team from an average achieving team. The first one is having a clear vision, mission and strategy, which are supported by everyone. Subsequently these are translated into clear role assignments for all team members, in which the existing talents are deployed the best possible way. In a High Performing Team a strong feeling of mutual trust prevails and team members know they can count on each other. Feedback (positive as well as improvement areas) is given on a daily basis, based on the view that reflection and evaluation are of vital importance to improve all individuals and the team as a whole. And maybe the most distinctive characteristic is that High Performing Teams, no matter what, stay focused on achieving their final goal. They don't get distracted by unexpected, external factors that cross their paths.

The good news and the best of all is that all ingredients for a High Performing Team are all already available within most teams, because they are part of a human being, and definitely part of several people together. In the hectic times we live in, it is therefore important to more consciously consider this and to do everything possible to create the right setting for a complete use of its potential. Doesn't anyone like to be part of a High Performing Team?



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