

Why some teams gel and some teams smell

I have been working closely with leaders and their teams for the past 20 years in my role as a coach and corporate trainer.

This handout outlines why some teams gel and some teams' smell. The High Performing Teams (HPT's) teams that gel best and continue to grow and develop have the following 8 traits.

1. Clarity on their goals – Crystal clear. Everyone understands what they are working towards and why are they working towards it? Never under estimate the why. People in a high performing team all have buy in to the goals of the team. The goals are SMART. The team refers to the goals consistently. Goals could be linked to revenue, market share, sales, growth, turnover, employee engagement. All team members see the point of the goals and are involved in deciding how they should be set.

2. Psychological safety – In successful team's people know they are safe to contribute and are encouraged to suggest ideas for the team's benefit. At times there will be some tension. If there is no tension or conflict in your team, you could be heading for trouble. Team members need to have the confidence to voice their opinions and disapproval of the team's direction when needed. They should not fear repercussions. A degree of conflict or tension within a team is critical. It indicates that the members of the team are concerned about their own needs as well as the success of the team. You can't make an omelette with breaking a few eggs.

3. Clear communication – The message sent is rarely the same as the message received. High performing teams communicate consistently. They avoid confusion, by having things in writing. Excellent non-verbal communication is very important. Being able to read other people's body language and being aware of the impact of your own body language makes an enormous difference to the success of the team. Most of the issues I see in teams relates to poor communication and false assumptions. If the team communicates consistently and, in a language, that everyone understands a lot of potential problems could be avoided.

4. Individual accountability – HPT's recruit wisely. They are made up of individuals who thrive on accountability. These people enjoy the challenge that comes with being accountable. They appreciate that with accountability comes a degree of pressure to perform. They thrive on this. If they are unsuccessful they own it. It takes a high level of maturity and emotional intelligence to consistently want to be accountable.

5. Measure and celebrate success – HPT's are clear on how they will assess their performance. When a HPT is successful they celebrate. Enjoying the fruits of their hard work. When they are not successful they assess why and make suitable adjustments. Celebrating regularly is a great way to maintain motivation, keep communication up and remind people of why they want to be part of this team.

6. A hunger to improve – This is inherent in all HPT's. There is a mindset that says we are doing well now, but how can we do it better? This improvement should be driven by excellent and empowering coaching and leadership. Recruiting fresh people with different ideas will assist. HPT's realise that just because they have always operated in a certain way, that doesn't mean that they will continue to always do things that way.

7. Strong leadership – Strong leadership sets the tone and the direction for the team. Great leaders know the importance of being soft on people, yet firm on outcomes. Relationships before results. The best leaders are driven, have high emotional intelligence, are excellent communicators and surround themselves with a diverse range of motivated people.

8. Enjoyment – When you spend time with HPT's you'll notice they work hard and are enjoying themselves. People bring a can-do attitude to the team. They smile, laugh appropriately, and do whatever they can to lift their teammates. Never underestimate the link between enjoyment and a Team's success