**Theme 4 – The Discipline of Teams – Jon Katxenbach, Douglas Smith.**

***What makes the difference between a team that performs and one that doesn’t?***

**Intro:**

* If managers want to make better decisions about teams, they must be clear about what a team is.
* Team – “ a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable”
* *Four elements:*  common commitment and purpose, performance goals, complementary skills and mutual accountability.
* *Classify teams into 3 varieties:* teams that recommend things, teams that make or do thing and teams that run things.
* Found that teams and good performance are inseparable; cannot have one without the other.
* But people use the word team so loosely that it gets in the way of learning and applying the discipline that leads to good performance.
* For managers to make better decisions about whether, when or how to encourage and use teams, it is important to be more precise about what a team is and what it isn’t.
* Teamwork represents a set of values that encourage listening and responding constructively to views expressed by others giving others the benefit of the doubt, providing support, and recognising the interests and achievements of others.
* Such values help teams perform, promote individual performance and performance of entire org.
* Groups do not become teams simply because that is what someone calls them. The entire workforce of any large and complex org is never a team.
* Must distinguish between teams and other forms of working groups. A working groups performance is a function of what its members do as individuals. A teams performance includes both individual results and collective work products.
* A *collective work product* is what two or more members must work on together eg surveys.
* Working groups are both prevalent and effective in large orgs where individual accountability is most important. Best working groups come together to share info, perspectives and insights, to make decisions that help each person do his job better. Focus is always on individual goals and accountabilities.
* Teams require both individual and mutual accountability. Rely on more than group discussion, debate and decision, sharing infor and best practice performance standards.
* Work produced through joingt contributions of their members. This is waht makes possible performance levels greater than the sum of all individual bests of team members.
* A team is more than a sum of parts.

**Common commitment:**

* First step-think about teams as discrete units of performance and not just as positive sets of values. The essence of a team is common commitment. This kind of commitment requires a purpose in which team members can believe.
* Teams develop dirction, momentum and commitment by working to shape a meaningful purpose. Building ownership and commitment to team purpose is not incompatible with taking initial direction from outside the team.
* Most successful teams shape their purposes in response to a demand or opportunity put in their path, usually by higher management. Management is responsible for clarifying the charter, rationale, and performance challenge for the team, but management must also leave enought flexibility for the team to develop commitment around its own spin on that purpose, set of specific goals, timing and approach.
* Team- invest large amount of time exploring, shaping and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them collectively and individually.
* Team- translate their common purpose into specific performance goals. When purposes and goals build on one another and are combined with team commitment they become a powerful engine of performance.
* Transforming broad directives into specific and measurable performance goals is the sureset first step for a team trying to shape a purpose meaningful to its members.
* All provide firm footsholds for teams several reasons:
  + Specific team performance goalds help define a set of work products that are different both from an org-wide mission and from individual job objectives. Requires collective effort of team members to make it happen. Simply gathering from time to time to make decisions will not sustain team performance.
  + Specificity of performance objectives facilitates clear communication and constructive conflict within a team.
  + Attainability of specific goals helps teams maintain their focus on getting results.
  + As outward bound and other team building programs illustrate, specific objectives have a levelling effect conducive to team behaviour. Teams that succed their goals evaluate what and how each individual can best contribute to the teams goal and to the performance objective rather than a persons status or personality.
  + Specific goals allow a team to achieve small wins as it pursues its broader purpose. Invaluable to building commitment and overcoming the obstacles that get in the way of a long term purpose.
  + Performance goals are compelling. They are symbols of accomplishment that motivate and energise. Challenge the people on a team to commit themselves as a team to make a difference.
* The combination of purpose and specific goals is essential to performance. Each depends on the other to reamin relevant and vital. Clear performance goals help a team keep track of progress and hold itself accountable.
* Virtually all effective teams we have met, read or heard about have member 2-25. Large number of people can theoretically become a team but are more likely to break into subteams rather than function as a single unit.
* **Why?** Large numbers of people have trouble interacting constructively as a group.
* Large groups also face logistical issues, such as finding enough physical space and time to meet. Have issues creating a proper gaol. Normally well meaning intentions that cannot be translated into concrete objectives.

**Complementary skills:**

* In addition to finding the right size, teams must develop the right mix of skills. Fall into three categories.
* **Technical or functional expertise.** Product development groups that include only merketers or engineers are less likely to succeed than those with the complementary skills of both.
* **Problem solving and decision making skills.** Teams must be able to identify the problems and opportunities they face, evaluate the options and make necessary trade offs and decision about how to proceed.
* **Interpersonal skills.** Common understanding and purpose cannot arise without effective communication and constructive conflict which depends on interpersonal skills. Skills include, tisk taking, helpful criticism, objectivity active listengin, giving the benefit of doubt and recognising the interest and achievements of others.
* A team cannot get started without some minimum complement of skills, especially technical and functional ones.
* It is equally common to oeverempahsize skills in team selection. Yet in all the successful teams weve encountered, not one had all the needed skills at the outset. We discovered that teams are powerful vehicles for developing the skills needed to meet the teams performance challenge.
* Effective teams develop strong commitment to a common approach; how they will work together to accomplish their purpose. Members must agree on who does what job, how schedules will be set and adhered to, what skills need to be developed etc.
* Agreeing on the specifics of wokr and how they fit together to integrate individual skills and advance team performance lies at the heart of shaping a common approach. Every member of a successful team does equivalent amounts of real work; all members including team leader contribute in concrete ways to teams work product.
* When individuals approach a team situation especially in a business setting each perexisting job assignments as well as strengths and weaknesses reflecting a variety of talents, back ground, personalities and prejudices. Only through mutual discovery and understanding of how to apply all its human resoures to a common purpose can a team develop and agree on the best approach to achieve its goals.

**Mutual accountability:**

* No group ever becomes a team until it can hold itself accountable as a team. Like common purpose and approach, mutual accountability is a stiff test.
* At its core, team accountability is about the sincere promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin tow critical aspects of effective team: commitment and trust. Teams do not succeed by ignoring or wishing away such behaviour.
* Mutual accountability cannot be coerced any more than people canve made to trust one another. But when a team shares a common purpose, goals and approach, mutual accountability grows as a natural counterpart.
* When people work together toward a common objective, trust and commitment follow. Consequently teams enjoying a strong common purpose nd approach inevitably hold themselves responsible, both as individuals and as a team for the teams performance. Also produces the rich rewards of mutual achievement in which all members share.
* On the other hand groups established primarily for the sake of vecoming a team or for job enhancement, communication, organisational effectiveness or excellence rarely become effective teams.
* Most teams can be classified in one of three ways:
* **Teams that recommend things.** Teams include task forces, project groups and audit, quality or safety groups asked to study adn solve particular problems.
  + Have predetermined completion dates.
  + Two critical issues are uniqye: getting off to a fast and constructive start and dealing with the ultimate handoff thats required to get recommendations implemented.
  + Key to first issue lies in the clarity of the teams charter and composition of its membership. Need a clear definition of whom management expects to participate and the time commitment required.
  + Management can help the team get the necessary cooperation by opening doors and ealing with political obstacles.
  + Missing the handoof is almost always the problem that stymies teams that recommend things. To avoid this the transfer of responsibility for recommendation to those who must implement them demands top managements time and attention.
  + Critical to involve people outside the taks force well before recommendations are finalised.
* **Teams that make or do things.** Teams include people at or near the front lines who are responsible for doing the basic manufacturing, development, operations, marketing, sales, service.
  + Top management should concentrate on what we acall the companys ‘critical delivery points’- that is places in the org where the cost and value of the companys producat and services are most directly determined. Might include, customer service performed, products designed and productivity determined.
  + When an org does require a significant number of teams at these ponts the sheer challenge of maximising the performance of so many groups will demand a carefully constructed and performance focused set of management processes. Issue here for top management is how to build the necessary systems and process supports without falling into the trap apprearing to promote teams for their own sake.
  + Imperative here is a relentless focus on performance. Top mang can help by instituting processes like pay schemes and training for teams responsive to their real time needs, but must amke clear and compleeing demands on the teams themselves and then pay constant attention to their progress with respect to both team basics and performance results.
* **Teams that run things.** All groups that become real teams seldom think of themselves as a team because they are so focused on performance results. Wheter it is in charge of thousands of people or just a handful, as long as the group oversees some business, ongoing program or significant functional activity, it is a team that runs things.
  + main issue these teams face is determining whether a real team approach is the righ one. Many groups that run things can be moreeffective as working groups than as teams.
  + The key judgment is whether the sum of individual bests will suffice for the performance challenge at ahnd or whether the group must deliver substancial incremental performance requrining real joint work processes.
  + Members may have to overcome a natural reluctance to trust their fate to others. The price of faking the team approach is high.
  + Working groups present fewer risks. Effective working groups need little time to shape their purpose since teh leader usully established it.
  + Meetings are run against well prioritised agendas and decisions are implemented through specific individual assignment and accountability.
  + Most of the time performance aspirations can be met through individual doing their respective jobs well.
  + Having said this, we believe the extra level of performance teams can achieve is beoming critical for a growing number of companies. When top management uses teams to run things it should make sure the team succeeds in identifying specific purposes and goals..
  + This is a second major issue for teams that run things. Such teams confuse the broad mission of the total org with the specific purpose of their small group at the top. If a group of mangers looks only at the economic performance of the part of the org it runs to assess overall effectiveness the group will not have any team performance goals of its own.
* While basic discipline of teams does not differ for them, teams at the topa re certainly the most difficult. The complexitites of long term challenges, heavy demans on executive time and the deep seated individualism of senior people conspire against teams at the top. Real teams at the top were often smaller and less formalised. They were mostly tow and threes with an occasional fourth.
* Far too many groups at the top of large corporatins needlessly constrain themselves from achieving real team levels of performance because they assume that all direct reports must be on the team, that team goals must be identical to corporate goals and that the team leader is above doing real owrk.
* Real team performance at the top can and does occur.
* We believe that teams will become the primary unit of performance in high performance orgs. Teams will enhance existing structures without replacing them.
* A team opportunity exists anywhere hierarchy or org boundaries inhibit the skills and perspectives needed for optimal results.
* We are convinced that every company faces specific performance challenges for which teams are the most practical and powerful vehicle at top managements disposal.
* Top management must recognise a teams unique potential to deliver results, deploy teams strategically when theey are the best toll for the job and foster the basic discipline of teams that will make them effective.

**Not all groups are teams; how to tell the difference:**

* **Working group:**
* Strong clearly focused leader
* Individual accountability.
* Groups purpose same as the broader org mission
* Individual work products
* Runs efficient meeting.
* Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on other- e.g. financial performance.
* Discusses, decides and delegates.
* **Team**
* Shared leadership roles.
* Individual and mutual accountability.
* Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers.
* Collective work products.
* Encourages open ended discussion and active problem solving meetings.
* Measure performance directly by assessing collective work products.
* Discusses, decides and does real work together.

**Building team Performance:**

* **Establish urgency, demanding performance standards, and direction.** Team members need to believe the team has urgent and worthwhile purposes and they want to know what the expectations are. Teams work best in compelling context.
* **Select members for skill and skill potential, not personality.** No team succeeds without all the skills needed to meet its purpose and performance goals.
* **Pay particular attention to first meetings and actions, initial impressions always mean a great deal.** When potential teams first gather, everyone monitors the signas given by other to confirm, suspend or dispel assumptions and concerns.
* **Set some clear rules of behaviour.** Effective teams develop rules of conduct at the outset. Most critical initial rules pertain to attendance, discussion, confidentiality, analytic approach, end product orientation, constructive confrontation and contributions.
* **Set and seize upon a few immediate performance oriented tasks and goals.** teams trace their advancement of key performance oriented events sooner such results occur, the sooner the team congeals.
* **Challenge the group regularly with fresh facts and info.** new info causes a team to redefine and enrich its understanding of the performance challenge.
* **Spend lots of time together.** Must spend alot of time together scheduled or un scheduled especially in the beginning. Busy exe and mangers tood often intentionally minimise the time they spend together.
* **Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition and reward.** Positive reinforcement works as well in a team context as elsewhere.