LEADER AS COACH

Some Practical Advice

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DAU

Leader as Coach – Some Practical Advice

1. About

This is a beta guide containing a mix of content, video clips, and downloads designed to help provide "just in time" work references to support your coaching activities. We want to know how it helps you and how we can make it better. Please provide feedback and let us know how this works for you!

Questions to consider:

- How's the clarity of the guide?
- Brevity?
- Usability?
- How do the videos enhance the learning/application experience?
- What can we do even better?

Please send your feedback to Pat Barker (patrick.barker@dau.mil).

2. Introduction

Bottom Line Up Front

Coaching is about asking questions that help others think through their challenges and take action. Coaching is about questions, not answers. This is a key element in getting the most out of our people and teammates. In the video below, see what DSMC's Dick Hansen has to say about that.

What is Coaching?

Intent

This coaching content focuses on developing your leadership style or your level of leadership through coaching. We challenge leaders to examine their personal leadership level/style, build their awareness of presence, active listening, and powerful questioning, and find practical ways of integrating this into their daily interactions and organizational leadership DNA.

In this worksheet we will introduce and invite you as a leader, a colleague, or a teammate to consider:

- What coaching is and what it isn't
- The T-GROW model for a coaching conversation: Topic, Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward
- Some impactful coaching competencies: presence, active listening, powerful questioning
- The neuroscience of coaching: how to build neural networks that support leading with questions

Success Equals…

You as a leader commit to leveraging coaching competencies and practical techniques to initiate and build a culture of coaching throughout your organization.

3. Coaching 101

Coaching… What it is, and what it isn't.

As Leaders, we wear many hats:

- Master and Commander, PIC, PEO, CEO
- Acquisition Expert: THE ONE with the acquisition domain answers in the in the team sport that is the "BIG A" Defense Acquisition System
- Mentor

A Common Denominator while wearing these hats is Answers. We're experts and we provide advice.

Coaching is different. Coaching happens in conversations that invite the workforce (our leaders and people, our teams, their organizations) into their own authority, to build their own awareness, spark their own answers and solutions, and determine their own actions. It's about "deepening the learning and forwarding the action."

In the quick video below, watch Dick Hansen and Pat Barker demonstrate a mentoring conversation. Pat has a challenge in his project to build a coaching culture in organizations and Dick answers.

A Mentoring (not coaching) Conversation

Coaching is partnering with another (or others like a team or Integrated Product Team) in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaching has also been described as an interaction or conversation that "deepens another person's learning and forwards their action."

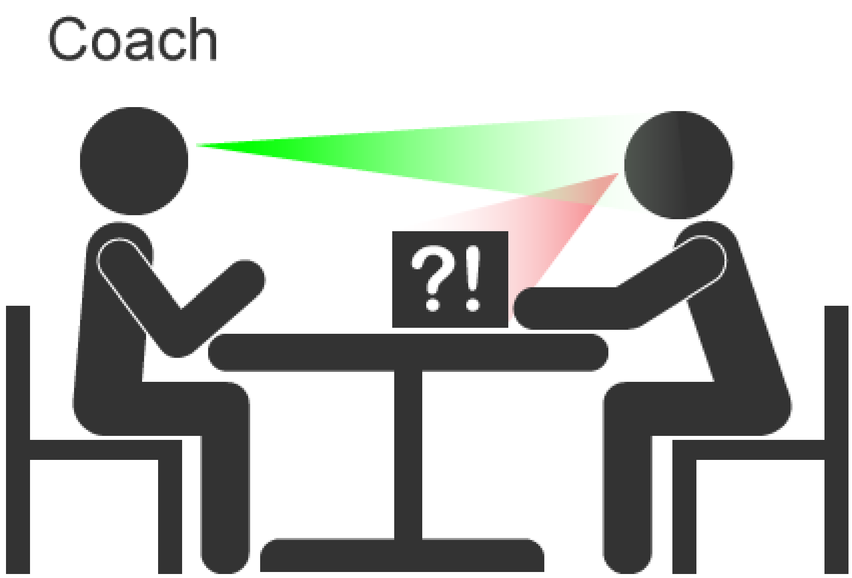
Coaching is an international profession and as such is associated with professional standards. To learn more, visit the International Coaching Federation (ICF) website.

As a comparison to the mentoring video clip above, watch see Dick Hansen and Pat Barker demonstrate a coaching conversation below. We take the same situation as above – Pat's project – but reframe the conversation around coaching questions. How is it different from the earlier video?

A Coaching Conversation

Focus on their thinking potential, not on the problem or issue.

A picture is worth a thousand words. If we could only offer and elaborate on one picture, this is it:



It comes from David Rock's book, Quiet Leadership. We have a coach on the left and someone, a direct report, or a colleague, maybe even a boss, on the right.

The person on the right presents a dilemma, a challenge, a problem, as represented by the box on the table. This person is interested in conversing about the challenge. David Rock invites us to consider that Coaching and our role as leader as coach is about focusing on their thinking, not on the problem itself. This is a major takeaway for coaching.

When you get the knock at the door, "Hey colleague, got a few moments?" And the person presents a dilemma, a challenge, a problem, don't focus on the box… don't "reach for" and "disassemble/reassemble the box" and solve the person's issue. Resist the urge to tell the person the answer (mentor, consult, direct, solve).

Instead, coach the other person to their own answers, solutions. Help them think about the issue in a productive way to come up with their own solutions. Give them a thinking partner, a sounding board, a "black hat" (See Edward DeBono's 6 Thinking Hats), or any other color hat that helps them with their own thinking about the problem. In other words, when you find yourself focusing on the box (and we will do that—stay tuned for the neuroscience of why we are wired for solutions), shift and lift your eyes up as a coach and ask powerful questions, don't tell or provide answers.

Impactful coaching competencies that enable a coaching conversation

Coaching Presence

Coaching presence is the ability to be fully conscious and create a spontaneous, supportive environment.

- Be open, flexible and confident. "Who do I need to be in this conversation?"
- Champions new behaviors and actions; provide ongoing support.
- Is open to not knowing, not providing solutions, and taking risks.
- Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities.

One way to set yourself up to be present in the conversation and listen actively is to center yourself. While there are many ways to enable your mindfulness, one way comes from Richard Strozzi-Heckler, an approach to somatically check-in on your three dimensions: length, width, and depth.

"Centering? Sounds too 'woo-hoo' for me." Not so fast grasshopper. Watch the short video below on centering, the Strozzi way. Oh, by the way, did we mention Strozzi's centering is Special Forces tested and approved? NOT mamby-pamby land!

Coaching Competencies: Presence

Active Listening

Active listening is the ability to focus completely on what the learner is saying, and not saying.

- Distinguishes between the words, the tone of voice, and the body language.
- Summarizes and paraphrases what learner has said to ensure clarity and understanding.
- Integrates and builds on learner's ideas and suggestions.
- "Bottom-lines" or understands the essence of the learner's communication and helps the learner get there rather than engaging in long, descriptive stories.

Active listening is a critical coaching skill. Listen to Dick Hansen and Pat Barker talk about it below:

Coaching Competencies: Active Listening

Download a PDF worksheet that helps you gauge the degree to which you are an active listener:

Active Listening Worksheet

Powerful Questioning

Powerful questioning is the Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the learner.

- Asks questions that reflect active listening and understanding of the coachee's perspective.
- Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility or new learning.
- Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action.
- Asks questions that deepen the learning and forwards the action.

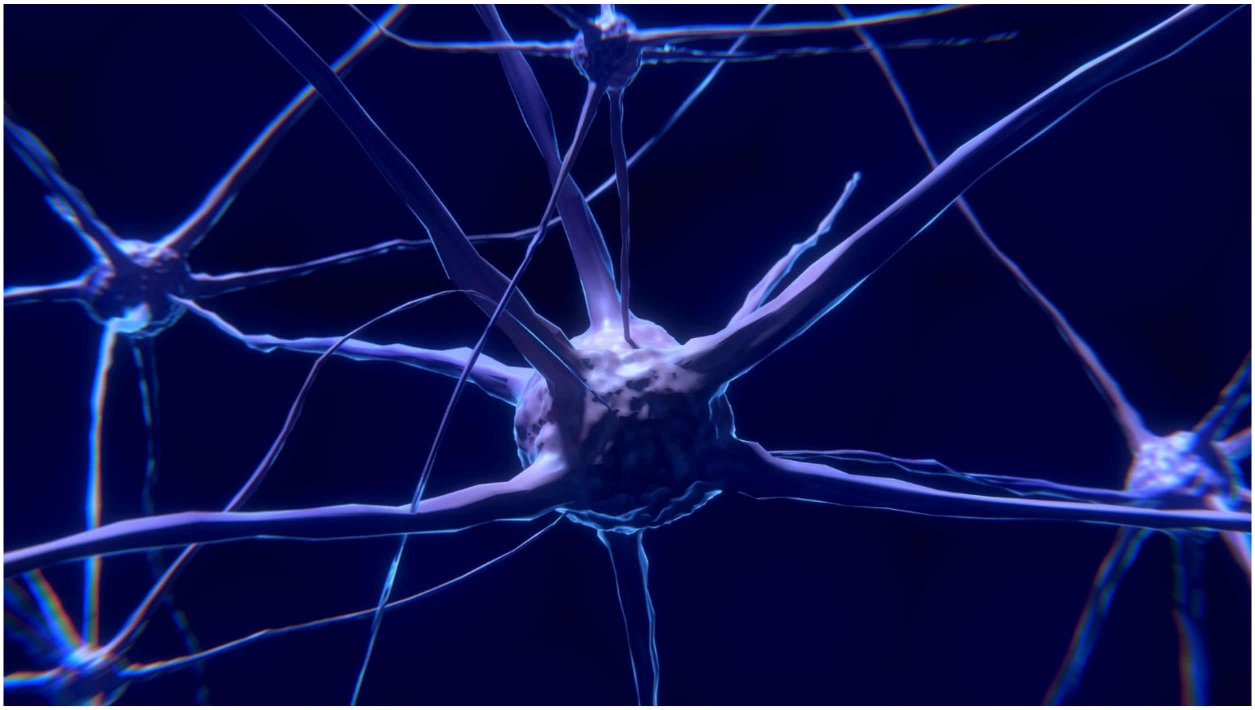
Read more: https://coachfederation.org/core-competencies

Asking questions? Really? Who are we, Socrates? Some Kung Fu master on a mountaintop? In the video below, listen to Dick Hansen and Pat Barker talk about asking coaching questions.

Coaching Competencies: Powerful Questioning

4. The Brain Science of Coaching

This isn't just "Leader's Soft Skills"… it's hard science, neuroscience, neurobiology, chem-e, EE. Our brains are made up of 100 billion neurons. That's a big number…hard to fathom. Those neurons create mental maps as we learn, grow, gather experience and each of our individual mental maps are or can be vastly different.



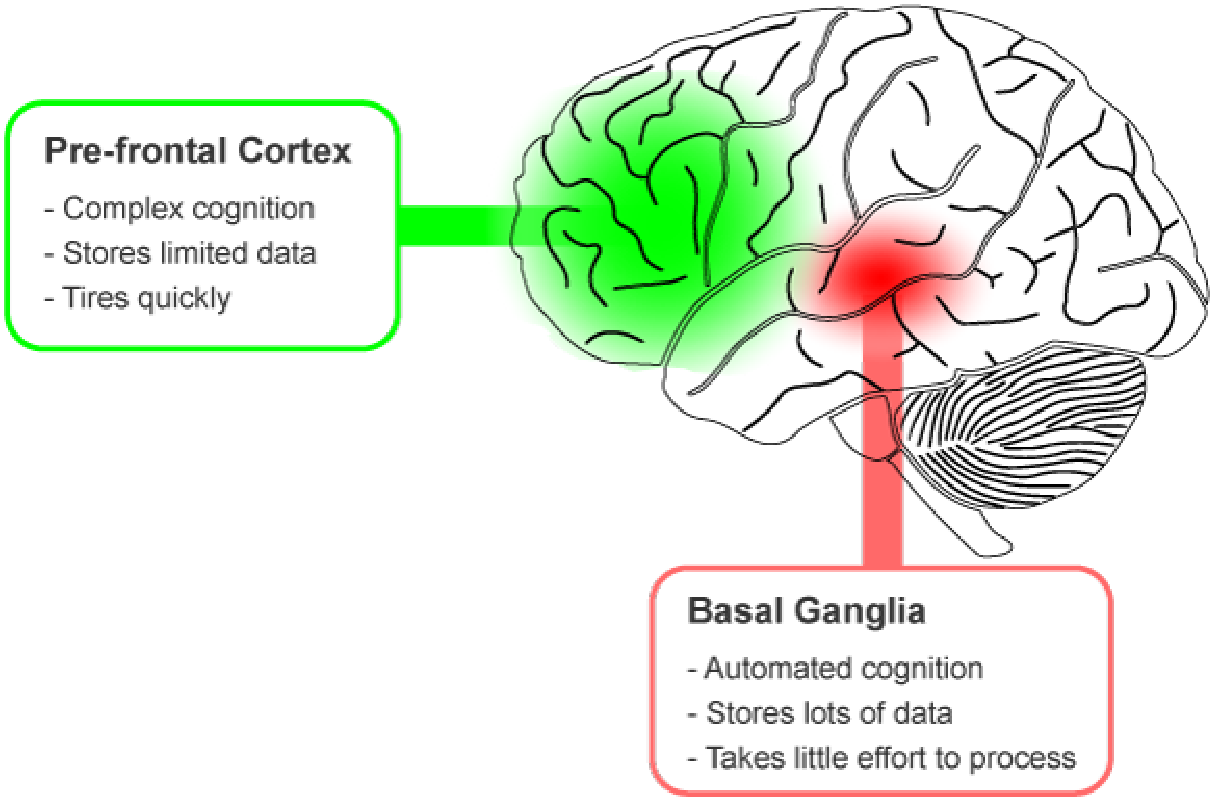
Now some mental maps might be similar or identical, e.g., the mental map that we have to lift our left arm or to breath. When we have an "aha moment" (the Quantum Zeno Effect)…meaning our neurons just fired (that synapse connection), we can help increase that connection with some attention density… focus on the idea or solution and work with it further.

This enables neuroplasticity or the ability of our brains to change, create new neural networks and mental maps. In summary, “What fires together, wires together.”

Thinking Differently

So with the almost infinite ways to think about and solve a problem, why do we think we can overlay our vastly different mental map over someone else 100 billion neurons and expect them to get it, support it, want to execute our way of thinking?

Let’s take that one brief step further. We’ve highlighted two areas of the brain, the prefrontal cortex and the basal ganglia, as seen in the brain figure below.



The prefrontal cortex (PC) is a limited resource, meaning that it can only store a minimal amount of data, takes a lot of energy to process and tires very quickly. Conversely, the basal ganglia can store a lot of data, and takes very little effort to "process."

Example: we often drive a car without really thinking hard about it. We've done it so much, its habit and lives in our basil ganglia. Until you find yourself in Ireland, on very narrow roads, with a manual transmission rental car. Now your PC will be glowing red from the new data, change, etc.

So what?

Here's the challenge, we got to where we are as leaders by solving problems. To paraphrase Descartes, "We Fix, Therefore We Are." We have built a strong neural network in the basal ganglia (our habit center) around identifying just what is wrong with the box on the table AND how to fix it.

Now we are asking you to consider stop solving other's challenges, and start being present, listening, and asking questions…focus on their thinking to let them solve their own issues. This might shift you out of habitual solving and into questioning and focusing on their thinking; powerful questions that pull their insight vs pushing your advice.

It is not easy to train ourselves to get into an "I must ask questions" mental mode in the middle of the busy workday with a million distractions, but we have to do it. We must develop skills to make that mental shift regardless of what is going on. One way to think about the dynamics of the mental shift is to think in terms of the Plane of Action and the Plane of Observation. Check out the following video clip:

Plane of Action and Plane of Observation

WARNING: You might sense your prefrontal cortexes glowing as you build your skills and coaching competencies. AND, by all means… DO try this at home.

Learning to coach is like riding a bike, a backwards bicycle. Have a look at how hard it can be to retrain our brains. After the video, substitute expert with answers to coach with questions.

All this brain stuff opens a door into exploring our intuitions and how we make decisions. Watch a short book review by "dumb professor" Pat Barker discussing cognitive psychologist Gary Klein's book: The Power of Intuition. There's cool coaching potential in it.

Power of Intuition

OK – so how do I get to try this coaching stuff?

Given this new level of leadership and interaction, coaching vs. directing, here are two questions to consider and write down some thoughts:

- What do you need to take on?
- What do you need to let go of?

5. A Coaching Culture

Think about a coaching culture.

The Lone Nut

Set the example for a coaching culture. Be the "lone nut" to make it a movement in your organization! Watch a short TED video led by Derek Sivers to see what a "lone nut" can accomplish in making a change!

How to start a movement

Lone Nuts trying demonstrate a coaching culture tend to do the following things:

- Describe for your colleagues what coaching is and what it isn't.
- Create an agreement with a JPO colleague that would like some coaching.
- Coach them create an Extraordinary Outcome (could be a business outcome, a huge project, a career plan, or a successful IPT meeting).
- Use T-GROW to structure your conversations.
- Gain awareness of and improve your coaching competencies.
- Practice the tools with your colleagues, subordinates, your (dare we say it?) bosses … and yourself.
- They do their homework and benchmark, looking for examples of organizational and cultural outcomes that can result when a leader decides to focus on asking questions instead of providing answers. Check out what happened on this Navy submarine.

BE THE LONE NUT!

6. Featured Tools

Three (3) Vital Questions

One good way to start a coaching conversation is to use the framework taught in DAU-supported leadership programs for both the F-35 Joint Program Office "Enterprise Leadership Cohort Program" or ELCP and the Columbia Class Program Office (PMS-397) called "Columbia Cross-Functional Leadership Program (C2FLP). This framework not only sets up a powerful "Extraordinary Future" dialogue, but great for ad-hoc conversations.

There are three videos below narrated by lead facilitator Abby Straus. We borrowed directly from the F-35 ELCP, so you will hear references to a workshop. Don't worry about that. Just focus on the main material.

[Video 1]

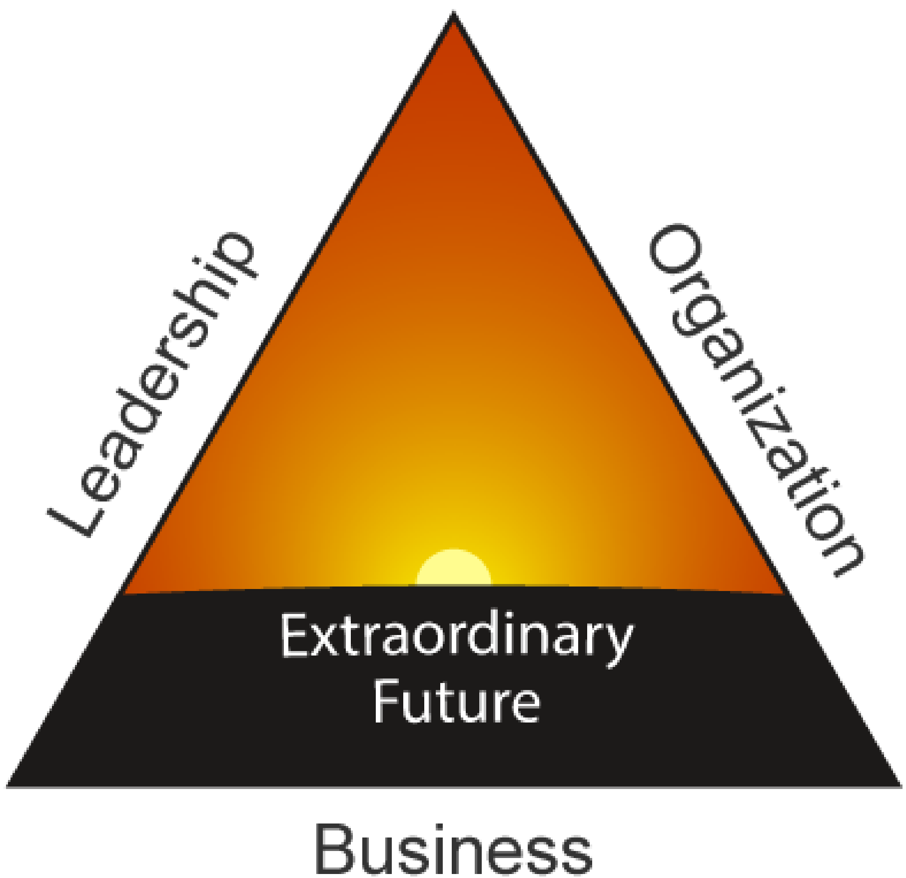
[Video 2]

[Video 3]

Your Extraordinary Future (EF)

The 3 Vital Questions provide great context for an “Extraordinary Future” conversation. The “vision” part of the Creative Tension model (the 3rd of the three questions) can be well-defined by an Extraordinary Future construct. Think of is as a “deeper dive” onto the vision to provide more clarity on what that final state actually looks like.

In the DAU executive coaching engagement, which typically lasts approximately 12 months, a senior acquisition leader pairs up with a DAU executive coach who helps the leader to think in terms of an Extraordinary Future or EF as depicted by the triangle below. There are three legs to the triangle: Leadership, Organization and Business. An EF represents a condition where one’s own leadership skills, organization and business outcomes are literally reinvented.



The DAU Extraordinary Future is adapted from Robert Hargrove’s notion of “Impossible Future” described in his book Masterful Coaching.

An EF is a transformational state and requires significant effort on the part of the leader to create it. Why do we call this an “Extraordinary Future” and not just a “goal” or “objective?” Because in coaching the aim is to get you to think a bit deeper and reach a bit higher. Even if you fall short you still end up doing a pretty darn good job. But for now do not think of falling short.

Even though this is not a “true” DAU Executive Coaching engagement, this coaching culture program serves as a vehicle for using some of the tools used by our coaches and asking the kinds of powerful questions inherent in good coaching dialogue. By exposing you to these topics and questions we also hope to promote a coaching culture at your organization, where asking powerful questions is the norm, and where you can set the example based on your Cohort experience. Therefore, we choose to keep its core term “EF” and its key constituent elements to remind you of your role as a coach (and perhaps “lone nut”) in the overall transformation of your organization into one that exhibits a coaching culture.

We also keep the term to remind you that the “essence” of an EF is the notion that it is a worthy endeavor to shoot for something which risks failure. Our definition of an individual EF that specifically tailored to this Coaching Program is defined by the following three elements:

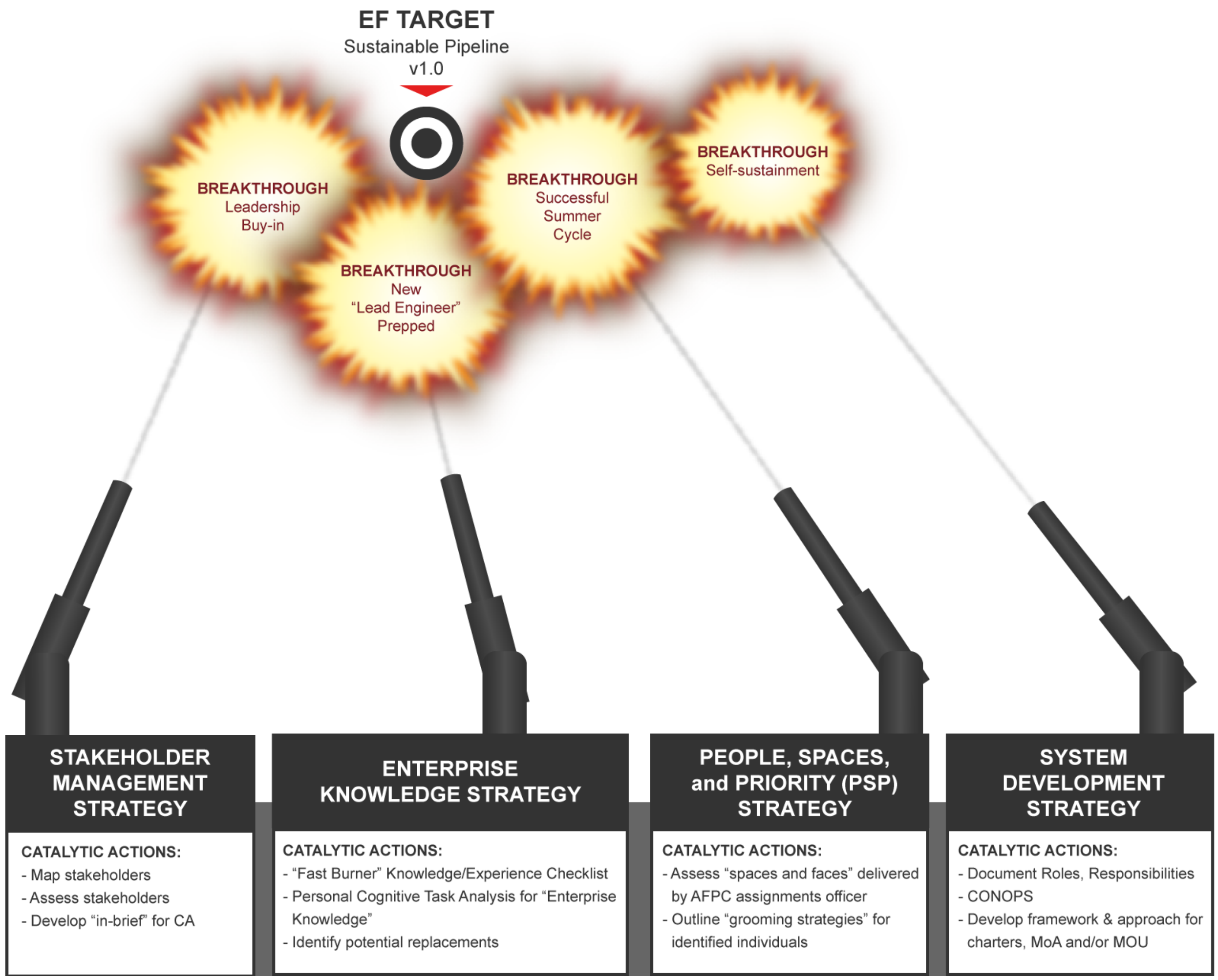
- ***Your leadership capability:*** *What kinds of leadership skills do you currently possess and what kind of leader do you need to be in order to see your initiative through to success?*
- ***Your organizational health:*** *How can you encourage your stakeholders – particularly those who work for you – to share in the ownership of your initiative?*
- ***Your business outcomes:*** *What conditions must exist for you to claim success in your project or program? How do you know you are done?*

Note that the project (the stuff you do, tasks you accomplish) is only one side (the “business” leg) of that triangle. The EF is more than just your initiative; it is also about your organization and your own personal and professional development. In this sense, your project/task is a subset of your EF. This means you have the opportunity to use your EF to <u>purposely shape</u> the parameters and scope of your job (and those of others) to stretch your personal and professional talents.

Visualizing Your EF Starts Today!

Can you look ahead within the context of the Extraordinary Future framework? Can you help others do so? Meeting your business goals is nice but how might you purposely shape your approach to ensure you stretch your leadership capabilities? How can you improve your organizational health by design? We ask you to imagine something that can be realized even if you don’t have the resources at the moment to make it happen. Allow yourself for the moment to dream big.

The picture below, labeled “EF Framework,” is an original concept provided by a DAU coaching client (a senior USAF officer) a few years back. An EF is hard to create but rather easy to draw. In expanding upon an EF we talk in terms of Breakthroughs, Strategies and Catalytic Actions.



Breakthroughs: These are tangible objects or event or conditions that, when seen together, let you know you have achieved your Extraordinary Future. They help you answer the question: What's missing that if present would satisfy my Extraordinary Future? In other words, what might "done" look like?

Strategies: These are broadly-stated means that will get you from where you are now to where you need to go to achieve your breakthroughs.

Catalytic Actions: These specific and powerful actions that, if taken within the next 30 days, would make a difference and get you immediately on the road to your breakthroughs.

Once you have defined your EF (or that of your coachee) in terms of a future state of being (leadership, organization and business) the task is then to further what it looks like, how you will get there in a strategic sense, and what you can do right now to launch you in the EF direction. Watch Dick Hansen and Pat Barker further explain what an EF is all about.

Listen to the EF Conversation

Download the worksheet below to help you think through your extraordinary future.

Extraordinary Future Worksheet

The T-GROW Model

Topic, Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward

T-GROW is an easy to remember and use conversational construct or model that we invite you to consider as a structure for your coaching conversations.

Topic - What do you want to discuss?

Goal - What is your goal (or success?

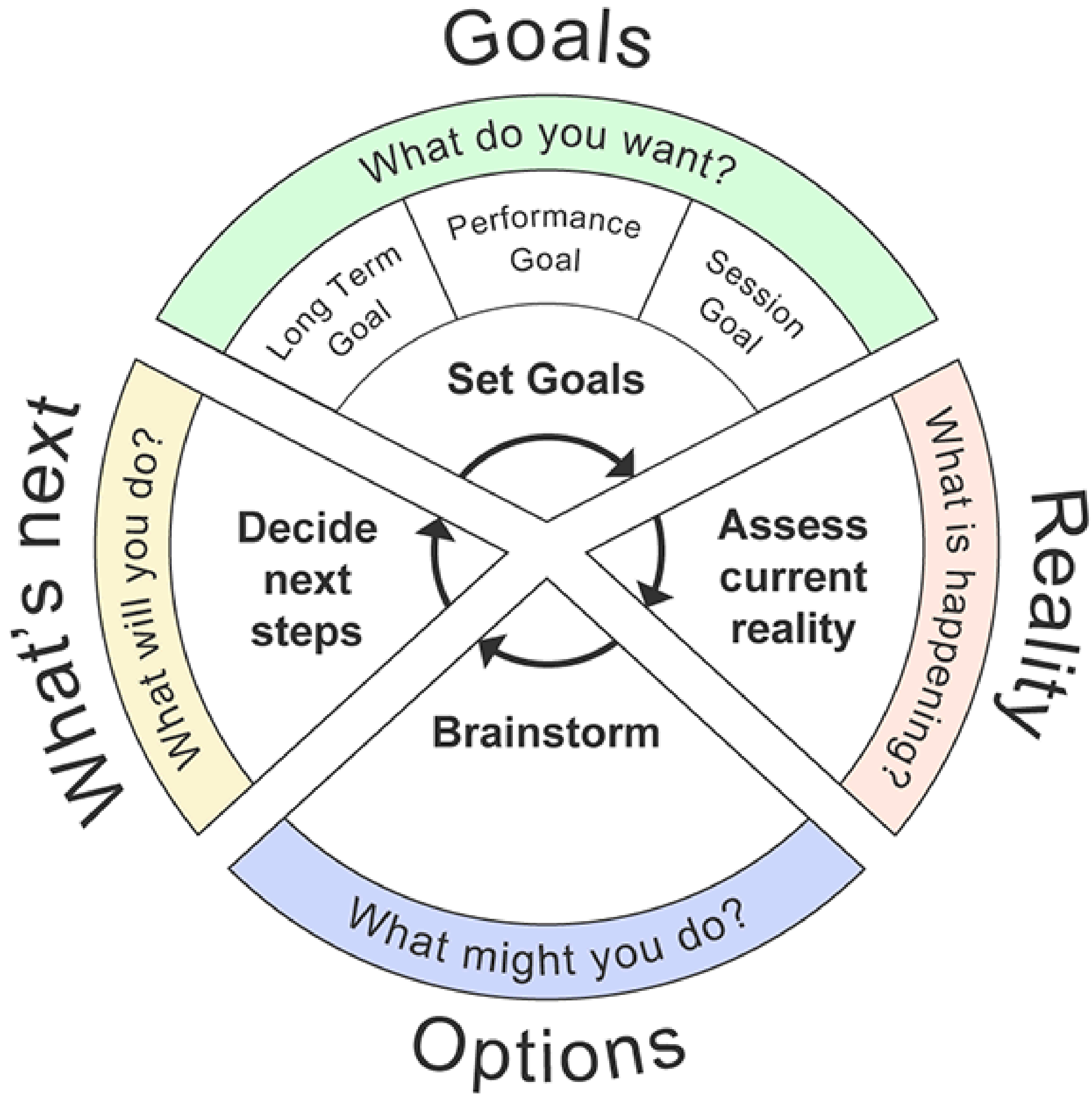
Reality - What is happening?

Options - What might you do?

What's Next - What will you do?

It begins with the coach exploring the coachee’s goals. Then the coach helps the coachee become aware of the current reality and helps them explore options. As a coach, we are deepening their learning. Finally, the coach and coachee explore and determine “what’s next.” We are forwarding their action.

Whether you use the acronym or the more detailed illustration below, T-GROW is a clear, succinct method of asking questions and coaching.



Have a look at the short coaching conversation below at your leisure. There are some good coaching moves and questions in that video, particularly how the coach stays with the Topic and Goal a bit longer to really hone in on what this coachee wants or would find useful from the coaching conversation.

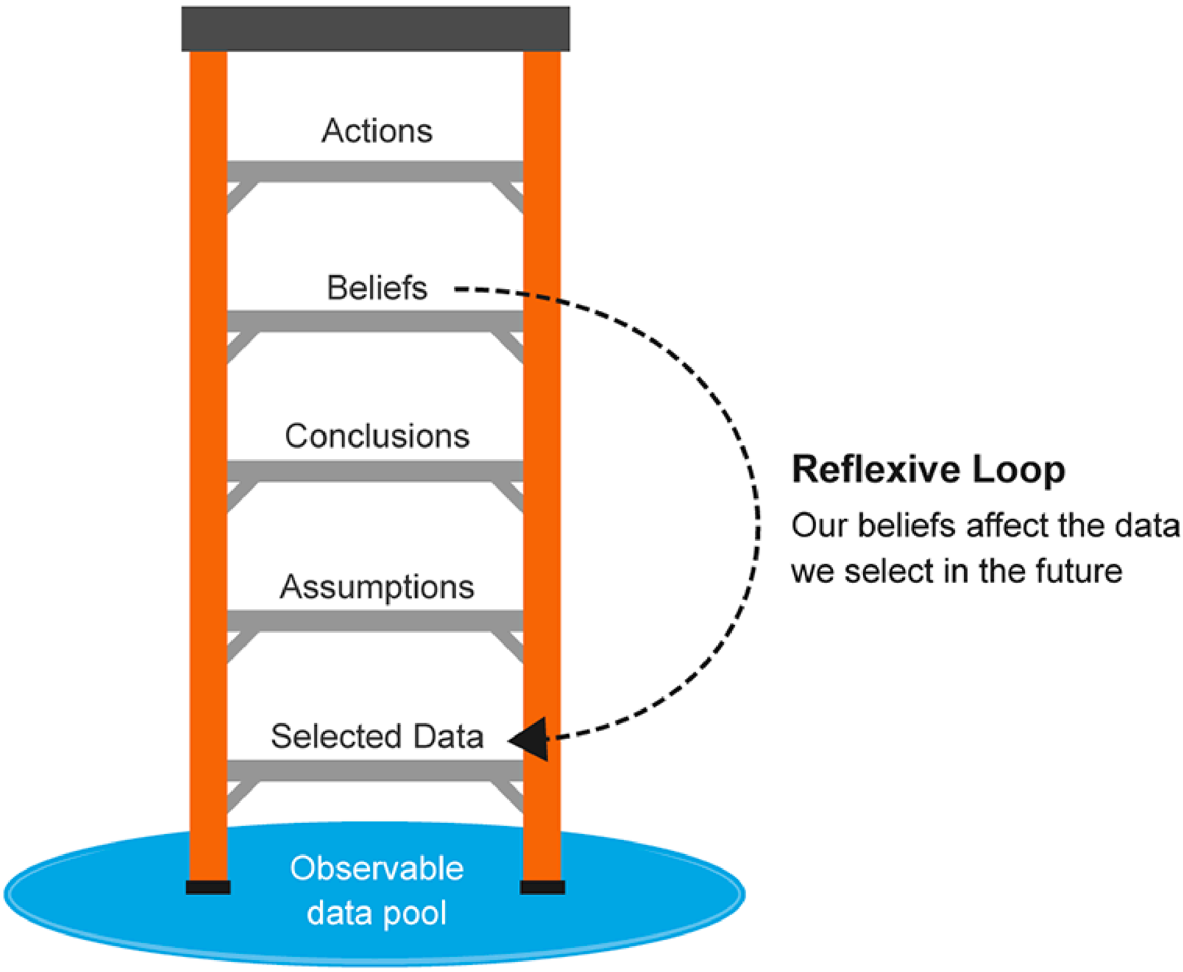
[Demonstration of T-Grow model by the Performance Coach, Part 1]

Can't get enough of T-GROW? Listen to the audio file below with Pat Barker and Dick Hansen using T-GROW. In this case, Dick will coach Pat around a challenge. This is audio-only with no distracting images so feel free to listen podcast-style.

[T-Grow Demo]

The Ladder of Inference

The Ladder of Inference describes the thinking process that we go through, usually without realizing it, to get from data or fact to a decision or action. Each rung or step of the ladder might and often does take us further away from data.



This subtle (or not so subtle) pattern of reasoning influences our selections, additions, assumptions, conclusions, adoptions, and actions. The goal is to step ourselves or in this case, step your coachee back down the ladder to original data. Watch the short YouTube animation based on a TED Talk below that explains the Ladder of Inference Quite well!

[Rethinking Thinking by Trevor Maber]

You are Your Calendar

"I know I should work on my Extraordinary Future, but…" Ah, the "yes, but…" rationalization. We will always have an incredible number of demands, the daily grind, the fire-fights, the close-fight, and it's hard for us to focus on the EF. Ask yourselves:

- How is the way you are currently spending your time consistent with realizing your EF?
- Where are you using your time wisely? Not wisely?
- How could you improve how you spend your time and attention?

- What activities do you need to ABANDON?

Exercise

Here's a quick exercise for you. Print 12 weeks past and 12 weeks future calendar by week (past quarter, future quarter). Start with the earliest weeks and categorize or color each and every activity, event, etc.

M = Makes a Difference (green)

I = Important (Yellow)

T = Trivial (Red)

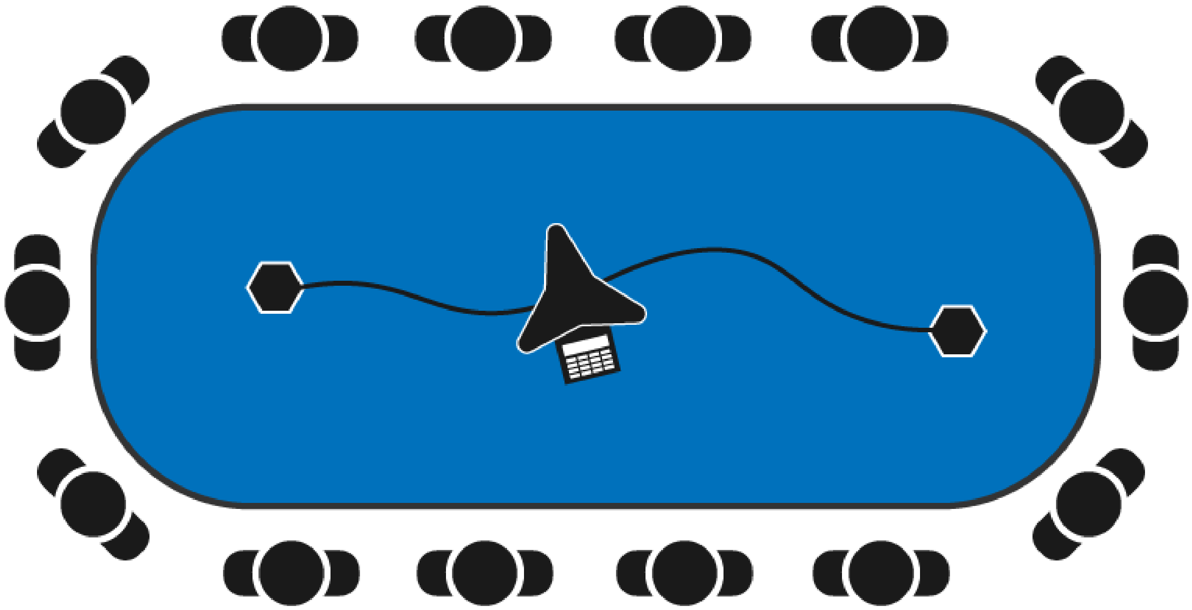
Then reflect on where you spend your time and how it supports (or doesn't support) your EF:

You can also coach your colleagues, subordinates, perhaps your superiors using this tool. Ask powerful questions to generate insights:

- What's working? What's not working or getting in the way? What's behind or underneath that?
- What do you notice about time spent on things that actually Make a Difference?
- What's the balance of focus on important things vs. Makes a Difference vs. Trivial?
- What "Important" things do you want or need to systematically abandon to enable time for M?

[Watch a session of You Are Your Calendar]

Build a Board of Directors



Members

Friends	believe in me, listen and support
Maximizers	see the possibilities in us and our “project”
Expert resources	know where to turn for what's needed
Nudgers	keep me going when going gets tough
Motivators	inspire, hold us accountable
Spirit / Nurturers	ground me, offer insight
Partners	join in commitment to same goal
Networkers	leads me to other people, connector, can bring others on board
Mentors	pull out my genius; see me; provide role model
Elders	offer wisdom of ages, larger perspective, and the long view
Eccentrics	thinks outside the box
Forward thinkers	envisions the issues that may come up in future
Clarifier	ask clear questions, poke at ideas to help strengthen my resolve, sharpen my ability to communicate clearly

Challengers	help me to act boldly

Watch the short video below to see DSMC Instructors Pat Barker and Dick Hansen coach through and build a board of directors.

View the video

Team Coaching

Team coaching is hard for two reasons:

1. You need to pay attention to more than one person
2. Coaching is voluntary: sometimes people don't want to be "coached"

For the sake of simplicity, in a team coaching environment, we want you to simply focus your coaching on the team lead and do one or both of the following things:

1. Observe the team dynamics using any of the following references
2. Provide any or all of the assessment frameworks below to the team itself and encourage them to use at least one.

In our business we have to work with other people. Play nicely in the sandbox. It certainly helps to understand that sandbox and how other people play in it. The name of the game is superior acquisition outcomes and, to borrow a past phrase, it takes a village to make that happen. DoD Acquisition Programs operate in Integrated Product Teams, or IPTs.

According to the Defense Acquisiiton Guidebook (DAG): "Within the PMO under the PM leadership the IPPD integrates all acquisition activities starting with requirements definition through production, fielding/deployment, and operational support in order to optimize the design, manufacturing, business, and supportability processes. *One of the key IPPD tenets is multidisciplinary teamwork through Integrated Product Teams (IPTs)."* These words are located in the DAG chapter 1 Section 3.3.5.1. Click HERE to get to Chapter 1 and scroll down to this section.

Want to learn even more about IPPD and IPTs? Go to the original source! The DoD has a guide for all that; it has been around a long time!

Download the Guide here!

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) also has things to say about IPTs.

Download their report here

IPTs are the critical linchpin connecting YOU to your program's success. Here are some things to consider:

Forming your IPTs

Basic IPPD Step	What it Means

Identify activities and stakeholders	Activities stem from the WBS and include the specific tasks that must be performed in order to deliver the product to customer. Stakeholders can come from a variety of sources and warrant robust effort to determine who they are.
Determine range of contractor involvement	Every member of the program team (government and industry) needs to work from the same information and toward the same overall program goals. The degree to which this open communication can occur depends on several factors like the competitive nature of a particular program and it must be within the statutory boundaries of acquisition laws. As long as these criteria are met, the amount of integration across the government/ industry boundary is unlimited.
Define the program/team structure	IPTs are usually formed around the key products and processes associated with the program. If the program has created a WBS, it is a useful tool for identifying how the IPTs should be structured. It makes sense to concentrate control and responsibility at the most important levels of the WBS, particularly around high-risk tasks or those tasks on the critical path. One can look to the WBS levels in forming the IPTs, making sure, however, that all life-cycle concerns are addressed in the IPTs.
Define team goals, responsibilities and relationships	Goals must align with program goals. Other key considerations include reporting structure, working relationship with other IPTs, level of empowerment and relationship between government and contractor personnel.
Train participants in IPPD principles	Participants must have a clear understanding of the DoD philosophy of IPPD, the tools available for its implementation, and the skills, such as team building, required for its success. Different levels of management need different types of training, focused on their part of the approach, e.g., top-level management needs to be trained on methods of empowerment.
Determine co-location and integration requirements	Co-location is the ideal case and should be sought. However, in practice, most programs have found that integrating all stakeholders into a cohesive unit is neither simple nor inexpensive. An adequate budget must be available from the start of the program for personnel relocation or for investment in communication assets if collocation is determined to be impracticable.
Provide for communication	In an IPPD environment, all stakeholders need to have access to the most current information on the program. Therefore, planning related to information management, communication networks, and methods of formal communications should take place at the beginning of all acquisition/development programs.
Define program/team metrics	When properly defined and used, metrics can permit timely assessments predictive of ongoing processes and the monitoring of resource consumption. Metrics should be easily measured, exportable, simple to use, support the program processes, and be cost effective.
Record processes, activities and decisions	Recording IPPD-related processes, activities, and decisions is essential for program stability and communication integrity. It provides a historical record of activities and decisions; Documents tradeoff studies, cause-and-effect analyses, and similar activities; Promotes team-oriented information and communication; Facilitates evaluation of metrics and lessons learned

How is your team doing? How might you want to assess yourself. Here are some salient features of teams based on a review of a variety of team-based guidance documents ranging from DoD to INCOSE to Agile.

Checking your IPTs Performance

Desired Things in IPTs	What it Means
Chartering with Goal alignment	Getting teams off to a good start is critical. Key activities include charter preparation, conducting IPT training, and preparing a Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M). Since team composition is often matrixed, the team should ensure the goals and objectives of team members are consistent with project goals and objectives. The team must also accept that new goals can emerge, old goals might become irrelevant, new team organizations might be required and adapt to those changed conditions
Open Discussion with No Secrets	Be willing to be vulnerable. Each member brings to the team unique expertise that needs to be recognized by all. Because of that expertise, each person's views are important in developing a successful program, and these views need to be heard.
Empowered Team Members	All representatives assigned to IPTs at all levels must be empowered by their leadership. They must be able to speak for their superiors, the "principals," in the decision-making process. Team members must also be willing to "call out" other team members on behaviors and hold all members accountable for actions and tasks.
Qualified Team Members	Qualified members must be professionals who are current in their functional area They also must be knowledgeable in the mission and organization they are representing. Required training for any aspect of expertise in functional or process areas critical to team success must be provided in timely fashion.
Efficient Participation	Accept the fact that consensus is not always the best solution. IPTs should be organized to allow all stakeholders to participate yet be right-sized to the issue. Membership should be limited to the minimum essential to enhance communication and trust. Be willing to support the notion that collective team needs will sometimes trump organizational needs.
Issues Raised and Resolved Early	The IPT should try to resolve issues within the team, seeking additional functional expertise or higher leadership intervention only when necessary. In the spirit of teaming and cooperation, issues should not be worked "off-line" beyond the purview of the IPT

But there's more!

In the simplest sense, the difference between a "team" and a "group" is that teams are characterized by accountability and groups are not. With that in mind, here are even more tools and charts that you might want to look at to help explore the dynamics of how teams operate.

Pick any ones of these based on what you want to accomplish.

DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Edgar Schein, one of the most eminent researchers in the field of organizational psychology, offers a model of how groups can work together better to become successful teams. The model is known as the "Dimensions of Effective Groups." We prefer to replace "groups" with "teams" (see above), but the model applies in either capacity. The dimensions, and the way they are positively expressed, include:

- **Goals:** Team goals are clear and shared by all. People feel involved through their contributions to defining our desired outcomes.
- **Participation:** Everyone is enthusiastically involved in team activities. Team member ideas and contributions are honored. People feel heard and included.
- **Feelings:** People are able to express feelings freely and openly. We listen empathically and respond from a creative orientation.
- **Diagnosis of team issues:** When problems arise, careful diagnoses is made before action is proposed. All aspects of an issue are canvassed and the best working solution is devised based on desired outcomes.
- **Conflict:** We approach conflict creatively as an opportunity to learn about ourselves and our team.
- **Decisions:** Consensus is sought and tested. Diverse ideas are welcome and judged on their merit.
- **Leadership:** As need arises, different members of our team step up. We lead from our strengths and support others in doing the same.
- **Trust:** We trust ourselves and each other. We hold a posture of trust toward our colleagues and also support each other in being trust*worthy* in our thinking and action.
- **Creativity and growth:** We are flexible and creative. We try out new things. We learn from each other and from our mistakes.

Use the survey to diagnose behaviors that limit your capacity to operate as a high performing team.

Instructions
1. Print and supply a copy of the survey for each team member
2. At a team meeting, ask team members to assess the team's performance in each of the dimensions. Circle a number from 1 to 10 for each dimension.
3. Collect the group’s scores on a single sheet of this survey (or flip chart) or project an image from your computer onto a shared screen
4. Calculate averages for each dimension and the range.

Download the form HERE

Interpreting the results/next steps
Sit down with your team and discuss the results (the consolidated scores, averages, and range) of the team performance survey. Seriously. Take the time to do it, and in that process you will discover:
- Where the team believes it is performing well (a score of 4-5)
- Where improvement is required (a score of 1-3), which opens the door for you to generate ideas for improvement.
- Where there is disagreement (a wide range of scores) about the team assessment on any dimension, which, in turn, allows you to seek to understand what the members of the team are feeling or sensing.
- If the team has difficulty discussing any aspect of improving team performance. This invites all members of the team to contribute to the creation of a team charter and/or set of rules of engagement to keep future team discussions on track

BELBIN TEAM ROLES ASSESSMENT

Dr. Meredith Belbin, a British researcher and management expert, conducted groundbreaking research into team effectiveness and found the most effective teams tend to be composed of a balanced mix of people. He theorized that when groups come together for some kind of joint activity, some groups have an over-abundance of skills necessary for peak team performance, and a shortage of skills in other critical areas.

Belbin identified nine key skills in three categories – people skills, action-task related skills, and thinking skills - that each project or work group needs in the mix to be able to operate at peak team performance. Some people are good all-rounders and are able to operate flexibly; but most of us have a dominant skill, and a secondary skill, which we can contribute to the group.

PEOPLE	ACTION/TASK	THINKING
1. **Resource Investigator**: Extroverted, enthusiastic, and communicative. Explores opportunities and develops contacts who can help the project.	4. **Shaper**: Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	7. **Plant**: Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Able to solve difficult problems.
2. **Team Worker**: Cooperative, mild, perceptive, and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction, and calms the waters.	5. **Implementer**: Disciplined, reliable, conservative, and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions.	8. **Specialist**: Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.
3. **Coordinator**: Mature, confident, and a good team leader. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, and delegates well.	6. **Completer-Finisher**: Painstaking, conscientious. Seeks and fixes errors and omissions. Delivers on time.	9. **Monitor-Evaluator**: Sober, strategic, discerning. Sees and evaluates options. Judges accurately.

Some of us play more than one role on a team. But teams that are missing critical skills can run into trouble. For example, if everyone plays a Plant role the team may focus on generating ideas and implementing little. If the team is mostly Completer Finishers or Implementers, they just want to get on with the job, and will settle for anything. The table below provides an example of a team that is missing several critical skills. This team is missing the plant, coordinator, and shaper roles, and has an abundance of specialists.

Table 2: Sample Team Roles Assessment

Team Role	TOM	JANE	BILL	SARAH	HARRY	JESSICA
Plant						
Resource-Investigator		1				
Coordinator						
Shaper						
Team Worker					1	
Implementer			2		2	2
Monitor-Evaluator						
Specialist	1	2	1	2		1
Completer Finisher				1		

Your team can use this worksheet to identify the primary and secondary roles that members bring to your team. What roles are in abundance or missing altogether? Become a better-rounded team by encouraging members to learn how to adopt missing roles, or recruit to the team, people with required skills.

Instructions

1. Print and handout to team members the 9 x team roles table and a copy of the worksheet.
2. On a master sheet (projected on a screen) or transcribed onto a flip chart, record the names of the group members, one in each cell of the top row.
3. Ask team members to review the 9 x team roles table and identify their PRIMARY and SECONDARY role choices.
4. Ask team members in turn what their PRIMARY and SECONDARY team roles are, and record these in the relevant cell for each team member.

Download the form HERE

Interpreting the results/next steps

1. Review the team's composition and discuss what team roles you have in abundance (everyone trying to do the same thing) and which are absent?
2. Ask team members to a) identify the roles they are willing to develop to fill in the gaps or b) suggest additional team members who may have the necessary skills.

5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

Many groups are unable to perform well as a team, having neither the courage, nor the discipline to overcome the cause of politicking and dysfunctional behavior. Patrick Lencioni identified the following five dysfunctions of a team that barriers to success:

1. **Absence of Trust**: Fearful of being open and vulnerable with others.
2. **Fear of Conflict**: Can't get to discuss critical issues; trying too hard to keep the peace.
3. **Lack of Commitment**: Uncertain about the decisions they make; not committed to what is decided.
4. **Avoidance of Accountability**: Avoidance of interpersonal discomfort stops people from holding each other accountable.
5. **Inattention to Results**: Seeking personal goals and status at the expenses of team success.

Teams that successfully deal with the five dysfunctions can become high performing, cohesive teams that:

- Are able to admit mistakes, take risks by giving feedback, and willing to ask for help
- Tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Are focused on and deal well with the issues
- Avoid wasting time on the same old issues
- Do more in less time using fewer resources
- Deal with critical issues creatively
- Are aligned around common objectives

We have a downloadable worksheet below to help you diagnose dysfunctional behavior of a team and make changes so the team becomes high performing.

Instructions
1. Print out the worksheet for each member of the team.
2. Ask members of to think about the first dysfunction – absence of trust – and make notes about what they observe, and what strategies they would suggest for dealing with the situation.
3. Ask members to share their thinking, and record ideas on a flip chart, or on a master electronic version projected onto a large screen from a personal computer.
4. Discuss and make a short list of corrective actions.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 for all other dysfunctions.

Download the form HERE

Interpreting the results/next steps
1. Publish a document listing the agreed to new practices as part of a "team charter"
2. Encourage all members to hold each other accountable for sticking to the agreed practices.
3. From time-to-time, conduct further assessments, or when the group performance is less than optimal.

GROUP FLOW ASSESSMENT
This assessment helps groups recognize when they have achieved a state of optimal performance. Flow is often considered a personal peak experience, but it often occurs in groups when they become high performing teams, where every action seems perfectly orchestrated.

Flow was first recognized and named by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. It is a psychological state that occurs midway between boredom and anxiety. Flow is an almost effortless yet highly focused state of consciousness, and the descriptions do not vary much by culture, gender, or age. The close match between the challenge and the skill generates rapid feedback that engenders the flow state where the participant becomes deeply absorbed, and oblivious to the world around them. Flow experiences are so rewarding in terms of fun and enjoyment they become self-justifying.

A special case of Flow is Group Flow. Members of a group experience Flow when they make the transition to the team state. We see this particularly on the sports field, with high performing teamwork and in collaborative gaming. Flow occurs in children's group play, when they learn without the support of a teacher. Flow is least likely to occur when a teacher is lecturing or when we watch TV.

The principles of Flow are also used to influence learning and game design. Games/learning activities are designed to start the player with a modest challenge, so that the game/learning activity is neither boring, nor too big a challenge.

Flow occurs most often when people are engaged in their favorite activities – playing sports, working, playing games, or socializing, under the following conditions:

1. There are clear goals every step of the way
2. There is immediate feedback to one's actions
3. There is a balance between challenges and skills
4. Action and awareness merge*
5. Distractions are excluded from consciousness
6. There is no worry of failure
7. Self-consciousness disappears
8. The sense of time becomes distorted
9. The activity becomes an end in itself

* There is one major difference between the Personal and Group Flow experience which is reflected in the design of assessment. During personal Flow experiences, people become less aware of their surroundings. In Group Flow, people become highly aware of each other, and their ability to more perfectly coordinate.

You can use the Flow survey immediately after (or during) a meeting or other team activity to ascertain whether the group has achieved a state of peak team performance. Use with the appropriate team meeting protocol and question sequence to help the team achieve most of the dimensions of Flow.

Instructions

1. Print and supply a copy of the survey for each team member.
2. At or after a team activity, ask team members to assess the team's performance on each of the dimensions of Flow. Circle a number from 1 to 5 for each dimension.
3. Collect the group’s scores on a single sheet of this survey (or flip chart) or project an image from your computer onto a shared screen.

Download the form HERE

Interpreting the results/next steps

Take the following action:

1. High scores: If most of the average group scores are in the 4-5 range, then it is likely the team is experiencing collective Flow.
2. Other scores: If the average of some or all of the scores are in the lower range, set aside the time for an improvement session to develop ideas for improving the team performance.

3. Some team members not experiencing Flow: If one or two members of the team are rating the Flow scores low and the rest of the team are reporting high scores, have a conversation to explore what the team can do to help them have a more enjoyable experience.

Consider the following further improvements to the group activity:

- If you have not been using a structured meeting process to guide your meetings/workshops, do so now, and expect a significant improvement in team performance and satisfactions
- Make sure the purpose of the meeting is made clear at the start of the session, and that each question is adequately announced and explained.
- Adjust the meeting protocol so the meeting is more efficient and productive.
- Revise the meeting process: clear and easy-to-respond-to questions, no redundant questions, include word prompts to scaffold/stimulate thinking and the questions are in the correct sequences, the first question is relatively easy to discuss/respond to, the last question generates a clear outcome.
- Ensure the participants have adequate information to respond to questions.