THE TRUTH ABOUT TEAMS

Understanding the link between personality and maximizing team performance

HOGAN

High-performing teams can provide companies with an undeniable advantage over their competitors. However, most managers will tell you that although it is easy to put together a team with great potential, they rarely perform at their maximum capacity.

According to Dave Winsborough, partner at New Zealand consultancy Winsborough Limited and co-developer of the Hogan Team Report, the problem is a basic misunderstanding of how teams work.

"There is significant literature devoted to creating high-functioning teams, most of which focuses on the proper mix of skills and experience," Winsborough said. "But this approach ignores the most important determining factor in team performance: personality."

Personality affects team performance in three ways:

- How people approach their role within the team
- How people interact with the rest of their team
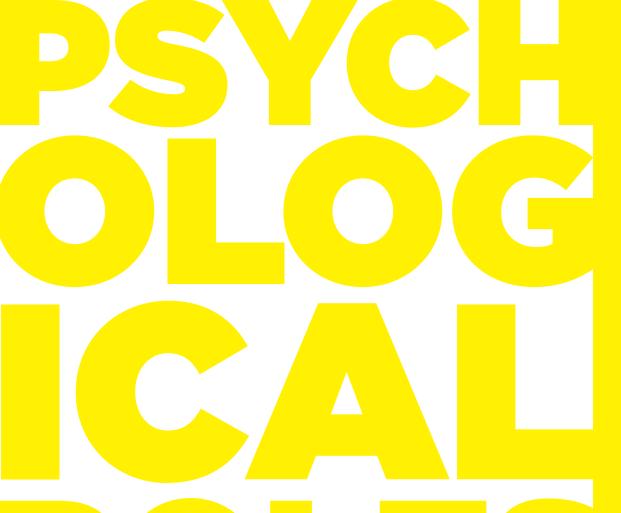- How people's values align with the rest of the team

The right mix of personalities is critical to forming a team with the proper balance of psychological roles, absence of dysfunctional personalities, and shared values to anchor the team.

WHAT IS A TEAM?

It is important to distinguish between a group and a team. A group is a collection of individuals who have individual goals, do independent work, and succeed or fail based on their individual efforts. A team is three or more people who have a common goal, whose ability to achieve that goal is dependent on each other, who share common leadership, and who share success or failure.

1. Common goal

2. Dependent on one another

3. Common leadership

4. Share success and failure

PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLES

People have two roles within a team: functional and psychological.

Functional roles are defined by a person's position or title – chief executive, engineer, accountant, etc.

Psychological roles are roles to which people naturally gravitate based on their personalities.

"When people are formed into a team with a designated task, there is an awkward phase in which individuals are searching for how they fit in – their psychological role," said Winsborough.

There are five psychological roles to which people naturally gravitate:

1 Results – The Results role is defined by a high score on HPI Ambition. High Ambition people are socially self-confident, leader-like, competitive, and energetic. They seek leadership roles, direct the team, and drive others toward business goals; however, they may be overly competitive with their peers or subordinates and are not inclined to seek input.

2 Relationships – The Relationships role is defined by above average results on HPI Interpersonal Sensitivity and Sociability. People who are moderate to high on both scales are gregarious, outgoing, talkative, and viewed by others as warm, friendly, approachable, and charming. Relationships people are perceptive, thoughtful, and cooperative team members who listen to others and foster trust and respect from peers and staff; however, they can be overly focused on getting along with others rather than results.

3 Process – The Process role is defined by a high score on HPI Prudence. High Prudence people are procedurally driven, organized, and attentive to details and implementation. They hold high standards for both their own and others' performance; however, they may be seen as rigid and inflexible and may miss the big picture.

4 Innovation – The Innovation role is defined by a high score on HPI Inquisitive. High Inquisitive people are imaginative and often creative, curious, and open-minded thinkers who are focused on the big picture. They bring a variety of ideas and solutions to the table; however, they may have difficulty with practicality because they prefer ideas over implementation.

5 Pragmatism – The Pragmatism role is defined by low to average score on both HPI Interpersonal Sensitivity and Inquisitive. People who are low to moderate on both scales are practical, levelheaded, cautious in accepting new ideas, and hands-on when problem solving. They are not easily swayed by emotions and are comfortable confronting conflict; however, they may be seen as ignoring people's feelings, as well as the big picture.

The Hogan Personality Inventory describes normal, or bright-side personality – the strengths and weaknesses people display when they are at their best. Bright-side personality characteristics dictate to which psychological role an individual will be drawn. The HPI measures normal personality along seven primary scales:

Adjustment: confidence, self-esteem, and composure under pressure

Ambition: initiative, competitiveness, and desire for leadership roles

Sociability: extraversion, gregarious, and need for social interaction

Interpersonal Sensitivity: tact, perceptiveness, and ability to maintain relationships

Prudence: self-discipline, responsibility and conscientiousness

Inquisitive: imagination, curiosity, and creative potential

Learning Approach: achievement-oriented, stays up-to-date on business and technical matters

BALANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLES

Understanding and balancing psychological roles within a team is crucial to unlocking its potential.

"Psychological roles need to be balanced in two ways," said Winsborough. "First, a team needs to have complimentary fit, which is to say it has enough diversity among its members to fill every psychological role."

Teams without complementary fit can develop imbalances and performance gaps. For example, a team with too many people in the Results role might suffer from excess internal competition.

"The other side of building a balanced team is that you have to have enough individuals to provide critical mass in each psychological role," said Winsborough. "For example, the more individuals a team has in the Process role, the better it tends to perform."

TEAM DERAILERS

Balancing psychological roles is an important step toward creating a high-performing team. It is equally important to understand team members' derailers.

Under stress, people's greatest strength can become their biggest weakness – the ambitious salesperson earns a reputation as a cutthroat competitor, the meticulous accountant turns to nitpicking or micromanaging. These tendencies are called **derailers**.

HOGAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

The Hogan Development Survey describes the dark side of personality – behaviors people display when they are stressed or bored. The HDS measures dark-side personality along 11 dimensions:

Excitable: moody, easily annoyed, hard to please, and emotionally volatile

Skeptical: distrustful, cynical, sensitive to criticism, and focused on the negative

Cautious: unassertive, resistant to change, risk-averse, and slow to make decisions

Reserved: aloof, indifferent to the feelings of others, and uncommunicative

Leisurely: overtly cooperative, but privately irritable, stubborn, and uncooperative

Bold: overly self-confident, arrogant, with inflated feelings of self-worth

Mischievous: charming, risk-taking, limit-testing and excitement-seeking

Colorful: dramatic, attention-seeking, interruptive, and poor listening skills

Imaginative: creative, but thinking and acting in unusual or eccentric ways

Diligent: eager to please and reluctant to act independently or against popular opinion

Dutiful: eager to please and reluctant to act independently or against popular opinion

If too many members of a team share the same derailing tendencies, they can become team derailers. **Team derailers fall into three categories:**

Distancing derailers help individuals manage anxiety or pressure by maintaining distance from and pushing others away.

Agitating derailers are an offensive rather than defensive response to pressure. They help individuals manage situations by manipulating or controlling others.

Acquiescing derailers help individuals manage their anxiety and stress by building alliances with others.

These derailers can lead to shared blind spots, amplified reactions, or competitive responses, in which team members enter a sort of arms race by responding to each others' derailed behavior in a manner that triggers more derailed behavior. However, by recognizing their shared characteristics, teams can work to mitigate their tendencies and correct problem behaviors.

TEAM CULTURE

People's core motives, values, and interests affect every aspect of their lives, from what they find rewarding to their behavior. When the majority of a team's members share the same values, it forms the basis for team norms, culture, and decision-making.

MOTIVES VALUES PREFERENCES INVENTORY

The Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory identifies the core motives, values, interests, and beliefs that determine what kind of culture a team is likely to create. The MVPI measures values along 10 scales:

Recognition: responsive to attention, approval, and praise

Power: desire for success, accomplishment, status and control

Hedonism: orientation for fun, pleasure, and enjoyment

Altruistic: desire to help others and contribute to society

Affiliation: desire for and enjoyment of social interaction

Tradition: dedication, strong personal beliefs, and obligation

Security: need for predictability, structure, and order

Commerce: interest in money, profits, investment, and business opportunities

Aesthetics: need for self-expression, concern over look, feel, and design of work products

Science: quest for knowledge, research, technology, and data

Shared team values have **three main impacts on the team:**

1

Coherence – Having common values assists with team bonding and makes working with colleagues easier and more enjoyable. Conflict tends to be more productive on teams with congruent values, focusing more on substantive, technical, or professional differences.

2

Greater efficiency –Team members are on the same page with regard to tasks and situations, understand each other's needs, and trust one another more than individuals in teams without shared values.

3

Stability – Shared values increase individuals' commitment to the team and its purpose, which increases team motivation and reduces turnover. Members who stay longer with a team are more likely to engage in activities and make decisions that benefit the group over selfish gains.

TEAM
CULTURE

HOGAN TEAM REPORT

Developed in conjunction with partner firm Winsborough Limited, the Hogan Team Report draws on the powerful science of our personality assessments to help teams understand their internal dynamics in a way never before possible:

Balance psychological roles. The Hogan Team Report analyzes team members' scores on the Hogan Personality Inventory to identify the psychological role to which each team member naturally gravitates. The report displays the percentage of the team that plays each role and highlights potential role gaps. Finally, interpretive data provides feedback and development suggestions depending on a team's orientation.

Identify potential fracture lines. Using the Hogan Development Survey, the Hogan Team Report identifies shared performance risks, or derailers, that can become problematic when team members are excited, tired, overburdened, or otherwise distracted. These behaviors can interfere with the team's ability to build relationships and maintain cohesive goals.

Understand team culture. Team culture is the sum of its members' values – the powerful motives and preferences that determine what we desire and are willing to work for. Using the Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory, the Hogan Team Report identifies shared values and how they are likely to contribute to team culture.

Achieving the right mix of skills, experience, and personality is the key to creating a productive team and satisfied workforce. The Hogan Team Report is the ideal tool to achieve maximum performance.

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