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EXCERPT



COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES  
TEAM TOOLKIT

# Improving Team Collaboration

The bulk of work done in organizations occurs in teams or other collaborative relationships. Most organizations, however, do not manage internal collaboration productively and assume that technology or formal organizational structures can yield agility. We have focused on agility not as a broad ideal but, rather, in terms of where it matters most—at the point of execution, where teams are working on new products, executing core processes, designing or implementing strategic initiatives or cultivating and engaging top clients. These and other points of execution are essential for organizational success and need to be managed as networks of relationships.

To understand key collaborative drivers of success we have assessed strategically important groups in a wide range of global organizations. We first employed network surveys completed by more than 30,000 employees and then conducted hundreds of interviews with both employees and leaders of successful teams. We found that performance was tightly tied to group-level networks with consistent patterns of internal and external connectivity. And that the more successful teams also managed to avoid negative patterns of collaboration that lead them to under-perform over time.

In this workbook and the companion on line tool we invite you to reflect on a network critical to your and your organization's success. Sometimes these groups might be formally designated – as in a team or unit on the formal organizational chart. But sometimes these groups exist outside of the formal hierarchy. As such we ask that you define the team/network and then assess collaborative dimensions of success via the process below.

## Step 1: Define the Network

Identify a team or broader group to apply the network development framework. Typical high impact opportunities include:

- Improving effectiveness of teams, functions or business units.
- Realizing revenue growth opportunities.
- Promoting process execution and lateral coordination throughout organization.
- Driving product/process innovation and/or new client offerings.

## Step 2: Identify Collaborative Opportunities

Engage at least two other people (and ideally more – possibly using a team meeting to engage multiple perspectives) to assess opportunities for improvement in each of the core sections of the team network development framework. Please identify one opportunity in each area:

- Network structure
- External collaboration and
- Archetypes of failure

# Network Management Practices

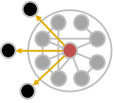

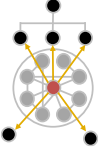

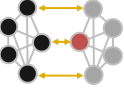
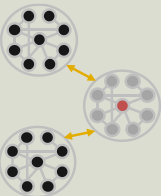
## Identify Top Opportunity For Your Team

Network Practice	What Good Looks Like
<b>Managing the Center</b>	<p>1 We ensure that people or roles within the group do not become so overloaded with collaborative demands that they are unable to support their colleagues in a timely fashion.</p>
	<p>2 We scan for, identify, and reward employees who frequently engage in collaborative behaviors – such as offering resources, help, information, and contacts – that make their colleagues more effective.</p>
<b>Managing the Edge</b>	<p>3 We ensure that newcomers -- either new hires or those from other parts of the organization -- are integrated rapidly into the group and know who to turn to for information, expertise, resources, and decision approvals.</p>
	<p>4 We make sure that subject matter experts and high performers are available to help their colleagues in a timely manner on appropriate issues.</p>
<b>Minimizing Silos</b>	<p>5 We facilitate effective collaboration at specific points in the group –across functional lines, physical distance, hierarchical levels, core projects, or expertise domains – where informal networks are critical to performance and innovation.</p>
<b>Building Agility</b>	<p>6 We facilitate innovation and organizational change by engaging employees with significant relationships across functional lines, physical distance, expertise domains, and demographic populations.</p>
	<p>7 We make sure that employees in the group are aware of one another’s expertise, contacts, and resources and so know who to turn to for help when opportunities and problems arise.</p>
<b>Minimizing Insularity</b>	<p>8 We make sure that the group collaborates effectively with appropriate functions/divisions within the organization and with relevant stakeholders outside of the organization (such as key customers, vendors, and associations).</p>

# Nurturing the External Ecosystem for Performance and Engagement

## Activity

Please indicate the two external collaborative opportunities that you feel could most impact your team's success. Then invite key members of the team you identified earlier to consider and place checkmarks against the top two practices that they feel could most impact the team's performance.

	Your Rating	Team Leader	Long Tenure	New Member	Remote Member
 <p><b>Source and shape work coming into the team.</b></p>					
 <p><b>Obtain resources (time, talent, funding, etc.).</b></p>					
 <p><b>Influence decision-makers and informal opinion leaders.</b></p>					
 <p><b>Adapt best practices for quality and efficiency of work.</b></p>					
 <p><b>Innovate through collaboration/integration with adjacent expertise.</b></p>					
 <p><b>Create team member enterprise connectivity for performance and engagement.</b></p>					