



THE OFFICE PLAYBOOK

HIGH-PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS TEAMS

Society tends to idolize the individual – from the star quarterback to the charismatic leaders of the modern business arena. But humanity’s greatest achievements – the Egyptian pyramids and Great Wall of China, the invention of modern medicine, the exploration of the outer reaches of the universe – are the result of collective effort.

In business, high-performing teams can achieve superior results to individuals. Yet, even teams composed of talented individuals rarely perform to their maximum potential. By examining the origins of teams and challenging typical models of team function, we can understand why these talented teams fail, and how managers can ensure their teams perform at the highest level.

SOCIAL CREATURES

From our first days, human survival depended on collective action. Teams are our natural work unit. Group dwelling offered our early ancestors access to food and safety beyond the reach of the individual, and eventually allowed societies to thrive, spread across the globe, and achieve the awe-inspiring achievements listed above.

Our evolution as social creatures means we have a basic need to belong. People are acutely sensitive to threats of exclusion or rejection. For our ancestors, ostracization meant death. For modern humans, it leads to isolation and depression in one’s personal life, and dissatisfaction and, eventually, failure at work.

WHAT IS A TEAM?

The term team covers a wide array of sizes and functions – from a five-person youth basketball team to the 535 members of the U.S. Congress. There is an important distinction between a team

and a group. 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, on the other hand, 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.

“The true test of a team is whether it has synergy,” said psychologist Dave Winsborough, managing partner at assessment and consulting firm Winsborough Limited and one of the authors of the Hogan Team Report. “A real team is able to outperform its best member; it is greater than the sum of its parts.”

WHY PSYCHOLOGY MATTERS

In business, 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, those same teams rarely perform at their maximum capacity.

The problem, according to Winsborough, 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 functional roles which are dictated, for the most part, by one’s title and position,” said Winsborough. “That is sensible and shortsighted at the same time, because it ignores an individual’s psychological role.”

Although evolution gave humans an in-built need to get along, competition for resources ingrained in us an equally strong, yet competing need – the need to get ahead. Humans developed psychological roles – important functions to which people are naturally drawn based on their personalities – as a way to reconcile these competing priorities.

FIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLES

“When individuals are formed into a team with a designated task, there is an awkward phase in which everyone is searching for how he or she fit in – his or her psychological role,” Winsborough said. “We found that there are five psychological roles to which people naturally gravitate: results, relationships, process, innovation, and pragmatism.”

RESULTS

Team members who gravitate toward the results role take responsibility for managing the team. They tend to organize work, clarify roles, distribute tasks, and evaluate outcomes. They are comfortable taking charge, and are needed to communicate ideas, work processes, individual contributions, progress, and problems to the team.

Individuals who are drawn to the results role often have above-average scores on the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) Ambition scale. High-ambitious people tend to be socially self-confident, competitive, and energetic. Too many results-oriented team members can result in competition between peers and infighting over leadership roles.

RELATIONSHIPS

Team members in the relationships role tend to be concerned with harmony and cooperation within the team. They may also be the champion for the customer and stakeholders – someone

MEASURING PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLES

The Hogan Personality Inventory is the industry standard for measuring normal, or bright-side personality – the collection of characteristics on which people rely to get along and get ahead at work, in relationships, and in life. 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, gregariousness, 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-orientation, stays up-to-date on business and technical matters

Individuals’ scores on these scales closely correspond to the psychological roles to which they naturally gravitate:

- **Results:** higher than average scores on Ambition
- **Relationships:** average to higher-than-average scores on Sociability and Interpersonal Sensitivity
- **Process:** higher-than-average scores on Prudence
- **Innovation:** higher-than average scores on Inquisitive
- **Pragmatism:** lower-than-average scores on Interpersonal Sensitivity and Inquisitive

who empathizes and understands how those outside the team will see things. Personally, they tend to be upbeat, gregarious, and outgoing.

Relationships team members are important for building cohesion and positive relationships within the group.

Preference for the relationships role usually corresponds with a higher-than-average score on the HPI Interpersonal Sensitivity and Sociability scales. Individuals scoring high on these scales are often seen as warm, friendly, and approachable. However, they can be overly focused on others and getting along rather than performance.

PROCESS

Team members who naturally focus on process are concerned with implementation, the details of execution, and the use of systems to complete tasks. They are reliable, organized, and conscientious about following rules and protocol.

This role is defined by a high score on HPI Prudence scale. High Prudence people are procedurally driven and attentive to details. They hold high standards for both their own and others' performance. However, they may

thinkers, who are focused on the bigger picture and bring a variety of ideas and solutions to the table. However, they may have difficulty with practicality, and prefer ideas and conceptualizing over implementation.

PRAGMATISM

Team members who are drawn to the pragmatism role are practical, somewhat hard-headed challengers of ideas and theories. They promote realistic approaches and aren't easily swayed by the need to preserve harmony or innovation for its own sake.

This role is defined by low to average scores on both HPI Interpersonal Sensitivity and Inquisitive. People who are average or lower on both Interpersonal Sensitivity and Inquisitive are practical and level-headed, cautious in accepting new ideas, and not easily swayed by emotions.

BALANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLES

Understanding these psychological roles reveals why otherwise talented teams can fall flat and provides the key to unlocking teams' potential.

"Say I want to put together a software development team," Winsborough said. "Using the conventional model, I would want to hire a group of programmers that were each the best at what they do – design, coding, etc. These people would all function extremely well within their individual silos, but because I didn't

TEAM MEMBERS WHO NATURALLY FOCUS ON PROCESS ARE RELIABLE, ORGANIZED, AND CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT FOLLOWING RULES AND PROTOCOL.

be seen as rigid and inflexible and may miss the big picture.

INNOVATION

Team members who gravitate toward the innovation role anticipate problems, and recognize when the team needs to adapt. They spot trends and patterns quickly, enjoy solving problems, and generate creative solutions.

This role corresponds to a higher-than-average score on the HPI Inquisitive scale. High Inquisitive people tend to be imaginative and often creative, curious, and open-minded

pay attention to the balance of psychological roles within the team, they would probably have a hard time communicating and working with each other, or with anyone else."

To perform at their maximum potential, teams need to maintain a balance of psychological roles. These roles must be balanced in two ways: complementary fit and similarity fit.

"It is impossible for any one person to fill all the roles that a great team needs," Winsborough said. "When a team has complementary fit, it means that it has enough diversity among its members to cover every psychological role."

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.

ABOUT THE HOGAN TEAM REPORT

Developed in conjunction with Hogan partner Winsborough Limited, the Hogan Team Report draws on Hogan's suite of powerful 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 fracture lines**

Using the Hogan Development Survey, the Hogan Team Report identifies shared performance risks, or derailleurs, 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. When a team's core values are divergent, team members don't gel, conflicts can become personal, and turnover is more frequent.

Without complementary fit, teams develop gaps that can hurt performance. A team that has multiple results-oriented individuals but lacks individuals in the relationships role, for instance, would likely suffer from excess internal competition, or might push for results at the detriment of customer satisfaction.

Similarity fit, on the other hand, concerns having enough individuals to provide critical mass in each psychological role.

"Part of the concept of a balanced team is that it may not be enough to have a single individual carrying the burden of a particular psychological role," Winsborough said. "For example, the more individuals a team has in the process role, the better it tends to perform."

Of course, imbalances in an existing team's psychological roles aren't cause for despair.

"We would never advocate just firing everyone and starting over," Winsborough said. "By knowing their balance of psychological roles, teams and their managers can identify and correct for performance gaps. Self-awareness is a powerful tool, both for teams and individuals."

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.

ABOUT HOGAN



The international authority in personality assessment and consulting, Hogan has 25 years of experience helping businesses manage their most valuable assets – their people.

Hogan's assessment solutions help businesses reduce turnover and increase productivity by hiring the right people, developing key talent, and evaluating leadership potential.