

HOW NASA BUILDS HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS (HPTs)

IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE!

At **Synergy Global** our 'hearts & minds' are focused on **leveraging talent to make the world a better place.**

Whether that involves your leadership ability or the collective genius of your team/staff, we'll partner to unleash hidden potential.

We focus on helping clients achieve positive, measurable behavioural & cultural change – encouraging you to exceed expectations, lead with integrity & have fun!

Our Philosophy

- ◆ People support what they help create
- ◆ Credible processes yield credible results
- ◆ You can't do things differently, until you see things differently
- ◆ Nothing changes unless behaviour changes

Why is High Performing Important?

In 1986, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded, killing all 7 crew members (1986). The Hubble Telescope mission cost US\$1.7B. It was launched in 1990 with an optical flaw that rendered it useless. The repair mission cost a further US\$60m. In both cases investigations identified NASA's organisational culture & leadership as being the key factors leading to the failures. There were clear inconsistencies earlier in the projects.

Why did the project teams fail to pursue these indicators? What NASA learnt, to their cost, was that social context, i.e. how we engage within a culture & react to the different influences, plus the pressures imposed by that culture, drive the ultimate result.

How can Team Performance be Improved? Dr Charlie Pellerin, ex-Director of Astrophysics at NASA, responsible for the Hubble launch & repair missions, took his, very public, failure seriously, plus set about finding how social context/environment drives team behaviours. He named this *The Fifth Force*, and created 4-D Systems to offer improved leadership skills to avoid further disasters. Using a simple organising concept from physics, the approach analyses & simplifies social contexts into 4 Dimensions, addressed by team & individual assessments, workshops & coaching. It uses 8 behaviours, key to creating high-performance team contexts.

How do people know it works? Over 700 NASA teams comprising more than 10% of NASA's total workforce have used these performance enhancement & risk reduction processes. Teams in every quintile enhanced performance, the most profound being in the teams that started lowest. On average they improved by 5% with every re-assessment.

Specific individual and team diagnostics with action on effective cultural behaviours:

CULTIVATING

What? Motivate team members with a shared purpose
Stop: Low Appreciation & Conflict
Start: Mutual Respect, Enjoyable Work and Collaboration
How? Authentic Appreciation, Trustworthy and Effective

VISION

What? Create a compelling picture of a desired future state
Stop: Blind Optimism and Low Commitment
Start: Grounded Optimism and High Commitment
HOW? Reality-based optimism, & 100% Commitment

INCLUDING

What? Establishing sense of togetherness
Stop: Excluding with Low Trust
Start: Including, with High Trust
How? Appropriately Include Others, Keep All Agreements

DIRECTING

What? Transfer the vision into reality
Stop: Victims/Blaming/Complaining & Rework
Start: No Drama, Clear Roles, Authority, Accountability
HOW? Resist Blaming/Complaining, Clarify RAA

Technical Excellence & Client Care ('Getting it Right' & 'Doing it Nicely')

We provide high quality services with bespoke programs, designed by experts, who are passionate about making a difference. We only use evidence-based tools & proven methodologies that include robust metrics to demonstrate ROI.

Our ability to tease out a deep understanding of client needs enables us to tailor programs that will exceed your expectations, hence, gaining us repeat business with strong testimonials for our ability to deliver personal, professional & whole organisational development.

Our Services

- ◆ Effectiveness Consulting
- ◆ Change Facilitation
- ◆ Executive Coaching

Benefits: HTPs are productive, attract & retain top talent plus mitigate risk by effectively:

- 1) Creating/engaging in an environment of mutual trust and respect,
- 2) Understanding shared interests & collaborating fully
- 3) Efficiently and creatively solving technical problems, and
- 4) Meeting project milestones and deadlines

Measuring & Managing Improved Social Context:

Learning from NASA's grave mistakes Dr Charlie Pellerin highlighted the fact that many problems resulted from weak relationships & poor communication, as well as 'normalisation of deviance' within NASA's behavioural norms. He used his background in physics & his success in leading technical teams to develop 4-D systems – to create high performing teams. People using 4-D learn to manage work contexts using tools & common language to communicate challenges. The assessments analyse team & individual performance. This makes social context not only visible but also directly manageable. Teams move from being mainly task focused, to recognising the importance of each styles; the context for a sustainable team; & organisational learning.

Ref: Pellerin, CJ, (2010) How NASA Builds Teams, Engineers & Project Teams, John Wiley & Sons, USA

To discuss how best to leverage your own team's talent, please contact Heather-Jane Gray +61 (0) 439 066 067 heather-jane@synergy-global.com