

SPECIAL REPORT

The Seven Myths of Team Success



By Ron Koller

From the desk of Ron Koller

I've had the privilege during my illustrious 15 year career of observing, categorizing and documenting many diverse organizations and how they strengthen their teams. Some companies do better than others. I saw cutting edge folks with some radical ideas, and I continued to see the "old school" training technology implemented. You know the type... I'm the teacher, you're the student... I'm smart, you're not... I'll t(pr)each, you'll listen. Is it me, or do these old school folks drive you crazy? And yet, their craziness sneaks its way into the status quo and continues to direct how most organizations treat (or mistreat) their teams. Most of us just scratch our heads, ignore the forced training and keep plugging along.



The intent of this special report is to put a stop to the madness. Teams are at the core of almost every organization and drive success and failure. We're obsessed with team performance, but still pretty immature when it comes to the "care and feeding" of teams.

The Boring Trainer



The Flaky Trainer

Inside you will see the 7 myths of team success – which just happen to be the 7 beliefs that "old school" folks and the "touchy-feely" folks have that drive us absolutely batty. The key to this report will be to identify what the myths are holding us back in our current teams and what the realities are that will move us ahead. This report will help us get past the flaky trainer types and the boring subject matter experts that have most of us avoiding training and development sessions like the plague.

Below are the 7 myths and their corresponding realities. Do a quick scan and see which is true of your team and your organization.

Myths

1. Training is the solution to team problems
2. The team leader needs to be like Oprah
3. We don't need to build relationships
4. Conflict is bad
5. It's always "their" fault
6. The vision is the leader's responsibility
7. Team meetings are a waste of time

Realities

1. Training is not enough
2. Only some of the time
3. You can't afford not to
4. Conflict is sometimes good and bad
5. We need to hold the mirror up first
6. Shared vision is everyone's responsibility
7. Bad team meetings are a waste of time

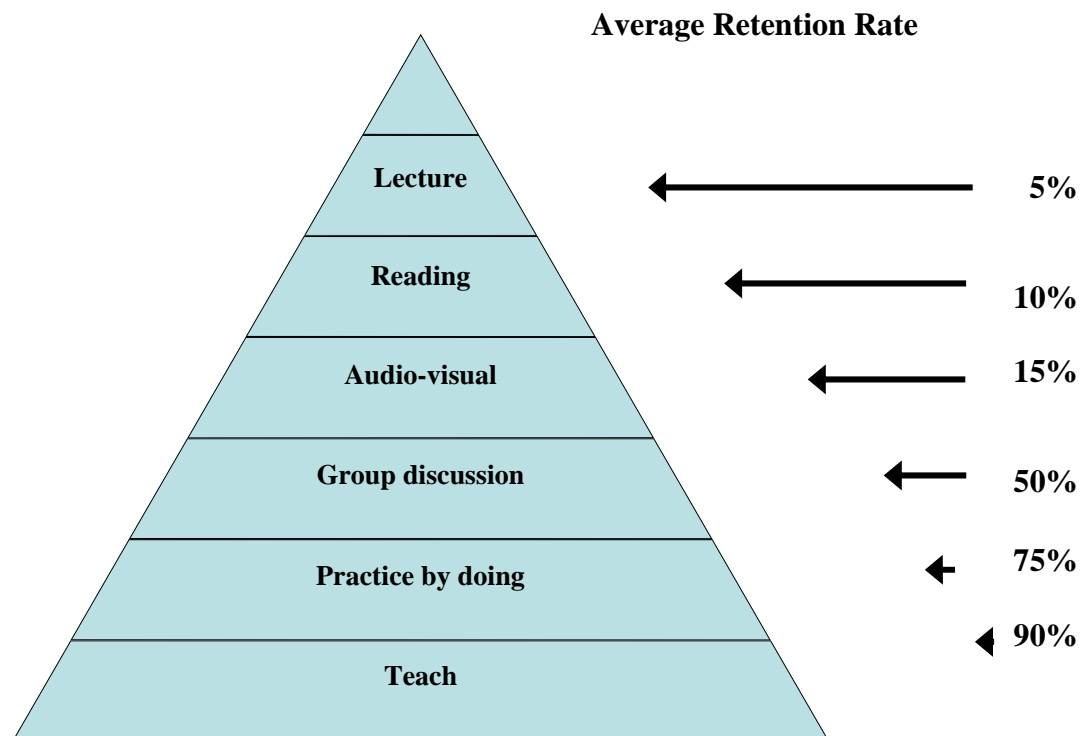
The following pages will take you through each myth and reality and where to look for (or lookout for) in your everyday work life. The end of the report will provide you with an email address where you can email us to let us know where you think we got it right and where you think we got it wrong. Enjoy ...

Myth #1: Training is THE solution to team problems

Lean manufacturing training, lean engineering training, lean office training; where will it all end? I've seen all of these training programs and more. They are all designed to help companies do more, do it better and do it faster. Said another way, they learn to do more with less. Notice that I used the word "learn." Just because you learn something, does NOT mean that you go out and apply it. If that were true, I'd be a regular at Weight Watchers and the gym and I'd be in good shape. Instead, I've "learned" about eating right and working out, but just because I've learned it does mean I do it. This is a key point with regard to training.

The second point worth mentioning is that a majority of corporate training is just flat out BAD. I grew up outside of Detroit and am very familiar with the automotive companies. It is truly amazing to see some of the advances that companies have made in their processes and their technology. Ironically, the "people" improvements lag far behind. Or is it ironic? My opinion is "of course it is", and here's why.

Teacher tell is still the predominate training method. Though the overhead projector has been replaced by the lcd projector, training is still pretty bad. The figure below shows just how dumb it is to use traditional training methods, which ironically is just how most organizations and their training providers use.



*Developed by NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science,
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If you had an opportunity to invest in a training program that has a 5% return on investment, what would you do? Would you jump at the chance? Of course not. You'd tell me that it was a ridiculous proposition and you would flat out reject it. And yet, that is exactly what many, many organizations do. They invest (participant time, provider time) in training programs that are spruced up lectures, resulting in a 95% loss on investment..

95%
LOI of most training

Reality #1: Training is not enough

Ron Lippitt, co-founder of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Research at the University of Michigan, did some pioneering work in the areas of leadership and teams. A little-known methodology that he created is still used today in the fringes of the training world. He called it Integrating Training with Consulting (ITC). Kathleen Dannemiller furthered Lippitt's work in detail. We've simplified a lot of what she did and call it the Listen First™ approach to training and development.

Think about it. These people doing “team training,” do they really understand what's going on in your organization, let alone your unique team? No way. And yet they start out every session talking and talking and talking. The underlying principle beneath this *teacher tell* approach to training is that, “*I know and you don't. I'm smarter about this problem than you are.*” Of course, we know this statement to be ridiculous, yet it is the myth that drives most of the team training going on across the world at this very moment.



And I'm not talking about those stupid icebreakers that these kindergarten corporate trainers do, either. “Introduce yourself to each other and tell two truths and one lie ...” I'd rather watch reruns of Sally Jessie Raphael than participate in a team training session that starts out like that. Too much glitz, no substance.

How many training sessions have you been to where you, the participant, get your voices heard to start out the training? Have you been to training where what you have to say is far more important than what some know-it-all preaches or some quack who used to be a teacher?

There is hope. In the Listen First™ approach, we start out every type of session, whether it be training or team development, by having the participants have a voice in what they think or feel about the topic at hand. Based on participant input, we then “course correct” the DRAFT agenda. This is completely at the other end of the training spectrum from the norm. Most training providers have pre-scripted, generic boilerplates that look really, really snazzy. The Listen First™ approach has an ROI that is at least 2½ times higher than traditional team training.

The Listen First™ approach is a *participant-centered* way of doing a session rather than the *trainer-centered* approach, which predominates corporations across the world. Implication: The next time someone starts out a team training session, ask them to just shut up and listen for the first hour before diving into content. And, no, I don't mean unleash a bitch session. Good consultants know how to direct the conversation into productive time, rather than frustration time.

Myth #2: The team leader needs to be like Oprah

Don't get me wrong here. I'm not saying that Oprah is bad. She is a wonderful influence on many women, young and old, but she's not for everybody. And it is the Bobby Knight management style that pervaded most organizations for years that is to blame for why there is so much Oprah-like team, leadership and communication classes. *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* was a best-seller for a reason. A lot of people are technically competent, but emotionally idiotic. Emotional Intelligence has been getting a lot of play lately because it is what is lacking the most in those leading organizations.



As you dive deeper into the myth, you see Bobby Knight on one end of the spectrum and Oprah on the other. Bobby Knight epitomizes the manager that has no people skills, but is superior when it comes to technical skills. He knows his stuff and is very successful. But what if you asked him to leave his current job and coach the last championship team from the NBA? What do you think would happen? I'll tell you. He would fail miserably. You cannot consistently berate high performers and expect high performance. Instead, you'd get mutiny.

So let's look at the other end of the spectrum, Oprah. She is a great listener, better than I'll ever be if I worked on it everyday for the rest of my life. She's got a great heart. She flat out knows how to build relationship with people. She is absolutely loved by millions. She is very influential. And yet, if your house, condo or apartment were burning down, would you rather have a fire chief in that moment to have Bobby Knight's style or Oprah's style?



The underlying myth is that there is *one best way* to lead. Since a majority of leaders in the 20th century lacked relationship skills, adding relationship skills to the mix is still hugely important. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. To be only democratic and never autocratic is NOT the answer. This almost always leads to disaster.

The high democratic style leaders point the finger at the high autocratic style leaders and think of them as Neanderthals. The high autocratic style leaders think of the high democratic style leaders as wimps. They both point fingers at each other as being bad for the organization. So who is right? What is the reality?

Reality #2: Sometimes you need to be like Oprah

But not all of the time. There is no one best style of leadership. It all depends on the situation and the person or people that you are trying to influence. Among other things, Ron Lippitt was the first to research and show that there were indeed different leadership styles. Hersey and Blanchard then took this work to a whole new level with the creation of their very successful model called Situational Leadership.®



Ron Lippitt actually proved in his research that, indeed, Bobby Knight is on one end of the management continuum. However, the continuum I'm referring to is

the “task” continuum. Coach Knight is extremely high on task. He controls as much of what his players do as he can. Lippitt showed that the style on the other end of that “task” continuum existed as well. He called it laissez-faire, we call it “delegation”. So Lippitt’s study showed us there are at least two leadership styles.

What Hersey and Blanchard did, was enter “relationship” or “supportive” behavior into the equation. Coupled with high and low task, there could then be four styles of leadership. Phil Jackson is the public figure that embodies the persona of a leader is who is high on relationship behavior, but also high on task. He develops relationships with his players far better than the average coach. And yet, he still draws up plays on his clipboard and is highly directive at times. His leadership persona is that of a leader who is high in both relationship and task. The reality is that he does different combinations of relationship and task depending on who he’s dealing with and what situation they are in. Sometimes he’s a little like Oprah, sometimes he’s a lot like Oprah and sometimes he’s the exact opposite of Oprah. It, again, depends on the situation and the person(s) he’s dealing with.

Myth #3: We don’t need to build relationship

Wait a minute. You just spent the last few minutes trashing Oprah, and now you’re saying I still need to incorporate her Oprah-isms into our work. No way. Well, yes way, sort of. I’m not saying that you all start blurting out, “you go girl.” But I am saying that people in the workplace are so focused on the work that they don’t spend nearly enough time focusing on relationship.

Think about the failures that your organization has faced over the years. You could breakdown the reasons for these failures into many categories. There are many non-people categories like the market, changing customer demand, technology problems, etc. But there are many more people-related categories such as politics, big ego’s, poor communication, conflict, etc.



The myth here is that building relationship equates standing together in a circle and singing Kumbaya or playing some ridiculous game. A 2006 search of Amazon.com showed that in the top 10 bestselling books on business teams includes titles like “The Big Book of Teambuilding Games” and Teambuilding Activities for Every Group.” These fruitcakes have ruined the term “Teambuilding.” At sessions I’ve worked, I often asked, “who woke up this morning, jumped out of bed and said, yes, I’m going to a teambuilding session today?” Nobody ever raises their hands.

Reality #3: You can’t afford not to focus on relationships

How many projects and organizations were ruined by one bad relationship? Unfortunately, the answer is probably into the millions. Relationships gone bad, or non-existent relationships, take their toll on the bottom line. It reminds me of the quote, “I won’t go along with you if I can’t get along with you.”



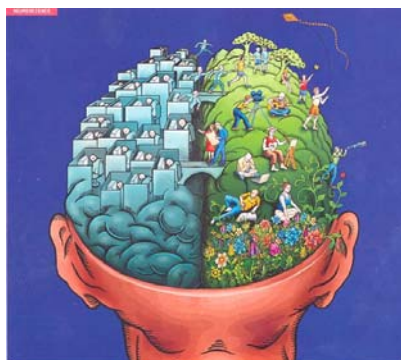
Now think again. Think about projects and organizations you’ve worked on and with, where things were near perfect. The results were

great, people performed at a high level and there was no degree of unhealthy stress. How would you describe the relationships in these situations? Would you describe them as functional or dysfunctional?

Unfortunately, corporations are still male dominated and men shy away from the R word (relationships). What I'm here to tell you is that you can do high relationship without selling out to the touchy-feelies out there. High relationship on the shop floor is accomplished by simply asking, "what do you think?" Yes, this is high relationship compared the years of years of barking out orders that still pervades a majority of manufacturing facilities in the world.

Harvey McKay is widely renowned as a salesman and a manager that is high relationship. But let me tell you, he's no Oprah. He's just as much into the bottom line as the Bobby Knights. In his book, *Swim with the Sharks*, he included a list of 33 things you need to know about the people you work with. I challenge you to get a hold of the list, and see how much of it you know about the people you work with or report to you.

There are ways of doing Oprah without being touchy-feely. I grew up in a place where being touchy-feely got you hit with a hockey stick. You could say I'm anti-touchy feely, but I'm pro-high-relationship. Rarely do I run into executives that know Harvey's 33 things; and when I do, it is the leaders that people look up to and are actually written about in magazines like the Harvard Business Review.

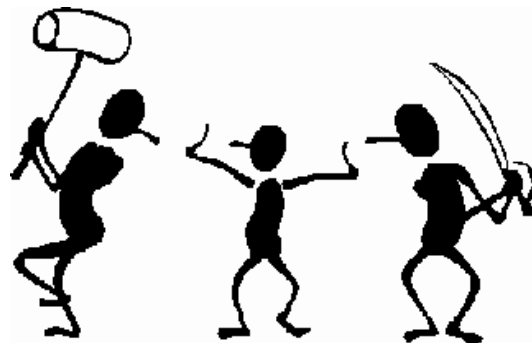


The trick is to figure out how to "do relationship" in a logical way. Harvey's 33 may be too daunting of a task for you. If it is, don't complain about not getting a promotion or your team not getting that bonus. It's your own fault that you didn't make the time. Better-teams.com is not a place for victims. Leaders that "do" make the time to build relationship; those that "don't" don't – plain and simple.

<need to add here about covey and relationship bank account concept>

Myth #4: Conflict is Bad

Let's see what we've discovered so far. First, corporate team training is either non-existent or so bad that we'd rather have a root canal than attend a teambuilding session. Second, because so many emotional dolts have been running the show for so long, the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of relationship skills. We're too nice too often. Third, the same emotional dolts that make their employees attend sensitivity training and team training, themselves, over-focus on production/performance and under-focus on the care and feeding of their people.



One truth in the emotional intelligence community (a member of which I'm NOT), is that emotional dolts (i.e. senior management) do not know how to cultivate healthy conflict. In fact, all this Oprah training has helped them hide from conflict. Anybody who engages in conflict is labeled as someone with a bad attitude. Message to employees: if you disagree with you boss, just shut up or you'll get in trouble. Bad consequence #1 in organizations: people at the top make uninformed decisions that result in mediocrity. Bad consequence #2 in organizations: wisdom in the bottom 3/4ths of the organization is wasted.

Because people fear losing their job, the vast majority of employees rarely share what they really think with those who need to hear it most – management. Managers rarely share what they really think with upper-management. This dysfunction goes all the way to the top. The Bobby Knights call any opposition to their views as insubordination. Conflict, whether vertical or horizontal, is viewed in a negative way.

To repeat, those who engage in horizontal conflict are labeled with a bad attitude; those who engage in vertical, upward conflict are labeled insubordinate or whiners. I'm not telling you what you don't already know. I'm telling you what people say in the bathrooms or at the bar, but never say in meetings or in magazine articles or books.

Reality #4: Conflict is sometimes good and bad



Because of the emotional immaturity of most adults in the business world (me included), most conflict in organizations is bad. It is bad because it happens behind people's backs. Duplicity is the most prevalent form of conflict in organizations. I know what you're thinking, duplicity is a big word for me too. Webster online defines it as "the quality or state of being double or twofold." In other words, it is being two-faced. It is when you're boss asks if everything is going OK and you lie by nodding your head, then tell your work friends what an idiot your boss is. There is some truth to the myth.

Good or healthy conflict happens when people on a team are able to express their true feelings without angering or irritating other members of the team. I love the quote, "If two people agree on absolutely everything, you don't need one of them." This is so true, and yet we see the opposite happen in the workplace.

Without a hiring system or approach, what does human behavior lead us to do? Research has shown that we tend to hire people who think like us, act like us and look like us. If left to our own human devices, we would hire a homogeneous group. Why? Because when we hire people who have similar interests, it is more fun. In our own lives, we have people with whom we have a lot in common with -- they are called friends.



The trouble with this truth is that few have very good conflict management skills. And even those that do don't always act in a constructive way. Our experience has shown that having a third party involved (whether internal or external to the organization) almost always improves the way teams deal with conflict. DIY works with your house on TV, but it doesn't work for

your team. Have you ever tried to deal with the sensitive issues by yourself when you need an expert to help? You quickly realized that you are NOT that expert. Case in point. If we have a medical problem that requires surgery, we generally would think of operating on ourselves to be a ridiculous option. By and large, we consult a competent medical physician to do the job.

And yet, we think we can fix our own teams. Even the highest performing teams on the planet have a coach. The team leader generally does not have outstanding skills in facilitation. You need to have skill in determining when and where you need to intervene. A neutral third party is best to facilitate constructive conflict vs. destructive conflict, which is what team leaders generally get stuck in. This brings us to the next myth ...

Myth #5: It is always their fault

Why is it that there is always an “us” and a “them.” Must be human nature. Wherever I go, this phenomenon exists. And when problems with the team arise, it is always someone else’s fault. The most productive question we’ve learned to ask at the right time is, “and what is your contribution to this problem?” Though it is somewhat like a punch in the stomach, they get over it, get thinking, then get more productive.

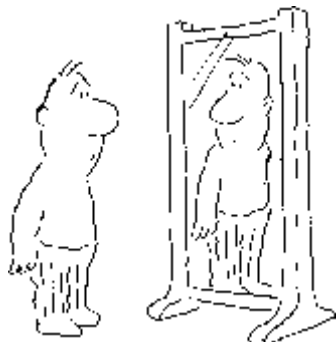
This is a myth because, statistically speaking, it is a 50/50 proposition. 50% of the time it is “their” fault. This part of the myth is true. Unfortunately for us, 50% of the time it is “our” fault, but we’re too ego involved to see it.



It takes someone of incredible maturity to figure out for themselves what their contribution to a given problem is. Even so, the most immature among us, tends to hide our faults, especially in a business context or conflict. This myth exists because of deep rooted insecurities that cause people to hide or not want to admit to mistakes. It’s easier and more convenient to blame somebody else.

Reality #5: We need to hold the mirror up first

The most difficult, and therefore most productive behavior we see is when people admit their part of the problem first, then ask the other party how they see their own part of the problem second. It’s a little like the Covey principle *seek first to understand, then to be understood*. And we’ve seen this work over and over and over again.



The status quo in most organizations is to fully prepare for the blame game. We get out our laptops, open up our powerpoints and make our arguments as to why “those other people” are to blame and/or what “they” need to do differently. And, of course, “those other people” get defensive first, then go on an offensive of their own. And the battle goes on in corporations across the world as we speak.

And yet, there are some teams out there using our two-team conflict model™ to resolve their differences and achieve the synergies that most teams never even come close to. How do they do it? Well they do the same thing as any

normal team does. They (1) make a list of everything wrong with “them,” and (2) make a list of everything that “they” need to do differently in order for the project or process to move ahead. However, whereas most teams take these lists into battle, more progressive teams go the extra mile. They then (3) make a list of all the things that they themselves are doing to contribute to the problem. They also (4) make a list of all the things they themselves can do differently to resolve the problem. Finally they present (3) and (4) first at the meeting. Teams that have trouble coming up with lists (3) & (4) are told to broaden the scope of the problem; this generally frees them up to see a more “whole” perspective.

What do they encounter? Shocked looks at the other end of the conference room. They are almost looks of, “you stole our powerpoint presentation.” It is like taking the bullets out of your attackers gun. You’re now dealing with a “toothless tiger.” Of course, no team is so self-aware that they see all of their faults, so they ask if they missed anything, and invariably they do. But, at this point, the other group is gently giving them the feedback instead of lobbing verbal hand grenades because they are beginning to feel like dolts.



After the original team gets done with their self, they move on to the other team and seek to understand what is their contribution to the problem. I strongly recommend you have someone facilitate this interaction. Teams encountering this for the first time fall all over themselves. Fortunately, what they don’t know and get wrong, the original team has for them in the form of lists (1) and (2). The difference is that at this point is the session/presentation, it is more of a collaborative effort, not a war. It is more often than not the moment at which two groups actually communicate with each other in an honest, constructive way for the first time.

Myth #6: The vision is the leader’s responsibility



Father Knows Best was a hit show in the 1950’s. Let me repeat that date ... the 1950’s. Why is that worth repeating? Because it is the founding principle that lies beneath the functioning of almost all corporate teams. Author Peter Block put it best in a talk I heard him give, “People at the top think, people at the bottom do.” Translation to teams: the team leader is the smartest one of the bunch and is therefore the one responsible for doing the most important thinking for the group ... the vision of their success. He or she has and more often than not uses his or her authority to decide who does what in a vacuum. Because we’ve been conditioned into thinking that this is the only way to run a team, we accept it. Remember, we don’t want to rock the boat for fear of insubordination. And for good reason ... most of us have mortgages, spouses, children, etc.

At this point you may be saying, “you lost me on this one buddy. Somebody has to be in charge or it would be chaos.” And I half agree with you. The problem is that when the team abdicates their responsibility for the vision, the chances that the vision will be any good drop. The chances that the vision will come to fruition drop through the basement floor. It is easy to blame the team leader or boss for failing when they alone have the only voice controlling the team.

Control is a funny thing in organizations and teams. You definitely need it, but if you don't handle it properly, it will bite you in the backside. We're in the 21st century and we know that leaders, when full of themselves and not listening to their employees, definitely do NOT know best. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the leader proposes a vision that people do not believe in, it just doesn't work. And as we've discussed earlier in this report, employees will just about always nod their heads and say OK, rather than let you know that they don't really believe in your vision ... that it does not excite them.

I recently had the experience of helping an organization kickoff a leadership development process. The leader of the 16 person group flew just about all night to get there and was on 3 hours sleep. He announced this as he started his opening remarks. It was his way of telling them, "you and this means that much to me." It was his way of showing them he cared. Then he continued ... what a mistake.



He announced "that there were 2 ways to motivate people: (1) define a vision and get people excited about it, or (2) say do this or we die. We are in situation #2." In that moment, he sucked all the energy out of the room. He said a few more things, then looked at me to ask if that was enough, could he leave. I said no way. I let the 4 tables of 4 people discuss what each of them heard, what were their reactions and what questions of clarification did they have?

They pummeled him with statements disguised as questions. I usually do not allow this, but he had it coming. He got the message loud and clear, "your vision sucks and none of us believe in it or in you." There is work to be done with this guy and this department. But, either through budget constraints or time constraints, he'll continue to tell me that he would love to continue with the process, but he can't. So typical of the Bobby Knights when you hold up the mirror ... they start running scared!"

Reality #6: The vision is everyone's responsibility

So far, we've shoveled most of the blame for a lack of shared vision on the leaders, and deservedly so. But in this truth, we'll talk about the followers' contribution to the problem. They are guilty of helping make this conspiracy work. In this truth, we'll start with the leader, then finish it off with the followers.

Leaders need to create what Herb Lock, of Monroe Bank & Trust, refers to as the discussion phase before they move into the decision phase. When talking vision or doing preferred future planning, we've really seen positive results by establishing these phases. This enables leaders to be able to think out loud and not be so guarded with their thoughts. In this model of planning, just because the leader says it, doesn't mean it is automatically so.



Leaders are able to loosen up a bit, show their folks that they are regular people like the rest of the folks. Their input is just one piece, albeit an important piece, of the puzzle the team needs to put together if they are to be successful. If anything the advice we most often give in this phase is to leave things undone. Create mission or vision statement or goals or objectives with whole phrases missing. Why do we do this? To be crystal clear that not only is their room for team members input, but that we can't

move forward without it. Leaders are almost always blown away at the wisdom of the team once they tap into it.

That brings us to the followers. Organizations work in a top down fashion because the perception exists that someone above you in the organization has the ability to get you fired. While in theory this is true, it does not happen as often as people worry. This fear causes followers to hold back their honest assessments of what is holding the organization or team back. Every person on the team has a perspective of what needs to happen in order for the team to be successful. Some are right, some are wrong. But it is the responsibility of each member to get their voices heard. They need to stand up and be counted.

Far too many people want to blame the leaders, when in reality the blame lies just as much on the followers. Everyone wants to pile on the shuttle director in the Columbia disaster, and they should. But shame on the engineers who knew burnout was a possibility and claimed their warnings were falling on deaf ears. Ever heard of the media? Use some common sense. “Yeah, but that could cost me my job?” the victim mentality worker says. Well, instead it cost people their lives.



Everyone's vision is not always going to align to everyone else's. The risk of putting your vision out there is that it won't get supported and you'll look like a loser. We live in a risk-reward culture. The lower the risk, the lower the reward and visa versa. Like it or not, that's the system we live in. If you put your vision out and majority rules against it, that's telling you something you may not want to hear. On the flip side, it may get you that promotion you've dreamed of.

Myth #7: Team meetings are a waste of time

How many of you attended a bad meeting this week? Dumb question, right? It is unfortunate that so many of us complain that we don't have enough time, and yet we waste so much time in meetings that we either don't need to attend or could be accomplished in half the time.

Let me ask you another question. How many of you have ever been to a really good meeting? Though they are few and far between, good and even great meetings do happen. The problem is that the bad meetings outnumber the good/great meetings overwhelmingly.



As a result, we take the “just say no” approach to meetings. Many managers, in fact, don't have meetings at all. Why? Well, their managers had such bad meetings that they dreamed of becoming manager and ending those bad meetings. So when they became boss, they just stopped having them. And, as we learned in myth #6, in the Father Knows Best view of the world, only the leader needs to stay informed anyhow.

The problem with this myth is that we've thrown the baby out with the bathwater. It is not that “meetings” are bad, but that “poorly run meetings” are bad. We need not throw out or avoid meetings, but we should throw out bad or poorly run meetings.

Even the high performing Blue Angels debrief after every session. You heard me right. They have a meeting after each flight to see what they each think they did well and what they thought they could have done better. Then the other pilots add to the self analysis. They say that these meetings are a critical part (life & death) of their team's functioning.

Reality #7: *Bad* team meetings are a waste of time

The truth here speaks for itself. Meetings are a lot like change. People don't like them unless they are good. Unfortunately, most of the time, they are not good. The myth is actually true in a majority of cases. However, just because it has almost always been this way does not mean it will be this way forever.

This is the first way in which we impact most teams in a positive way. Helping teams run good meetings is easy; it is the low hanging fruit that we always hear about, but rarely see. The problem with most team meetings is that, at best, they only have an agenda. We all know that different people have different agendas. So when we just throw out our agendas on the table and call it a meeting, we get garbage.



In the 18th century, Thomas Carlyle made popular the quote, "A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder." It is even truer today when applied to meetings. A meeting without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder.

There are countless articles and books out today that talk about the lack of clarity around purpose. Unfortunately, most people don't have the time luxury of sitting around and talking purpose. Well, I should say that's the reason they give. The real reason is that they don't know how to infuse purpose into everyday meetings.

Teams are not very good at thinking in terms of purpose. They are too well versed in actions or activity based statements. Teams that don't know the difference between purpose, outcomes and agenda will not perform at high levels. There are teams who are breaking rocks and there are teams who believe that they are building cathedrals.

We'll end this special report with a 5 step process guaranteed to help you have better team meetings *immediately*. Do this and you'll have all your ducks in a row.

Step 1 – Data

Depending on what the team is working on, everyone has a perspective on what is happening. Create a bullet point for each person's perspective to represent their data.

Step 2 – Outcomes/Objectives

Based on the data, what are the outcomes that the different *individuals* want to walk away from the meeting?



Step 3 – Purpose

What is a statement of purpose for the meeting(s) that unites all of the individual outcomes? We generally use the temple “to ... so that ...” as a starting point. Beware of *activity-based* purpose statements. If you have an activity based purpose statement, keep asking why do this?

Step 4 – Agenda

This part is a no-brainer. The only real teaching point here is that you need a meeting to have a Purpose, Outcomes *then* an Agenda. Do this and you can't go wrong.

Step 5 – Evaluation

At the end of a meeting, either by paper or by flipchart, ask what worked, what didn't work and any suggestions for the next meeting. This is action research (now called continuous improvement) at its best.