

The background of the slide is a collage of puzzle pieces. In the foreground, several large, vibrant red puzzle pieces are scattered across the frame. Behind them, a multitude of smaller, semi-transparent grey puzzle pieces are visible, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on the metaphorical use of puzzle pieces.

# **Managed Empowerment, An Oxymoron?**

# How Do You Unlock The Power Within Your Teams?

Can teams be empowered, while at the same time work within the structure and discipline imposed by their organization? Best Practice organizations think so, and organizations that fail at teaming often cite the lack of structure as a contributing factor.

The key to success is in knowing how much and what kind of structure to impose. Predictable things arise which cause teams to waste time, team leadership to suspect things are running amok, and executive management to worry whether organizational goals are being met.

In many organizations, groups of employees are called teams, told they are empowered and are expected to act accordingly. This approach can result in a flurry of interest and excitement about teaming, and some groups may even achieve a measure of success.

However, at some point in the life cycle of most teams, unresolved internal issues emerge which threaten the team's ability to meet their business objectives. These unresolved issues can jeopardize the very existence of a team, since the lack of resolution can lead to frustration and disengagement on the part of team members.

Managing empowerment by using a structured approach enables your organization to change and realize improvement in business objectives simultaneously. By putting some structure in place up front, and addressing the predictable behaviors in a disciplined fashion, the risk of unresolved issues will decrease significantly. Organization leadership becomes more willing to buy-in because the process is business focused, not just a "feel good" exercise.

# Existing Management Philosophies

*The primary management philosophies in existence today run the gamut from very directed and controlled to autonomous.*

## Autocratic

- All decisions are made at the top
- Buy-in is not considered worthwhile and may be viewed as counter productive
- Work activities and roles are tightly structured, monitored, and controlled
- Interaction of lower level staff is minimal across functions
- "Common Mentality" pervades the organization

## Democratic

- Decisions are reached by majority vote
- Buy-in is considered desirable, but not essential
- Responsibility for structuring, monitoring, and controlling work activities may be assigned to individuals or committees
- Individuals interact across functions as directed

## Team Oriented

- Decisions are reached by consensus
- Buy-in is considered essential
- Work activities are structured and accomplished by cooperative, multidisciplinary teams
- Individuals are encouraged to interact across functions at whatever level is most appropriate

# High Performance Teaming (HPT) Characteristics

*Organizations that have embraced empowerment principles and accomplish their goals with high performance teams, demonstrate eight key characteristics.*

## Sense of Purpose

- Team members share a common vision. Their priorities are clearly defined and they work collectively toward achieving common goals, focused on results. They are committed and accountable for high standards and quality results.

## Trust and Mutual Respect

- Team members are authentic and honest. They request, receive and give honest feedback. They are interested in ideas and value other member's opinions. They are proud to belong to the team.

## Open Communication

- Team members say what they think and feel, there are no hidden agendas. They have the information they need to work together and individually, and participate openly in team discussions. They handle differences in opinion and conflict openly by attacking the problem, not the person.

# High Performance Teaming (HPT) Characteristics

## Shared Leadership

- Decisions are made by consensus and the team avoids easy compromise or group think. The leadership function is shared by all members and is identified clearly in roles and responsibilities. The team leader is an active member of the team, and the entire team is accountable for the team performance.

## Effective Working Procedures

- Policies, procedures, rules and processes are created and documented by the team to enable them to perform their jobs more successfully. Decisions are made based on the conditions to be satisfied and risks are considered and minimized before implementation.

## Building on Differences

- Members are eager to explore differences in values and approaches, and make full use of the different skills, knowledge and personal strengths of individual team members. They also seek information, ideas and opinions from people outside of their team.

# High Performance Teaming (HPT) Characteristics

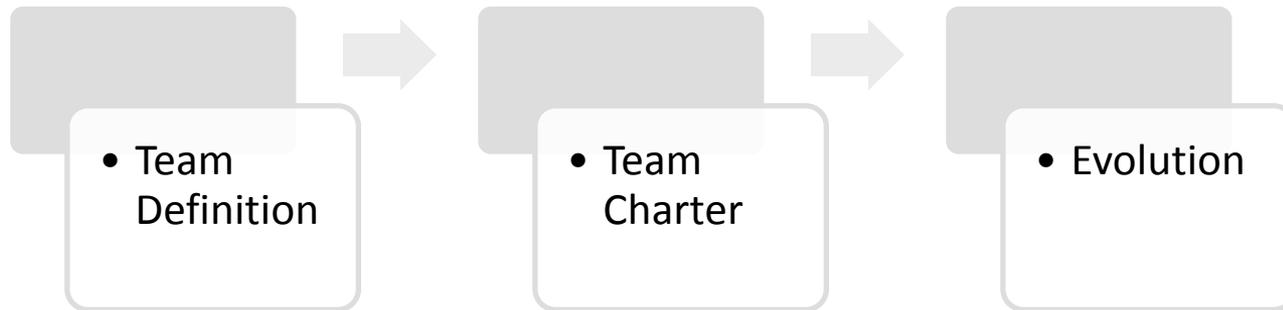
## Flexibility and Adaptability

- Members respond quickly and flexibly to changes in the external environment. They follow existing processes but continue to challenge them when appropriate. They value change as an opportunity to improve.

## Continuous Learning

- Continuous improvement is built into the team operating guidelines. Members readily admit to and learn from mistakes. They take time to think and agree before they act and evaluate.

# The HPT Methodology



So how do you help your organization get from where they are to high performance? By using a disciplined approach with a business focus that has a strong supporting infrastructure which enables ownership, empowerment, and accountability.

Applying a disciplined approach and guiding teams through their formation creates a strong sense of ownership for team results, employee empowerment, and mutual accountability within the team. When employees take pride in what they do, and have control over the outcomes, they work harder and smarter to meet the goals they have established for themselves.

# The HPT Methodology - Phases

## Team Definition

- The initiation phase in which the core team is established, high-level business objectives and expected outcomes are identified and the team's vision is created.

## Team Charter

- The planning phase in which business needs are validated, resources are acquired, purpose and scope are identified, and the mission and boundaries are approved.

## Evolution

- The execution, measurement and control phase in which teams work the plan. This phase requires teams to measure their success against the business objectives established in the charter. As business needs change, the team will cycle through the various process steps to ensure their direction is still valid and to improve their performance.

# The HPT Methodology - Tasks

## Team Definition

- Establish Core Team
- Define Business Objectives and Expected Outcomes
- Understand Customer Need
- Create Team Vision
- Acquire Concurrence from Sponsor and Customer

## Team Charter

- Validate Business Need
- Define Purpose and Scope
- Define Skill Requirements
- Acquire Needed Resources
- Define Mission and Boundaries
- Establish Operating Guidelines
- Define Roles and Responsibilities
- Create Measurable Objectives
- Develop Work Plans
- Develop Communication Plans
- Acquire Buy-in From Sponsor and Customer

## Evolution

- Execute the Work Plan
- Monitor/Measure Attainment Against Goals
- Exercise Conflict Management
- Continuously Improve Processes
- Validate Business Purpose, Scope and Boundaries Against Current Business Needs
- Review and Learn From Experiences
- Reward and Celebrate Successes

# HPT Supporting Infrastructure

*Establishing a supporting infrastructure for teams is critical to the organization's success. There are two key roles:*

Sponsor

- The HPT Sponsor's role is to set high-level business objectives, identify expected outcomes, ensure team vision, mission and goals meet business needs, and support the new culture and team environment.

Team Advisor

- The Team Advisor's role is to coach teams through the business process, counsel teams through problem resolution and feedback, provide analysis and interpretation of team assessments and most importantly to transfer skills to team members.

# Critical Success Factors

*Guiding and implementing an empowerment initiative requires elements which are critical to its success. These are:*

Executive sponsorship and support

Organizational involvement and ownership

Right team for the right purpose

Standard Business Process

Dedicated Team Advisor resources

Just-In-Time team learning

Open, honest and frequent communication

# Managed Empowerment

Can empowerment be managed? Yes, if you include all of the pieces of the process!

By using a disciplined approach you will help your organization establish executive sponsorship and support, gain organizational involvement and ownership, and create the right teams for the right purpose.

# More Help For Your Team



The Ask Team Doc podcast delivers weekly team building tips and advice to help busy managers, team leaders, and team members — just like you — navigate today's crazy business world. [Get it here.](#)



Step-by-step tools that will guide you through the team building minefield and help you build the high performance team you've always dreamed of. [Get it here.](#)



Some of us like to “think” before we “act,” and others like to “act” first and then “think” about it. Wouldn't it be nice if there was a way to figure out who was who? Well, there is. [Get it here.](#)