

**BUILDING  
HIGH  
PERFORMANCE  
TEAMS**



# *Building* High Performance *Teams*

## *Align Your Team for Superior Results*

*High performing teams meet deadlines. They focus on the right goals. They generate better ideas and more revenue. They communicate seamlessly regardless of where in the organization—or where in the world—they are located. Organizations achieve high performance teams through courageous leadership and effective systems. Unfortunately, many organizations fail to diagnose and resolve the complex issues that make their teams less effective. MDA emphasizes the big picture of team development. Working closely with the team leader, we dig down to the root causes of poor performance by analyzing the team's people, skills, process, and relationships. Then we develop a practical, customized program and work with the entire team to remove barriers to high performance. The outcome is a clear sense of purpose, the right mix of roles and responsibilities, greater trust and collaboration, and better business results.*

### **What Are the Benefits of Team Development?**

Building a high performance team requires a delicate balance of leadership, candor, vision, systems, and accountability. MDA can help you improve team performance through our expertise in leadership and organizational development. Our services will help you:

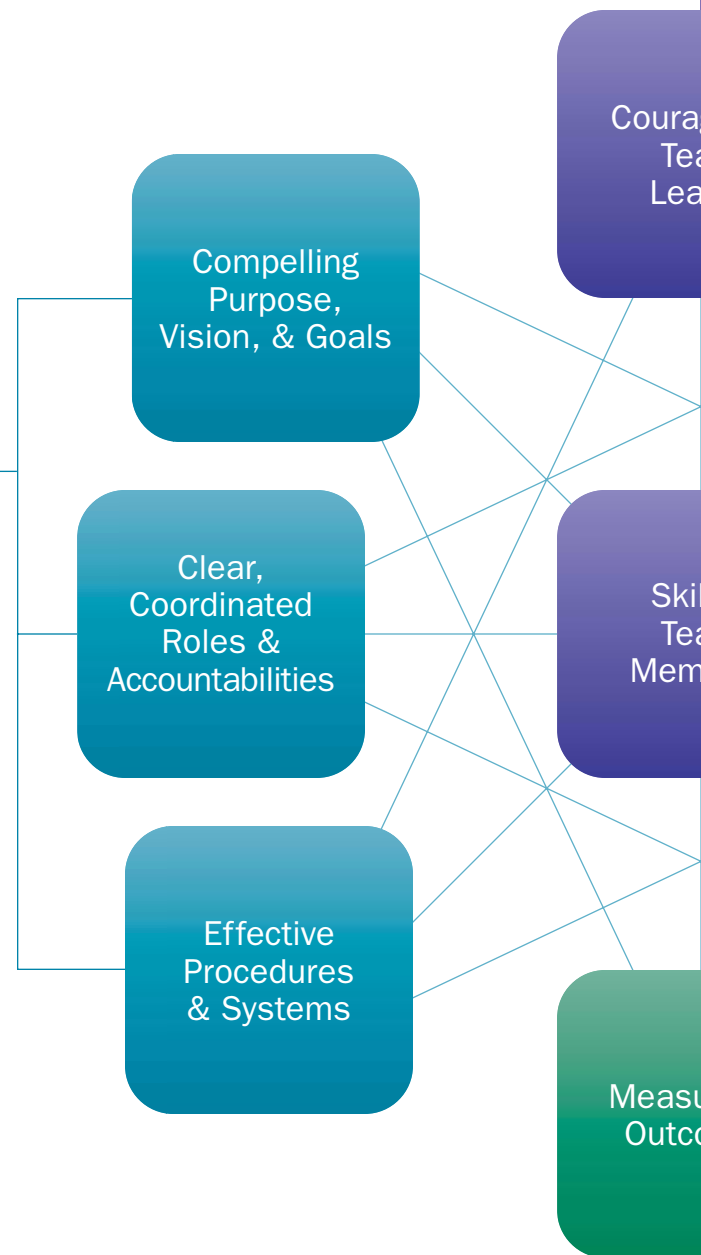
- ▲ Get the best results from team leadership. The role of team leader is crucial in managing a team for best results. The team development process provides an intense, hands-on skill-building exercise for your leaders.
- ▲ Work effectively across different business units and geographic locations. Today's teams involve highly complex structures and often must overcome functional, cultural, and operational issues.
- ▲ Build a more collaborative culture. Teams that build effective communication systems enjoy stronger relationships and more trust.
- ▲ Get the right mix of skills in place. Team leaders must deploy their resources carefully to match people and skills with roles and responsibilities. Make sure your team is durable and resilient, even if one team member leaves.
- ▲ Sharpen your procedures and work flow. How the team works is as important as who does the work. Great teams must be backed up by smart, effective systems.
- ▲ Focus on measurable outcomes. The real test of a high performance team is whether it consistently delivers superior results aligned with corporate goals.

## What Contributes to a High Performance Team?

The factors that contribute to effective, high performing teams can be grouped into four key areas: **Team Leadership and Team Skills, Purpose and Process, Measures and Outcomes, and Team Relationships.** The strength of these inter-related elements determines the quality of your results. If you diagnose and improve only one or two of these areas, your team is unlikely to realize its full potential. All of these factors must be aligned to deliver sustained high performance.

### Purpose and Process

The team leader must establish a meaningful common purpose for the group that is aligned with corporate strategy. This vision enables the team to chart a course and assess its progress in the context of a clear and compelling mission. To achieve its goals, the team must be organized around effective procedures and systems. This includes clear, coordinated roles and accountabilities, effective protocols for decision-making, proper technology tools, and team-wide communications. There must be a shared understanding of *where* the team is going, *how* it plans to get there, and *who* is responsible for specific tasks.



### Measures and Outcomes

No team functions well without knowing its desired objectives and how to measure success. A focus on outcomes and results enables the team to evaluate its effectiveness and build confidence in its performance. The team leader and the team as a whole must identify specific goals and establish meaningful, quantifiable performance benchmarks related to those goals. This should include a long-term process by which the team continually re-evaluates its objectives and sets more aggressive standards, with an emphasis on practical, measurable results.

## Team Leadership and Team Skills

The team leader is at the heart of the team development strategy. He or she must understand and respond to the special challenges involved in leading a team, which often involves personal coaching related to team structure and dynamics, leadership styles, vision and strategy, and individual and group communication. You also need to have the right people in the right jobs. This means analyzing how roles and responsibilities are defined within the team and assessing the mix of skills needed to achieve maximum results, and then conducting individual assessments to evaluate whether you have the proper “fit” of experience and competencies.



## Team Relationships

Team performance depends on a culture of collaboration and cohesiveness. This climate is impossible to achieve without candid, trusting interpersonal relationships among team members and with other teams inside the organization. Building this kind of team environment usually requires a focus on communication skills for individuals and groups, conflict resolution techniques, and methods for providing feedback. The team leader must also recognize the specific personality skills that individuals bring to the team and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the existing mix in the context of the team culture.

## **MDA Team Development Services**

MDA evaluates the team based on the factors that contribute to effective, high performing teams. We design a customized program for the team leader and team members based on business goals and the specific strengths and weaknesses of the team. At the end of the program, we evaluate and measure the team's progress. Typical components of a custom program include the following:

### **Discovery**

We work with the team leader at the outset of the program to gather data and "diagnose" the needs of the team. Rather than focus solely on team relationships through facile "team building" exercises, we analyze all the interrelated factors that affect team performance, so that we can provide support where it is most needed.

### **Design**

Based on our analysis, we create a customized program focused on the specific areas where the team needs help. We don't offer "cookie cutter" team development programs, but instead select specific tools, discussion topics, surveys, exercises, and coaching strategies designed around mission, goals, and individual team members.

### **Team Sessions**

Over the course of six to nine months, we hold numerous meetings with the team leader, key team members, and the team as a whole to implement the team development design. We work through the components of the high performance team model, emphasizing those areas that are most important to the effectiveness of the team. The program includes discussion, role play, homework, and individual assessment and development.

### **Evaluation**

We emphasize practical results. When the program is concluded, we work with the team leader to re-evaluate the team and assess its new level of effectiveness. The goal? Measurable improvement in performance and results by the team as a whole.

## About MDA Leadership Consulting

*Without great leadership,  
nothing works.™*

We believe leadership matters. From the boardroom to the community to the playing field, leaders make the difference between excellence and mediocrity. Since 1981, MDA Leadership Consulting has helped organizations select the right talent to drive strategy, sharpen organizational alignment between talent and resources, and accelerate the development at all levels of the leadership pipeline. From our headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota, client teams work with mid- and large-cap companies with roots in America's heartland. MDA consultants are schooled in an integrated approach—a mix of talent management, leadership development and organizational alignment—all of which impact the quality of leadership in an organization.

*With great leadership,  
anything is possible.™*

## About our Team

MDA has more than a dozen team development experts who understand the dynamics of high performing teams and organizational alignment. Our consultants bring a diverse set of business experiences, academic backgrounds, and personalities to consulting engagements. To learn more about our team, visit us at [www.mdaleadership.com](http://www.mdaleadership.com)



**MDA** LEADERSHIP  
CONSULTING

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