



6Cs to Drive Team Results

Over the past few years, as we have worked with many different leadership teams across a variety of industries and processes, we've observed repeatedly that when there are gaps in performance, most attention gets paid to processes and external forces, instead of focusing on the team and individuals. If you want to conquer complexity, you must have a strong foundation. The difference between great teams and mediocre teams are: Clarity, Commitment, Connection, Consistency, Credibility, and Challenge. Leaders and companies that implement these competencies as a system and make sure each one is understood at an individual level will undoubtedly see positive results.

Drive Clarity

An overwhelming number of studies confirm that many organizations and teams lack clarity around what is truly important.

- *Harvard Business Review* cites that over 90% of employees do not fully understand company goals or what is expected of them
- *Bain and Company* cites that only 1 in 7 employees can name their company's most important goals

How can this be? Urgency keeps leaders from being able to effectively drive clarity.

- Goals are too generic (they are not specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound – SMART)
- High level goals are not contextualized or cascade to lower levels
- Goals are not reinforced (one time communication is not enough)
- Having too many goals can actually lead teams to lose focus on where and how to spend their time

Without clarity, the team cannot focus. Without focus, energy is wasted, resources are spread thin, and nothing gets better.

Begin driving clarity:

- What is our mission – why we do what we do
- What is our vision – where and who we want to be in the future
- What are the top 1-3 goals; what must improve if all else remains constant
- What is most important right now – where and how do we start

Narrow the scope of the team and increase the intensity, then drive clarity to an individual level. It is not enough to assume, "the team knows what to do."

This requires a fundamental understanding of human nature. Most people do not want to be the one to raise their hand to express an issue or concern. Perhaps someone doesn't want to raise their hand because they don't want to challenge someone else on the team and prove that person wrong. Perhaps they don't want to challenge an



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executive or direct report. Silence or fake acknowledgement is the path of least resistance... do not accept it. In high performing companies these behaviors are considered dishonest and lacking in integrity. Embrace clarity and honesty!

In a game of basketball, if one of the five players does not fully grasp the play, it's going to be a bust. It doesn't matter that 80% of the group knows what to do. It's the 20% that will break it and cost you the game.

Secure Commitment

Once there is clarity around organizational or team goals, a leader must secure personal commitment from every team member; not compliance or appeasement, but true commitment. It is one thing to know the mission, but another to truly believe, support, and have the capacity to sell it to others. Each person must respond positively to these questions:

- Am I personally committed to the vision/mission?
- Do I believe these goals are the most important?
 - Or are there other goals I would rather pursue?
- Do I agree with this course of action?
- Can I sell the mission to somebody else?

Always remember, the truest measure of commitment is action, not words. Everyone must demonstrate their commitment to the team and the goals. Nobody can be allowed to make choices or decisions that will impede progress of the team and cause them to fail.

Create Connection

You have clarity and commitment, but what do you and the team do next? This is where many leaders fail. How is the team going to achieve the goals? You cannot assume that the team members know what to do.

- *Bain and Capital* cited in a study that 87% of surveyed employees did not know what to do to achieve the goal; they did not understand how they could contribute or influence the goal in a positive way
- Based on *Gallup's* work with companies worldwide, only about half of employees strongly agree that they know what is expected of them at work

You as the leader must help facilitate the connection of individual actions and behaviors towards achieving the goal by helping set milestones, create effective metrics and a scorecard system to review these metrics, and provide feedback. Instead of placing focus on what goes wrong, you must identify the desired conditions for things to go right.

- What are the leading actions and behaviors to drive success?



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- Is it clear how each team members' individual actions or behavior contribute to success/failure?
- Are you creating a culture of employee engagement – a primary component of creating connection?

Practice Consistency

The best teams operate with a high level of consistency. In a fast-paced and ever-changing environment, there needs to be a framework that can be counted on. Once you have defined the actions and behaviors needed to be successful, you must have the discipline to do them every day.

- Are there management systems in place to facilitate habits and routines?
- Amid urgent activity, are there foundational processes to keep focus on what is important (but not urgent)?
- Are there processes/systems to promote routines and habits?
- Do I make progress on things that matter?
- What influence dynamic is there between urgency and importance?

We have seen many teams let urgent activities get in the way of them performing activities that they know are highly important. Short-sided urgency has had predictably, detrimental consequences. Example: Not doing preventative maintenance of critical equipment. As Stephen Covey said, "You cannot substitute the important for the urgent."

Build Credibility

Teams that have consistent practices in place are far more likely to follow through. While accountability is a word in business that always seems to get a lot of attention, we believe it overshadows a word with far greater impact, credibility.

Accountability is all about who does what. Credibility is the quality of being trusted and believed in. Which more personal to you, being accountable or credible?

- Does the team do what they say they are going to do?
- Do individuals follow through?
- Do they have the knowledge, skillsets, and experience necessary to be successful?

Personal and team credibility goes beyond following through. It also is about ensuring that the other team members will do their job and do it well.

Promote Challenge

The best teams must challenge the status quo. They are always looking to get better. They push the limits and each other by encouraging new ideas and perspectives. They



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actively seek opportunities to do things differently. These teams are honest, confront issues directly, and are not afraid to deliver bad news that can lead to identifying opportunities and generating sustainable solutions that improve team and organization's performance.