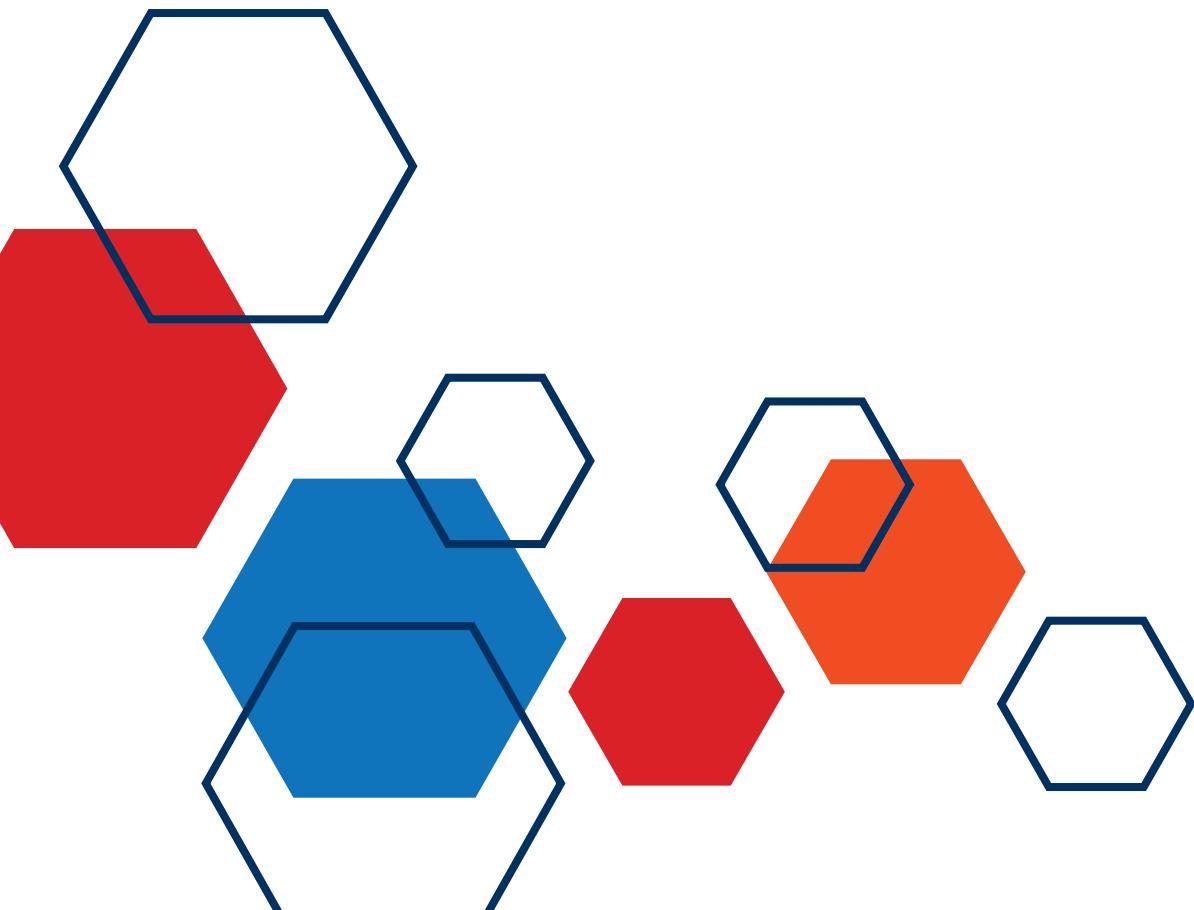


# Thought Leadership

## Building Teams That Deliver Results

**Authored by:** Peter Berry, Managing Director, PBC



# INVESTING IN TEAMS

Research published in the Harvard Business Review has profoundly caught our attention. It's important reading for anyone interested in leadership and teams. It's based on research from three partners from Bain & Company.

Bain's key findings are as follows;

Organisations led by highly effective executive teams had revenue growth, profitability, and total shareholder returns that were three times higher than the study groups' average. Research also shows that highly effective leadership teams are correlated with consistently high employee retention, productivity, and morale. In short, they are force multipliers: Effectiveness radiates from the top team through the organisation.

However, two-thirds of senior executives surveyed in 2020 by the Centre for Creative Leadership felt that their top team was ineffective, and only 20% felt that their team was high performing. Part of the problem is that companies prioritise the development of individual leaders over leadership teams - an understandable choice, given that business schools, management books, and the media all celebrate leadership as a solo skill. Organisations need to prioritise the development of strong and effective leadership teams that function as a collective behavioural unit rather than a loose affiliation of individual leaders.

The very heart of teaming is collaboration. It combines direction and discipline, and it thrives in an environment of connection, inclusion, and trust. Teams that excel at collaboration create the psychological safety needed to give and take feedback, brainstorm, solve problems, and hold themselves accountable.

The authors argue that to determine how you are currently working together, hold up a mirror by conducting a team effectiveness diagnostic. Focus on understanding how your team views itself. After 6–12 months, survey or interview team members again, and celebrate progress and stretch further.

## DEFINITION OF GREAT TEAMS

I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Robert Hogan, the world's greatest business psychologist, for more than 25 years. Our shared passion is building leadership and team effectiveness because they are so consequential to organisational outcomes. We believe that great teams are groups of people who:

- 1. Report to the same manager, who can have 50–70% influence on the performance and culture of the group.**
- 2. This manager must show 360 feedback that puts them in the top 50th percentile.**
- 3. Exist for a reason around the need to produce business results shaped by a motivational purpose, strategy, and passion for the work they perform.**
- 4. Believe that the group's success is just as important as individual success**
- 5. Are a group of people who enthusiastically want to be part of the team.**
- 6. Thrive on having very high standards around collaboration and accountability.**
- 7. Have a one-page business plan kept alive by a strong strategic planning cadence with quarterly offsites.**
- 8. Genuinely live the Jim Collins principle of "right people on the bus and wrong people off the bus.**

Teams can be anywhere from dysfunctional to high performing. A dysfunctional team destroys culture and performance, while a high performing team builds engagement and delivers results.

Teams need to focus on purpose, people and performance. The 'One team, One dream' approach is needed where group success is just as important as individual success. The best teams have very high levels of collaboration and accountability.

The most powerful investment in teams is by combining Hogan personality and 360. The personality and 360 assessments can be presented as group results, so that the team can do some solid action planning. Then we use the High Performing Team Assessment (HPTA) for individuals in the team to assess both the performance and culture of the team.

A score is provided and opportunities for improvement are crystal clear. The score is benchmarked against other teams in our database, so the comparison makes it perfectly clear where a team sits — from dysfunctional (low score) to awesome (a very high score). The HPTA can be repeated after 6 to 12 months with the aim of improving. Some clients use the 75th percentile score as a target.



The main applications of the HPTA include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing an opportunity to gather feedback from team members on the performance of the team as a whole
- Identifying targeted interventions aimed at improving team effectiveness
- Utilising a diagnostic that can serve as a means of tracking changes and shifts in team performance and culture
- Benchmarking teams against a global comparison group
- Providing input into broader workplace planning and talent management strategies
- Assembling new teams - the HPTA can assist in highlighting the unique strengths and development areas that the team bring together as a collective group.
- For dysfunctional teams, the HPTA puts the hard issues on the table.

The HPTA allows teams to gather feedback from team members about how the team is performing. As a result, the HPTA provides useful information that can be used in conjunction with personality and 360 assessments to help teams understand the different roles and expertise each team member brings.

Leadership and team effectiveness are measurable and improvable. A complete picture of leadership potential and performance is best captured by personality, 360 and team surveys. Team diagnostics that shed light on a team profile are critical for improving team effectiveness. It helps to connect people data with operational and financial data to understand the causal link with leadership.

Best practice is sharing all three data points which can be done by creating psychological safety, trust and a team culture of mutual support, connectivity and coaching.

Leaders are not born knowing how to build great teams. On the contrary, their early professional development has a focus on cognitive and technical skills, such as engineers and accountants. With career progression, they then need new competencies around strategy, teams and engagement.

**"The best leaders care more about their teams than themselves"**

– Peter Berry

## PBC PHILOSOPHY

**Leadership is about results.**

**Teams deliver results.**

**Judge the leader by their team.**

## GOOD TEAM BAD TEAM

The findings from Good Team and Bad Team by Blair Miller and Sarah Thurber (2024) are as follows;

- Many leaders are surprised to find themselves bogged down by people problems.
- “They can’t get people to row in the same direction – or row at all.”
- A shared purpose transforms individuals into teams.
- Foster trust, the catalyst for high performance.

## TEAMWORK AT THE TOP... IT PAYS

ghSmart, a leadership advisory and consulting firm, found that the single most common mistake among first-time CEOs was not getting the right team in place quickly enough, this mistake was made by 60% of them.

**Effective leadership is combining strategic clarity and employee motivation to deliver organisational results including employee engagement and retention.**

**Building high performing teams and enriching the employee experience brings the purpose to life and takes people and performance to the next level.**

## BUILDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR A PURPOSE LED WORKFORCE

### Strategic Cadence

Clarity on purpose and goals

DELIVERING BUSINESS OUTCOMES

### High Performing Teams

Taking performance to the next level

### Employee Motivation

Improved engagement and retention

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Only 20% of teams are high-performing, which is a great cost to businesses.
- Too much leadership development is spent on individuals, not teams.
- Teams are the brand of the leader; their reputation matters enormously.
- At PBC, we use Hogan Personality, Hogan 360, and our HPTA to measure and improve team effectiveness.
- Any investment in teams should be aligned with supporting strategic cadence and employee motivation.
- Collaboration and accountability are the hallmarks of high performing teams.

# WHAT THE BEST TEAMS DO BETTER

Our HPTA research shows that at the executive team level, there are two major competencies that separate the best from the worst teams – collaboration and accountability. The research comes from team assessments, where members of the team vote on the top opportunities for improvement. The items are then ranked from the highest to the lowest scores. The bottom 25<sup>th</sup> percentile reflects the worst performing teams in our database, while the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile are the 1 in 4 that get superior results. **More collaboration** is the key point of difference working together for shared goals. **More Accountability** is where everyone is held accountable by the manager, and most importantly, by their peers.

What four things would improve the team?	Bottom 25%	Top 25%
<b>MORE COLLABORATION</b> One team approach, no silo's, less them and us, all on the same page, working together with one goal	1	12
<b>MORE ACCOUNTABILITY</b> Challenge each other constructively, correct poor behaviour, stronger KPI reviews, hold people responsible, challenge poor performers	2	11
<b>CLEARER VISION, STRATEGY AND GOALS</b> Clear KPIs, a clear business plan, shared sense of purpose, clear direction, disciplined strategic reviews	3	7
<b>TACKLE THE DIFFICULT ISSUES</b> More healthy debate, challenge each other, discuss the hard issues, don't avoid conflict	4	2
<b>IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS</b> Open and honest communications, keep us updated, share the big picture, share information, communicate decisions	5	14
<b>SET PRIORITIES</b> Be clear on priorities from the beginning, allocate time according to priorities, better manage competing priorities, honest discussions on priorities	6	4
<b>TEAM BUILDING</b> Understand each other, share our strengths and weaknesses, build self-awareness, team building exercises, understand each other's personality and work style	7	3
<b>PROCESS IMPROVEMENT</b> Streamline processes, standardise processes, continuous improvement, improve internal processes, consistency	8	1
<b>REGULAR MEETING RHYTHM</b> Regular business reviews, regular team meetings, stronger planning process, separate operational from strategic reviews, strategic discussions	9	13
<b>REGULAR FEEDBACK</b> Continuous performance feedback, constructive feedback, ongoing feedback on how to do better	10	8
<b>BETTER MEETINGS</b> Clearer agendas, improve punctuality, better attendance, not wasting time, regular meetings for catch ups	11	6
<b>MORE RESOURCES</b> Need more resources, align resources to business objectives, better resource planning, better sharing of resources	12	5
<b>CELEBRATE SUCCESSES</b> Celebrate achievements, more recognition and reward, recognise good performance, celebrate wins and milestones	13	9
<b>CLEARER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b> Clarify exactly who does what, clearly define job descriptions, get people to take ownership, understanding each other's roles and responsibilities	14	10
<b>MORE SOCIAL OCCASIONS</b> Social events, more time together as friends, social activity, regular social occasions	15	15

# THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN TEAMS

**Leadership is about results. Teams deliver results.  
Therefore, we should judge the leader by their team.**

The leader can have anywhere between 50-70% of the impact on the performance and culture of the team. Teams can be dysfunctional or awesome.

PBC has a team diagnostic called the High Performing Team Assessment (HPTA). Team members confidentially assess their team for both performance and cultural characteristics, each with 6 competencies, as described in the table below. We have conducted research of correlations between the HPI and the HPTA. This gives us an insight into which personality characteristics are most conducive to a high performing team.

In the HPI profile, Interpersonal Sensitivity is the most influential in generating positive outcomes in a team. It contributes to both performance and culture in a team. It correlates positively with emotional intelligence, resilience and trust. Of great interest is the positive impact on meeting effectiveness, innovation, strategy, leading change and results (which are performance competencies). Adjustment is also a significant contributor to the functioning of the team. Remember, Adjustment and Interpersonal Sensitivity are the measurement of EQ.

Ambition and Sociability are key drivers of strategy and innovation. Ambition is about confidence, drive, and leadership. Sociability is about social confidence, creativity, and change.

## Hogan Personality Inventory

Table 1. Correlations between the HPI Scales and the HPTA Sub-Themes

Domain	Sub-Theme	ADJ	AMB	SOC	INT	PRU	INQ	LEA
Performance	Strategy	.16	.20*	.26**	.17*	.11	-.01	.14
	Innovation	.20*	.17*	.22**	.20*	.03	.06	-.02
	Accountability	.08	.11	.12	.13	.04	-.01	.03
	Leading Change	.19*	.13	.10	.17*	-.03	.05	.07
	Results	.13	.02	.14	.17*	.08	.02	.03
	Meeting Effectiveness	.18*	.14	.19*	.21*	.06	.01	.13
Culture	Trust	.14	-.03	-.04	.17*	-.01	.02	-.01
	Professional Conflict	.09	.05	.04	.14	.03	.05	.04
	Communication	.12	-.01	.19	.12	-.03	.03	-.05
	Emotional Intelligence	.16	.05	.09	.24**	.02	.02	.01
	Collaboration	.11	.00	.12	.17	.00	-.04	-.10
	Resilience	.21*	.13	.05	.19*	.02	.02	.06

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ; ADJ = Adjustment, AMB = Ambition, SOC = Sociability, INT = Interpersonal Sensitivity, PRU = Prudence, INQ = Inquisitive, LEA = Learning Approach.

# SUMMARY: PBC THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

## **LEADERSHIP is consequential, measurable and improvable**

- Leadership is not about position or title. It's about inspiring people and performance
- The leader has 70% impact on team performance and culture, + the leadership team has 50% impact on employee engagement
- Teams should be the brand of the leader - teams need to be accountable and collaborative
- You need to be a good manager and leader while balancing soft and hard skills
- The best leaders drive PURPOSE, PASSION and PERFORMANCE and they speak from the heart
- We use Hogan Personality and 360 assessments to move managers from self awareness to self mastery and career success

## **PEOPLE is engagement, performance and retention**

- A truly powerful purpose statement motivates employees and delivers strategic goals
- Hire hard, manage easy, onboarding process and probationary period should be at best practice level
- Employees must live the values and demonstrate the right behaviours
- Get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus
- Provide career, development, and coaching opportunities to build capability
- Make engagement a KPI, it pays - 2/3 are engaged and 1/3 disengaged
- Understand the cost and root cause of turnover

## **STRATEGY is 'one team, one dream'**

- The best leadership teams are passionate about the legacy they want to leave
- Purpose, strategy, business plans and values need to be clear - Purpose Pays!
- Have a 3-5 year strategic plan supported by a one-year business plan
- Use a strategic planning cycle with quarterly reviews
- One-page plan for teams 1 & 2
- Be crystal clear about what winning looks like, start with the end in mind
- A balanced scorecard has financials, people, customers, processes and social good as goals

## **About Peter Berry Consultancy (PBC)**

PBC is a multidisciplinary global consulting firm with 30 years' experience in the delivery of solutions aimed at maximising the potential of individuals, teams, leaders and organisations. We undertake research to support our evidence-based solutions and have a network of partners and distributors globally.

PBC is the Australian and New Zealand distributor of Hogan Assessments and the authors of a range of diagnostics including the Hogan 360 suite, Agile suite, High Performing Team Assessment (HTPA), and co-authored the Hogan Safety Climate Survey.

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