



SIX FACTORS THAT PREDICT WHETHER OR NOT A TEAM WILL PERFORM

A White Paper by Karla Pierson



Overview

High performing teams are the backbone of any organization's success.

Based on over 20 years of research and working with clients across multiple industries and sectors, we have identified six performance factors that predict team performance within an organization:

CONNECTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, COLLABORATION, PURPOSE, COURAGE AND AUTHENTICITY.

These factors are at the core of Candeo Partners' multi-dimensional consulting approach, and are the basis for predicting whether a given team will perform... or miss the mark.

This paper de-mystifies the art and science behind team performance and equips leaders to be able to turn any team into a high performing team.

Introduction

One of the top things on any leader's mind is the concern of whether or not their team is going to produce. If the team delivers, the leader is successful. If the team doesn't deliver, the leader isn't successful. So, the leader's job is totally defined by the team's performance. One of the first questions a leader asks themselves is, "Do I have the right people on the team?" The belief is, if I have the right people (and talent), the team will deliver. If I don't have the right people (and talent), the team won't deliver. Having the right people is critical, but it's not the whole story.

The next question is, "How are you going to lead the team to come together and deliver?" We see in professional sports teams the focus to recruit the right players and attract top talent every season, but talent alone is never enough to go to the championship. It's the combination of having the right people and leading the team to deliver that becomes the difference between a group of highly talented individuals and a winning team. This aspect of leadership is an art and a science, and once a leader has it, they can replicate the success.

Everyone has been on a high performing team before and knows what it feels like. Each person understands what they're doing and they are in sync, even though there may

be some overlapping roles. The communication flows freely and you're not worried about stepping on each other's toes. More importantly, you're all committed to the same outcome. Many times, it's a scenario where there may be late nights and people working overtime, but you're proud of the end result and proud of the people you're working with. And it's worth it.

Then, we've all been on teams that are not high performing, where it's unclear who is doing what, results are slow, rework is needed, there's difficulty communicating with some people more than others, and you can't wait for the project to be over. It feels like drudgery.

So, how do you create a high performing team? There actually is a science behind it and it is replicable. When certain factors are in place, you can predict with confidence that a team will reach peak performance. On the flip side, when one or more of these factors are missing or low, the team will struggle and results will be inconsistent. Below are specific factors that equip leaders to assess whether or not the team will perform and what to do to have them deliver.

The First Factor

CONNECTION TO OTHERS: *The level at which people are connected gives a sense of fulfillment and enjoyment at work, as well as increasing how fast work gets done. Likewise, low levels of connection will show up as dissatisfaction, lack of enjoyment and slower results.*

The primary factor in building a high performing team is level of connection to each other. This doesn't mean they have to like everyone or have everything in common; but, team members should know the general background, expertise and some personal information about the people they're working with. There needs to be a mutual respect and a personal bond, such that they are comfortable working together and can trust each other. It sets the foundation of the six factors, because when connection is low, it's really difficult to hold others accountable, collaborate and bring out the best in them. This is not to say that the other factors don't stand on their own, but their power is not near the same without the foundation of connection.

If you think about the team members you rely on most, there is a high level of connection, trust and mutual respect. You don't hesitate to reach out to them. You can ask them random questions and responses are quick with a flow of communication making it easier to work together and more fun. This high connection interplay has a direct impact on producing results faster. Alternatively, where the connection is low with another team member, responses usually lag, resulting in slower execution and less satisfaction working with them. Things that cause a lower level of connection can be geographic separation, people you don't work with closely, lack of understanding or an unresolved issue. Typically, we avoid those people or work with them on a required basis only.

The Second Factor

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS: *One of the biggest barriers to people being accountable is the lack of clarity about what the desired result is. Either the scoreboard isn't visible or it's too complicated. When people are clear about the results, they're in action to produce them. A high level of accountability leads to consistency of results being produced.*

The second most important factor is accountability for results, or the "walking the talk" factor. Its foundation requires clarity of the game and required outcomes for the team. Imagine going to a sports game and not having a scoreboard; that would be frustrating and boring. Yet in organizations, we do that every day by not having a clearly defined strategy, desired results and the context for why we're doing it.

The team's performance is measured by whether or not team results get produced, regardless of who does it. On high performing teams, members own each other's success and many times there's an overlap of people being responsible for the same result, which increases the probability of the team delivering. Members of a high performing team are committed to each other's success, the delivery of the team results and can see how these results forward the overall corporate objectives.



The Third Factor

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY: *A collaborative environment fosters a combination of being connected and being accountable for results, where every team member's set of thinking is valued. Working collaboratively may take longer at the front end, but saves time in re-work. The impact of having multiple points of view leads to better decision-making and higher quality results.*

Breakthrough team performance requires collaboration. And, not every decision needs to be a collaborative one. Where it really pays off to collaborate is in situations in which a breakthrough result is required, i.e., a new level of performance where the status quo is no longer sufficient. As a leader of collaborative discussions, it's imperative to value the input of everyone at the table, suspending judgement about whether you agree or disagree. The biggest barrier to collaboration and innovative thinking is "already knowing" the answer and discounting other people's views. The ability to appreciate different points of view allows new ideas and solutions to arise, resulting in new levels of performance.

The Fourth Factor

SENSE OF PURPOSE: *People's level of connection to a sense of purpose results in the feeling of making a difference, which is a core need of every human being. It is a motivator for people to go above and beyond the normal task and is a personally intrinsic reward beyond any monetary compensation. Organizations where people have a high sense of purpose typically have very low turnover rates.*

Twenty years ago, most executives envisioned making a difference once they retired and could volunteer their time. This was because most people believed that making money was separate from making a difference. Nowadays, the cultural norm that has emerged with millennials entering the workplace is the belief that their career is not only about making a living, but also about making a difference in the world.

High performing teams are practiced at knowing "why" they are doing something, the difference it's making and consistently connecting those dots. It may be as simple as why we're having this meeting or, in a larger sense, what difference this product makes for our customers and the community. Associating a sense of purpose with the business results, gives team members a more meaningful, satisfying work experience.

The Fifth Factor

COURAGE TO ACT: *Breakthrough performance requires an environment where people are free to take risks and try something new in service of producing a new level of result. It takes courage to go for something you don't know how to do, and a certain type of leader to create the kind of culture where these actions are encouraged without fear of failure.*

Courage to act is the innovation factor. In high performing teams, the leader supports experimentation, free from worrying if it will work or not. The challenge for the leader is to manage “required” results and “breakthrough” results at the same time, delineating the two different modes of operating:

- **Required results** are based on historical performance and solid financial planning. Employee bonuses are tied to these results.
- **Breakthrough results** are aspirational and by definition are outside of what you know how to do. Therefore, the breakthrough mode takes courage and a willingness to be outside your comfort zone and an environment that allows for testing new ideas.

Creating an environment for breakthrough team performance includes celebrating the small wins along the way and encouraging each other to try new things. Ultimately, when both types of results are managed well, breakthrough results elevate the current level of performance and become the new reality.

The Sixth Factor

AUTHENTICITY: *A culture that fosters freedom of self-expression allows people to authentically be who they are, while including their quirkiness and personal goals, in the workplace. At an organizational level, this becomes a leadership imperative for diversity and inclusion. The business impact of this type of culture results in an environment rich in innovation, creativity and ease of workflow.*

This factor is really about the freedom to be your authentic self in the workplace. When leaders create a comfort zone in which people can express themselves freely, permission is given to share their views and be who they are in all situations. This is especially needed for optimal team performance when the workplace is diverse in age, ethnicity, technical capabilities and multi-cultural backgrounds. Embracing differences creates a sense of ease, belonging and peace of mind. Environments where employees feel less freedom will have more stress and employee turnover, and less satisfaction and engagement.

SUMMARY CHART OF TEAM PERFORMANCE FACTORS

FACTOR	LOW	HIGH	IMPACT ON RESULTS
Connection	Slow turnaround, misalignment & low satisfaction	Trust, mutual respect & inspiration	Speed of execution, enjoyment & creativity
Accountability	Lack of clarity, low ownership & minimal participation	Clarity of results, high ownership & walking the talk	Credibility & a track record for producing results
Collaboration	Independent work mode & decision-making	Partnership, openness & joint decision-making	Higher quality thinking, better decisions & less re-work
Purpose	Getting the job done with a transactional approach	Engaged & focused on what matters & a shared vision	Sense of fulfilment, making a difference & retention
Courage	Fear of failing or doing something new (change adverse)	Inspired action & willingness to risk in the face of uncertainty	Innovation & breakthrough results
Authenticity	Guarded, disengaged & uncomfortable	Sense of ease, belonging & peace of mind	Engagement, satisfaction & diversity

Conclusion

While leading a team to produce breakthrough results is an art, it is also a science. The power of the six factors identified above equips leaders with tangible tools for improving team performance and producing breakthrough results, regardless of the situation at hand. These factors can help diagnose what's missing, such that if you put it in, would result in elevated performance. This level of precision allows leaders to have their hands on the gears and the levers, so they can add more or less of any given factor to maximize the team's performance and results.

About Candeo Partners, LLC

Candeo uses a multi-dimensional consulting and coaching methodology to partner with business leaders for improved performance and breakthrough results. We equip leaders with distinctions and key competencies to maximize performance at the individual, team and organizational levels. We have different conversations, working models and trainings to identify the thinking (paradigms, mindsets and assumptions) operating in the background of peoples' actions (behavior, processes and systems). Our commitment is to provide multiple ways to bring out the best in leaders and their teams, to inspire new levels of performance and grow brilliance within organizations.