

High-Energy Teams



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Preface

For more than 40 years, Team Management Systems (TMS) has been at the forefront of team and leadership development, creating research-backed tools that help individuals, teams, and organisations achieve sustainable performance. It all began with pioneering insights that led to the development of the Types of Work Wheel and the Team Management Wheel—frameworks that remain central to our approach today.

Since then, TMS has continued to evolve, offering a suite of powerful, interconnected tools designed to enhance personal, team, and organisational development. At its core, the TMS system provides flexible pathways that can be used as standalone solutions or as part of an integrated approach to building high-performing teams and organisations.

This ebook is part of a series exploring the key principles that drive effective teamwork. It introduces a dynamic model for cultivating high-energy teams—teams where commitment, enthusiasm, and a shared drive for excellence become defining characteristics. Through the eight critical questions of the High-Energy Teams Model, we demonstrate how TMS products and methodologies can guide teams towards higher engagement, stronger collaboration, and sustained success.

Overview

High-energy teams don't happen by chance—they are built through deliberate focus on eight strategic questions:

- Who are we?
- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- What is expected of us?
- What support do we need?
- How effective are we?
- What recognition do we get?

These questions form a dynamic and interconnected framework that drives team alignment, focus, and adaptability. When teams consistently revisit and address them, they cultivate clarity, accountability, and a shared sense of purpose—key ingredients for sustained high performance.

At Team Management Systems, we have developed the High-Energy Teams Model (Figure 1) as a structured approach to integrating these questions into team development. This model helps teams move beyond short-term collaboration and into a state of sustained energy, engagement, and effectiveness.



Figure 1. The High-Energy Teams Model

Who are we?

Understanding and appreciating each team member's unique work preferences, values, and risk orientation is foundational to a high-energy team. Recognising these differences enables teams to leverage diverse skills and perspectives, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving. When team members understand "what makes each person tick," they can collaborate effectively, prevent conflicts, and maximise strengths for the benefit of the entire team.

Where are we now?

Evaluating the team's current state is essential for growth. By assessing role balance, development stage, risk attitudes, and values alignment, teams gain a comprehensive understanding of their capabilities and gaps. Conducting a situational analysis also helps teams identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while pinpointing areas for improvement. This 'current state' awareness ensures that teams can develop targeted strategies, close capability gaps, and create a strong foundation for future success.

Where are we going?

Defining a clear vision and purpose ensures team alignment and motivation. A Team Purpose Statement provides direction by outlining objectives, clarifying expected outcomes, and reinforcing the team's contribution to organisational goals. When team members understand their purpose, they engage with energy, commitment, and a shared drive for success.

How will we get there?

A structured action plan is crucial for turning vision into reality. SMART team goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) define a team's overarching priorities. These break down into SMART personal goals, ensuring individual contributions align with team objectives. The Types of Work Wheel ensures all critical work functions are covered, creating a balanced approach. By integrating SMART goals with structured planning, teams can track progress, optimise workflows, and maintain momentum toward their vision.

What is expected of us?

Clear roles, responsibilities, and behavioural standards create accountability and efficiency within teams. When expectations are well-defined, team members can focus on delivering results without confusion. Establishing shared values and ground rules enhances collaboration and ensures a productive team environment.

What support do we need?

Teams perform best when they have the necessary resources, skills, and development opportunities. Identifying gaps and establishing ongoing support through training, mentoring, and feedback systems ensures that team members have the tools they need to perform effectively. A well-supported team is the bedrock of individual growth and collective success.

How effective are we?

Continuous evaluation and improvement drive team success. By using benchmarking, feedback mechanisms, and performance reviews, teams can assess what's working well and where improvement is needed. A culture of accountability and transparency encourages ongoing development and high performance.

What recognition do we get?

Recognition plays a key role in sustaining motivation, morale, and engagement. Encouraging regular feedback, celebrating achievements, and providing meaningful rewards ensures that team members feel valued. When people see their contributions acknowledged, they remain committed and driven toward shared goals.

Linking Skills

Effective Linking Skills ensure that all eight strategic questions in the High-Energy Teams Model are not only addressed but seamlessly integrated and coordinated. These skills are essential for all team members and particularly crucial for team leaders, who must excel in communication, coordination, and alignment to strengthen team cohesion and drive performance.

Who are we?

This question in the High-Energy Teams Model encourages team members to recognise and appreciate the diverse ways in which they approach work. By understanding how individuals are likely to behave in different situations, teams can leverage strengths effectively while minimising stress and potential conflicts. This awareness lays a strong foundation for addressing the remaining seven questions.

A powerful way to explore these dynamics is through the Workplace Behaviour Pyramid (Figure 2), which examines behaviour across three distinct levels.

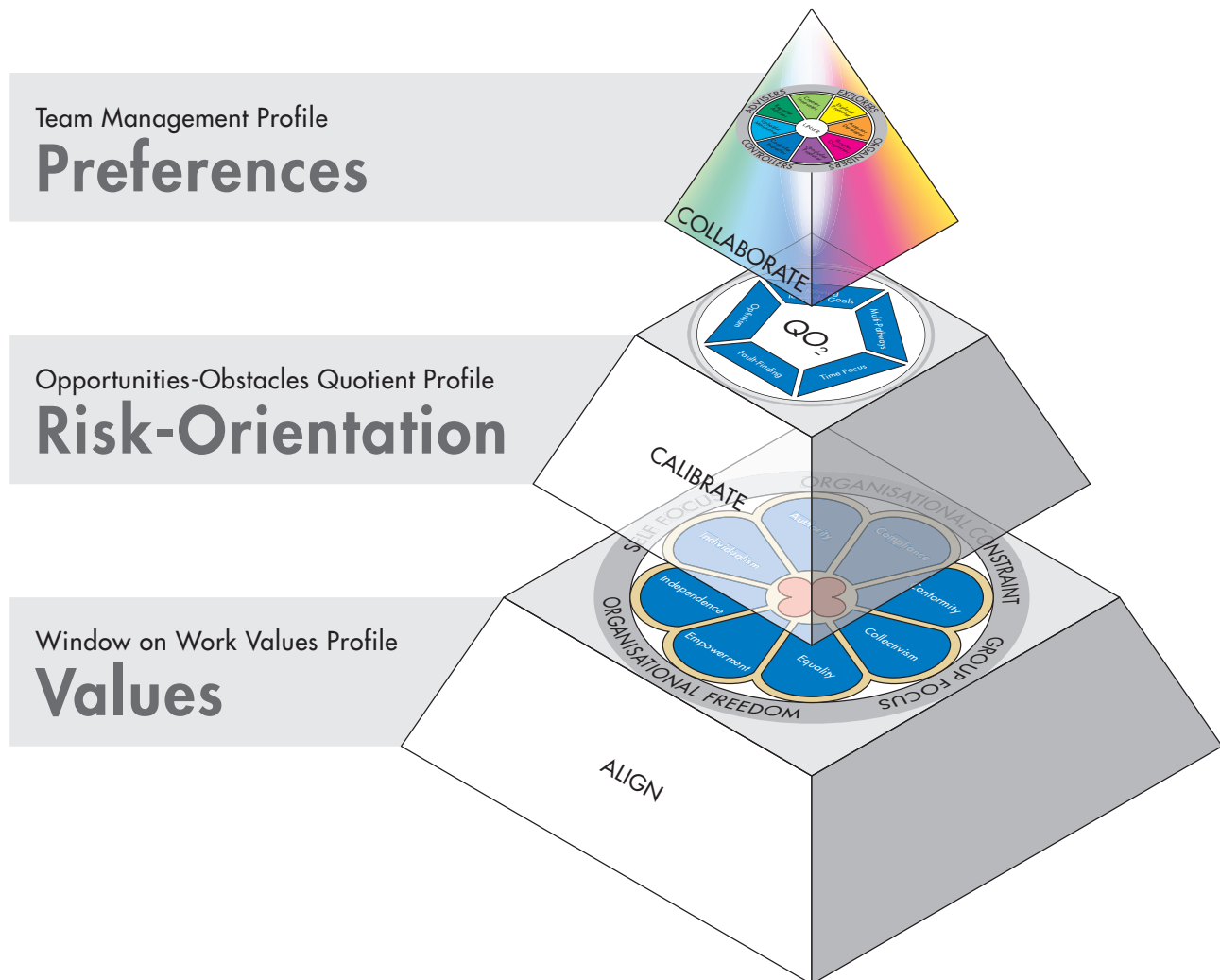


Figure 2. Workplace Behaviour Pyramid

Values

At the base of the pyramid are values. These are fundamental concepts or beliefs that people use to guide their behaviour in the workplace. Values drive our decision-making and motivate us to summon energy to protect what we believe in. They extend beyond specific situations and shape our perceptions of people, behaviour, and events. Major sources of conflict and disillusionment often stem from mismatched values. While we may be willing to work on tasks we dislike, we are much less likely to compromise when our values are under threat.

Values can be difficult to observe in others, as they are deeply ingrained and often operate beneath conscious awareness. However, when values are challenged or violated, they surface, triggering conscious reactions aimed at defending against the perceived threat.



Figure 3. Window on Work Values Model

The Window on Work Values Model (Figure 3) groups workplace values into eight distinct clusters, visually represented as windowpanes, reminiscent of the rose windows in European cathedrals. This model demonstrates strong structural validity: value types positioned close to each other are closely related, while those on opposite sides reflect contrasting perspectives.

Risk-Orientation

The middle layer of the Workplace Behaviour Pyramid explores how people approach risk. While not as deeply ingrained as values, these behaviours operate at a subconscious level and can be shaped by the work environment and the attitudes of colleagues.

In any work setting, both opportunities and obstacles are inevitable—no amount of planning can eliminate them entirely. What differentiates individuals is how they perceive and respond to these challenges. Some see obstacles as a chance to pivot and explore new possibilities, while others view them as barriers to progress. For some, obstacles become stumbling blocks, whereas for others, they serve as stepping stones to future success.

A person's risk orientation is defined by the emphasis they place on 'seeing opportunities' versus 'seeing obstacles'. The Risk-Orientation Model (Figure 4) captures these dynamics through five subscales, providing deeper insights into how individuals approach risk in their decision-making and problem-solving.



Figure 4. Risk-Orientation Model

Preferences

We each bring a unique approach to work—how we think, plan, and communicate varies from person to person. Naturally, we gravitate towards tasks that interest us, placing greater emphasis on those activities. These tendencies are known as preferences. Simply put, they reflect what we enjoy doing.

Although preferences shape our behaviour, they differ from values in that we can adapt when required to work outside them. In contrast, values are deeply ingrained drivers of behaviour, and we are far more likely to react negatively when they are challenged.

Unlike values, preferences are usually easy to observe. They influence first impressions, whether through someone's quiet thoughtfulness or their enthusiasm for sharing ideas. Positioned at the apex of the Workplace Behaviour Pyramid, preferences are the most visible aspect of how we engage with work, yet they can shift over time in response to both internal and external factors.

In a team setting, work preferences can be effectively understood through the Team Management Wheel (Figure 5), measured by the Team Management Profile (TMP) Questionnaire.

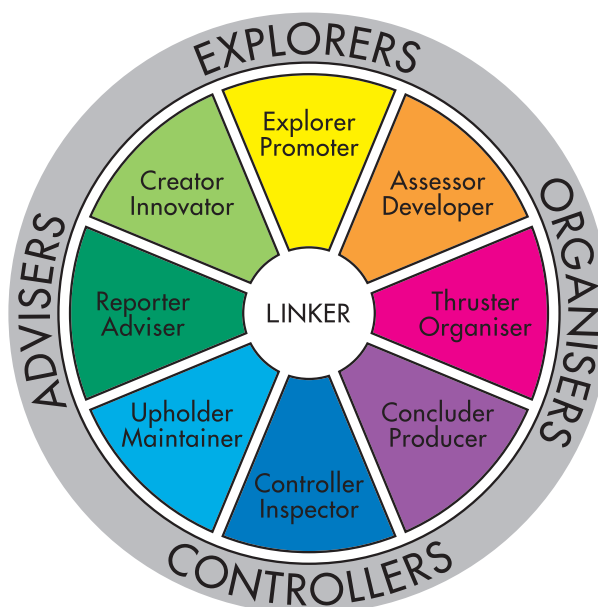


Figure 5. Team Management Wheel

The Team Management Wheel highlights eight distinct role preferences that individuals typically adopt within a team. A ninth, critical contribution—Linking—is not a separate role but a set of skills essential for integrating and aligning team efforts. Individuals who demonstrate strong proficiency in these skills are known as Linkers, playing a pivotal role in coordinating activities to achieve collective outcomes.

The brief descriptions below outline the unique characteristics each preference brings to the Wheel.

<i>Role preferences</i>	<i>Brief descriptions</i>
Reporter-Adviser	Prefers gathering information and likes to fully understand situations before acting.
Creator-Innovator	Enjoys thinking up new ideas and new ways of doing things rather than focusing on delivering outputs on a regular basis.
Explorer-Promoter	Likes to take ideas and promote them to others, not worrying too much about any details involved.
Assessor-Developer	Enjoys analysing and developing different possibilities before decisions are made.
Thruster-Organiser	Likes to make things happen and get results rather than 'waste' too much time debating issues.
Concluder-Producer	Practical people who like to carry things through to the end by working to a plan.
Controller-Inspector	Quieter, reflective people who enjoy the detailed side of work and like dealing with facts and figures.
Upholder-Maintainer	Enjoy working in support of others ensuring that tasks are delivered to high standards.
Linker	Linkers can come from any of the role preferences mentioned above. Linking is not a preference but a set of skills and as such it is independent of the role preferences.

Summary

For a team to work effectively, it's essential to understand how each member approaches their work. The "Who are we?" question provides a framework for discussing these differences and using them to the team's advantage. The Workplace Behaviour Pyramid supports this process by identifying three key behavioural levels that shape how team members engage with tasks and respond to daily challenges at work.



3 Behavioural Levels of Individuals

Preferences

Risk-Orientation

Values

Where are we now?

This question guides team members in evaluating their current state from five key perspectives:

- 1 How balanced are we in terms of role preference?
- 2 What is our attitude to risk?
- 3 Do our work values align?
- 4 What stage of team development are we in?
- 5 What are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?

Role preferences

For a team to perform effectively, understanding the distribution of role preferences is key. A well-balanced mix can make it easier to allocate tasks based on individual strengths. However, when too many team members share the same preferences, problems may arise if everyone focuses only on their preference areas.

Some common challenges that may arise when preferences are unevenly distributed include:

- A strong presence of Thruster-Organisers can drive momentum but may also lead to quick decisions without full consideration.
- A high number of Reporter-Advisers ensures thorough analysis, though it may sometimes delay decision-making as the team seeks additional information.
- A team dominated by Explorer-Promoters can generate many exciting ideas, yet discussions may need structure to ensure action follows.
- A high number of Controller-Inspectors brings valuable attention to detail, but the team may risk becoming overly focused on specifics at the expense of broader progress.

If a team lacks balance, action plans can be developed to address gaps in role coverage. Even in well-balanced teams, challenges can still arise if collaboration and coordination are ineffective. Preference diversity, while valuable, can lead to misunderstandings if differing perspectives are not effectively managed.

Risk Orientation

A second assessment of team dynamics focuses on risk orientation, which in Team Management Systems (TMS) terminology is measured using the Opportunities-Obstacles Quotient (QO₂). This metric evaluates the ratio of energy directed toward recognising opportunities versus the energy spent identifying obstacles.

The QO₂ Profile Questionnaire, a 50-item assessment, measures how an individual is likely to respond to situations involving risk at work. A typical result might show an 82% score on the opportunities side and a 30% score on the obstacles side, yielding a QO₂ score of 2.7—indicating that the individual is 2.7 times more likely to see opportunities than obstacles.

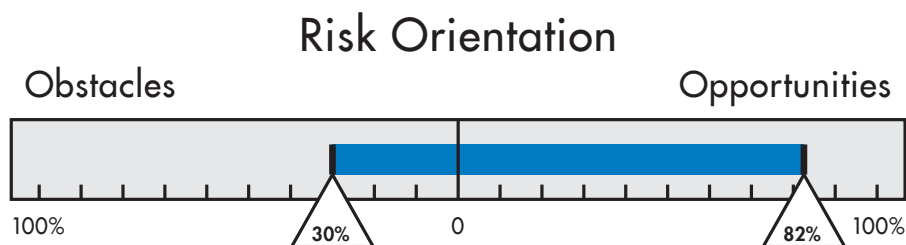


Figure 6. Risk-Orientation scale

In the workplace, maintaining a balance across the Risk-Orientation scale is essential. Successful teams need both confidence to pursue opportunities and critical thinking to assess potential obstacles. While a strong opportunity focus can drive innovation and growth, unchecked optimism may lead to impractical decisions. Conversely, a low QO₂ score suggests a greater focus on obstacles, which can encourage caution but may also slow progress.

Effective teams understand their combined QO₂ map and use this awareness to guide decision-making. A high team QO₂ score suggests a readiness to embrace opportunities, but structured planning may be needed to ensure obstacles are considered. Conversely, a low team QO₂ score indicates a tendency to focus on barriers, highlighting the need to balance caution with forward momentum.

Shared values

For teams to collaborate effectively, shared values are essential. Differences in values can create tension—for example, individuals with a strong preference for Individualism may struggle to align with those who prioritise Collectivism, while those who value Empowerment may find themselves at odds with team members who favour Compliance. Before determining the team's direction and approach, it is critical to examine individual values. A commitment to shared values forms the foundation for progress.

Within the TMS system, the Window on Work Values (WoWV) Profile helps teams identify and align their values. By analysing these insights, teams can establish shared values and define behavioural ground rules, contributing to the "What is expected of us?" discussion. Recognising and addressing mismatched values allows teams to proactively manage potential conflicts and enhance cohesion.

Team Development Stage

Tuckman (1965) proposed four stages of team development that can help teams evaluate their current stage on the path to mature development. The health check thermometer in Figure 7 can assist teams to identify their current stage. The ideal is to reach the Performing stage; if not yet achieved, the team will need to create a plan to progress.



Figure 7. Stages of Team Development

Situational Analysis (SWOT)

Every team operates within a broader environment where external factors create both opportunities and challenges. While these influences are often beyond a team's control, they can significantly impact decision-making and performance. Holding a brainstorming session can help the team assess these factors and anticipate their potential effects. One effective approach is a PESTLE analysis, which examines Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental influences.



Using PESTLE Framework

Political – Government policies, trade regulations, and workplace laws can impact operations and strategic priorities.

Economic – Inflation, interest rates, and consumer spending affect financial stability and demand.

Social – Changing demographics, workplace expectations, and values like sustainability influence team dynamics.

Technological – Advances in AI, automation, and digital tools create both efficiencies and new challenges.

Legal – Compliance with data privacy, employment laws, and industry regulations is essential for risk management.

Environmental – Sustainability policies, climate regulations, and ecological concerns drive operational changes.

To understand the impact of external opportunities and challenges, the team must also evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses. This involves assessing capabilities and determining how well they align with organisational goals.

Some key questions to start this evaluative process are provided below. Discussing these aspects will provide valuable insights into your team's current position and highlight areas for development.



Internal Analysis

How well do we perform?

Do we have adequate resources?

Do team members have the necessary skills?

Summary

Five techniques help establish a "Where are we now?" benchmark for assessing progress. By applying these techniques, teams gain a clear understanding of their current position, enabling informed decisions for ongoing development.

Role Preferences – Identify team balance and potential gaps.

Risk Orientation – Assess the team's approach to risk and change.

Values Alignment – Drive alignment of the team's core values.

Team Development Stage – Understand the team's current stage of growth.

SWOT Analysis – Identify the team's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to prepare for the future. Consider a framework like PESTLE to analyse external factors.

Where are we going?

Team Purpose


High-energy teams are motivated by a shared purpose that aligns with their organisation's vision. When a team understands why it exists and what it's working towards, it builds clarity, energy, and commitment.

Once the organisation's future direction is clear, each team should create a Team Purpose Statement. This helps translate broader goals into specific objectives, defines expected outcomes, and unifies team efforts around a common focus.

An effective Team Purpose Statement answers three key questions:

- 1 **What** – Defines the team's specific focus, distinguishing its role from others.
- 2 **Who** – Identifies the team's key stakeholders, including internal and external customers who rely on its outputs.
- 3 **How** – Explains how the team delivers value, with an emphasis on service, quality, and collaboration.

Additionally, a Team Purpose Statement can outline specific outputs and outcomes, which may be revised over time as priorities evolve. Outputs refer to the tangible deliverables provided to clients or stakeholders, shaped by clear goals and measurable targets. Outcomes, on the other hand, reflect the broader impact these outputs have—whether on customers, the organisation, or the market. By defining both elements, the Team Purpose Statement brings clarity and direction, creating a solid foundation for sustained success.



Value of a Team Purpose Statement

- Clarifies scope** – Establishes what falls within the team's responsibilities and what does not.
- Sets success criteria** – Provides a framework for measuring and evaluating team performance.
- Sharpens focus** – Encourages strategic thinking and creative problem-solving.
- Defines priorities** – Identifies key tasks that drive the team's objectives.

<i>Team Purpose Statement</i>	
The What:	Our purpose is to be the safest, most efficient, and reliable manufacturing team on site, specialising in the production of high-quality gate valves for sustainable water management.
The Who:	We will achieve our purpose by collaborating with transparency to meet ambitious goals. Our customers include internal departments and external partners, and we are committed to exceeding expectations for both groups with service and product quality standards that support environmental and operational sustainability.
The How:	We will continuously advance our skills to uphold best safety practices and incorporate emerging technologies. To this end, all team members will receive 15 days of dedicated training and professional development per year. We will establish and maintain clear, adaptable guidelines for customer service, production, and quality to keep pace with industry advancements.
The Outputs:	Our targets include achieving budgeted weekly production goals, maintaining 365 days without lost-time accidents, and reducing incident rates by at least 25%. We strive to perform within 5% of global best practice standards.
The Outcomes:	Our success will be reflected in recognition from senior management who see our contributions as integral to the organisation's progress. External customers will experience our commitment to service excellence and innovation, resulting in increased satisfaction and positive feedback.

Figure 8: Example Team Purpose Statement: manufacturing team



Goal of a Team Purpose Statement

A strong Team Purpose Statement should be:

- Clear** – Easily understood by all team members.
- Concise** – Focused and to the point, avoiding unnecessary complexity.
- Meaningful** – Reflects the team's unique role and contribution.
- Energising** – Inspires commitment and enthusiasm.
- Aspirational** – Encourages growth and a shared vision for success.



Foundations of a Team Purpose Statement

- Who** – Defines the key stakeholders the team serves (internal and external).
 - What** – Clarifies the team's core focus and responsibilities.
 - How** – Describes how the team delivers value and achieves its goals.
 - Outputs** – Specifies the tangible deliverables the team produces.
 - Outcome** – Highlights the broader impact of the team's work.
- Remember!** A Team Purpose Statement should use motivating and engaging language.

Summary

Answering the question, "*Where are we going?*" involves aligning the team's direction with the organisational vision and developing a Team Purpose Statement to support this alignment. If the organisational vision is already established, this part of the High-Energy Teams Model focuses primarily on creating a Team Purpose Statement.

How will we get there?

Answering “How will we get there?” involves identifying the gap between “Where are we now?” and “Where are we going?”. With a clear starting point and destination, the team must now plan its journey by determining the most effective approach, anticipating challenges, and setting key objectives to guide progress.

A structured planning process ensures that the team remains focused, adaptable, and aligned with its broader purpose. This involves four key steps:


- 1 Define SMART Team Goals
- 2 Identify Critical Tasks
- 3 Set SMART Individual Goals
- 4 Review and Adapt the Plan

Each step builds on the previous one, creating a practical roadmap for achieving success.

SMART Team Goals

Before diving into specific tasks, the team should establish clear, measurable objectives that define what success looks like. SMART goals—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound—provide a structured way to set these objectives, ensuring that the team remains aligned and motivated.


Setting SMART team goals first provides a foundation for the next step: breaking down these objectives into critical tasks.

**SMART teams reflect on:**

What are our key priorities?


How will we measure success?

What challenges or constraints do we need to consider?

- S**

Specific – What is my goal?
- M**

Measurable – How will you track your progress?
- A**

Achievable – Is your goal realistic?
- R**

Relevant – Does the goal align with your overall plan.
- T**

Time-bound – Give your goal a deadline.

Critical Tasks

Once team goals are established, the next step is to map out the activities required to achieve them. The Types of Work Wheel (Figure 9) helps teams identify the essential tasks needed for success. Unlike the Team Management Wheel, which focuses on work preferences, this model highlights the nine core work functions that must be completed for effective team performance. Using this model, teams can ensure all critical work areas are covered and identify potential gaps or areas requiring additional support.

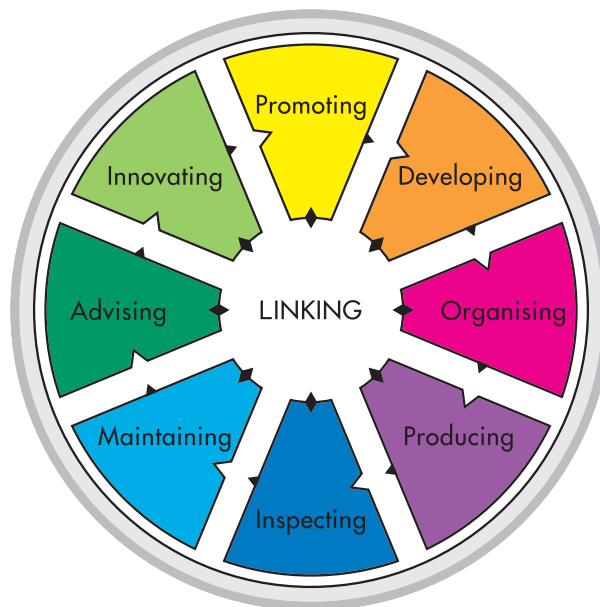


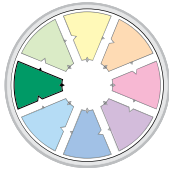
Figure 9. Types of Work Wheel



The Nine Critical Work Functions

- Advising – Gathering and reporting information.
- Innovating – Creating and experimenting with ideas.
- Promoting – Exploring and presenting opportunities.
- Developing – Assessing and testing the applicability of new approaches.
- Organising – Establishing and implementing ways of making things work.
- Producing – Concluding and delivering outputs.
- Inspecting – Controlling and auditing the working of systems.
- Maintaining – Upholding and safeguarding standards and processes.
- Linking – Coordinating and integrating the work of others.

For each factor the team should discuss the key issues of relevance. The following table lists key questions for each work function. Advising is often the best place to start this process.



Advising

- What information is needed?
- Why do we need it?
- Who will get it?
- When will we get it?
- How will we get it?

Innovating

- Have we looked at all possible alternatives?
- Does our plan incorporate new ideas and latest thinking?
- Are we guilty of doing what we've always done?
- Is there a better way of doing it?

Promoting

- Who are our clients and/or customers?
- Are there any other stakeholders?
- Have we communicated with everyone affected by our plans?
- How can we 'sell' ourselves to key stakeholders?

Developing

- Can our ideas be put into practice?
- Has a rigorous analysis been carried out?
- What likely obstacles might arise?
- Do we have contingency plans?

Organising

- What are our objectives?
- Do we have a timeline?
- Who will do what?
- What resources do we need?
- What are the immediate priorities?

Producing

- What are we producing?
- Have we mapped out the various stages of our plan?
- Do we have key performance indicators for each stage?
- Do we have standard procedures to follow that ensure quality?

Inspecting

- Is timely financial data available to us?
- What are our quality standards?
- Is safety as good as it could be?
- Are our resources (files, data, tools etc.) secure?
- Are we well covered legally?

Maintaining

- What ethical guidelines are we bound by?
- Are our working conditions adequate?
- How do we maintain quality and productivity?
- How do we maintain good relationships with stakeholders?

Linking

- Do we link well enough with each other?
- How are our external links?
- Is everyone well informed?
- Do we meet frequently enough?
- What other ways can we ensure good linking?

SMART Individual Goals

With critical tasks identified, it's important to ensure that each team member has clear, actionable objectives that align with the team's broader goals. SMART individual goals help ensure accountability and ownership, clarify expectations and deliverables, and motivate team members by linking their work to larger outcomes. By setting individual goals in alignment with team priorities, each member contributes to collective success while developing their own skills and capabilities.



SMART Individuals reflect on:

- What role do I play in achieving our team's goals?
- How will I measure my own progress and success?
- What support or resources do I need to succeed?

Review and Adapt

In high-energy teams, plans are not static—they evolve as circumstances change. Regular review and adaptation ensure that the team remains agile, focused, and continuously improving. By making continuous improvement a habit, teams can maintain momentum, alignment, and high performance over time.



High-Energy Teams ask:

- Are we on track to achieve our team goals?
- Do any tasks or priorities need adjustment?
- What have we learned, and how can we improve?

Summary

With a clear understanding of "Where are we now?" and "Where are we going?", the next step is to map out the journey. This process involves setting SMART team goals to define clear objectives, identifying critical tasks using the Types of Work Wheel, and aligning SMART individual goals to ensure accountability and ownership. At different stages of the journey, each of these factors becomes critical and requires focused attention. Regular review and adaptation allow teams to assess progress, refine priorities, and maintain momentum, ensuring they stay on track toward their ultimate destination.

What is expected of us?

In a high-energy team, all team members need to know and understand three key things:

- 1 Each person's critical work functions
- 2 Areas of accountability and responsibility
- 3 The ground rules for the team

Critical work functions

High performance isn't just about skill or experience, it's about focusing on the right work. While some tasks require specialist expertise, many can be done competently by different people. The key difference between high and low performers is whether they focus on the critical tasks that drive results.

Identifying these tasks gives organisations a strategic advantage in recruitment, selection, career development, and performance management. In teams, mapping work to the eight segments of the Types of Work Wheel helps ensure that all essential activities are covered. Some functions—like Organising and Developing—are often top priorities, followed by Producing and Maintaining. Individuals in these roles must focus their efforts accordingly, but the team as a whole must collectively cover all eight functions to avoid gaps.

To stay effective, teams should regularly assess whether the right work is being done by the right people. This goes beyond individual preferences—it's about aligning team capabilities with business needs. While people naturally gravitate toward certain ways of working, preferences shouldn't dictate responsibility. Work should be allocated based on a balance of individual strengths and organisational priorities. These discussions are key to driving performance, engagement, and effectiveness across the team.

Accountability and responsibility

For a team to perform effectively, every member needs a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities, and accountability. Job titles alone rarely provide this clarity. In reality, authority and decision-making are often shaped by informal agreements and work habits, which don't always match formal structures. This can lead to confusion, delays, or tasks falling through the cracks when it's unclear who has the authority to act.

Documenting clear accountability guidelines helps ensure everyone understands their responsibilities and decision-making scope. Problems often arise when people are asked to take ownership of tasks without being given the authority to follow through—causing frustration and inefficiency.

To stay on track, teams should regularly review who is responsible for what, and who has the authority to act. These conversations strengthen teamwork, support effective decision-making, and create the clarity needed for high performance.

Ground rules

Ground rules provide a shared framework for how the team operates, shaping behaviours, expectations, and interactions. Often described as the social glue that holds a team together, they define "the way we do things around here", ensuring consistency and alignment in how work gets done. Clear ground rules improve team effectiveness, minimising confusion, disruptions, and conflict.

To create meaningful ground rules, teams should first establish shared values. The WoWV Profile is a useful tool for guiding this process. By identifying and agreeing on core team values, teams can develop aligned behavioural and action-based ground rules that reinforce collaboration, accountability, and performance expectations.

One example of this approach comes from a senior management team in the cheese division of a large dairy company, Big Cheese. Using the WoWV Profile, they identified the three most important values clusters for their team: Empowerment, Independence, Individualism.

These value types were then broken down into specific behavioural expectations, forming the foundation for the team's customised ground rules (Figure 10). By linking values to actions, they ensured that their ground rules were not just theoretical ideals, but practical commitments that guided everyday decision-making and teamwork.

These ground rules then became part of the team's Charter and were placed in a prominent position for all team members to see. When disagreements arose in the team then these ground rules helped to resolve the conflict and persuaded team members to modify their behaviour for the benefit of the team.

Team Values Statement

In terms of the Window on Work Values Model our team holds most strongly the value types of Empowerment, Independence and Individualism. As such we aim to focus on the needs of our group, working with a high degree of individual freedom to meet organisational expectations. We also support some aspects of the Authority and Equality value types, insofar as there should be equality of opportunity within an agreed framework of line management authority. We encourage team members to meet their own needs while supporting one another to achieve the team goals.

In support of the values comprising these value types we agree on the following ground rules that will guide the behaviours and actions in our team.

- Our team will be fair, tolerant and trusting and be seen by others to have these qualities.
- We acknowledge that everyone brings value, talent, skill and resources to the team.
- We support gender and ethnic balance and without compromising on quality will move towards a recruitment policy implementing this.
- We will develop a clearly defined strategy and cascade detailed business objectives throughout the group.
- We will use a personal development program to develop key actions and to obtain buy-in to deliver objectives.
- Effective and open communication is important to us.
- We will come to meetings fully prepared.
- Teambuilding is important to us and we will encourage team development for senior management and other teams, using the Team Management Wheel.
- Full participation is expected by each team member and we accept the right of anyone to make and respond to any respectful challenge.
- There will be a focus on team goals before personal agendas.
- We will regularly measure performance against targets and key actions.
- Within these performance measures managers will have scope in how the actions are delivered.
- We encourage and respect different ideas.
- We are open to new ideas and will listen supportively.
- We support periodic brainstorming sessions.
- We will help one another.
- Failures are to be learned from in a positive way.
- Personal learning is to be encouraged.
- We agree to share all our information, for the benefit of the team.
- Individual rewards are important to us but we recognise the need to establish a system of team rewards.
- As a group of individuals we expect each person to have a high degree of self-direction and autonomy, working within the agreed corporate guidelines.
- We expect to have challenging targets.
- We support public recognition of success and will develop ways to implement this.

Figure 10: Team Values Statement for the 'Big Cheese' management team

Summary

A team operates most effectively when everyone understands what is expected of them. This includes clarity on critical tasks, responsibilities, and areas of accountability—ensuring that each team member is aligned with what drives success.

The Types of Work Wheel helps identify the tasks that are essential for high performance, enabling teams to focus on what matters most. Additionally, establishing clear agreements on roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority supports both individual and collective success.

To create a cohesive working environment, teams must also define shared ground rules. Using the Window on Work Values Model, teams can align on core principles and develop practical behavioural guidelines that reinforce accountability, collaboration, and team effectiveness.

What support do we need?

In the "Where are we going?" and "How will we get there?" stages of the High-Energy Teams Model, teams define their goals, strategies, and key deliverables. Achieving these outcomes requires the right support systems, both at the team level and the individual level.

Team support

For a team to thrive, it must continuously assess its capabilities, skills, and resources to ensure it can meet expectations. This starts with evaluating team expertise, and identifying any gaps in people, technology, or processes that may hinder progress.

High-energy teams don't just react to challenges—they proactively learn and adapt. A strong learning culture enables teams to refine their approach, reinforce successful strategies, and address obstacles before they become barriers to progress. Equally important is psychological safety—creating an environment where team members feel confident to share ideas, take risks, and experiment without fear of failure. When teams embrace this mindset, they build resilience, encourage innovation, and strengthen collaboration, ensuring long-term success.



High-Energy Teams ask:

- What problems did we experience this month?
- What did we learn from our customers/clients this week?
- What did we learn from each other this month?

Individual support

High-energy teams invest in individual growth. Each team member should actively identify the skills they need to enhance their performance, using a Personal Learning Action Plan (PLAP) to guide their development.



PLAP Key Questions

- What do I want to learn?
- What resources do I need?
- Who can help me?
- How will I know if I've learned anything?

Coaching is a powerful tool for building skills and confidence. While leaders often take on this role, effective coaching happens in everyday interactions. The key is to highlight strengths, provide clear and constructive feedback, and understand each person's perspective. Those who coach also develop their leadership and communication skills in the process.

Mentoring offers another layer of support, typically involving experienced professionals from outside the immediate team. Unlike coaching, mentors are not directly responsible for performance but provide career guidance, fresh perspectives, and strategic insights. Successful mentoring is built on trust, respect, and regular, open conversations.

A culture of continuous learning, peer support, and open feedback helps individuals and teams thrive. By embedding development into daily interactions, teams create an environment where people feel supported, motivated, and empowered to grow.

Summary

Once a team defines its purpose and vision, expectations are set for delivering objectives and goals. A high-energy team ensures that every member has the right support to succeed. Individual needs can be addressed through Personal Learning Action Plans (PLAPs), while coaching and mentoring provide additional guidance for growth. At the team level, a structured learning process fosters continuous improvement, helping teams adapt, develop expertise, and maintain high performance.

How effective are we?

High-energy teams are those that regularly evaluate their effectiveness and continually improve their performance. This can be done through questioning, benchmarking and team process reviews.

Questioning

Asking the right questions is essential for driving improvement and avoiding complacency. While it's common to focus on finding answers, thoughtful questions can reveal blind spots, generate fresh ideas, and guide better decisions.

The Types of Work Wheel offers a structured way to explore how teams operate, particularly in project planning and evaluation. It helps identify strengths, uncover areas for improvement, and build team awareness. To take conversations further, TMP Curiosity Cards can prompt deeper discussion, challenge assumptions, and open up new perspectives.

To get started, teams might reflect on questions such as:

- Do we gather enough information?
- Is this the most effective way of doing it?
- Who are the stakeholders we need to influence?
- Is this what stakeholders want?
- Are we organised well enough?
- Are our outputs and outcomes clearly defined?
- What details need checking?
- Are we maintaining our standards?
- How can linking be improved?

The My Team Diagnostic Tool, included in every TMP subscription, provides an overview of team strengths across the Types of Work. It highlights priority areas, supports meaningful discussion, and helps guide practical next steps for improved effectiveness and alignment.

Benchmarking

High-energy teams continuously evaluate their performance against benchmark standards. Most organisations define best practices and expect their teams to improve over time. No matter how well a team is performing, there is always an opportunity to refine processes and achieve higher standards.

Benchmarking can be complex, but a few key principles provide a strong starting point. Performance benchmarks typically fall into two categories:

- Output indicators measure what has been delivered—e.g., efficiency, volume, or speed.
- Effectiveness indicators assess the impact of those outputs—e.g., quality, engagement, or long-term results.

Teams often focus only on output indicators (e.g., hours of training delivered) but overlook whether those outputs achieve meaningful outcomes (e.g., improved performance after training). A balanced approach ensures both efficiency and effectiveness.

A practical team exercise is to list current output benchmarks, compare them with actual results, and identify gaps. Doing the same for effectiveness benchmarks helps teams focus on what truly drives success—and take targeted action to improve.

Team Process Review

A Team Process Review focuses on how work is done rather than just what is being done. It encourages teams to reflect on their behaviours, interactions, and ways of working, creating an opportunity for shared insights and constructive feedback.

Bringing the team together for open and honest discussions is essential. The focus should be on improving collaboration and strengthening team dynamics, rather than dwelling on problems. By framing feedback positively and solution-focused, teams can identify practical ways to enhance communication, alignment, and overall effectiveness.

High-energy teams don't just review performance, they actively refine how they work together to sustain momentum and achieve lasting success.



Team Process Review Questions:

- What does our team do well?
- What does our team do badly?
- How can we improve our service to our clients?


Summary

High-energy teams continuously assess their effectiveness through questioning, benchmarking, and structured team process reviews. These approaches help identify strengths, address challenges, and refine ways of working.

The My Team Diagnostic Tool, combined with facilitated discussions, provides a structured framework for evaluating team effectiveness and driving meaningful improvements. By regularly reviewing performance, teams stay aligned, adaptable, and positioned for sustained success.

What recognition do we get?

Teams are unlikely to attain high-energy status unless there is adequate recognition for the accomplishments of all team members. It is usually up to the team leader to ensure that this happens as far as financial remuneration and promotion are concerned, but for the 'softer' areas such as positive feedback and encouragement, everyone in the team can make a contribution.



Five Ways to Give Recognition:

- Feedback
- Celebrations
- Remuneration
- Fringe benefits
- Promotion

Feedback

Giving positive feedback is simple, yet often overlooked in the rush of daily work. A genuine "thank you" can go a long way in making team members feel valued and appreciated.

People respond to recognition in different ways. Some enjoy public acknowledgment, while others prefer private appreciation. Understanding individual preferences and work values ensures feedback is delivered in a way that resonates.

Celebrations

Team celebrations can help the development of Collectivism within the team. There are many opportunities during the year to get people together just to socialise or to celebrate some important result such as the achievement of a special target. But make sure that everyone wants these celebrations – if they feel they must attend then the motivational effect will be lost.

Remuneration

Financial recognition can be one of the most effective yet complex forms of reward. Organisations that prioritise Individualism often focus on personal incentives, while those valuing Collectivism may emphasise team-based rewards. Striking the right balance is key: rewarding senior team members at the expense of others can demotivate the team and impact overall energy levels.

Fringe benefits

Beyond direct remuneration, fringe benefits offer another way to recognise excellence. These may include travel bonuses, club memberships, or car allowances, though tax regulations in some countries have limited their use. Where possible, offering meaningful perks can reinforce a culture of recognition and appreciation.

Promotion

Even when teams don't have direct control over promotions, members can position themselves for growth. A clear career plan helps individuals set goals and prepare for future opportunities. Demonstrating a commitment to skill development and making aspirations known to senior management can increase visibility and readiness for advancement.

Summary

Recognition matters. High-energy teams ensure that every member feels valued for their contributions. Strong leadership makes recognition a priority, so when team members ask, "Are my efforts appreciated?" the answer is always "yes."

Linking Skills

At the centre of the Team Management Wheel lies the Linker, representing a set of core skills that underpin effective teamwork. Linking Skills ensure teams stay aligned, collaborative, and focused on shared goals.

When teams address the eight strategic questions of the High-Energy Teams Model, differences in perspectives—and even disagreements—are inevitable. Without strong Linking Skills, these differences can lead to misalignment and conflict, draining team energy. But when teams actively practice Linking, they transform challenges into productive dialogue, maintaining momentum and engagement.

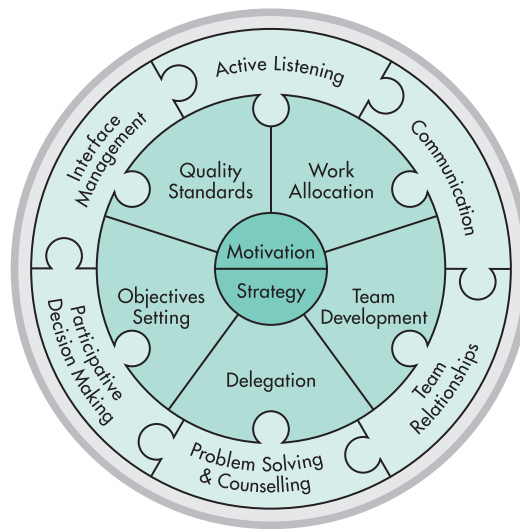


Figure 11. Linking Leader Model

The Linking Leader Model categorises these skills into three key levels:

- **People Linking Skills** – The foundation of team interaction, including Active Listening, Communication, Team Relationships, Problem Solving & Counselling, Participative Decision-Making, and Interface Management. These skills are essential for all team members.
- **Task Linking Skills** – Critical for execution and accountability, including Work Allocation, Team Development, Delegation, Objective Setting, and Quality Standards. These skills are particularly important for team leaders and senior members.
- **Leadership Linking Skills** – At the core of effective leadership, Motivation and Strategy shape a team's direction, purpose, and sustained success. Without these, teams struggle to reach their full potential.

For a deeper dive into Linking Skills, refer to the LLP | 360 Accreditation Handbook and Linking Leadership ebook (McCann, 2020).

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