

BUILDING HIGH- PERFORMANCE TEAMS TO DRIVE/SUSTAIN CHANGE

PART 3 OF A 6 PART SERIES

The essentials of leading through crisis to transformation

FIVE ESSENTIALS OF LEADING THROUGH CRISIS TO TRANSFORMATION

- 1 Leading from a distance
- 2 Building high-performance teams**
- 3 Responding to crisis with empathy
- 4 Earning and keeping trust
- 5 Sustaining the transformation



Dedicated, focused, and selfless teams have led organizations of every kind out of crisis. They're doing so during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they'll continue doing so as humanity begins recovering.

High-performance teams always have a talented leader at the helm. Take the Apollo 13 mission control team, led by Flight Director Gene Kranz, which successfully brought the mission's astronauts home. Transformative leaders such as Kranz know that one person has limits and that no single individual possesses all the answers. In the end, it's the team that generates the results needed for the organization to move beyond crisis.

To build and sustain a high-performance team that can accomplish all of that, leaders must understand how teams operate. And they need to line up the conditions necessary for their teams to excel.

"If everyone is moving forward together,
then success takes care of itself."

— Henry Ford

WHAT WE MEAN BY TEAM

The word 'team' has been bandied about so much that it has come to have minimal practical meaning.

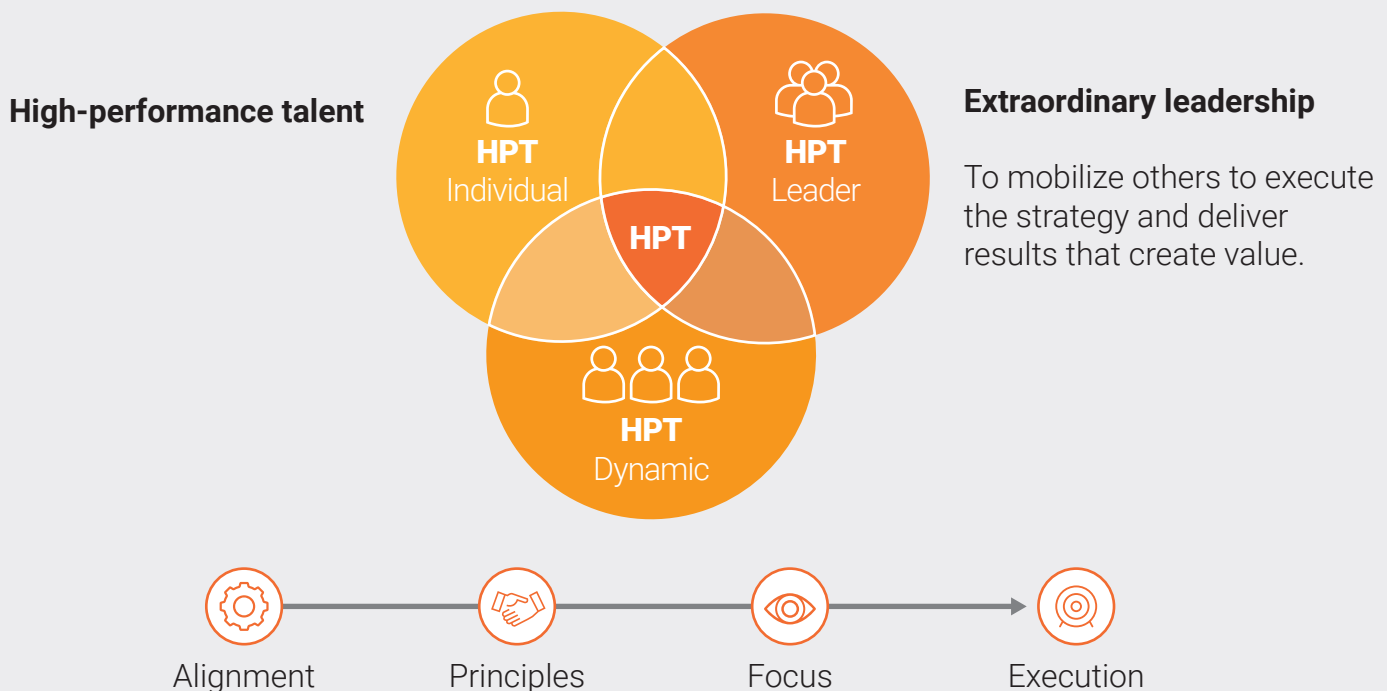
But in our view, the term has a specific definition. A team is not merely a group of people working together, nor is it an organization that shares a common vision and a desire to collaborate. Rather, a team is a small number of people—fewer than, say, 20—who possess complementary knowledge and skills and who demonstrate distinctive personal characteristics and behaviors.

In particular, team members:

- Operate at a high level of interdependence—relying on each other to execute a strategy successfully.
- Share authority and responsibility for self-management. For instance, team members know their roles and don't require close management to carry out their tasks.
- View themselves as accountable for the team's collective performance—not just for their own individual contributions to the team's efforts.
- Work intensely toward a common goal and a shared reward.

It's the combination of those characteristics that enables a team to deliver the results that an organization moving through crisis to transformation needs.

HIGH-PERFORMING-TEAM (HPT) MODEL



THREE COMPONENTS OF BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM

To build a high-performance team, transformative leaders must attend to three core components: talent, leadership, and the team dynamic. Let's take a closer look at each.



TALENT: Putting the right people in the right roles

Transformative leaders seek out individuals who have the knowledge, skills, attitude, and motivation required to execute the mission of the team—in ways that support the organization's most-important goals.

The most-promising candidates for membership on the team will be people who are A-list players or rising stars in the organization. They are motivated as much by others' success as by their own, take responsibility for their self-development, embrace the organization's core values, and have a strong sense of purpose aligned with the organization's purpose with regard to why the organization exists and how it serves its stakeholders.



LEADERSHIP: Mobilizing the team to deliver results

It's not enough to just gather individuals who fit the bill. The person heading up the team will have to lead the members in a unified, coordinated way, with the goal of generating maximum value from the team's collective efforts.

To achieve this, the team leader must understand and be committed to the strategic direction spelled out for the organization and for the team itself. The team leader must also know how to engage with team members in ways that move them in the stated direction. To do that, the leader must understand the motive profile of each member, their preferred rewards, and strengths and weaknesses. The leader then knits these individuals together and coaches them to create the value the organization needs. And the leader keeps the team focused on those activities that maximally contribute to delivering value.



DYNAMIC: Creating a culture of excellence

Transformative leaders guide team members to behave in ways that nurture healthy dynamics when it comes to the relationships between members of the team as well as organizational structures, policies, markets, products, and services.

The team must ultimately manage itself such that those dynamic elements work together to create strong and sustainable energy, engender solid commitment, cause laser-sharp focus, and elicit passion for ongoing improvement. As a result, the team will be able to keep delivering on its objectives—not just during the current crisis but also in crises that may erupt in the future. And its collective performance will prove greater than the sum of individual members' contributions.

High-performing
teams don't
just happen.

Transformative leaders play a central role in creating them and maximizing their impact.

Such leaders take a disciplined approach that makes sure the right people are in the right roles and that they're aligned with the right goals. Leaders also proactively set up the conditions that will enable the team to ultimately deliver results the organization needs and actively enable each team member. Such leaders thus unleash the full potential of their organizations' human capital.

Yes, building and then leading a high-performing team embody hard work. But leaders can't afford to shy away from the effort—especially when transformation is essential for helping their organization not only emerge stronger than ever after a crisis but also sustain that performance far into the future.

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ABOUT US

For nearly forty years, AlixPartners has helped businesses around the world respond quickly and decisively to their most critical challenges – circumstances as diverse as urgent performance improvement, accelerated transformation, complex restructuring and risk mitigation.

These are the moments when everything is on the line – a sudden shift in the market, an unexpected performance decline, a time-sensitive deal, a fork-in-the-road decision. But it's not what we do that makes a difference, it's how we do it.

Tackling situations when time is of the essence is part of our DNA – so we adopt an action-oriented approach at all times. We work in small, highly qualified teams with specific industry and functional expertise, and we operate at pace, moving quickly from analysis to implementation. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our clients until the job is done, and only measure our success in terms of the results we deliver.

Our approach enables us to help our clients confront and overcome truly future-defining challenges. We partner with you to make the right decisions and take the right actions. And we are right by your side. When it really matters.

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