

DREXLER / SIBBET TEAM PERFORMANCE MODEL

A guide to high-performing teams

In today's dynamic business landscape, high-performing teams are crucial for achieving organizational success. The **Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model** provides a structured framework for understanding and guiding team development. This model, developed by Allan Drexler, David Sibbet, and Russ Forrester, outlines the predictable stages that teams go through as they form, evolve, and ultimately achieve high performance. This article offers a detailed exploration of the Drexler/Sibbet model, its relevance, implementation, benefits, and real-world examples.

Understanding the Drexler/Sibbet Model

The Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model is a visual and conceptual tool that maps the stages of team development from formation to sustained high performance. It's often depicted as a journey or a roadmap, emphasizing the sequential nature of team growth. The model highlights the importance of addressing key questions and challenges at each stage to ensure smooth progression. It proposes that a team must successfully navigate each of the following stages in order to reach peak performance:

- **Orientation ('Why'):** This initial stage focuses on creating a shared sense of purpose and understanding *why* the team exists. Members need to understand the overall goals, objectives, and context of the team's mission. The key question to address here is: *Why are we here?*
- **Trust Building ('Who'):** Once the 'why' is clear, the focus shifts to building trust and relationships among team members. Understanding each other's roles, skills, and working styles is crucial. This stage addresses the question: *Who are you?*
- **Goal Clarification ('What'):** With a foundation of trust in place, the team can begin to clarify specific goals and objectives. This involves defining *what* the team needs to achieve and establishing clear performance metrics. The driving question is: *What are we doing?*
- **Commitment ('How'):** This stage focuses on developing a plan of action and deciding *how* the team will achieve its goals. It involves assigning roles, establishing processes, and allocating resources. The central question here is: *How will we do it?*
- **Implementation ('Wow!'):** This is the action-oriented stage where the team executes its plan and begins to see results. It's a time of intense collaboration, problem-solving, and learning. The exclamation *Wow!* signifies the positive energy and momentum generated by achieving milestones.
- **High Performance ('Why Bother?'):** This final stage represents sustained high performance, characterized by continuous improvement, innovation, and a strong sense of shared purpose.

The question *Why bother?* is not a question of giving up, but rather a challenge to continually seek new and improved ways of doing things and to avoid complacency.

Relevance in the Corporate World

In the fast-paced and competitive corporate environment, effective teamwork is essential for driving innovation, improving productivity, and achieving strategic objectives. The Drexler/Sibbet model provides a valuable framework for:

- **Guiding Team Formation:** The model helps organizations form teams with a clear understanding of the stages they will need to navigate.
- **Diagnosing Team Challenges:** It enables leaders to identify the root causes of team dysfunction and address them proactively.
- **Facilitating Team Development:** It provides a roadmap for facilitating team growth and enhancing performance over time.
- **Improving Communication:** By highlighting the key questions at each stage, the model encourages open and honest communication among team members.
- **Enhancing Collaboration:** It fosters a culture of collaboration and shared accountability, leading to better outcomes.

Implementation in Organizations

Implementing the Drexler/Sibbet model typically involves the following steps:

1. **Assessment:** Begin by assessing the current stage of team development. This can be done through surveys, interviews, or facilitated discussions.
2. **Education:** Educate team members and leaders about the Drexler/Sibbet model and its principles.
3. **Facilitation:** Use the model as a framework for facilitating team meetings and discussions. Encourage team members to address the key questions at each stage.
4. **Intervention:** Develop targeted interventions to address specific challenges or roadblocks. This may involve team-building activities, conflict resolution, or process improvement initiatives.
5. **Monitoring:** Continuously monitor team progress and adjust the implementation strategy as needed.

Specific tools and techniques that are used in the implementation of the model include:

- **Visual Roadmaps:** Create visual representations of the model to help team members understand the stages of development.
- **Facilitation Guides:** Develop facilitation guides to help leaders lead team discussions and activities.
- **Assessment Tools:** Use surveys and questionnaires to assess team progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Team Charters:** Develop team charters that outline the team's purpose, goals, and operating principles.

Benefits of Using the Model

The Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model offers several key benefits:

- **Improved Team Performance:** By providing a clear roadmap for team development, the model helps teams achieve higher levels of performance.
- **Enhanced Communication:** It promotes open and honest communication among team members, leading to better understanding and collaboration.
- **Increased Trust:** It fosters a culture of trust and mutual respect, which is essential for effective teamwork.
- **Reduced Conflict:** It helps teams address conflicts constructively and proactively, preventing them from escalating.
- **Greater Efficiency:** By streamlining processes and improving coordination, the model helps teams work more efficiently.

Real-World Examples

Here are a few examples of how the Drexler/Sibbet model has been implemented in corporate settings:

- **Software Development Company:** A software development company used the model to improve the performance of its agile development teams. By addressing the 'why' and 'who' stages effectively, the company was able to build more cohesive and productive teams, resulting in faster development cycles and higher quality software.
- **Marketing Agency:** A marketing agency used the model to improve collaboration between its creative and account management teams. By clarifying goals and establishing clear roles and responsibilities, the agency was able to improve communication and reduce conflict, resulting in more successful marketing campaigns.
- **Manufacturing Plant:** A manufacturing plant used the model to improve the performance of its production teams. By empowering team members to identify and solve problems, the plant was able to increase efficiency and reduce waste, resulting in significant cost savings.

Conclusion

The Drexler/Sibbet Team Performance Model offers a valuable framework for understanding and guiding team development. By understanding the stages of team growth and addressing the key questions at each stage, organizations can build more effective and high-performing teams. Implementing the model requires a commitment to education, facilitation, and continuous improvement. However, the benefits of using the model, including improved team performance, enhanced communication, and increased trust, make it a worthwhile investment for any organization seeking to improve its teamwork.