

# THE 5 PRINCIPALS ALL WINNING TEAMS HAVE



*The Need for Agility – Adaptability & Alignment have never been made more apparent as a critical tool kit for survival than during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

We have never run a planning conference or training session where the participants struggled to articulate the attributes required for a team to be successful. However, the key is to put the theory into practice. What follows are five team principles any team requires in order to have sustained success. They provide a framework and filter to assess the current performance of any team.

## **PRINCIPLE 1:**

***A UNITED and AGILE team that understands and responds urgently to the World around them (internally and externally)***

Disunity kills teams. You just need to be an observer of politics to witness Political Parties unravelling publicly. Likewise, being slow to respond to evolving trends, threats and opportunities is almost always a precursor to failure.

Unity and agility are cultural issues which start with the Leadership Team and cascade down throughout the entire organisation. It is crucial to reward, recognise and celebrate the actions and behaviours which support team unity, so it helps affirm and showcase the desired team way of doing things. It is important to symbolise agility as being a key ingredient for a team's success, including behaviours, such as risk taking, innovation, acting decisively on feedback received or problems identified.

Disunity in any form cannot be tolerated, and needs to be acted on when it occurs, no matter how well intended. This is not to discourage robust debate and different thinking. In fact, diversity of thinking and views is critical to a team's success.

## PRINCIPLE 2:

*An authentic STORY, which is owned, consistent and fundamentally believed by the team, and apparent to all stakeholders. One Message – Many Voices – Locally Applied*

To put it simply, marketing spin that is simply not true will kill a team's credibility. What is promised up front has to be what is delivered. The lived experience reveals the true culture and values of any team.

In this era of rapid and easily accessible storytelling (eg: Blogs / online forums / Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / AirBNB, Trip Advisor); consumers have ready access to the sharing their lived experience. We live in a story sharing world.

The power of story sharing has shifted from mainstream media to the consumer community. It is often suggested that more than 8 out of 10 people will believe the story of a perfect stranger above any marketing campaign put out by an organisation.

**The test of authenticity of any team lies with five simple filters:**

- 1. You're upfront promise has to be the lived experience.** Take note tradesmen, when you promise to be at a client's premises at a particular time, and you don't front and do not call to apologise, your word is not authentic, thus your personal Brand is damaged.
- 2. Every Interaction Counts.** Go no further than the recent high profile example of United Airways and how they dealt with the removal of a passenger on a flight they had over booked! There is nothing they could currently say or do that will rebuild their brand in the near term.
- 3. Brand Yourself.** The way you portray yourself and your team, the language you use, your qualities, benefits, way of doing things all help provide a message, and showcases your team culture.

4. **Develop a Common Story.** Just when you get sick of saying something, some people are just starting to get it. A common longitudinal story that is consistent and shared many times is crucial. The story of your point of difference, and your story of why has to be compelling, and believed by all team members, but above all it has to be apparent to stakeholders outside of the team.
5. **Own Your Own Story** or Someone Else Will. People are talking about you and your team now. How you reward, recognise and showcase what you stand for and believe is your responsibility. Ignore this at your peril.



## PRINCIPLE 3:

*An unrelenting focus and appetite for EXCELLENCE. Good – Better – Best Mind-set You cannot pretend to be good. The basic platform for any team has to be one of continuous improvement.*

**Operational Excellence means attaining a position of advantage through the superior execution of team dynamics and disciplines. Excellence presents itself through:**

1. Extraordinary execution
2. Excellent reliable quality (zero errors, omissions, duplications, wasted time and effort)
3. Swift dependable and consistent service – performance
4. Costs being driven down relentlessly
5. Ease of doing business (simple, hassle free service delivery)
6. Operational Disciplines are observed and maintained with an external world focus (allows for unintended consequences to be dealt with)
7. Enthusiastic, friendly, knowledgeable, connected, confident and talented staff (this is something you feel....your culture).

Teams are constantly juggling with the performance needs of today, with the desired future state. Hence a constant focus on PROGRESS has to form part of any teams DNA. The first rule of excellence and its achievement is it has to be defined. Without an agreed definition and method of monitoring and measuring, it can never be achieved.



## PRINCIPLE 4:

***A TEAM CULTURE which exudes confidence, a belief in colleagues, a can do attitude and a passion for the team.***

The old saying of “If you think you can, you are absolutely right, but if you think you can’t, you are absolutely right” is always true. How any team thinks, acts and behaves is central to performance. A team always achieves more if it is confident. It is important to distinguish between the ‘hygiene factors’ required for any team to perform, and the motivating factors, the latter being the “x” factor difference between the teams that excel and those teams which simply just try hard.

Hygiene Factors include clear roles, job descriptions and performance measures, which must be in place for a team to perform, but should not be confused with Motivators. Motivators include a feeling of achievement, responsibility, recognition for achievements, a feeling of autonomy, and being a respected and valued member of a team.

***“Never let someone who has done nothing tell you to do anything!”***  
***- Al Pacino***



## PRINCIPLE 5:

***Leadership which is TRUSTED and RESPECTED and above all can articulate a compelling vision and role models the desired team culture WALKS THE TALK***

Once a leader loses their integrity, it can never be restored. Trust and Respect is everything for a leader to be effective. Leadership is not a competency, but the some part of how a person responsible for a team communicates, coaches, mentors and supervisors their team.

- Mentoring is all about the FROM and TO Quest. It involves the dynamic of helping a team or individual change or progress from one standard of performance to another.
- Coaching focuses on ensuring performance is met, achieved and sustained
- Supervision deals with the day to day issues.

A leader cannot sustain all three in equal amounts of time and effort. Often the time and effort which goes into supervision comes at a cost of mentoring, and vice versa. Understanding the difference is important, as too often a leader becomes consumed with supervision which hampers progress to a future state.

**The L5 Leadership Model is a good way to check in with one's leadership priorities**

**L1:-** Leadership Starts From Within

**L2:-** Leadership is about Influencing Others

**L3:-** Leadership develops an environment for excellence

**L4:-** Leadership builds professionalism and management capability

**L5:-** Leadership inspires leadership actions and aspirations in others

## CONCLUSION

As always, our challenge is for you to rate yourself against our principles, formulate your own formula, and apply one or two key actions over the next 100 days. These principles are only our suggestions. If one of these principles are not in place to an acceptable level, our experience is performance always falls away. What is your formula?





## **FACTA NON VERBA, DEEDS NOT WORDS**

David Stewart is the Principal of RYP International and has been an international thought leader in Team Culture and High Performance for over 30 Years. He has a Masters in Business Leadership, a Bachelor of Education and a Graduate Diploma in Sports Science. You can contact him via Email:

E: [dstewart@rypinternational.com](mailto:dstewart@rypinternational.com)

W: [www.rypinternational.com](http://www.rypinternational.com)