

MANAGER MOMENTS™

HOW TO BUILD A HIGH-PERFORMING TEAM



LEADER'S GUIDE

PREVIEW



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NOTES

MANAGER MOMENTS

How to Build a High-Performing Team

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, you're a team leader or manager who is trying to encourage, support, and bring out the best in your employees. The good news is that you've come to the right place!

Employees bring their individual strengths to a team. They also bring their unique perspectives, values, beliefs, generational differences, and personalities. Bringing out the best in everyone and building on strengths for the common good of the team and the organization, is what building a high-performing team is all about.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

MANAGER MOMENTS: How to Build a High-Performing Team is a micro-learning series that delivers short blasts of practical wisdom on a variety of team topics. It explains the natural stages of a team and enables managers to take their team to a higher level.

Resources

The *Team Member Assessment* and the *Manager's Tally Sheet* referenced in *MANAGER MOMENTS: How to Assess Strengths and Needs (module 1)* are included at the back of this Guide.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Modules

MANAGER MOMENTS is a flexible program designed to meet your unique time requirements, learning objectives and learning style. There are seven modules in this series; this Manager's Guide is organized by topic so you can focus on the modules you need:

1. How to Assess Team Strengths and Needs (7:15 minutes)
2. How to Build Team Unity (6:40 minutes)
3. How to Diagnose Team Problems (7:33 minutes)
4. How to Improve Team Communication (6:40 minutes)
5. How to Mediate a Dispute (7:30 minutes)
6. How to Restore Team Unity (7:35 minutes)
7. Understanding the Stages of a Team (6:33 minutes)

Forms of Study

Interactive Self-Study – Use this manager's guide in conjunction with the Manager Moments video modules. Work through the manager's guide in your own time and at your own pace. Keep it on hand as a ready reference.

Colleague Study – Approach a colleague or two and schedule a 20- to 30-minute work session or lunch to get together to view the film and discuss the reflection questions included in this Manager's Guide. Compare and share ideas and reactions with your colleagues for more powerful learning.

Workshop Training – Customize a group workshop according to the needs of your team. Give each member a manager's guide for reference during the session and to keep as a helpful resource.

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Module 1: How to Assess Team Strengths and Needs

Is your team strong? Or, is it troubled, stalled, or simply going through the motions? This module uses the characteristics of a high-performing team to help you assess your team's strengths and needs—which is the first step toward building a high-performing team.

STEP ONE

Ask your team to assess strengths/needs.

- Explain the benefits of a high-performing team.
- Ask for honesty: "I want you to thoughtfully consider..."
- Ask for confidentiality and anonymity.
- Give them permission to be honest by explaining that you won't take anything they say personally.
- Distribute the assessment.

STEP TWO

Tally the results.

- The Tally Sheet is organized by Seven Characteristics of High-Performing Teams: Clearly defined roles; Clear and common vision; High level of communication; Strong sense of team unity; High level of trust; High level of support; and Team accountability.
- Use the Manager's Tally Sheet to identify strengths and needs.
- Separate yourself from the Results.

It doesn't matter if you see things differently—your team members' perception of the team is their reality.

STEP THREE

Share the results.

- Share strengths first and then needs.
- Keep your personal opinion out of it.
- Separate yourself from the Results.

STEP FOUR

Create an Improvement Plan.

- Start with yourself. What will you do?
- Ask the team for ideas.
- Don't forget your strengths. How can you build on them?
- Ask team members for their opinions.
- If you have a troubled team or a team with low trust:
 - Discuss benefits.
 - Set ground rules.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 1 Reflections:

- Think about your team. What do you see as strengths? Needs?
- What do you think your team members might say? Why?
- Do you anticipate any resistance for trying to improve/increase team effectiveness? If so, how will you handle it?

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Module 2: How to Build Team Unity

Team unity is one of the cornerstones of a high performing team, and the efforts of a unified team benefit you and your company. But, a unified team also benefits its team members by providing them with some of their most basic emotional needs:

- The Need to Achieve.
- The Need to Belong.
- The Need to Contribute.

Because we all value each of these needs differently, it's up to you to maintain a balance on your team.

The Need to Achieve

Establish goals.

- Employees who value Achievement highly will work hard to meet their goals because they don't want to let the team down.
- Establish team goals, and then individual goals, so everyone understands their part.
 - **Make sure goals are** specific, measurable and have a time associated with them so everyone is accountable.
- Sets goals to:
 - Provide direction.
 - Help everyone stay on track.

The Need to Belong

Define team expectations.

Employees who value Belonging highly flourish when team members encourage and respect one another, when they feel comfortable sharing their opinions, and when their place on the team is valued.

- Create a *Team Bill of Rights* to build trust and respect among team members and establish expectations.
- A *Team Bill of Rights* protects everyone's rights to:
 - Be respected.
 - Be heard.
 - Try and fail.
- Defining team expectations:
 - Helps employees feel appreciated.
 - Builds a respectful and inclusive environment.

The Need to Contribute

Acknowledge work and effort.

- Acknowledge and praise team milestones and accomplishments.
- Celebrate team successes.
- Acknowledge and praise individual accomplishments.
- Address poor performance.

Remember: what gets noticed, gets repeated.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 2 Reflections:

- Think about your team.
 - Who values Achievement highly?

 - Who values Belonging highly?

 - Who values Contribution highly?

- What ideas do you have for building team unity in each area?
 - Achievement:

 - Belonging:

 - Contribution:

- Do you have specific team goals and individual goals for each team member?

- Do you consistently acknowledge good work and effort? Do you address poor performance and work habits?

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Module 3: How to Diagnose a Team Problem

Is your team in a slump? Is there a lack of energy and enthusiasm? Are your team members on edge? Or, worse – combative? The first step for solving a team problem, is identifying its source.

Team problems fall into two categories: Leader-driven and Employee-driven.

Leader-driven Problems

- Leader-driven problems include:
 - Too much or too little guidance.
 - Poor communication.
 - Lack of consequences for poor performance.
 - Poor follow-through.
- To identify whether you are the catalyst for your team problems, ask yourself these questions:
 - Do I provide each of my employees enough guidance?
 - Do all of my employees know what I expect of them?
 - Am I available to my employees?
 - Do I check in regularly with each of my employees?
 - Do I communicate regularly with my team?
 - Do I address and provide consequences for poor performance?
 - Do I reward good performance?
 - Do I follow through with what I say I will do?
 - Do I keep my promises?

Employee-driven Problems

- Employee-driven problems are due to one employee's behaviors which negatively impact the team.
- Generally, there are three types of employees that can wreak team havoc:
 - The Complainer.
 - The Lone Ranger.
 - The Steamroller.

The Complainer

- Negative about everything.
- Needs your attention.

Handling a Complainer

- State the problem, then be quiet: "I heard you complaining about..."
- Explain how complaining affects the team and state expectations.
- Give your attention: "if there's something you don't like, talk to me about it."

The Lone Ranger

- Someone with expertise and knowledge who prefers to work alone.
- More confidence in their own ideas and abilities rather than anyone else's.
- Undermine a team's efforts.
- Needs validation.

The Steamroller

- Self-appointed leader.
- Wears down team members with debate to push their own ideas.
- Needs validation.

Handling a Lone Ranger or a Steamroller

- Lone Rangers and Steamrollers believe their way is better.
- Provide validation. For example, “I appreciate your expertise” or “I appreciate your willingness to take an idea and run with it.”
- Explain how behaviors affect the team and state expectations.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 3 Reflections:

To diagnose your team problems, identify whether the problem is leader-driven or employee driven.

- If it is Leader-driven, what behaviors will you change? How?

- If it is Employee-driven, what is the problem? Do you have a Complainer, Lone Ranger, or Steamroller on the team? How will you handle it?

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Module 4: How to Improve Team Communication

Strong communication is a critical component of a high-performing team. There are three areas of team communication: Bad news, good news and the big picture.

Bad News

- Have a staff meeting so everyone hears the news at the same time.
- Tackle the topic head on.
- For rumors that aren't true, state the news, then refute it.
 - "I understand there are rumors about layoffs."
 - "Right now, there are no layoffs planned."
- For rumors that are true, state the news, then confirm it.
 - "I understand there are rumors about layoffs."
 - "As you know, Jackie and Ken in Receiving were let go last week."
 - "Right now there are no additional layoffs planned. I will try to keep you informed as much as possible."
- Answers questions.
- Recognize their feelings of uncertainty.
- Reassure them you will keep them informed as much as possible.

"I will try to keep you informed as much as possible."

You may not be able to fully disclose all the information you learn, when you learn it. But, acknowledging your employees' need to know, and committing to tell them what you can, is reassuring."

Good News

- Celebrate victories.
- Communicate good news twice:
 - Brag about your team to others; share their achievements and accomplishments.
 - Tell your team that you told others about their success.

The Big Picture

- Tell your employees what you know: about the company, the industry, trends in the field, etc.
- Share information that you receive (unless it's confidential).
- Communicate news that will enrich your employees' understanding of how their jobs fit within the company and the industry.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 4 Reflections:

- Think about when and how you receive information about the company and the industry.
 - How do team members currently receive that information?
 - Is there a better way to share it?
- How do you usually communicate bad news? Is there a better way?
- How do you usually communicate good news? Can you do more?
- How do you celebrate achievements and accomplishments?

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Module 5: How to Mediate a Dispute

When a dispute starts to brew, it can quickly develop into an emotionally-charged conflict that affects the entire team. Ideally, your team members will be able to settle the conflict without your involvement; but sometimes, the conflict becomes difficult to navigate without your help.

The important thing to remember is that your two employees are responsible for resolving their own problem. It's up to you to bring them together so they can do so.

Mediation Tips

- Set chairs in a triad so everyone is facing one another.
- Avoid small talk and set the ground rules by saying something like:
 - “I expect that you will listen to each other and not interrupt.
 - “You will each have a chance to describe the problem: ‘What’s the problem as you see it?’ ”
- Use your hand, body, and voice to maintain control.
 - Lean in, hold up your hand, look at the speaker.
 - Use your voice to regain focus.
- Keep your opinions and judgments to yourself.
 - Appear impartial.
 - Don’t nod in agreement or say you understand.
 - Don’t take sides.
- Summarize and ask if there’s anything else.
- Ask your employees for solutions and get agreement.
- Schedule a follow-up to make them accountable—and to show them you care.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 5 Reflections:

- Think about your team:
 - What conflicts have you had to mediate.

 - How did it go?

 - What could have gone better?

 - What could you have done differently?

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Module 6: How to Restore Team Unity

Are your team members out of sync lately? Is morale low. Is something going on but you can't quite put your finger on the problem? Have you noticed cliques starting to form?

Teams are made up of people which means there is an ebb and flow to the dynamics based on environment, circumstances, workload, change, time of year, relationships, stress—you name it. Much of it is out of your control. But, maintaining team unity and your reactions to the changes around you is within your control.

Remember the ABCs of Team Unity? That's your starting point.

Tips for Restoring Team Unity

- Go back to your ABCs. As part of a team, your employees have three basic needs. Ask yourself, do your team members feel:
 - A sense of Achievement?
 - A sense of Belonging?
 - That they are making a Contribution?
- A problem in any of those three areas can break down team unity. To determine where the problem is, look at each area.

Achievement

- Do you have goals? Do you need to revisit them? Does your team know what they are?
 - Are they specific or vague?
 - Are they measurable?
 - Is there a deadline or a time element?
- Does everyone understand the big picture and what is expected? If you're not sure, have a team meeting to revisit goals and the big picture.

- Do team members understand how their individual goals fit with the team goals? To be certain, have one-on-ones to connect and make sure your team members are on track.
- Is there anyone preventing the team from achieving its goals? If so, meet with the underachiever. Find out why the team member is struggling.
 - Does the team member understand the expectations?
 - Does the team member have the tools to complete the work?
 - Is it a training issue or a performance issue?

Belonging

- Are team members respectful and inclusive? Or do they think their way is best and their opinion the only one that matters?
- Are cliques forming? Or, are employees pulling away from the team to work alone?
 - If so, assign team members the opportunity to work with others.
 - Confront the problem of excluding others.
- Is it fun to be part of your team? Or has it become a daily grind?
 - Add some fun back into the work week. Be creative.

Contribution

- Are you recognizing good work?
- Remember, if your employees feel their contributions don't matter, they won't try so hard.
- Are you recognizing team members as they prefer to be recognized? Know your team members' preferences:
 - Public praise
 - One-on-one praise
 - A handwritten thank you
 - An email note of appreciation

- Are you addressing poor performance and poor work habits?
- If your team sees poor performance and poor work habits go unaddressed, they may feel you don't care so they won't either.
 - Work with team members to improve performance and correct poor work habits.
 - Raise the bar and make sure your employees know you're paying attention.

MANAGER MOMENT Module 6 Reflections:

- Think about your team.
 - Would your employees say they believe that what they do matters?
 - When is the last time you praised your team for good work and expressed appreciation for effort?
 - When is the last time you praised each team member for their contribution and expressed appreciation for effort?
 - Are there any performance problems you need to address?
 - Are there any poor work habits you need to address (for example, tardiness, being late for meetings, long lunches, or leaving early)?

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Module 7: Understanding the Stages of a Team

Would you describe your team as high-performing? Is everything clicking? If so, good for you! But, it's important to recognize that teams are always in flux. They go in and out of certain stages depending on varying circumstances.

The Stages of a Team

Forming

- A new team: all employees are newly together.
- A new employee is joining an existing team.

Storming

- The dynamics associated with a new team or a new team member as everyone tries to get to know each other and their work styles.
- Also associated with the uncertainty that accompanies organizational or department change as everyone tries to figure out their roles.

Norming

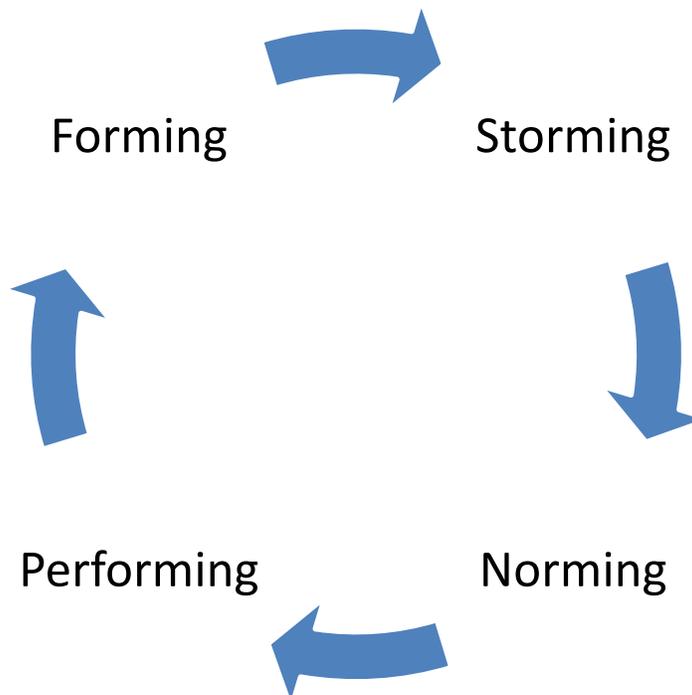
- A time when everyone is settling. The collective desire to succeed as a team replaces the feeling of uncertainty associated with storming.
- Team members have gotten comfortable with their roles.

Performing

- Your team is fully functioning.
- There is high trust, high communication, and high support.
- Team members are collaborative and share a win-win mindset.

Understanding the Stages

- The stages are cyclical. Teams slip back to forming and storming depending on circumstances:
 - New team members.
 - An organizational or departmental change.
 - Other circumstances that affect the team.
- How you help your team manage the change will determine how quickly it returns to norming and performing.
 - Communicate
 - Address uncertainty head on
 - Provide accurate information (not confidential or unsubstantiated) to stop rumors
 - Check in more frequently to build trust
 - Watch for cliques and influence alliances



MANAGER MOMENT Module 7 Reflections:

- Think about your team over the past 6 to 12 months:
 - What stages has the team gone through?
 - If there has been flux, what caused the different stages?
- What stage is your team currently in?
 - What makes you think so?
 - Do you anticipate any event that will push your team back to forming or storming? A new hire? An impending change?
- What challenges, if any, do you anticipate as you work to steer your team toward high-performing?

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