

# Growing the Servant Heart

## Leading Teams with a Servant Heart

Student Notes

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*These notes accompany the **Leading Through Others** on-line course module  
available at [academy.christian-leadership.org](http://academy.christian-leadership.org)*

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## Objectives

These notes accompany the **Leading Through Others - Leading Teams with a Servant Heart** module in the **Growing the Servant Heart** on-line course. This course is available free of charge at [academy.christian-leadership.org](http://academy.christian-leadership.org)

Leaders lead people and more often than not those people are organised into teams of some description. Teams vary in size, in character, in duration, in purpose and objective. However, there are certain things that are common to all teams, not least the leadership needs they have in order to achieve their full potential. This lesson focuses on those needs from the perspective of Christ – centred servant leadership, with the goal of enabling the team leader to enable their team to achieve its full potential in God’s service.

A team comprises a group of people but it is a common mistake to assume that a group is a team just because they have been brought together. The members may individually be highly competent. However, unless work is done to bring them together as a team, working collaboratively to achieve a common goal which is equally owned by all, they will not be successful. How often is this seen on a sports field and yet in church and organisational situations it is most times completely ignored. As a servant leader it is the leader’s job to bring the group members together into a cohesive, collaborative unit that is able to achieve its goals. As Christ-centred leaders it’s our job to do this in a way that glorifies God and exhibits the character of Christ.

The core of our study on teams is based on the work of Pat MacMillan who identified six characteristics which are common to teams that are highly effective. Pat MacMillan is a Christian who is expert in leadership and team development and who works with both secular and Christian organisations. These six team characteristics truly reflect a servant heart on the part of both the leader and the team members.

The **Growing the Servant Heart** programme is about providing practical tools to help the Christian leader function day-to-day, as such the tools and approaches have been selected because they are supportive of the values and objectives of the Christ-centred servant leader.

At the end of this lesson, as the student, you will have:

- Considered the nature and lifecycle of a team.
- Examined six essential characteristics required for a team to be effective.
- Considered the make-up of an effective team.

## Prerequisites

Completion of **The Jesus Model** and **Leading through Insight** modules of the **Growing the Servant Heart** on-line leadership programme. These can be found at [academy.christian-leadership.org](http://academy.christian-leadership.org)

## Helpful Books

**The Performance Factor – Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork** by Pat MacMillan. Published by Broadman and Holman Publishers, ISBN 080542375-3.

This is a challenging, informative and entertaining book to read. It offers deep insights into the nature of a team. It considers what it takes to develop a cohesive and collaborative body of people

who jointly own their common goal. A group of people who will work together to that end and so fulfil their potential. It's not about command and control, but it is about approaches that will fulfil the leadership objectives of the Christ-centred servant leader. The content of this book forms the core of this session and so it is an essential read that will help you further develop the concepts discussed in this lesson.

## Independence or Interdependence

As we begin our consideration of teams it's worth spending a little while looking at the Bible to see what we can learn about people in this regard. Are people designed by God to exist and work in complete independence or, did he make mankind to be interdependent upon each other?

We read in Genesis 1: 26

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Genesis 1:26*

Here we learn that God declares that man was modelled on God and that was his intent. We should note that God considers himself to be plural – he says “let **US** make them in **OUR** image”. We know this to refer to his triune nature, the three distinct persons of the Trinity in one single God; a mystery to us. However, we do see the three persons of the Godhead existing together, communicating with each other and collaboratively functioning together, each performing their specific role in God's economy. Mankind is made in that image.

We see also that God intended man to have dominion over the world, collectively, together – “let **THEM** have dominion....”

It should be no surprise then, when in Genesis 2 we discover that in order for his creation to be good the man, Adam, needs a helper. “It is not good”, God says, “for the man to be alone”. And so God provides a helper for him

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18*

And this was still while creation was perfect, before the rebelliousness of Adam brought about “The Fall” and God responded with “The Curse”

In an earlier lesson we also saw how Moses took on too much for himself and was advised by Jethro to share the load.

*Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Exodus 18:17&18*

Man is both finite and quite limited in his abilities and capacity. However, God made us to live in cooperative community and equipped us with the skills required. Jethro advises Moses to share the load, to let go of being independent in attitude but live and work in interdependence with others.

Then writing to the Ephesians Paul explains how in Christ we are to be bound together and are to function as a body, in interdependence. In fact this cooperative, cohesive body is essential to a right relationship with Christ, the head of the body, and resultant spiritual growth.

*“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”*

*Ephesians 4:15&16*

Because Paul was the author of so many letters and the key player in much of the book of Acts, it’s natural to think of him as a lone hero, working independently to share the Gospel across the Roman Empire. However, a moment’s thought will remind us of how many people he had on his team, or perhaps we should say how many people were co-workers with him for Christ.

The final greetings of the letter to the Colossians are one example. Look how many people he refers to and how many people are his co-workers.

*Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. Colossians 4:7-14*

So we see that God made us not to be independent of others, a major weakness in western countries, but to exist with others in mutual interdependence. It’s clear that this interdependent nature was established by God in his creation and was one of the marks of its perfection. The fall spoiled that perfection but man is still made to live and work collaboratively, in relationship with others.

This is where teams come in to play. Because we are no longer in the perfection of creation, we must take active steps to live and work in effective interdependence. It takes effort to build a group into a team. The material we will look at in this lesson is intended to help us rise to this challenge, living out the character of Christ as Christ-centred servant leaders, leading the teams for whom we are responsible. As with the fire fighters in the illustration, in some situations teams are essential and with that the only path to a successful outcome is collaborative interdependence.

## Reflections

Before we look at teams in more detail it will be good to reflect on our experience of teams and what we think a team is about.

- **Take a Moment**
  - What teams have you been on?
  - What teams are you on?
  - On a scale of 1 – 10, where 10 is excellent and 1 is extremely poor, how would you rate them on effectiveness?
    - Why?
  
- **Take a Moment**
  - How would you define a team?
  - What do you think are the key characteristics of a team?

## Foundational Considerations

Let's just take a few moments to consider some foundational considerations about teams and team work. We'll see more of these as we work through this module.

### What is a Team?

Many people have sought to understand the nature of a team and help others develop them so let's see some of the answers they have come up with:

*"A Team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, common performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."* G. Moorhead and R.Griffin

*"Teams are not the same as groups: they need to be planned, built and maintained. A team has a distinct characteristic – it is a group working together to achieve a common purpose, and it may be composed of people drawn from different functions, departments or disciplines."* From *Business: The Ultimate Resource*

*"A Team is a group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results."* Pat MacMillan

*"A Team is a group organized to work together to accomplish a set of objectives that cannot be achieved effectively by individuals."* Anonymous

- **Take a Moment:**
  - Review these four definitions of team
    - What do you learn about the nature of a team?
    - How does this compare to your own initial definition of team?

So what have you found out about teams from these definitions?

- ***Number of People***

First there is the obvious: A team involves a number of people; exactly how many will depend upon the volume of work and range of skills and abilities required. Later we will look at the types of person an effective team needs. These types are independent of technical skills and more about personality and inherent capabilities. It's important for the team leader to ensure that he has the right mix of team members on his team and that any gaps can be covered effectively.

- ***Common Purpose***

Next we see that the members of a team have a common purpose. Again, this may seem to be an obvious statement but so often there are problems in this area. These arise because the purpose and objectives of the team have not been worked out and owned by all its members. Then personal agendas come into play. Enabling team members to all subscribe to a single common purpose is a vital task for the team leader.

- ***Complimentary and Diverse Skills***

As already observed a team is about bringing together a set of people who together are able to achieve their common goal. This means that between them, team members can bring to bear all the necessary skills and capabilities required to achieve the goal. Given that no one person is able to do everything it is obvious that each team member will be different from every other team member. Thus a team comprises a set of diverse people who are able to complement each other as they work towards achieving their common goal.

- ***Specific Method***

A team must agree exactly how they are going to work together; who does what in order to achieve their goal. Thus they will define and agree a specific method of working.

- ***Deliberately Built***

Effective teams do not emerge by chance. Chance is not a capable designer and actually resides over disharmony. It cannot achieve a thing. A team has to be deliberately built. The goals need to be understood and the diverse set of members called according to the skills and capabilities required. Even then this is not enough. Work must be done to bring this group together to mould them into a team. This is the key role of the leader. Without it, as we shall see later, a group will remain a group of individuals who, in most cases, will pull against each other.

- ***Commitment***

A definitive marker of a team is that all its members are committed. They are individually committed to achieving the goal and also committed to help each other to achieve the goal.

As we shall see, teams are not about individuals doing their own thing but about people agreeing to complete the same journey to a single destination. They agree to work collaboratively using an agreed specific method, so that as one they achieve their common purpose. No individual can achieve the goal alone they are each interdependently reliant upon the others.

- ***Mutual Accountability***

Team members choose to be accountable to each other; this also is a definitive marker of a team. They commit to achieve their part of the task not simply for their benefit but for the benefit of the whole team. So they will work in a way that enables their fellows to be able to do their part too.

- ***The Individual Cannot Achieve the Goal Alone***

Effective teams achieve things that an individual cannot do. It's why teams are used.

- ***Achieve Exceptional Results***

Properly formed, committed to each other and achieving a common and shared goal, using an agreed method, effective teams simply outperform individuals and groups of individuals. Teams are capable of astounding achievements. It's why teams are formed and deployed.

- ***Cooperation***

The essence of effective team work is collaboration and cooperation. Effective teams do not have people who try to do it alone, to do it their way in their time. That way lays failure.

At first sight Pat MacMillan's definition of a team seems to lack so much but if you read his book - **The Performance Factor** – you will discover all these other factors lie behind his initial, simple definition.

## **Team Members are Volunteers**

At first sight this doesn't seem to make sense. Surely if my boss assigns me to team I am assigned to it; I'm not a volunteer, I am instructed to join it. Let's ponder that for a moment and look at three aspects in which team members must be volunteers.

### **Alignment**

Just because you have been assigned to team does not mean that you are in tune with its purpose and goals, or even that you choose to be in tune with the team. I'm sure we have all seen people who didn't want to be there and, as the English saying goes: "they drag their feet". They don't do what is asked of them and their lack of cooperation causes problems. It is an act of voluntary choice to submit oneself to the goals of the team. It requires a deliberate act of will to choose to embark on the same journey as one's colleagues. It's not possible to force someone to commit to the destination, even if they are instructed to join the team. It is a voluntary act and it is the leader's job

to nurture his team members and lead them to that place of voluntary commitment.

### **Leadership**

The team leader may be assigned by the management but each team member has to choose to accept them as leader. Following the direction of the leader is a deliberate act of will, a voluntary choice. Thus each team member must volunteer to be led by the leader.

### **Interdependence**

In a team, each of its members is dependent upon others to do their part. More than this, each member needs the others to do their part in order to achieve success. They cannot achieve the common purpose without all the other team members. Again placing oneself in this position of mutual dependence is an act of will; a voluntary choice. So, team members who do not make that choice choose to try to succeed without the other members of the team. When they do this they cause disruption and experience frustration and failure.

### **Benefits and Risks**

#### **Synergy**

One of the great advantages of a team, as considered above, is that together an effective team can achieve more than any individual and even more than if the team members worked as individuals. This is synergy, achieving more than the sum of the parts and it's sometimes expressed as "1+1=3".

#### **Involves Risk**

As we have just observed achieving synergy requires deliberate and voluntary interdependence. This is risky. Why? Because success depends upon others. As a team member your destiny is no longer in your own hands (if ever it was) but it is now in the hands of others, your team mates. So you put at risk your success, your reputation, your rewards by voluntarily committing to rely upon the effectiveness of your co-workers.

#### **Depends upon Trust**

The risk of depending upon others is mitigated by the degree to which you trust them on two levels:

- Can they do what they say they can?
- Will they do what they say they will?

You become reliant upon their integrity and you voluntarily place yourself in that position. But this is not a one way street. Your co-workers are doing the same with regard to you. Thus everyone in a team is both vulnerable and under pressure at the same time.

Trust is the foundation of interdependence. Only when everyone in a team trusts each other can a team be truly interdependent and thus truly collaborative.

It has been observed that trust is like a bank account: Money is credited to the bank account and then that money can be drawn down and used. The problem comes when the withdrawals exceed the credits.

Similarly we have “Trust Account” and as we demonstrate our integrity (i.e. we can do what we say we can and we do the things we promise to do) others credit trust in our account. Sometimes things will go wrong and we will fail. Then we draw on the trust credited to us by others; they recognise that our failure is just a blip and let it go. Each time we fail we draw on the trust of others and if we fail too often we will overdraw and our team mates will no longer trust us.

It’s worth noting that trust is harder to win than to lose, and having lost the trust of another it’s harder to win it back than to gain it in the first place.

Our integrity is important for the effective working of the team to which we belong. For the leader it is a vital currency that must be jealously guarded.

## Groups and Teams

Before we look at the leadership needs of a team we will take a few moments to look at various types of team from the context of willingness and ability of team members to cooperate.

As we have already seen, cooperation between team members is essential for a team to be effective and the development of high levels of cooperation is a top priority of the leader. We are going to develop a chart that will show you why.

As with all good charts there are two axis. The first is the “willingness to cooperate”. As we have already discussed, team members are in fact volunteers and **willingness** to cooperate is an important factor. However, one may have all the willingness in the world but if you don’t have the “**ability** to cooperate” then it’s not much use. So these are the key axis we will use to examine team effectiveness.

This approach was taken by Pat MacMillan and he identified a number of types of groups of people, some of which could justifiably be called a team and others could not.

## Unhealthy Group Types

### The Unruly Mob

Stuck down in the left hand corner the Unruly Mob’s members have neither the willingness nor the ability to cooperate. In fact their ability and willingness would both score negatively if you measured them. They are quite simply all over the place, at best achieving nothing and worst having a negative impact on each other. Examples include groups where the members are people who have worked as individuals for years, doing things their own way, and that was OK as an individual. Force them together in a team and it all goes wrong.

### The Confused Crowd

This group want to cooperate but they don’t know how. They have great intentions but negative ability. This is perhaps because they have not been trained in working together or perhaps because the composition of team members is wrong. We will look at team member composition later.

### Warring Factions

These people have the ability to work together but they have no intention of doing so because of lack of trust, internal politics or they are just so competitive they have to beat the next guy. Their

trust accounts are empty and no-one will take the risk of being dependent upon any of the other members.

### **Individual Stars**

These are people who have the skills to cooperate but they are in it for themselves. They recognise that a little bit of cooperation can help them achieve their own personal goals. The team goals don't really come into play except in as much as they may serve the individuals. Pat MacMillan likens them to racing cyclists. They are prepared to take turns to lead the group, breaking the wind resistance for those that follow. But when it gets close to the finish they focus only on themselves as they sprint to the line. It is very rare for these teams to recognise that there are better results to be had if they collaborated more. They achieve little more together than they would if they worked independently.

Now we come to the 4 positive team types. They represent a development path and life cycle as the team grows towards achieving its full potential.

## **The Trajectory to Achieving Full Potential**

We'll now take time to look at healthy teams.

### **The Basic Group**

This is the most common form found in organisational settings. People brought together by "the boss" to set about some task. At this stage they are not working collaboratively so it's really a set of individuals and as such achieves only the sum of the individual contributions. There are two prime issues that they face which the leader must address.

- They are not aligned in outlook and objectives because members' concerns tend to be about whether the group is heading in the direction that they want to go. - Is belonging to the group in their own best interests? It may be that team members don't know each other or are uncertain of the others abilities and intent. Consequently, the members are hesitant about committing to cooperative working.
- Also they may lack the skills needed to work cooperatively and so overall it's easier for individuals to get on doing what they can do alone.

The big issue for the basic group is alignment. Are they all going in the same direction?

### **The 'Adolescent' Team**

When the team members have become convinced that their best interests are served by belong to this team they move into this stage of 'adolescence'.

As team members they have individually bought into the team's objectives and begun to get to know each other. Now they begin to focus on interpersonal concerns. The fundamental issue to be addressed now is trust. As we just discussed in a team this needs two questions answered: Have they got the necessary competence to do what is asked of them, and will they do what they say they will?

As they work together they get to know each other, understand their respective competencies and integrity. Appropriate expectations of each other are developed and trust builds up. There is greater

willingness to risk relying upon other team members and with that the team becomes more willing to work cooperatively.

### **The Learning Team**

Two things now begin to happen:

- Based on developing trust the team begins to talk about how to work together better. They tend to consider the processes they use within the team, especially ones that don't work well, they clarify roles so that everyone knows who is doing what.
- Team members begin to help each other; they become adaptable and are prepared not simply to stick to the defined process but to adapt what they do to make it easier for others to do their job.

As a result of this developing maturity and ability to cooperate, synergy begins to emerge and effectiveness increases. A concern begins to develop not simply for "my task" but the corporate success of the whole team.

### **The High Performance Team**

At this stage the team is able to balance the tensions between individual needs and team needs. They are able to clearly divide the task and operate individual roles while remaining committed to the whole task.

Founded on the maturity developed in the preceding stages the team now becomes concerned about how to do things better. This means that they are able to assess their own performance, and that implicitly means the performance of individuals as well as the team as a whole. As they work out how to do it better, the overall performance of the team continues to increase to a place well beyond that which was achieved by the same people when they were still a "Basic Group".

### **Team Performance**

Pat MacMillan sets out these group and team types based on his experience. They are not an attempt to set out some kind of theory but are a recognition of observed, practical realities.

The Basic group is the most common form of team but its performance is only that of a set of individuals getting on with their own jobs.

The negative types are essentially counterproductive and their members end up working against each other and so their performance is worse than if the individuals worked alone, sometimes considerably worse.

The positive types can properly be called a team according to any of the definitions we considered and once they have moved beyond adolescence, performance becomes greater than the Basic Group; the sum of the parts. This is synergy. As they develop into The High Performance Team, achievement significantly outstrips that of the Basic Group.

### **Achieving One's Full Potential**

The goal of the servant leader is that the individuals they lead should achieve their full potential. They can achieve their full potential as an individual but even this is far less than their full potential

as a member of a High Performance Team. So it's easy to see that developing their team along this path is a priority for the Christ-centred servant leader.

More than this, the outlook of a High Performance Team is that of serving fellow team members as together they seek to fulfil the common and shared purpose. In short it inherently develops the servant character in every team member and this character works out in practice. This too is a goal of the Christ-centred servant leader, to grow more Christ-centred servant leaders.

## Reflections

- **Take a Moment:**
  - How do you react to what we have just discussed?
  - In this spectrum of groups and teams, where would you honestly place the team or teams to which you currently belong?
  
- **Take a Moment**
  - Review the nature of the Christ-Centred Servant Leader we discovered in the first module – **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom**
  - Identify the characteristics of a High Performance Team resulting from its growth path through the healthy team types.
  - What do you discover when you compare them?

You see a significant similarity when you consider the nature of a High Performance Team, as described by Pat MacMillan, against the characteristics of a Christ-centred servant leader. The character and heart of the servant leader on the part of team members is key to the team achieving its full potential. If you want to consider the stages of development further I recommend that you read Pat MacMillan's book: **The Performance Factor**.

## The Characteristics of a High Performance Team

Having overviewed team types and considered how they perform we have seen that there is a way for a group of people to work so cohesively and collaboratively that they are capable of extraordinary achievement. This way enables them to achieve their full potential, which is the goal of the servant leader.

Now we can develop some of the things we have learned about teams and examine the characteristics of a team that achieves its full potential. Pat MacMillan identifies six characteristics. We will summarise these here and then look at each in more detail in turn.

### Common Purpose

A team needs a clearly defined purpose that is understood by all team members and to which they each subscribe and own. Without this, confusion reigns because no one knows what they are seeking to accomplish. It's why they are all there in the first place. This adoption and ownership of the shared, common purpose ensures everyone is pulling in the same direction and it's called "alignment".

### Crystal Clear Roles

For any system to work its parts must have specific functions which do not clash and enable it to do exactly what is needed. The same is true of a team. Clearly defined roles for each member are

required such that between them they cover all the activity that is needed. This doesn't happen by accident, it needs careful consideration and design. This is often a difficult thing to achieve.

### Accepted Leadership

Competent leadership is essential to keep the team on track; to keep it aligned and collaborating. As we discussed earlier, team members are volunteers and they volunteer to be led, to follow the leader. A leader can be assigned, but unless the members of the team choose to accept them, that leader will be ineffective. In the previous lesson, **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader**, we discovered that being honest, forward-looking, inspiring, competent and spiritually mature are characteristics required in a leader by those who accept their leadership.

### Effective Processes

In order for team members with clearly defined roles to work effectively they must have effective processes. These processes answer the question: "Who does what, when, where and how?" But these are not simply the technical processes required for the individuals to fulfil their technical function but about how the team works together. They include things like how decisions are made; how meetings are run; how problems are solved; how progress is monitored and performance improved and so forth.

### Solid Relationships

This is not about being best friends, it is about understanding each other in terms of what each team member brings to the common task. It is about understanding competencies and having high levels of trust. These are things that get the team through the bad days; the crisis and the tough times. The best and most effective teams are diverse in terms of the character and capabilities of their members – i.e. they are different, sometimes very different. This means that deep friendships all round are very unlikely, in fact such diversity can lead to tensions. Solid, well founded relationships enable the team to deal with those tensions, leveraging the resultant creativity without allowing the potential conflicts to become destructive.

### Excellent Communications

This is the oil that enables teams to work. Excellent communications enables misunderstandings to be minimised, problems to be clearly explained and shared and ideas to flow.

This is so important that next module -**Leading Through Relationships** – will focus on this. Consequently, we will not examine the topic further in this lesson.

It is these six characteristics that bind the team together and enable it to achieve exceptional things. We will now take a look at these characteristics in more detail.

## Clear and Common Purpose

### Opening Reflections

- **Take a Moment:**
  - Before we proceed, what do you think is the function of "Purpose" for a team?
  - What do you think are the necessary qualities for a Purpose to be effective in its function?

## The Purpose of a Team

It may seem to be an obvious statement but teams that have no clear purpose always fail to achieve. Why? Because teams are defined by their purpose and their purpose defines what they are to achieve. Therefore, teams with no purpose can never achieve anything, they are pointless. Teams with no clearly expressed purpose never know if they have accomplished what they think is their goal and each individual member will have their own version of what that goal is.

Believe it or not many teams have no clearly defined purpose and therefore have no idea what they are about. Teams are not an end in themselves their purpose is to achieve some goal and that goal needs to be clear, understood and accepted by the team members. Only then can the team's members agree what their purpose is and achieve that purpose. Bringing about this common view is the responsibility of the leader and for the servant leader it is key to enabling team members to achieve their full potential.

There is a trap into which the leader can fall: That is to believe that because the purpose is clear to them that it must be obvious to the whole team. It takes work to achieve the commonality of purpose and unless that work is undertaken, the purpose, which may be clear to you as the leader, will not be clear to the team members.

## The Most Important Factor

A clear and common purpose is the most important factor determining successful outcomes for the team. It is the reason that the team members choose to cooperate, to work together. As individuals they want the outcome and recognise that they need to work together to achieve it. Consequently they are prepared to subordinate themselves to the team goal and work cooperatively in order to achieve it.

If the purpose is the reason "Why?" for the team, then it is the purpose that draws the team together. More than this, it is the fact that members share the same purpose that holds them together when the going gets tough. That is when the purpose needs to be clear, understood and owned. Unless it is, the team will at best underperform when it gets tough and at worst, give up. This is because "***an ill-defined team purpose sows the seeds of confusion and conflict***" (Pat MacMillan) and that is in the easy times, so imagine how that confusion and conflict becomes dominant when things are difficult.

## Alignment – A Unified Intention

Enabling team members to pull in the same direction, working towards the same end with a "unified intention" to achieve the same goal, the team purpose, is called alignment. This means that team members have agreed to the importance of the team purpose because it lines up with their individual goals. They recognise, therefore, that if the team succeeds in achieving its goals then they will also succeed in achieving their goals.

Each team member has a personal and individual journey to complete to work through the alignment of their personal goals with those of the team. For some this may be a bigger issue than for others, but it is the leader's responsibility to enable team members to complete that journey.

For some a lack of alignment will lead to frustration and anger as their goals are not met. For others it leads to apathy. In either case the individuals will not be fulfilling their potential. In both cases they

will have a negative impact on other team members because they are not all on the “same page”. They will be unable to contribute effectively to achieving the team purpose. In some cases they may be a toxic influence, disrupting the cooperation of their fellow team members.

Alignment cannot be achieved by grand speeches and motivational talks. It must be won, one person at a time as they work through their issues and come to own the team’s common purpose for themselves. This takes time but if they cannot arrive in that place then, for the benefit of the team, they need to step aside in favour of someone who does identify with the team’s purpose.

## Owning the Purpose

In order for the team to own the purpose they need to contribute to its formulation. This is best done in workshop format. This allows the team to examine the purpose in detail, reflect upon and resolve the issues that arise and place their mark upon it in the wording. The result is the team’s mission statement. Such processes generate ownership on the part of those who participate. Pat MacMillan outlines a process for this in “**The Performance Factor**”

Having developed an agreed statement of purpose (the mission statement) it can often be mediocre and uninspiring. Don’t be satisfied with this draft; it needs to be reviewed, evaluated and the wording refined to make it sharp, clear and inspiring.

Often a team will be working to a mission statement that has been handed down by whoever established the team. In this case the workshop should be about evaluating the given mission statement and refining the wording. The refined wording should then be offered to the people who established the team. Most times they will accept the refined statement. The benefit is ownership of the purpose by the team. This ownership is strengthened if they have contributed to the wording, even if it may seem a cosmetic change; it is their stamp of ownership. Ownership leads to energy, enthusiasm, commitment, creativity and drive.

## Essential Factors

An effective purpose must be:

- **Clear (I see it)**  
The benefits to be gained from achieving the purpose, the reward for the team members’ effort, must be clear and understandable. Because it’s clear to you as a leader do not assume it’s clear to everyone else. Refresh your memory about SMART objectives in the notes for the previous lesson – **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader**.
- **Relevant (I want it)**  
Not only must the team’s purpose be appropriate for the parent organisation but it must have relevance for the team members too. It needs to be in keeping with their needs, interests and goals. In other words the team members must want to achieve the purpose; it must motivate them to bring about the end result.
- **Significant (It’s worth it)**  
In short, the purpose must be worth the effort. Not only must it be relevant but it must be worth achieving. Most times this implies that the task will be big enough or have sufficient

impact to make the risks, hard work and effort required worthwhile.

- ***Achievable (I believe it)***

The goals must be realistic, it must be possible to achieve them otherwise no one will believe it is possible. If the team doesn't believe it is possible then they will not work towards it. A danger is that a team member who does not think that the goal is achievable will stay quiet and just go with flow. Such a person is unlikely to commit to the task and will be a weak link in the team.

- ***Urgent (I want it ... now!)***

There needs to be a sense of urgency about the task and it needs to be real. A "hyped up" urgency will be seen through and the lack of credibility will weaken the team's commitment.

A purpose with these attributes binds the team together, giving it focus. The Christ-centred servant leader is the one responsible for leading the team to establish such a clear, common and shared purpose. To do so they need to understand their people and work with them both individually and together to bring about the commitment that is needed.

## Reflection

- **Take a Moment:**

- Think about the teams to which have belonged or do belong to now.
  - Do/did they have a clear purpose owned by all the members?
  - Can you write that purpose down?
  - How would you assess the team's performance?
- What do you think can be done to refine the purpose and enhance the level of ownership and commitment of each team?

- **Take a Moment**

- Review and reflect on the seven practices of a Christ-centred servant leader that we looked at in the last lesson.
- How would they work out for you, as you seek to help the team develop a shared, common purpose team?

## Crystal Clear Roles

### Opening Reflections

- **Take a Moment**

- Should team members have specific roles?
- What roles are they and why do you think that?

### Considering a Team

Much like a chess set, teams are a collection of individuals who possess different capabilities so that together they can combine to achieve something that an individual working alone cannot. In some cases they are people with individual capabilities, unique among their fellow team members, just as the chess pieces: King, and Queen are unique. In other cases they have the same essential capability

but are made different by their focus. For instance one pawn is the same as another but the scope of each is constrained by its position on the board. Thus, due to their position each has a specific role.

Similarly each member of a team performs a different role as their contribution to the achievement of the team's purpose. Those contributions must be clear to the individual concerned and everyone else in the team. If they are not clear then confusion and conflict will arise as team members either try to do the same thing or let things drop down the cracks between them. Either way the resultant dysfunction can cause a complete failure of the team to achieve its purpose.

In an organisational setting, individuals may be members of several teams playing different roles in each. So not only are crystal clear roles essential to minimise confusion and conflict in the team, they may well be needed to enable individuals to remember the appropriate role in each team.

## **Kinds of Team Roles**

From this perspective, generically there are three kinds of team role: functional or technical, formal and general.

### ***Functional Team Roles***

Functional team roles are about the functional or technical expertise of the individual team members. Many teams are cross-functional and as such are a set of people brought together because of the functional or technical contributions they can make to achieve the team's purpose. Most times the capabilities of the individuals will be clearly different and it's easy to define their roles. In some cases, like the two Bishops on the chess board, people may have interchangeable capabilities but their role is defined by some other factor. Just as one Bishop can only occupy white squares and the other black squares, these people will each have a different and specifically defined focus.

### **Formal Team Roles**

Formal team roles are not related to functional or technical capability but rather the qualities that emerge from character, strengths, skills and experience. They include roles required to allow the team to operate as a team such as: team leader, administrator, meeting facilitator and so on. It is critical that these roles are agreed not only by the individual who fulfils them but the whole team.

Care needs to be exercised to ensure that the best equipped person in the team is asked to fill such roles. This means that the leaders must know their people. One's mind is drawn back to the JoHari Window model in the earlier module – **Leading with Insight**. Selection of team members to fulfil formal roles needs to be done on the basis of matching the qualities required of the job with qualities of the individuals available. For instance the best meeting facilitator may not be the most senior manager in the team. This is why discussion, consensus and agreement are essential.

### **General Team Roles**

General team roles are really about the roles team members play in activities such as conflict resolution, problem solving, conducting meetings, process improvement, performance monitoring, initiating activities and the like. They are about how team members participate in the general interactions of the team and how the team works cooperatively. These roles are 'general' because they are needed for any team to be effective and because in some ways they represent the ground rules of the team.

## Special Team Perspectives

Specific views on team member roles, such as Belbin Team Types and Inscape's Team Dimension Inventory, come into play in the formal and general kinds of team role. Belbin and Team Dimensions are not simply about the needs of team but about the contributions that individual team member can make. We will briefly examine both of these team role schemes a little later in this lesson.

## Division of Labour

In every team sport individual team members have specific roles to play. Their purpose is to win the competition which requires them to win each match. To do this each team member must execute his assigned task. Imagine a soccer team in which there is no striker, no one to score the goals, or a Goal keeper who insists on being the striker! Between them lie the defensive players whose job is to make sure the goal keeper has an easy time and the midfield players whose job is to feed the ball to the striker. These players also have other tasks, such as marking specific members of the other team and make them ineffective in the game. The actual tasks differ dependent upon the opposition.

The division of labour within a team is critical and it is achieved as a deliberate act. It is about deploying the functional, formal and general capabilities of team members in the most effective and synergistic way. The aim is to play to the strengths of the team members, it's why they were chosen, or at least it should have been.

The scope of the roles that emerge from the division of labour must cover ALL the required team operations, leaving no gaps and discontinuities to hinder progress. The best solution will not happen by accident, in fact a division of labour that just happens will almost inevitably be the cause of the team's failure.

Functionally the division of labour may be straight forward as it's about the functional and technical competencies of individuals.

Formal and general role assignments may not be so straight forward. However, in all cases there may be factors and hidden skills that mean the obvious assignments are not the best assignments from the team perspective. Therefore, this process needs to be carried out by the team in an environment where they can freely discuss the needs of the task, the roles that are required and their individual capabilities. In the next module – **Leading Through Relationships** we will look at an approach to these and similar types of team conversation which can help teams be effective in the outcome of meetings.

There is always one final question: Challenge the process – “Is there a way we can arrange this better?”

## Team Role Qualities

From years of experience there are five qualities that Pat MacMillan recommends to be kept in mind when planning team roles. They need to be:

- **Clear**  
There is a common understanding shared by the team.

To avoid confusion and the conflict that would otherwise result, each team member must be

clear about their own roles and the roles of all other team members. The leader must provide an opportunity for the team to verify their clarity. This may need to be reviewed over time.

- **Complete**

There are no gaps left, everything is accounted for.

It's essential that the defined and assigned roles cover every aspect of the task and operation of the team. If they don't, activities and deliverables will fall between the cracks and lead to team failure. If you have watched a tennis doubles match you will have seen the times when the ball shoots between the two players of one team because each thought the other would get the ball. The risk of this happening needs to be minimised.

The problems will arise in the areas that were never discussed, so specifically check the interactions between team members and make sure they know who does what and when. Dummy run the team's processes in a workshop to make sure they really work and the role assignments are complete. Look out for what happens when things go wrong. The natural thing is to consider how things should work when it all goes well. This is only the first part of the task. The second part is to consider how things work when something goes wrong. So, identify the potential issues and test the roles against those issues, modifying them as needed.

- **Compatible**

Play to team members strengths

Roles simply need to match the individual strengths and capabilities of team members. The leader needs to get to know his people and give them opportunity to share what their strengths and capabilities are. You may be pleasantly surprised.

- **Complementary**

The defined roles work together.

Make sure that no role gets in the way of another role, preventing it from completing its task.

- **Consensual**

Everyone in the team must buy-in to the plan.

Team members need to agree with who does what. As mentioned several times, the obvious assignment of roles may not be the best that can be achieved. If it isn't then the team will not achieve exceptional performance. The Christ-centred servant leader will check this out because his goal is that each team member should achieve their full potential. Ask the "Can we do this better?" question.

## It's Our Job

There are two common attitudes to be found in an organisation "That's my job – hands off" and "That's their job – leave it to them." Neither are helpful in a team.

In a team that is aligned and pulling together, everyone is committed to the journey and sees the purpose of the team as their job. The attitude is "It's ALL or job!" The division of labour is a convenience to enable the team to achieve. Team members identify with the team and recognise that no one's job is done until the whole of the team's job is done.

Unhelpful individualistic attitudes result in some people being overloaded, some people never delivering on time and some people having too little to do.

The team attitude that "It's ALL or job!" leads to another question: "How can I help?" and a response that is to pitch in and help, having first agreed what needs to be done. This is one of the roots of exceptional performance and stems from ownership and commitment. This is a manifestation of the servant heart that the Christ-centred team member needs to develop. This works contrary to accepted attitudes about responsibility.

## The Team Risk

With the division of labour in a team comes risk because now every team member is dependent upon every other team member. No individual can succeed alone, they succeed together as a team or not at all.

The mitigation for this risk, as we discussed earlier, is trust.

For others to have trust in me I must demonstrate competence and integrity. "I can do what I say I can and I will do what I say I will." It is the Christ-centred servant leader's task to encourage and develop this trust within the team. Where this trust exists then team members will choose to cooperate. Where it does not exist they will fly solo in an attempt to mitigate the risk to their own success and the effectiveness of the team will crumble.

Essential to developing the required level of trust are well designed and properly assigned team roles. Only where these align with the assigned team members strengths and abilities are they able to do what they say they will. Poorly designed team roles, with cracks between them, will make the incumbent look incompetent, destroy trust and erode cooperation between team members.

## Reflections

- **Take a Moment**
  - Reflect upon your team
    - Are the roles well defined with no gaps? Consider all three types of role.
    - Is the team playing to its strengths?
    - To what extent do team members stick to their own jobs or do they all own the whole job.
  - How can the team do better?

- **Take a Moment**
  - Review and reflect on the seven practices of a Christ-centred servant leader that we looked at in the last lesson.
  - How would they workout for you, as you seek to help the team develop Crystal Clear Roles?

## Accepted Leadership

In accepted leadership we look at leadership from the team's point of view. This needs to be specifically considered alongside the seven leadership practices that we looked at in **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader** and then integrated with the other areas we have studied in the **Growing the Servant Heart** programme so far. As we shall see, servant leadership, and in our context, Christ-centred servant leadership is the foundation for leading effective teams.

## Opening Reflections

- **Take a Moment**
  - Reflecting on the things you have learned about Christ-centred servant leadership, why do teams have leaders?
  - What conditions are necessary for an experienced leader to actually be able to lead his team?
  - Why might a team have more than one leader?

## The Volunteer Team

For a moment consider a team in an organisation for which people are paid to work. The team is give a task and the members are required to perform within their function to accomplish that task. It's what they are paid to do and doing this requires that they do nothing more than comply with the requirements of those who pay them. Such a situation, led by compliance, generates acceptable performance but not exceptional performance.

Exceptional performance needs something more than compliance. It arises when team members are committed to the task, whereas compliance arises from one's contract of employment. Commitment is volunteered because team members have bought in to the goal, the common purpose, and they want to achieve it for themselves as much as for the organisation. They are aligned with the purpose and own it for themselves and thus they volunteer themselves to bring it about.

Volunteers need to be led, they cannot be managed. Management applies to the compliance relationship because it's about contracts and voluntary efforts cannot be covered by contracts. It is these voluntary efforts that add the extra effectiveness to the team and which deliver exceptional results.

Pat MacMillan puts it this way:

*“Volunteers are not “managed” but demand leadership capable of calling out the levels of initiative, and creativity that motivate exceptional levels of both individual and collective performance”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Serving and Empowerment**

This volunteer nature of teams means that the members must accept their leader. They voluntarily choose to follow their lead as together they seek to be exceptional. This is far more than contractual compliance, i.e. simply doing what you’re paid to do and stopping there.

As we move beyond compliance we see a mutually dependent relationship develop. In order to achieve the exceptional performance desired by the team, because they are sold out to the cause, the leader must facilitate their exceptional and creative efforts. This is so that as individuals, and as a team, they can achieve their full potential. To achieve this, the leader must serve the team, they must be a servant leader.

As the leader serves the team and delivers on what the team needs to perform the team members voluntarily give the leader the authority to lead them. They empower him, or her, to be their leader and they choose to follow them. So the team (including the leader) have moved from management by power because of relative positions to leadership by permission and influence. This is what it means to be an accepted leader. It is an entirely different dynamic and is a hallmark of a servant leader and an effective team. This is the serve/empower circle the more the leader serves the more the team empowers the leader to lead.

Conventionally empowerment is considered to be something that the leader grants to the people he leads. In our context it is also something that the team members grant to the leader. So it becomes a situation of mutual release. The leader is releasing the team members to be the best team members they can be and in turn they release the leader to be the best leader they can be.

## **The Perspectives of a Team’s Servant Leader**

Pat MacMillan summarises the attitudes required of the servant leader who leads a team:

### **They appreciate the team’s collective wisdom**

In the new model of leadership you will recall that the leader doesn’t have to have all the answers. When there is a problem or challenge they call upon the collective wisdom of the team to address the issue. This is because as a team they all own the team’s purpose and this means they all own all of the issues and can contribute to addressing them. This liberates the leader and releases the team’s capability, experience and creativity which is greatly enhanced by the team’s diversity.

### **They recognise the contribution of diversity**

Different people with different skills, different backgrounds, different experience, and different outlooks bring power to a team. Not only do they bring their functional and technical talents to the team but together their difference allow them to find better and innovative ways of working together and solving challenges. Such diversity can also cause conflict and so the leader will seek to release its benefits whilst keeping it focused on the team’s common and shared purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> The Performance Factor pp97

### **They understand that leadership is a role not a position**

As we saw in **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom**, this leads straight from the Christ-centred servant leader's character. The voluntary nature of the team draws the leader and their team closer together because they are committed to a common cause. As the leader is accepted by the team, the divisions blur and they all become the team. The leader releases team members so they can achieve their best individually and collectively while the team empowers the leader to be their leader. Thus the leader is better able to serve their team.

The servant heart is the most crucial dimension in leadership in the Kingdom as we discovered in the module **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom**.

### **They see leadership and power as something to be released and shared**

The servant leader recognises that creativity, energy, initiative and indeed leadership are attributes of every team member. His goal is to release the individual members of the team so that they can perform to the highest possible level. This is the new model of leadership at work.

As we discussed earlier in the programme, the leader gets to know his people; their strengths, weaknesses, preferences, joys and dislikes so that he knows how to release them to achieve. Such a leader will not allow his position and status to get in the way, blocking the team's achievement. They all own the common purpose.

The diversity of the team means that its members have a range of expertise and specialisms. Thus, for any given task one member may have greater insight, experience and understanding than the others, including the team leader. Consequently the most suited member, the one with expertise in this area, would be allowed to take the lead for that issue or task. In such a team an external observer can find it hard to identify the team leader because leadership flows between its members as necessary.

### **They understand the balance of the needs of the task and the needs of the team**

Achievement of the task is what the team is about but the wise leader will not allow this to dominate at the expense of needs of the team members. Just as without the task the team would not exist, without the team the task cannot be achieved. The servant leader will manage the tension between these factors and account for both, neglecting neither.

## **The Team Leader's Role**

In the previous section we considered the issue of team roles. So now it's time to look at the role of the team leader. These are directly in line with all that we have learned about leadership so far.

### **Set and Maintain the Direction**

It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that the team has a clear direction, which the team members understand and so buy-in to the journey's destination. The leader does not have to be the originator but they need to ensure there is a clear purpose owned by the team. In fact, as we have observed, the team will have greatest ownership when they have been able to devise how they express the team's destination, its purpose.

When storms strike the team, the leader will make sure they keep their direction in view. They

recognise when mid-course corrections are needed and negotiate the changes with team and those who commissioned the team.

### Manage the Borders

Every team has borders. These are the boundaries with other teams and also with the broader organisation to which they belong. The team leader negotiates with these other entities as needed to enable their team to fulfil its purpose. In more complex situations it means that the team leader must network with others, building ongoing relationships with them. This establishes the foundations of trust that are necessary.

### Facilitate the Team

Facilitation is not simply about meetings but enabling the team to make progress, overcoming the challenges that may hinder them. It is about: ensuring that individual team members have what they need and are able to complete their part of the task, bringing the collective wisdom of the team to bear on problems and challenges, resolving conflict and so on. This again means that the leader needs to know his team members.

### Negotiate with Others

The leader represents the team to those to whom the team is accountable and those who can provide necessary resources and negotiates their availability.

### Coach Team Members

The servant leader seeks to grow the people he leads, working with them to develop skills and overcome problems. We looked at coaching in **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader**. In **Exploring leadership in the Kingdom** we also saw that the leader needs to encourage spiritual growth and maturity.

## Reflections

- **Take a Moment**
  - Reflect upon your team
    - Have your team members moved from being compliant workers to volunteers?
    - If not, what do you think is blocking that growth?
    - If they have, what has brought that about?
  - How can you take the “serve /empower” cycle to the next level in your team?
  
- **Take a Moment**
  - Review and reflect on the seven practices of a Christ-centred servant leader that we looked at in the last lesson.
  - How would they workout for your team, as you seek to be an accepted leader?

## Effective Processes

### Opening Reflections

- **Take a Moment:**
  - In your view should a team have specified processes?
  - Why do you think that?

### The Recipe for Success

The mention of processes is guaranteed to make most people yawn but they exist all around us and are essential to a team being effective. Pat MacMillan defines them as:

*“A sequence of step by step actions designed to produce a desired outcome”*

In short a process is a recipe. Imagine that glorious cake that you would like to share with your loved ones, or even keep for yourself. Your first step is to find the recipe and then you follow the step-by-step instructions it contains. The result is the desired, and the desirable cake. A recipe is a process that lists the ingredients (the things you have to work with) and describes the method (the preparation and cooking steps) you will use to achieve the desired result. The recipe graphic shows a different way of looking at a recipe. It shows the sequence and identifies the required inputs and the point at which they are needed. This is more like the way one might illustrate a process flow.

Let's move on a level, we now want to prepare a banquet not just a single cake. It's a task that needs more than one person, so now we have a kitchen full of people, each preparing their assigned dishes to a specified recipe. Some make the starters, some the main courses, some the deserts, and there may be a choice of each. Main courses comprise of a number of elements and so a number of cooks may be working on each of the components of that alone.

Each member of the Kitchen team needs to know what and how many to produce, and when their dish has to be ready for service. They operate to a process for their dishes and a process to coordinate their work so the parts of meal come together at the right times. If those processes don't exist or don't work then the banquet at best is not good and at worst guests are disappointed and go hungry.

Processes are essential for any and every team to work together collaboratively, cohesively and effectively. They form a foundation that enables team members to collaborate effectively and achieve their common purpose.

### Barriers to Establishing Processes

There are four barriers that cause processes to be overlooked or ignored: lack of appreciation, lack of time, lack of design and lack of management commitment.

#### Lack of Appreciation

Where teams do not understand the value of processes they will pitch straight into their task with little thought as to what they need to do and why they are doing it. The team's efforts become disjointed and far less effective than they could be. They become more the result of hope than

design. It also means that there is no review and evaluation of effectiveness. So no lessons can be learned, no improvements can be made and the team continues to make the same mistakes time and time again, wondering why things are not going well.

This approach is 100% contrary to the outlook of the Christ-centred servant leader whose desire is that their team members achieve their full potential.

### **Lack of Time**

There is often great pressure to deliver and teams may well rush into activity. There is they say, “No time to waste! We must just get down to work and it will all work out as we go along.” Activity becomes confused with progress.

Without having thoroughly considered and planned what they need to do and how they need to do it, the team will make mistakes. Mistakes lead to the need to do things again. So, with this outlook, we are forced to find extra time to do the work again, but seldom can we make time at the outset to get it right first time. Getting it right first time is far less costly, less frustrating and more satisfying than redoing ones work.

In the telecoms industry in which I worked products went through several stages between concept and reality. For example: high level design, detailed design, implementation, testing, field trial, manufacture/deployment. A problem that did not appear until the manufacture/deployment stage was incredibly costly to resolve and required weeks or months. Whereas, had the problem been found at the design stage, there would have been virtually no cost incurred at all. It may have taken no more than an hour or so to address. We used to reckon that a problem cost 10 times more to fix at each successive stage of development. So a problem resolved during the high level design was 50 times cheaper to fix than if it had not been found until the manufacturing stage.

Upfront brain-work always pays dividends in terms of the overall job. Even though it may seem to be delaying progress, it will always shorten the overall job and improve the quality of the outcome. The Christ-centred servant leader is concerned to facilitate the fulfilment of those whom they lead. As such they will appreciate the gains to be made by taking time upfront to prepare the processes that their team members need to be effective.

### **Lack of Design**

Imagine the growth of shanty town for a moment. First a few shacks are erected, then more people come and more shacks are built, eventually there are a huge number of shacks in a random layout. Where it was once easy for the first settlers to fetch water, now they have to trudge through a maze of narrow dirty alleys. Processes that are devised as you go, or get adapted in a piecemeal fashion to accommodate things that were overlooked, stop being effective and eventually stop working at all.

Processes that just happen as things move along will never be effective. Likewise processes that get bent to accommodate changes will eventually not be effective. The first bend may be OK but after a few changes the process will be so bent out of shape that it will no longer work properly. Where this approach is taken with significant changes, parts of the process that no longer have a purpose often remain, causing work for no benefit. No one knows why they are there and no one dare remove them.

To be effective processes must be deliberately designed to achieve a specific purpose and be deliberately reviewed and systematically updated or redesigned to accommodate change. Unless this happens, processes and the team that uses them will fail. From the perspective of the Christ-centred servant leader, whose goal is that team members are able to achieve their full potential, effective processes are essential.

### **Lack of Management Commitment**

Processes liberate teams to be effective. They enable teams to monitor progress, identify the need for improvement and to take the initiative to bring about that improvement. Such freedom challenges insecure managers and leaders. They may be concerned about job security, be confused about their role, perceive a loss of control, or a host of other issues. The result is a desire to hang on to control, to remain operating in the mould of traditional, “machine-minded” management. Even a high performance team may be trapped by this because of the attitude of the other parts of the organisation with which the team interacts. The manager/leader becomes the obstacle to achievement. They become the bottleneck because nothing can happen without their involvement.

It is in this situation that the character and attitude of the servant leader comes into play as they seek to support and enable those who have such issues.

### **The Foundation for Team Work**

Processes form a foundation that allows a team to work together. They define methods and ground rules for the team, help the team to coordinate their actions and achieve the desired result. It allows each member to know what everyone else is doing. When something goes wrong it allows the team members to know exactly where they are and work out what needs to be done to recover the situation. A side effect of effective process is the growth of trust between team members.

The existence of a process also enables improvement to be achieved. By reviewing the effectiveness of the processes and how well it meets actual needs, improvements can be made and performance can be enhanced. As we have seen, this is especially important where the circumstances change. Needs often change in small stages without people really noticing. At first the process continues to work well but as the number of changes stack up it becomes less and less effective.

### **Effective Processes Enable Synergy**

For a team, synergy is achieved when the outcome brought about collectively by the members exceeds that which the same people could have brought about by working individually. Well designed and agreed processes, collectively used, are the means for achieving synergy. They enable each team member to fulfil their part in the joint endeavour so that together they can succeed. According to Pat MacMillan *“synergy is found in both work and wisdom”*.

- Work is those functional or technical activities of team members that are necessary to deliver the desired outcome. The process allows each member to fulfil their part of the task in a way that allows the other members to do the same. Well-designed processes enable the team to achieve exceptional results; that is synergy. The need for these work-processes are usually self-evident.
- Wisdom is different and the need for wisdom-processes is much less self-evident. Wisdom is the application of a team’s, knowledge, insight, character and experience. It comes into play

in areas such as planning, decision making, problem solving, conflict management, meeting management and so on. These are necessary activities within a team and they make all the difference to the team's effectiveness but they do not seem to directly contribute to the desired outcome. But consider conflict for a moment by way of example. If issues arise that generate conflict between team members then they will not work together effectively and it may well prevent the team from achieving the desired outcome, its common purpose. Similarly, if planning is not effective and problems are not solved and decision making is poor then the team will fail to achieve its objectives.

The team's wisdom-processes require as much consideration as do the technical and functional processes. Given that they are often overlooked entirely they should be given a priority.

## **Developing Effective Processes**

As we have discussed, the development of processes is a deliberate action and it needs to include the whole team, drawing on their collective expertise, experience and wisdom.

### **Identify the Necessary Processes**

The first step is to have the team consider their work and wisdom tasks and identify the processes that are needed. Some organisations may have considered this generally and have already established common processes that can be used or adapted.

### **Map Each Process**

The next task is to take each process and map it out. Take a look at the diagrammatic recipe we looked at. That is a process map (there are other ways to draw processes). It states what the desired outcome is, it identifies the necessary inputs and stages of work required. It will also identify who does what and when and what passes between each stage of the process; this is particularly important as many issues will arise where things fall down the gaps between team members.

Having sketched this out the team can then walk-through the process to identify things that are missing or wrong and they can be corrected.

### **Document Each Process**

Effectively the process sets out a set of ground rules and methods to be employed. The process needs to be documented in some manner. Memories fade quite rapidly and unless it is documented, compliance to the process will degrade just as rapidly. Process descriptions don't have to be long, if one page is sufficient to adequately describe an effective process that is all that is needed. They can be graphic or written but a combination of words and images is usually best as together they communicate effectively to more people.

Effort is also required to ensure that each team member understands the process the same way. Walking-through and rehearsing a documented process will help achieve this.

### **Evaluate the Processes**

It's important to review and evaluate the processes and decisions. This means taking time to ask and answer two key questions: "How effective is this process?" and "How can we make it more effective?" This last question is the one that underpins exceptional performance. It is an outworking

of the “**Challenging the Process**” leadership practice we discussed in the previous lesson - **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader**. It is a vital step enabling the fulfilment of potential.

*Here is a health warning: unless the process is written down it will be difficult if not impossible to effectively review it and improve it.*

When holding meetings or making decisions it is good practice to spend 5 minutes at the end evaluating the meeting or the decision process, scoring them out of 100. If the scores are logged and reviewed then it’s possible to see how things are going and measure the impact of any improvements.

## Reflections

- **Take a Moment**

*Meetings are often difficult so if you have a copy of the **Performance Factor** read the section in the **Effective Team Processes** chapter entitled “**Turning Principle into Practice – the Meeting**”*

- How do your team meetings operate? Is there an effective “process”?
- What do you think your team meeting process should be like? In this case consider the process to be the ground rules for meetings.

- **Take a Moment**

- Reflect upon your team
  - What written and unwritten processes does your team have?
  - Have you got adequate processes to cover:
    - The team’s work?
    - The team’s wisdom?
  - If not, what processes does your team need to establish?
  - Sketch out a process map for a selection of them. (Pay particular attention to the hand-off points between process stages/team members.)

- **Take a Moment**

- Review and reflect on the seven practices of a Christ-centred servant leader that we looked at in the last lesson.
- How would they workout for your team, as you seek to establish and operate effective team processes?

## Solid Relationships

### Opening Reflections

- **Take a Moment**

- In a team context what does the term “diversity” mean to you?
- In what ways might team members be different? Make a list.
  - What do you feel are the benefits and challenges that arise within your team (or a team) from each of those aspects of diversity?
  - How do you react to people exhibiting these differences?

## The Nature of Team Relationships

A team is a set of different people who relate to each other because they are all members of the team. The question is what is the nature of the relationship? Do they need to be good friends or is being good colleagues sufficient? What do you think?

Friendships are built upon commonality; shared or at least compatible interests, values and so on bring strength to friendships. The best and most effective teams are collections of individuals chosen for the differences they bring to the team; for their diverse skills, experience and outlooks; diversity brings strength to a team. This means that the foundations within the team upon which friendships can be built may be few and far between.

A team gains strength and capability from the diverse nature and backgrounds of its members, although mismanagement of this diversity can lead to strife. However, creativity and energy will flow from positively engaging the diversity within the team. When we look at vision and creativity in the last module of the programme – **Leading the Journey** - we will return to this theme.

## Christians and Diversity

Our context for **Growing the Servant Heart** is serving God in the Kingdom with a Christ-like servant heart. A result of the Gospel is that Christians are united together because we are united to Christ and we share the same indwelling Holy Spirit. As we have reflected in other modules, we are to be renewed and aligned with Christ in the attitude of our minds (Ephesians 4:23 &24) and we are now united through the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, to all be fellow citizens of the Kingdom with all God's people. We are also members of God's household (Ephesians 2:19). We have been bound together in Christ.

Thus in this one, very significant respect we have been united and have a strong and specific commonality. However, we are all on an individual journey from different places, with different backgrounds, experiences and understanding, and in some cases hurts. In short we are all different and all remain imperfect. Until we reach the conclusion of our journey, when we are ultimately united with Christ on the Last Day, we remain imperfect. This means that in our service of God we need to manage our diversity wisely and grow in love for each other.

## Addressing the Complexities of Diversity

Within a team diversity is a fact of life. Wise team builders will have deliberately sought to bring diversity into the team because of the benefits it brings. To realise these benefits team members must understand and accept the differences with a view to mutually accommodating and adapting to each other.

This means that team members accept each other as individuals and learn how to work together. We spent time considering this in the second module of the programme – **Leading with Insight**. We investigated difference due to national culture and also emotional intelligence, which is an essential skill.

It is important when learning how to work with each other that we leave stereotypes and prejudices behind. In so doing we model our behaviour on the gracious, servant character of Christ who is concerned for each of us as individuals. You may find it helpful to review the **Leading with Insight** module.

## Building Solid Relationships in a Team

The reason we need solid relationships in a team is because the team needs to work not only on the days when it all goes right and it's easy. Teams must function effectively, arguably more effectively, on the bad days, when it's all going wrong and it's hard. It's in such times of stress and difficulty that good, solid relationships are needed between all team members. That is the time when one needs to know that one can rely upon one's fellow team members. When the crisis hits it's too late to build the necessary relationships. They need to have been built beforehand.

The six essential qualities of Trust, Understanding, Acceptance, Respect, Courtesy and Mutual accountability need to be developed in order to grow solid relationships and the leader must take the lead in this:

### Trust

Trust is the bedrock which underpins the relationships in an effective, high performance team. It is an essential quality without which team members are unable to rely upon each other. This is because they subordinate themselves to the team in order to collaboratively achieve the team's purpose. This makes team members vulnerable because they give themselves to the team, so if the team fails they fail and the team fails if another member is unable to live up to their promises and commitments. Trust mitigates the risk of relying upon others. Where there is insufficient, team members will strike out alone in an attempt to achieve their goal because they trust themselves when they are unable to trust others.

We looked at the issue of trust earlier in this lesson so now we would be a good time to review that section.

### Understanding

Team members need to understand each other in order to develop mutual trust. They need to develop a clear understanding of each other's capabilities and the potential for contributing to the common purpose. As we saw when considering emotional intelligence, team members also need to develop and understanding of how each other thinks. This helps when it comes to tailoring our communications so each member enables their colleagues to respond appropriately and achieve their full potential. This becomes the ground on which effective collaboration can be built.

How can this knowledge of each other be established? Simple activities such as the *Coat-of-Arms* exercise can help. Each member of the team draws their own *Coat-of-Arms* which clearly communicates what they want others to know about them. Using the JoHari Window to assess relationships between members. Using the retirement speech exercise can be helpful. Each member prepares the speech they would hope their boss would give about them on their retirement.

Personal inventories such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and DISC, when used in a team setting, allow individuals not only to understand more about themselves, but allow team members to gain similar insights about each other. In team contexts the Belbin Team Roles Report can be also be helpful (we will look at this in a little more detail shortly). Such inventories can be invaluable in helping team members to get to know each other.

*A word of warning: Inventories such as MBTI, DISC and Belbin should be administered by qualified people. The feedback from these instruments needs to be explained and discussed with the aid of*

*someone who really understands them. Amateur use of them can cause more harm than good. If you need assistance with the use of personal inventories to help your team please contact One Another Ministries using the phone number or email provided on the Academy.Christian-Leadership web site.*

Understanding is a foundation for the trust that is necessary within a truly effective team. Where understanding does not exist then suspicion grows. Recall the Ladder of Inference which describes how our reactions are determined by what we believe. Where our beliefs are wrong, then so will our responses be wrong. Understanding those with whom we work will remove suspicions and erroneous beliefs and assumptions, replacing them with the knowledge that enables trust. Thus understanding one's team members is essential for the trust that is needed in a highly effective team.

### Acceptance

Understanding not only underpins trust but it also enables team members to accept each other, especially those who are different to us. Acceptance is the acknowledgement of who people are; how they react and respond and the benefits their difference brings to the team, so that the team can be more effective. It is more than simply acknowledging that diversity makes a wider set of tools available to reach the goal. It is about acknowledging individuals and the contribution each can bring. It is accepting who they are and how they work so that their contribution can be included and differences can deliver a significant benefit for the team.

### Respect

Respect means to honour and esteem the contribution that each team member makes to the team. It is recognising their distinct contributions and valuing both that contribution and the person making it. This second point is clearly something that would be expected in a Christian setting. Alas, as fallen people not yet at the end of the road of sanctification we will often fall short. None the less, it should be our desire and goal to accept people for who they are before God. When working in teams this, therefore, needs to be one of our spiritual objectives.

How might respect work out? Including people and thanking people, with sincerity, for their contributions is an easy way. Spiritually this needs to be the genuine outworking of heart attitudes.

As Christ-centred servant leaders we need to acknowledge individual contributions and achievements both one-to-one and publically. On this point please review the **"Encouraging the Heart"** practice we examined in the previous lesson - **The Effective Practices of a Servant Leader**.

### Courtesy

Courtesy between team members is a vital indicator of the state of relationships in a team. Courtesy is demonstrated by sincere graciousness and consideration for our team mates, especially when they are not present. The humour we use about others is an indicator of attitudes. Because it's made in jest, a negative or unloving comment is no less a true indicator of heart attitude than outright verbal assault. Jesus said *"out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."* Luke 6:45.

In diverse teams there will always be moments of conflict. However, where there are solid relationships characterised by trust, understanding, acceptance and respect, then the personal issues that arise will be quickly dealt with. This should be never more so where the servant character of Christ is evident. Where such qualities do not exist then the alternative is contempt. Then lack of

civility and courtesy will rapidly become visible on the “good days”. What then will happen on the difficult days?

### **Mutual Accountability**

Where a team understands that they succeed or fail together and that they must work collaboratively to succeed, then mutual accountability exists. “*For me to succeed we must succeed and for you to succeed we must succeed*”.

The accountability relates to one’s preparedness to do what it takes to not only do that which they have committed to do, but to ensure that others can fulfil their commitments too. Where they are having difficulty the question is “How can I help?” It’s a mutual accountability because all in the team have the same attitude towards each other.

Accountability can be difficult in individualistic cultures such as the UK and the United States because it requires individuals to decide to commit themselves to, and be reliant upon others. In collectivist cultures a mutual accountability exists within the in-group. But what about situations where the team includes members of the out-group? (Refer back to the **Gaining Cultural Insight** lesson the **Leading with Insight** module.)

### **Developing Solid Relationships**

To bring about the solid relationships in a team that enable them to overcome the bad days, the Christ-centred servant leader needs to foster the qualities and spiritual character we’ve just looked at.

Formulating these characteristics into the ground rules for the team can help achieve this. Such ground rules cannot be imposed they need to be developed collectively by the team because heart-felt ownership is required. Ground rules can then remind members of how they have agreed to behave as members of the team.

Agreement to the ground rules also gives permission to challenge those who “break the rules”. This permission is especially important when a team comprises people of varying levels of seniority. Can the junior manager challenge the Chief Executive? In such a case the Chief Executive must walk the talk and acknowledge and respond to justified challenges. They cannot override the ground rules by virtue of position and status.

An example set of ground rules to be found in Pat MacMillan’s “The Performance Factor” are:

*WE ARE OPEN AND HONEST WITH ONE ANOTHER.*

*WE TREAT EACH OTHER WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT.*

*WE LISTEN TO AND RESPECT EACH OTHER’S IDEAS AND OPINIONS.*

*WE HOLD CONFIDENCES*

*WE HONOUR OUR COMMITMENTS*

*WE SUPPORT AND INVEST IN EACH OTHER’S DEVELOPMENT*

*WE ROUTINELY CRITIQUE OUR PROCESS*

*WE HAVE FUN.*

*Note that this is expressed in the present tense because it's about what we do now, every moment. It's not a statement about what we WILL do in the future which allows wiggle-room in the mind, giving permission to avoid compliance now but promise it tomorrow.*

A leadership practice of the servant leader, we discovered in the previous lesson, is to “**Model the Way**”. Thus the Christ-centred servant leader should take every opportunity to live out the example of such ground rules. Even if they have not yet been formally worked out and declared by the team.

## Reflections

- **Take a Moment**
  - Reflect upon your initial thoughts on diversity compared to what you think now: How have they changed?
  - How will those changes affect you as a member/leader of your team?
  
- **Take a Moment**
  - Consider the team to which you belong or which you lead:
    - How does it compare against the six qualities needed for solid relationships?
    - Briefly review the previous modules. What can you do as a team member/team leader to enhance the relationships in your team?
  
- **Take a Moment**
  - Review and reflect on the seven practices of a Christ-centred servant leader that we looked at in the last lesson.
  - How would they workout for your team, as you seek to establish solid relationships in your team?

## Excellent Communications

Please see the **Leading Through Relationships** module.

## Formal and General Team Roles

The first thought when a team is being assembled is normally given to the functional or technical skills required. From that requirement individuals are identified and recruited. However, meeting the needs of the Formal and General team roles are perhaps less obvious but are just as important.

The required capabilities to fulfil these roles concern the character of the team members in terms of how they function within a team and interact with others. They cover aspects such as administration, facilitation, creativity, problem solving, coordinating, attention to detail, ability to see the “big-picture” and so on. They make a big difference to how a team functions. They are more about aptitudes, personal preferences and the source of one’s job satisfaction than technical skills and are reflected in the roles individuals play in a team. Meredith Belbin calls them “Team Roles”.

## Opening Reflections

At a simple level a project has a beginning, middle and end. At the beginning the desired outcome has to be identified and the requirements for achieving the outcome need to be determined. In the

middle someone has to convert those requirements into an outline solution. In the last phase that solution has to be implemented and delivered.

- **Take a Moment:**
  - Consider the life-cycle of a project. Pick a real one if you can.
    - What are the stages of that project?
    - What natural characteristics (e.g. problem solving, planning) and job preferences (i.e. tasks people enjoy doing) are required amongst the team members at each stage?

## Team Member Characteristics

The Christ-centred servant leader's goal is to enable those whom he or she leads to fulfil their full potential. As we have just been considering, the ability of a team achieve its purpose is dependent upon the ability of the team to collaborate effectively. Effective collaboration means the team has to be well formed. Between them all, the team members have to provide all the necessary skills and capabilities to achieve their common goal. In addition to having the right technical and functional expertise the leader needs to consider each team member's characteristics as they assemble their team.

To grasp why this is important just consider a team that consists only of people who can come up with original and creative ideas but no-one who can turn those ideas into reality. How would the team achieve its purpose? If they cannot achieve their purpose then the Christ-centred servant leader's goal, that each individual team member achieve their full potential, cannot be achieved.

We will consider two models of team member characteristics that help when considering formal and general team roles. We will look at these with the aim of giving insight into this aspect of team building.

- The first is the Team Dimensions model researched and formulated by Inscape Publishing.
- The other is the Belbin Team Roles model researched and formulated by Meredith Belbin.

## The Team Dimension Model

Underpinning this model is a concept of how a team works. Effectively this is the high level process that the team follows to devise an idea and bring it to reality. Inscape's research identifies four core team member types that are required for that team to be successful.

### The Team Process

The team process is referred to as the "Z-process" simply because of how it is represented diagrammatically against the process elements and team dimension types. The naming convention used makes correspondence between these two views clear. The "Z-Process" follows the following steps, each focusing on a particular action.

- **Focus on Possibilities – Creating**

At the outset a team is faced with a challenge and seeks to devise a creative and innovative solution. In this **Creating** stage the team focuses on the challenge and the solution possibilities and so new ideas emerge. This can be a very conceptual stage full of creative ideas many of which may not prove to be credible. It may well cause immense frustration for

team members who are more pragmatic. (In the last module of the programme we look more at the challenge of creative thinking and problem solving.)

- ***Focus on Interaction – Advancing***

The ***Advancing*** stage is about moving ideas on and so interaction between team members is the focus in order to benefit from the team’s collective wisdom and abilities. The value of the idea is developed as the contribution made by each team member emerges. The credible, preferred solution or solutions are advanced to the next stage.

- ***Focus on Analysis – Refining***

In the ***Refining*** stage the key word is analysis. The team scrutinises, modifies and improves potential solutions selecting the best way forward. The goal is to test that the idea is realistic and identify and pre-empt issues that might emerge later in the process. Detailed implementation plans are worked out and established.

- ***Focus on Realities – Executing***

Having devised and refined the ideas and developed the implementation plan now comes the ***Executing*** stage. This stage is about bringing the plans to fruition, making ideas a reality. This is achieved through the implementation of well thought out and considered plans and processes.

## **Team Member Types**

Each stage of the “Z-Process” requires team members with particular characteristics in order for the team to be successful. We look at the four main types plus an additional type. It is most likely that any given individual will be a blend of types.

- ***The Creator Type***

Creator types tend to be spontaneous, conceptual thinkers. They understand the big picture and seek to generate innovative solutions to the problem. These are solutions that are different and tend to be beyond traditional, tried and test thinking.

They tend to want freedom from constraint and can act impulsively as they let feelings guide them. They gain satisfaction from the process of creating new concepts and ideas and overcoming problems. Once this process is completed and everything is in place they may become restless and want to start the next new thing.

**Contribution:**

Creators will contribute innovative ideas and concepts which by definition are not the obvious solution.

**Weakness:**

Creator types enjoy generating ideas and so they may move quickly from one idea to another and can lose sight of the objective. They become less helpful as the team moves through the Z-process, unless of course a problem emerges. Then they will love to solve it.

- ***The Advancer Type***

The Advancer will take ideas while they are still undeveloped and work out how to advance them, that is make them real. They work out and plan how to implement ideas using insight based on past experience. They may be sceptical of new ideas at first but if the ideas become the norm for the team then they are happy to work with them.

Their satisfaction derives from creating a sense of purpose in the team which they will promote with single-minded determination. They desire to achieve objectives by the best and most direct means. This may mean that they may advocate a path that drives through the normal rules and boundaries. They can focus on multiple ideas and switch between them rapidly. Respect and influence are important to them.

**Contribution:**

They are energetic when it comes to promoting team objectives and recognise the value of a new idea and seek to actively carry it forward:

**Weakness:**

When working with very conceptual people, without the balance brought by other team member types, they can press on with the implementation of concepts that are not fully matured and ready for implementation, ignoring barriers that need to be addressed.

- ***The Refiner Type***

Refiners challenge the concepts and ideas under discussion. They seek to plan how to implement new ideas and identify and pre-empt potential risks. They seek to create order from “chaos” by improving the implementation process.

They probe and challenge ideas to try to improve them and prefer order and being methodical.

**Contribution:**

The Refiner makes sure that a concept is thought through. Considering how to improve and implement it.

**Weakness:**

The refiner tends to be risk averse and so will influence the team to filter out higher risk/higher gain solutions.

- ***The Executor Type***

The executor is a methodical, detail orientated person who follows up on team objectives by adopting orderly and methodical implementation processes. They prefer the proven over the innovative and will not be particularly interested in discussion about such things. They tend to be cautious about new approaches and like to think things over carefully.

**Contribution:**

Executors are good at spotting problems in advance and minimise inefficiencies and errors during implementation.

**Weakness:**

Without clear objectives or guidelines they can lose sight of the goal and go off track.

- ***The Flexer Type***

The Flexer is an additional type, so called because they are flexible. They have the ability to step into any of the other roles. They monitor what is happening and will step in to ensure that things stay on track.

**Contribution:**

They objectively view the activities of the team to identify gaps and will step in to keep things moving along.

**Weakness:**

Without a clearly defined and specific role a Flexer can be overlooked by other team members who are committed to their own role in the process.

## Belbin Team Roles

Belbin's team roles again emerge from research but have a slightly different perspective. In the Belbin model they are called team roles. Nine different roles have been identified. You can learn more about Belbin team types at the Belbin website - <http://www.belbin.com> or from Meredith Belbin's book "Team Roles at Work" published by Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

### Belbin Team Roles

As we summarise Belbin's team roles you will see degrees of correspondence with Inscape's view of team member types. Belbin's research shows that individuals have a preference for one or other of the roles but their character will also reflect other roles. This means that, if called upon, each team member can operate in more than one way in a team. If that were not the case the minimum team size would be nine people, one of fulfilling each role.

#### *Plant*

The Plant is the creative. Imaginative and innovative problem solver. They have a tendency to ignore details and may be poor communicators.

#### *Resource Investigator*

The Resource Investigator explores opportunities. They tend to be extrovert and enthusiastic. They communicate well and are good networkers. They can be over optimistic and can lose interest once their enthusiasm has declined.

### *Co-ordinator*

Co-ordinators are just that. They co-ordinate and as such they are good chairpersons, clarifying goals and facilitating decision making. They are good at delegation but others may perceive them as manipulative and it's not unknown for them to delegate their personal work.

### *Shaper*

The Shaper challenges thinking, ideas and approaches. They find ways to overcome problems and enjoy pressure. Their challenging of others can be provocative and they can hurt people's feelings.

### *Monitor Evaluator*

The Monitor Evaluator makes shrewd judgements taking all factors into account. They tend to be sober, strategic thinkers who take time to think things through. They can be overly critical and seem to lack drive and ability to inspire.

### *Team Worker*

Team Workers have a lubricating effect on a team helping the team avoid friction; they calm troubled waters. They tend to be mild people and are co-operative and diplomatic. However they can be indecisive when decisions need to be made and can be easily influenced.

### *Implementer*

Implementers are the folk who turn ideas into practical outcomes. They tend to be disciplined, efficient and reliable if somewhat conservative and inflexible. They can be slow to respond to new ideas.

### *Completer*

Completers are the people who follow things through to completion. They are painstaking and conscientious, finding the things that are wrong so they can be resolved. They tend to worry a lot, and can become "nit-pickers" - over-anxious about the correctness of small details. They find it hard to delegate.

### *Specialist*

Specialists are just that, specialist in specific areas of skill or knowledge. They are self-starting and can be single minded because of their specialisation, which is often in scarce supply. They typically only contribute in a narrow area and often they have trouble grasping the big picture.

## **Team Make-up**

When building, extending and developing teams, or replacing personnel, we have seen that two areas of skill need to be considered. The technical or functional capabilities and the Team Role of a person. To be effective a team needs the correct mix of people in both these categories. Inscape's Team Dimensions and Belbin's team roles are helpful in addressing these team capabilities. Gaps in these means that a team is unable to function effectively and will thus be unable to achieve the level of collaboration required to be highly effective; the desired synergy will not be realised and the team may well fail.

Consider for a moment two scenarios: A team that is intended to be an ideas factory, their role is to create new ideas and another team whose role is to implement ideas. For instance, consider an architect's practice and a builder:

- The architect devises concepts for buildings and turns them into plans. A team of architects provides a technical service with specific skills but they need to be highly creative. Even preparing the drawings they deliver in execution mode has a strong creative element. So using the simplicity of the Team Dimensions model one would expect to see more Creators and Advancers in an architect's practice than Refiners and Executors. Some Refiners and Executors would be needed but only to enable the plans to be delivered.
- The builder is charged with building the creation of the architect. They start with the provided plans but they are not required to be incredibly creative. Any creativity will focus on the area of processes and planning techniques, but this is not their main area. Their team would be biased towards Refiners and Executors.

## Team Relationships

Team roles give insight into team members' character and personality; why they behave as they do. They are tools that enhance both self-awareness and awareness of others. These are two key elements of emotional intelligence which allow team members to assess the workings of their relationships with others. They enable them to adjust their expectations and their behaviour towards others in order to work together collaboratively.

Using Belbin's model, consider Sam who is a Plant, he loves generating new ideas. He is conceptual and not too worried about details. How would Ray, who is an Implementer, react to him? An Implementer brings about practical results but can be conservative, inflexible and slow to respond to new ideas. One could easily imagine that Sam and Ray don't get on at all, often arguing over finding more imaginative solutions or just getting on with it.

An understanding of the team roles of team members can be very helpful to the leader and team members as they seek to build solid relationships and work well together.

## Understanding the Team Roles of your Team

If you know people, with a little thought, you can have a good idea about their preferred team role. However, because you only see their dominant characteristics you will probably not perceive their secondary role capabilities. Also if you are building a team from scratch it is quite likely that you will have only limited, often very limited, understanding of the individuals concerned. So the question arises, how can you understand where an individual fits into the categories we have listed?

Both Team Dimensions and Belbin roles can be assessed using Inscape's Team Dimensions Profile and the Belbin Team Role Reports. These are available on-line but we advise against using these tools without expert assistance. In unskilled hands, with little understanding of the background to these tools, inappropriate conclusions can be drawn. These can be harmful to the individuals concerned and the team that is in view. If you want to know more about these then please contact One Another Ministries using the email address or phone number provided on the Academy web site.

## Reflections

- **Take A Moment:**
  - Consider the following combinations of Team Roles. What kind of relationships do you think they would have and how might that work out?

- Plant & Shaper
- Resource Investigator & Implementer
- Co-ordinator & Team Member
- Completer & Specialist
- Implementer & Completer
- Implementer & Plant
- Monitor-Evaluator & Plant

*You may find it helpful to learn a little more about Belbin's Team Roles from the information available at [www.belbin.com](http://www.belbin.com)*

- **Take A Moment:**
  - Consider your fellow team members:
  - What team roles can you identify amongst them?
  - Consider the process by which a team operates. Does your team have all the necessary roles required to be able to function effectively?
  - What would you do to address any gaps?

## Summary and Conclusions

We have seen that just assembling a group of people doesn't make them a team, nor does calling them a team. Unless effort is put in to building this group into a team they will remain just a group of individuals and fail to achieve their full potential.

We have seen also that the most effective teams are filled with volunteers. They are not volunteers because they have volunteered to join, they may have been instructed to do so. They are volunteers because they have deliberately chosen to actively share the same journey as their team mates. They have chosen to risk being dependent upon the rest of the team in order to achieve the goal that they have all volunteered to share with each other; their shared and common purpose.

We have seen that team members are committed to each other choosing to be accountable to each other and jointly committed to the common goal. They recognise that their success is not just dependent upon the team but the team's success is their success. This is more important than achieving individual glory.

We have learned that effective teams are made of people who choose to collaborate with each other. No individual's job is done until the whole team's job is done. So, when they have finished their task a question they have is "How can I help?" Team members also seek to assist each other by making it easier for each other to do the job in hand. They ask the question: "How can we do it better?"

We have seen those teams that achieve exceptional performance through synergy, that is performing way beyond expectations, demonstrate six characteristics:

- They have a clear purpose to which all the team members buy-in.
- They have clear roles so everyone knows what they are doing. This establishes their functional roles but also extends to the way every team member contributes to how the team works together.

- They voluntarily accept the leadership of the leader and the leadership of specific tasks pass to the team member who is best equipped. The team members empower the team leader to serve them as leader.
- They have effective processes so that everyone knows how to work together and this forms the platform from which greater gains can be made.
- They share solid, trust based relationships that not only allow them to work collaboratively when it's all going well but enable them to thrive when things get tough.
- They communicate effectively because this is the lubrication that enables the team to work effectively.

The Christ centred servant leader's prime focus is to grow and establish the team so it can achieve synergy. They enjoy exceptional achievement as its members work collaboratively and cohesively to achieve their shared purpose. They recognise that they are only successful when the team as a whole is successful. In this way the team and its individual members all achieve their full potential in God's service.

## Action Plan

As you have worked through this lesson you have been considering how your team compares to the characteristics we have been considering. Appendix 1 contains a simple, questionnaire about your team which gives insight into how close your team is to the ideal we have been considering. Complete that questionnaire.

In the light of the results of the questionnaire, what you have learned about the characteristics of a highly effective team and what you have learned from the previous lesson about effective leaders? Work out your action plan to move your team towards achieving exceptional results.

Return to the studies on Emotional Intelligence and assess how you can develop the emotional intelligence of your team.

## Further Study

Read Pat MacMilan's book "**The Performance Factor**" which fills out the detail of the material we have just studied.

Further investigate the Myers Briggs Temperament Inventory and Belbin's Team Roles Reports and consider how you may be able to use them to grow your team.

## Next

The next module is **Leading through Relationships**. The primary focus of this is communications in the context of servant leadership. As we have seen effective communications is the lubrication that makes collaborative working actually work.

This module is about more than simply how to communicate verbally. It stresses the importance that both the speaker and the listener take responsibility to ensure the success of the communication. It also highlights the need to recognise that different people need different styles of communication.

In support of team working it also reviews an approach to running meetings that enable teams to share ideas, concerns and enthusiasm in a manner that is consistent with the ideals we have been considering. This is referred to as de Bono's Thinking Hats.

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## Appendix 1: How Good is Your Team?

It has been said that a team is not a team until it has been built into one. Before then it remains a group. Build the team effectively and it can deliver high performance, outstripping your expectations.

At best a group delivers the same result as if its members worked individually. At worst they work against each other reducing effectiveness. But when they are formed into a properly functioning team they can be many times more effective; then they become a High Performance Team. To the Christ-centred servant leader developing his team to achieve its full potential in Kingdom service is of prime importance. The first step is knowing where that team stands.

### The Quick Assessment

Based on the work of Pat MacMillan (The Performance Factor\*) here is a simple tool to help you review how well your team is doing.

Answer each question on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 is the most negative answer. Mark your answer with a cross.

\*The Performance Factor, Pat MacMillan, Broadman and Holman Publishers, ISBN-8-8054-2375-3

		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Alignment</b> For your team to be a great team the members must be "Aligned". This requires a clear and shared purpose and a 100% commitment to realising that shared purpose in a common and coherent way. The following questions will help you consider exactly how Aligned your team is:	To what extent does your team have a declared purpose that is clear, relevant, significant, believed, urgent and motivational? <b>(Note: Not At All=1)</b>					
	If you asked your team members what the purpose of the team was, how consistent would their answers be? <b>(Note: Not At All = 1)</b>					
	Does that answer represent an agreed, common and shared view? To what extent are there differences? <b>(Note: Significant differences = 1)</b>					
	To what extent is your team involved in developing the strategies and plans to achieve the common purpose? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
	How far is each team member's commitment to achievement practically demonstrated by higher levels of cooperation? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
<b>Crystal Clear Roles</b> Clarity is required in the minds of the team as to exactly what is the role of each team member.	To what extent can your team members accurately tell you their specific role along with its well defined boundaries, responsibilities and accountabilities? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
	To what extent can each of your team members accurately tell you what the other team members do? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
	How frequently do things "fall through the cracks" or disappear into "black holes" and not get completed as required? <b>(Note: Often = 1)</b>					
	How often does conflict arise between your team members because of differing opinions about responsibilities or effectiveness? <b>(Note: Often = 1)</b>					
	When you look at your team members honestly, how compatible are their roles with their abilities? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					

		1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>Accepted Leadership</b></p> <p>A High Performance Team requires clear and competent leadership to facilitate and orchestrate the achievement of its goals. For specific activities task leadership will be provided by individual team members who have the necessary competence and capability to guide on that issue. Team members must voluntarily accept the leadership of those who lead.</p>	To what extent do you share the leadership of your team with its members based on their competences? <b>(Note: Never = 1)</b>					
	To what extent do you fully delegate responsibility for specific tasks to team members? <b>(Note: Never = 1)</b>					
	How often do individual team members with expertise offer formal and informal guidance and direction in accordance with that expertise? <b>(Note: Never = 1)</b>					
	How often do you call upon the team’s wisdom, encouraging them to offer their insights and leadership based on their expertise and experience? <b>(Note: Never = 1)</b>					
	To what extent do the team members <u>choose</u> to accept the leadership provided from whoever is providing it at the time? <b>(Note: Never = 1)</b>					
<p><b>Effective Team Processes</b></p> <p>Team processes are not just about individual functional/technical tasking but include how the team functions as it makes decisions, solves problems and resolves conflicts. It’s about how the team members work together.</p>	How well do you understand the roles that each individual team member prefers and plays in your team? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
	How well do the team members understand the roles that both they and their colleagues individually play in the team process? <b>(Note: Not All =1)</b>					
	Given the purpose of your team, to what extent do you have gaps in its make up in terms of the roles each member plays <b>(Note: Many Gaps = 1)</b>					
	How effectively do team members play to their strengths and know how to use each other’s strengths? <b>(Note: Not Very=1)</b>					
	How rigid is the structure of your team or is it flexible enough to maximise the individual and collective achievement of all members? <b>(Note: Very Rigid = 1)</b>					
<p><b>Solid Relationships</b></p> <p>Solid relationships are essential in a team. They are not about friendships but rather about being able to work together well, developing a trust in fellow team members so that collectively the team can deal with setbacks, misunderstandings, conflicts as well as the bad days.</p>	Are your team members reliable, doing what they say they will do? <b>(Note: Not At All =1)</b>					
	How often do you see your team members “doing it themselves” because that is the only way they can be sure that the job gets done? <b>(Note: Very Often = 1)</b>					
	How frequently does your team squabble or play the “blame game” <b>(Note: Very Often =1)</b>					
	On the bad days how well does your team pull together or does it tend to fall apart? <b>(Note: Not Very Well= 1)</b>					
	When one team member has difficulties how often do the others share the burden and make sure that the job gets done? <b>(Note: Not Very Often=1)</b>					

		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Excellent Communications</b>  Excellent communications is a pre-requisite for all the other characteristics. To function as a High Performance Team, members must understand not only how to share information in a way that <u>others</u> can receive but also to assume a responsibility for ensuring that <u>they</u> understand the communications that they receive.	To what extent do your team members communicate via email excessively even when it would be better to speak to each other? <b>(Note: Very Often = 1)</b>					
	How frequently do any of your team members get frustrated because they seem simply unable to communicate with specific team members? <b>(Note: Very Often = 1)</b>					
	To what extent do any of your team members overwhelm others with words or emails in an attempt to communicate? <b>(Note: Very Often = 1)</b>					
	To what extent do any of your team members always seem to miss out on what is happening or what was agreed? <b>(Note: Very Often = 1)</b>					
	How well do you and your team members accommodate each other's preferred means of receiving information? <b>(Note: Not Very Well = 1)</b>					

## Reviewing Your Responses

So how did you do? Look at the position of your scores. It will help to “join up the dots” or to shade them like a left to right bar chart.

### Top End?

If you scored mainly 4's and 5's you're doing quite well but are there a few specific issues that need to be addressed. Team performance correlates directly to the quality of leadership and it's the upper decile of leaders who get the best performance from their people and for the business. That extra performance is where synergy is to be found. That means you need every score to be 4 or higher, with as many 5's as possible.

### Middle Ground?

Hovering around the mid way? That may be a comfortable place but it probably means that the team is simply surviving or perhaps at best just doing OK. It's the place one would expect to be if the team were simply a group of individuals each pulling their weight but not combining to maximise their achievement. Taking action to move those scores up will mean that your team will develop a greater commitment and desire to achieve because they will learn to pull together and develop synergy. Stay there and the risk is that if things get tough the next time you try this test you will be in decline, looking at 1's and 2's.

### Low End?

If you have mainly 1's and 2's then your team will not be achieving anything like their full potential. It probably means that you have some toxic attitudes around that work against success; they will tend to bring down the rest. You need to take urgent action to develop leadership and team building skills and rebuild morale, helping your people regain their job satisfaction and their desire to succeed.