

# CYNTHIA MAHONEY

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## How to Create a High Performing Team



# Welcome

Hi, I'm Cynthia Mahoney and thank you for taking the time to check out my whitepaper about How to Create a High Performing Team.

In my work as a leadership development facilitator and coach, I've found that many teams find it hard to access their potential as a collective.

Powerful strengths lie within each team member but it's bringing them all together so that each team member is singing from the same songbook at the same time that gets tricky.





# Welcome

**A high performing team  
is like an amazing choir.**

The individuals express their strengths and work together to generate a performance that is beyond what any of them could achieve individually.



A team like this is one that delivers results and that people love being part of.  
Is this your team?

If not, please don't worry, you aren't alone!

Read on to discover how to create a high performing team.

# Fears of Leaders about their Teams

“There are on-going tough times and my team’s morale is down – how do I keep them motivated and performing?”

“How do I get the best out of all my team, make them more accountable and help them feel supported ?”

“I find it really challenging get my team to step up. I’m frustrated that I have to spend so much of my time and energy dealing with staff issues. Am I really a leader? ”



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# The Missing Element for Most Teams

Research shows that the key success factor separating high performing teams from the rest of the pack is their focus on “how” they work together.

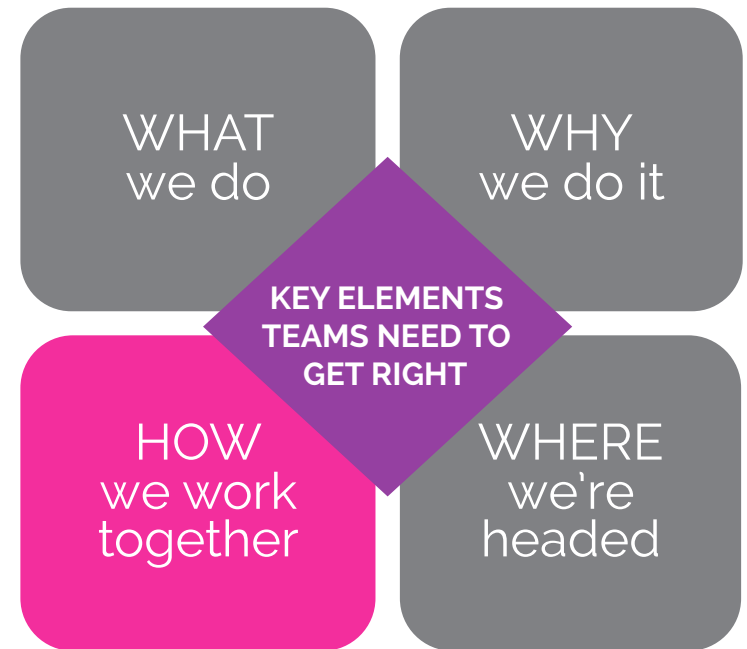
Yet many teams don’t do this crucial piece of work and spend their time on the:

- ✓ Why (purpose),
- ✓ Where (strategic direction and future plans), and
- ✓ What (technical elements of their work).

They miss the:

✗ How?

*How do we work together as a team in a way that accesses our strengths, where we can be our best selves, and where we are all accountable so that work is both productive and enjoyable? What’s OK and not OK in our team?*





# The Missing Element for Most Teams

The “How” the team works together is the foundation stone for a high performing team.

Some teams dismiss addressing the How they work together as not “real” work. In fact, research (including by Google’s five year Project Aristotle) says that the “How” is one of the key factors in establishing psychological safety in a team. Google found that psychological safety stood out as the key factor to creating a successful team.



*"Psychological safety is a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up. The team climate is characterised by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves. We need people to bring their absolute full selves to the challenging jobs ahead." - Dr Amy Edmondson*





# Consequences of not dealing with the “HOW”

When you don't address the “how” you work together as a team, engagement levels drop and productivity suffers.



**Engaged teams are 21% more productive, 22% more profitable, have 65% less turnover and have 10% higher customer scores.**

BUT...



Research by Gallup has found that just 15% of workers were “engaged” in their jobs i.e. *“they are enthusiastic about, and committed to their work and contribute to the organisation in a positive manner”*.



18% of workers are “actively disengaged”. According to Gallup, this means, *“they aren't just unhappy at work; they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish....Actively disengaged workers are more or less out to damage their company”*.



Sixty-seven percent of us say we're “not engaged” at work which Gallup defined as, *“sleepwalking through their workday,”*



In Australia and New Zealand 71% of workers were not engaged compared to the global figure of 67%.



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# Consequences of not dealing with the “HOW”

## Sound familiar?

At the extreme end of the scale you might see:

- ✓ Unhealthy behaviours in the team, toxic environment with passive aggressiveness, gossiping, blame culture, victim mentality and unhealthy conflict.
- ✓ Lack of trust in each other. Difficult conversations to provide constructive feedback are avoided. No collaboration. Silo mentality which causes innovation and productivity to suffer.
- ✓ Staff are disengaged. High turnover, and high levels of absenteeism and presenteeism.

Or you might feel like everything is going OK but your team isn't quite operating at the amazing choir level yet. You haven't found a way to unlock their collective genius to take them to a high performing team.



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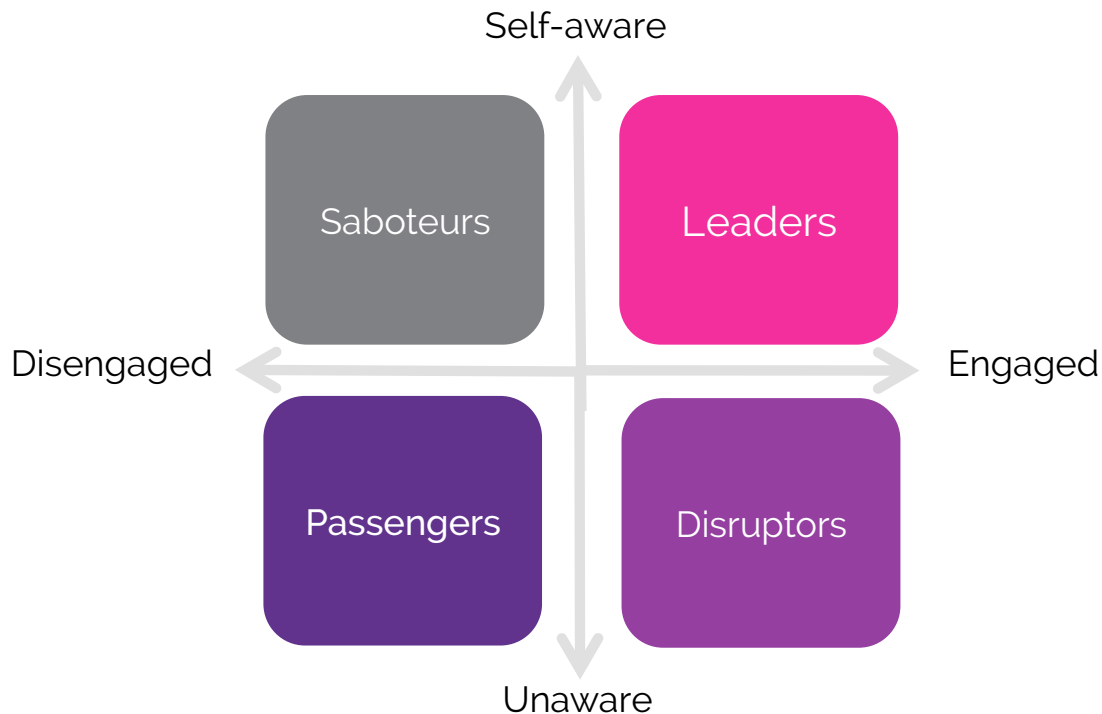
# The Solution? Create a Team of Leaders



Leadership is an activity, not a role or a title. It's what you do that counts. Everyone can be a leader, no matter what role they occupy.

Aim to create a team of leaders, rather than a team with one leader. The more leaders you have in your team, the higher performing it will be.

# The Solution? Create a Team of Leaders



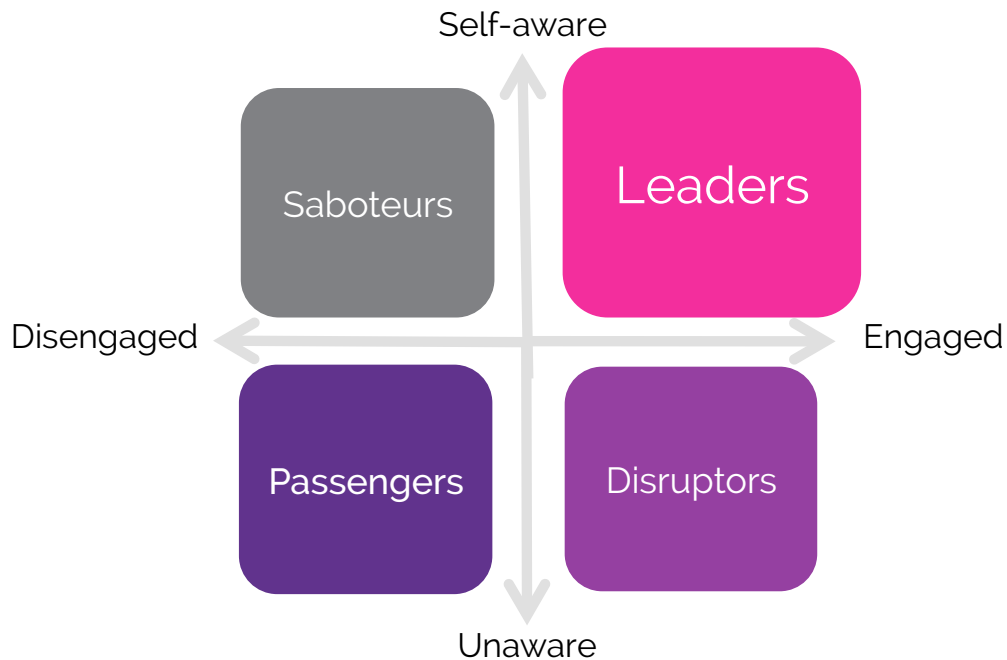
In working with clients over the past 20 years I've identified four groups of people you may observe in your team based on their engagement and self-awareness levels – Leaders, Disruptors, Passengers and Saboteurs.

The combination of these four types of people will determine your team's performance levels.

As the team leader, providing opportunities for your people to grow and develop through improved self-awareness and having strategies to increase engagement enables a higher proportion of people in your team to become Leaders within the role that they occupy. And that's what you want!



# 1. Leaders



TIP: To create more Leaders look for ways to develop your team members by:

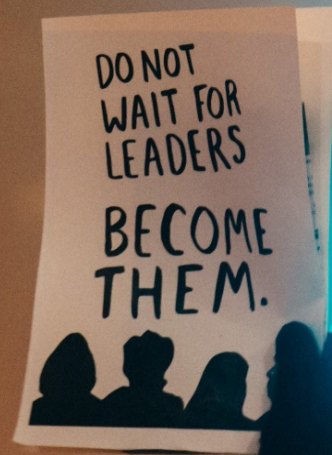
- ✓ Increasing their engagement
- ✓ Increasing their self-awareness

## Recognising a Leader

Imagine the impact on your team's performance if more staff were Leaders of their own role?

These people are:

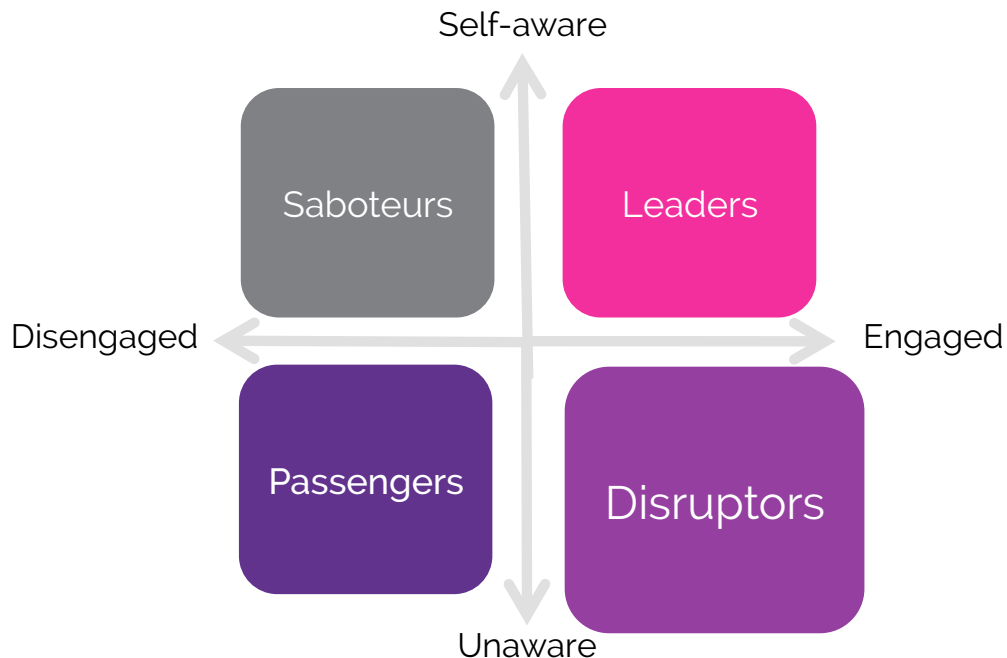
- ✓ High performing and accountable.
- ✓ Contribute new ideas.
- ✓ Have energy.
- ✓ Help out team mates.
- ✓ Look for ways to support the leader.
- ✓ Take on additional responsibilities and work harder.
- ✓ Access and contribute their strengths.
- ✓ Take fewer sick days.
- ✓ Are able to be themselves at work.



DO NOT  
WAIT FOR  
LEADERS  
BECOME  
THEM.



## 2. Disruptors



TIP: To encourage Disruptors to become Leaders look for ways to:

- ✓ Increase their self-awareness – how they manage themselves and what the impact of their behaviour is on others

### Recognising a Disruptor

Disruptors lack the self-awareness of the Leaders. They are passionate and interested, and readily contribute their ideas, but they often lack judgement.

These people:

- ✓ Have good intentions but they're inconsistent.
- ✓ Overuse their strengths which can be perceived negatively by others (but they don't realise the impact they're having).
- ✓ Keep doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result.
- ✓ Have a disruptive effect on the rest of the team. High engagement means they speak out and want to get involved but they lack the awareness to be situationally flexible.
- ✓ Don't make strategic behavioural decisions – they execute their default behaviours.
- ✓ They can be mistaken for Saboteurs but are not intending to be.

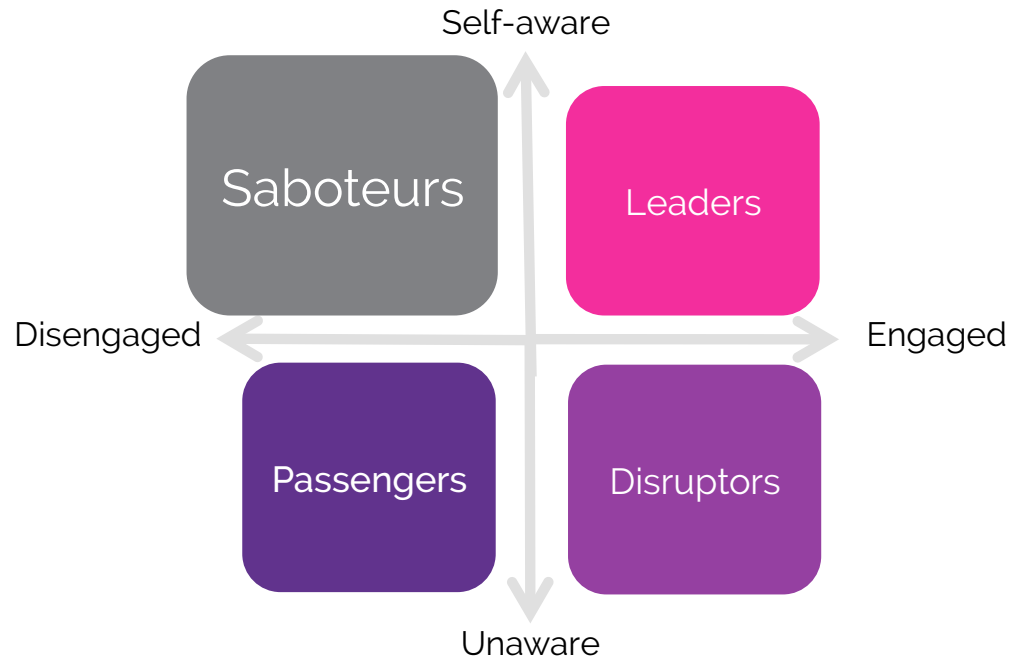


# 3. Saboteurs

## Recognising a Saboteur

- ✓ Disengaged and self-aware and know exactly what they're doing .
- ✓ Disrupt and deliberately undermine the team.
- ✓ Vent frequently to others, expressing their frustrations and dissatisfactions, publicly display a bad attitude.
- ✓ Not as productive as they could be.
- ✓ Spread negativity in the workplace and damage the bottom line.

If Saboteurs are allowed to continue their behaviour with no intervention they can actually move the Leaders and the Disruptors towards disengagement.



TIP: To move your Saboteurs to Leaders:

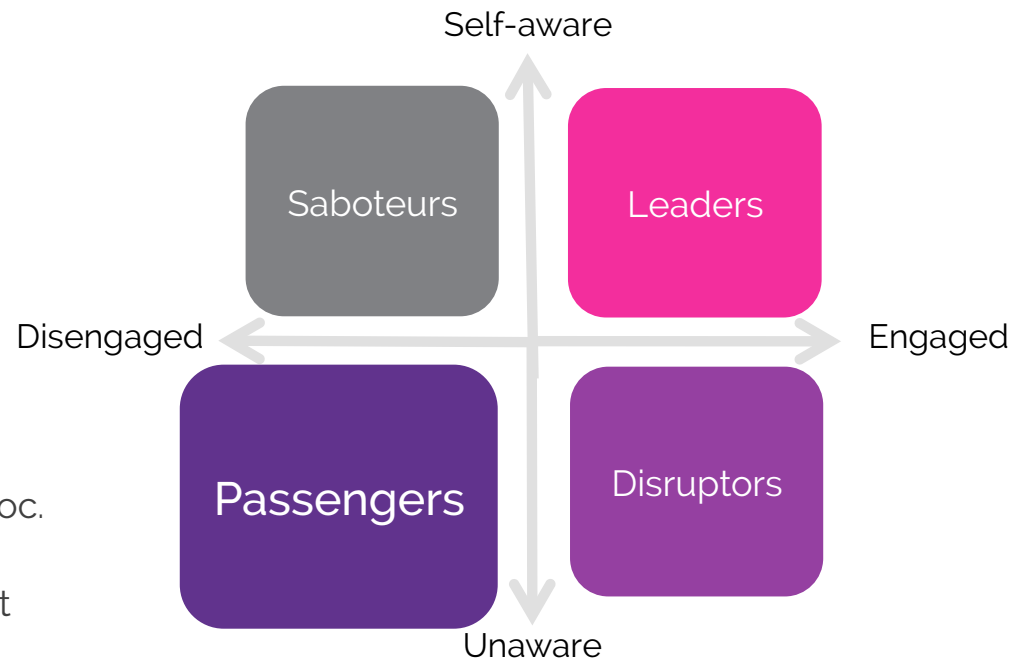
- ✓ Look for ways to increase their engagement
- ✓ Encourage them to take responsibility for engaging themselves at work (it's not all on you)
- ✓ Involve the team in creating behavioural norms of what's OK and not OK in the team

# 4. Passengers

## Recognising a Passenger

- ✓ Have low self-awareness and are not engaged.
- ✓ Don't speak up.
- ✓ Passive. Want to be told what to do and don't seem to have any agency.
- ✓ Victims with no accountability, often blaming others.
- ✓ Generally not hostile or disruptive. They don't hate their job or set out to wreak havoc.
- ✓ Lack passion or energy in their role. They merely meet minimum requirements, don't actively seek out or volunteer for new projects and may spend more work hours doing other things than actual work.

It's hard to increase organisational performance because it's difficult to accelerate innovation, creativity and productivity. Passengers are a total drag on the team.










TIP: To help your Passengers develop into Leaders look for ways to:

- ✓ Increase their engagement
- ✓ Increase self-awareness about the impact of their behaviour on others
- ✓ Encourage personal accountability and agency

# Where is Your Team on the Ladder?

I've developed a Team Performance Ladder to help people recognise how their team is currently performing. I call a team of leaders a Dynamic Team. They will be higher up on the Team Performance Ladder than a team with a leader.

I work with teams to increase engagement, self-awareness, connection, and accountability and move them up the Ladder of Performance. A Dynamic Team has more Leaders and less Passengers, Saboteurs and Disruptors.

<div>More of your time spent on leading</div>  <div>More of your time spent picking up the slack for your team and managing conflict</div>		Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance	
	6	Dynamic	x 50%	
	5	Dedicated	x 40%	
	4	Doing	x 30%	
	3	Detached	x 20%	
	2	Dysfunctional	- x 20%	
	1	Destructive	- x 50%	

# 1. Destructive

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
1	Destructive	- x 50% 

## Destructive team behaviour:

- A high proportion of “Saboteurs” and “Disruptors” in the team.
- “Leaders” tend to leave.
- Bullying, blaming, finger-pointing (aggressive behaviours)
- Some people don’t talk to other people (passive-aggressive behaviours).
- Lack of accountability.
- Toxic culture.
- An “every person for themselves” mentality.
- People don’t feel safe. There is a judgement culture.
- Many team members live in the past and hold grudges.
- High staff turnover, burn-out, stress, disengagement and absenteeism.
- Low individual and team performance.



## 2. Dysfunctional

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
2	Dysfunctional	- X 20% 

### Dysfunctional team behaviour:

- High proportion of "Disruptors" and "Saboteurs" in the team.
- No trust.
- Inattention to results (people are too busy worrying about each other than doing the work).
- Lots of "talking about" people rather than "talking to" people behaviour.
- The team leader is just clinging on rather than actively managing.
- There's a lot that goes unsaid in the team. When someone is letting the side down it is ignored.
- The team is not delivering as interpersonal conflict is high.

# 3. Detached

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
3	Detached	X 20% 

## Detached team behaviour:

- A high proportion of “Passengers” in the team.
- The team is operating at a minimum standard, just doing what they need to do to survive.
- Trust is low. Team norms haven't been articulated and people are afraid of conflict. Values are not understood or shared.
- A “me first” attitude - collective team intelligence is low.
- Improvement opportunities are missed.
- No buy-in or commitment to team goals. Impersonal communication. People feel discouraged.
- No discussion or debating of ideas.
- People don't care when they let colleagues down.
- Silos lead to inefficiencies.

## 4. Doing

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
4	Doing	x 30% 

### Doing team behaviour:

- A high proportion of “Passengers” in the team and a few “Leaders”.
- On the surface the team is performing but there’s room for improvement.
- People are very busy doing their jobs, staying in their lanes, heads down.
- There are no signs of excitement in the team, no smiling faces.
- The team is in their comfort zone, not going the extra mile.
- People are risk averse, don’t contribute ideas and there’s little innovation.

# 5. Dedicated

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
5	Dedicated	x 40% 

## Dedicated team behaviour:

- Performance has risen greatly, at an individual and team level.
- A higher proportion of Leaders in the team, some Passengers and Disruptors but no Saboteurs.
- Behavioural norms are discussed, although some team members have still not quite bought into this.
- Generally have each other's backs but there is still a bit of a "too nice" issue that gets in the way of the team performing at its best.
- Truly courageous conversations are avoided between peers – they still look to the leader to do this.
- Collaboration is high. People are proactive and engaged. They enjoy their work.
- You'll observe lots of smiling faces.



## 6. Dynamic

	Your Team's Behaviour	Impact on Performance
6	Dynamic	x 50% 

### Dynamic team behaviour:

- There are a lot of "Leaders" in the team. "Saboteurs" are rarely recruited and soon leave.
- Trust is strong. People go out of their way to help each other.
- People feel safe and valued. Smiling faces can be seen.
- People are able to flourish and are future-focussed.
- Personal accountability is high.
- Regular feedback given; the team has bought in to the norm of having courageous conversations, there are no surprises.
- Open to new ideas, listen to each other and accept input from others.
- Collective team intelligence is high.
- Aligned to the vision of the organisation; 'team first' attitude.
- The team energy is high, there is collaboration, innovation and high productivity.
- People love being members of this team.
- Staff retention is high.

*"High performing companies must be striving to create a great place,  
for great people, to do great work." – Marilyn Carson*



# Questions to Ask Yourself

Think about your current team. Where would it be positioned on the Team Performance Ladder?

Where would you like your team to be on the Ladder?

Where might you need to put your focus to help your overall performance to level up?



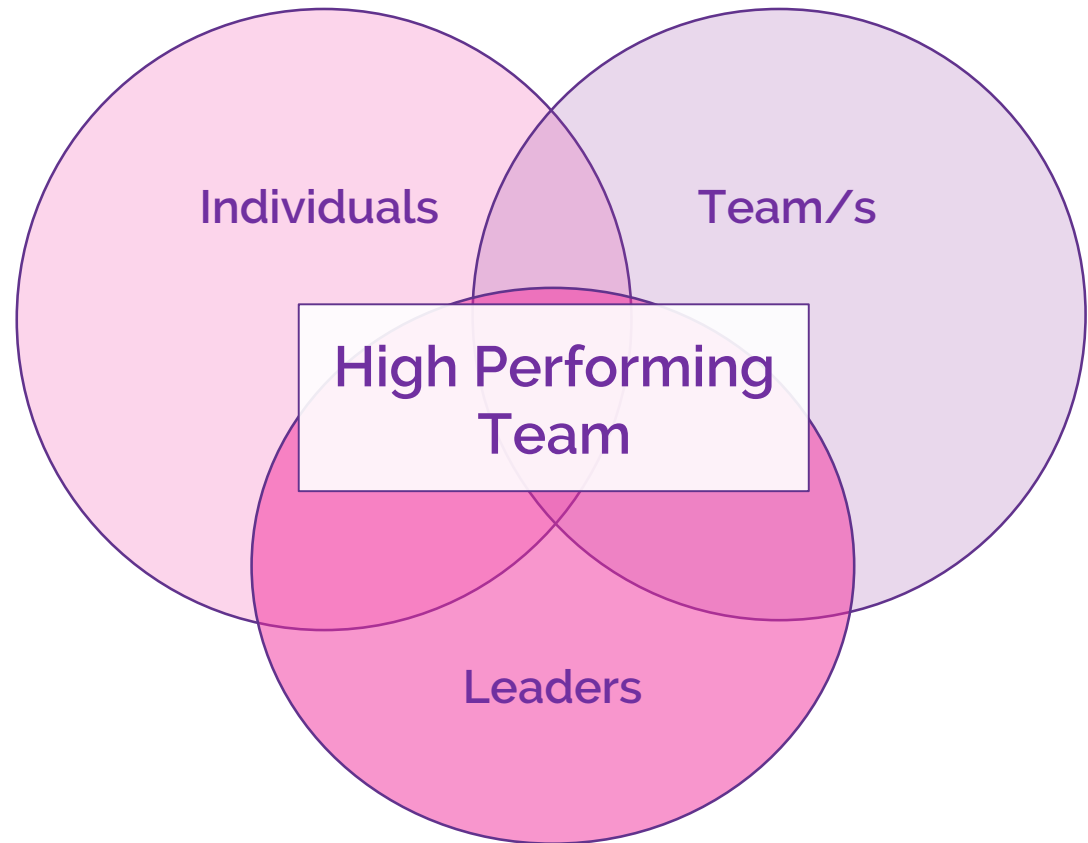
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# How to Move up the Ladder

It's the sum of three key parts working together at any one time that creates and sustains a high performing team.



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# How to Move up the Ladder

If you can achieve impact at three levels of change – the individuals in the team, the team as a whole, and the team leader – this will result in a high performing team.

## 3 KEY QUESTIONS FOR TEAM LEADERS

**1. *Do you have strategies in place to develop people at the individual team member level?***

This will improve your ability to unlock and access everyone's best so they are happier and higher performing.

**2. *Do you have strategies in place for development at the team level?***

This will improve trust, connection, innovation, collaboration, creativity and synergies. The team's Collective Intelligence will be raised.

**3. *Do you have strategies in place for development at the leadership level?***

This will improve leaders' ability to provide direction and support, to engage effectively with the team and other stakeholders, and to be accountable and deliver results.



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*"My model for business is The Beatles: They were four guys who kept each others' negative tendencies in check. They balanced each other and the total was greater than the sum of the parts. That's how I see business: Great things in business are never done by one person. They are done by a team of people." – Steve Jobs*





# Summary

1. Pay attention to the “HOW” your team works together, not just the “WHY”, “WHAT” and “WHERE”.
2. Be a team of leaders, not a team with a leader. Therefore work on recruiting and developing people in your team to be “Leaders” of their own role.
3. The less “Saboteurs”, “Passengers” and “Disruptors” you have in your team, the higher-performing it will be.
4. Where are you and your team located on the Team Performance Ladder? Where do you want to be? How might you move up the rungs?
5. Ensure you have development strategies at three levels – the individual team member, the team as a whole, and for the team leader.



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# Is Your Team Ready to Step Up?

## Do these challenges sound familiar to you?

Do you recognise that your team could do with a boost to become more Dynamic?

If you're ready for you and your team to achieve the success you've always imagined, I can help.

I work with leaders and teams to embed a high performance culture through:

- ✓ My High Performing Teams workshop program (ranging from a half-day workshop to a 12-month integrated workshop and coaching program)
- ✓ One-to-one coaching
- ✓ Group Coaching



Limited slots are available. Let's talk!

Please contact Niki at

[businessmanager@cynthiamahoney.com.au](mailto:businessmanager@cynthiamahoney.com.au)

# Let's Connect

## Courage. Connection. Conviction. Curiosity. Creativity.

Working with Cynthia enables leaders and teams to dial up their Courage, Connection, Conviction, Curiosity and Creativity to unlock high performance.

Cynthia is a facilitator, coach, mentor, speaker and author with a passion for personal disruption, neuroscience, positive psychology, courageous conversations, high performance and well-being. Her mantra (taken from the latest research) is that *"Happier people are higher performing,"* and she strives to help leaders and teams achieve this in the workplace.

Cynthia made a successful leap from an extensive career in government to founding her own leadership development practice eight years ago. Through her business, Cynthia has created a way to combine her entrepreneurial spirit with her passion for developing people to be their best and her skills and talent in facilitation. Her journey of self-discovery, along with her empathy, authenticity, and commitment to courage, growth and self-leadership, enable her to help people, teams and organisations make positive change and achieve professional and personal success.



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## Cynthia Mahoney

Director

**Cynthia Mahoney & Associates**

Dare to Lead Trained, Dip Leadership  
Coaching & Mentoring, Cert IV Business  
& Personal Coaching, Grad Dip  
Business, M Agr Sci, B Agr Sci

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