

The wisdom of Teams.

Dr. Ally Abouabas, MPM PhD.

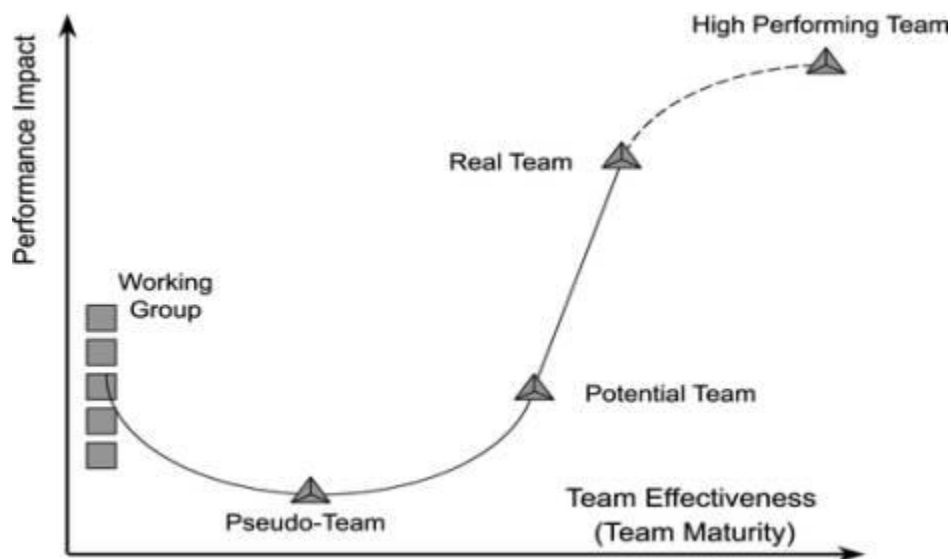
Many researchers on business leadership have highlighted the value of a team, teamwork, and team players. Some think about teamwork values like sharing, cooperating, and helping one another only to short-term project work. Others believe that any group of people working together is a team. Katzenbach and Smith defined a team as:

“A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”

A large number of people, more than twenty can theoretically become a team, but such groups more likely will break into sub-teams rather than function in a single team. Large numbers of people, by virtue of their size, have trouble interacting constructively and face logistical problems as a group. Therefore, Small numbers of people can usually develop the common purpose, goals, approach, and mutual accountability of a real team.

Successful teams must develop the right mix of skills among team members such as technical expertise, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and interpersonal skills. It is a mistake when leaders ignore skills when selecting team members, especially technical and functional ones. Effective team leaders realize they neither know all the answers, nor can they succeed without the other members of the team. The power of teams can help members for personal learning and development and to identify quickly skill gaps.

Indeed, team's performance must always have related to its overall purpose; otherwise, team members become confused. Leader's direction helps teams get started by framing the performance requirements of the organization. The best teams invest a tremendous amount of time and effort exploring and shaping on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually.



The team performance curve illustrates essential relationships and options concerning these five points:

1. Working group: This is a group for which no significant incremental performance need or opportunity would require it to become a team. The members interact primarily to share information and best practice to help each member perform within their area of responsibility.

2. Pseudo-team: team members have no interest in shaping a common purpose or set of performance goals. This type of team is the weakest of all groups regarding performance.
3. Potential Team: This is a group for which there is a significant incremental performance need and trying to improve its performance impact.
4. Real team: this is a small number of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.
5. High-performance team: Team members in this group are deeply committed to one another's personal growth and success. The high-Performance team significantly outperforms all other like teams and outperforms all reasonable expectations given its membership.