

“The Orange Revolution”

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Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

For some reason, it’s easier for us to assign credit to a single person than to a team.

Here’s what geniuses do: they build great teams.

Never intimidated by other great minds, Edison actively sought out men with a broad base of knowledge, a passion for learning, impeccable character, and a commitment to excellence. He recognized that by allowing each of the talented people he’d assembled to stretch and succeed independently of him, he got the best results.

In the early 1970s Kenneth Bruffee, an English and composition professor, introduced the then-radical argument that students learned more through group work than when listening only to their teacher.

After all, it is people in the trenches, not senior leaders, who are the true force behind any sustained change in a company.

Each member of the crew was extremely proficient at his job, and each trusted the others implicitly, and each was ready to sacrifice for the whole. People in breakthrough teams report their highest loyalty is their relationship with one another—the other team members. They also feel their manager cares about their well-being, a dramatically human emotion. 63 percent of workers found office productivity to be positively affected when co-workers are friends outside of work. Our research has come to show us that the same practices of appreciation and recognition that create revolutionary leaders also contribute to the success of breakthrough teams.

we use the term “Orange” to describe the overall characteristics, rules, and behaviors of great teams. In a breakthrough team, each member agrees to:

- Demonstrate personal competency.
- Expand their competency with leadership traits of
 1. Goal setting,
 2. Communication,
 3. Trust,
 4. Accountability(what we call the Basic 4)
- 5. And recognition.

Clearly visualize the cause while following The Rule of 3.

1. **Wow**—Breakthrough
2. **No Surprises**—All team members are accountable for openness and honest debate, and each knows what to expect from the others.
3. **Cheer**—Team members support, recognize, appreciate, and cheer others and the group on to victory.

To facilitate this type of team of motivated and skilled leaders: Ensure the right people join.

Translate corporate goals.

Facilitate rule setting.

Promote a culture of appreciation.

Leaders of revolutionary teams must begin to see themselves as playing a role on the team rather than as someone outside and above their colleagues.

The more power managers give to their employees, the more those employees esteem their leaders. Feeling part of an authentic team that cheers for each other and has clear goals leads to higher engagement. Nothing else—not even bonuses or other perks—motivates like the opportunity to define and unite behind a common purpose.

In the absence of a defined overarching reason for being, members come up with their own agendas. Every person in the company has a small voice in deciding the overarching cause. And then every team defines what that cause means to their group, and then each person takes a turn envisioning how they can make a contribution to the team and company causes.

Our global research with Towers Watson in 2008 discovered the third most important predictor of employee engagement was having pride in your organization,

While a cause is a single purpose that defines what we are all about, too many of us have worked in teams with so many priorities that it's hard to keep them straight in our heads,

It is essential that employees feel leaders are authentic about their commitment to the cause before they buy in.

Without a clear, larger purpose, setting the standard for how the team should be operating and what priorities should exist, teams can become blown off course easily, lose focus, or even become dominated by strong personalities (alienating everyone from a sense of ownership).

Indeed, at the world's most remarkable online shoe retailer, we found one of the world's most unique company mission statements: "to live and deliver wow." Zappos' succinct and wacky cause is largely due to the work of Hsieh. Like other revolutionary team leaders, he is convinced that it's the clarity of the Zappos mission that drives its unique culture and stacks the competitive deck in their favor.

It's remarkable how powerful a single common rallying point can be in establishing breakthrough results.

We band together to compensate for each other's deficiencies and to magnify our singular abilities. The first quality that we found in abundance in breakthrough teams—a heightened sense of esprit de corps and the tendency to value team members above others.

Effective leaders not only help set the team's vision, remove obstacles, and lead celebrations, but they also play a pivotal role in bringing capable people aboard. And they handle the difficult conversations when it's clear a team member is not qualified for his or her current role. One manager in a customer service role told us that she and her team are “slow to hire,” ensuring

Leaders who achieve enhanced business results are significantly more apt to be seen by their employees as stronger in the following areas (what we called the Basic 4 + Recognition):

- Goal setting (knowing where you are going)
- Communication (wise use of your voice and ears)
- Trust (believing in others and being trustworthy)
- Accountability (doing what you say you will do) Plus
- Recognition (appreciating others' strengths)

We see in the data below that employees become more engaged as they believe their teams, leaders, and organizations set clear goals, communicate openly, build trust, hold them accountable, and recognize great work.

In the best companies the Basic 4 + Recognition traits are practiced deep in the organization. So, if we're going to focus on developing personal competency, then goal setting, communication, trust, accountability, and recognition should command our first and finest efforts. In fact,

Let's focus on goal setting. It's a natural starting point for our discussion, since it's hard to succeed at anything without a clear direction.

GOAL SETTING

“What can I be world class at?”

COMMUNICATION

TRUST

It's also about all members trusting one another to do their fair share of the lifting, but in their own unique ways.

An adequate level of trust can help you survive; but actually reaching a high level of trust can make you and your team thrive.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Members of breakthrough teams, in contrast, see accountability as a positive. They personally embrace equal accountability for their successes and mistakes, because they have a voice in establishing expectations, and have the ability to adjust conditions, as needed, to anticipate or correct problems.

RECOGNITION

There were also some communication challenges within O'Neil's immediate head-office marketing team. It seemed that no one wanted to disagree with each other, so there was little dialogue.

- Wow
- No Surprises
- Cheer

These basic ground rules hold sway in hundreds of teams around the world. We have culled the best and have come to refer to them as the Rule of 3: wow, no surprises, and cheer.

WOW

You make a decision to be the best in the world every day, every minute.”

NO SURPRISES

The ability to disagree, without causing offense, is essential to robust communication within breakthrough teams.

CHEER

The team committed to be great (Wow), because they shared everything (No Surprises), and because they learned to encourage each other (Cheer). Three simple rules that created a breakthrough team at the NBA league office, with practices that spread around the rest of the league.

We found six core traits, and they were consistent across a range of diverse organizations. Teams that are focused on wow results do the following: they dream truly ambitious goals; they believe in each other and what they can accomplish together; they take calculated risks but closely measure their results; they persevere despite problems or conflicts that arise; and they have a charming habit of telling stories that exemplify what they are trying to achieve.

TRAIT #1: DREAM

TRAIT #2: BELIEVE

As we interviewed members and leaders of great teams, we found there was an important step linking a dream to execution: it is believing your only outcome will be success.

This is a common theme with the breakthrough teams we interviewed. They believe they will win, regardless of obstacles.

TRAIT #3: RISK

TRAIT #4: MEASURE

They had a dream. They helped create belief within the team. They took a risk. And they created a scoreboard for the team.

TRAIT #5: PERSEVERE

This aspect of Wow was extremely clear with most of the teams we interviewed for this book—great teams don't dwell on the mistakes, they forgive and continue moving forward.

TRAIT #6: TELL STORIES

We've all seen violations of the No Surprises rule in our workplaces or in high-profile media stories, where communication is withheld, lost in translation, or just misunderstood.

We see team communication failures all too often: One team member has a hidden agenda. Another is pointing fingers and placing blame. One is sugarcoating a negative situation. One simply says nothing at all. One worries about the consequences of speaking his mind. Another has a transformational idea but has been ridiculed in the past. What should be honest communication leads a team to a failure to correct problems or the withholding of vital information that could benefit the entire team.

“Open communication fosters trust,” says leadership expert John C. Maxwell. “Having hidden agendas, communicating to people via a third party, and sugarcoating bad news hurt team relationships. Your goal should be to speak truthfully but kindly to teammates.”

Although processes did vary from team to team and organization to organization, we dug up a few simple truths that were shared by all. **ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RESPECT**

When managers and team members aren't accessible, team members feel like islands unto themselves. This leaves room for hidden information, lost productivity, incorrect outcomes, and disengaged team members.

ACCEPTING IDEAS

We shared the stage recently with Jonathan Blum, senior vice president of public affairs for the restaurant giant Yum! Brands. During his talk he explained that one of his company's core values is "we seek truth over harmony."

RESPONSIVENESS

Because the fear of "no response" is so intimidating, people often withhold their thoughts and feelings. Responsiveness is a critical component of creating a team culture of No Surprises.

BROADCASTING VITALS

Deadlines, goals, responsibilities, and progress are always in view, and members are aware of the objectives of their fellow members and the team as a whole.

OFFER HELP, ASK FOR HELP

CREATE FACE-TO-FACE

A breakdown in a team is usually the result of one or more of a half dozen common problems: infighting and ego; seemingly irreconcilable differences of opinion; misdirected ideas of competitiveness; cultures of blame; inappropriate hierarchies of power inside the team; and unaligned values of the individuals that are not in sync with the organization's goals.

the more time we spend trying to resolve squabbles between team members, the less time there is for doing the work of the organization.

SNAPS stands for Super Nifty and Positive Stuff. "We do SNAPS in our Zuddles (or Zappos huddles), and we just had one earlier," he said.

HOW TO CHEER: A PRIMER

One of the key problems with organizations appreciating the incredible value of recognition and cheering is that there is such a pervasive belief that employees fundamentally dislike work, and they are only putting in their time for the paycheck. The truth is that people find great satisfaction in feeling part of a team that is succeeding, and they are readily inclined to embrace a cheering culture.

Cheering is unifying, it creates an atmosphere of camaraderie and a willingness to accept each other and buoy one another.

In order to make sure you do recognition and cheering right, take a close look at the following five tips.

Keep It Positive:

Cheer Immediately:

Cheer Closely:

Cheer Great Work:

Share the Experience:

Wow

No Surprises

Cheer

The Rule of 3 is a macro set of to-dos for building great teams.

Challenge the groups to quickly come up with a description of what success looks like.

Once you've come to a consensus on your single cause, break back into groups to brainstorm a pathway to it.

We've found that most managers waste an average of six months before they act to correct interpersonal issues. That's way too long.

How do you know if you've got a toxic team member? A (nontoxic) team at Harvard Business School identified seven symptoms:

1. Frequently complains about and criticizes others in public.
2. Brings out the worst in other members.
3. Attacks people instead of criticizing the issues.
4. Talks in the hall but not in the room.
5. Constantly disagrees with everyone and everything.
6. Displays chronic discrepancies between public words and private actions.
7. Claims to understand his or her behavior but seems unable to change.

It's just about impossible to achieve breakthrough results if you don't embrace each of the Rule of 3. You can't Wow if you don't commit to No Surprises and Cheer.

We recommend your team:

1. Look for competency and attitude, then train for skills.
2. Bring in individuals with different, but complementary, skill sets.
3. Make previous team experience a priority.
4. Look for empathy and integrity.

Hiring for different but complementary skill sets must be a much broader and continuing undertaking.

In short, hiring should always be viewed in the context of team interaction. You want to look for people with the ability to approach hard decisions and strong conflicting opinions in a way that builds esprit de corps.

HIRE FOR COMPETENCE AND CULTURE

But many great leaders hire for culture first, and competence second.

GIVE POWER TO THE PEOPLE

“Success doesn’t come from being a powerful leader, it’s from leading a powerful team.”

As we’ve met with new teams just starting out, it’s our experience that morale is typically high. It’s very high, in fact. In the beginning, there is a belief among the members that the task they have been given is important. They feel pride—knowing they’re trusted. But that trust is immediately undermined when leadership holds the reins too tightly. Here’s one example that

KEEP SCORE

ACTIVELY BUILD ESPRIT DE CORPS

RECOGNIZE, RECOGNIZE, RECOGNIZE.

Key insights about the best role for the manager and senior leader in the creation of esprit de corps corporate-wide:

1. Allow it:
2. Train it:
3. Find it:
4. Reward it:
5. Promote and profile it:

Fortunately, creating a breakthrough team in your personal life isn't that different from doing it at the office. We start by defining a clear big-picture goal, then we collectively commit to living the Rule of 3: We wow each other. We make sure there are no surprises. And we cheer. When these elements are in place, the rest takes care of itself.

In our 200,000-person survey conducted by HealthStream Research, leaders who were considered most effective by their teams demonstrated the following traits:

- They set measurable goals.
- They answered questions truthfully and directly.
- They listened respectfully to others.
- They were available when colleagues or employees needed to talk.
- They created an environment where employees felt free to express their views.
- They accepted and valued others' ideas.

On a great team, members don't consider themselves one of five, for instance, but one-fifth of one.

As much as we try to separate the leader from the person, the two are totally inseparable.