



RATHBONE RESULTS

UNLOCKING BUSINESS POTENTIAL

TEAMSWORK

A Rathbone Results
White Paper

Introduction

At Rathbone Results, we believe that increasing complexity and speed of change makes teamwork an, if not THE most essential component for profitable sustainable growth. However brilliant, individuals on their own, outside of the context of a real team, cannot deliver outstanding business results.

With that in mind, between January and August 2020, we deployed our TeamsWork Survey to take the temperature of teamwork across several sectors and organisations. [The fact that this period coincides with the emergence of COVID-19 is poignant.]

Our aim in this white paper is to:

- Present the results from this initial survey of 67 senior leaders in client organisations, including five intact teams.
- Identify key areas of good and not-so-good practice for teams at large
- Give you tips for developing teamwork in your organisations
- Start wider and highly-pragmatic conversations on teamwork

Background

At Rathbone Results we created the TeamsWork Framework, with its 2-minute 20-question survey tool, in December 2019. It comes from substantial work experience across six continents with SMEs and large Corporates and draws on the body of research around teams.

We called it TeamsWork because when teams work well, TEAMS really WORK.

TeamsWork identifies five characteristics of high-performance teams:

1. **TRANSFORMATIVE PURPOSE** - “why” the team exists, the goals/results it aims to achieve.
2. **ALIGNED COLLABORATION** - “what” the team delivers, and “how”.
3. **TRUSTED DECISION-MAKING** - that focuses creativity and directs action.
4. **WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT** - that mutual bonding of team-members.
5. **CONTINUOUS LEARNING** – that fuels continuous improvement and sustainable results.

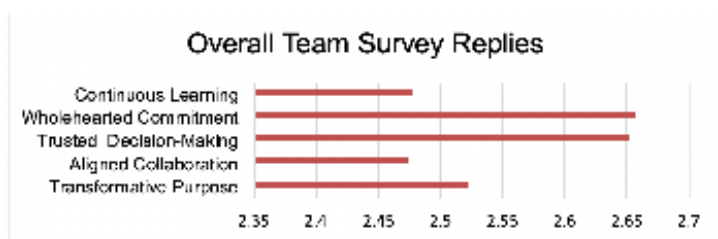


The Results: Overall Scores

Great news! Characteristics of high performance teamwork are in strong evidence. In particular, **key teamwork strengths** lie in **wholehearted commitment** and **trusted decision-making**. Within those two areas, significant team working strengths include: playing to capabilities, inviting different views, trusting each other to make decisions, caring about fellow team-members, and putting the interest of the team/organisation above our own. These strengths should be leveraged to address **areas for team development** revolving largely around **aligned collaboration** and **continuous learning**, elaborated below.

Overall Scores

Question averages are based on a scoring range of: 1 = rarely; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often



1	clear team "rules of engagement" (norms)	2.58	11	adjust own priorities to stay on track as a team	2.52
2	work to learn norms, in the spirit they are meant	2.58	12	hold each other to account for quality and delivery	2.36
3	ensure nobody dominates or is left out when we meet	2.49	13	invite different views when making decisions	2.81
4	play different roles for which we have the capabilities	2.75	14	trust each other to make individual decisions	2.79
5	agree our purpose/goals and strive to deliver and exceed them	2.64	15	confront misunderstanding to resolve conflict	2.52
6	see individual and collective success as tied to organisation's goals	2.57	16	care and are curious about how others feel and react	2.80
7	know how individual contributions align to organisation's goals	2.51	17	encourage tough conversations to resolve conflict	2.31
8	strive to learn from each other for continuous improvement	2.60	18	support the collective decisions when different to our views	2.61
9	recognise each other and give each other feedback	2.27	19	care about each other and are energized by working together	2.76
10	communicate directly, constructively, in a timely manner	2.36	20	acknowledge our self-interest yet put the organisation first	2.72

Looking at the development areas:

To improve aligned collaboration, teams and individual team members would do well to work on behaviours around questions 3, 9 and 10. Namely: Make sure nobody dominates or is left out when you meet. Recognise each other and give each other feedback – positive as well as constructive. Communicate directly, in a constructive and timely manner.

Tips - for more aligned collaboration:

- Leverage strengths in wholehearted commitment, particularly in questions 19 (We care about each other and are energized by working together) and 20 (We acknowledge our self-interest yet put first what's best for the organisation) to include all when you meet, give each other feedback and communicate directly on issues.
- Map out interdependencies between team members, so each team member is clear about how their effort and inputs feed into the work of other team members - to deliver great client experience and overall team results. Tools we use to help you do this include the Business Canvas and Network Mapping.

To improve continuous learning, teams and individual team members would do well to work on the behaviours around question 17: Encourage tough conversations to resolve conflict and to continuously improve.

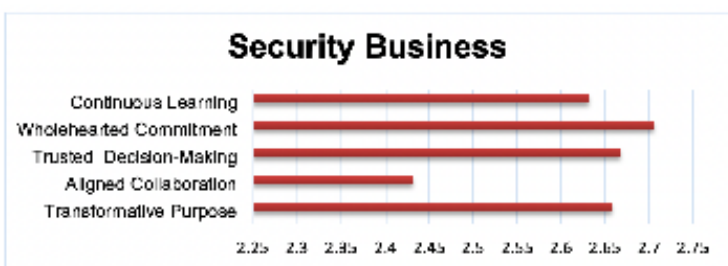


This is one of the hardest and most counterintuitive behaviours for team members to adopt. Especially in organisations known for elegance and bonhomie, many work hard to smooth-over tough conversations. Many prefer to leave conflict to defuse naturally. Yet tough conversations to resolve conflict, handled well, build new bridges, deepen understanding and commitment, increase creativity and innovation. Well-managed positive tension is a hallmark of high-performance leaders, teams and organisations.

Tips – for more continuous learning:

- Leverage strengths in wholehearted commitment to address the behaviours to be developed.
- On a personal basis, though this may seem too strong a statement, “don’t let the sun go down on your anger.” Resolve conflict on the day it becomes evident. At least acknowledge and diarise with the conflicting other when, together, you will begin to defuse and learn from the conflict.
- On a team basis, begin “meetings” with two questions: “What’s gone well?” “What needs to be better/be resolved?” Mine for conflict as for gold. View and use conflict as a rich source for learning.

Two intact team examples – included within the overall results. Question averages are based on a scoring range of: 1 = rarely; 2 = sometimes; 3 = often.



1	clear team “rules of engagement” (norms)	2.42	11	adjust own priorities to stay on track as a team	2.58
2	work to team norms, in the spirit they are meant	2.53	12	hold each other to account for quality and delivery	2.68
3	ensure nobody dominates or is left out when we meet	2.47	13	invite different views when making decisions	2.53
4	play different roles for which we have the capabilities	2.71	14	trust each other to make individual decisions	2.95
5	agree our purpose/goals and strive to deliver and exceed them	2.74	15	confront misunderstanding to resolve conflict	2.68
6	see individual and collective success as tied to organisation’s goals	2.63	16	care and are curious about how others feel and react	2.53
7	know how individual contributions align to organisation’s goals	2.58	17	encourage tough conversations to resolve conflict	2.37
8	strive to learn from each other for continuous improvement	2.64	18	support the collective decisions when different to our views	2.68
9	recognise each other and give each other feedback	2.16	19	care about each other and are energized by working together	2.84
10	communicate directly, constructively, in a timely manner	2.21	20	acknowledge our self-interest yet put the organisation first	2.95

This team’s greatest teamwork **strengths** lie in its **wholehearted commitment, trusted decision-making** and **transformative purpose**. The greatest single improvement area for team performance is **aligned collaboration**. In particular, team members would do well to develop behaviours that support questions 3, 9 and 10.

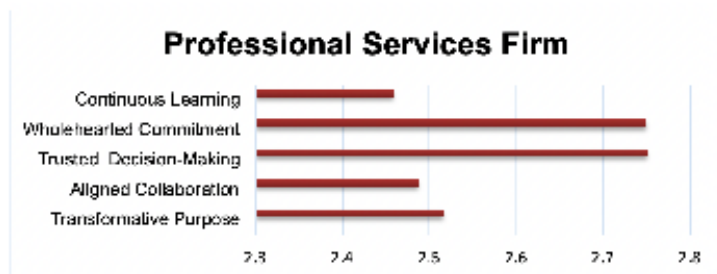
To improve aligned collaboration:

- Make a point of including all, especially more reserved members, and of reigning back the more extroverted ones who could be seen to dominate.
- Recognise each other and give each other feedback. Like tacking when sailing in a windy stretch, to reinforce or adjust direction and behaviours, people need to be recognised for their contributions. That means receiving feedback – positive as well as constructive.
- Communicate directly, in a constructive and timely manner. Not only does direct communication reduce misunderstanding (Chinese whispers), it also accelerates action, deepens understanding, builds trust and encourages closer coordination.



Tips – for more aligned collaboration:

- Leverage wholehearted commitment, particularly the behaviours related to questions 19 (We care about each other and are energized by working together) and 20 (We acknowledge our self-interest yet put first what's best for the organisation) to address the behaviours to be developed.
- Map interdependencies between team members, to clarify how each team member's efforts and inputs impact on other team members, on ultimate client delivery and on overall team results. Tools we use to help you do this include the Business Canvas and Network Mapping.



1	clear team "rules of engagement" (norms)	2.87	11	adjust own priorities to stay on track as a team	2.50
2	work to team norms, in the spirit they are meant	2.80	12	hold each other to account for quality and delivery	2.13
3	ensure nobody dominates or is left out when we meet	2.36	13	invite different views when making decisions	2.88
4	play different roles for which we have the capabilities	3.00	14	trust each other to make individual decisions	2.56
5	agree our purposes/goals and strive to deliver and exceed them	2.75	15	confront misunderstanding to resolve conflict	2.50
6	see individual and collective success as tied to organisation's goals	2.69	16	care and are curious about how others feel and react	2.61
7	know how individual contributions align to organisation's goals	2.56	17	encourage tough conversations to resolve conflict	2.25
8	strive to learn from each other for continuous improvement	2.63	18	support the collective decisions when different to our views	2.44
9	recognise each other and give each other feedback	2.19	19	care about each other and are energized by working together	2.81
10	communicate directly, constructively, in a timely manner	2.31	20	acknowledge our self-interest yet put the organisation first	2.61

The **greatest strengths** of this team lie in **trusted decision-making** and **wholehearted commitment**. Greatest areas for improvement in team performance are **continuous learning** and **aligned collaboration**.

To **improve continuous learning**, team members would do well to develop behaviours that support questions 17, namely: Encourage tough conversations to resolve conflict and to continuously improve.

Again, this is one of the hardest and most counterintuitive behaviours for team members to adopt. Especially in organisations known for elegance and bonhomie, many work hard to avoid tough conversations. Many prefer to leave conflict to defuse naturally. Yet tough conversations to resolve conflict, handled well, build new bridges, deepen understanding and commitment, increase creativity and innovation. Well-managed positive tension is a hallmark of high-performance leaders, teams and organisations.

Tips – for more continuous learning:

- On a personal basis, develop the practice of resolving conflict on the day it arises, acknowledging and diarising resolution with the conflicted other.
- Make it a team norm to begin "meetings" with: "What's gone well?" "What needs to be better/be resolved?" Mine for conflict as for gold. See conflict as a learning opportunity.

To **improve aligned collaboration**, team members would do well to develop behaviours that support questions 3, 9 and 10, namely:

- Make sure nobody dominates or is left out when we meet. This is important for two reasons. First, because each person in a team, like a piece in a jigsaw, matters. Secondly, because each person brings different perspective and diversity of thinking engenders greater creativity and innovation.



- Recognise each other and give each other feedback. Like tacking when sailing in a windy stretch, to reinforce or adjust direction and behaviours, people need to be recognised for their contributions and receive feedback – positive as well as constructive.
- Communicate constructively in a timely manner. This is key to agility, a top competency for 21st century success.

Tips – for more aligned collaboration:

- Leverage and match the following strengths to the above improvement behaviours:
 - Capabilities of individuals – encourage team members to continue to play to their strengths and to encourage others to do likewise – particularly given the perfect score on question 4.
 - Wholehearted commitment – the clarity of the team’s “rules of engagement” (questions 1), the fact that the team collective works to norms (question 2), that improvement in the above areas is a demonstration of caring for each other (question 19) and that it is in the organisation’s interests to address the development areas listed above (question 20). Why not make it a team norm to actively manage each other’s airspace?
 - Trusted decision-making (high scores for questions 13 and 16).

Summary:

Teamwork is alive and well. Especially during lockdown, the need for people to connect as teams is evidenced by the traffic on Zoom, Skype, Teams and Webex platforms.

Strengths are clear - in wholehearted commitment (to teams and by teams to team members) and trusted decision-making.

Areas for improvement are also clear, particularly in aligned collaboration. From the overall scores and those of two intact teams, questions 3, 9, 10, 12 and 17 attract the lowest scores. Three of those (3, 9, 10) relate to aligned collaboration. The other two point to continuous learning and transformative purpose. Aligned collaboration is therefore THE repeating development theme. Higher team performance will flow by enhancing collaboration and ensuring that it aligns team members and connects across to other related intact teams.

Bottom line: Teams would do well to develop five behaviours, to build muscle in five teamworking habits, to (1) ensure real inclusion (that nobody dominates or is left out), (2) recognise and give feedback, (3) communicate directly and constructively in a timely manner, (4) engage with tough conversations to resolve conflict and (5) hold each other to account for delivery. All five can be developed – on an individual and team basis.

Why not complete our online TeamsWork Survey – and invite your team members to do likewise? You’ll each receive an individual report on your results. There is a rich conversation to be had as you compare results between you! <https://www.rathboneresults.com/teamwork>.

To get feedback on your team as a whole, contact us for free-of-charge and no-obligation conversation.



**Why not ask fellow team-
members to complete our
online TeamsWork Survey -
for you to start a conversation
on how to improve teamwork
in your organisation?**

<https://www.rathboneresults.com/teamwork>

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