

Growing Productive Teams



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Peopleware
(Part IV)

Growing Productive Teams

Teams typically don't get work done, individuals do.

So why form teams?

- ▶ Diversity of skills, knowledge, abilities & experience
- ▶ Manpower
- ▶ Positive aspects of group dynamics
e.g. Increased creative flow
- ▶ Help get everyone pulling in the same direction

Jelled Teams

*Group of people so closely knit
that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.*

Teams and Goals

- ▶ Teams have a unique goal!
- ▶ Jelling makes them adhere to an arbitrary goal

Organizational Goals

- ▶ To be "professional" and accepting employer's goals
- ▶ Hysterical managerial optimism

Team must willingly accept the goal!
This is neither trivial, nor self-understood!

Why are Teams Important?

*Teams don't attain goals...
People on the teams attain goals!*

Tom De Marco

- Almost all component tasks are performed by individuals
- Most work done by individuals working alone.

*The purpose of a team is **not** goal attainment,
but **goal alignment!***

Tom De Marco

Signs of Jelled Teams

1. Low turnover

- No one leaves in the middle of the project...
- People care more about achieving something than about a small salary increase

2. Strong sense of identity

- e.g. team names, social interactions

3. Sense of eliteness

- Feel to be part of something unique

Signs of Jelled Teams

4. Joint ownership of the product

- Participants pleased to have their names grouped together on a product

5. Obvious enjoyment

- Healthy feeling
- Interactions are confident, easy and warm

No one ever forgets being part of a jelled team!

Characteristics of Jelled Team Environment

1. Work is fun
2. People energized
3. They blow past deadlines & milestones
4. Incredible loyalty to team and environment that allows team to exist

Teams vs. Cliques

- Same **denotation**, different **connotations**
 - Like “breeze” (briza de aer) and “draft” (curent de aer)
- Jelled working group is called ...
 - ...**Team** when it appears **pleasing**
 - ...**Clique** when it represents a **threat**

Fear of cliques is a sign of managerial insecurity!

Tom De Marco

IBM's Black Team

Born of realization that testing viewed as unimportant & undesirable
Result, poor test quality = poor product quality

Pulled people with slightly better testing skills
Initial results okay, but

...Sense of pride & team grew

- ▶ Created a team personality (name, dress, appearance, socially)
- ▶ Delighted in finding defects
- ▶ Came to be feared

Teamicide! ... a.k.a. How to kill team growth

1. Defensive Management

- ▶ You can't protect yourself against your own people's incompetence
- ▶ Let your people make mistakes of their own
- ▶ Trust your people

2. Bureaucracy

- ▶ Paperwork → sign of epidemic defensive management
- ▶ +30% of the time invested in **mindless pushing of papers**
- ▶ Makes team not believe in the goals

Teamicide (2)

3. Physical Separation

- ▶ Telephones don't help!

4. Posters & Plaques

- ▶ "Motivational accessories" are a triumph of form over substance
 - ◆ e.g. "**Quality is Job One**" ☹ ☹ ☹
 - ◆ "**Teamwork... the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results**" ☹ ☹

5. Time Fragmentation

- ▶ Bad both for efficiency and team formation
- ▶ No one can be part of multiple jelled teams

Teamicide! (3)

6. Quality Reduction

- ▶ Disguised as "**cost-reduced products**"
- ▶ Time + Scope + Effort + Quality
- ▶ Undermines self-esteem and enjoyment

7. Phony (fake) Deadlines

- ▶ Defines work so that success is impossible to attain
- ▶ The plague of **overtime**
 - ◆ Example of colleague who cannot cope with the overtime pace

8. Clique Control

- ▶ Break teams due to insecurity
- ▶ Upper management is not aware about teams

*Most organizations don't set out consciously to kill teams.
They just act that way.*

Tom De Marco

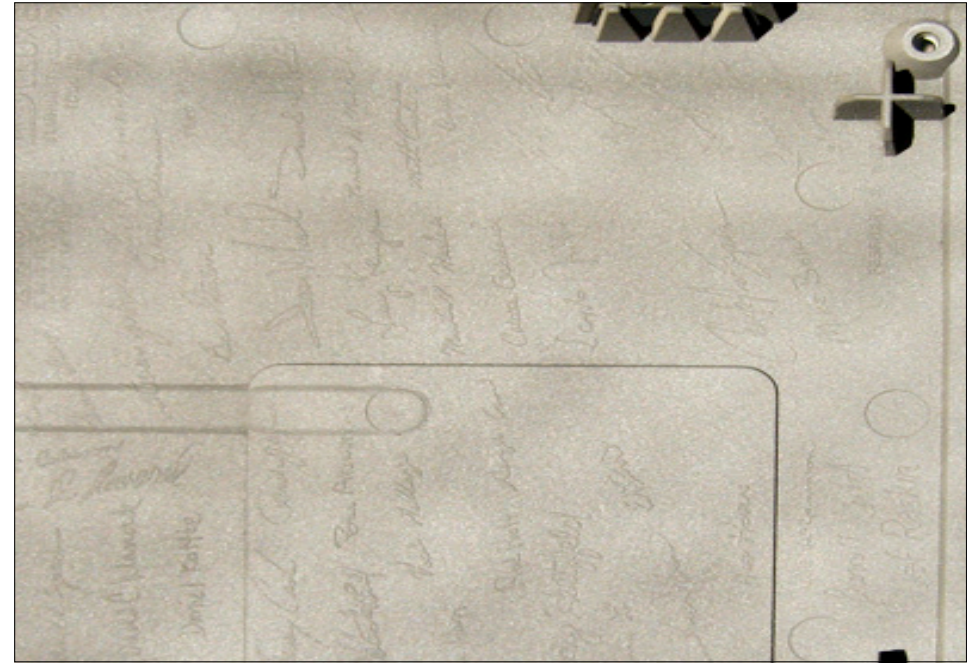
Trust

De Marco's Examples

- The signing of a huge contract
 - ▶ Putting reputation in hands of your subordinates
- Designing a system at the ... beach
 - ▶ Inhibit the obsession of **visual supervision**
 - ▶ How do you know that they worked? By their fruits!
- Bidding for Projects
 - ▶ Not only "glamorous" projects got chosen
 - ▶ Let team members have a word on adding new members to the team
- Natural Authority
 - ▶ opposed to insecure need for obedience

Chemistry of Team Formation

1. Make a Cult of Quality



2. Allow Teams to Feel Unique and Elite



If you could effect some change in the people you manage and make them much more productive and goal-directed, but also less controllable, would you do it?

3. Provide lot of **closure** opportunities

Chemistry for Team Formation (ctd.)

4. Network model of leadership

- ▶ **Manager is not part of the team!**
 - ◆ Because he is not a peer
- ▶ Individuals provide occasional leadership in their strength areas
- ▶ Manager outside team, occasional direction, clear obstacles
- ▶ **Structure of a team is a network, not a hierarchy!**

5. Allow & encourage diversity (skills & other elements)

- ▶ The sports team metaphor does NOT hold!
- ▶ People have various and complementary qualities

Human Capital

Expenses vs. Investment

- Investment = use an asset to buy another asset
- Expense vs. Investment
 - use money vs. convert money

March 1998	
Ordinary Income/Expense	Mar'98
Expense	
Utilities	> 100.00 <
Total Expense	100.00
Net Ordinary Income	-100.00
Net Income	-100.00

Pay utilities

Whatever Corp.	
Profit and Loss	
April 1998	
	◊ Apr '98 ◊
Net Income	> 0.00 <

Buy a notebook

How About People?

Salaries treated always as expense, never as capital investment

- Correct only if the salary is paid for work that is “gone” when product is done!

Human Capital

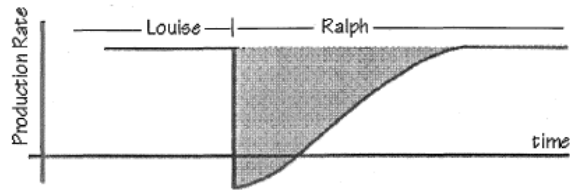
- If money invested in a training seminar → money is not “gone” at the end of the month → it's not expenses; it's investment!
- Eating the seed corn...
 - Sacrificing long-term for quarterly earnings

2 Tests

on how your company understands human capital

- How much was invested in you?
- What happens when you want to leave?

Production Loss Due to Change of Personnel



- Some numbers...
 - ▶ If Ralph needs **6 month** to get up to speed and his progress is **linear** then cost is **3 Person-Month**
 - ▶ For more complicated jobs up to **24 months**
- Downsizing
 - ▶ You save the ongoing expensed, but loose the 150.000 \$ investment!!

The ultimate management **sin** is ...

...WASTING PEOPLE'S TIME!

T. DeMarco, *Peopleware*

WASTING people's **TIME!**

Method 1: Status Meetings

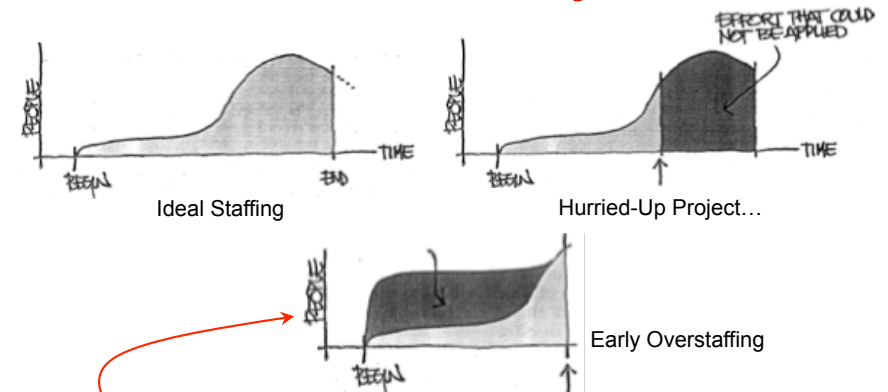
- Status meetings
 - ▶ The boss interacting with each one of the members
 - ▶ No further interaction between the rest of the members
- Goal is not the need for information, but the need for **reassurance**

Status meetings are reassurance ceremonies!

*Status meetings are not about the status of the work,
but the status of the boss!*

- Organizations need ceremonial meetings, but they need to be explicit
 - ▶ E.g. celebrating achievements, new people join the group

Method 2: Overstaffing



- Would you do it this way? May be you would... ;-)
 - ▶ It's not about finishing...
 - ▶ it's about looking better or worse to the upper management

Method 3: Time Fragmentation

- Time Fragmentation wastes the individual's time
 - ▶ Significant amount of time used to "switch gears" → largely **invisible**
 - ◆ You do it, but you do it slower
 - ◆ Slow (re)start as a result of interrupted flow.
- Status Meetings and Overstaffing are bad, but at least visible. **Time fragmentation is invisible**
- Especially bad when the tasks involve qualitatively different kinds of work habits.