Team: Getting Things Done with Others

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General Ideas

- How quickly an organization can respond to radical change is critical for its survival
- Instead of foxing the problems, look for their root in the system
- Teams have to be designed to be an environment where people can perform at their best
- Stiving for a balance of health and performance leads to better results in the long run
- To work harder each time you take more responsibility is false

- AI can only replace someone who has not **developed better ways of thinking and deciding**

- The biggest challange in Knowledge Work is to define what it actually is
- It is not by doing increasing amounts of work that one becomes excellent, but rather by changing the kinds of work.

Part 1

When Teamwork does not work

- Too much volume makes teams unhealthy
- Triggers for Action (mails, calls, etc.) have increased
- Live in consistent overwork becomes normal and even comfortable

- **MING Model** for team development (Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing)
  Is neglected because of time issues.
  Teams are reshuffled often before even learning to act together.

Properties of a good team:
- Clear shared purpose, direction and priorities
- Well defined individual roles
- Fast response times to requests
- Focus on results instead of hours worked
- Asynchronous work to allow flexible schedules
- Ability to decline requests to protect priorities
- Reliable delivery on commitments
- Timely communication when plans change
- Shared language and agreed standards for teamwork
- Meetings:
  - Short and few
  - Purpose and outcomes clarified beforehand
  - Start and End on time
  - Action points agreed before meetings end
  - Prepared participants with ready topics
  - Issues resolved clearly enough to move forward

New type of Work

Problems with Modern Companies
- Multilayered Decision-Making Processes
- Silo-Mentality (Keeping Information hidden and under-communication) and resulting misalignment
- Rigid Planning Cycles

Lean Management
- Lean = Removing waste in manufacturing processes
- Identifying value for the customers. Mapping out processes. Challenging and improving how things are done
- Focus on respecting people and giving them the power to improve their work through autonomy and engagement

- Six Sigma = Variation of Lean, focusing on reducing statistical variance in production, improving product quality

Holocracy

= Organizing by roles and accountabilities instead of hierarchies

- Holons: Circles of autonomy and accountability that might overlap
- Focus on a specific result, a person is accountable for.
  A job is well done when WHAT is true?

Agile
- Scrum = framework for implementing Agile
- Break work into short iterations or sprints
- Select tasks for each sprint based on priority
- Collaborate closely with stakeholders
- Hold short, regular meetings to track progress
- Review results and gather feedback after each sprint
- Adjust plans and improve in the next cycle

These Systems in Perspective to Knowledge Work

- Most focus on production of goods and software not knowledge work
- Knowledge Work is mostly hard to plan and consists of unstructured, varied, unrepeated tasks

- Productivity in KW is based on
  - Dedication of time
  - Handling commitments
  - Answering emails
  - Effective meetings
  - Definition of goals
  - Making effective plans
  - Handling interruptions and changes

What a Team is

- Team = a group that regularly comes together to achieve a common goal, more easily achieved together

Principles for Teams to Work

Clarity:	• Constant clarification on views on WHAT IS • Defined Purpose and Direction • Standards and Processes • Definition of the 5 Horizons in GTD
Trust:	• Trust = enough commitment to rely on another to do their best towards a goal
Open Communication:	• Support of disclosure on things affecting the performance of the team
Learning:	• Taking time to review, reflect and learn • Challenging group think and unconscious bias
Diversity:	• Encourage different backgrounds (educational and cultural) and different points of view

Skills Individuals and Teams should have

Individuals:	• Presenting themselves in conversation • Listen without interrupting • Giving constructive feedback
Team:	• Effective Structure • Clear Processes • Defined Roles • Guidance on Prioritization • Mechanisms to deals with unrealistic expectations

Part 2 Elements for Productive Teaming

The structure for team organization is the same as the general structure of GTD

Control

- Handling Agreements right builds trust

- **3 Ways of handling agreements**
  1. Not making agreements
  2. Completing agreements or
  3. Renegotiating agreements

Capture:	• Team members capture things that need attention for themselves • Put them into own agendas list or upcoming team meeting agenda
Clarify:	• Clarify what needs to be done and assign accountabilities on the captured points • Give permission to team members to take time each day to clarify their work • Clarify in team meetings: 　• What is the request and how do we categorize it? 　• Is it actionable? 　• What are the next steps? 　• What is the outcome? 　• Who does what by when? • Everyone has a project list for themselves • "P" and "p" Projects 　• "P"-Projects = Projects the team needs to track 　• "p"-Projects = Projects the individual needs to track
Organize:	• Have a **Master Calendar** for all important team events,

Focus

Purpose and Principles:	Purpose ○ Everyone should know these things: 　▪ Why we're here. (Purpose) 　▪ How we play together. (Principles) 　▪ Where we're going. (Vision) 　▪ The milestones we'll pass on our way. (Goals) 　▪ The role in making that happen (Areas of Focus) ○ Clarify what the purpose of the organization is and the one of team within it? ○ Reinforce the purpose periodically Principles ○ Define a standard for how to do things and what to expect from each other 　(How meetings are held, how fast to respond, what to decline, …) ○ Create an environment that encourages the right behavior instead of relying on discipline ○ Be a role model and act how you want others to ○ Find standards by asking what would bother you / excite you if done consistently ○ Communicate the standards and also the logic behind them ○ **Document decisions: What you have decided and also WHY**
Vision:	• Clarify what great success means for the team (in 3 to 5 years) • Create a clear picture of what the future should look like • Build a vision by stating a global goal and some slightly more specific ones • Focus on the WHAT not the HOW
Goals:	• Make some more urgent claims on what to achieve • Use

Planning

Tools for Planning
- Lists
- Mind Maps
- Sequences
- Workstreams
- Spreadsheets
- Gantt Charts
- Scenarios

- Never work at 100% Capacity
- When deciding, something is important to do, ask what you let go of in favor of the task

Use the Natural Planning Model

1. Define purpose and share
2. Set standards and behaviors
3. Envision success
4. Collect all ideas
5. Identify key milestones and deliverables
6. Assign next actions and owners

	milestones and deliverables • Have a Team Reference System where the team collects relevant information to team projects. Assign people to update specific parts of the team	

Reflect:	• Make a Revieew Session each year to reflect on successes and possible improvement
	• Weekly Review Meetings.
	     • Status of all team projects is tracked
	     • Every Team member does their own review beforehand	

Engage:	• Prioritize as a team • Base decisions on intuition and well kept lists/calendar	

	SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) or OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) • Align the goals with the vision • Engage the Team to create the goals for themselves • Collect as many ideas as possible, then reduce them to the most effective ones
Areas of Focus:	• Focus on strategic priorities • Define areas that should be maintained at a certain standard • Document roles and create checklists for holding them • Create Roles like "Sales" and assign them measures with a goal like a number of signed contracts
Projects:	See organizing
Next Actions:	• Let people handle their next actions for themselves

Part 3: Managing a Team

- A manager should focus on helping the team succeed
- Leaders have to see how the parts of a system come together
- Provide a clear vision but also a structure on how to handle the day-to-day-challenges
- Empower people to make decisions wherever possible
- Lead by setting and holding standards yourself first. Be a role model
- Let the team set the standard for themselves and let them hold each other accountable
- Capture Agreements and hold people accountable
- Create a "Townhall List" for what to announce to all
- Keep a dashboard as overview on what the team is up to
- Let everyone keep a Waiting-For-List and make 15min time a day for people to ask you things
- Only do what is truly important. Establish a culture of saying "no" to access work.
Only commit to things you can handle. Say no, commit to doing it or renegotiate

Delegation

- Only do what only you can do. Delegate everything else
- Hand off tasks others can do, even if they may not do them as well initially
- Avoid taking back old responsibilities after promotion
- Give others opportunities to grow through practice and coaching
- Delegate whole projects or entire areas of responsibility, not just small actions
- Pass on tasks that do not require your unique access, authority, or relationships
- Free yourself to focus on purpose, vision, culture, high-level decisions, and external relationships

How to Delegate

Prepare:	• Define desired outcome, timeline, and available resources
Negotiate:	• Have a real conversation, clarify expectations, and agree on "conditions of satisfaction" • Allow space for the delegate to say no, ask questions, commit later, or propose alternatives • Agree on milestones, due dates, and communication methods
Deliver/Complete:	• Performer works, gives updates, and flags changes or blockers early
Satisfaction:	• Review outcome, request adjustments if needed, and acknowledge the effort • Avoid "lazy delegation" by giving clear deadlines and success criteria • Limit the number of people involved to maintain aligned expectations • Maintain eye contact, clear tone, and follow up consistently to build trust and accountability

Examples of Standards

General:
- Keep thinking time each day for planning and organizing and protect it

Email:
- All email (received as "To:") is acknowledged within 48 hours.
- Subject lines clearly describe the topic of the email.
- When the topic of an email string changes, change the subject line, rather than simply hitting reply or reply all.
- Include only people in the "To:" field who have a direct action in the email, and use "Cc:" for those who just need to be kept informed.
- Inboxes are clarified every 48 hours.

Meetings:
- Meeting invites state the desired outcome of the meeting.
- An Agenda and Waiting For List (see Getting Things Done) is to be prepared before the meeting
- The start and end time of all meetings are honored.
- Meetings should allow for transition time between meetings
- default meeting times should be 50 minutes rather than 60, or 25 minutes instead of 30.
- All agreements neet to be documented (What & Why)

- Focus on the agreed topic has to be kept
- All devices need to be closed and everyone needs to focus
- Have a visual representation of what is done

- 5 Reasons for meetings
  1. Inform others
  2. Collecting Information
  3. Collecting Options
  4. Making Decisions
  5. Forming Relationships

Medium	Purpose	Response time	Comment
Email	Used when a team collaboration tool is not possible, e.g. with people outside the department	Next workday	Not for internal department communication. Team collaboration software is preferable. "I'll get back to you" might be enough No after hour mails
Team collaboration software	Better information flow within the team	Next workday	Post to the correct thread in the right channel. Notify only those who need to know. If unsure, create a new thread with a clear identifying name.
SMS	Quick messages	Four hours	—
Phone	For immediate input	As soon as circumstances permit	Not expected to be "on" all the time. If you miss a call, return it if the SMS indicated a timely need. If calling and no one picks up, send a text explaining the reason.