FORCE MULTIPLIERS
FOR HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

Force Multiplier 1: Conduct More Effective Meetings

In today's rapidly-changing business environment, "good" teamwork is not enough. To truly achieve extraordinary results, your team needs to turn on the afterburner and employ some force multipliers. In this article, we want to show you four critical force multipliers to empower your team as they relentlessly pursue Flawless Execution®.

"We have too many meetings!" is the battle cry of the knowledgeable worker. Intuitively many managers have sought to reduce the number of meetings in order to improve efficiency, but in many cases this will not fix the problem. The problem in most companies is not too many meetings — it's that their meetings are irrelevant. In many cases, the reason for the meeting is unclear, or there are no rules of conduct for the meeting — leading to confusion and frustration for the people involved. We've witnessed many well-intentioned teams, meeting for all the right reasons, only to be derailed by a lack of basic structure or discipline. Here are some practical tips that will dramatically improve the effectiveness of your meetings:

- Determine when your team must meet in order to allow subordinate groups or individuals the time they will need to plan and brief prior to executing actions that achieve desired outcomes.

- Determine the desired effect of your meeting. What are three things you want to see as a result of having a meeting?

- Create a standing agenda that is flexible enough to accommodate your group but keeps them focused on the elements they deem critical to successful decision-making and execution. Group members should submit input to the agenda on a pre-established schedule that allows for the agenda to be finalized and sent to participants in advance of the meeting.

- Meeting participants MUST do all required pre-work.

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- Establish Rules Of Engagement (ROE) and enforce them. Here are some examples of meeting ROE:

- Only one person speaks at a time.

- No sidebar conversations.

- Attendees can speak a maximum of 3 continuous minutes.

- No email/cell interruptions.

- Consider carefully the impact of your decisions and how to best communicate decisions to subordinate organizations.

- Complete a Commitment Sheet at the end of the meeting and email it to the participants after the meeting. This consists of the minutes from the meeting, decisions made and assignment of accountability for action. Most teams struggle with decision-making in meetings. Filling out a Commitment Sheet can dramatically improve how a team addresses issues and makes decisions. It also ensures accountability and records all of the issues brought to the table in a simple format. A good Commitment Sheet should include the decisions discussed, what actions will be taken, further research that will be made, deferred decisions and contingency plans discussed.

Force Multiplier 2: Build a Relevant Team Scoreboard

A relevant scorecard is essential to a high-performance team, but numbers for their own sake won't make your meeting effective. Too many teams measure the wrong things — which can kill a team's performance. The saying goes..."ask the wrong questions, get the wrong answers." It's best to focus on a few sets of metrics that are the most relevant to supporting the team in their decision-making and execution responsibilities.

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Ad hoc reports can supplement these numbers when your team wants deeper analysis on a particular issue. Remember to keep the appropriate level of detail. Too little detail and the numbers are worthless. Too much detail and people don't read or understand them. Let the team validate the format of your scorecard. Recognize that your initial scorecard will NOT be perfect and will need constant testing and revision until perfected. Finally, make sure that what you choose to measure supports the broader operational objectives.

Force Multiplier 3: Commit to a Set of "Living" Standards

Most companies have standard operating procedures (SOPs) — on the shelf in some cubical. Most SOPs are outdated the day they are written. This is a tragedy. Your SOPs can be the glue that enables standardized execution, but they have to be a central part of your team's execution process. They have to be frequently updated living documents repeatedly referenced and upheld by leaders. In a flawlessly executing team, standards allow you to handle routine operations without further consideration and with greater speed. Standards are critical to gaining Lessons Learned from Debriefing. They can help you understand whether failure to adhere to the standards caused the failure or, conversely, whether your team's success resulted from NOT following the standards. In this case you would need to adjust your SOPs to the next best practice. When Debriefing yields a Lesson Learned, often these can be added to SOPs to leverage the best practice across, up and down the organization.

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Force Multiplier 4: Establish Disciplined Communication Rules

Undisciplined communication can sap the effectiveness of any group. We're not talking about the interpersonal chat that goes on in an organization. We are talking about how team members transmit and receive information to one another that supports execution — voice mails, emails, text, CRM & social messaging, ad hoc meetings and more. Teams with good Execution Rhythm take these daily communications seriously enough to create detailed standards for them. Here are a few examples:

- Communication should be face to face first, voice second and email/text last.
- Never leave a voice mail longer than 15 seconds.
- Never reply more than once to an email. Start a new email so the recipient does not have to read a long string of messages to determine the central point.
- Always address conflict in person or via telephone/web meeting, never via email.

Use these simple tools and watch your team's performance accelerate!

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