

Smart Books

Highperformance Teams

Articles about Teams by Steve Denning

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1. Creating high-performance teams

1.1. What's the saddest statistic in the world?

The saddest statistic in the world? How about the percentage of people who truly love what they are currently doing at work? It's a miserable 6%! That means 94% of people are in various stages of disinterest, disillusion or despair as to how they are spending most of their waking time on this planet. Is this what several thousand years of civilization ought to be about? Almost universal discontent and misery? We are of course much better off financially than we were a hundred years ago, but it doesn't seem to be making us any happier. All the statistics indicate: the richer we get, the more miserable we become - the so-called Easterlin paradox.

What makes it even more poignant is that everyone I talk to can tell of a time in their life when it wasn't so. When I push and prod a little, everyone can tell me of a time, perhaps long ago, perhaps not in the workplace, but a time when they were truly engaged in what they were doing. So it's not that people aren't at least subliminally aware of what they are missing. They know that there is a massive gap between the quality of their lives now and the quality of what their lives could become.

This is one reason why I'm excited about the issue of high-performance groups. That's because members of high-performance groups are not only more productive: they also report on finding the work deeply satisfying and meaningful. So if we knew how to create high-performance groups, it would not only be good for the economy: it might provide people with more satisfying lives.

1.2. How do you create these high-performance groups?

We know that high performance groups emerge when the members take ownership for the well-being of a whole group. We see various signs of this higher level of engagement. Members consider themselves responsible for assuring the group's success. They become willing to do whatever is necessary for the group to become exceptionally successful. They do so in a spirit of giving and generosity and a belief in doing something special or intrinsically worthwhile, rather than something done as a result of bargaining or self-interest or calculation or obligation. They accept accountability for the outcome of the group's activities.

In a high-engagement group, the ownership of the group is not limited to the hierarchical leader or a few people at the top. A group becomes fully engaged when every member becomes an owner with a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for the accomplishment of the mission of the group.

High performance groups emerge when people have the courage to make commitments to co-create a new and different future.

That's all very well, you might say. But how could we actually generate this sense of ownership and commitment?

In fact, some famous books (such as *The Wisdom of Teams* or *Leading Teams*) argue that it's not possible to create high performance groups: it's a matter of "luck" or "chemistry". I disagree. High-performance groups began with ideas in people's heads: ideas about what the relations between human beings have been, are and might and should be. If we study how this happened, we can learn how these ideas came to be transformed in pursuit of some goal that radically changed behavior. We can learn how the people involved in such high-performance groups came, even if only for a brief period, to live life in a different way, with different conceptions of what human beings should be and do, and why, later on, they fell back into less exalted ways of behaving.

If you look only at traditional management techniques, it's pretty easy to see why someone might conclude that it's not possible to create a high performance group. Clearly, directing people to form such groups isn't going to work. Nor is giving people reasons why they should do it likely to help much.



An interesting book that focuses on the use of questions to create community is Peter Block's *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (Berrett-Kohler, 2008)

I believe that story may be even more important than questions. It has a special role to play in generating high-performance groups:

My work is tending to show that certain kinds of story can "prime" people to view the world in a particular way and enhance the likelihood of their viewing their own group as having a fresh and expanded potential. The group is no longer a fragmented bunch of separate individuals or "them": it starts to become "us". As a result, participants perceive themselves, and begin acting as, owners of the group, even though in hierarchical terms, the hierarchical managers may remain legally in charge.

Story can help create the necessary intimate and authentic relatedness of a high-performance group, both to each other and to the group.

Story can help create a dynamic of invitation. Through story, the members of the group can come to see that a mission--their mission--is in some "special" to members of the group. A story can help inspire commitments made in a spirit of being involved in something intrinsically worth doing, not something done under duress or any sense of requirement or compulsion.

Through the exchange of stories, rather than abstract arguments, differences in opinion and experience can be given space to be articulated and listened to with respect. In this way, the different gifts and interests of the members can be acknowledged and given respect.

Story can also provide the release of tension that begins to build up when people disagree. Humor, laughter, the ability to puncture of pomposity and pretension, all seem to be hallmark of these high performance groups. They care deeply about the group's purpose, while not taking themselves too seriously.

Through living a common story, individuals undertake a shared journey with shared responsibility for its success.

Through listening to people's stories, you can create energy rather than consuming it. By being willing to listen, you create accountability by confronting people with the implications of their freedom to commit or not to commit. You offer people the opportunity make choices. You create the possibility for people to be in charge of their own lives.

Listening to people's stories also entails the risk that people may say no: they may opt not to get involved. Attempts to eliminate the risk by removing the option of choice and imposing a command-and-control approach to problems may create an illusion of agreement or even consensus: but in reality, there is no ownership, no engagement. Engagement can only be offered: it cannot be bought.

We know that the intensity of engagement of the group's members is affected by the way people are brought together, the nature of the questions that are raised, the extent to which people opinions are listened to and their gifts are given respect, and the quality of the commitments that are made. Story can play a crucial role in setting the right context. It can establish the right mood music.

If we hope to understand the paradoxical world in which we live (and unless we understand it, we cannot act rationally in it or on it), we cannot limit our attention to the impersonal forces of economics and finance and the bottom line of corporate performance. The goals and motives that guide individual human action must be looked at in the light of all that we know and understand; their roots and growth, their essence, and above their validity, must be examined at with every intellectual resource that we have. The possibility of combining high productivity with high levels of personal satisfaction and meaning, makes this inquiry one of primary importance.

As Isaiah Berlin once wrote, "Only barbarians are not curious about where they come from, how they came to be where they are, where they appear to be going, whether they wish to go there, and if so, why, and if not, why not." *



2. Five ways to kindle the spirit of high-performance teams

It's easy to get lost in the mechanics of creating and sustaining high-performance teams. In amongst all the "nuts and bolts" of setting them up, like daily standups, planning poker, burndown charts, understanding the team's focus factor, and calculating its velocity, one might even begin to imagine that this is some new set of management gadgets aimed at squeezing a few more drops of productivity out of a weary and beleaguered staff.

One might miss the fact that this is actually about creating exhilaration in the workplace, igniting shining eyes and delight, and inspiring people to reinvent themselves. The mechanics, or "nuts and bolts", are just stepping stones towards the spirit and the magic of a new kind of workplace, a place where people are energized and vibrantly alive. The fact that this way of working also happens to be much more efficient and productive, and able to create delight for clients are happy spinoffs, but ultimately the sine qua non of the approach is the spirit of the team itself.

2.1. Why do some teams achieve high-performance?

Why do some self-organizing teams evolve into high-performance teams, while others flounder around for months, even years? Getting the context right is a big part of it. But even when the context is right, it still doesn't happen. Why?

Ultimately the evolution of self-organizing teams evolve into high-performance teams depends on mutual respect and trust of the members of the team. When people have this kind of respect, they feel they have the support of others, they view the group's resources, knowledge, perspectives, and identities to some extent as their own, they feel as though they have new capabilities, and begin to include others in their concepts of themselves. They feel a sense of exhilaration as they learn new things from and about their partners. In a sense, their sense of self expands. They become a larger person.

We are beginning to learn some of the neuroscience of the phenomenon. It has much to do with a hormone called oxytocin that is produced naturally in the brain during supportive social interactions. It causes deliciously exhilarating floods of feeling in the brain. It curbs fear and increases trust. It is strongly present in young mothers, and in love affairs. It also appears to be an element in the feeling we find in high-performance teams.

The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle also wrote about the phenomenon in terms of the concept of "philia". This is usually translated as friendship, but it is more than mere liking or friendship. It connotes the passion associated with love, but without the sexual connotation. (High-performance teams routinely talk about their relationships as a form of love, e.g. when David Axelrod spoke to Sixty Minutes and described the mood within the Obama campaign team on the night of November 4, 2008.) It is also admiration, but it's not a mutual admiration society: there is a constructive frankness in these relationships, because the participants care enough to say the things that mere acquaintances won't. The team members discover what is wonderful in the other person, but the quality is not pre-existing: it is mutually created. In effect, it is a deep appreciation for the character of the other person.

2.2. How does this trust and respect arise?

Can it be generated? How does this trust and respect arise? Can it be generated?

In order for the team members to reach this level of respect, they have to know each other more deeply than the superficial relations of the modern bureaucracy. They have to get to know who are these people they are working with.

Clearly, conventional management techniques are at best impotent, and more likely, counterproductive when it comes to creating this kind of respect and trust. Leadership storytelling, by contrast, is well adapted to meet the challenge. Here are five ways it can be used:



2.3. Five ways to create this level of respect and trust

2.3.1. Stimulate the muscle memory of high-performance teams

One way is to have the team members tell each other stories of their own experiences of high-performance teams that they have experienced in the past. The experience might have occurred in the workplace, in the community, at school or in the family. This may enable the team members to start to see each other as people who have had experiences of high-performance teams in the past, and so create the implicit question: if we have all been in high-performance teams some time in the past, why can't we get into this mode now?

2.3.2. Tell springboard stories of other high-performance teams

In addition, to encourage memories of high-performance teams, a leader might tell springboard stories about successful high-performance teams in other, similar organizations, with the object of stimulating the narrative imaginations of the team members with the thought: if people like that, who are very similar to us, could do it, why not us now?

2.3.3. Teach the team members how to communicate who they are

One reason why the team members may not know whether they can trust or respect the other team members, is that the other team members themselves don't really have a clear image themselves of who they are, and so are unable to project a personality that is fit to be trusted. In such a situation, teaching the team members to learn how to craft and perform the story of who they are can enable them to come to terms with what sort of person they see themselves as, and communicate that to the other members of the team.

2.3.4. Have the team members construct the team story.

The classic way in which groups have been inspired to work together is a narrative pattern that is as old as the ancient Greek historian, Thucydides, and as modern as the political campaign of Barack Obama. The pattern involves three stories:

The story of who we were >> The story of who we are >> The story of who we will be.

Having the group craft and perform this combination of stories is a powerful way for them to communicate both to themselves and to others what they have in common and why they might evolve into a high-performance team.

Note that the trick here is the alignment of the stories with the overall goal the group: unless the stories are aligned in this way, they will not be effective.

2.3.5. Deep listening to each other's story

A final technique involves creating a safe space or container within which the team members are encouraged to undergo deep listening of the other person's story, by learning how to tell each other's story. By getting inside the other team member's stories, they become intimately familiar with who they are.

2.4. The underlying mechanism

On the surface, these are merely exercises. But beneath the surface, something deeper is going on. When it works well, the participants lower their social guard. They make themselves vulnerable. They learn about each other. With luck, they discover what's wonderful in each other. They are suddenly looking at themselves through the admiring eyes of others, and vice versa. They can see themselves as more noble and generous and open. As a result, they can begin to act with them in ways that are more noble and generous and open. They become "new people".

2.5. The risks and benefits of undertaking this approach

The approach outlined here is not without risk.



The team members may consider themselves as too clever and sophisticated to run the risk of lowering their social guard.

There is a real possibility that we lower our social guard, we might not like what we find. We may find that we are incompatible. We crawl back into our shell. We decline to become new people.

The organization might decide not to run these risks and might opt dull predictability of standardized mediocrity to exciting, exceptional performance. They may have other priorities than striving for high-performance teams.

But for those organizations that want the full engagement of their staff, the productivity gains that high-performance teams generate and the delight that clients experience in having their needs fully met, these are powerful and useful tools

3. Most high-performance teams are self-organizing teams

My research on high-performance teams encountered some manager-led teams. In manager-led teams, management appoints a team leader and the leader becomes the boss of the team. The team reports to the leader. It's a team, yes, but the team is also an extension of the hierarchy. Everyone looks to the leader for instructions.

However most of the high-performance teams were not manager-led teams. They were teams where the management had deliberately stepped back, or was inattentive or where one reason or another was totally absent, thus enabling the team to self-organize. It's as though there was a tear in the fabric of the universe, an open space that was created, and lo and behold, the self-organizing team emerged.

What generates the energy and passion of self-organizing teams, and their eventual high productivity, is that the members enjoy the opportunity to organize their own work and contribute their full human potential to the collectivity, rather than being limited to what the organization thinks it can absorb, and only at those moments when it is ready to absorb it.

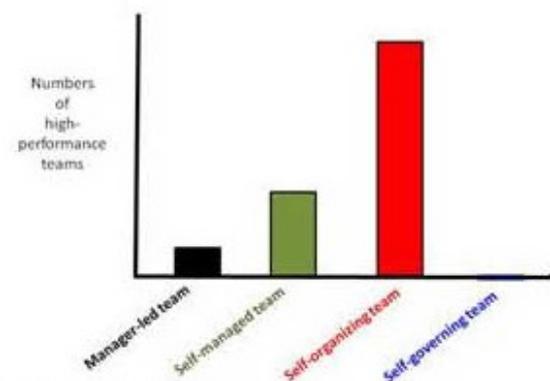
Interestingly, my research encountered no examples of self-governing teams in big firms in a high-performance mode. Self-governing teams rarely if ever attain a high-performance mode, apparently because the struggle to decide what to do gets in the way of actually doing it.

Perhaps an exception to the rule that high-performance teams are self-organizing, but not self-governing, would be a startup company that is growing in an organic fashion, based on the collaboration of a group of equals. Such a firm can be quite agile, so long as it stays small. The problems begin when it begins to grow, and then walls of divisions and departments start to grow, and the firm begins to slow down, as departments and divisions and layers of management begin to form.

Four types of team

	Manager-led teams	Self-managing teams	Self-organizing teams	Self-governing teams
Setting overall direction for the team				Management responsibilities
Designing the team and its context			Team responsibilities	
Managing work process and monitoring progress				
Executing the team tasks:				

Where are high-performance teams found?





4. When cross-functional teams aren't: high-end knowledge work

The cultural barriers to managing with high-performance teams in an organization are many and substantial. In software development, the biggest hurdles are usually the management establishing clear priorities for the work of a team before the beginning of a work period, and then allowing the team to work without interruption on those priorities for the course of a work period.

4.1. The case of the high-end knowledge firms

In the high-end knowledge firms, an even bigger constraint may be getting the degree of collaboration in cross-functional teams that high-performance teams require. These firms are staffed with people who were always at or near the top of their class in school, and who were recruited into the firm because they were the best and the brightest. Now they have developed expertise in a field and they are recognized as tops in their field.

In such settings, cross-functional teams are common but they are often teams merely in name. The reality is that they are a way of “dividing and conquering”: each expert participates in the team as the owner of a piece of intellectual turf. There may be collaboration at the border, but within each area of expertise, the expert is the czar. The idea that other members of the team might contribute to the expert’s area of expertise, make suggestions, or even improvements as to how the work should be done, is often a strange, practically unthinkable thought. The expert owns the territory, precisely because of expertise. The firm makes its living by selling the expertise of its experts. The idea that experts might have something to learn from others less expert than themselves would put in question the self-image of both the expert and the firm. The thought that a junior member of the team might make a suggestion to improve the work of the senior member is as unthinkable as the thought that a nurse might tell a surgeon how to improve the conduct of an operation.

4.2. The power of cognitive diversity

And yet we know from that wonderful book, *The Difference* by Scott Page (2007), that cognitive diversity is what enables ordinary people to become extraordinary. It’s what enables ordinary people who are cognitively diverse to outperform groups of like-minded experts.

So we know that teams of experts that are operating in intellectual silos are not performing as well as they might if there was real collaboration across areas of expertise. We also know that teams performing work in intellectual silos are maximizing the amount of work in process at any one time, and we know that having large amounts of work in process slows the work down. We also know that if each member of the team is working on “their own thing”, the possibility of getting the thing that will delight the client most, fully done as early as possible, and then moving on to the next item ceases to be feasible. In short, we know that such cross-functional are barely more than teams in name and are operating in a very sub-optimal fashion. We also know that this is one of the reasons why people working in such firms are required to work very long hours under considerable stress.

4.3. The prospects for change

Yet the possibility of changing this sub-optimal pattern of work can seem remote. Within the firm, this way of working is simply the way work has always been done. It is the way things are. It is the unquestionable reality of what it means to work in the firm. It is the way it will always be. The thought that large numbers of very clever and talented people working very hard for very long hours are actually working in an unproductive fashion is not a thought that can remain in the mind of such people for very long, however intellectually solid that thought may be.

Are such firms a lost cause for high-performance teams? Are they doomed to remain in this sub-optimal way of working until newer, upstart, more productive firms emerge, are recognized as better and take the place of their more prestigious predecessors?



Here are three tactics for introducing high-performance teams into even the most intractable high-edn knowledge culture:

4.3.1. Tactic #1: The future is already here!

Given the global scale of the Agile movement in software development, there are now software teams within most big organizations implementing the principles I am describing. It is therefore likely that there are such software development teams within the firm practicing the principles, perhaps with varying degrees of success. One tactic would be to try to find out (a) whether there are any such teams, (b) what success they are having; (c) what constraints they are facing. Of course it is being tried, and it is not working well for any of the many reasons I have described, this approach may not be applicable at this time. But if you can find teams implementing Agile software development and having considerable success, they may constitute Trojan horses, for introducing the movement more broadly within your consulting firm. This is what has happened in many other companies. The argument is one by analogy: if it worked so well in software development, why not more broadly in the organization? So they try it out and they find that, yes, it does work beyond software. Springboard stories about such experiences could be very effective.

4.3.2. Tactic #2: The best way to learn is to teach

There is now a considerable amount of evidence that the managing work through collaborative high-performance teams leads to massive gains in productivity. It is also now clear why these gains in productivity occur. It is simply a more productive way to get work done. As a firm of consultants that aims at helping other organizations improve their productivity, a high-end consulting firm ought at least to be aware of these possibilities in advising its own clients, and be able to help its clients achieve these massive gains in productivity if they are so interested. It's one of the strategic options to consider, because the productivity gains are game-changing in nature, even if implementation is far from easy, and often in conflict with existing corporate cultures. In fact, if a high-end consulting firm doesn't include this way of working as one of the strategic options, it could be considered as not doing a proper job of advising on strategy. Helping organizations decide whether to go down this path and how to achieve these gains is likely to evolve into a lucrative line of business for consultants, which is now just gaining momentum. It is already that in software development. In teaching other organizations how to achieve these productivity gains, A high-end consulting firm would inevitably have to acquire some knowledge and expertise in the area itself. In the process of acquiring that expertise, it will eventually dawn on the firm, "As doctors, why don't we heal ourselves as well."

4.3.3. Tactic #3: Getting a Better Work-life balance

Another angle of attack might be through work-life balance issues. I get the impression that many, if not most, staff in the high-end knowledge firms are working long hours, under a lot of pressure, with quite a bit of stress. The usual proposals put forward to deal with this rather dispiriting, albeit well compensated, existence is for people to carve out more time for their private life. This doesn't really work very well, because the pressures from work remain inexorable. The paradox is that although these very talented and intelligent people are working very hard, they are not working nearly as productively if they implemented the principles of high-performance teams. A similar dispiriting scene existed in software development for many years until the way of managing the work was changed. When the teams became more productive, overtime vanished and the "pizza index" dropped to zero—late nights at the office became the exception not the rule. The firm was happy because a lot more work was getting done. And the software developers were happier because now they got to see their families on a regular basis, without having to fight off the pressures of the office. It might take some time to convince people that working very hard for long hours is not necessarily being very productive. Having done it for so long, it will seem to many as simply "the way things are". However as the new generation of people joining the workforce are increasingly looking to the quality of working life as a key factor in deciding which firms to work for, hiring the best people will eventually become more and more difficult unless these issues are addressed.



5. The conventional wisdom on high-performance teams is wrong

In the May Harvard Business Review, Richard Hackman repeats the conventional wisdom on high-performance teams: “Even the best leader on the planet can’t make a team do well. All anyone can do is increase the likelihood that a team will be great by putting into place . And the leader still will have no guarantees that she will create a magical team. Teams create their own realities and control their own destinies to a greater extent, and far sooner in their existence, than most team leaders realize.” 1/

The five conditions that Hackman refers to are (a) the team must be real; (b) the team has compelling direction; (c) the team should have clear tasks and norms of conduct; (d) the team needs a supporting organizational context; and (e) the team needs expert coaching.

What Hackman doesn’t address: if you take certain additional steps, you can routinely create great teams, almost as reliably as putting a pot of water on a fire will cause it to boil. It turns out that Hackman’s “five conditions” are simply an incomplete specification of what is needed to get “great” or “magical” performance. They are necessary but not sufficient.

5.1. What is missing?

What are these additional steps needed to get great performance? They fall into five main categories:

5.1.1. Self-organizing teams

One of the keys to getting consistently great team performance is to empower self-organizing teams. Self-organizing teams have greater capacity to mobilize the energies, the insights and the passion of the team members than manager-led teams. They also need to have a clear and compelling direction that can be adjusted as the context changes. This include:

The organizational locus that is responsible for setting the team’s direction and updating that direction as conditions change must be explicitly identified. That locus is responsible for holding the vision for the team, as the context and the work changes; that locus is desirably a self-organizing team, with a single person representing the unambiguous voice of the team. The locus is variously called the vision holder, or the product-owner or the project manager.

Both the team’s vision-holder and the team’s coach understand and support the concept of a self-organizing team. If the management tries to “manage” the team in the traditional command-and-control fashion, the team will not self-organize.

The team is cross-functional and cognitively diverse. Cognitive diversity enables ordinary people to achieve extraordinary performance.

The team is small: The team is normally 7 + or - 2. Larger projects can be handled by networked groups of teams.

The team is co-located. Studies show that co-location routinely doubles productivity. Once a team has reached high velocity, geographically distributed modes of operation is possible, without loss of productivity.

The team is allowed to self-organize. This includes ensuring that the team has a say in who is on the team, can decide how much time work will take, and how much work to undertake in any work period.

The team is not interrupted by management during a work iteration. Great performance is precluded if the team is continually interrupted.

The vision-holder maintains a single prioritized list of work to be done by the team. Priorities are updated and reconciled on a continuing basis.



5.1.2. Radical transparency

Self-organizing teams operate on the edge of chaos. To make sure that the teams do not slide over into chaos, or if they do, to enable rapid rectifying action, radical transparency is necessary.

The team works in relatively short iterations. Short iterations enable both management and the team to see what is being accomplished. The length of the iterations depends on the degree of uncertainty in the context. In some fields, weekly, fortnightly or monthly iterations are the norm. A kanban mode of operation is an alternative, that may be more attractive when the work is extremely unpredictable.

The work to be undertaken in any iteration is clearly specified and doable within the iteration. Obvious as this requirement may seem, it is in practice quite difficult to accomplish.

The work to be undertaken is defined in terms of user stories that are to be implemented. The team is focused less on producing things and more on actions that will delight clients and stakeholders.

The team meets daily. The members of the team briefly review with each other what happened yesterday, what is planned for today and what are the impediments getting in the way of the work. The impediments are recorded for future action.

The team posts visible charts to track progress. The charts are kept on the walls of the team's common workspace and visible to all team members and to management.

The team focuses on completing work by the end of each iteration. Work in process generates more work. Bringing work to closure as soon as possible is a key to high-productivity.

5.1.3. Relentless self-improvement

Rather than the traditional situation in which the management urges the team to do better, the focus is on establishing transparency that enables the team itself to realize how it is doing, and encourages the team to do better.

The team measures and tracks its velocity in each iteration. The team tracks changes in velocity of time and thus knows whether or not it is improving.

The team holds retrospective reviews. The team assesses progress and determines how work could be improved in future.

The coach works with management and the team to remove impediments.

5.1.4. Delighting clients and stakeholders

Traditional management focused on producing goods and services. Improved management focused on satisfying clients. High-performance management focuses on delighting clients and stakeholders.

The vision-holder decides what will delight the clients and stakeholders. Ideally, the vision holder is the leader of a self-organizing team that also includes members of the team doing the work.

The vision-holder works with the team doing the work to define the user stories that are most likely to delight clients and stakeholders. The team is focused on actions that will delight clients and stakeholders.

The team gets stakeholder feedback. At the end of each iteration, the team gets feedback from stakeholders as to the value of the work that has been done.

5.1.5. Interactive communications

Self-organizing teams ignite the passion, the energies and the insights of the members of the team. This kind of enthusiasm is easily killed by heavy-handed one-way communications.

Both the vision-holder and the coach communicate interactively with the team. They refrain from one-way communications, telling the team what to do, in a top-down, command-and-control mode.

Both the vision-holder and the coach master interactive communication: They learn how to use power of stories and questions to communicate.

Individually, none of these five sets of actions is new. What is new is putting the components together in



an integrated fashion. When all the elements are implemented together, self-organizing teams tend to evolve into a high-performance mode and extraordinary gains in performance can occur.

5.2. This is hard

Traditional management might object that these actions constitute a lot of things to do. And that it's not easy to do all those things at the same time. And that acting in this way is radically different from the way most organizations are run today.

Those objections are correct. This is a different way to manage and it's not easy.

But if you want great performance from your teams, that is the way to get it.

5.3. Where it's happening

Scores of organizations are now doing this on a routine basis, and routinely getting "great" and "magical" performance. The results are not only massive gains in productivity, but also deep job satisfaction in people doing the work, and delight among clients whose needs are being addressed directly and in a timely fashion.

Initially these measures were initially pioneered and refined for software development. Until a decade ago, software developers were among the worst performers in organizations: their work was always late, over budget and full of bugs. By following the measures listed above, teams of software developers are now among the best performing teams in their organizations.

As a result, this way of managing is now spreading beyond software development into sales, marketing, consulting, call centers, and in fact every aspect of work.

The approach can be applied to managing large projects like a mammoth project. Or it can be applied to a tiny project as small as organizing your daughter's birthday party. It can be used to manage normal workflow in a work unit, such as a consulting firm, or a sales organization, or a church, as well as the work of an entire organization.

5.4. What it means

The measures sound like a lot of "nuts and bolts". And it's very easy to get lost in the nuts and bolts, but in the end, it isn't really about the nuts and bolts, and improved efficiency. Those are just stepping stones towards creating exhilaration in the workplace, igniting lots of shining eyes and delight, and in the end inspiring people to reinvent themselves.

Because of the results it is producing, a radical new way of managing work is emerging. It involves a different way of thinking about work, a different way of managing work, and a different way of participating in work. It isn't a quick fix. It isn't an incremental change or a shift at the periphery. When fully implemented, it affects everything in the organization. It entails fundamental change.