



High-Performance Project Teams

A Benchmark of Current Best Practices

HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS use team best practices more than other organizations. Conversely, low-performing organizations consistently underutilize team best practices. These conclusions are among the results of a survey of eighty-two project management practitioners by the Center for Business Practices, the research arm of the consulting and training organization, PM Solutions.

The CBP surveyed senior practitioners with knowledge of their organizations' project management practices and business results. The survey, *High-Performance Project Teams: A Benchmark of Current Best Practices*, was sponsored by ProjectWorld and designed to determine the extent to which the effective use of project teams leads to organizational success.

The CBP identified those project team practices that lead to high performance through a comprehensive search of the literature on project teams. The research revealed a set of best practices that were categorized into the following components:

- Team Strategy & Governance
- Team Leadership
- Team Roles
- Team Participation
- Team Competency
- Team Training
- Team Member Relationships
- Team Decision Making
- Team Recognition & Rewards
- Team Structure
- Team Development
- Organizational Climate for Teams

The survey asked the respondents to what extent seventy-two specific team practices were exhibited in their organizations. They were also asked how well their projects performed, based on eight measures of project performance, including schedule performance, budget performance, customer satisfaction, resource allocation, strategic alignment, estimation performance, employee satisfaction, and portfolio performance.

High-performing organizations were compared to low-performing organizations as well as the overall average to determine whether or not there were any differences in the extent to which organizations used team best practices.

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Best Practices that Set High Performers Apart from the Rest

The following best practices were used significantly more often by high-performing organizations than other organizations. Team recognition and rewards best practices, in particular, set high performers apart. The practices are listed in order of their significance.

- There are formal processes for opting out of teams
- Team performance measures are used as part of a team reward and appraisal system
- Team members provide recognition and rewards to each other for effective performance
- Teams have adequate resources (money, time, people)
- Team members are involved in hiring, training, and disciplining team members
- Team members understand contemporary project management principles
- Team members are willing to make all the necessary key decisions and be held accountable for them
- The organizational culture supports and encourages team empowerment, experimentation, creativity and innovation
- Teams regularly review compliance with their rules

Best Practices Not Performed that Set Low Performers Apart from the Rest

The following best practices were significantly more often *not used* by low-performing organizations than other organizations. And organizational climate best practices in particular set low performers apart. The practices are listed in order of their significance.

- Teams have the right mix of members to achieve project success
- The organization provides the tools needed to foster the work of teams
- Team leaders function effectively
- Senior management encourages continuous improvement of methods and processes
- The organizational culture supports and encourages team empowerment, experimentation, creativity and innovation
- Senior management creates the necessary organizational environment to make effective teams the norm
- There are formal processes for opting out of teams
- Team performance measures are used as part of a team reward and appraisal system
- Team members receive training in project management skills
- Team members value diversity in the team

High-Performance Project Teams, available from the Center for Business Practices (ring bound, 138pp., \$195 list), covers seventy-two best practices for teams, and shows which practices are most significant in leading to high-performance in organizations.



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