



What do we mean by a capable, effective team?

Capable means possessing the ability or quality necessary to do or achieve a specified thing. In this context, being capable implies each team member has the knowledge and skills required to do their job. Capability is built through good recruitment, appointment and induction practices as well as providing encouragement, support and opportunities for ongoing personal and professional development.

Effective means successful in producing a desired result. In this context, being effective implies each team member consistently and competently undertakes the responsibilities expected of them. Team effectiveness is built through good performance management practices such as giving timely, constructive and actionable feedback in real-time, providing frequent and meaningful recognition for good work and addressing poor performance promptly and respectfully.

Team means associated together in work or activity. In this context it is pointing to a particular type of relationship within the group. A collection of individuals working independently is not a team, even if they share an office! Members of a team have interdependent roles and responsibilities, they work collaboratively towards a shared objective and they rely on each other to achieve success. Building a team requires a leader capable of creating a compelling vision of the future, communicating that vision and helping people understand and commit to it and to each other. It also requires attention to the team culture—that is, how team members work, interact and behave with one another.

What is team culture?

Team culture is a tricky thing to try to pin down. Although it's hard to measure and much of it is unspoken, it has a huge influence on how the team functions.

Teams thrive in a healthy culture. In this type of culture team members are motivated and dedicated. They understand their role and how it contributes to team success. They are appreciative and supportive of one another. The high degree of trust between members provides psychological safety and this, in turn, encourages collaboration and creativity. The sense of well-being amongst members optimises team outcomes.

An unhealthy culture has a negative impact on team outcomes. An unhealthy culture is characterised by little or no enthusiasm, a pervasive fear of failure, dysfunction and/or confusion.