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# THE 9 COMPONENTS OF EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Would you like your leadership  
teams to become more extraordinary?

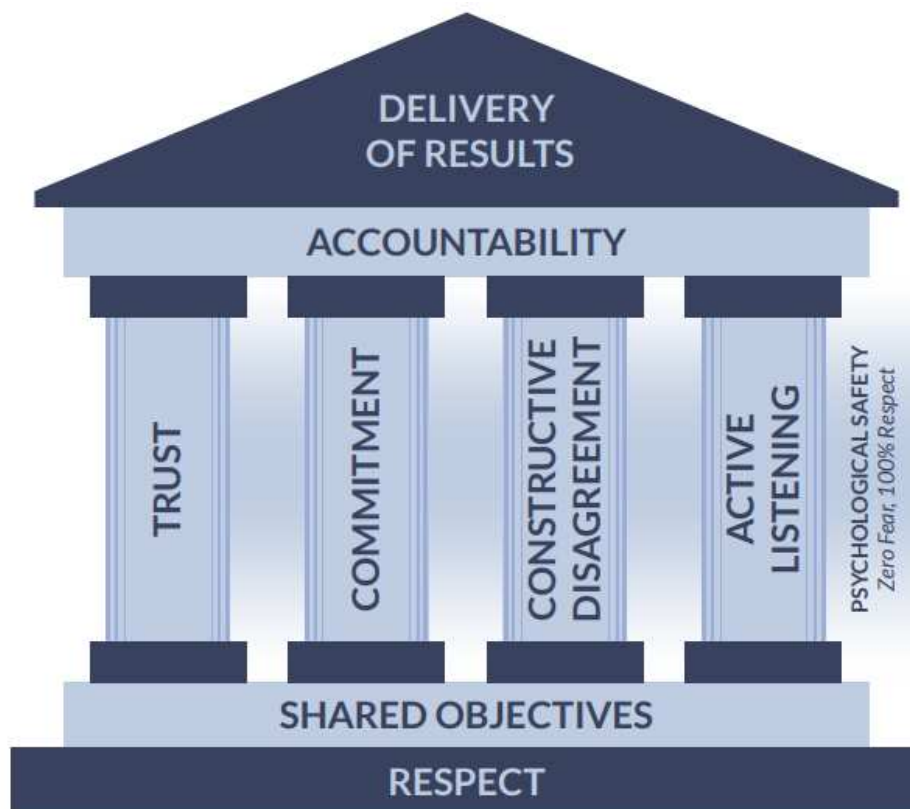
A paper by

**Campbell Macpherson**

Change & Strategy International Ltd

# The 9 Components of Extraordinary Leadership Teams

*Business success - or failure - depends upon how your leadership teams behave*



*We have used so many development models with leadership teams over the years – and there always seemed to be something missing. So we decided to fill the gaps and create the ultimate guide with which to help leaders develop a truly extraordinary leadership team.*

**Leadership is a team game, not a solo pursuit.** Leadership teams are critical to every organisation's success – and they exist at all levels of an organisation.

Leadership teams set the strategy, are responsible for the delivery of the strategy, create the culture, set the tone and the example for how everyone in the organisation behaves. An organisation gets the culture that its leaders create.

Dysfunctional leadership teams can bring an organisation to its knees.

Extraordinary leadership teams can enable organisations to thrive.

In our many years of working with leadership teams at all levels of organisations worldwide, we have determined that there are 9 key traits that successful leadership teams possess and every single one of them can be developed.

### **The 9 Components**

**The foundations** of an extraordinary leadership team

1. Respect
2. Shared Objectives

**The pillars** of an extraordinary leadership team

3. Trust
4. Commitment
5. Constructive Disagreement
6. Active listening
7. Psychological Safety

**The outcomes** of an extraordinary leadership team

8. Accountability
9. Delivery of Results

How does your team rate in each one of these nine categories?

## The Foundations

Building a leadership team is like building a house – or in this case, a temple. Let's start with the foundations. The foundations of a successful leadership team are two-fold:

1. **Respect.** The bedrock of every successful team. Without genuine respect for one another, no team can possibly succeed. Not merely respect for one another's title and position but deeper respect for the individual beneath the title. Respect for their values, their expertise, their challenges, their viewpoints.
2. **Shared Objectives.** If a team is to achieve extraordinary results, it must be working together to deliver the same shared objectives. Every single member of an extraordinary leadership team is focused on achieving a single set of results that the entire team is measured against.

## The Pillars

There are four pillars to our temple:

3. **Trust.** Respect enables Trust, the first of the four pillars of our temple, the pillars of an extraordinary leadership team. A team where every member trusts that their colleagues are coming from a good place, that they have the best intentions for the team and the organisation - no matter what they may say or even how they may say it. The members of an extraordinary team trust that their colleagues have their back and that they want them to succeed personally - because the success of the entire team depends upon it.
4. **Commitment** is the second pillar. Genuine commitment to the team and what it is seeking to achieve. In the case of Senior Leadership Teams, an acknowledgment that this team is your 'first team'. Cabinet Responsibility. Plus commitment to helping one another to succeed.
5. **Constructive Disagreement** is the third pillar: the ability to have ego-free, robust debates that can even get heated at times. Team members are not afraid to disagree - eager to seek out a diverse range of views to arrive at the best result. No-one is afraid to be proven wrong, because being wrong helps the team arrive at the right decision. Their debates, discussions and disagreements are all conducted with respect. In heated discussions, every team member plays the ball and not the person, to use a sporting parlance.
6. **Active listening** is the final pillar: the ability to listen to understand not merely to reply. Highly-effective team members listen closely to the other person and play back what they have heard in a quest to build a deeper appreciation of the other person's perspective and challenges. Enhanced understanding leads to better and shared solutions to critical issues.

7. **Psychological Safety.** The four pillars are the key behaviours of an extraordinary leadership team. When combined, they create an environment of ‘*Psychological Safety*’, otherwise known as “*Zero Fear 100% Respect*”<sup>1</sup>, where every single member is sufficiently comfortable and confident enough to air their concerns, point out errors, suggest new ideas and say precisely what they think, in a respectful way, in the full knowledge that they, too, are respected. An atmosphere where they can ask questions and voice opinions without ridicule or punishment.

## The Outcomes

The last two components sit atop the pillars:

8. **Accountability.** On top of the pillars and enabling the roof to be built is: *Accountability*. Each member must be personally accountable for playing their individual role to the best of their abilities, for delivery of the collective strategy, for the behaviour of the team as a whole and the behaviour of every single one of their fellow team members. The last one can be the toughest challenge of them all.
9. **Delivery of Results.** And finally we have the roof, completing our temple diagram and making it whole. Delivery of Results is the culmination of every single one of the other attributes in the diagram. It is why the team exists. And when it comes to results, there is no individual triumph without a collective triumph. Either the team wins or no-one does.

How does your team fare on each of these critical elements?

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<sup>1</sup> A brilliant quote courtesy of David Chiem, CEO Of MindChamps, Asia’s Most influential Entrepreneur in 2022

## The Spectrum of Leadership Teams

Leadership teams exist on a spectrum: from dysfunctional to extraordinary, and they exist at all levels of an organisation. Each team must function as well as they possibly can if the unit, division, department or organisation is to succeed.

Organisations with dysfunctional leadership teams never live up to their full potential; they consistently under-perform. Some are weakened so much by the actions and inactions of their leadership team that they have to be rescued. Some become take-over targets. So many go under.

Dysfunctional leadership teams are eventually and inevitably replaced - starting from the top. But so much damage has been done in the meantime that these organisations can become shadows of their former selves. One reason is that dysfunctional leadership teams create dysfunctional cultures that mirror the tribal, warring behaviour at the top of the organisation. Another is that dysfunctional leadership teams are too busy fighting one another to appreciate what makes their business special or to recognise the opportunities, let alone seize them.

But even dysfunctional teams can be transformed – as long as the team leader is ready, willing and able to do so. They can move across the spectrum – first to ‘Fragile’, then onto ‘Developing’ and finally to ‘Extraordinary’.



Transforming dysfunctional or fragile leadership teams is challenging, but the alternative is far worse – as so many leaders have discovered. No transformation is easy and there will inevitably be casualties along the way, but it is critical for the success of the organisation or department, the success of every employee and, of course, for the success of the leaders themselves.

While you go through every line of the spectrum on the following page, ask yourself the following:

- Where would you place the team you lead on the spectrum?
- Where would you place the team of which you are a member on the spectrum?
- Where would you place your organisation’s leadership team?
- Why?

*Conduct an online assessment of your team  
and take a look at the Extraordinary Leadership Teams program at  
[www.changeandstrategy.com](http://www.changeandstrategy.com)*

**Where does your team sit on the Spectrum of Leadership Teams?**

The Spectrum of Leadership Teams		Dysfunctional	Fragile	Developing	Extraordinary
<b>The Outcomes</b>	<b>Delivery of Results</b>	My individual performance is the most important thing	Yes, the team needs to perform – but not at my expense.	Both team and individual performance are important.	Team performance is #1: we all win or no-one wins.
	<b>Accountability</b>	Be accountable for as little as possible.  No accountability for team behaviours. No consequences for poor team results.	Clear personal accountabilities and responsibilities.	Clear interdependencies among team members.	Accountable for own and team performance and team behaviour. Genuine cabinet responsibility.  Clear decision-making process.
<b>The Pillars</b>	<b>Psychological Safety</b>  <i>Zero Fear 100% Respect.</i>	Every member for themselves. Winners v losers. Focus on weaknesses.  Keep concerns to myself. Cover up mistakes or apportion blame elsewhere.	Factions.  Some nervousness about airing concerns.  When mistakes happen we find out why.	Concerns able to be aired.  Still a little nervous to ask the ‘dumb question’.  We implement learnings without shame.	Strengths offset your weaknesses  Diversity of thought, new ideas, challenge.  OK to be wrong. Continuous improvement.
	<b>Active Listening</b>	Members tend to opt for silence or talk over one another.	Mainly listen to reply.	Listen to understand.	Listen to understand and actions taken as a result.
	<b>Constructive Disagreement</b>	Discussions are superficial or adversarial. Too many elephants.	Different opinions can be perceived as criticism.	Detailed discussions but careful not to offend.	Constructive discussions and disagreements based on respect
	<b>Commitment</b>	My function’s team is more important because I lead it.	Reluctant to commit to this team fully until it improves.	Both teams are important.	Fully committed - this is my ‘first team’.
	<b>Trust</b>	Little genuine trust in fellow team members.	Not all team members’ motives can be trusted.	Seems like a strong level of trust – but has it been fully tested?	Every member is coming from a good place.  Colleagues want you to succeed.
<b>Foundations</b>	<b>Shared Objectives</b>	Every executive is focused on their own objectives	Team objectives don’t affect individual incentives.	Team objectives form a part of each member’s incentives.	One set of objectives to deliver together.
	<b>Respect</b>	Little genuine respect for fellow team members.	Respect for some members: those who earn it.	An underlying respect among team members.	Full respect among the team underpins every interaction.

# CHANGE :: STRATEGY

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**Change is inevitable. Successful change isn't.**

Enabling leaders worldwide to build extraordinary leadership teams and create extraordinary leaders of change – starting with themselves.

## Campbell Macpherson: The Change Catalyst

Campbell Macpherson is an international expert on leadership and change, a keynote speaker, an award-winning author and an Executive Fellow of Henley Business School. He has been enabling leaders for 3 decades across the UK, Europe, Australia, US, ME and Asia.

His executive career included Senior Adviser to the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Strategy Director of Zurich, HR Director of Sesame (1000-person FS firm), Marketing Director of Virgin Wines and eBusiness Head of AMP. He began his careers flying jets (badly) in the RAAF.

Clients include: T Rowe Price, BNY Mellon, Pershing, Howden Insurance, CPA, Shoosmiths, Invesco, Henley Business School, Singer Capital Markets, SJP, iPipeline, Mazars, ...



### Our 3 Key Programs:

#### Leading with Influence

*Develop your next generation of senior leaders*

#### Extraordinary Leadership Teams

*Critical for the success of every business*

#### Leading Change

*88% of changes fail. Lead the 1 in 8 that succeeds.*

### Our 3 Key Papers:

#### The 12 Traits of Extraordinary Leaders

*Every leader has the potential to be extraordinary*

#### The Chequerboard of Leadership

*When EQ meets Delivery*

#### The 9 Components of Extraordinary Leadership Teams

[Download each of the above from [www.changeandstrategy.com](http://www.changeandstrategy.com)]



Author of  
**THE CHANGE CATALYST**

2018 Business Book of the Year  
2018 Leadership Book of the Year



Author of  
**THE POWER TO CHANGE**

How to harness change and make it work for you. 2020.



Author of  
**YOU: PART TWO**

Thriving in the second half of your life. 2021.

**NEW!** Campbell's fourth book, *Transforming Olympus*, will be published in 2025.

A leadership novel based on the Greek Gods – as Zeus and Hera realise they must change the way they lead the cosmos if they are to avoid the devastation of eternal irrelevance.