Team Coaching INTERNATIONAL™

Positioning the Tools FAQ

1. How to position the Team Diagnostic™?

Marketing/value messages:

The Team Diagnostic™ is a coaching/team development tool. Not just more data.

> Note that the term "coaching" has lost some of its cache with some organizations. They would say coaching failed to deliver the business results they expected. The return on investment was too subjective. "Coaching" may feel too soft; there is a misconception that coaching is all about "touchy-feely" and not about the hard, everyday requirements of business. Because of this perception about coaching, some coach/facilitators have started to refer to this work as "team development".

Teams use the data in the assessment to generate conversations about what is working and not working on the team. The language of the assessment is common sense, accessible language that every team member understands. Teams frequently tell us, "You speak our language." They don't have to learn a new language set, terminology, nomenclature or complex model — they see the results and can get right to work. Too often with other assessments, it takes valuable time just to understand what the data means and the language and meaning is quickly lost. With the Team Diagnostic™ , if "Trust", or "Decision Making" score low, everyone knows what the terms mean and it's easy to remember where the focus is.

"What gets measured gets done" is the old saying. It's still true. Fundamentally, the Team Diagnostic™ is a measurement tool. It assesses the team against 14 key scales. The assessment provides metrics, a baseline, and a common language for team members. The Team Diagnostic™ gives a portrait of the team — how they interact, how they perform as a collaborative, interdependent group. It is a self-portrait drawn by the team.

The assessment gives the team and team leader (and organization) an answer to the question: "How is your team doing?"

Most teams are underperforming. In our initial data sample of thousands of teams less than 12% scored themselves as high performing — nearly 9 out of 10 teams in organizations are not reaching their potential.

2. What is a typical team engagement?

Here are the two most common variations:

1. The Complete Engagement

   Assessment deployed to team; initial debrief to review results (1-2 days); followed by 6 months of monthly coaching and a follow-up assessment. Note that there is a trend toward a more accelerated time frame: 3 or 4 monthly sessions instead of 6-8.

   Obviously this is the preferred way of working with the team. As coaches we understand that change takes place over time and that coaching is an ideal medium for ongoing support to affect change. And we understand that it is a substantial investment and sometimes organizations or team leaders are not quite ready to jump in at that level. For team leaders who hesitate we recommend offering the Team Leader View™ as an introduction to the process and Team Diagnostic™ model. It gives the team leader the experience of taking the assessment and the safety of a private one-on-one debrief with you. The team leader's curiosity is often piqued by that experience. They want to know how the team sees itself. This forms a natural bridge from Team Leader View™ to the Team Diagnostic™ engagement.

2. Door-Opener

   Assessment deployed to team; initial debrief to review results usually half-day; follow-on coaching and follow-up assessment sold separately as add-on to the initial work. Smaller price tag.

   The assessment itself is a powerful intervention. It provides a wealth of information about the team and how the team functions. It may be easier to sell the initial smaller package and then when the team asks, "Now what?" you offer the additional services.

3. How large can a team be?

Here we use the word "team" two ways. First, a narrow definition: a small group of interdependent members with a clear common purpose. That purpose would not be accomplished without the contribution of all team members. Typical team size: 6-9. When teams get larger than about 10-12 look for "nested" teams, or sub-teams within a larger team. This is an important conversation with the client or sponsor. The central question is, "What is the outcome you want from this process?" When the outcome is to have individual teams improve performance then the logical step is to use the Team Diagnostic™ with each team, or sub-team within the larger organization. Alternatively, the client may want the departments or sub-teams to see that they have a crucial interdependence in which case you would deploy the Team Diagnostic™ to the larger segment. It will be very important to communicate to team members the perspective they should take when they complete the assessment whether that is their individual department team, or the larger organization.

The assessment has been used with meta-teams (very large "teams") of 50 and more. Clearly there were nested teams within, but the intention was to have all 50 see themselves as part of the larger whole, dependent on each other for the larger, meta-team's results, rather than the smaller departments.

4. How do you position this work?

Most of the coach/facilitators we have trained refer to this work as team coaching or team development. As mentioned, the term "coaching" has a tarnished reputation in some organizations. Individual/Executive coaching did not deliver the results organizations expected.

Some organizations also react negatively to "team building." There was a time when team building activities, especially off-site adventures were very popular. Teams went to the woods for ropes courses, had a powerful experience, and then came back to the office and nothing changed. You may need to emphasize that the work you do is change over time, not a one-time event.

Many facilitators are linking the work with teams to other initiatives the organizations already endorse as valuable. For example, team leadership as part of an organization's leadership development commitment; employee engagement is another, also culture change, large project implementations, or mergers and acquisitions.

5. Organizations want ROI. How do I respond?

The assessment provides metrics for "before" and "after" but these are team dynamic attributes from the model — not bottom line numbers that would show up on a P&L statement. The improvement is impressive and it is easy to see how improvement in communication or decision-making or trust would translate into higher performing teams using business improvement measures.

In the Digital Library there is a case study of a healthcare team that shows a correlation between improvement in team factors and improvement in patient satisfaction based on an industry standard survey.

We highly recommend that every time you start a team engagement you challenge the team to measure their improvement as a team against a business measure that is important. "How will you measure success?"

Take a snapshot of the business measure at the beginning of the engagement and at the end, and have the team work on it during the coaching process. While the team is working on their business measure the team factors will come into play, and the coach can create awareness with the team about how those team dynamic factors show up. The bottom line is… we want to improve the team factors for the sake of improving business measures. As the team coach, you help the team have their attention on both sets of measures.

6. What questions can I anticipate from prospective clients?

Has this assessment been used with teams/industries/companies like ours?
It is likely that the answer is "yes". However, we may not have a case study and we may not have a reference client example. That's because we keep the company and team information confidential with each facilitator. In rare cases we can ask a facilitator who has worked with clients in the same industry if it is possible to get a company name or even a reference, but permission is typically slow (too slow) and many companies simply decline. In short: don't count on it. The assessment has been used by thousands of teams worldwide with outstanding results. Teams of all types and sizes from every industry. On our website, there is an impressive list of client companies who have used the Team Diagnostic™. You can refer to the clients on this list as companies where the Team Diagnostic™ has been used (not implying that you delivered the work to that company).

Has the assessment passed psychometric analysis for validity and reliability?
This question often comes from HR. They have the responsibility to monitor the professional standards for assessments. The answer is "yes", the Team Diagnostic™ has passed the statistical, psychometric standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) for both validity and reliability. We can provide a one-page summary of the psychometric analysis.

> *Reliability*: addresses the question, "Is this a reliable measure?" In other words, is it a metal ruler or an elastic one? Does the assessment produce consistent results?

> *Validity*: addresses the question, "Does it actually measure what it says it measures?"

How does the Team Diagnostic™ compare to other assessments?
There are many excellent assessments available on the market today. You probably know the names of many: MBTI, DISC, FiroB, the Leadership Circle 360, Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Belbin Team Roles, and the list goes on. The distinguishing question is this: is this a true team assessment? Does it assess the team from a "team" point of view or is it a collection of individual assessments of team members aggregated into a team view?

Individual assessments provide useful information for team members. They show personal preferences, decision-making styles, etc., and that information will help team members work together more effectively. However, an aggregate of individual assessments is not the same as an assessment of the team as a system. The Team Diagnostic™ and report gives the true team view — one that they have never seen before.

Many facilitators use a combination of individual assessment with the Team Diagnostic™ to give team members the benefit of both. An easy way to check: do the items in the assessment ask for an individual perspective or a team perspective? All of the items in the Team Diagnostic™ are written from the team point of view. For example, "On our team we have clear goals and strategies to achieve them."

In the Team Diagnostic™ model we include this awareness of individual differences, and how that impacts collaboration, under "Values Diversity." It's important that team members appreciate the strengths of diversity on the team — and, it is one aspect of Positivity.

Many assessments focus on what we would call the ***Positivity*** side of the equation: interpersonal relationships or emotional intelligence or social intelligence or leadership attributes. These qualities are important, obviously; that's why there is a Positivity side to the Team Diagnostic™ model: how team members interact has enormous impact on the culture of the team and the ability of the team to achieve its goals.

One of the distinguishing differences between the Team Diagnostic™ and other assessments is that the Team Diagnostic™ puts equal weight on the ***Productivity*** side of team performance — because teams put at least equal weight there. When a team asks the question, "How are we doing?" they want to know how they're doing when it comes to the areas of team performance they are most familiar with and where they are often measured: alignment, accountability, ability to make good decisions, manage resources, etc.

From the team's perspective, these attributes are equally important, more familiar, and may even be seen as more important to the team. It's easier to talk about "our decision making process" than it is "how we engage, or don't engage in conflict on our team."

Another important difference: the Team Diagnostic™ model uses the everyday language that teams already use. It is common sense, accessible, and allows teams to see their results and get right to work. With other assessments they need to learn a coded language first, understand the distinctions, and all of that before they can talk about the essentials. One of the things we often hear from teams, "You speak our language."

One difference often over-looked: The Team Diagnostic™ ***can be customized*** for individual teams using the open-ended questions at the end of the assessment. The assessment serves as a targeted survey of the team.

7. How do I decide if the Team Diagnostic™ is a fit for my client?

Meta-level questions:

> What % of work is done by teams in the organization?
> What is the "team culture" in the organization?
> What results are the high visibility / high impact teams responsible to deliver?
> What happens if they don't?

Micro-level questions:

> What business results is your team responsible to deliver?
> What happens if you don't?
> How would you rate your team's "team competence" on a scale of 1–9? (If they don't know what "team competence" is, explore by asking how well their own team functions as a team.)
> What is it like at a ___? What behaviors and attitudes show up?
> What would it be like at a 9?

8. How do I bring focus to the value more than the cost?

Where resources are tight, it's natural for the discussion to move quickly to cost. Acknowledge that cost is an important consideration and there are many variables that play into cost. Shift to what it's costing the organization if business results are not delivered. Stay focused on pain points and what it's like to experience them.

Once a clear need has been identified, bring the benefit and value of the Team Diagnostic™ forward. Describe how the Team Diagnostic™ will benefit the organization and improve the pain points. Build resonance and alignment with a vision of what it could be like if the pain points were reduced or eliminated. As the conversation comes back to cost, the many variables like project scope, number of coaches, length of time for follow up coaching etc. will be more easily discussed after building a foundation of resonance around the value.

9. What typical improvements does the Team Diagnostic™ achieve?

Based on our study of teams who have taken the baseline and follow up assessment, the average increase in Team Diagnostic™ results is approximately 20% improvement in Positivity factors and 20% improvement in Productivity factors. 30% of the teams that go through the whole coaching process move to the High Productivity / High Positivity quadrant.

10. I only have a 30 minute meeting to present this to a potential client. Where should I focus?

Remember the model; Positivity can create the conditions for Productivity. If you only have 30 minutes, the positivity that you establish can help you get you the result you want (or at least another 30 minutes later). Build trust and respect while focusing on business results and value. Create a respectful safe space, set some context, and ask a few powerful questions:

> Quick check-in… How is your team doing on a scale of 1–9?
> What is the team best at?
> What are two things getting in the way of business results?
> What would it be like if those things were improved? What happens if nothing changes?

Map what you hear back to the Team Diagnostic™ factors, and convey the benefit of being able to measure and work on those factors with the team as a whole, so that everyone is engaged in addressing their challenges to achieve better business results.

Leave the meeting with a powerful yet simple way to have attention on team performance, along the lines of, "You mentioned ____ is on issue on this team. (Could be trust, handling disagreement, decision making) Here's my suggestion: notice when that issue comes up on this team and notice the impact on the team and the team's performance." Request that the client simply notice the impact when it shows up on the team. Remember to request another meeting and commit to checking-in on what the decision maker learned about the issue.