The High Performance Schools Project:

10 Team Insights

Dr Pete Stebbins, PhD

HPTschools.com
Schools: Our Most Important Workplaces

- Every student succeeding
- Teachers enabled & empowered to do their best
- Workplaces which have their own spoken or unspoken cultural norms

3.5 million students
300,000 teachers
9,389 schools
Student Achievement (Hattie, 2003)

**School Culture:**
- Students: 50% variance
- School Leaders: 5-10%
- Peer effects: 5-10%
- Teachers – 30%*

*It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in this equation (Hattie, 2003).

**Home Life:**
5-10%

Culture = “the way we do things around here”
“Culture Eats Strategy For Breakfast”
Peter Drucker

School Culture: Workforce Hazards

- Emotional Dissonance (Low Morale/High Stress)
- Relief Staff & Turnover (Quality of Relationships)

Low Performance Culture = Poor Student Outcomes
The High Performance Schools Project

“Design and implement healthy school culture strategies using the High Performance Teams Framework & evaluate against staff and student outcomes.”
The Road Rules for Developing High Performance Culture

2 Factors

- Achievement (Results)
- Engagement (Support)

4 KPIs

- Vision & Action
- Performance Reporting
- Leveraging Diversity
- Work/Life & Wellbeing
Results

Core strategies were consistent across schools regardless of size, status or location.

Collaboration between schools using HPT promoted higher engagement among shared staff.

High Performance Teams (HPT) strategies improved staff engagement and student achievement.
1. They Link Vision with Action

2. They Collaborate to Drive Organisational Improvement
1. LINKING VISION & ACTION

"VISION WITH ACTION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD" JOEL BARKER

Vision & Core Purpose: Your ‘Hedgehog’

The Hedgehog & The Fox

Organisations are either FOXES ('good' organisations that manage complexity by having a multitude of different strategies) or HEDGEHOGS ('great' organisations that manage complexity by simplifying it down into a single, powerful, unified strategy).*

* Jim Collins (author of Good to Great)

Discovering Your Core Purpose

Your organisation’s 'HEDGEHOG' (the single powerful idea that encapsulates both core purpose and strategic direction) can be discovered by identifying the overlapping ideas within the three circles of purpose:

1. PASSION - what are we deeply passionate about?
2. EXPERT - what can we be the best in the world at?
3. RESOURCE ENGINE - what drives our resource engine?

Action Plans: Connected & SMART Strategies

Connecting Vision With Strategy

ACTION PLANS need to be developed that have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Realistic & Time bound) strategies clearly linked to your vision & CORE PURPOSE.

Keeping It Real & Relevant

ACTION PLANS are ‘living’ documents that are:

1. Displayed on DATA WALLS in staffrooms and common areas;
2. Regularly reviewed and updated at TEAM MEETINGS;
3. Used as source documents to create lead indicators for monthly team DASHBOARDS. HPTschools.com
2. COLLABORATION STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMATION

“A BAD SYSTEM WILL BEAT A GOOD PERSON EVERY TIME” W. EDWARDS DEMING

Structures: Management vs. Governance

Management Teams & Board Committees

MANAGEMENT:
1. ELT: Executive Leadership Team
   organisation wide strategy
2. SLT: Senior Leadership Team
   organisation wide operations
3. DLT: Department Leadership Teams
   dept, operations

GOVERNANCE:
1. Board: sets overall strategic direction
2. Sub-Committees: domain specific oversight
3. Working Parties: issue focused work groups

Transformation: Getting Results

Correctly Match Strategy To Structure

GET IT RIGHT = unleash powerful positive culture change throughout the organisation.

GET IT WRONG = confuse and frustrate the goodwill of staff and create chaos & uncertainty.

“NEVER BLAME A Bad SYSTEM ON A Good PERSON” W. EDWARDS DEMING

Organisational Culture & Behaviour

Professional Practice & Service Delivery

Sub-Committees & Working Parties

Line Management Structures

Working Down & Across: Hybrid Structures

DOWN: Working Down through the organisation use line management structures.

ACROSS: Working Across the organisation use sub-committees and working parties.

Meet, Plan, Deliver, Report, Repeat

Meet
Report
Plan
Deliver

4 SUCCESS FACTORS:
(1) Clearly defined purpose and action plan.
(2) Clear timelines and accountabilities for deliverable outcomes;
(3) Meeting protocols to maximise group effectiveness.
(4) Regular reporting mechanisms upwards & across.
“At times throughout the year it felt like we were building the airplane as we were flying it. The thing that helped us to keep our stress levels low was to keep it simple and to create a detailed action plan. We mapped each of the 4KPIs to our Annual Improvement Plan and created a simple 1-page summary.”

“We encourage all staff to take on leadership roles across the school – with everyone on the same page around our vision it’s been easy to trust that they will do the right thing, and I haven’t been disappointed.”
**KPI 1: Vision & Action**

Rate Your Team

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3. They Monitor Key Lead Indicators
4. They Have Team Specific Data Walls
5. They Use Effective Meeting Protocols
3. LEAD INDICATOR DASHBOARDS

“REGULARLY REVIEWING YOUR LEAD INDICATORS MAXIMIZES SUCCESS”

**STEP 1**
Core Purpose + Improvement Outcomes

*Core Purpose*
“What’s the core purpose of our organization?”

**STEP 2**
Key Metrics + Data Sources

*Lead Indicators*
“What do we need to regularly measure & report to ensure we are ‘on track’ with our goals & targets?”

**STEP 3**
Dashboard Design + BAU

*Dashboard Design*
“What’s the best way to visually display data to maximize engagement & understanding?”

**Establish Outcomes**
“What qualitative & quantitative outcomes are we trying to achieve, & what goals & targets do we need to set?”

**Data Sources**
“What types of data are available both inside & outside our organization that we could use as relevant & timely lead indicators?”

**Business As Usual**
“How do we make sure dashboards guide decision making in meetings & everyday conversations?”

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4. THE HPT TEAM DATA WALL

“WITHOUT DATA YOU’RE JUST ANOTHER PERSON WITH AN OPINION” W. EDWARDS DEMING

**Key Achievement Documents**

- Team Performance (Team Action Plan)
- Job Satisfaction (Core Purpose / Mission Statement)
- Role Clarity (Team Structure / Org Chart)
- Job Demands (Workflow Map)

**Manage The Risks:**

- Conflict & Bullying (Above & Below Line, Wellbeing Pulse Data)
- Peer Relationships (Team Profile & Talent Map)
- Communication & Informal Resolution (Feedback Protocol, Meeting Agendas/Notes)

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**Team Data Wall**

- Core Purpose
- Action Plan
- Workflow Map
- Team Org Chart
- Feedback Protocol
- Talent Map
- Wellbeing Pulse
- Meeting Notes

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**Ground Rules (Red Card/Yellow Card):**

- Respecting both sides of the argument and allowing diversity of views.
- Right to ‘off record’ speech with ‘on the record’ documented as formal feedback.
- Staying ‘issues’ focused and not letting personal issues overpower the agenda.

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**Best Practice Meeting Guide:**

- Being constructive in feedback and offering a solution-focused approach.
- Apologies:
- Attendees:
- Notes/Minutes:
- Moderator:
- Chair:

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5. HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM MEETINGS

“GIVE YOUR TEAM AN HOUR OF POWER”

THE HPT 60 MIN TEAM MEETING

Mission & Ground Rules (2)
Warm Up (5)
Team CheckIns (10)
Hot Issues (15)
Manager Update (10)
Action Plans (10)
Culture & Communication (5)
Takeaways (3)

LIVE NOTES
Notes/Minutes are recorded live to increase both auditory and visual engagement & clarity regarding agreed outcomes & actions.

THE MODERATOR
The Moderator (rotating position) supports the Chair to manage time and optimise team dynamics based on 5 key factors:
1. Openness & Trust
2. Balanced Debate
3. Competency Over Role
4. Issues Over Personalities
5. Clear Outcomes & Actions

HOT ISSUES
‘Top of mind’ issues from team written on white board and then prioritised according to majority interest for short action focused discussions.

THE CHAIR
The Chair runs the meeting based on the Agenda and is supported by the Moderator (aka Batman & Robin) but has final say on all matters of time and flow of meeting.

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“At the beginning of the school year staff measured data to get a baseline as well as to set our focus for areas of improvement. The numbers don’t lie – connecting lead indicator data to inform decision making and coordinate staff actions works.”

“As educators we’re asked to collect so much data and some staff struggle with how to make sense of it. Building our own data wall with data that matters to us, and presenting it in a way that is easy to understand has helped all members of staff to start to see data differently.”

“It amazed me how implementing such small changes to our meetings like the clearly defined rotating roles of chair and moderator, and the ‘safety nets’ of ‘meeting ground rules’ and red and yellow moderator cards improved both the quality and efficiency of our meetings. I couldn’t imagine doing meetings any other way now.”
# KPI 2: Performance Reporting

## Rate Your Team

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6. They Leverage Diversity

7. They Build A Culture of Feedback
6. LEVERAGING DIVERSITY

“STRENGTH LIES WITHIN OUR DIFFERENCES, NOT WITHIN OUR SIMILARITIES” STEPHEN COVEY

1. TEAM PROFILE ACTIVITIES

Personality Style

Get everyone in the team to complete an assessment examining personality, communication style, thinking preferences etc. which can be displayed in a ‘Team Profile’ format to enable discussion around similarities and differences.

Work Interests & Goals

WORK INTERESTS - Team members describe the tasks within their roles that they enjoy or prefer.

CAREER GOALS – Team members describe their career goals (i.e. “5 years from now I want to….”)

2. TEAM PROFILE MAPPING

Team Talent Map

Stocktaking and documenting the information shared by team members into a simple Talent Map placed on the Team Data Wall provides a readily accessible map of the diversity and interests within the team. This can be harnessed to ‘best fit’ people to projects and opportunities as well as allow for deeper conversations on common interests.

3. TEAM ABOVE & BELOW LINE

Team Specific Do’s & Don’ts

By understanding differences among team members we can identify the Do’s and Don’ts of behavior which may inadvertently increase tension and conflict in the team.

Protocols to Resolve Issues

Teams can usually resolve the majority of interpersonal issues without any formal structure. HOWEVER an agreed formal structure is an essential safeguard to resolve unexpectedly difficult issues before they become formal complaints or grievances.
7. A CULTURE OF FEEDBACK

“FEEDBACK IS THE BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS” KEN BLANCHARD

Barriers to Feedback I

Mixed Messages & Information Overload

Death of The Feedback Sandwich

The 'Feedback Sandwich' sends a confusing mix of 'good' and 'bad' messages which reduces the positive power of feedback.

Working Memory Overload

1,2,3.............8,9,10

Our working memory is limited to the start and end of longer conversations. We forget the 'middle section' which is often where the most important feedback is given.

Barriers to Feedback II

The Status Dynamic & Karpman’s Triangle

Shifting Status to Show Respect

During a conversation our communication style changes between High & Low Status to meet the other's needs. If we get this wrong our 'warmth' looks like 'weakness' and our 'confidence' looks like 'arrogance'.

Feedback Stress Reactions

When feedback goes wrong, people react in one of three unhelpful ways (Victim, Rescuer, & Persecutor) which we need to defuse by changing our status appropriately.

High Performance Feedback

The Law of Bow-Challenge-Bow

A Timeless Recipe for Success

Throughout history and across cultures the sequence of 'bow-challenge-bow' marks the effectiveness of any exchange of ideas or contest of ability. This sequence is the DNA of High Performance Feedback.

Bow

Challenge

Bow

Ask permission to engage & postpone if need be. Acknowledge own imperfections related to issue.


Personalise value of conversation. Wrap-up confirming outcomes. Thank the other person.

Karpman's Triangle

Victim

Persecutor

Rescuer

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“Getting to know the different ‘thinking style preferences’ of each member of the team was extremely helpful. It has given us a common language which helps us to play to each others’ strengths and I’m sure has helped prevent misunderstandings that I’ve experienced in other staff rooms earlier in my career.”

“To get the school up to speed, clear communication was vital. We quickly worked out our own set of ‘road rules’ and what our negotiables and non-negotiables were going to be. Our feedback protocol helped us to fast-track this journey.”
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8. They Engage in Continuous Team Building
9. They Share Work/Life Goals
10. They Prioritise Their Wellbeing
10 Team Insights

1. MAKE TIME TO SHARE

Team Meetings

- Always do a quick warm-up including a one-word barometer & conversation starter at every meeting.

Coffees, Lunches & Dinners

- Plan ahead and select a venue which includes a private meeting space to talk.

Professional Development Debriefs

- Make time to debrief after professional development sessions to share personal learning.

2. MATCH TO TRUST & TIME

Low Trust/ Low Time (5-7min*)

- Conversation Starters – Level 1
- Photo Shares
- Magic Moments
- Dream Destinations

Mod Trust/ Mod Time (7-15min*)

- Conversation Starters – Level 2
- Team Profiling
- Life Line (Career)
- Bucket Lists

High Trust/ High Time (15-30min*)

- Conversation Starters – Level 3
- Life Line (Personal)
- Advice to Older/Younger Self
- Life Strategy Map/Update

3. FEEDBACK & FOLLOW-UP

Buddy Check-Ins

- Follow up directly with people to learn more about their personal shares and build relationships. Don't forget to be vulnerable and also share relevant information too.

Update Data Walls

- When people's circumstances change we may need to update relevant sections of the Team Data Wall (i.e., Talent Maps & Workflow Maps) to help keep everyone in the loop and share the load.

* For team sizes of 4-5 (split groups if larger size)

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GOALS are an important step in developing your life strategy once you have clarity about your LEGACY and DREAMS.

**Work/Life Strategy**

**Work/Life: 4 Domains**

- Play
- Work
- Relationship
- Family & Friends

**Work/Life Strategy: 4 Steps**

1. Legacy
2. Dreams
3. Goals
4. Plans

**Work/Life Goals**

**Why Goals Are Important**

GOALS enable you to do the work you want to do, to live where you want to live, to be with the people you enjoy, and to become the kind of person you want to become.

"GOALS ARE WHAT TAKE US FORWARD IN LIFE; THEY ARE THE OXYGEN TO OUR DREAMS." LUCAS FALCONER

**Trust: Sharing Goals With Team**

**Sharing Your Goals**

When you share your goals with others you build trust through vulnerability. When you enquire about other people’s goals you build trust through showing genuine interest in them.

**Supporting Other’s Goals**

When you remember other people’s goals, check-in on their progress and encourage them, you create goodwill and strengthen the team’s identity and ability to collaborate.

**List Your Current Work/Life Goals**

- Work: __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- Play: __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- Relationship: __________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- Friends & Family: ________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________

STOCKTAKE: What are the current activities you enjoy doing in each of the four domains?

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Stress & The Waves of Life

Not All Waves Are Equal

Some stressful life events carry a much higher risk of illness than others. Don’t sweat the small stuff and overreact to smaller waves of life. Don’t live in denial and under-react to the bigger waves – give yourself time to recover.

Wipeouts: Your Warning Signs

Prevent wipeouts by knowing your early warning signs of stress!

Master The 4 Elements of Your Wellbeing

Wind: Mindsets

MINDSETS are like the wind – invisible to see yet powerful. Shift from unhealthy to healthy mindsets: from Worry to Acceptance; from Demand to Encourage; and from Blame to Responsibility.

Earth: Lifestyle

A healthy LIFESTYLE & caring for your body is likened to caring for the earth. You need to (1) have a healthy diet, (2) exercise regularly, and (3) get enough sleep.

Water: Emotions

Like rivers flow, so do the tears of our EMOTIONS. Manage emotions effectively through (1) problem solving, (2) mindfulness, and (3) relaxation so the river flows not floods!

Fire: Purpose

PURPOSE and passion burn like a fire within us. Having a clear sense of purpose and living according to your values are the keys to living a contented and happy life.

Regular Wellbeing Check-Ins with Your Team

DON’T ask generic open ended questions such as “How are you?” They are too hard to answer simply and honestly (or people think you do not really want to know) so most people will just say “Fine” in reply - leaving no room for follow-up questions & support.

DO ask specific, easy to answer, closed questions such as “What’s your one-word barometer?” or “On a scale of 1-10 what’s your number at the moment?”. You can then follow-up with open ended questions & support.
“For us as a staff group getting to know each other on a personal level and what makes each of us tick was extremely important – the better you know someone, the better you’re able to help them with what’s important to them. We plan to keep team building at the top of our agenda.”

“Career planning for our staff is important particularly balancing the needs of stationary vs. progressive staff. As school leaders we need to be thinking that our team’s individual career and life goals are a year round conversation, not just a once off at yearly performance appraisals.”

“As a school leader I have to put my hand up and say that I’m not always the best with work/life balance. While I’ve felt guilty about this in the past, I’ve now got some very practical tools to help me keep focused on preventing burnout.”
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KPIs and Performance Levels:

- **KPI 1**: Vision & Action
- **KPI 2**: Performance Reporting
- **KPI 3**: Leveraging Diversity
- **KPI 4**: Work/Life & Wellbeing
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