



STARTM

Enhancing Team Performance

Management Report



Strategic Team Assessment Research

Management Report

How to Improve Team Performance

Report Prepared for:

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ABC COMPANY

June 3, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Team

The STAR Analysis was conducted on 14 people from the Buildings and Facilities group of a medium-sized engineering architecture firm. This team worked together on multiple projects and included project managers, engineers, and architects with various specialties. These specialties included structural, mechanical, electrical, civil, fire protection, and landscaping.

The Issue

The specific issue identified was the lack of integration of Building Information Management (BIM) as an integrated design tool to be used by the entire team. The team was struggling with use and implementation of the tool. This situation was impacting a number of areas including the design process, the relationships with clients and other subcontractors. In addition, there were issues regarding BIM that have legal implications.

During the kick-off session to this assessment process, we asked the team members what they thought they could do to increase their effectiveness. The consensus was that they needed to communicate more often and more effectively.

The Findings

The STAR report revealed a team that was not actually functioning as a team. Detailed later in this report is the finding that this team is operating as three separate project teams. When we measure the team as a whole, we find relatively low measures in all of the areas: communication frequency, reliance on others, professional trust, positive energy, and knowledge exchange.

If the three project teams were measured separately, the results would show three higher performing individual teams. Because we measured the team as “whole,” the score was significantly lower.

In addition to team interaction processes, we also measured personal characteristics and traits related to the high performing team competencies. The team’s communication style is Reactive. The team is low in positive energy exchange. Innovation and positive energy are unquestionably related. The team has an over-reliance on a single individual. The personality of the team is one of skepticism—especially when it comes to things that are unknown. Knowledge Exchange is not a significant activity within the team. Knowledge is transferred in a very structured, specific, technical, and focused manner.

The Management Implications

This team is lacking the reason to exchange knowledge beyond the immediate project at hand. Without a strong level of exchange, the team is not reaching potential. Misuse of time occurs through the redundancy by individual team members. The findings with this team indicate that they share information when asked, but do not proactively contribute to higher knowledge both within the project team and within their disciplines across the organization. The team members do not currently see an intrinsic need to share knowledge but are very willing to do so when the need is identified. The management challenge is to direct the sharing of knowledge through formal channels and planned communication activities or events.

This team has high levels of technical expertise. On a day-to-day basis they are expected by management to perform these skills and collectively produce a project that delights the client. This team will not, generally, seek out and initiate solutions to organizational issues in a proactive manner.

This team can and will be high performers on organizational issues if the leadership takes the lead and assign them to the group to work on the issue. Under current management processes that focus this expertise on projects, the members of this group will see organizational issues as being outside their domain. However, when they understand they have been assigned to help solve this issue, their technical capacity and capability will be highly valuable to the organization.

The Recommended Actions:

1. There were a number of individual issues that MORF Consulting identified during the assessment process. Use the individual assessments in on-going Career Development Program. There may also be value in having outside coaching for some individuals.
2. Group training on team development would address many of the following solutions.
3. Less energy should be expended on checking other's work.
4. Build team's awareness of individual's current work and expertise. Greater awareness of skills and expertise helps in execution and informs members of colleague's work, thereby speeding coordination of effort.
5. Train team on *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.
6. Train team on 'Skillful Discussions' by Chris Argyle.
7. Implement Three Meetings: The Daily Check-in, The Weekly Tactical and the Monthly Strategic.
8. Raise the question of why Gretchen is trusted to a greater degree than the others on the team. Does it correspond to her position in the organization chart?
9. Explore coaching for high reliance team leader --Jacqueline -- to help increase her professional trust with team.
10. Hold innovation sessions where team members encourage each other's ideas. In brainstorming sessions, adopt zero negativity practice.

Frequency of Communication

How to Improve Your Team

★ The Team's Communication Style is Reactive

- ✧ They focus on the facts
- ✧ They provide information when needed or requested
- ✧ When requested, the information provided is complete and accurate
- ✧ Communication is rarely initiated

★ Red Flags

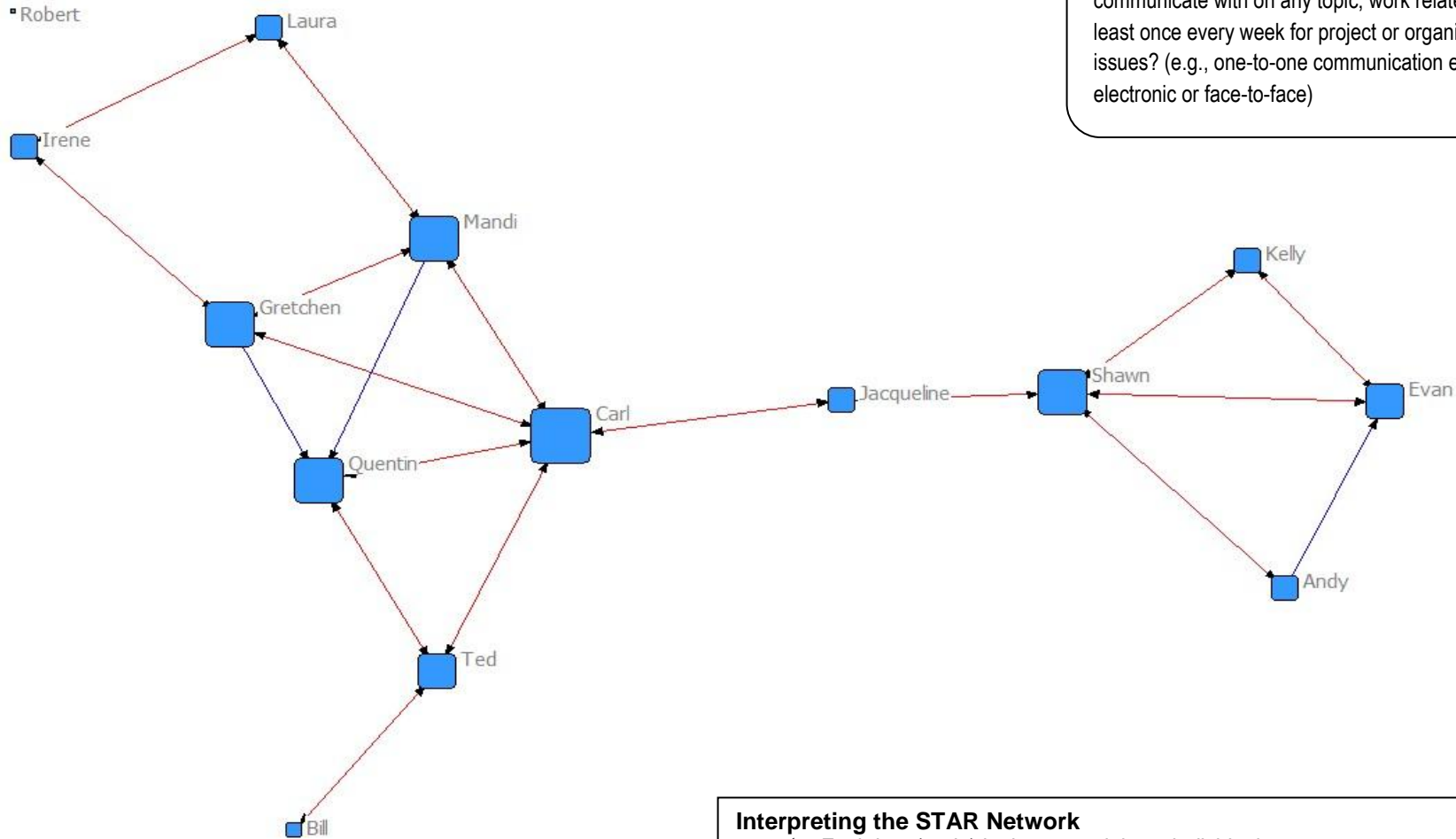
- ✧ This team is made up of two distinct groups.
- ✧ A single individual from each group does the interaction with the other group.
- ✧ This relationship creates a fragile network that is susceptible to breaking apart if one of these individuals leaves the project or organization.
- ✧ There is a danger of miscommunication to the whole team if the message is not interpreted accurately by the linking individual.
- ✧ They expect management to set up 'planned communication'.
- ✧ They look to management to direct:
 - When to talk
 - What to talk about
 - What information to share

★ Solutions

- ✧ Create more connections between the two groups.
- ✧ Add links between individuals in each group.
- ✧ Schedule weekly meetings so more in the group are communicating to increase opportunities for collaboration and exchange of knowledge.
- ✧ Give them a plan and they will follow it.
- ✧ Emphasize the need to cultivate relationships with team members even when they do not have an immediate need for their expertise.
- ✧ Train team on 'Skillful Discussions'.
- ✧ Implement Three Meetings: The Daily Check-in, The Weekly Tactical and the Monthly Strategic.

Weekly Communication

SURVEY QUESTION: Which individuals do you communicate with on any topic, work related or not, at least once every week for project or organizational issues? (e.g., one-to-one communication either electronic or face-to-face)



Interpreting the STAR Network

- ✓ Each box (node) in the network is an individual
- ✓ Each link between the boxes is a relationship such as frequency of communication, reliance on each other, positive energy, professional trust, or knowledge exchange.
- ✓ Red means '2 way' or reciprocal
- ✓ Blue means '1 way'
- ✓ Arrows demonstrate directional connection
- ✓ Size of the box (node) indicates 'more' or 'less' of the measured attribute

Reliance on Others

How to Improve Your Team

★ This team has an over-reliance on a single individual

- ✧ Jacqueline

★ Red Flags

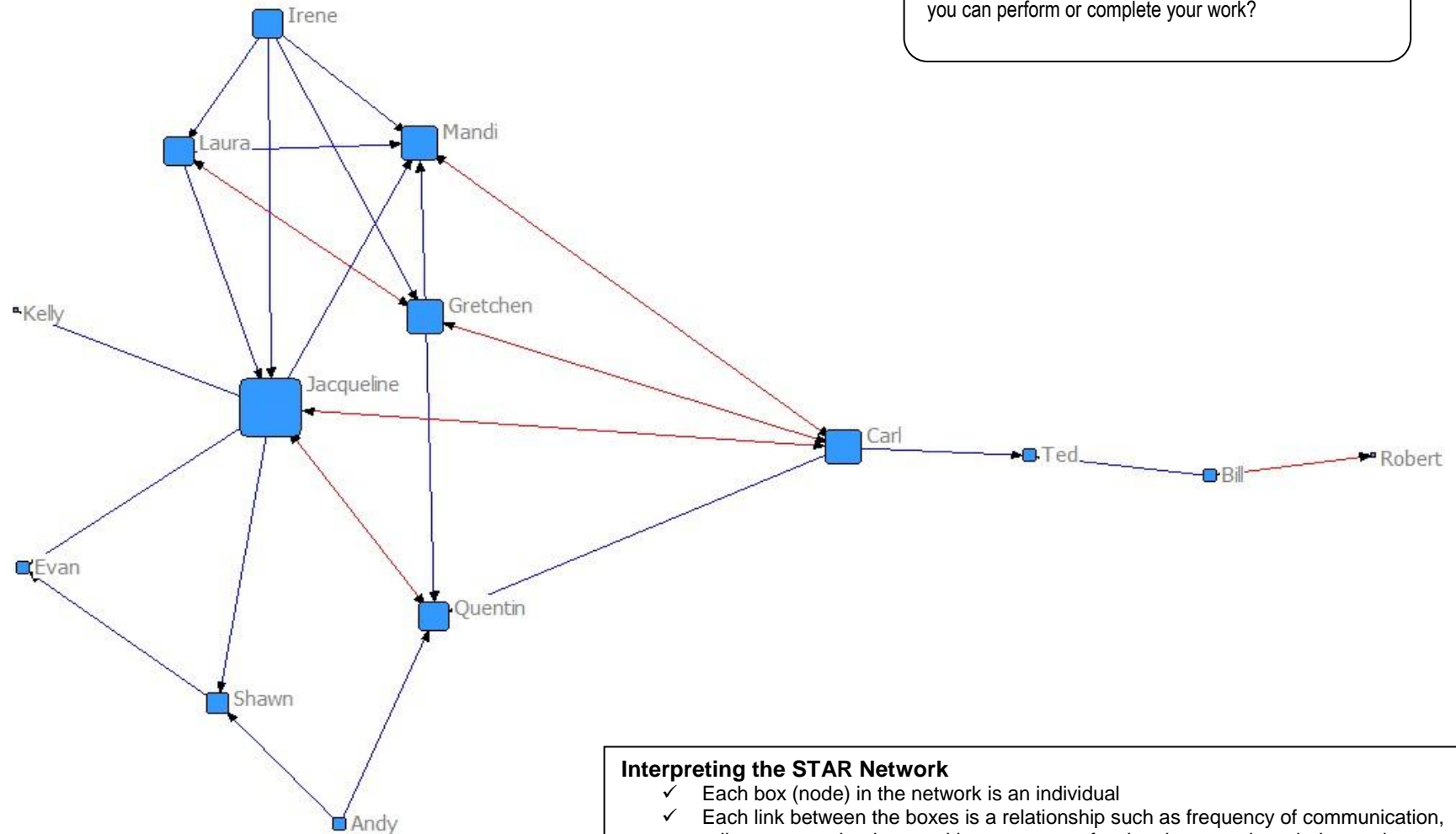
- ✧ Bottle-necks exist from over-reliance on one person and have potential to invisibly hold up the work.
- ✧ Delays result from a single individual as the central figure in the network.
- ✧ There could be a slow-down of information being given and received.
- ✧ People are out of the loop.
- ✧ Those on the outside of the network have few others with reliance on them.
- ✧ Personality tendency to verify other's progress -a high level of focus on other people's work (micro-management) exists.

★ Solutions

- ✧ Examine the team to make sure work processes are divided equally within the team.
- ✧ Get Jacqueline's input on what she can delegate to others.
- ✧ Clarify who needs to rely on others to get the work done.
- ✧ Have less energy be expended on checking other's work.
- ✧ Build team's awareness of individual's current work and expertise. Greater awareness of skills and expertise helps in execution and informs members of colleague's work, thereby speeding coordination of effort.
- ✧ Provide delegation and conflict resolution training.
- ✧ Coach Jacqueline on Leadership Transition Process.
- ✧ Train team on *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

Reliance on Others

SURVEY QUESTION: Rate the amount of RELIANCE you have on [Name] to complete his/her tasks so that you can perform or complete your work?



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Professional Trust

How to Improve Your Team

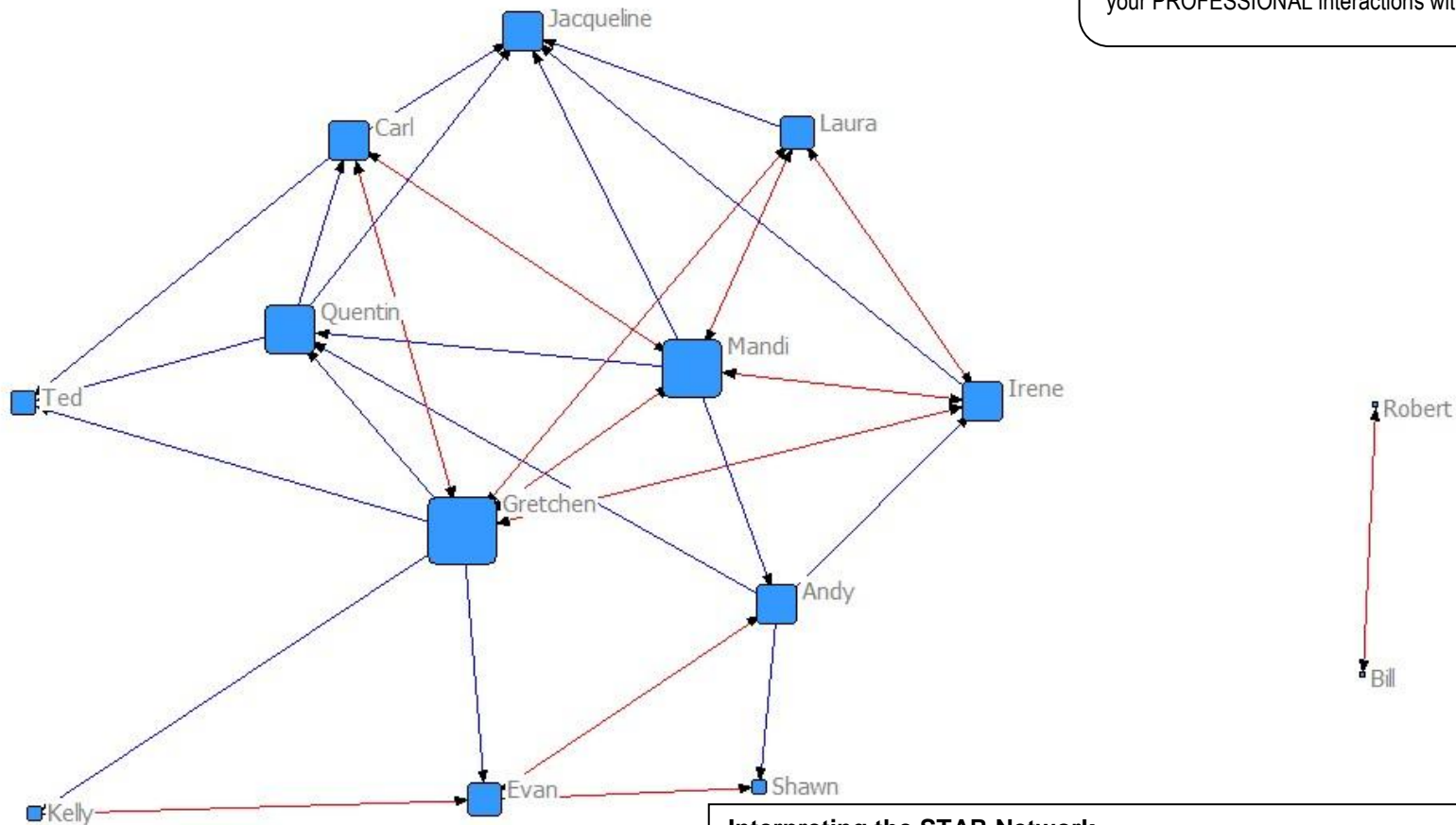
- ★ **The personality of the team is one of skepticism—especially when it comes to things that are unknown.**
 - ✧ The focus on what went wrong or what could go wrong lessens the trust that they have for each other.
 - ✧ They analyze pitfalls and play Devil’s Advocate; searching for weak links and focus energy on where projects will likely fail.
 - ✧ This weakens the trust that team members have with each other.

- ★ **Red Flags**
 - ✧ A great deal of focus is on what went wrong or could go wrong.
 - ✧ Tendency to study something to death; it dies without implementation.
 - ✧ Analyzing pitfalls becomes safer than risking and failing.
 - ✧ Limits innovation and creative problem solving.
 - ✧ Playing Devil’s Advocate raises only problems without venturing solutions, keeping ideas from getting off the ground.
 - ✧ Individuals on the team have a higher level of trust for themselves than with each other (Self-reliance).

- ★ **Solutions**
 - ✧ Raise the question of why Gretchen is trusted to a greater degree than the others on the team. Does it correspond to her position in the organization chart?
 - ✧ Explore coaching for high reliance team leader --Jacqueline -- to help increase her professional trust with the team.
 - ✧ Manage the amount of skepticism and analyzing pitfalls that the group engages in and provide equal time for exploration of the positive.
 - ✧ Hold brainstorming sessions where there is no critique, only exploration of solutions.
 - ✧ Train group on ‘Giving Feedback Model’.

Professional Trust

SURVEY QUESTION: How much do you TRUST [Name] to take actions within [Company] that are mutually beneficial to BOTH you and them based on your PROFESSIONAL interactions with this person?



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Positive Energy

How to Improve Your Team

★ **The team is low in positive energy exchange. Innovation and positive energy are unquestionably related.**

★ **Red Flags**

- ✧ Their interactions with each other tend towards neutral or negative, which acts as a de-energizer for the team.
- ✧ There is a dominance of a single person who has positive energy exchange with the team. The team relies on her to be positive, which could create a burden for Mandi.
- ✧ Innovation is unlikely to occur in the presence of negative energy exchange.
- ✧ They act like a group of high performing individuals; not like a team.
- ✧ There is a tendency to be technical and independent in focus:
 - You do your part
 - I will do my part
 - We will combine them at the end into a complete project
- ✧ Their individual focus is on their project role; not on creative problem-solving.

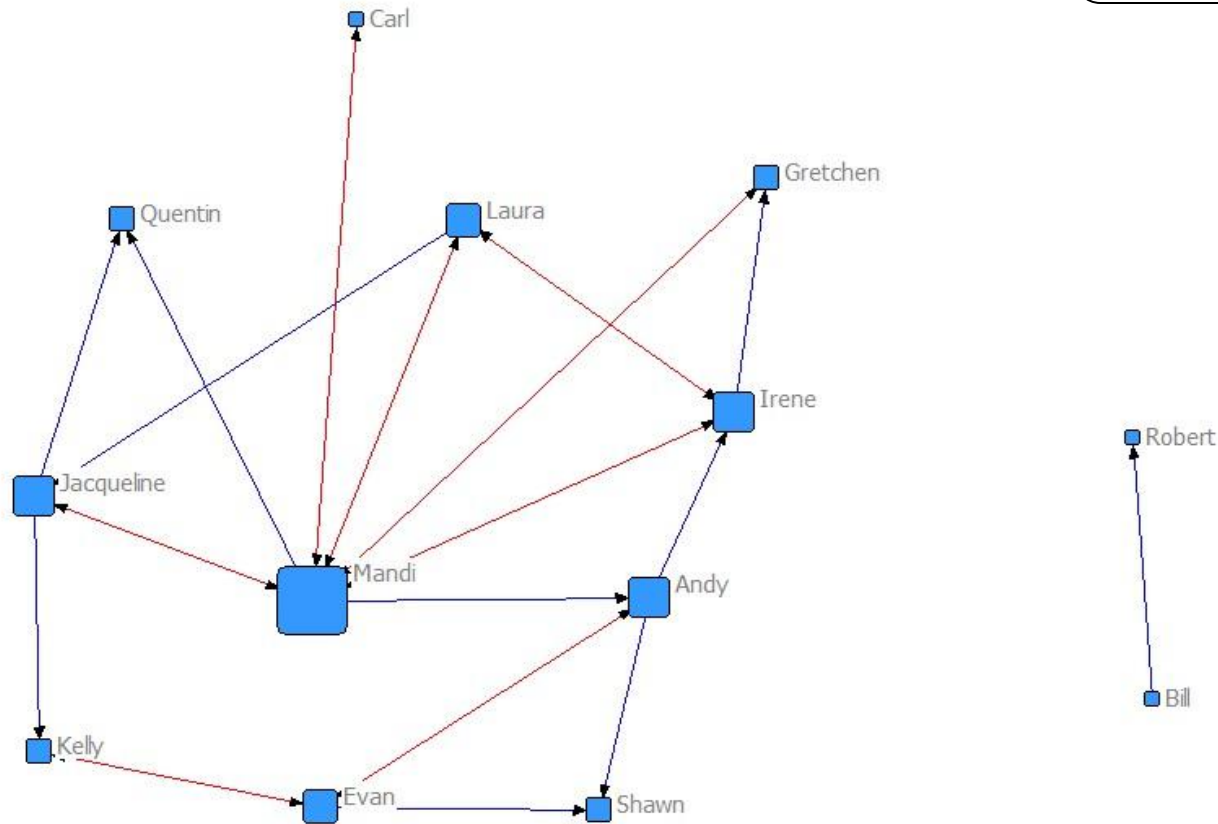
★ **Solutions**

- ✧ Manager needs to build sense of team and emphasize the value of positive energy exchange.
- ✧ Talk about teams who generate positive energy who have become a catalyst for creativity and innovation. Emphasize that people enjoy working on positive teams and function better in both good times and bad.
- ✧ Hold innovation sessions where team members encourage each other's ideas.
- ✧ In brainstorming sessions, adopt zero negativity practice.

Positive Energy

▪ Ted

SURVEY QUESTION: When you interact with [Name], how does it impact your energy level? [Positive, Neutral, or Negative]



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Knowledge Exchange

A healthy organization/team freely exchanges knowledge throughout the entire organization. When the environment encourages knowledge exchange, people come up with new ideas and share them for the greater good of the organization. Research shows that the organizations that are passionate about knowledge exchange gain the greatest competitive advantage.

Constant knowledge exchange equals constant nourishment or growth. Organizations will die without creativity and innovation moving throughout all parts of the system.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE MOVES THROUGH THE PEOPLE TO NOURISH AND GROW THE ORGANIZATION



Roots=groups

Knowledge is water that nourishes the tree



Knowledge must transfer to managers (trunk) to distribute out to the branches of the organization

Knowledge Exchange

How to Improve Your Team

- ★ **Knowledge Exchange is not a significant activity within the team. Knowledge is transferred in a very structured, specific, technical, and focused manner. The team:**
 - ✧ Provides the information requested
 - ✧ Gives information to lead others to make the right decisions
 - ✧ Shares knowledge when requested and asks for information when needed.

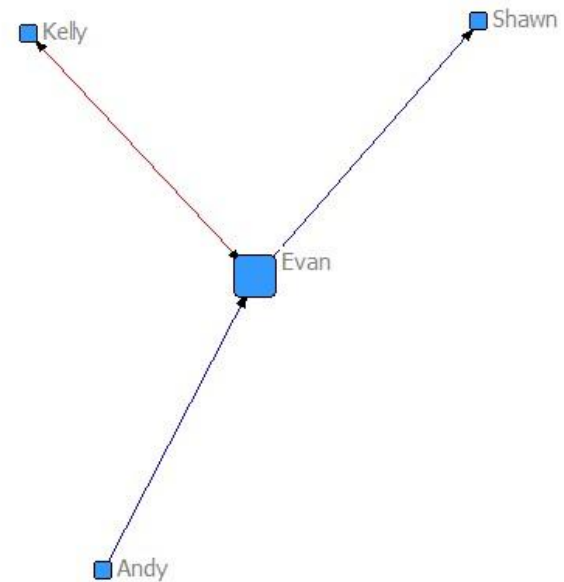
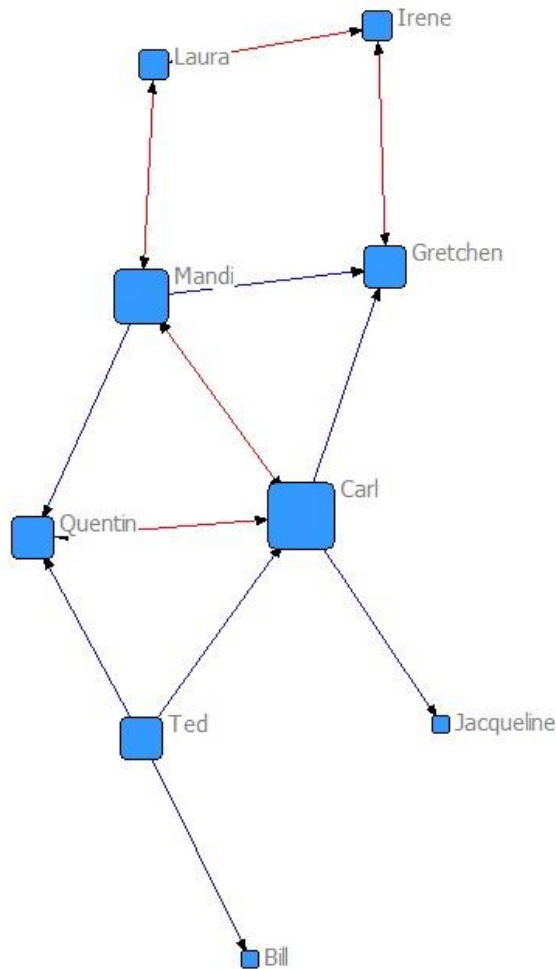
- ★ **Red Flags**
 - ✧ There are a minimum number of links between individuals in the two independent groups.
 - ✧ Each individual should be exchanging knowledge on a regular basis with at least three other individuals within the network.
 - ✧ There are 'knowledge islands' where individuals are retaining knowledge without benefiting the overall group.

- ★ **Solutions**
 - ✧ Restructure reporting responsibilities for each person to achieve knowledge with three other individuals. This will increase the exchange of ideas, problem solving, innovation and learning.
 - ✧ Train team to share knowledge in a more structured/standard and technical format, which is their overall personality preference. For willing participation, be sure they understand the reason and benefit.
 - ✧ The assessment results show that the group appreciates learning and is open to opportunities to obtain new knowledge. They need to be encouraged to do this with each other on a regular basis. Include it in their Career Development Program objectives.
 - ✧ Hold monthly meetings to exchange knowledge to improve client and internal responsiveness, team effectiveness, increased quality, better solutions and fewer errors.

Knowledge Exchange (Weekly)

SURVEY QUESTION: How often do you exchange KNOWLEDGE with [Name] to develop new solutions or approaches to issues within [Company]?

▪ Robert



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Glossary

Communication

The initial focus of the STAR Network survey determined which personnel knew each other through communication of any type on a quarterly basis.

Time Based Communication - Weekly

The Weekly Communication network graph provides a graphic display of weekly communication and the directionality of that communication. Arrows from one person to the next indicate one-way communication. Arrows on both ends of a link indicated two-way communicating (e.g., giving and receiving). One-way communication is in Blue and two-way communication is in Red.

Node

A node is a point on the graph that represents a person, position or office. This represents a person in the network. Lines leading to/from the person, position or office are considered “links.” Links show the measured communication, trust, knowledge exchange and reliance, along with directionality and density.

Dynamics

The complement to communication in supporting knowledge exchange is the dynamics that exist in a team. Specifically, the reliance that exists between individuals, the trust in the network, and the belief that values are shared are key indicators regarding how individuals are motivated to share knowledge.

Knowledge Exchange

As with the discussion on organization related performance, the basis for achieving high performance in project issues is the free exchange of knowledge.

Reliance

The survey rates the amount of reliance individuals have on others to his/her tasks so that they then can perform or complete their work.

Professional Trust

Professional trust is measured when an individual believes that another individual will take actions that are mutually beneficial and not solely to one’s own advantage. Professional trust tends to be an outcome of reliance. There are many forms of professional trust in an organization from what is referred to as “blanket trust,” which translates to a trust of another individual in any action they take to a “focused trust” on a specific topic. This is a key requirement for knowledge exchange since individuals need to feel confident the knowledge being exchanged will have a mutual benefit. In contrast, if an individual believes that exchanging knowledge can lead to

a reduction in status or power, then that individual will be hesitant to release knowledge into the network.

Knowledge Exchange

The basis for achieving high performance in an organization is the free exchange of knowledge.

Daily Check-In Meeting

Daily check-in meeting requires that team members get together, standing up, for about five minutes every morning to report on their activities that day. It provides a quick forum to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks on a given day and eliminates the need for unnecessary and time-consuming email chains about schedule coordination. (Lencioni P. (2004). *Death by Meeting*. California: Jossey-Bass. p. 236)

Weekly Tactical Meeting

The weekly tactical meeting should last 45 minutes and includes the following: The Lightning Round, Progress Review, and Real Time Agenda. (Lencioni P. (2004). *Death by Meeting*. California: Jossey-Bass. p. 240)

Monthly Strategic Meeting

The monthly strategic meeting should last at least 2 hours per topic so the participants feel comfortable engaging in open-ended constructive debate about critical issues. It is where the team wrestles with, analyzes, debates, and decides upon critical issues that will affect the business in fundamental ways. (Lencioni P. (2004). *Death by Meeting*. California: Jossey-Bass. p. 241)

Characteristics of High Performing Teams

Frequency of Communication	
<i>Proactive versus Reactive</i>	High performing teams typically communicate before being asked to do so. They share information freely and make links between their work and others needs
<i>Formal versus Informal</i>	High performing teams typically use formal channels to keep everyone informed and informal channels for creativity and day-to-day management and problem solving
<i>Factual versus Story-telling</i>	High performing teams use fact-based communications to insure comprehension and stories to create depth of knowledge

Knowledge Exchange	
<i>Education approach to communication (when learned)</i>	High performing teams communicate new ideas and concepts as they occur. They understand the value of information and how it can help others perform.
<i>Data and/or Recommendations</i>	High performing teams provide both complete data and recommendations to let others know where they stand
<i>Desire to gain knowledge</i>	High performing teams ask others about their work and what they are doing on a day-to-day basis. They purposely try to learn from people in other disciplines.

Reliance on Others	
<i>Need for structure and detail</i>	High performing teams provide structure to a flexible environment. As things change (and they are open to the change), they re-apply new structure so everyone is on the same page.
<i>Willingness to delegate</i>	High performing teams are willing to delegate not only the accountability but also the responsibility.
<i>Micromanagement</i>	High performing teams trust their delegation skills and leave others the freedom to perform the activities in a way they see fit.

Professional Trust	
<i>Skeptical versus Gullible</i>	High performing teams question processes and practices to determine the best way to move forward, not because of competition or resentment.
<i>Positive versus Negative focus</i>	High performing teams are focused on future-oriented success and goals, not on the biggest ways to fail.
<i>Self-trust - self-reliance</i>	High performing teams have members who trust themselves and see themselves as people of their word. People on these teams do what they say they will do.
<i>Trust but verify mentality</i>	High performing teams create a verifying culture where verification is seen as a chance to celebrate success, not as a way to check on progress.

Positive Energy	
<i>Individual versus Team Focus</i>	High performing teams focus on what they need to do to help the group succeed. They are willing to put aside their own self-interests for the good of the team.
<i>Focus on what is right or what is wrong</i>	High performing teams celebrate what has gone right and learn from what has gone wrong. Things that go wrong are seen as a team's chances to improve.

MORF CONSULTING

MORF LLC has extensive experience with private and public for-profit, non-profit, educational, governmental and military clients. We have many long-standing relationships with the architecture, engineering and construction industry. Our leadership development tools and our client specific research efforts combine to support the development of leaders within the context of their organization's culture.

MORF LLC provides proprietary methodology in working with leadership succession and leader development within an organization. Our research-based approach to organizational design allows organizations to identify the strengths of talents of existing staff, gaps in organizational requirements and developmental areas.

Our staff is highly experienced in providing team development efforts for on-going high-performance work groups and/or project teams. Our facilitators and coaches are knowledgeable in group-dynamics and skilled at working through conflicts and providing creative solutions to troublesome issues.