



## Teamwork Makes The Dream Work

All of us have heard of the Greek mythological hero Achilles and his team which captured Troy. Achilles and his team were able to defeat the large and mighty Greek army (who had greater resources and experiences) as they were clear on the objectives and had high awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses. While each one had their special skill, they perfected the art of complementing each other to achieve high levels of synergy. The conquest of Troy is a tribute to team dynamics-how individuals and teams pursue greatness and work with a strong desire to leave behind a legacy.

Such inspiring examples of leadership and teamwork can be seen even in the corporate world. In this article, I share some of my personal insights into 'what makes a high performing team?', largely based on my experiences of having been a part of the growth and expansion story of L&T IDPL over the last decade.

### L&T IDPL-A Unique Working Model

L&T IDPL has a unique mode of operation where IDPL is responsible for being awarded an infrastructure project from a customer. Once IDPL has successfully acquired the bid, the entire construction activity is managed by another L&T company-ECC.

On completion of the construction by ECC, the management of the facility is again handed back to IDPL. This kind of a model brings with itself huge interdependencies. Hence, the success or failure of the project depends largely on the collaboration between various entities and stakeholders and not on a single team or department. This requires the leadership at L&T IDPL to bring together different people across various stages of the project life cycle-right from the conceptualization, execution, coordination and the post execution phases, under extremely uncertain and trying situations.



The 'high performance' here is not only defined by the completion of the project but also on the way in which team dynamics are handled. 'High Performance' also extends to the way in which the uncertainties are dealt with, without compromising the value system of the organization, honoring commitments made to various stakeholders, constantly persevering and not losing one's determination even in the face of adversities.

### High Performing Teams-An Important Business Driver

Our prospects are spread over the country and hence there is a constant need for reiterating and reminding people of a collaborative work culture.

Moreover, the work requires various departments and stakeholders to come together to achieve results. This may include a wide range of people from across the spectrum-Business Development, Project Management, Contracts Managers, Operations/Maintenance teams public, and government agencies. IDPL does not encourage 'silo functions' and therefore each team needs to come together with the other to achieve the common objectives.

### Qualities Required For A Collaborative Team:

- ✓ Leveraging the strengths of individuals and teams and building collaboration.
- ✓ Focus on the overall objectives and keeping these ahead of individual interests.
- ✓ Trust and building strong bonds between the team members and the organization.
- ✓ Transparency in communication while being respectful to individuals.
- ✓ Being mature in all business transactions and upholding the values that the organization stands for.

Based on my experience, given below are the 3 keys to ensure organizational success and the creation of high performance teams:

### 'Intrdependence' And Teamwork

**"A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality."**

**John Lennon**

'Intrdependence' is the glue that binds team's members together and ensures success. Without this, the success of the project becomes elusive. 'Intrdependence' is a collaborative value that develops when a business or a leader builds a sense of community and belongingness in the workforce. The resultant synergy not only ensures success in the number of goals accomplished, productivity etc. But also helps build a collaborative culture.

### Characteristics Of A Team With High 'Intrdependence':

1. Open Communication: Team members openly and freely share relevant information with each other, with an aim to help.
2. Self-awareness: Each individual team member is aware of his/her own strengths and areas of improvement.
3. Appreciation for others: Team members are also aware of and acknowledge the strengths and shortcomings of the other team members.
4. Demonstrating key behaviors: Along with high levels of emotional maturity, all the team members demonstrate commitment to excellence, trust, genuineness, empathy, sharing and acceptance. The guiding principle is "If we win, I win".

### 'Interdependence' And Teamwork

**"Perhaps we are not here to see each other but to see each other through."**

**Anonymous**



Mr. Suresh Kumar. P. G

#### About the Author...

Suresh Kumar P G, an Engineer turned Human Resources professional, currently serves, L&T Infrastructure Development Projects Limited as its Head of HR. He also heads the Corporate Communication and Admin for this Company. He has been associated with L&T for over twenty two years. Prior to L&T IDPL, he was in the line function of its parent organization. He has a total of 28 plus years of work experience. During his line function he had long stints in the areas of Business Development, Project Management and Project Implementation. He combines his line function experience to his Human Resources Management requirements. Besides L&T, Suresh Kumar has been a part of Ashok Leyland, an Indian automobile giant. For the past ten years, he has been actively involved in redefining the infrastructure landscape wherein his managerial skills and practical approach have played a significant role in the growth of L&T IDPL.



Business decisions often need people from various departments, lines of business and also from the external environment to come together. This is important, since it leads to a better understanding of the big picture, allowing people with different ideas, perspectives, and expertise to voice their ideas and find creative and innovative solutions to problems that the organization is experiencing or needs to solve. However, combining all of these voices results in a unique set of challenges, requiring specialized team management and leadership skills. Here, it is important that the leadership provides adequate support in overcoming team formation issues, recognizing the talents and contributions of each individual, establishing open and honest communication within the team and the organization, and keeping the team focused and motivated. Getting the entire team to be focused on the end goal is crucial in such situations and lays the foundation for success.

### Collaborating With The External Environment In The Face Of Adversities

*“We take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere.”*

**Tim McGraw**

Today, organizations are expected to deliver value and improvisations at breakneck speed. To deliver beyond such expectations, there is a need for effective collaboration throughout the value chain—from customers all the way back to the leadership team in the organization. Teams must be able to cater to the needs of various stakeholders without compromising on the values and company policies. They

should also be able to focus energies together in order to face any uncertainties and unexpected changes that might seem detrimental to the project life cycle and navigate the course of actions accordingly.

The environment plays an important role and influences the business tremendously. It affects the viability and feasibility of the projects at the bidding stage and the presence of socio-economic uncertainties increase the risks within the business. This also includes, the general public not willing to pay toll fees, wheeling charges etc. in order to maintain the infrastructure provided. The collaboration therefore with external factors plays a major role in the sustenance of the project. Some external factors that affect our business include stability of the Government, policies, support from political parties and law and order situations. Hence, it is important for the business to collaborate with external agencies keeping in mind the overall objective in mind. In such challenging business scenarios, we at L&T IDPL have mastered the art of tolerance to uncertainty and still perform well.

### The Role Of Leadership:

In order to encourage collaboration and interdependency, each team leader must provide the necessary support and structure for the team and be a role model while expecting certain behaviors. An important leadership competency for any organization is the ability to build and lead high performing teams. Here, people must work closely together, wear many hats and work effectively across the organization to get tasks accomplished quickly

enough to remain competitive and have a ‘One Up’ advantage even in times of adversities. Some points that may be kept in mind by leaders leading high performance teams who have high dependencies on internal and external dynamics are:

### Understanding The Big Picture.

In an effective team, each team member must understand the context of the team's work to the greatest degree possible. This includes understanding the relevance of his/her job and how it impacts the effectiveness of others and the overall team effort. Too often, people are asked to work on a part of the task without being told how their role contributes to the desired end result, much less how their efforts are impacting the ability of others to do their work. Understanding the big picture promotes collaboration, increases commitment and improves quality.

### Communicating common goals.

Effective teams have agreed-upon goals that are simple, measurable and clearly relevant to the team's task. Each goal includes key measurable metrics (that are available to everyone on the team), which can be used to determine the team effectiveness and improvement. Understanding and working toward these common goals as a unit is crucial to the team's effectiveness.

### Working collaboratively, as a unit.

In an effective team you'll notice a penchant for collaboration and a keen awareness of interdependency. Collaboration and a solid sense of interdependency in a team will defuse blaming behavior and stimulate opportunities for learning and improvement. Without this sense of interdependency in responsibility and reward, the resulting ‘blame game’ may lead to quick erosion in team effectiveness.

