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HBR's 10 Must Reads On Teams (with Featured Article “The Discipline Of Teams,” By Jon R. Katzenbach And Douglas K. Smith)



Synopsis

NEW from the bestselling HBR's 10 Must Reads series. Most teams underperform. Yours can beat the odds. If you read nothing else on building better teams, read these 10 articles. We've combed through hundreds of articles in the Harvard Business Review archive and selected the most important ones to help you assemble and steer teams that get results. Leading experts such as Jon Katzenbach, Teresa Amabile, and Tamara Erickson provide the insights and advice you need to:

- Boost team performance through mutual accountability
- Motivate large, diverse groups to tackle complex projects
- Increase your team's emotional intelligence
- Prevent decision deadlock
- Extract results from a bunch of touchy superstars
- Fight constructively with top-management colleagues

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Customer Reviews

This is one in a series of anthologies of individual articles that the editors of Harvard Business Review consider to be the "must reads" in a given business subject area, in this instance

teamwork. I have no quarrel with any of their ten selections, each of which is eminently deserving of inclusion. Were all of these articles purchased separately as reprints, the total cost would be \$60 and the value of any one of them exceeds that. Given the fact that it now sells this one for only \$13.53, that's quite a bargain. The same is true of volumes in other series such as the Harvard Business Review on Leadership and Harvard Business Essentials. I also think there is great benefit derived from the convenience of having a variety of perspectives and insights gathered in a single volume. In all of the volumes in the 10 Must Read series that I have read thus far, the authors and HBR editors make skillful use of several reader-friendly devices that include Idea in Brief and Idea in Action sections, checklists with and without bullet points, boxed mini-commentaries (some of which are guest contributions from other sources), and graphic charts and diagrams that consolidate especially valuable information. These and other devices facilitate, indeed expedite frequent review later of key points. Those who read this volume will gain valuable information, insights, and counsel that will help them to boost team performance through mutual accountability, motivate large and diverse groups to tackle complex projects, increase their teams' emotional intelligence, prevent or resolve decision gridlock, extract collaborative results from a group of superstars, and disagree constructively with colleagues at all levels and in all areas of the given enterprise.

Avoiding Dictator Syndrome: The Paradox of Circular Logic in Teams. In HBR's 10 Must Reads On Teams (2013), I have found Frisch's (2008) article, When Teams Can't Decide, to be my favorite and most applicable to my current career season. In my career, I've considered one of three core discipline leads, whose work impacts the other in a circular fashion. When having team meetings to discuss creating new features, each lead, representing the expertise of their team's function, weighs in on the conversation. This often presents the issue of what Frisch has identified as "circular logic" (Strategic, 2012). Circular logic, also known as the "voting paradox", was first discovered by an eighteenth-century French mathematician and social theorist, the Marquis de Condorcet, in which different subsets of the group can generate conflicting majorities for all possible alternatives" (Frisch, 2008, loc. 2144). The article focuses on how teams can circumvent the "dictator-by-default syndrome", which is cornering their superior to make an either/or decision, and navigate the complexities of circular logic (Frisch, 2008). The purpose of this paper is to review Frisch's (2008) article. "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function" (Fitzgerald, 1945). In math, the transitive principle is stated as follows: if $A > B$ and $B > C$, then $A >$

C. However, the Marquis de Condorcet proved this principle is only true as an individual or in pairs (Strategicâ |, 2012). The transitive principle never became a law because it does not work for groups in which there are three or more decisions, each offering multiple options (Strategicâ |, 2012).

HBRâ™s 10 Must Reads on Teams gives the team leader a quick place to find down-to-earth articles containing much needed research into how teams operate, should be constructed and how they can be made more efficient. While I enjoyed reading the articles in the book, I was deeply interested in the first one, which I believe should catch the imagination of any technical-minded leader, âœThe New Science of Building Great Teamsâ•. Starting the book of with such a well-written and researched article is certainly powerful. Until I read this article, I wondered if there was a way to follow and track the social interactions of team members to see what skills were most important to building a good team. Pentland was able to build such a device: a wearable badge that collects data on âœwhat tone of voice they use; whether they face one another; how much they gesture; how much they talk, listen, and interrupt; and even their levels of extroversion and empathy. By comparing data gathered from all the individuals on a team with performance data, we can identify the communication patterns that make for successful teamworkâ• (Pentland as cited in HBR's 10 Must Reads On teams, p.5, 2013). This research shows that face-to-face interactions are more important than emails, phone calls, voicemails or texts. While I like emails for data-trails, I would rather discuss issues and ideas in person, so I am pleased to learn how teams can be at least 8% more effective by adding more face time (2013).

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