

Team Success

How to Help Teams Realize
Their Full Potential

A PRIMER FROM RANGE.CO





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What makes a team a team?

The way we work is rapidly evolving. Teams are becoming more distributed, companies more diverse, decision-making more complex. Constant adaptation is the new normal.

With all this change, it's hard to create and nurture great work cultures: those fabled places where everyone feels proud of what they're doing and how they're doing it. It often seems — especially as companies grow — that instead, people become less engaged, teams less productive, and bureaucracy turns into force of nature. The more humans we add, the less human our places of work seem to feel.

“The team [not the organization] carries the most weight with employees across company size and industry.”*

To prosper in this new normal, we need to invest in this fabric of work and help it grow stronger. More and more, we're learning that wellbeing and productivity don't have to be a tradeoff. Your team can meet their goals *and* be happy at work.

As leaders, we're seeking to learn from one another how to create environments where teams can succeed.

We search on Google and HBR, ask colleagues and friends, post on Reddit — all to find answers to questions like “How do you run an effective meeting? How do you set great OKRs? What makes a good 1:1?” Or even “How do I give good feedback? How do we foster psychological safety and connection? How can my team work better together?”

All of this focus is on teams because they are now the core unit of work, and a great team is the aspiration. When we talk to people across the work spectrum, we hear the same refrains — organizations want to create great teams, managers want to build great teams, people want to work on great teams.

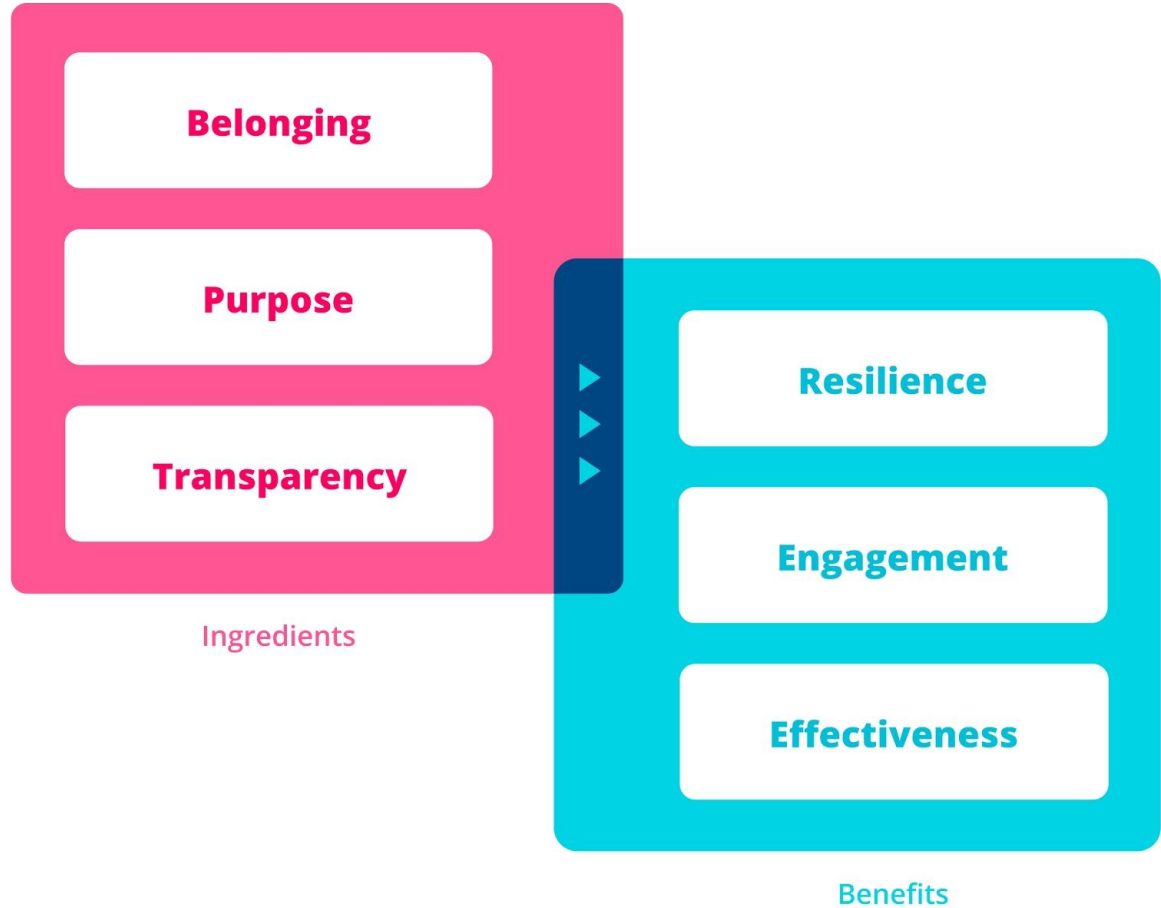
We see **team success** as a new, emergent discipline that great leaders are practicing, sharing, and researching. It's not just about company-level engagement or HR terms, it's about how your team is operating day-to-day. And that's what this primer is about. We developed it to help you understand the discipline of team success: what is it, and how you actually get there.

At the end we'll cover where Range's team success software fits in, and what it can do for you and your team.

Thanks for reading, and thanks for helping build great teams.

*Harvard Business Review, The Real Secret to Employee Engagement, June 13, 2019

Team Success



What is team success?

Hopefully you've had a chance to experience, even for a little while, what a great team feels like: effective, impactful, fun, supported, connected. You're in the groove, together. And that groove is built on trust.

That's team success: when you're all working *together*, and no matter what comes at you, you've got it handled. But "working together well" can feel a bit fuzzy, so our team at Range set out to define what team success actually means and how you create it.

We talked to innovative leaders across companies, read academic research (and talked to the experts who wrote the research), and even took creative ideas from all the progressive communities and Slack groups we could find. What we learned was that team success has two sides: what you need and what you get. On the one side, team success is a discipline — the practice and art of creating the conditions for your team to be successful. And on the other side? The actual success — the benefits and attributes of being a successful team.

We've found that team success goes beyond thinking just about employee engagement or performance management.

For example, here are three scenarios that might sound familiar:

- An engineering manager is concerned her distributed team feels disconnected. She wants to run asynchronous stand ups in a way that would foster better collaboration and a deeper understanding of one another.
- A head of product who wants to coordinate work amongst their teams who don't have the best track record of working together. They want to make it easy for everyone to keep track of what's going on while encouraging them to empathize with one another.
- A CEO who wants to build an open culture, based on transparent communications, where they can develop and share objectives (OKRs) and have all teams in the organization easily report on progress.

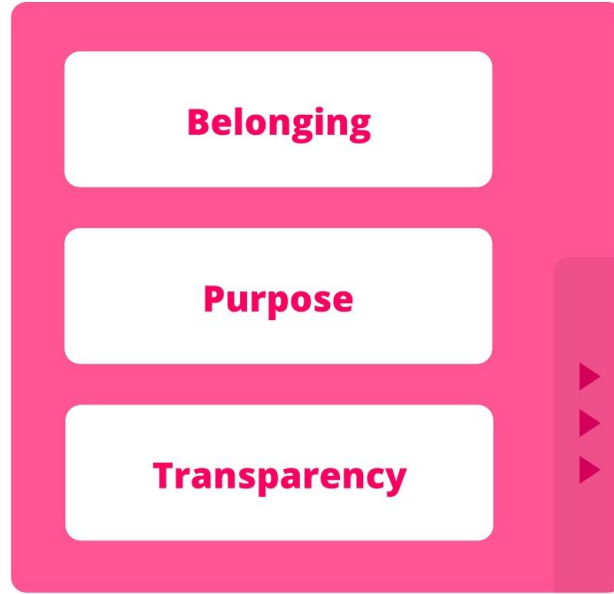
The people in these scenarios don't just share goals focused on performance or engagement alone, but on how they can build different capabilities to fundamentally change how they work together, everyday.

We've broken down team success into the ingredients that go into it and the resulting benefits — that great team feeling. In the pages that follow, we go into detail about why each input and output matters, and practices to consider to build each.

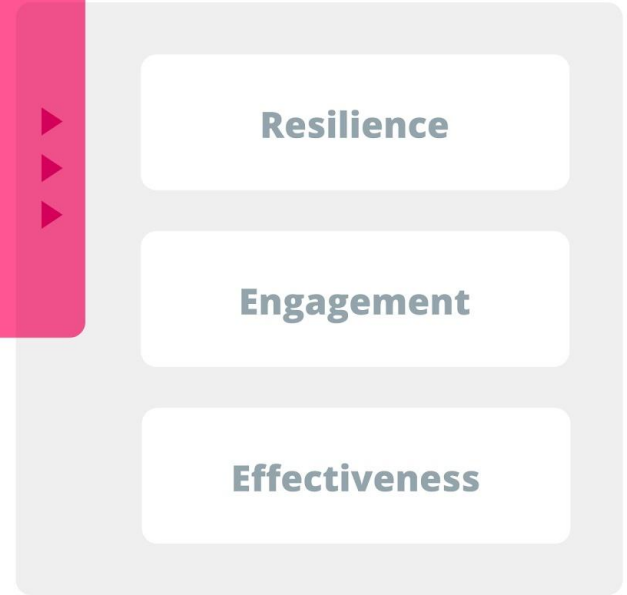


“While the employee experience journey may start with a focus on the workplace, perks, and rewards, in time it must focus on the more human elements of the work itself to truly create meaning.”

Team Success Ingredients



Ingredients



Benefits

Purpose

Every team needs a shared understanding of why they're a team — their purpose. This defines where they fit into an organization and underscores their value.

Deciding on a why, sharing it, and incorporating it into all aspects of the work makes everything easier. It increases engagement and makes it easier to be effective when you understand your role and impact.

Hallmark practices

- Create [Team Charters](#) to clarify why your team is working together, the principles that guide your work, and the general rules of engagement
- Align your work with purpose by setting [strong OKRs](#) or goals that outline the why in addition to the what and how
- Define and share [individual roles](#) on the team to clarify who does what



58 percent of companies that prioritized both the definition and enactment of organizational purpose experienced growth of 10 percent or more.

Transparency

Transparency means that the team knows what's happening, can find answers to their questions easily, and can openly share what they're working on.

Transparency is built from consistent, open, trusting communication, and is a hallmark of all successful teams. It's a practice that delivers equal access to information and shared context, so everyone not only feels in the loop, but more empowered to make autonomous decisions.

No team can avoid hard decisions or failure, but transparent communication makes it easier for the team to learn to be resilient.

Hallmark practices

- Establish a [cadence of communication](#), including daily updates
- Build a [knowledge base](#) for the team
- Share [meeting notes](#) and decisions broadly to raise awareness and create alignment



In a survey conducted by [the Economist's business arm](#), respondents "overwhelmingly indicated that poor communications at work can lead to stressful work environments, stalled careers, missed performance goals, and lost sales."

Belonging

Feeling unsure or unsafe around your team is a recipe for disaster or at least disengagement. Creating belonging means creating an environment where everyone feels safe to fail and take risks — and safe to feel discomfort — making them more resilient to change and challenges.

Teams with belonging have a strong foundation built on vulnerability and trust, which in turn provides psychological safety and increases the sense of community and dependability. Feeling like you belong means you feel connected and are more likely to be engaged with your work.

Hallmark practices

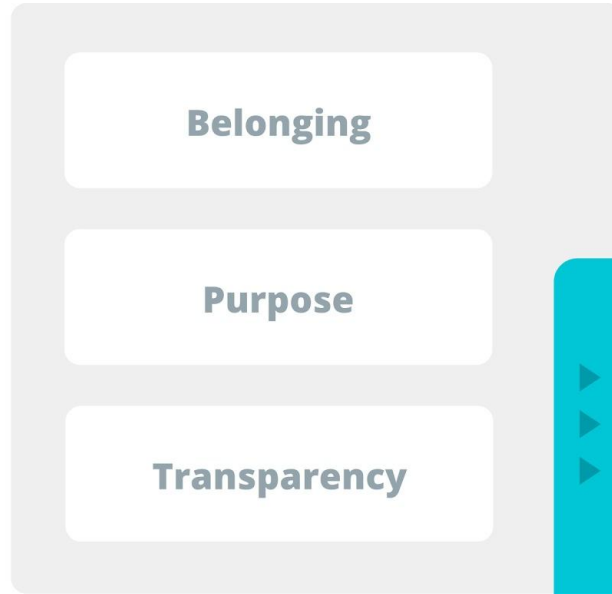
- Create a [habit of connecting](#) during the course of work — regularly, not just during happy hours
- Set aside time for [team feedback](#) and [blameless retros](#), allowing for shared learning and growth
- Take time to [learn about other people](#), not just your direct coworkers



High belonging was linked to a whopping 56% increase in job performance, a 50% drop in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in sick days. For a 10,000-person company, this would result in annual savings of more than \$52M.

Team Success

Benefits



Ingredients



Benefits

Effective

Successful teams meet their goals. Sounds simple, right? In practice, it's really (really) hard.

Being effective means that the team is consistently working on the right things, taking new information and learning from it, and making critical decisions on how to best move forward. They're balancing quality, quantity, and speed across multiple projects.

Learn more

- Read about Google's quest to understand [team effectiveness](#)
- From Deloitte — [Organizational performance: It's a team sport](#)
- An interview with Medium's Chief Architect Xiao Ma on [putting the concept of servant leadership into practice](#)



In a study from Deloitte, 53% of respondents said shifting to a team-based model improves performance.

Engaged

Successful teams don't just know what they need to do, they understand the value and find meaning in their work.

These engaged team are ones where teammates are excited about the work and the impact they're having. They speak up, support one another, and ask for help when they need it. They care about the outcomes of their work and are actively trying to do the best they can together.

Learn more

- How to create a model for [giving and receiving feedback](#)
- Read McKinsey's [guidance on making work meaningful for leaders](#)
- Take a look at [tips from 8 industry leaders on how to engage employees](#)



- Highly engaged teams show 21% greater profitability
- Highly engaged business units achieve a 10% increase in customer ratings and a 20% increase in sales

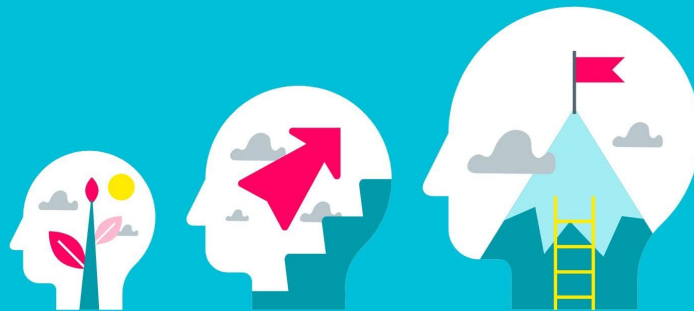
Resilient

Successful teams roll with it. They don't just think things might not go as planned, they expect them not to.

They have built a shared mental model of what success looks like, but as importantly as change is constant, they can adapt. They have a strong sense of trust and support, and a growth mindset, so when failure happens (and it always does), they don't take it personally. Instead, they learn from it and move on to the next thing.

Learn more

- From HBR — [4 practices of resilient teams](#)
- Read about how PwC defines the [traits of resiliency](#)
- See how UNC's Kenan Flagler Business School [defines the dimensions of a resilient culture](#)
- Take a look at [Responsive.org's Manifesto](#)



86% of executives cite lack of collaboration or ineffective communication for workplace failures.

Range:

An integrated approach

Many solutions focus on just one use case, such as OKRs or better meetings. Others deal with employee engagement or performance management.

Rather than dealing with the symptoms, we think team success software has to be holistic if it's going to fundamentally impact the root causes that hold teams back. People use Range to build successful teams, not just better OKRs.

It's a comprehensive, flexible solution, so teams can check-in, set objectives, and run meetings in whatever way suits them best. It strengthens team culture with questions and moods. And it integrates with tools teams use, like Google Docs and Calendar, Slack, Asana, Jira and GitHub, making it simple to bring in and share the information you need in one place.

Whether your team is local or remote, you can share progress asynchronously, so it's easy to stay in sync and focus on what matters.

Range is free to try, and if you ever want more information or to better understand if it's right for your team's needs, just drop us a line at hello@range.co.

We hope you enjoyed this primer on team success, and if you'd like hear more about building great teams, be sure to sign up for Range's newsletter.

Learn more at range.co

