

“Best Practices” of our Client Teams

by Art Wilson

At CPS, one of our most satisfying and enjoyable experiences involves coaching client account teams. As coaches, we provide support for the account team as it uses CPS processes and tools to develop and implement strategies to produce extraordinary results with their key client.

It has been our experience that the teams with the highest performance and results share five common behaviors, which we consider to be true Best Practices.

1. The team is *focused on the client*—not just responsive, but proactive
2. The team has a *clearly defined Extraordinary Goal* that is real for each team member
3. The team *has a strategy and plan* to attain its Extraordinary Goal
4. The team requires that *members of the team are accountable* to each other for assigned tasks
5. The *members of the team regularly communicate* with one another about the status of the plan

Client-Focused

High-performance teams are dedicated to delivering value to their clients. They know their client and the critical issues that are impacting the client. They personalize and shape their offerings and deliverables in ways that their clients value and that differentiate them from their competitors. These teams are proactively engaged to provide creative and innovative solutions.

Extraordinary Goal

Members of high-performance teams share a common goal. They have jointly defined their goals for the client account and, in every case, the goal is documented. It is common for the goal to metamorph over time, but in every case, the Extraordinary Goals reflect the client-focus of the account team and result in extraordinary performance. These account teams transcend “business as usual” in the attainment of their Extraordinary Goal.



A Strategy and Plan

High-performance teams have a plan with easily monitored steps or milestones that will move them over time to the attainment of the Extraordinary Goal. The plan is not credenza-ware; it is a living document that is adjusted and modified as the selling environment and client needs change. There are assignments for individual team members and dates by which those actions are to be completed. The plan is updated to reflect the accomplishment of planned milestones and the addition of new milestones. The strategy and plan are the map and blueprint that make it possible to move to closure on the Extraordinary Goal.

Commitment to Action/Accountability

High-performance teams get things done—they implement the plan and make the strategy work. Individual team members on high-performance teams commit to each other to make things happen. Milestones and action items are completed on time. Team members step in and share the load when another member needs help. No individual wants to let the other members of the team down.



Regular Communications

High-performance teams communicate regularly, whether in face-to-face meetings, via teleconferences, or email. The key aspect is that they meet AS A TEAM and work together moving toward the Extraordinary Goal. As a result of regular team communication, synergy and team dynamics create a field for success. Team members become committed. The extraordinary goal becomes “doable.” The team members know the “most important best next actions,” who on the team is accountable for the action, and when the action is scheduled for completion. As one member of a high-performance team has told us, *“We communicate as if our lives depend on it.”*

Consistent use of these “Best Practices” differentiates a high-performance team from the rest of the pack. They start with a focus on the client and never lose that focus. They have an Extraordinary Goal that demands creativity and performance. They take the time to create a plan that supports the goal and have a road map for it. They know the dynamics of the client and of the plan. They communicate and collaborate with each other. They are committed to action and will not let the other members of the team down. *These are the “high-performance teams.”*

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