RESILIENCE SERIES

Team Resilience Guide

How to be at your best when facing adversity by effectively leveraging team dynamics

Team Building Through Change

Session Guide

Overused Strengths

When under threat or in a crisis, teams react and take action. During these times of adversity, teams tend to lean heavily on what they are good at (Staw, Sandelands, Dutton, 1981). This is natural and can at times be effective. In many cases however, it can also result in an overuse or overreliance on these team strengths. This can lead to counterproductive behaviors or a lack of team versatility (Austin, 2015).

Counterproductive Behaviors

Counterproductive behaviors can emerge when teams intensify their prominent work styles and overuse their strengths (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). This may reflect a knee-jerk reaction. It may also reflect overconfidence ("What has worked well in the past will continue to work in the future").

Take the case of the sales team that experiences anxiety and stress due to missing sales goals. Fear grows within the team that some of their jobs may be at risk if this performance trend continues. They may not take time to investigate the underlying reason they missed their sales goals, or they may not know how to solve the identified problem. They subconsciously intensify their naturally higher dominance and extraversion, which results in more aggressiveness and self-imposed pressure on the team to raise their level of performance. Already stressed due to an uncertain work environment, the team falls apart under the added pressure, missing their goals by an even wider margin.

Lack of Versatility

A lack of team versatility is another byproduct of overreliance on strengths in reaction to a crisis (Kahneman & Lovallo, 1993). This often results from limited mindsets on the team ("There is only one way to do things"). Reactions to anxiety and stress cause teams to more firmly focus on the behaviors they do well. As a result, these teams stop exercising other behaviors that may be equally valuable.

As our sales team from above began to overly rely on their dominance and extraversion, they lessened their ability to take careful heed of the situation. Without a thorough exploration of

possible solutions when making decisions and proposing ideas, the team developed a lack of interpersonal awareness. They failed to realize how each team member was feeling as expectations were pushed beyond what they could handle. This can be perceived as uncalculated risk-taking, as well as proposing impractical solutions without being mindful of the impact on others.

How to use this guide

Team Behavioral Emphasis

The Team Resilience Guide is intended to to provide teams with content to support self-reflection and taking action to effectively leverage their behavioral strengths during times of crisis. By analyzing the aggregate Behavioral Assessment results of a team, PI assigns them one of nine Team Configurations, each of which summarizes the overall behavioral styles and emphasis of a team.

The guide is organized by the nine Team Configurations. These consist of:
- ❏ **Exploring Teams:** Venturesome, risk-taking, and imaginative.
- ❏ **Bolstering Teams:** Social, fun, and full of energy.
- ❏ **Pathfinding Teams:** Best described as "relentless."
- ❏ **Cultivating Teams:** Focused on cooperation and loyalty to one another.
- ❏ **Anchoring Teams:** Eager to help each other out and be forthcoming with their time and resources.
- ❏ **Stabilizing Teams:** Structured, task-focused, and practical.
- ❏ **Executing Teams:** Best described as "no nonsense."
- ❏ **Producing Teams:** Competitive and intense.
- ❏ **Adapting Teams:** Best characterized by its diversity of personalities and behaviors.

Guide Sections

This guide includes insights and actions empowering teams to be at their best with relation to:

- ❏ **Normal Team Dynamics:** Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations.
- ❏ **Crisis Team Dynamics**: Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress.
- ❏ **Tips to Increase Resilience:** Simple, practical actions to apply in your daily work to avoid overuse of strengths.
- ❏ **Self-Reflection Questions:** Topics for self-coaching to evaluate how well you are recognizing overuse of strengths and applying tips to adapt your work style.

Team Configurations and the Strategy Framework

The nine Team Configurations include target behaviors aligned to the PI Strategy Framework. See below for a summary of how the four strategy quadrants (Exploring, Producing, Stabilizing, Cultivating) align to each of the Team Configurations.

- ❏ **Exploring Teams:** Exploring
- ❏ **Bolstering Teams:** Cultivating & Exploring
- ❏ **Pathfinding Teams:** Exploring & Producing
- ❏ **Cultivating Teams:** Cultivating
- ❏ **Anchoring Teams:** Stabilizing & Cultivating
- ❏ **Stabilizing Teams:** Stabilizing
- ❏ **Executing Teams:** Producing & Stabilizing
- ❏ **Producing Teams:** Producing
- ❏ **Adapting Teams:** These teams tend to demonstrate a moderate or strong emphasis across three or four of the quadrants. Therefore, these teams function well in environments where change is frequent and strategies are not focused in a single area.

Exploring Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Make decisions fast
- ❏ Rapid exchange of ideas
- ❏ Think boldly and out loud
- ❏ Solve problems through innovation
- ❏ Relish change and risk-taking

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Exhaust others with too many ideas and little execution or follow-through
- ❏ Expend energy on activity, not productivity
- ❏ Create additional complexity through impulsive decision-making
- ❏ Develop something completely new when simplifying the existing approach is preferred

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Avoid making decisions in the heat of the moment. Build in time to think.
- ❏ Stop trying to do everything at once. Prioritize fewer things for execution and focus.
- ❏ Don't let problem-solving be based on the loudest voice in the room.
- ❏ Practice the mantra "Do less, not more."
- ❏ Avoid think-out-loud sessions, which exhaust others and can be counterproductive.
- ❏ Pay attention to team communications, as they may appear too informal for some audiences.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Did we just create more complexity for others when simplicity and focus is needed?
- ❏ Are we trying to innovate and create new things when we should be improving upon what we have?
- ❏ Are others frustrated with us because we overwhelm them with more actions in a time where less is needed?
- ❏ Did we approach critical topics with the right level of seriousness and formal tone?
- ❏ Did we really accomplish anything or did we just expend a lot of energy and activity?
- ❏ Are we exhausting others by trying to make too much happen?

Bolstering Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Social, fun, and energetic
- ❏ Rapid, organic exchange of information
- ❏ Supportive, brainstorming approaches to decision-making
- ❏ Positive, high-engagement tone
- ❏ Desire to resolve conflict amicably

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ The team is so focused on keeping things flexible and people-oriented that critical information or processes fall through the cracks.
- ❏ Internal rifts may form between people who want to push for big changes and those who prefer stability and security.
- ❏ Too much focus on keeping work fun and supportive may mean the team never pushes itself to be a little uncomfortable to achieve something big.
- ❏ The casual approach to work may create a great culture and spawn a variety of ideas, but the cost might be a lack of sustained, focused effort to benefit the company's goals.

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Hold each other accountable for keeping track of information or initiatives. For example, have each person in a meeting take notes on one agenda item, then combine them together afterwards so no one has to do all the note-taking.
- ❏ Make connections with people or other teams that can help your team project manage and hold team members accountable to meeting deadlines.
- ❏ Create short multi-day focus periods where team members work on a set of assignments and are not allowed to deviate from them. Work on extending these periods slowly over time until they are a couple of weeks long.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Does the team constantly need to reschedule deliverable dates?
- ❏ Does a lot of work get started but never finished?
- ❏ Can people find information on decisions that were made during meetings last month?
- ❏ Is a lot of time spent chatting with each other?
- ❏ Is the team seen as dependable?

❏ Make socializing a reward rather than a
part of how work is done. For example,
have the team reward itself for a focused,
organized, on-time delivery of a project by
having a short outing or lunch together.

Pathfinding Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Relentless, fast-paced, goal-oriented approach to work

- ❏ Healthy conflict, with people challenging new ideas instead of just accepting them

- ❏ Speed and making an immediate market impact is valued over coordination between individuals or teams

- ❏ All work is evaluated through the lens of how customers will react

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ The team is so focused on the external market that they do not build strong foundations of people or processes within the team. This makes scaling difficult, and the team is vulnerable if there is a change in staffing.

- ❏ The frequency of conflict can reach an unsustainable level, where people feel that they need to fight hard every time they want to voice an opinion. This can lead to people shutting down and not sharing their ideas if it doesn't seem worth the effort.

- ❏ If a competitive mindset is taken too far, resources and information may not be shared as the team, or individuals, becomes competitive with other internal stakeholders.

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Work with other teams or individuals to help scale or automate aspects of the team's work.

- ❏ Ensure there are knowledge redundancies so that the team is not overly dependent on any one person.

- ❏ Use anonymous methods like surveys, polls, and voting to source new ideas and let the group vet them rather than have to argue for an idea.

- ❏ Look for ways to share resources or information across the team so that people do not feel like they need to fight for or horde resources.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Do the highest-paid or longest-tenured employees always call the shots?

- ❏ If a large proportion of the team left or were reassigned, could the team still function?

- ❏ Do people look out for each other and have time to spend helping each other?

- ❏ If the demands for the team doubled, would the current way of working scale well? Would people be able to handle the added load without burning out?

- ❏ Can team members see a future for themselves at the company? Do they know what they need to do to move up in their careers?

❏ Work through thought exercises about what the team would address if they were to completely dominate the market. What would they work on within the company to make things better? Are any of those hypothetical situations likely to manifest as actual risks for the team's current work?

Cultivating Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Employee-first decision-making
- ❏ Frequent personal communication
- ❏ Concerns about in-team/out-team well-being and morale
- ❏ Tight cooperation and support
- ❏ Participative leadership style

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Overreliance on consensus (e.g., groupthink)
- ❏ Avoiding disagreement and uncomfortable decisions
- ❏ Lack of well-defined and organized execution plans
- ❏ Difficulty holding people to performance standards

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Remember that the popular answer isn't always the best answer.
- ❏ Your team will be more decisive if it can get better at disagreeing and committing.
- ❏ Hold closely to agendas during meetings so social tendencies don't detract from their purposes.
- ❏ Be careful that your actions aren't so favorable toward people that they hurt performance. You may need tough love.
- ❏ Spend more time focused on execution and deliverables and less on relationships and social interactions.
- ❏ Try to put someone in charge of all major decisions and actions so that people don't diffuse responsibility out of niceness.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Do our decisions become watered down because everyone has a say?
- ❏ Do we move fast enough or could we act with more intensity?
- ❏ Do we over-index on people impacts and not spend enough time on business impacts?
- ❏ Do we come up with strong solutions or are we too reliant on consensus and groupthink?
- ❏ Do we develop well-thought-out execution plans or just spend time talking about them?
- ❏ Are we comfortable talking about our own team performance and pushing each other to work harder or more aggressively?
- ❏ Does our team command the respect of others or are we seen as the fun, nice, and/or easygoing group?

Anchoring Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Cooperative, with constructive exchange of time and resources

- ❏ Organized and collaborative when making decisions and assigning tasks

- ❏ Internally-focused, steady approach to work

- ❏ Formal approaches to resolving conflicts and handling complaints

- ❏ Reputation for being patient and dependable

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Relying too much on structure may result in constraints when resources or priorities need to be shifted rapidly.

- ❏ With a heavy focus on internal work and development, the team may be too focused on what they think is right, losing sight of what customers want.

- ❏ The team may be so set on a given path that they miss opportunities that could have been captured with quick, proactive decision-making.

- ❏ The team may only feel empowered to address issues within their area of influence. They may not recognize when an issue is due to an external change, or if they do, they may feel that there is nothing they can do about it and fail to take action.

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Spend time learning about external stakeholders, either through face-to-face meetings or through other means, such as developing persona files. Work together to brainstorm ways to better meet these stakeholders' needs.

- ❏ Look for opportunities to expedite decision-making, such as limiting the number of sign-offs needed, or setting quick deadlines for decision-making.

- ❏ Set ambitious (yet realistic), customer-focused goals for the team. Seek out an external mentor or stakeholder who will help push the team to meet these goals and hold them accountable for failures.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Do we know what our customers' needs are? Can we name our biggest customers or describe what they do?

- ❏ Do we have a clear idea of things we could do on our team to help drive sales or retain customers?

- ❏ If our processes and systems were obsolete tomorrow, would we be ready to build something new?

- ❏ Do we know what teams like ours are doing at competitors' companies?

- ❏ Do we have any business incentive to innovate how we work?

Stabilizing Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Thorough, in-depth problem analysis
- ❏ Focus on operating efficiency and cost savings
- ❏ Building predictability and stability for others
- ❏ Focus on few, well-defined objectives

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Group analysis paralysis
- ❏ All planning, no action
- ❏ Over-engineered processes and procedures
- ❏ Creating obstacles to speed
- ❏ Making decisions in private

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Be careful that your team isn't creating processes that slow others down.
- ❏ Find ways to create better inner-team dialog before going deep into a problem area.
- ❏ Build out timelines to increase urgency and pace of team actions.
- ❏ Adopt a "perfect is the enemy of good" philosophy.
- ❏ Practice shipping work in small chunks in order to get feedback earlier.
- ❏ Socialize and encourage dialogue around plans, processes, or procedures.
- ❏ Don't lose sight of bigger objectives or the grand vision when making tactical decisions.
- ❏ Spend time planning how you will sell ideas and influence others rather than just delivering information or new requirements.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Are we spending too much time trying to solve a single issue?
- ❏ Do others know what we are up to, or are we being too private?
- ❏ Are we getting stuck because we are overanalyzing a topic?
- ❏ Is our team taking action, or spending too much time in planning mode?
- ❏ Are we able to deliver results with enough urgency? Are we keeping pace with others in the organization?
- ❏ Are we building things that are over-engineered and unrealistic for the work situation?
- ❏ Are we offering others the opportunity to provide feedback to our decision-making?
- ❏ Do our well-intentioned solutions actually lead to obstacles for others?
- ❏ Are we spending enough time selling our team, its work, and our ideas to others?
- ❏ Do we withdraw from collaborative decision-making in favor of more solitary problem-solving?

Executing Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Work is done in a no-nonsense, disciplined, and professional manner.

- ❏ Segmented, individual assignments

- ❏ Exchange of resources or ideas is done formally, within established protocols.

- ❏ Conflict is resolved with facts and data.

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Dependence on rules or procedures that may not translate well to the current needs

- ❏ Internal rifts between prioritizing customers' satisfaction versus working efficiently

- ❏ Tendency to rely on own expertise rather than making connections with other teams or stakeholders who could help

- ❏ Critical or demanding interactions that can hurt morale and lower engagement

- ❏ Conflict resolution overly relies on rational facts rather than consideration of how people feel.

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Set up connections with points of contacts on other teams who may be helpful resources or allies during a crisis.

- ❏ Set clear priorities so there are no conflicts over whether to serve external customer needs or internal company needs.

- ❏ Set up standardized forums for feedback to avoid interpersonal feedback that might be overly critical.

- ❏ Make a rule that people need to ask for permission before giving feedback.

- ❏ Set up small groups or pairs with assignments to teach each other or work on a new type of task that is different to them.

- ❏ Work to remove stigmas or consequences associated with failure by making mistakes a focus of learning and celebration in group settings.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Do we have a method for handling disagreements on the team besides pulling rank?

- ❏ If we were to need help, do we have a strong network with other teams or stakeholders we could rely upon in a pinch?

- ❏ What are the weak points or dependencies in our processes? If one of those points failed, what would the workaround be?

- ❏ Do we take time to acknowledge the individuals who make our team work? Do we understand each other on a personal level?

- ❏ Is our team seen as a constructive team player, or are we viewed as stubborn?

Producing Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Thrive on healthy competition
- ❏ Set realistic objective and goals
- ❏ Execute efficiently and on time
- ❏ Solve problems with focus and clarity
- ❏ Make decisions with results in mind

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Take away autonomy from others
- ❏ Become less visible to others by getting overly absorbed in tasks
- ❏ Drive people too hard
- ❏ Set unrealistic performance expectations
- ❏ Get too tactical on details

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ Consider whether more innovation or creativity are needed before moving into action mode.
- ❏ Be careful not to crush collaborative spirit because of a need to be right or in control.
- ❏ Review the people impact of any decisions before taking action.
- ❏ Avoid identifying metrics and deliverables before the problem is fully understood.
- ❏ Consider whether there is a way to "work smarter" rather than just working harder.
- ❏ Be careful not to tune out people who need to explore ideas out loud.
- ❏ Consider whether everything needs to happen at once, or whether a more prioritized or patient approach can succeed.
- ❏ Before building an execution plan, make sure to consider alternative solutions.
- ❏ Avoid making decisions that lead to unnecessary competition among people.
- ❏ Make sure performance objectives aren't so aggressive that they are unrealistic.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ What is the potential impact on people's morale or engagement if we follow through with these decisions?
- ❏ Are we trying to make structural changes without understanding the impacts on people?
- ❏ Are we executing in a way that hurts collaboration and team spirit?
- ❏ Are we seen as just giving orders and not soliciting input?
- ❏ Are we communicating frequently enough or only when decisions have been made?
- ❏ Are our communications missing an interpersonal element needed to gain buy-in and support?
- ❏ Are we creating conditions that lead to burnout and high stress among employees?
- ❏ Are we trying to solve things without taking the time to explain them or build consensus?

Adapting Teams

Normal Team Dynamics

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- ❏ Behaviorally diverse, and thus resilient to many changes in their role and environment

- ❏ Organic structure, reconfigurable to new challenges as they arise

- ❏ Self-organizing, recognizing and utilizing each other's individual strengths so they can be deployed effectively for any given situation

- ❏ Adaptable approaches to communication, conflict management, and resource management, including potential changes in individuals' roles or assignments over time

Crisis Team Dynamics

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on team strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- ❏ Although incredibly adaptable when their assignments are highly varied or constantly shifting, this team will have difficulty coordinating on stable, well-defined tasks that require a constant, singular focus.

- ❏ May be slower at coming to agreement due to behavioral and communication differences

- ❏ If too much rigidity is placed upon the team for how they need to work, individual members may resist and continue to work in their preferred style, leading to conflict or contradictions.

Tips to Increase Resilience

- ❏ If a problem arises, it is often in the form of conflict due to differences in behavior within the team. Working to build trust and connections among team members can help prevent these conflicts.

- ❏ If a situation requires clearly-defined tasks, split the team into subgroups based on their behavioral styles. Assign these subgroups different tasks that are well-aligned to the type of work that motivates them.

Self-Reflection Questions

- ❏ Is there a very clear and perhaps strict expectation for how our team is supposed to do its work?

- ❏ Is the nature of our work likely going to stay the same for the foreseeable future?

- ❏ Is our company entering a period of increased stability, slower production cycles, or decreased innovation?

- ❏ Is everyone on the team supposed to have a very similar job role?

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