

## Teams – Fast Track or Trendy Trap?

Many organizations take great pride in describing themselves as “team-based.” Scores of business books and magazine articles glorify and exalt teamwork over just about every other kind of organizational initiative. It’s easy to see why. Information technology and the competition of global markets have created flatter organizations, which have turned to teams to replace a top-down approach to addressing business challenges and to supplant individual effort with group strength. Teams have enabled some companies to take giant leaps forward in such areas as time to market, innovation, customer service, and quality of goods and services.

But teams are not always the best way to accomplish a job. In their enthusiasm for teams, especially “high performance” teams, organizations often ignore the difficulties and costs of forming and launching teams. Teams typically need more time and more training to achieve results than do other kinds of work units. Teams may run counter to a company’s established culture and reward systems. These challenges can block a team from operating at peak performance.

When assigned to the right task, comprised of the right people, and supported in the right environment, teams can achieve breakthrough performance. Determining if those three measures are met is a critical first step that many managers pass by in their zeal to build a team that can benefit their organization. This guidebook will help you determine if a team is the right way to accomplish the job your organization has assigned to you.