

# Inklings

ColeMcKee<sup>cm</sup>

## TOP TEAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE – BE AFRAID

Welcome to our first edition of Inklings. This will be a regular newsletter that we send out to those of you who we think will be interested in these short but thought provoking ideas. Fittingly given the current debate surrounding leadership in politics, the Banks and many multi-national corporations we wanted to focus on just how good or bad many Top Teams are.

Last year saw some pretty scary statistics: crippling bank debts, stock market plunges, government deficits, etc., etc. Less publicised but in its own way quite chilling was some excellent research on the impact top teams have on their organisations.

The researchers used several measures of the collective effect of these senior groups. The one we found most compelling is contained in “Senior Leadership Teams” by Wageman, Nunes, Burruss and Hackman. This involves customers, shareholders, employees and communities. How different these views often were from the teams’ self assessments! The results showed, to quote: *“Leadership teams that excel .... are rare ..... Most common are teams which are modestly successful ..... sadly some fail on all”* (criteria). [www.colemckee.com/pages/resources.htm](http://www.colemckee.com/pages/resources.htm)

The research maps very well with our own long experience of working with senior teams. This includes occasions when we have contact with them during change projects and so on as well as our assignments focused specifically on the top team. We have encountered the good, the bad and the frankly indifferent as a starting point. It takes time and effort to produce reliable teamwork but we have seen improvements ranging from the solid to the remarkable.

We have extensive experience of developing senior teams and you can find further information about our approach and ideas by visiting our website [www.colemckee.com](http://www.colemckee.com). It includes an article about different types of teamworking.

We are currently using various research results in our work with senior teams but one that we find compelling is the Gallup organisation’s huge body of research on “leading indicators” of business success which illustrates that Leadership is invariably a key factor in providing consistently great results. Gallup’s most recently published conclusions show results from studying thousands of leadership teams. Their analysis shows that the most effective ones are effective collectively in four Key Leadership Domains:

■ Executing                      ■ Influencing                      ■ Relationship Building                      ■ Strategic Thinking

See “Strengths-based Leadership: A Landmark Study of Great Leaders, Teams, and the Reasons Why We Follow” by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie.

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Senior teams we work with are finding this a helpful framework for deciding what they need to focus on. It also shows how they can use the complementary strengths in their teams – isn’t that what teamwork is all about?

Our next Inklings newsletter continues the theme of how focusing on STRENGTHS may be the key to developing high performing individuals and organisations. If you want colleagues to receive future Inklings they can register at [www.colemckee.com](http://www.colemckee.com).

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