

INSEAD

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Leading High-Performing Teams

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A baseline...



Question for you:

Why use teams?

Teams play key roles in almost all organizations...

Why?

*(i.e. what are the benefits
of using a team?)*



Brief exercise:

Thinking about team highs and lows...



- Take a few minutes to remember:

Left side of room

**Your most positive
experience in a team**

Right side of room

**Your least positive
experience in a team**

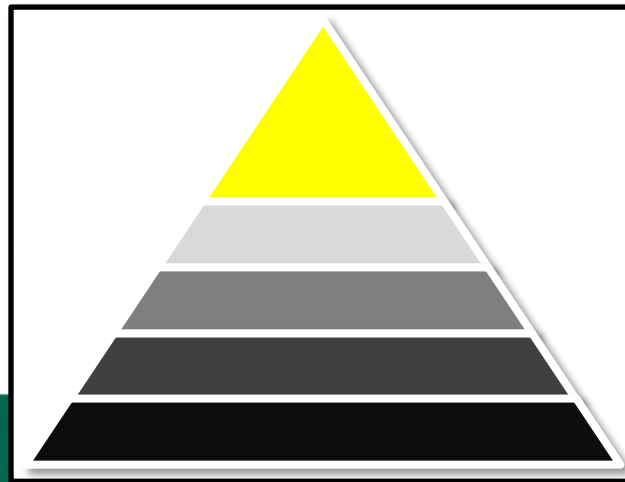
- Write down some notes about what made them so positive or negative; for example, was it because of:
 - Design
 - Structure
 - Goals
 - Task
 - People
 - Norms
 - Culture
 - Environment
 - Leadership
 - Outcomes

The answer...



Teams frequently lack
the conditions that enable
them to achieve success





The team effectiveness model

What allows teams to be effective?



Our goal: **Effective teams**

...but what does it mean for a team to be effective?

1. Task output that is (*at least*) acceptable to those who receive, review, or use it



Output

**Team
Effectiveness**

**Collaborative
Ability**

**Individual
Development**

2. Members increase their competence in working together as a team.



3. Experiences in the team foster members' personal growth and well-being

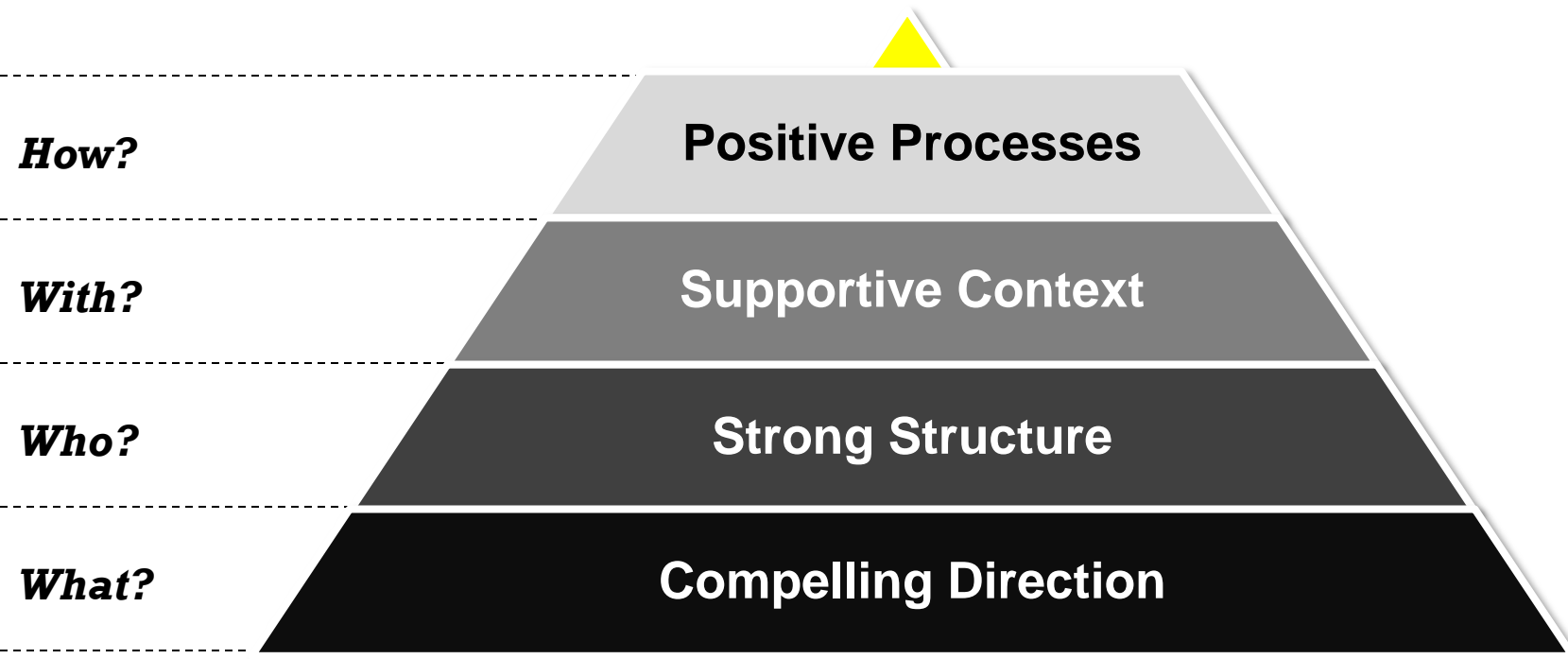


Hackman (2002)

On the basics:

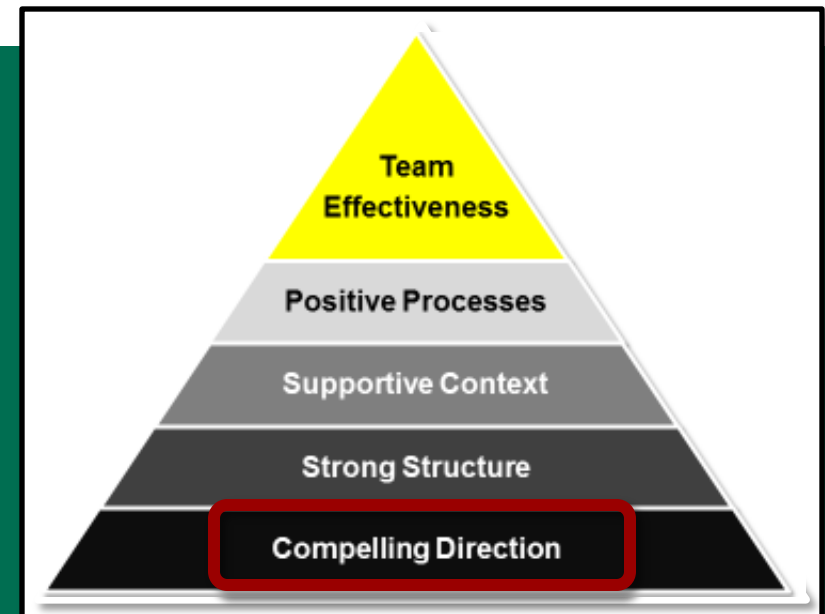
Team Effectiveness

Enabling Conditions



Team Effectiveness model

1. Compelling Direction



Essential Condition 1: *Compelling Direction*



Core question: *Does my team share a common goal?*

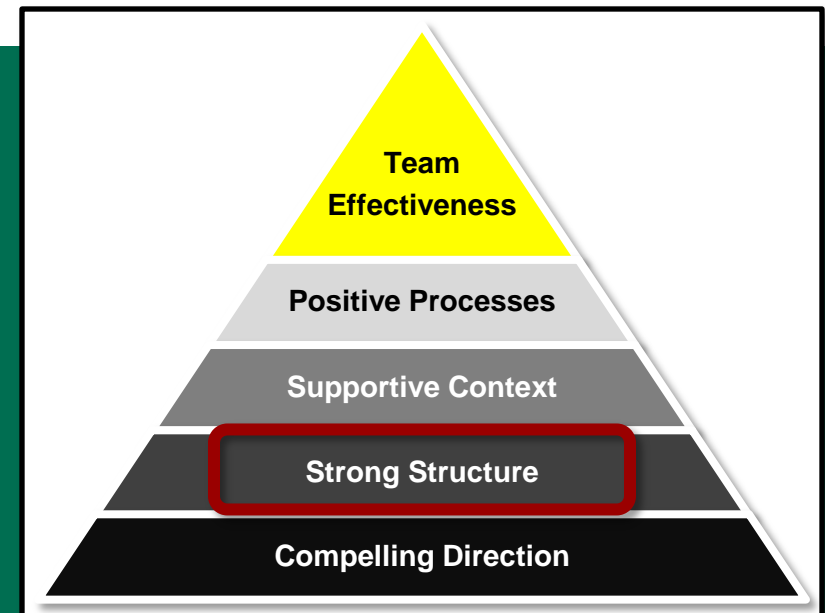


- Does my team's goal meet the “3C” criteria?
 - Clear
 - Challenging
 - Consequential



Team Effectiveness model

2. Strong Structure



Enabling Condition 2: *Strong Structure*

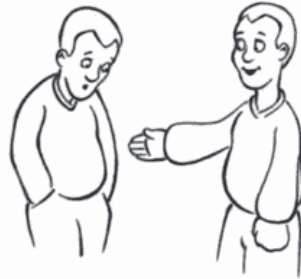
Core question 1: *Does my team have the appropriate people?*

▪ Does my team have the right people in terms of...

– Skills and Traits

– Diversity

– Number



Enabling Condition 2: *Strong Structure*

Core question 2: *Is my team a “thing”?*

■ Is my team...

- ...clearly bounded?

(not just informal helping)

Warning: *this is not as easy as you think...*



- ...meaningfully interdependent?

*(not business units called “teams”
e.g. MS Office 2010 “team”)*



- ...stable over time?

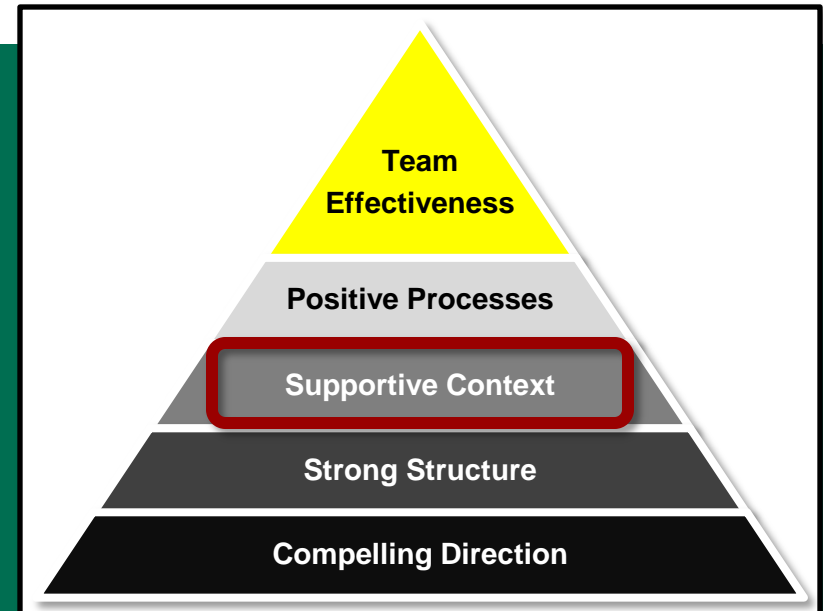
(not constantly shifting “sand dunes”)

Remember: *Teams aren’t bread...*



Team Effectiveness model

3. Supportive Context



Enabling Condition 3:

Supportive Context

Core question: *Does my team have what it needs to succeed?*

Rewards

There are favorable and measurable consequences for good team performance

Information

Team has access to data needed for the work

Resources

Team has sufficient material resources needed for the work

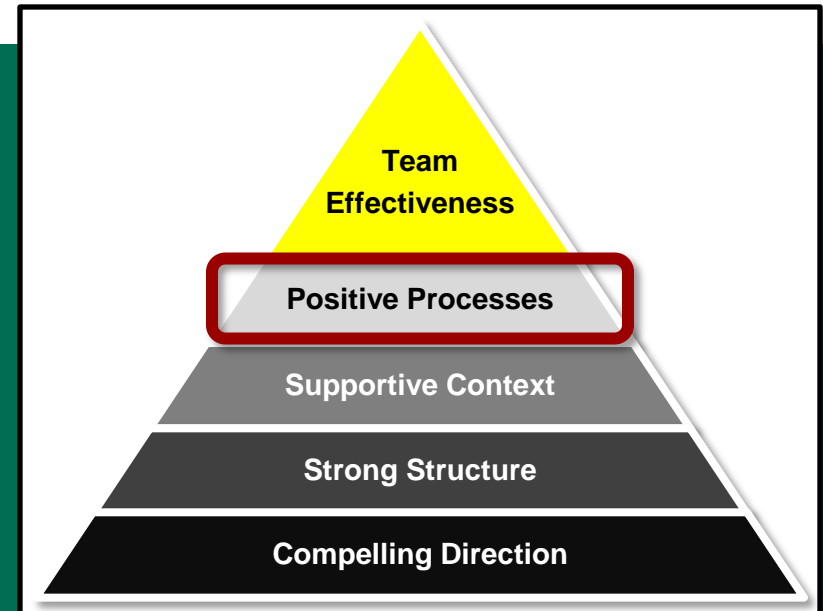
Education

Team has required training and/or technical consults



Team Effectiveness model

4. Positive Processes



Enabling Condition 4: *Positive Processes*



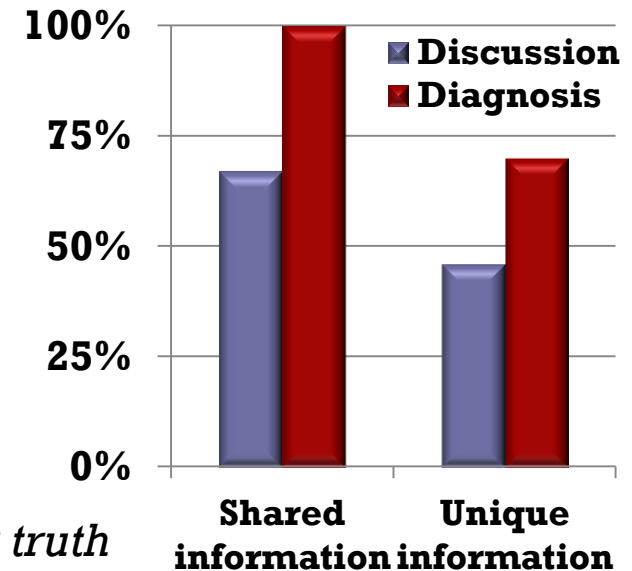
- **Does we avoid common team process pitfalls?**
 - Too much / wrong type of conflict
 - Conformity pressure
 - Counterproductive norms
 - Common information effect

Coming later this week...

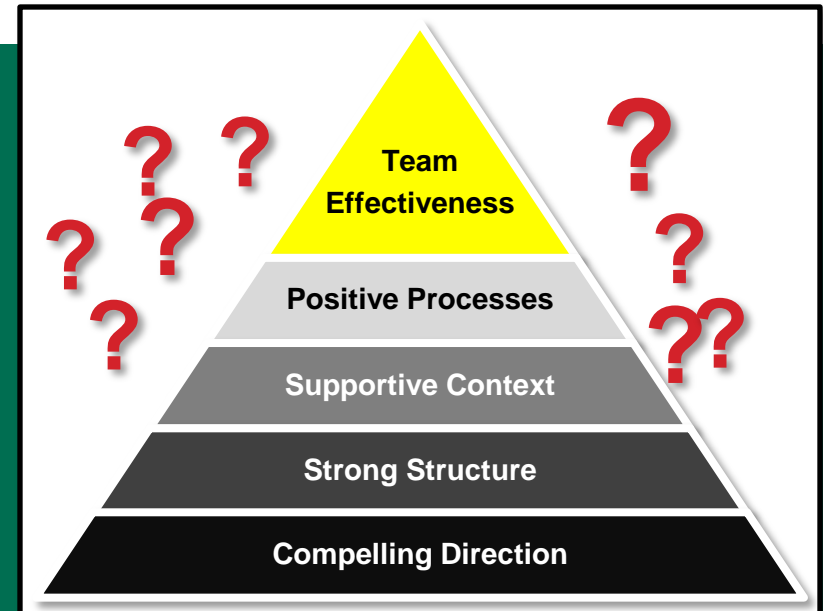


We spend most of our time focused on what we all have in common

- Because common information is...
 - **Visible:** *More likely to come up*
 - **Safer:** *Know others will agree*
 - **Trusted/Valued:** *Commonality as proxy for truth*



**Where's the leader
in all of this?**



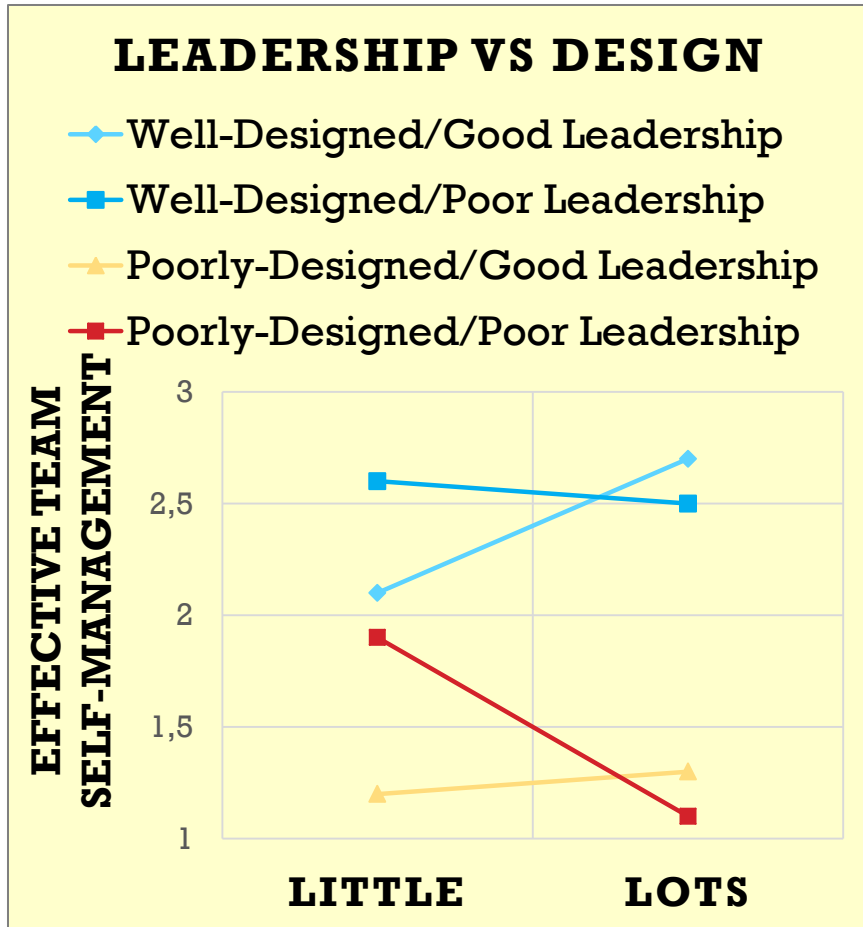
...So what IS the role of the team leader?

1. Make sure the work is appropriate for a team.
2. Get the enabling conditions in place...
...and keep them there.
3. Coach at the margins to help the team take full advantage of its favorable performance circumstances.

*And do it all in your own way -
there is no single best leader personality or style.*

On interaction between design and leadership...

- You can't lead yourself out of a bad design



Note:

Across all teams,
amount of leadership
(irrespective of quality)
**did not account for significant
variance in team effectiveness.**

- Three top design conditions driving effectiveness were:
 1. Purpose clarity;
 2. Task interdependence
(*designed, not perceived*)
 3. Group rewards

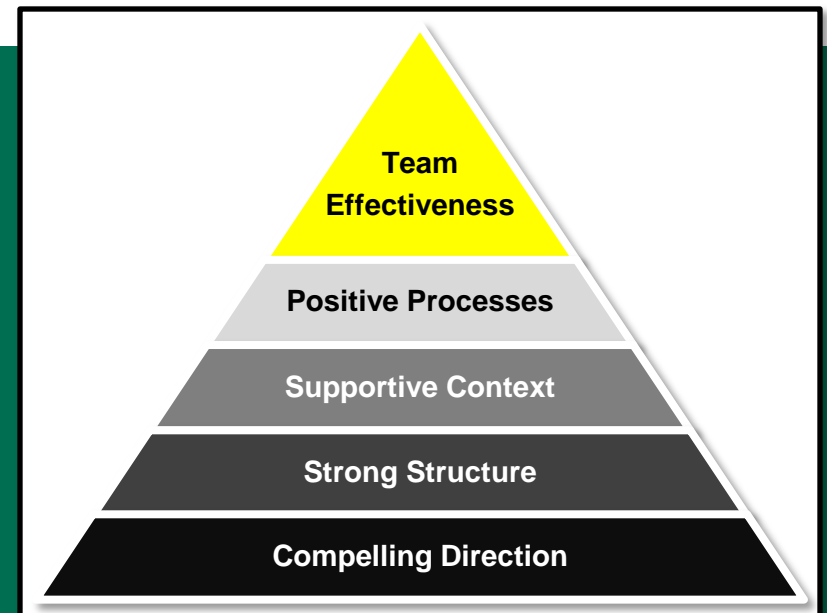
An important question:

Do these enabling conditions matter?

Study	Percentage of performance variance explained
Analytic teams in intelligence agencies	70+%
Senior leadership teams around the globe	50+%

Yes, quite a bit in fact!

Effectiveness Model Checklist



Enabling Conditions Checklist

1. Compelling Direction

☑ *Does my team share a common goal?*

☑ *Is my team's goal clear, compelling, and consequential?*

- **Clear:** members know and agreed on expectations
- **Challenging:** goal is between difficult and impossible
- **Consequential:** team's work matters to members, client, and/or society



Enabling Conditions Checklist

2. Strong Structure



Composition

- ✓ *Does my team have skills/expertise needed to achieve its goal?*
(incl. subject knowledge, team process, project management)
- ✓ *Is my team diverse in skills, perspectives, experiences, & intra-personally?*
- ✓ *Is my team big enough for task, but not too big?*
(minimizing coordination, contribution, & communication problems)
- ✓ *Does my team have a “high bottom”?*
(i.e. have avoided “weak links”)

Structure

- ✓ *Is my team clearly bounded?*
- ✓ *Are my team’s members meaningfully interdependent?*
- ✓ *Is my team appropriately stable?*

Enabling Conditions Checklist

3. Supportive Context



- ☑ *What does my team need most to succeed?*
 - **Tools, Technologies, and Resources**
 - **Rewards:** Desirable and measurable consequences for performance
 - **Information:** Access to required data
 - **Education:** Access to training (if needed)
 - **Protection:** Buffering from external pressures/demands

- ☑ *What does my team have that it can most afford to give up?*

Enabling Conditions Checklist

4. Positive Processes



- ☑ *Is my team avoiding conformity of perception, thought, and decision-making? (in both information sharing and analyses)*

- ☑ *Are my team's members making appropriate contributions? (i.e. no social loafing or free-riding)*

- ☑ *Is my team surfacing and actively managing conflict?*

- ☑ *Is my team developing innovative ways of working; avoiding mindless routines?*

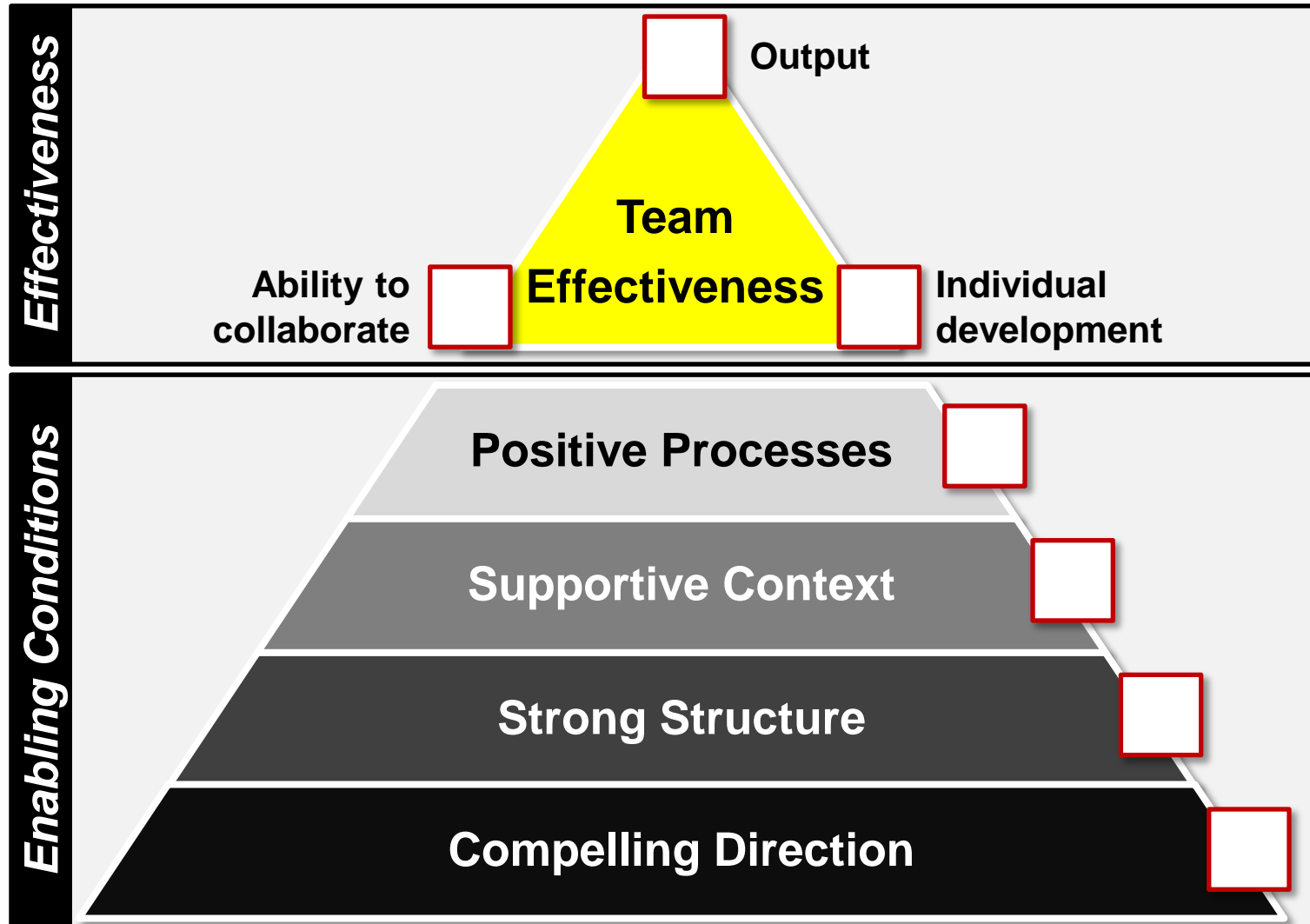
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**Putting it in
practice...**



A quick self-assessment: Grade your team (0-100, A-F)



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