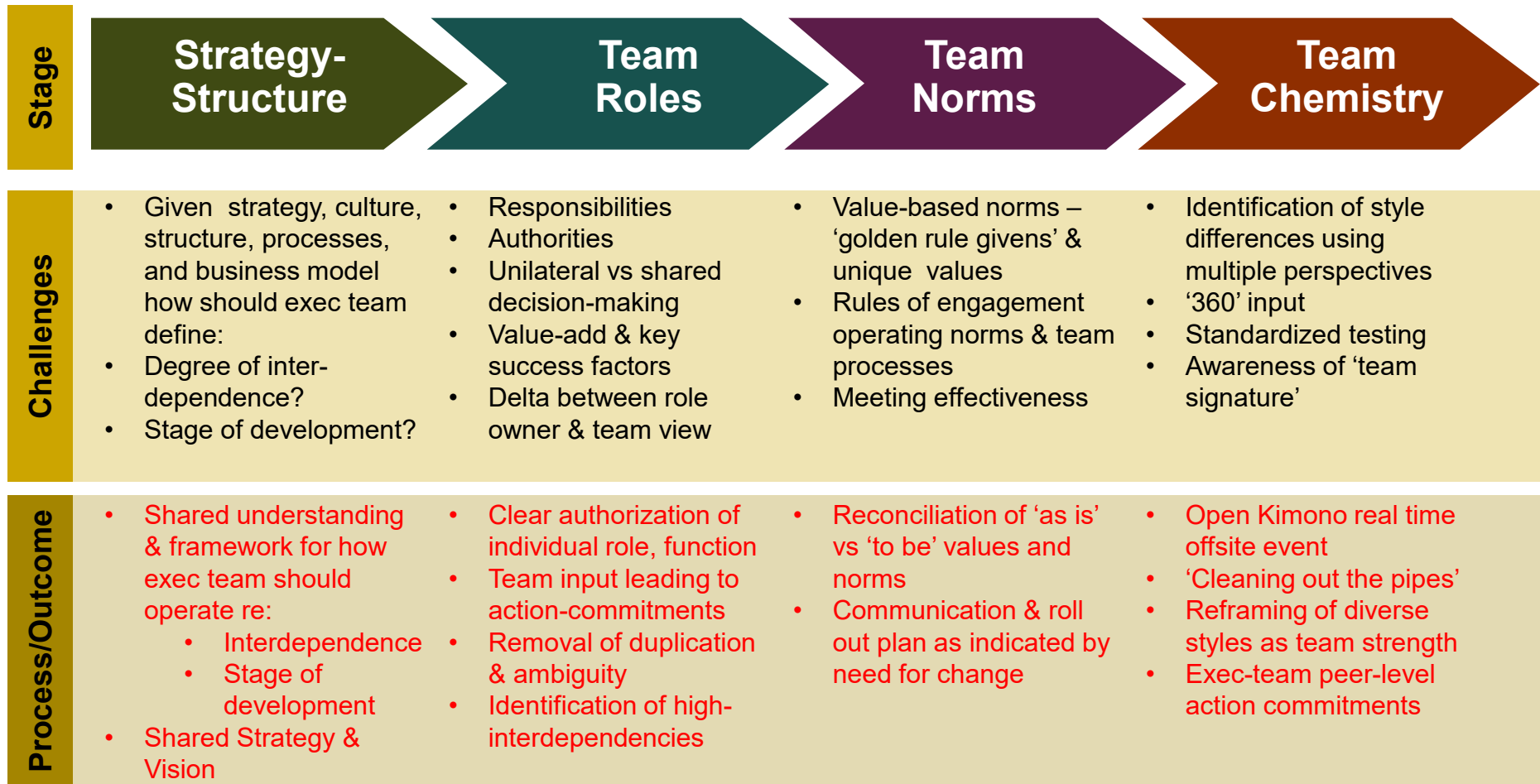# Leadership Team Laws of Gravity

2024

Four Challenges That Every Leadership Team Faces

Universal Team 'Laws of Gravity'

1. Every leadership team faces a <u>universal</u> set of challenges. Just to be a *minimally functioning team* requires some success in meeting these.
   1. These universal challenges exist, recognized, or not. You can pay a 'little' now; or a 'lot' later when the unmet challenge bites you.

2. These universal challenges have many names but invariably fall roughly into four distinct buckets:
   1. Org Structure aligned with the Strategy: What Kind of Team?
   2. Roles, Responsibilities, Authority & Functional Success Factors
   3. Team Norms, Organizing Processes & Structures
   4. Interpersonal Chemistry & Team Molecule

3. To ignore any one of these challenges, is a recipe for sub-optimization at best; dysfunction at worst. Every team is unique in their handling of these challenges, and may require differing degrees of focus on each.

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Team Development: Broad Scope

Stage	Strategy-Structure	Team Roles	Team Norms	Team Chemistry
Challenges	• Given strategy, culture, structure, processes, and business model how should exec team define: • Degree of inter-dependence? • Stage of development?	• Responsibilities • Authorities • Unilateral vs shared decision-making • Value-add & key success factors • Delta between role owner & team view	• Value-based norms – 'golden rule givens' & unique values • Rules of engagement operating norms & team processes • Meeting effectiveness	• Identification of style differences using multiple perspectives • '360' input • Standardized testing • Awareness of 'team signature'

Process/Outcome	• Shared understanding & framework for how exec team should operate re:
	  • Interdependence
	  • Stage of development
	• Shared Strategy & Vision
		• Clear authorization of individual role, function
		• Team input leading to action-commitments
		• Removal of duplication & ambiguity
		• Identification of high-interdependencies
			• Reconciliation of 'as is' vs 'to be' values and norms
			• Communication & roll out plan as indicated by need for change
				• Open Kimono real time offsite event
				• 'Cleaning out the pipes'
				• Reframing of diverse styles as team strength
				• Exec-team peer-level action commitments

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What Kind of Team?

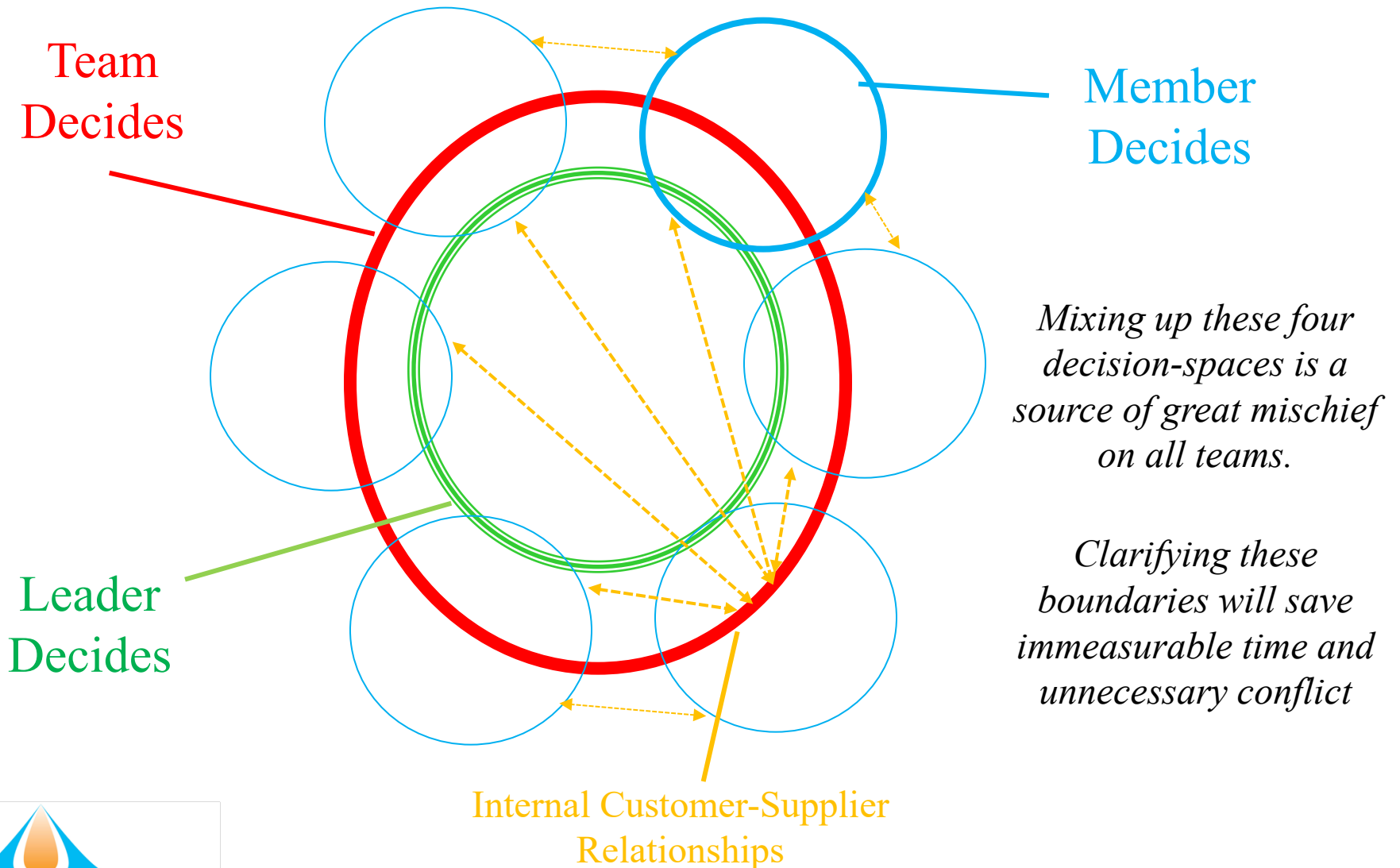| Non-Team	Virtual Team	Real Team	High Performance
◆ Group of individuals competing against each other. ◆ 'Parallel Play' no inter-dependency ◆ **GOLF - same course, different ball, & score, intra-competitive**	◆ Individual performance 'rolls up' to create a combined 'team score' ◆ Common goal but no inter-dependency to achieve it ◆ **TRACK & FIELD – different events, no inter-dependency, common success metric**	◆ Collaboration required for success ◆ Not every team member can contribute equally; still need 'stars' and 'playmakers' ◆ **BASEBALL & FOOTBALL pitchers, quarterbacks can win the game alone despite the need for 'sacrifice' plays**	◆ High degree of trust and task interdependency. Individual performance standards are high, but no one individual can 'make plays' alone ◆ **SOCCER BASKETBALL – Competitive success depends on teamwork**

Strategy-Structure Alignment

1. This is the 'What Kind of Team Do we Really Need to Be?' discussion; one usually not raised as a decision, but a default.

2. Any leadership business team needs to be at least a *Real Team* (as opposed to Non-, or Virtual-Team), but <u>not</u> every team needs to be a *High-Performance Team*.

3. Developing the *High Performance* team takes dedicated leadership and a significant, continuing investment. Many teams are just fine as a *Real Team,* given their strategy or structure.
    1. They share common goals, there is basic respect, roles are clear, they make occasional 'plays' together, but they have not developed synchronized inter-dependence or reciprocal trust and support.

4. The most common default is to the *Track & Field* level:
    1. There is cordiality but team members' primary loyalty is to their parochial 'kingdom', and perhaps to shared financial performance.

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Decisions: Not As Simple As It Looks

Team Decides

Member Decides

Leader Decides

Internal Customer-Supplier Relationships

Mixing up these four decision-spaces is a source of great mischief on all teams.

Clarifying these boundaries will save immeasurable time and unnecessary conflict

Roles, Authorities, Key Success Factors & Customer-Supplier

1. Though in the same universe, these four are not the same thing, but very distinct challenges; each needs a decision.

2. This is an extended team discussion which clarifies each team member's accountability to the team:
   1. Responsibility: My Org Footprint
   2. What value or services they provide to the rest of the team?
   3. What they can decide independently as leader of that function? Must get approval from the Leader? Or must get approval from the team as a whole?
   4. How they and the team define what success is for that service or function?
   5. Who are their internal customers? To whom do they act as a supplier? How successful have they been as suppliers?

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Team Norms & Methods

1. Rules of Engagement: How we get work done
   - Decision-making; Inter-dependencies & Collaboration; Communication: up, side, down; Risk-tolerance and achievement orientation; Accountability; Internal Customer-supplier expectations

2. Team Values: How we treat each other
   - Respect, Trust & Support; 'Golden Rule' values; Confidentiality; Conflict culture

3. Meeting Effectiveness: Formal and Informal Communication
   - Meeting effectiveness best practices & discipline, preparation, punctuality; agendas, action-logs, notes

4. Methods: Dashboard metrics – what we pay attention to as an efficient, high-level tool that ensures we are in touch with the business and tracking the right metrics in our regular meetings.
   - Gaps between Current & Future State = Key Initiatives
   - Key Initiatives become Roadmaps with milestones and outcomes
   - 5-8 Key Initiatives become 'Dials' on the Dashboard: e.g. Financial, Project Completion, Sales, Culture/Employee Engagement, Improves

Culture – The Team Molecule

1. Over time all teams develop a stable culture. That team culture is what becomes the culture of the organization. For most teams, this is a largely unconscious influencing pathway.

2. Team culture is the repeating patterns of all the feelings, perceptions, decisions, communication that occur regularly on the team. That culture is the actual behavior shown by the team and may be close or far from the stated team norms, which are most commonly 'aspirational'.

3. Team culture can be represented by the sum total of the personalities on the team through the Myers-Briggs, Hogan, etc. This 'team molecule' has a unique 'meta-personality' of its own.
   a. Some teams are more or less: decisive, risk-taking, disclosing, withholding, inclusive etc
   b. Understanding this 'team molecule' can be achieved in many ways but is always invaluable insight for the team.

Typical Offsite Workplan & Deliverables

1.   Strategy-Structure:

    1.   Team discussion ending in consensus about *'What Kind of Team?'* and level of investment in becoming 'that team that we need to be'.

2.   Roles, Authority, Success Factors, Customer Supplier Commitments

    1.   Each team member prepares a 1-slide presentation outlining their beliefs and assumptions about these several questions:

        1.   *What is my org? What functions or value do we provide to the organization? What decisions can be made by me, or my org? Which decisions only made by the team? How do I measure my success?*

        2.   *Facilitated discussion ending with clarification and shared understanding follow.*

3.   Team Norms, Process and Methods

    1.   Facilitated discussion ending with a short list of 'rules to live by'; plan and pathway to a team dashboard; stable meeting and communication structures.

    2.   Facilitated discussion ending with 5-8 Leadership Key Initiatives that evolve to a Dashboard

4.   Team Molecule & Culture.

    1.   Discussion of aspirational team norms compared to the 'actual' personalities of team members and behavior. Agreements about how to move toward convergence of aspiration with behavior.

    2.   Commitment to at least monthly 15' check-ins and quarterly correction discussion.

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How Leaders Accelerate Team Capability

FORMING

- Uncertainty, caution
- Look to the leader for direction
- Gathering of data
- Orientation to the task ahead

1. Define Reality
2. Clarify team goals, metrics, & value-add
3. Be explicit about, and model, core values, practices & norms.
4. Set up basic team structure & process

STORMING

- Testing around leadership, power, and authority
- Establishment of "Rules of the Road"
- Conflicts build up – spoken and unspoken

1. Surface conflict
2. Model flexibility, dialogue & resolution
3. Ensure role clarity and authorization
4. Reframe style differences as team strength via diversity
5. Deal quickly with violation of norms

NORMING

- Active engagement
- Real dialogue
- Shared leadership
- Growing trust
- Initial productivity
- Fear of break-up can lead to change resistance

1. Carefully manage add/deletes to team composition
2. Manage relationships with stakeholders
3. Create continuous improvement and innovation culture
4. Reward, recognize and encourage

PERFORMING

- True inter-dependence
- The work gets done
- Roles/authority flexible
- Highly productive
- Team morale high - loyalty intense
- Comfort with risk-taking - creativity

1. Innovate & challenge team to new goals
2. Coach, mentor & prepare successor
3. Guard against insularity & elitism
4. Integrate new members, teams & stakeholders
5. Document success factors for creation of high performance team in the larger organizational culture

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High Performance Team Components

Goals

- Shared vision of team purpose.
- Common set of clear and compelling performance goals. Significant performance challenges energize team. The team sets high performance standards.
- Sense of urgency and commitment.

Roles

- Clear and free of conflict
- Boundaries of roles are clear

Processes/Procedures

- Agreed upon approach for working together
  - Clear rules of behavior
  - Meeting management
  - How decisions will be made
  - Information flow
  - How conflict is surfaced and resolved
  - Ongoing team feedback

Interpersonal

- Application of individual differences.
- Members engage in open dialogue.
- Mutual respect, trust, and support of one another.
- Positive feedback and recognition.

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Team Development Overview

A Typical Engagement – Yours Will Be Uniquely Designed

	March 16	April 13	May 4	Aug 3
	1.5 day	1.5 day	1.25 day	1.0 day
Event	Christening	Future State	DashBoard	Check-In
Agenda	Team Norms Roles/Authority	Team Chemistry Key Initiatives	Roadmaps & Working Dashboard	Quarterly Tune-Up
Deliverable	Ratified Team Norms, Roles, Authority, CSF's	Ratified 5-8 Initiatives w/ Roadmaps	Working Dashboard	
Fees	($10,000)	($7500)	($5000)	($5000)

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