

20 Questions to Help You Unpack the Genius of Teams

More than ever, organizational success now comes down to teams.

Of course, teams have always been vitally important. One hundred thousand years ago, hunting teams were vital to the survival of early man. With the rise of agricultural civilization, teams were the basic operating unit of social hierarchies and communities. But for the last few millennia, while remaining a crucial building block, teams have been largely made subordinate to larger social organizations: armies, governments, bureaucracies, corporations, etc.

It has become increasingly apparent—and with no little irony—that the one human organization capable of adapting to, surviving through, and even triumphing from the accelerating pace of modern life is the oldest form of human organization: **teams**. Teams are now the key operating unit of smart companies as they enter both newly erupting markets and cope with mature but fast-evolving ones. They are the heart of new product and service creation, and implementation.

And they are the nuclei of the new operations that bubble up with increasing frequency inside the organization.

*In other words, at the moment when teams are once again becoming the crucial tool for organizational success across every part of society, we know almost nothing about them... and **most of what we do know is wrong.***

To help you think differently, perhaps even more scientifically, about teams, here are twenty questions you ought to be asking about the teams you manage and those to which you belong.

1. Is your organization, and the teams that compose it, up to the challenges they face in a hypercompetitive environment?
2. If not, is there some way to accelerate your understanding of teams?
3. Can you apply that new knowledge in a way that lets you build both fast and appropriately for the ever-changing challenges that face you?
4. Can you find the right team at the right moment?
5. Can you identify the right moment when one team needs to dissolve to create another, perhaps in a very different form?

These first five are not idle questions. They are very real and their implications are imminent.

Every organization of which you are a part is composed of teams, and every one of those teams is currently at some point in its life cycle. Some of these teams are clearly dysfunctional; others are suboptimal in their performance; and still others are approaching the end of their usefulness.

Even great teams aren't always being challenged to do all that they are capable of doing.

The new book, [Team Genius: The New Science of High-Performing Organizations](#), was written

by authors Rich Karlgaard and Michael S. Malone to help you answer all of these questions. At the foundation of [Team Genius](#) is this very simple truth: **To miss the importance of teams is a costly mistake and an avoidable one.** Thanks to the latest research by sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists, cognitive researchers, historians, and behaviorists, we have a better understanding of how teams are created, composed, and operated than at any time in human history. These discoveries are waiting to be put to use. Smart organizations will put them to use.

Will you be one of them?

> [Download the rest of the 20 questions here.](#)

Rich Karlgaard is the publisher of Forbes magazine, where he writes the biweekly column "Innovation Rules." He is the author of the Wall Street Journal bestseller Life 2.0 and The Soft Edge, and is a regular panelist on Forbes on Fox, and a frequent speaker to companies around the world.

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