

Co-Exponential®

For Enterprise Leaders

Build The Team Your Next Ambition Needs

Why team development is an investment in future performance, not just a response to problems.

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Your team may be delivering well. Its next ambition may still require it to work differently.

Perhaps you are entering a new market, bringing teams together, or asking an established leadership team to execute a more demanding strategy.

None of these means the team has failed. Each creates a reason to examine whether the way people make decisions, coordinate their expertise, and take responsibility is suited to what comes next.



The case for team development does not have to begin with a problem.
It can begin with an ambition.

Investing in strategy, technology, and individual capability is only part of that preparation. There is also value in deliberately developing how people put those investments to work together.

That is the purpose of team development: to strengthen the shared priorities, working relationships, decisions, and commitments that a business outcome depends on.

The question is not simply, “Does our team need help?”

What will our next ambition require us to do better together?

Great People Create Potential. Great Teaming Helps Realize It.

Individual expertise matters. But having the right expertise available is different from bringing it into the right decision at the right time.

Consider a leadership team preparing to enter a new market.



Sales

Understands the customer opportunity.



Operations

Understands delivery constraints.



Finance

Understands the economics.

The team's task is to turn those perspectives into a shared commercial decision. Use one live opportunity to agree which customer promise the business can make, what trade-offs it will accept, and who can commit the organization. That is team development applied to real work.



Google's Project Aristotle linked team dynamics with effectiveness within its teams. At **Co-Exponential**, we use our 12-factor diagnostic to compare team members' perspectives, identify strengths and barriers, and prioritize changes that support the team's next ambition.

Source: Google re:Work, Understand team effectiveness.

For leaders, the practical question becomes:

Where would better coordination of the expertise we already have make the greatest difference to what we can achieve?

That is a more useful starting point than assuming the answer must be more talent, more training, or more effort.

Turn Everyday Friction Into Useful Insight

A team does not need a crisis to find opportunities for development.

Start with the work already happening. Where do decisions repeatedly return for clarification? Where do priorities collide? Where does valuable expertise enter the conversation too late?

A missed deadline might reflect an unmet individual commitment. It might also reveal competing priorities, unclear ownership, or a dependency nobody resolved. The distinction matters because the appropriate response will be different.



Amy Edmondson's research found that psychological safety was associated with team learning behavior. Her work helps explain why the ability to ask questions, discuss mistakes, and seek help deserves attention when examining how a team learns.

Source: Amy Edmondson (1999), Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams, Administrative Science Quarterly.

For leaders, the task is to combine openness with accountability. Ask what happened, examine the conditions around it, and agree who will do what differently.

Do not make the absence of disagreement the goal. Make it possible to challenge an assumption, resolve the trade-off, and commit to a decision.

The opportunity is not to remove every difficult conversation. It is to make those conversations more useful.

Make The Investment Case Specific

Calling team development an investment is not enough. Define what would make it worthwhile.

Business outcome

Start with a business outcome, not a development activity. For a cross-functional team preparing a product launch, "improve collaboration" is too broad. A more useful objective is to reach the agreed launch date with fewer avoidable late changes and clear ownership of customer commitments.

Working practices

Examine the working practices that influence that outcome. Who decides when scope changes? Whose expertise must inform the decision? How are dependencies raised and resolved?

Evidence of progress

Agree what evidence would show progress. That might include decision turnaround time, late changes caused by unclear ownership, or delivery against agreed milestones. Establish a baseline and compare similar work over time.

Investment and constraints

Weigh the likely benefit against the investment of money and team time. Be explicit about assumptions. Time released from rework creates an opportunity; its value depends on what the team can do with it.

A sound diagnosis should also identify where team development is not enough. A resource shortage, conflicting incentives, or an unresolved strategic choice may require a different leadership decision.

The investment case is strongest when you can connect a business ambition, a change in how the team works, and evidence that the change is helping.

An Outside Perspective Should Make The Opportunity Clearer

A leader is both responsible for the team's performance and part of how the team operates. That makes it worth testing whether other people experience the same priorities, decisions, and expectations.

An outside partner should do more than offer reassurance or facilitate an enjoyable discussion. Their contribution should be to help the team compare perspectives, examine evidence, and identify changes relevant to its business priorities.

At **Co-Exponential**, we use **Teamitis™** to examine recurring patterns of ineffective teaming, including unclear ownership, competing priorities, and unspoken working assumptions. Our **Teamitis** Diagnostic gathers every team member's assessment and includes confidential one-to-one debriefs, enabling us to examine differences between the leader's perspective and those of the team.

The purpose is not to attach a label to capable people. It is to understand what to preserve, what to develop, and what may be preventing their strengths from contributing fully.

Set that expectation clearly before the work begins. Explain its purpose, how findings will be used, and who will see them.

Leaders should also examine their own contribution. If they routinely reverse decisions made within agreed boundaries, the team needs clarity about what authority has actually been delegated.

Make Improvement Something People Create Together

An assessment can reveal where perspectives differ. It cannot make the necessary decisions for the team.

Turn the findings into a small number of practical changes that people can apply to their actual work.

That might mean agreeing how competing priorities will be resolved, bringing specialist input into decisions earlier, or defining when a commitment must be renegotiated rather than silently missed.

Give each change an owner, an opportunity to be tested, and a review point. Include what leaders will do differently, not just what they expect from everyone else.



In **Co-Exponential's 90-Day Team Accelerator**, we combine an assessment at day 0 with working agreements and coaching applied to real work, then repeat the assessment at day 90. This connects the initial diagnosis to a sustained period of practice and review.

Assess changes in how people experience the team alongside evidence from delivery. A higher assessment score alone does not establish better business performance.

The aim is not to change everything at once. It is to make a few important improvements clear enough to practice, observe, and refine.

What Could Your Team Achieve Next?

Invest in how your team works, not just in what you ask it to deliver.

Bring one growth priority, upcoming change, or cross-functional challenge to a conversation with us here at Co-Exponential.

We will explore what that ambition requires, which decisions and working practices may need to evolve, and what evidence would show the team is better equipped to deliver.

Together, we will consider whether a Teamitis Diagnostic or targeted team development would be a useful next step.

You do not need to arrive with a diagnosed problem. Start with the result you want to make possible.

Book a conversation with Co-Exponential