



Out of today's chaos a new order is emerging. Teams must come together quickly with little pre-planning to get things done. Research by the *Korn Ferry Institute* shows that teams thrive when they have the right members, a shared purpose, clear goals, active commitment, candid dialogue, openness, and, know how to have fun.

The seeds of change, planted a few years ago, are now growing at an exponential rate. Different work needs to get done, and work needs to get done differently. Roles are morphing, responsibilities are broadening, and teams are coming together fluidly in multiple combinations. Organizational charts must be invisible, and hierarchy thrown out the window. Tapping collective wisdom is paramount to success.

To create this kind of dynamic, virtual team environment, leaders need to [ADAPT](#):

- [A](#)nticipate tomorrow
- [D](#)rive to elevate energy and others
- [A](#)ccelerate with agility
- [P](#)artner to tap “collective genius”
- [T](#)rust to create elevated interdependence

Korn Ferry, working with researchers at Harvard, studied 127 high-level teams in public and private organizations across 11 countries. They rated teams on their ability to sustain and grow the company, become more effective over time, and develop individual members into better leaders. Results from the study were poor. The majority of teams were mediocre or below standard in these areas.

One key difference between highly rated and poorly rated teams: *the presence of constructive conflict.*

When people think of teams, they often have a utopian image of locking arms around a campfire, taking the “trust fall” challenge, and walking over hot coals together. This is not reality. While it may sound counterintuitive, teams that strive to maintain harmony do not perform as well as those embracing conflict.

Debating issues is important for team creativity and brainstorming. Constructive conflict, however, requires dropping the “but”—a real buzzkill when one person floats an idea or asks a question, and someone else jumps in with “but.” What comes next is always negative, and leads to withdrawal, frustration or impasse.

Practice replacing “**but**” with “**and**” to improve team effectiveness.

Dennis Baltzley, Global Head of Leadership Development, uses four key words to describe teams of the future:

Diverse ♦ Distributed ♦ Nonhierarchical ♦ Transient

Good things happen when different people with broad perspectives and varied experiences come together to solve problems, collaborate as needed—and move on. Within this mix is a leader who has transitioned from being the “**orchestra leader**” making sure all the players harmonize to an “**electrical conductor**”—pushing information and energy throughout the network.

Teams mean different things to different people/organizations, but there are **common themes** that connect them all. I asked leaders to share their views on the meaning of today's “team” -- here are some of their thoughts:

“Teamwork starts with a common purpose and trust in one another.”

[Monthly small group discussions shaped by ACC Bridge Chat guides can build trust among team members.](#)

“Collaboration—each person having a role in which strengths complement weaknesses in producing greatness.”
[ACC Professional Development “Sword” Courses have segments on Inclusive Leadership and a Strengths’ assessment.](#)

“Selfless. I know that when I involve team members, the decisions I make are better than when I go it alone.”

“Sisterhood/brotherhood, having a heightened sense of others and not leaving anybody behind.”

“Creating collective muscle, mutual commitment and trust, and willingness to support others.”

What word would you use to describe teams today, and what makes your teams work?

Check out the new book, [Leadership U: Accelerating through the Crisis Curve](#), and Korn Ferry's new leadership portal, [Leadership U](#).

