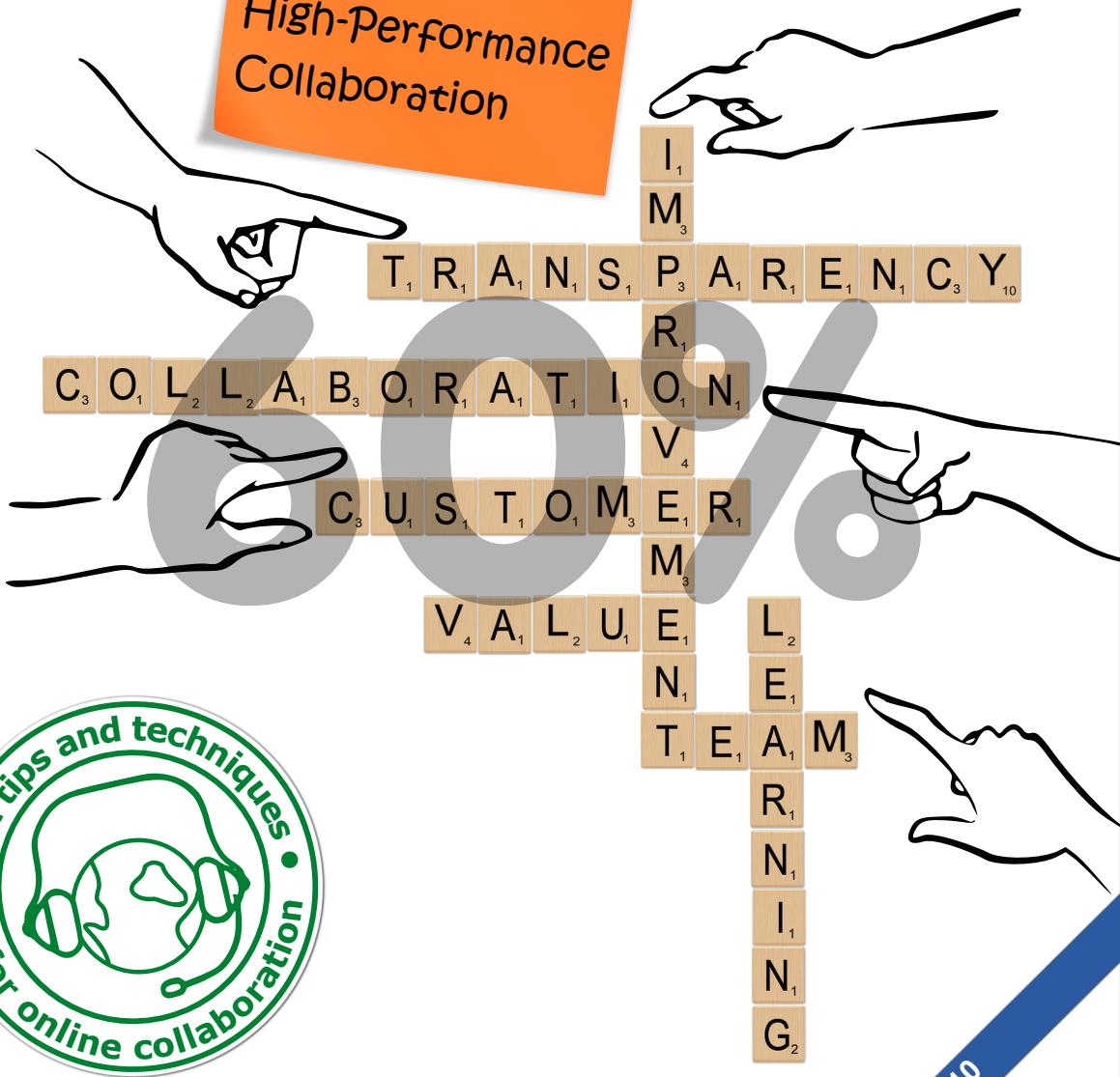


# Connective Teamwork

Spiral Into  
High-Performance  
Collaboration



Linda Dorlandt, Remi-Armand Collaris

Sprint 10

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# *Connective Teamwork*

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Spiral Into High-Performance Collaboration

# Connective Teamwork

## Spiral Into High-Performance Collaboration

Sprint 10

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Dear reader,

Thank you for your interest in this book. If you like the book, and you haven't already done so, please support our initiative by purchasing a copy (see cover) and sharing it with friends and colleagues who will appreciate it. If you bought this book yourself, register it at <https://forw.to/register-ct-en>, with password "TeamMeUp!" so we can mail you the latest news and new (e-book) versions of the book.

You can share insights and experiences with this material in one of the free Platform Team Learning meetings that we regularly organize. Sign up on <https://forw.to/connectivate>.

Kind regards,  
Linda and Remi-Armand

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*Thanks for your contribution:*

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*You don't make a book alone; many enthusiasts helped us in various ways. This help varied from interviews, sparring, trying out exercises to the final language check. Others have contributed in the form of a video, practical experience, or blog article. Below you will find a list of people who have helped us create this book. Thank you all very much for your enthusiasm and support, even if we forgot you on this list!*

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We will continue to develop this book. Comments and contributions are, therefore, most welcome.

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# Preface

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*"Every moment you are happy,  
is a gift to the rest of the world."  
- Harry Palmer, teacher, and author -*

***After a long preparation of much talking and little writing, in 2016, we booked a vacation to Zakynthos, one of the Greek islands, to immerse ourselves in writing this book. During this working vacation, we see everywhere why we are so enthusiastic about the concept of team learning. We did not want to withhold you the fun examples of both sources of inspiration and pitfalls we encountered here.***

We get excited by the joyful way many Greeks on Zakynthos do their work. You see a picture of our skipper on the right during a sailing trip. The broad smile on his face is not for the photo. That smile is on his face every second of the day, in everything he does. As far as we are concerned, he has the best job in the world, when you enjoy your work so much. The funny thing is that this pleasure also makes us appreciate the trip even more and thus increases the customer value we experience.



Two days before the sailing trip, we went to one of our favorite beaches. Upon arrival, it turns out the beach bar owners are still busy setting the place up. No beach umbrella is standing. One tourist after another arrives and leaves. As straightforward, practical Dutchmen, we wonder why they don't just make everything ready a month earlier? We decide to ask one of the owners. It turns out the Greek don't mind. The income they bring in during the high season is enough for them. They can live perfectly well on that. Nevertheless, we are welcome. Although he is still setting up the place, the owner arranges a drink for us. And, of course, that warm smile again. The result? We just came back a few days later. The beach bar is still closed, and already the owner is delivering customer value.

Developing in small steps is something the Greeks can sometimes do wonderfully. Many houses in Greece contain one or two floors in perfect order. In preparation for future expansions, they leave rebar rods sticking out of the roof on which they can build subsequent floors. A guide tells us that you did not have to pay taxes until your house was finished in the old days. So, it paid off to build your house in phases and enjoy living in it even before it was finished.

In some places delivering value proves a bigger challenge. They started constructing



a beautiful bicycle and pedestrian path with lighting between Laganas and Kalamaki (two neighboring villages on Zakynthos). Unfortunately, halfway through, they ran out of money. As a cyclist, you suddenly end up on the roadside from that point on.

Something similar goes for the main square in Zakynthos Town. They had the

idea to realize an impressive water play with water from the sea. There was even a subsidy for it. Energetically they turned the square upside down. And then there was no money left. What remains is a fence of corrugated metal sheets and a broken square.

Whether they are ever going to finish the bike path and plaza remains to be seen, but we can learn something from them. Why don't these people manage to complete these more complex initiatives while they possess such a good sense of customer value? We have noticed a clear difference with the small-scale initiatives: lack of focus on interim value delivery. As a result, you don't get interim feedback on the costs and benefits of the initiative and therefore don't have the opportunity to adjust the approach and planning to reality.

Writing this book, we hope to inspire you and your team(s) to deliver interim value. This way, you notice you are helping people, feel you are making a difference, and become motivated to provide subsequent results. Using the feedback, you become better and better at this.



## **Part 1: Spiral to Improve**

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# 1 Introduction

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*"We constantly crave certainties,  
but they will not contribute to our growth."*

*- Buddha, spiritual leader -*

***Are you full of good ideas but struggling to take control? Can't see the forest through all the method, framework, model, and other publication trees? Do you want more fun in your work, better results, and therefore more appreciation for your work? Do you want to make a difference with your team? Then this book will help you.***

We give you insights, tools, and practical resources to make your wishes come true. We offer models to get more insight into teamwork. We provide team exercises to get started with these insights right away. What you can gain from this is:

- More opportunities to grow and develop
- More visibility into the value you deliver
- Noticing that you make a difference



With the tools in this book, you will create an environment where people's talents flourish in teamwork. When people flourish, they deliver results. We have experienced firsthand how difficult it is to get team learning going. The obstacles ranged from invisible electric fences and managers under pressure to frustrated employees and - most importantly - initial lack of results. These experiences had one common thread: you only learn to be a learning team by acting like one. We show you how to use five practical steps to become a learning team and use these same steps to keep this movement alive.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Journey

---

*"Grass grows not by pulling the blades,  
but by watering the roots."*

*- African proverb -*

*The purpose of this book is to get you and your team practically on the road to better team results. It is intended for anyone who works in or with teams. Anyone who plays a role in composing, leading, or coaching teams. In short, anyone looking for an answer to the question, "How do I get better team results with my team?" In our work as executives, change managers, client representatives/product managers, and coaches, people often look to us for answers to this question. In our experience, however, solutions that come from the team itself are more effective and are followed up much faster than solutions from "above."*

In the run-up to this book, we looked for ways to help teams take an active role in their own improvement process. In short, to get team learning going and keep it going. In the many conversations we had about this topic, a recurring theme was "behavior." If you want to teach team learning, start experimenting and learning from this. Otherwise, nothing will happen.



It doesn't matter whether you are at the beginning of this quest or already well on your way. This book will stimulate you to reconsider your ideas about teamwork and leadership in both cases. We invite you to join your team in looking for fitting ways to improve your situation.

We wish you good luck in your quest to have more fun together, get more feedback, celebrate more successes, and achieve better team results.

## 1.2 Find Your Way

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*"Be yourself, there are enough others already."*

*- Unknown -*

**This reading guide will help you determine which parts of this book are most relevant to you and in what order you want to read and apply them. Whether you like to read from back to front or the other way around. You can also pick the sweets. This book and the accompanying website are very suitable to use as a reference guide. In addition to the basic information from the book, the site also contains detailed resources such as floor sheets and worksheets to support the exercises presented in this book. You can download and immediately apply them within your teams. They are easy to access by scanning the QR codes along the right margin. Following these QR-codes you will also find links to additional information such as blog posts and videos.**

### Structure of the book

#### **Part 1: Spiral to Improve (challenge your view on reality)**

The concept of team learning and how to set it in motion is the common thread throughout this book. In chapter 2 you will discover another way to look at teamwork. Why focus your energy on job satisfaction, synergy, teamwork and embracing mistakes? The models in this chapter offer you both a new way of looking at teams and a testing framework for measures to improve teamwork. In Chapter 3, you'll discover how to use team learning to successfully achieve better team results. Finally, in Chapter 4, you will find concrete steps you can take with your team. You'll see practical applications of the Team Learning Model, our roadmap with five focus areas to promote team learning.

#### **Part 2: Practical Exercises (pick the sweets)**

In this part you will get (new) inspiration to work practically with your team on team learning and continuous improvement. The aim of this part is to give you a practical guide to team learning and continuous improvement. These methods are in a logical order but choose the order and the pace that fits your team. You learn the importance of visualizing insights and how that helps to get the movement towards team learning going and keep it going.

#### **Part 3: Appendices (seek and ye shall find)**

In this section you will find an overview of possible next steps, a summary overview of the exercises in this book, references to related books, websites, and videos, a glossary, and an index.

We wish you lots of reading pleasure.

## 2 Why Go on Expedition Team Learning

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*"Coming back from work inspired  
is something we are all entitled to. "*

*- Simon Sinek, author, and inspirational speaker -*

*Self-organizing teams leverage their collective knowledge to achieve the best results. Why would you want this as a company? There are several possible answers to this question. Organizations want to respond quickly to change, deploy employees flexibly and thus ensure a greater return and futureproofing for their organization. Why do you want this as an employee? Learning and developing yourself, experiencing autonomy, and making a difference with your effort inspire and give you energy.*



This chapter will look at what a team is and what it takes to be more successful and have more fun as a team. We present a selection of practical models that all illustrate a piece of the puzzle needed to achieve this. Each model represents a specific view on what people and teams need to develop themselves. Together they provide a framework to assess improvement measures. Are your management actions to help teams actually perceived as help? Do they have the desired effect, and if not, what can you do to achieve the desired outcome?

## 2.1 Join the Team

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*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress,  
working together is success."*

*- Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company -*

**A team is a (small) number of people working together towards one common goal and broadly agreeing on the path to achieving this goal. The members of a team complement each other to achieve this goal. Teamwork, which refers to the way of working and the result of the collaboration, is, therefore, more than a sum of the individual performances.**



Teams are the building blocks of an organization. Building blocks that you encounter everywhere in the organization and at all levels.

- Teams on the work floor, delivering production.
- Facility management teams that keep your facilities running.
- Task forces and project teams, that temporarily meet for one-time (improvement) initiatives.
- Management teams that provide a conducive environment and assure consistency in the activities in the company to fulfill the company's purpose.

Not surprisingly, organizations are looking for ways to get more out of teams. How you get this done, however, is not self-evident. If you put too much pressure on teams,

- The quality can suffer.
- Job satisfaction can decrease, causing employees to leave.
- Absenteeism can increase.

These are all undesirable side effects that reduce team performance. If you try to optimize the team's way of working from the top down, you risk employees sitting

back and no longer showing initiative to solve daily problems structurally. Should you, as management, sit back and offer no structure at all? That doesn't seem to work either. So, what could you do?

If you give a team a clear goal, you will discover they will organize themselves to achieve this goal. Self-organization is ingrained in human nature, so take advantage of it!

## 2.2 Results Through Job Satisfaction

*"People want to know they matter, and they want to be treated as people. That's the new talent contract."*

*- Pamela Stroko, American author -*

**Why is it so difficult to motivate people and, more importantly, keep them motivated? Why do so many well-intentioned management interventions and improvement measures backfire? How do you effectively intervene when results are lagging?**

The Job Demands-Resource model (also called Engagement Model or JD-R model) helps you better understand employee motivation.

