



Introduction to the think one team™ framework



The vast majority of business initiatives and activities demand the ability of leaders and teams to work across the boundaries of function, geography, hierarchy and organisation. Without this capability to create and sustain partnerships it is extremely difficult to capitalise on the value that comes from knowledge, skill, client relationships and alliances. Ironically however, most organisations pay little attention to building this capability – and instead at best miss significant opportunities and at worst, add cost, frustration and barriers to their business that impact short-term and long term bottom line.

This paper provides a brief background to the think one team™ framework which is an Australian-designed book and approach to building the capability for leaders, teams and organisations to form and sustain partnerships which add value to and for the business. The framework is increasingly used in major Australian private and public sector organisations including Rio Tinto, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Xtrata, Department of Transport (Victoria) and Department of Defence.



Background

It is both natural and desirable for organisations to separate into smaller units like Divisions, Departments and Project Teams. This separation gives focus, specialisation and ownership which offers the promise of greater efficiency and effectiveness, faster decision making and increased engagement for the people involved.

Unfortunately, this separation into units can come at a cost.

Instead of leverage and growth there is the risk of increased conflict (or in some cases the absence of constructive conflict), unnecessary complexity, failure to leverage assets (particularly client relationships), damaged brands, disenfranchising of talented people, duplication and reduced service.

The challenge (and the opportunity) is to create an organisation that has the skills, confidence and capability to capture both the benefits of focused business units / project teams *and* the opportunities of leverage and synergies that come from effective teamwork and partnering.

There is no simple 'design formula' to achieve this because everything from strategic direction, to information systems, to structure, to work design and even geography plays a part. Importantly however, the 'make or break' is much less about these structural factors and more about relationships, behaviours and practical partnering skills and tools. Put simply, we have to be good at task focus within business units / projects teams and collaborative networking at the same time.

The think one team™ framework

The **think one team™ framework** is a book and development framework, designed by Australian Psychologist Graham Winter and based on a core model describing the five practices which characterise organisations that create value from the networking of their parts. In a world where businesses want and need both the focus of specialised business units / teams and the value of synergies between those units, the five practices are a simple and powerful model to guide leaders and teams.

The following section contains further detail on the five practices and ideas on how to bring this model to life. Further details including articles and program outlines can be viewed at www.thinkoneteam.com.

The five practices

From studying and consulting with many different-sized organisations across the business and non-business world, it became clear that there were quite distinct differences in the practices of people, teams and organisations who seemed constrained by 'silos' versus those who worked effectively across the boundaries (as 'one team').

This experience led to identifying five core practices (categories of behaviours and capabilities) that distinguish what we described as 'think one team' and 'think silos'.

A short overview of the five **think one team™** practices is outlined below, together with an explanation of their opposite. This is then followed by some specific examples.

think one team	think silos
1. Share the big picture	1. Pursue other agendas
2. Share the reality	2. Avoid and deny
3. Share the air	3. Stifle communication
4. Share the load	4. Look after your own turf
5. Share the wins and losses	5. Play I win, you lose

Examples of the five practices

1. **Share the Big Picture** is the first practice, and means that everyone and every team knows and shares their part in the bigger picture. That picture might be of the corporate vision and values, or simply just understanding what is happening in the next Department or Project Team. The shadow, **Pursue Other Agendas** is characterised by the individual parts of the organisation pursuing other things that are more important than the big picture.
2. **Share the Reality** is the second practice, and is about speaking the truth, confronting the harsh reality and being open to giving and receiving feedback. The shadow is **Avoid and Deny** and its guises include putting an overly positive 'spin' on issues or avoiding them altogether. When reality is avoided or denied, the whole organisation is at risk.
3. **Share the Air** is essential if potential is to be tapped. The lifeblood of organisations is communication. Open two-way communication, active listening and clear communication stops the damaging silo-behaviour from flourishing, however when the shadow **Stifle Communication** is in place, people dominate others, or alternatively they hoard information (including clients) and foster a 'them and us' culture.
4. **Share the Load** - When organisations really start to 'tick' the fourth practice happens spontaneously as people understand what the load really is, and they collaborate to get the job done while playing their own part. The shadow **Look After Your Own Turf** reveals itself as in-company competition, and narrow self interest.
5. **Share the Wins and Losses** is the fifth and final practice, and reminds us that in big teams everyone wins and loses together, whereas in the shadow, **Play I Win, You Lose**, people take credit for wins, while blaming losses on others.

As you reflect on the five practices, notice how when one shadow is allowed to prevail, it begins to infect the others, while as one positive practice strengthens, it pulls the others towards it.

For example, when people stop sharing the air it won't take long before they start to blame others and just look after their own turf. On the other hand when people do share the air they develop a much better understanding of how they can support each other and that leads to shared wins.

As with most things in organisations, it is the quality of the leadership at all levels that is the key to creating teamwork across boundaries or energy sapping silo behaviour.

What brings the five practices to life?

There are some essential points that help to understand and apply the five practices model so that business benefits flow. These are briefly explained below

The concept of 'think one team' means different things to different organisations.

- Accordingly it is essential that leaders be explicit as to the meaning of 'One Team' because that 'mental model' will underpin the development of capabilities to work across boundaries.

For example, a key to the mental model of the think one team™ framework is that there is nothing wrong with creating structural silos. In fact units, such as project teams are a significant strength. The key is to 'punch holes in the silos' so that communication, prioritisation and leveraging can happen without losing the value of smaller focused units.



To get the five practices of think one team™ to really grow and prosper there must be a strong business case / rationale.

- This might be the *'opportunity case'* (eg: to enhance customer service, speed-up new product / service development), or the *'problem resolution case'* (eg: reduce costs due to duplication, improve efficiencies along a service chain).

United leadership is the 'make-or-break' for leveraging teamwork across boundaries.

- Leaders must commit to the mental model *'one team'*, to the business case and to investing in developing the capabilities in leaders and teams so that people know how to create and sustain partnerships with colleagues and alliances.

The fundamental performance unit in organisations that team well across boundaries is the partnership.

- Leadership teams, project teams, alliances and so on will all function better if / when people get better at forming what we call 'performance partnerships'. This means looking beyond traditional team building / team skilling and increasing the skills of people to create and work in these performance partnerships.

Examples of the five practices

The following bullet points provide guidance on some of the elements that other organisations have identified as essential to their 'One Team' model:

share the big picture

- create a compelling story to engage people across the business
- define the priority synergies between business units, key projects and alliances

share the reality

- develop KPI's that encourage and reward partnering between business units
- boost productivity through regular 1x1 coaching / alignment conversations between leaders and employees (think about this relationship as a performance partnership)

share the air

- capture knowledge from projects and people and measure the leverage gained
- raise transparency of across-boundary / value chain measures

share the load

- endorse a collaborative problem solving program within and across projects - measure and reward the ROI
- build partnering agreements between project teams to ensure optimal alignment

share the wins and losses

- total commitment to the balanced scorecard
- champion a debrief / lessons learned initiative that embeds feedback loops and feedback thinking into daily business activities

One of the features of think one team™ is that the framework provides a common language and consistent model which everyone can understand and apply in their daily work.



Developing the capabilities to think one team

Our experience suggests that there are five core capabilities which, when developed amongst leaders and teams, have the most profound and sustainable impact on the effectiveness of teamwork across boundaries.

These capabilities and a brief description are provided below:

United Leadership™	Defining and ensuring the critical leadership alignment and behaviours that are needed to bring the five practices to life so that teamwork across boundaries becomes business-as-usual.
Applying the Five Practices of Think one team™	Proactively using the key business / cultural levers such as planning, measurement / reward, staff engagement and feedback to foster performance partnerships.
Establishing and sustaining partnering relationships and agreements	Developing the concepts, practices and tools to forge effective partnering relationships.
Collaborative problem solving	Introducing tools and increasingly more effective dialogue so that problems (simple and complex) can be embraced and addressed as business opportunities.
Shared Learning: Debrief-Learn-Adapt	Embedding 'the debrief' as a tool to align expectations, capture learning, enter partnering relationships and improve business processes.

Summary

There are significant business advantages for organisations that have this capability to create and sustain a one team culture in which 'performance partnerships' feature both within the business and with the full range of external parties.

The think one team™ framework provides a way to create this culture through an engaging book, a simple yet powerful model and a full range of development modules and tools that can be applied from the Executive Team to frontline operations.

Further details on the framework are available through Think One Team International and at www.thinkonetteam.com.

Reference: *Think One Team*, Graham Winter, Jossey Bass 2008

**The following pages contain
useful reference materials**

Assessing Teamwork Across Boundaries - An activity for your organisation to explore the model

There are few significant business initiatives or processes that are not reliant on teamwork across boundaries to deliver full value. The diagram below highlights the think one team™ model and examples of behaviours that characterise 'one team' and 'silo' behaviours. Please use it to assess your situation.

The **benefits** of enhancing teamwork across boundaries include:

- *improved customer service*
- *reduced costs*
- *higher employee engagement*
- *leveraging of resources*
- *speeding up responsiveness*
- *better quality*

The **downsides** of silo behaviours include:

- *costly overruns on initiatives*
- *turf fights between people*
- *delays in new service delivery*
- *duplication*
- *distracting conflicts*
- *breakdowns in alliances*
- *service slip-ups*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Making sure that everyone shares one big picture (vision; values; story) <input type="checkbox"/> Unity amongst senior leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Always asking 'What is best for the whole business?' <input type="checkbox"/> Considering the impact of actions on others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking the truth – respectfully and openly <input type="checkbox"/> Showing a culture of openly giving and receiving feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Asking 'reality check' questions of colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Debating and making decisions based on data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating openly and constructively across boundaries <input type="checkbox"/> Actively listening to others <input type="checkbox"/> Building trust between business units <input type="checkbox"/> Holding productive meetings and forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and prioritising together <input type="checkbox"/> Treating other business units as equal partners <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating on across-the-business problems and opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Proactively sharing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paying close attention to performance and results <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly debriefing <input type="checkbox"/> Recognising the big and the small wins, together <input type="checkbox"/> Achieving great results through teamwork across the boundaries
Share the Big Picture	Share the Reality	Share the Air	Share the Load	Share the Wins and Losses
Pursue other Agendas	Avoid and Deny	Stifle Communication	Look after your own Turf	Play I Win, you Lose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking understanding of other business functions <input type="checkbox"/> Allowing conflicting agendas to thrive <input type="checkbox"/> Missing opportunities because of silo thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely considering impact of actions on others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Putting a 'spin' on information <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding direct, honest feedback conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding the tough conversation / issues <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar coating feedback to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dismissing / criticising alternative views <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking over the top of others in meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting 'turf' – information, power <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding cross-functional meetings / conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Treating others in the business as competitors <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and prioritising in isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Duplicating processes and systems <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering inconsistency in language and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Blaming when things go wrong <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding disciplined and intensive debriefing <input type="checkbox"/> Making process more important than outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Ignoring the successes of other business units
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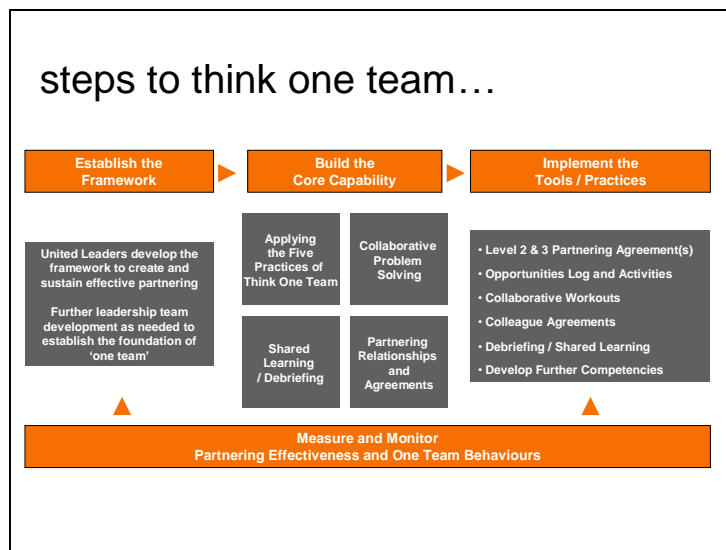
Pathway for Implementing think one team™

Think one team™ is designed to be delivered as a full program or in modules to suit the needs of part or all of the business.

The full program structure is outlined in the diagram opposite and illustrates the four elements. Some further details on these are explained below.

1. Establish the Framework

Leaders receive the detailed introduction to the think one team™ framework that enables them to explore and define its relevance to the business. An implementation framework is then created that strengthens unity amongst leaders and equips them to foster the teamwork across boundaries - essential to driving key business initiatives. Further team building may be needed in some cases.



2. Build the Capability

The initial focus is on building four core capabilities. These capabilities are provided in Modules each with defined purpose, deliverables and required measurement.

- **Applying the Five Practices Model** - identifying practical opportunities to apply the 'one team' philosophy and behaviours in day-to-day work.
- **Collaborative Problem Solving** - providing a practical way to generate business improvements and savings by fostering collaboration between business functions.
- **Building Partnering Relationships and Agreements** - initiating and sustaining the partnering relationships with colleagues that are essential for teamwork across boundaries between business units. Providing the capabilities and tools to build effective and sustainable Partnering Agreements.
- **Shared Learning / Debriefing** - instilling the capabilities and tools required to debrief performance, create shared learning and to apply that learning to improve performance.

3. Implement the Tools and Practices

A key to think one team™ is the focus on practical tools that can be applied through well-defined implementation plans. Accordingly, each Module contains its own implementation plan that is also combined in the full program and weaved into the overall governance framework.

Some of the key activities include collaborative workouts on issues of common business concern, defining partnering agreements and incorporating the think one team™ debrief tool into operations.

4. Measure Partnering Effectiveness

There are three online inventories that measure one team and partnering behaviours using the five practices model as the core framework. For the full program and for each Module, there are recommendations on the use of these instruments. For example, the Partnering Effectiveness Profile is essential to providing feedback and reinforcement to key participants in a significant partnering agreement.

Summary of Selected think one team™ Assignments

The details below provide a brief summary of selected assignments that have been carried out by Graham Winter and / or facilitators in the think one team™ network over the past year (some of these assignments commenced earlier and are continuing). Further details on the assignments and details of referees can be provided in most cases subject to client confidentiality requirements.

Carl Zeiss Vision

A substantial rollout of think one team™ for the Global Operations Team (has total workforce of approx. 11,000) and cascading through the key manufacturing sites in Australia, China, Mexico, Hungary and Brazil. The program has been implemented over three years and extended to Supply Chain Division and to alliance partnerships. It features partnering agreements and the use of think one team™ tools / methodology as a mandatory part of all across boundaries initiatives. A coach-the-coaches initiative with in-company accreditation is the next step.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Enable the company to successfully execute multiple projects and initiatives within and across sites.*

Department of Further Education, Employment, Science & Technology (SA)

United Leadership program over three years for the Executive Forum of the 30 senior leaders of this Agency of approximately 3000 people.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Develop the partnering at executive level that is essential to delivering on the Governments Skilling Strategy.*

Department of Transport (Vic)

Over the past year, the Department has introduced the think one team™ framework to the Executive Team and is now cascading via an internal certification process to provide practical models and tools aligned with the strategy and values.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Use think one team™ to facilitate key projects / initiatives while also building capability in collaborative work practices.*

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Full united leadership / think one team™ workshop program for the Executive Team and all Direct Reports of Adelaide Bank prior to the merger with Bendigo Bank. Subsequent rollout of the process through the Wealth Management Division of the Bank includes a customised business planning process, partnering agreements and use of collaborative problem solving.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Deliver on business strategy that requires a high level of partnering capability within and outside the Division.*

Superpartners (Melbourne)

This company has used the framework to develop united leadership amongst the Operations Executive who are responsible for a workforce of approximately 1200 people. Various workshops and coaching activities continue to embed the model, framework and tools into the key initiatives and across boundary relationships at operations level.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Support the business transformation.*

Savings and Loans Credit Union

A two-tier program which has enhanced the partnering between the Sales / Branch and Credit / Loans Processing functions of Australia's second largest credit union.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Gain a competitive advantage through faster and more effective processing of new business.*

Newmont Mining

Programs for the Waihi Mine Management Team (NZ) and various levels of Management at the Tanami Mine. Focus has been on using the collaborative problem solving tools, and to boost the teamwork that is needed to meet production targets. **Business Rationale / Outcome:**

Production targets can only be achieved through united leadership.

Department of Defence (Canberra)

Use of the think one team™ framework to assist the Defence Security Authority to deliver on a key cross-agency project.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Use the framework to drive the required collaboration and efficiency on this project and as a pilot for future across-Defence projects.*

Department of Health (CNAHS Regional Executive)

The leadership team of this substantial health region (approx 30,000 employees) is progressively using the think one team™ framework to develop a united leadership approach and to build the required partnering capability to deliver health services / outcomes in a difficult and complex environment.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Develop the united leadership that is needed to develop and implement the business strategy within tight budgetary requirements,*

XSTRATA Copper (Mt Isa)

Think one team™ is being progressively rolled out through the operations as a strategy to drive across-the-business effectiveness and efficiency programs.

Business Rationale / Outcome: *Use think one team™ to enable functions to leverage opportunities for cost reduction and production improvement.*