

# Developing highly *effective* teams



**CorMentis**  
Work Differently

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# TEAMS HAVE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL



An overwhelming number of executives and employees believe teams and collaborative relationships are central to their workplace future success.<sup>1,2</sup>

We harness this success through the power of the team. We have seen in workplaces and in research that explores how to leverage the latent potential of

productivity, collaboration effort and efficiency in the many webs of groups and networks. The way we team, the number of rapid networks we are part of, and the different tools we have at our disposal all help us to access this power.

**91%**  
of employees and executives believe that teams are central to their organisation's success.<sup>2</sup>

1 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends  
2 Centre for Creative Leadership, The State of Teams

**“Great workplaces create more engaged people, and when we see high levels of engagement you have the foundations for increased productivity and profit.”**

**Karen Green**



## BUILDING A GOOD TEAM IS HARD

**43%** of people see team building and collaboration as the most important aspect of great workplaces.<sup>1</sup> However, research shows us over and over again that an overwhelming number of people blame the lack of collaboration and teamwork as a reason for workplace failures.

*But why is it so hard?*

We do know that the capacity of people to cope with the scale and speed of change is an increasing challenge.

More importantly, we know that a person's cognitive abilities, personality make-up and preferences are contributing factors to how we experience and engage with work.

Aspects around trust in the group, social cohesion and feeling valued are core to your team performance experience.

**“ Only 15% of adults are actively engaged in our workplaces.”<sup>2</sup>**



1. Gensler- US Workplace Survey 2019  
2 Gallop State of the Global Workplace 2017



# POOR TEAM PERFORMANCE HAS A COST

The cost of ineffective teamwork has a material impact on the bottom line of companies.

We build teams so we can add collective value to our clients, to products, services and processes. We do this with the belief that a collection of people can complement each other and produce a better result more efficiently than as an individual.

The reality is that when you put a group of people together, all sorts of dynamics come into play that can end up costing the team and the valuable business time.

## Some impacts of an ineffective team:

- High levels of people drama
- A decline in productivity and efficiency
- Delays in product development and project cost estimates
- Decision paralysis and over-reporting
- Errors in judgment, procedures and protocols
- Loss of talent





# OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TEAMING HAS IS GROWING

The explosion of recent research into the human brain, social psychology and neuroscience have expanded our knowledge of what it takes to 'team' well and the barriers that limit our effectiveness.

We are leveraging the power of biology and our need to connect with groups, to feel safe, to understand how we relate and where we can add value. These factors and many others are playing an increased role in our understanding of how to build highly effective teams.





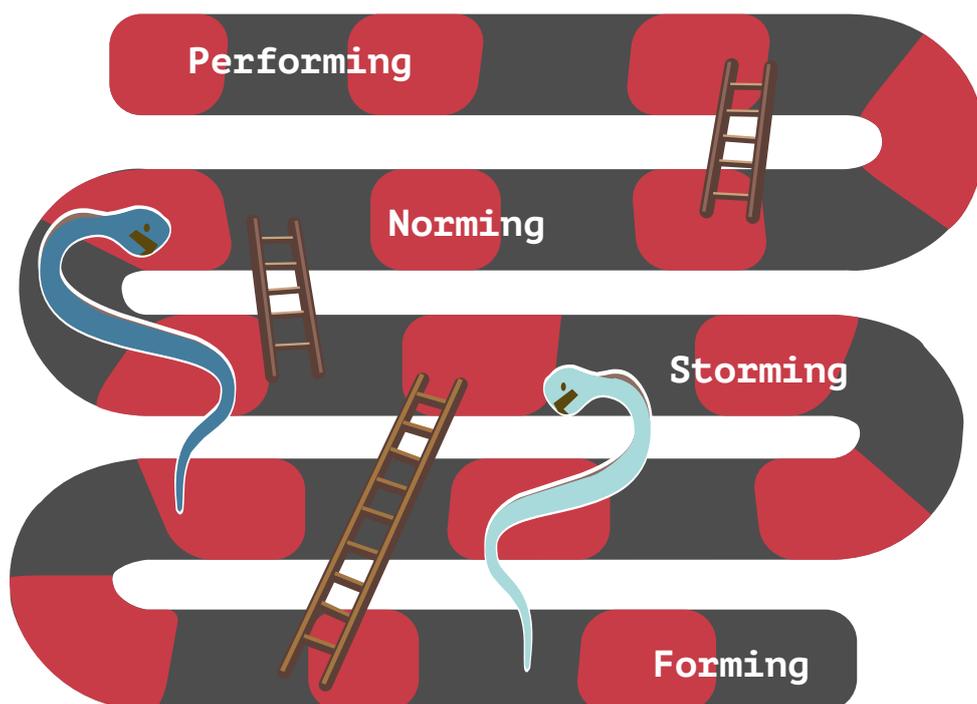
# BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM IS NOT LINEAR.

When teams come together to do a project or other work for an organisation, the members begin by developing **relationships**. They connect with other team members and with the team as a whole.

There are other highly potent **dynamics** at play in groups that influence the

*Failure to feel an acceptance to the group or to relate to the work of the team will very quickly impact on a person's performance in the team.*

behaviour and performance of teams. Even as groups form and move towards stable performance, many barriers can set a team hurtling back down the board. Issues such as **trust** and **interdependency** sit at the heart of a team's ability to mature the relationships.



Team development model Tuckman 1965

# Connectedness is boosted by Oxytocin.

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Oxytocin or the 'love drug' raises your motivation to trust other people.

When you feel trusted, you release oxytocin yourself which in turn makes other people more likely to trust you. This is called the virtuous cycle.<sup>1</sup>

*Feeling good motivates us to do good.*  
People are more likely to invest more of themselves in teams where they feel trusted. High trust motives more energy, productivity, collaboration and loyalty.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Zak - The Moral Molecule





# NOT ALL TEAMS NEED TO FUNCTION THE SAME

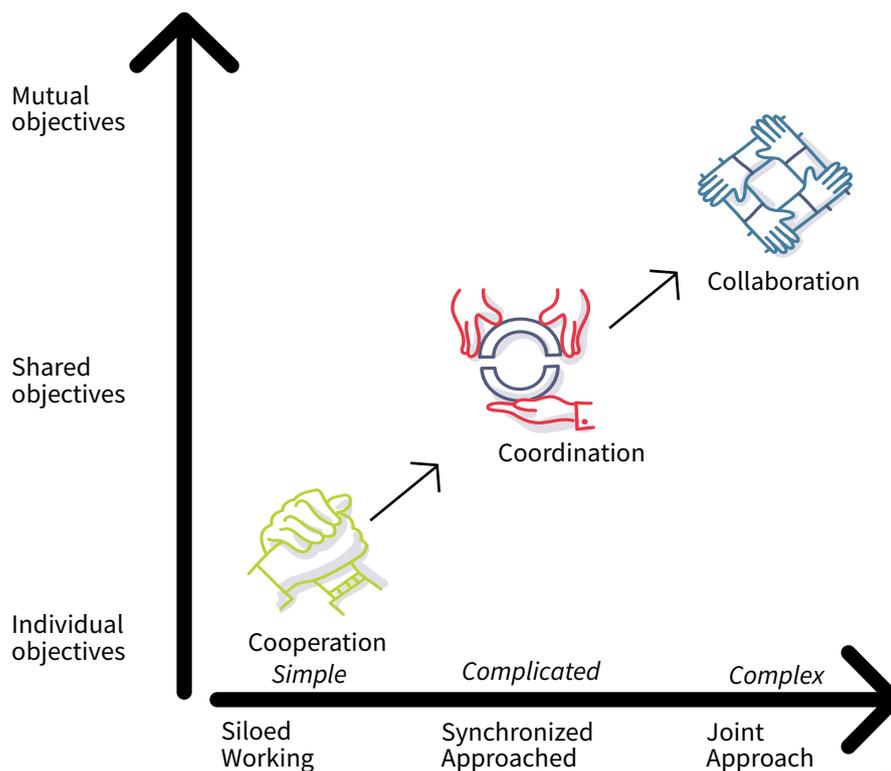
Teams can shift and change between individual and collaborative work.

Most teams in today's workplaces describe themselves as collaborative. But often they are moving between cooperative and coordinated work.

However, it's estimated that **a third of a company's successful collaboration efforts are only coming from 3-5% of your employees!**<sup>1</sup>

So, we are all feeling like we are doing more collaborative work but not really getting the results.

For most teams, effective collaboration is an aspiration, and we are somewhere else on the continuum.



Adapted from Shared Ambitions  
Baker Richards 2018

<sup>1</sup> 2019 Research by Microsoft in MSTeams and collaboration

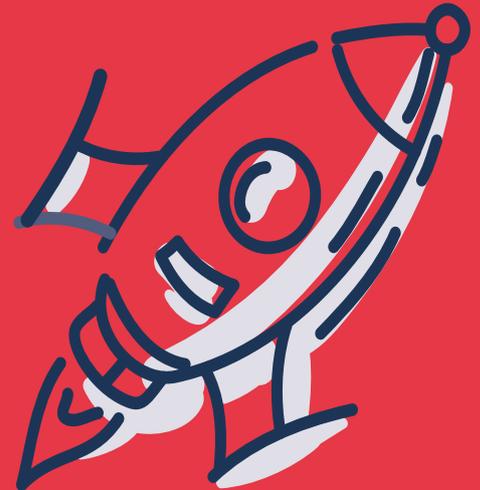


## THE POWER OF THE TEAM LEADER

A leader carries powerful influence and control over the success of the team.

When you makes the shift from individual contributor to leading others, you start on a journey from being a primary producer of individual work to being a broader business enabler.

You bring with you all your existing skills and abilities. You then need to pair this to the task of planning and delivery of work, the creation of teams and the accountable for getting the right people, doing the right actions at the right time. **Rarely do we equip our leaders to do this properly.**

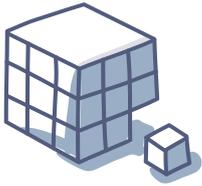


52%

of companies train their managers less than once a year.

29%

of companies said that 'Leadership is an urgent focus area for our organisation moving forward.'



## QUICK TIPS TO ASSESS YOUR TEAM

Doing the right work, at the right time is fundamental

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### *Assess the teamwork*

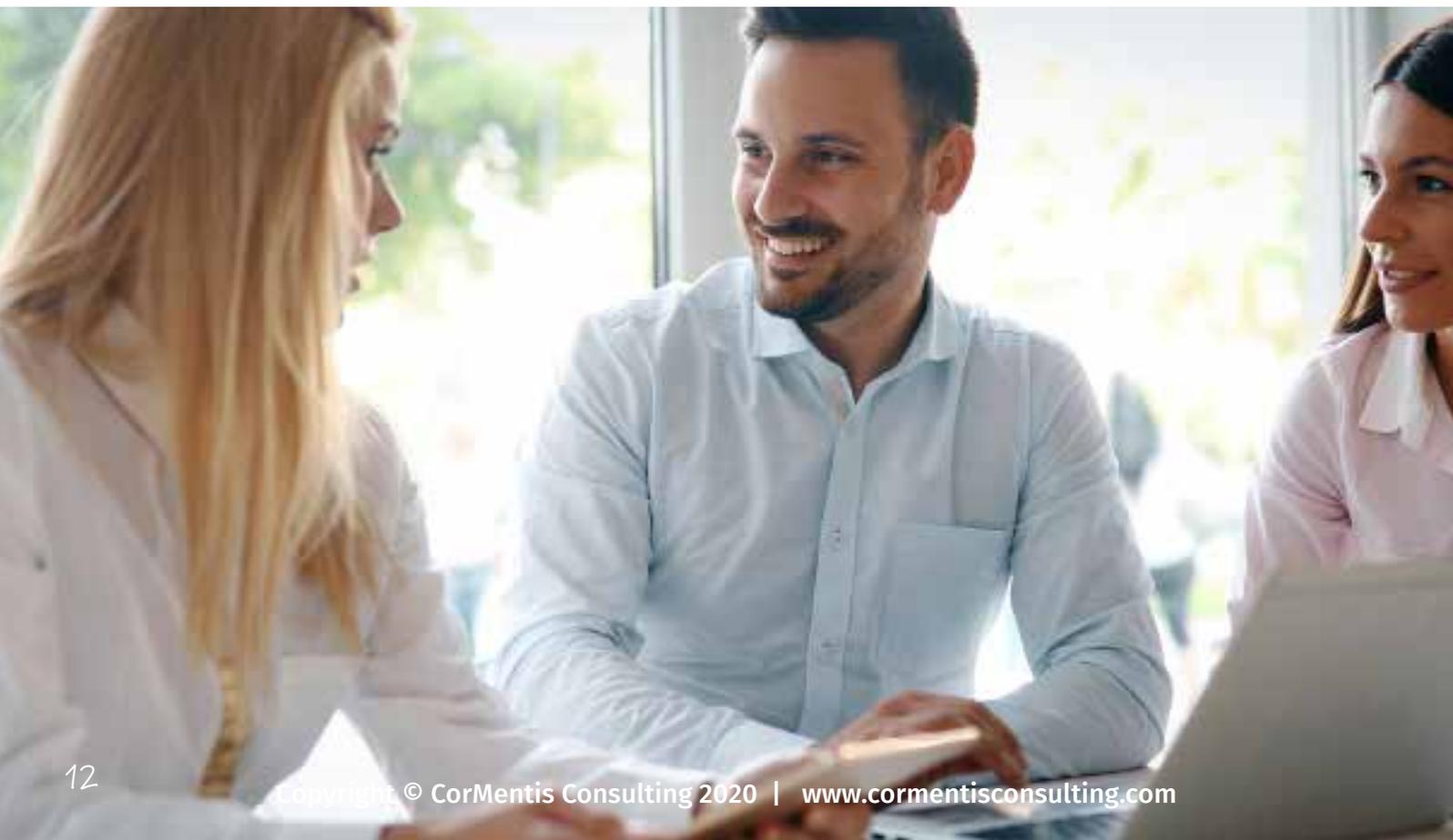
- How well does the team shift gears between types of work?

### *Build trust in the team*

- Focus on activities that build trust, sharing stories, preferences and social connections all help.

### *Build clarity between leader and team*

- Is the team aligned on how they see their work. Where they feel they spend most of their time and does that align with the leader's view.



**‘Psychological safety exists when people feel their team is a place where they can speak up, offer ideas, and ask questions.**

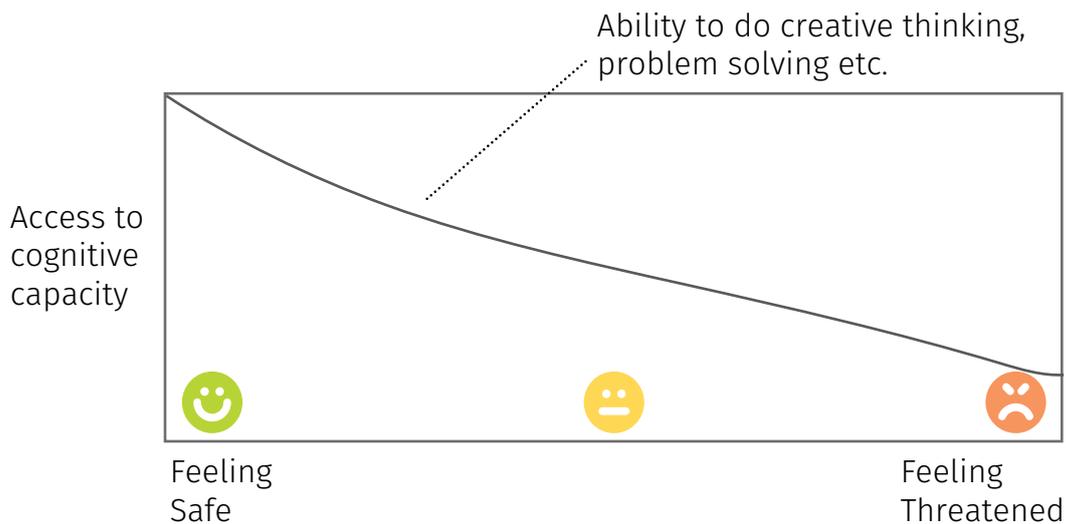
Amy Edmondson



# CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND TRUST

**A high performing team is built on an environment that is safe for interpersonal risk-taking and trust that others will give you space to take a risk and fail.**

**Safety and inclusion are essential to a team that needs to do any innovative, creative or complex work. Team leaders play a critical role in creating good behaviours (respect, safety, trust) that unlock cognitive thinking or toxic actions that increase the sense of threat.**



# WHY BELONGING MATTERS

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Researchers have found that the social-attachment system in the brain overlaps and borrows from the pain system to prevent the potentially harmful consequences of social separation.<sup>1</sup>

Our brains are wired to track our social status and potential separation from groups.

While this trigger system is good for our safety, it does come at a cost in the workplace. When our brains are in protection mode, keeping us from a perceived threat, they cannot function well as a problem-solver or creativity-generator.



<sup>1</sup> Why rejection hurts: a common neural alarm system for physical and social pain  
NI Eisenberger, MD Lieberman - Trends in cognitive sciences, 2004



## LEADER ACTIONS

Things that can cultivate safety and inclusion in groups.

- 1** Establish role clarity and team onboarding quickly. Prepare to re establish clarity whenever needed.

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- 2** Define above the line behaviours and rapidly call out any 'below the line' as soon as they are seen.

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- 3** Build shared work to develop connections between colleagues.

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- 4** Assign peer support and mentor relationships to team members.

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- 5** Look for ways to provide positive leader interactions and relations.

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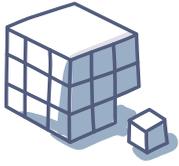
- 6** Provide training on unconscious bias and building emotional intelligence.



**“TODAY’S WORKPLACES AND LEADERS ARE**  
facing mounting pressures due to new  
types of work arrangements, challenges  
to traditional management styles and  
shifting expectations from workers....

**not all leaders understand or can  
maximize the potential** of current  
employees to create the competitive  
advantage from high performance  
culture”

**Gallop State of the Global Work-  
place  
2017 Survey**



## QUICK TIPS TO ASSESS YOUR TEAM

Safety, trust and belonging are at the heart of effective teams.

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### *Assess the team*

- Are teams and team members comfortable to approach senior leaders about problems or tough issues?

### *Look for warning signs*

- Do you see any signs that people are holding back input at meetings? Or avoiding hot topics? Is feedback rarely given between colleagues?

### *Build leader capability*

- Do leaders have the training and skills build inclusive teams?





## UNDERSTAND THE TEAMING PUZZLE

**Do you need to up-skill your leaders on building better teams?  
Is your team ready to grow into the next phase of work?**

Invest in a program that leverages the **science** of being **human** with the **knowledge** of effective team **performance**.

Use the knowledge from both leadership and teaming theory, along with behavioural science to help position your team to accelerate into the future.

*Learn :*

- The importance of emotional literacy in a team to build safety and healthy communication
- The difference between coordination and collaboration.
- The building blocks of a cohesive team
- How to create deep trust and positive relationships.
- Keeping the team focused on the right goals.
- How to give meaningful feedback helpful.
- Strategies for leaders to shape and grow the team.

[Book a team effectiveness assessment](#)



Adapted from-Team development model Tuckman 1965



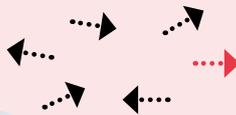
# TEAM DEVELOPMENT PHASES

Teams gather around the work to be done: but they mature through trust, commitment and consensus on a shared way of working.



## Forming

Unpredictable  
Safety & trust



Trust in the people, and the work is limited. Team behaviours and outcomes are reactive and inconsistent.

There are few shared perceptions, and shared processes are lacking.

Members don't know their place in the team.

1

**Build trust and the group identity around the work**

## Storming

Learning  
Clarity & Respect



Fast forming trust is building through shared work and analysis of each others' behaviours.

Teams are learning, and the use of conflict resolution strategies are common.

Members are establishing and maintain positions and beginning to find gaps. Priorities and opportunities emerge.

2

**Work on problem solving, deliverables and shared reward.**



## Performing

Optimized  
Create and Grow



Trust in each other develops. Behaviour is modified based on awareness of personality differences.

The team can leverage the diversity of thinking and strengths.

Goals and objectives are maturing, and work allocation adjusts to fit motivation and engagement across the group.

4

**Explore partnerships, innovation options and long term strategic deliverables**

## Norming

Productive  
Connect & Diversity



The team is a role model for others.

There is an alignment of members in execution and to stakeholder expectations.

Measurable results and operational excellence.

The team performance leaves a lasting business impact.

3

**Look for new ideas, process improvement and ways to building the network.**

**“ It is the team leader’s task to role model the behaviours and attitudes you want from your team. What you do becomes what they do”**

**Karen Green**  
Founder  
CorMentis Consulting



# TIPS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEAMS.

## Keep it small



Teams larger than eight can suffer from issues around connections, coordination, collaboration and cohesion. The ideal size for a team is between 5-7. For Larger teams try to break the group down into working sub groups around pieces of work rather than manage the group and work as a whole.

## Build trust and safety



Pay attention to relationships both within the team and with stakeholders. Build trust through transparency, openness and clarity on the rules and conduct of the team. Build safety through respect, communication and healthy conflict.

## Be clear on the goals



The goal posts, outcomes and achievements are the juice that drive the motivation and reward system in people. The more effective the planning work the better the team can come together around the work to be done.

## Team Check-in /Check-out.



Share positive and negative sentiment, make sure people have clarity on who is doing what and where. Model the behaviours you want to see in the team.

## Feedback culture

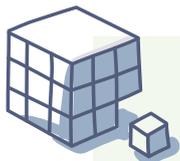


Feedback is essential to insight and learning. We need to give feedback on how the team is operating as well as the outcomes we are seeking. Schedule it, make it simple and consistent. Build it into the habits and patterns of your team.

## Diversity is key



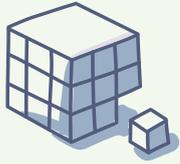
Diversity of thinking, diversity of skills and diversity of opinions are all hallmarks of highly effective teams. Look for dissenting ideas, be careful of recruiting bias and look for the right person that not someone that will just fit in.



## Questions for Leaders:

1. What is going well in the team now?
2. What would make the work flow better for all of us?
3. Does everyone have clarity on what is expected?
4. What should we stop doing?





## Our approach to teaming

We take a brain-based approach to building highly effective teams with programs that help the individual, the leader and the group to perform and deliver effectively and consistently.

We explore how you leverage new thinking in human social psychology, neuroscience and decision-making and pair that with long term research into leadership and group theory to give participants tools, strategies and actions that can be used immediately.

Let us help you diagnose and understand what makes your team tick.

## The benefits

- **Neuroscience based;** incorporates the latest research on human intelligence and pairs this with over 80 years of leadership and management theory.
- **Focused on the 'science' of performance in groups;** access and use emotional intelligence tools, decision-making systems and teaming frameworks to create engaged, cohesive teams.
- **Practical** skills that can be used to shape individual behaviour and support capability transitions for new team leaders.
- **The program is** a fast-paced, collaborative learning journey with real world examples, practical activities and resources.

## About the author

*Karen Green*

Behavioural strategy, leadership and workplace culture

Karen Green is a leadership and human behaviour specialist. For almost 20 years, she has been using the science of people and performance and bringing it into the world of business. She supports leaders to develop new mindsets and cultures that anchor, inform, and advance the values, attitudes and behaviours necessary to not only survive, but thrive in the digital age.



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