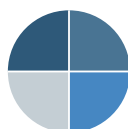# CREATING TEAM DIRECTION

Glowinkowski™ International's Direction Setting Process

Introduction

The majority of organisations have a vision for what they expect to achieve in the future. All too many fail to accomplish this because little or no effort is expended on translating what this corporate vision actually means for the organisation's senior leadership team in terms of what they do and how they do it. The Glowinkowski™ Direction Setting process is a proven methodology that enables such teams to self-determine their fundamental purpose and critical goals and has been successfully utilised over a 25 year period by leadership teams from a wide range of business sectors and geographical locations.

The context of a team setting its direction needs to be thought of in terms of the Glowinkowski™ Integrated Framework shown in Figure 1.

The framework positions the idea of Organisational Climate as the critical driver of performance. Climate is defined as 'what it feels like to work here'. A highly positive Climate means that all individuals within an organisation understand what it is trying to achieve and how they contribute to this overarching ambition. Also, they feel challenged to apply their skills to effect change and apply discretionary effort to make decisions within a meritocracy. They feel a sense of pride and commitment towards the organisation's goals; in short, they are engaged and self-motivated to succeed.

Our work has shown that all things being equal, such a positive Climate differentiates outstanding from average organisations. In addition, where we support an organisation to enhance its Climate, we observe substantial improvements across a wide range of performance outcomes, such as innovation, productivity, service quality, sales and profitability, academic performance (in educational institutions such as schools and universities) etc.

The Integrated Framework describes Organisational Climate as being driven by three critical 'change levers', which concern the effectiveness of the organisational structure or design, the quality of leadership behaviour, particularly at the senior team level, and, finally, the efficiency by which
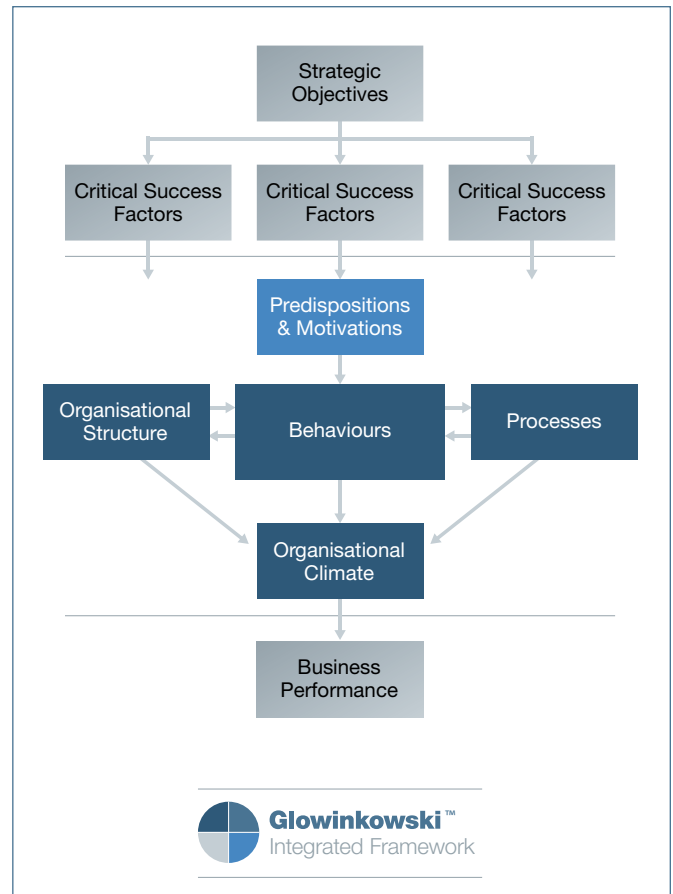

Figure 1: The Glowinkowski™ Integrated Framework

processes such as planning, communication, decision making and development are managed.

Based upon our many years of research and practical consultancy application, we describe these three factors as the 'leadership dynamic', which sets the 'atmosphere', i.e. Climate, which is required for sustainable, superior performance.
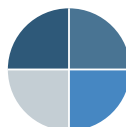
The Team

Fundamental to creating excellence in this leadership dynamic is the question of how the senior team actually operates, i.e. its behaviours. It is often said that the most important decision for a senior executive is establishing their senior team. While attention may be paid to recruiting team members, frequently too little is paid to harnessing their energy and commitment to act in a collaborative and collegiate manner as a team. Direction Setting concentrates upon achieving this.

The Direction Setting process is an absolutely vital means by which a senior executive can set in motion a process where the members of the team establish a clear purpose about what it is they are to achieve, i.e. what it is paid to do, together with galvanizing a real commitment to its aims

and objectives. Unless this is achieved, teams flounder and drift off course and the excellence outlined above does not materialise.

A key word, therefore, is focus. In our experience, senior teams all too frequently set themselves too many things to do concurrently within very short time-scales. Directing Setting provides the necessary focus by supporting the team to prioritise a stretching yet realistically manageable number of activities. Without such focus and failing to behave in a way that is appropriate to achieve its desired outcomes, there is little chance of creating the Climate mentioned above for the broader organisation. The Direction Setting process is a critical step in order to achieve this focus.

The Objectives

There are three core objectives:

1. To enable the team to acquire and understand a sense of how the organisation is currently operating, particularly in terms of the Integrated Framework by reviewing the 'state of play' in terms of the 'leadership dynamic' and Climate as described above.

2. To build effective relationships between team members by providing them with the opportunity to understand their natural behavioural strengths and potential weakness through receiving feedback through Glowinkowski International's Predisposition frameworks.

3. To provide the team with the opportunity to establish an agreed focus for itself as a team by defining the following:

   - The fundamental purpose of the team

   - The Critical Success Factors (CSFs) that the team needs to manage in order to fulfil its purpose

   - The specific Business Activities that enable the team to manage its CSFs'
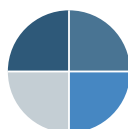
The Process

Pre-work

Prior to the core workshop component of the Direction Setting process, there are a number of pre-work requirements. The first of these provides the opportunity to establish a measure, or estimate, of the prevailing Climate of the organisation. This is achieved either through a series of Focus Group workshops and/or quantitative Climate survey, both conducted by ourselves. Alternatively, we analyse existing data that the organisation possesses through existing measurement processes.

Also, members of the senior team each need to complete the Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (GPI™) questionnaire. Arising from this are a series of feedback frameworks concerning their natural approach to problem solving and interacting with people as well as one that indicates how they regard themselves. Additional detail concerning GPI™ and Climate is provided in the Appendices to this document.

Workshop

The Direction Setting Workshop (DSW) runs over an intensive two or three day period and constitutes the following critical elements.

- The starting point concentrates on helping the team understand the Integrated Framework described earlier and, thereby, the significance of the behaviour and approach of the team in creating and underpinning the overall performance of the organisation.

- At this stage, we de-brief in terms of any Climate pre-work, which provides the team with a clear sense of its challenge in creating the type of performance oriented Climate described above.

- GPI™ feedback is then presented to the team. This provides individuals with the opportunity to reflect on their own natural approach with its associated strengths and gaps together with the profiles of their colleagues and the team as a whole. The facilitation process uses this feedback as a means to enable team members to discuss in a very open way the potential strengths and weaknesses that will contribute to or undermine team effectiveness. Additionally, it provides a fundamental insight for each individual in terms of their own ongoing personal leadership development.

(In order to support this feedback process, follow-up sessions on a one-to-one basis can also be provided in order to help individuals understand at greater depth their respective profiles.)

At this stage, however, the GPI™ will have provided a powerful basis for individuals to get to know each other and

provide a platform on which it is entirely feasible to surface all of the potential issues and conflicts associated with the different perspectives revealed by the data that, otherwise, often unknowingly undermine issues of team commitment and engagement. As such, GPI™ provides the sound footing on which relationships can be effectively managed on an ongoing basis.

The feedback process also provides the necessary spring-board into the second part of the DSW, which gives the team the opportunity to establish clarity and commitment for itself in terms of its central focus. Through the insight now possessed by each team member about themselves and their colleagues concerning their natural style, i.e. why they behave and think as they do, when the team begins to discuss practical and real issues, e.g. purpose and required objectives, there is a much clearer understanding and rationale about what underpins different colleagues' contributions. Therefore, these contributions tend to be better appreciated and valued, hence making the problem solving environment for the team more productive.

- In this second part of the DSW, the process illustrated in Figure 2 is followed.
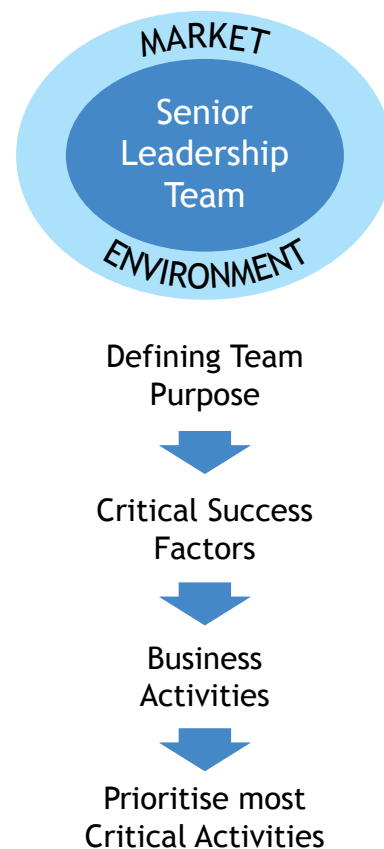

Figure 2: The Overall Direction Setting Process

Step 1: Defining the team's purpose statement

In establishing its purpose, the team is articulating what its members are collectively paid to do. If the purpose statement is couched wrongly, then all that follows will be wrong, too. The purpose statement should be clear enough to let the team and the entire organisation know when it has been fulfilled.

Step 2: Setting out the team's Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

The CSFs relate to the issues that must be managed in order to achieve the team's purpose. Achieving consensus on these aims is vital. From our work, we see management teams in successful organisations being much more focused than those in less successful enterprises, i.e. in the former there are fewer goals, or CSFs, in place. In other words, the top executives of the poor performers had no shared vision of what they were trying to do. Just the opposite is true of leaders of successful organisations.

Accordingly, the CSFs represent what the team must do and, to a considerable degree, how they must behave. In this sense, we work with the senior team to establish CSFs that commence by stating, "We need …" or "We must …". By themselves, the CSFs are not directly manageable.

In setting out its CSFs, a team should be guided by the 'necessary-and-sufficient' rule. That is, the group must agree that each CSF listed is *necessary* to the purpose and that together they are *sufficient* to achieve the purpose. This is a stringent requirement. The maximum number of CSFs is eight; however, in situations where a senior team is fighting for its organisation's ongoing survival, four is the limit.

The list should be a mix of tactical and strategic factors. If the factors are all strategic, the business might founder while everybody concentrates on the future. Equally, if all are tactical, the business could tie itself in knots driving for short-term success and not preparing for the future.

Our approach concerning the number and nature of CSFs may be tough, but it works and it is essential that it is followed. Whenever the approach is disregarded, the result is lack of focus and clarity. Highly paid managers should be able to achieve consensus about what is vital to their organisation.

Step 3: Identifying and Prioritising the Business Activities

Having agreed its CSFs, the next step for the team is to identify and list what has to be done to achieve them and, thereby, fulfil its purpose.

In defining these activities it is important that bland descriptions are avoided, e.g. improve customer service. As with the CSFs, it is essential that the activities are described in a way that demonstrates they are 'necessary and sufficient' in order to allocate ownership. In summary, the rules for defining the Business Activities are:

- Each Business Activity description should follow a verb-plus-object sequence, e.g. carry out competitor analysis.
- Every Business Activity should have an owner, the person responsible for managing the activity.
- The owner should be a member of the senior management team participating in the DSW.
- No owner should have more than five Business Activities to manage.

Since each team member shares collective responsibility for the CSFs, the entire team should also be interested in all of the activities. However, only one person owns an activity; thus '*commitment by all, accountability by one*'.

In listing activities, teams often begin to be creative, looking beyond what is already being done and considering breaking new ground. This is what is required, although each new activity must meet the 'necessary and sufficiency' rule.

To achieve this, a prioritisation process is conducted, which considers how many CSFs each individual activity contributes to achieving and how well it is currently done, i.e. well/poorly or it is a new/embryonic activity. Those activities that help attain most CSFs and are done less well necessitate direct, accountable ownership by a senior team member. Those activities that contribute to fewer CSFs and are done well can be delegated to people who report to members of the senior team. Thus, people get paid for activities upon which they will have greatest impact.

One final discussion challenges the team to establish goals for the six dimensions that construct Organisational Climate.

Working through these three steps enables the team to develop clarity for itself at both the high level of purpose as well as the more practical and detailed level in terms of what needs to be done.

Follow up

Six months after the DSW, the team has the option of taking a further measurement of Climate to assess how their sharpened focus on the agreed activities has helped shift Climate upwards.

Concluding Remarks

The DSW process provides opportunity to a senior leadership team to gauge the challenge they face in terms of its review of the prevailing Climate in the wider organisation. The provision of the GPI™ feedback adds a rich perception about the team's and individual members' potential behavioural strengths and weaknesses. We find this insight forms a powerful basis for the ongoing management of relationships within the team together with providing a sound platform on which individual development needs can be determined.

Additionally, the GPI™ data provides a critical focus for the subsequent part of the workshop.

This second part of the workshop process enables the team to generate real clarity about its purpose and key objectives, i.e. the CSFs, and, perhaps, more importantly, helps establish a sense of team commitment to that direction. This provides a critical basis for achieving ongoing and sustained success for the overall organisation.
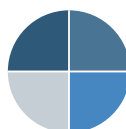
Appendix I

Predispositions

Leaders' actual behaviours, i.e. the box labelled 'Behaviours' in the Integrated Framework, are affected by aspects of their personality, which we call Predispositions. These concern the preferred or natural behaviours an individual would like to utilise.

Glowinkowski International has developed a highly reliable self-completion questionnaire that supports individuals to understand these attributes of their personality and how they will potentially influence their behaviour. By possessing this understanding, individuals are better able to appreciate why certain things that they do appear relatively easy, requiring less effort to undertake, and why other work demands necessitate greater effort and endeavour.

In the context of a DSW, by sharing this data with each other a team can much better appreciate why certain team members approach situations in a particular manner, why certain things people do irritate and other things feel complementary. This awareness enables the team to enhance its communication, openness and level of collaborative working.

Furthermore, this data enables individuals to identify important development needs that, when satisfied, will enable them to operate more readily in a greater number of situations, i.e. they learn to 'behave out of character' and deliver the required behaviours for the situation. Thus the quiet, more reserved individual can learn to act in a more socially gregarious manner. The individual who more naturally creates bigger ideas can learn to concentrate upon the detail.

It is important to recognise two crucial differences between our 'psychometrics' and many others in the market.

1. Through their being positioned within the context of the Integrated Framework, it is very clear to see and understand how aspects of personality can affect personal and, thereby, business performance.

2. The data is structured in such a way that it can be displayed for an individual or aggregated for a team.

This is crucial for a team because the data enables team members to appreciate where natural strengths may be clustered or where there may be gaps, either of which situation may prove a constraint upon maximising performance potential.

During the DSW, the three feedback frameworks from GPI™ are reviewed. The first considers how individuals prefer to approach solving problems and provides data about their natural approach to thinking and to completing tasks. In this context we are considering people's style in terms of their natural approach to thinking and idea generation together with how they go about doing things. Put simply, how you think and how you do.

An example of the feedback framework is shown below:
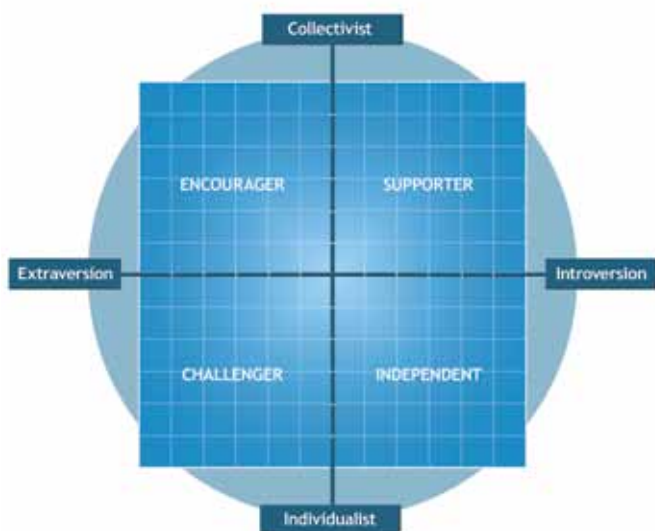
Problem Solving and Implementation Style
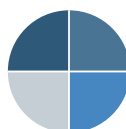
There is additional detail that lies behind this initial level of feedback. This is explored during the workshop.

The second framework considers how individuals prefer to approach engaging with other people and their expectations from such interactions. This provides a real insight into why individual colleagues behave as they do with each other, about what it is that underpins colleagues' approaches to influencing (or, indeed, not influencing) and the differing scale of need each team member has for social interaction.

An example of this feedback framework is shown below:

The third framework relates to individual's Feelings and Self-control. It looks at how people currently rate themselves and manage their emotions. This data is slightly more 'sensitive', particularly in view of it depicting how each team member feels. Nevertheless, it is a vital ingredient if the team is to truly appreciate each other and gel in a manner that will signal to the rest of the organisation that it is fully committed to its purpose and established aims. An example of this feedback framework appears below (and there is additional supplementary detail):

Communication and Inter-personal Style

Feelings and Self-control

As with Problem Solving, there is supporting detail that will be explored during the workshop.
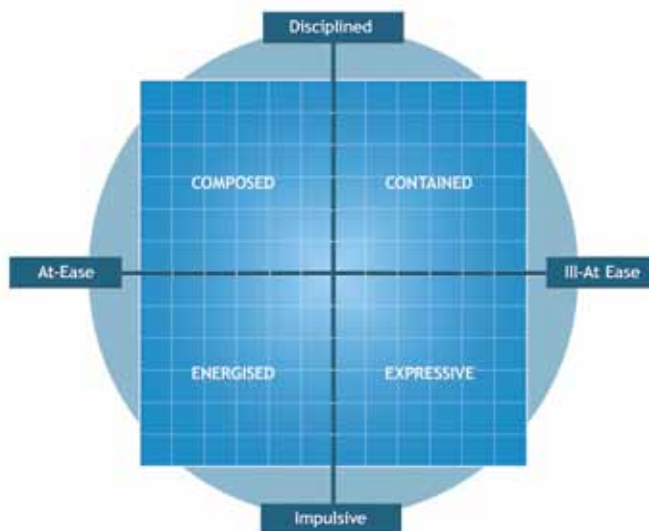
In each instance, team members receive their own data and the team's 'scatter plot'. The team are split into pairs to discuss the data and then brought back together in the full group to discuss the implications arising from the data for the team dealing with the myriad of challenges it faces in its dynamic market-place.

Appendix II

Summary Table of Climate Framework

DIMENSIONS	SUB-SCALES	ESSENCE STATEMENT
CLARITY	• Long-term direction • Integration • Co-ordination	• Well established long-term direction • People's/Groups activities are well integrated • Making progress toward long-term direction
CHALLENGE	• Innovation • Achievement	• Encouraged to try new approaches • Stretched with goals that are challenging/realistic
CHANGE ORIENTATION	• Motivation • Adaptability • Flexibility	• Take action before being directed • Minimum of unnecessary procedures • A readiness/enthusiasm for change
AUTONOMY	• Independence • Accountability • Effort	• Does not always have to check/ask permission • A feeling that the individual can make a difference • Prepared to work beyond job remit
RECOGNITION	• Reward • Feedback • Value & Appreciation	• Differential relation between reward and performance • Receiving effective feedback • Feeling of being valued and appreciated
INVOLVEMENT	• Commitment • Trust • Synergy	• Committed to the teams long-term direction • Proud to be part of the team • Whole is greater than the sum of parts