TIGER TEAMS

THE BIG PICTURE

No matter what industry you're in, you've seen how the world of business is ever-evolving—and it's more true now than ever.

In this new global context, digital transformation and managing remote teams have become the new "business as usual," creating the framework for leaders to develop more effective business models that will have a long-lasting impact on their teams, organizations, and careers.

In moments like this, it's imperative to stay dynamic. The old paradigms of corporate hierarchy and box-stick org charts simply won't cut it. Success in the future belongs to those who adapt, grow, and innovate, despite the obstacles.

Unfortunately, while shifts in the business landscape are often hard to predict, that doesn't mean you can't be prepared. By identifying your team's greatest strengths, both individually and collectively, you can create one of the most powerful resources possible: Tiger Teams.

WHAT ARE TIGER TEAMS?

Tiger Teams are cross-functional teams of internal and external future leaders that take on a circle-like shape and are formed to solve organizational challenges.

They are designed to be both proactive and responsive, and therefore able to address any needs that surface company-wide. That's because they're structured with the 80/20 rule: 80% of their work is spent on standard tasks, while 20% focuses on special projects.

THE CASE FOR TIGER TEAMS

YOU MIGHT BE ASKING, WHY DO WE NEED A TIGER TEAM?

The answer: It's a cross-functional, laser-focused, highly impactful, and multi-dimensional team designed to achieve necessary and rapid transformation. Think of it as a group of people who lead through innovation, think outside the box, and support other teams when your company needs it most.

In the age of disruption, strategic multidisciplinary teams bring together many years of experience in various business areas to help the organization stay on the right path in chaotic times. They even provide opportunities for employees to develop and master new skills while working to achieve common goals.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM TIGER TEAMS?

To put it simply, everyone. By assembling a team of dynamic, experienced, and creative minds, your organization can overcome unexpected obstacles, quickly respond to crises, bolster company-wide support, and cultivate talent—all without taking eyes off the big picture.

Beyond the organizational advantages, those selected to become Tiger Team members will be able to develop their skill sets in a new environment in which they'll feel more empowered and better connected, thus boosting their engagement and performance. And by taking additional pressure off of other teams and employees, especially in times of crisis, those receiving support will feel better equipped to handle what's in front of them.

HOW TO RUN TIGER TEAMS

It's vital to keep things uncomplicated, so we created a system that can be replicated with minimum costs and without unnecessary disruptions every time you face changes. Any organization can create Tiger Teams following a simple four-step approach we've outlined below.

DEFINE	DESIGN	DEPLOY	DELIVER
· Mission, charter, and supporting objectives · Criteria and selection of team members · Timeframe and metrics to measure	· Member roles and expectations · Meeting rhythms · Member rewards and recognition · Communication roll-out plan	· Notify Tiger Team members · Kick-off meeting and develop guiding principles · Do the work	· Align with stakeholders · Share out · Track and assess implementation progress

DEFINE

As a leader, you know that planning is essential in business. Before you can even recruit people for your Tiger Team, you need to define your project's scope, objectives, metrics, and positional criteria, so you can have clear direction and select the most appropriate candidates.

MISSION, CHARTER, AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

Implementing Tiger Teams starts with defining the mission, charter, and supporting objectives of your dream team. It may sound complicated, but it's as easy as answering these three questions:

- What problems will the Tiger Team solve?
- What is the purpose of the team?
- What is the scope of work?

Make sure to answer each question definitively and thoroughly so there's no room for interpretation, as your answers will not only inform the next steps, but also help you communicate your purpose to future members and stakeholders alike.

After this step, you should have:

- A mission statement, communicated in one sentence
- A list of achievable goals for the team

SELECTING TIGER TEAM MEMBERS

Once you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve, you can finally define the criteria for recruiting team members. To increase efficiency, focus on a limited number of relevant requirements for your team, business, and industry.

- The list of criteria can include but isn't limited to candidates who:
- Live the company values
- Have a team-first, self-second mentality
- Take ownership and accountability
- Show resilience by anticipating, adapting to, and rebounding from change
- Thrive in adversity

Keep in mind that Tiger Teams are "special" units built to overcome any crisis with offensive and defensive strategies, so ideally, your team should be headed by a respected leader and a top performer, along with 3 to 7 people with diverse backgrounds, career paths, and company roles. If you can't find them all internally, consider onboarding or looking for appropriate fits externally.

At the end of this process, you should:

- Have well-defined team selection criteria
- Decide on the exact number of team members to achieve the mission
- Select candidates that meet the requirements

SETTING TIMEFRAMES AND MILESTONES

Tiger Teams are laser-focused units with specific goals—which means they need clear timeframes, milestones, and performance indicators to adhere to this core concept.

Based on the problems previously identified and the scope of work, build a realistic timeframe that includes:

- Start and end dates/times
- Key milestones and performance indicators to showcase progress
- Trackable metrics to measure the success rate

Defining these elements will not only help qualify and quantify your team's performance, but also pace your project and keep team members accountable, from start to finish.

At the end of this step you should be able to:

- Express a definitive timeline for the Tiger Team
- Identify the metrics of success
- Name milestones, such as brainstorm, propose solutions to leadership, develop and roll-out solution(s), or integrate them into the business' rhythms
- Define what winning looks like for the team

DESIGN

In the design phase, you create the rules of the game to suit the company's needs. This framework will shape the Tiger Team's activity to enable consistent workflows and guidelines for team members to follow.

BUILDING A SOLID TEAM STRUCTURE

Now that you've defined your objectives and selected your team, it's time to build a customized communication plan and set the team structure, member roles, and expectations. This framework enables Tiger Team members to clearly understand their roles, visualize the big picture, and coordinate their efforts all while maintaining focus on their individual responsibilities.

When you build a winning team structure, focus on two principal elements:

- The roles that need to be filled within the team (executive leadership, rapid response, defense, offense, think tank, innovation, content, champions)
- The duties and expectations for each role

The model on the following page not only allows for seamless collaboration, but also helps define what needs to be done and by whom.

After this stage, your design Tiger Team should include:

- A structure that reflects the key roles inside the team
- A list of responsibilities for each role

TEAM STRUCTURE

During a crisis, a network of teams carries out responses and activities outside of standard operations and makes necessary adjustments to routine business activities.

RAPID
RESPONSE TEAM

DEFENSE

EXECUTIVE
LEADERSHIP TEAM

OFFENSE

CHAMPIONS

THINK
TANK

INNOVATION

CONTENT
STRATEGY
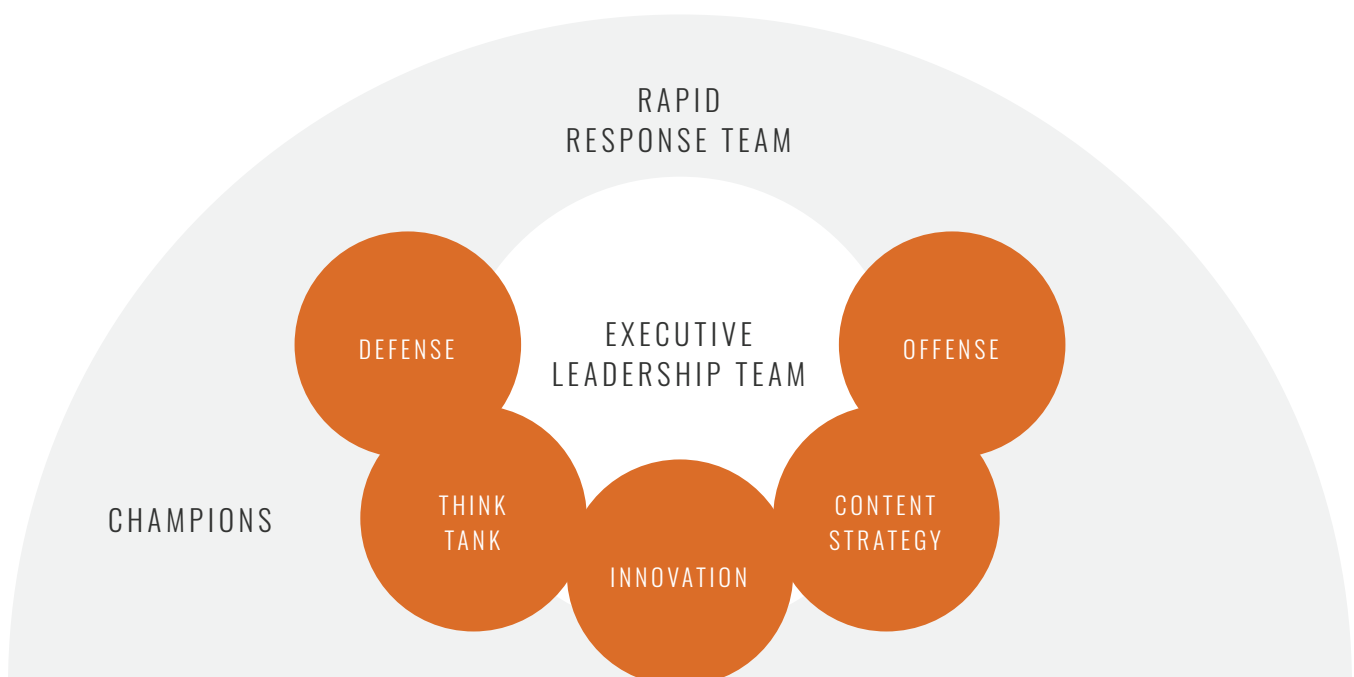
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Advises on strategy
- Responds to questions
- Provides practical insights

DEFENSE TEAM

- Research and development
- Identifies consumer needs
- Supports decisions

OFFENSE TEAM

- Provides value to consumers
- Provides intel to teams
- Coordinates strategy

INNOVATION TEAM

- Generates new ideas
- Test new tactics
- Delivers successful tests

CONTENT TEAM

- Develops communications
- Createss relevant content
- Delivers assets

THINK TANK TEAM

- Cross-functional
- Internal/external support
- Committed to new mission

CHAMPIONS

- Performs beta testing
- Supports roll-out
- Supports change management

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

- Advises on best practices
- Liaison between teams
- Supports execution

ESTABLISHING MEETING RHYTHMS

When it comes to making progress, consistency is key. Even if you can't predict when a crisis may occur, having a regular meeting cadence with room to flex will help team members pace their work, stay connected, and keep up with role-based expectations.

- When setting meeting rhythms, you should consider:
- How often team members should meet to facilitate communication
- Where the team will meet (virtually, in-person, combination, other)
- How you wish the team to share progress
- How you expect the team to deliver the final product

When you outline how the team will share progress and final outcomes, you ensure everyone's on the same page and pursuing the same ultimate goal.

At this point, you should:

- Determine the communication cadence and touchpoints needed to have the job done
- Schedule all touchpoints: working sessions, check-in meetings, and final presentations

WHAT	WHEN	WHO	WHY
Kick-off meeting	TBD	Tiger Team	Align on work to be performed
Working sessions	Weekly	Tiger Team	Execute the work
Check in meetings	Monthly	Tiger Team + Advisors	Provide status updates
Dry run presentation	TBD	Tiger Team + Advisors	Deliver a dry run for feedback
Final presentation	TBD	Tiger Team + TBD	Roll-out final deliverables

PLANNING REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

It might not seem important, but if the data is any indicator, it's safe to say employee recognition has a pretty massive impact on engagement, loyalty, longevity, and business results. When you recognize employees for a job well done, you increase their—and your—chances of success.

It may seem impossible to keep your employees happy, especially during a crisis, but it can be done with a well-organized employee recognition program.

Here are some of the most common tools companies use to reward employees:

- Certification
- Company award
- Individual or team spotlight
- Public recognition at a team meeting
- Swag or a gift
- Pay and bonuses
- Learning and development opportunity

Remember, recognition can take many forms, depending on the company culture, the staff's expectations, and the scope of work, so do what best fits your employees and your team.

At this step, you need to establish:

- What rewards and incentives team members receive for participation
- The resources needed to recognize and reward the team's efforts
- The mode and frequency of recognition

DRAFTING A COMMUNICATION ROLL-OUT PLAN

When it comes to communication, transparency is key, so you'll want a comprehensive communication plan to make sure everyone feels informed and connected, from stakeholders and other leaders to those who are or aren't selected.

- You can use the following questions to draft an effective communication roll-out plan:
- How will you inform the company about Tiger Teams?
- What type of messages will gain support from all employees, even if not selected?
- How will you notify and enroll team members?

The more precise and purposeful your communication plan is, the more positive the attitude towards change will be, allowing employees to focus on their tasks instead of handling rumors and overcoming obstacles created by informational chaos or miscommunication.

At this point, you need to:

- Prepare drafts for your messaging to those selected and those not selected
- Identify when and how everyone will be notified

SAMPLE MESSAGING

We are launching a Tiger Team to help [insert purpose]. *We're thrilled to share that you have been selected to participate in this team, congratulations! The objectives of this team are to* [insert objectives].

We're confident that you will add tremendous value and energy to this process. This is an exciting opportunity to help us move forward and infuse what is most important across the company.

Thank you for being leaders in this effort!

DEPLOY

Now that you've defined and designed, it's time to deploy. That means notifying team members, kicking the project and team off, developing the guiding operational principles, and finally, getting to work. From here on, Tiger Team members will have their boots on the figurative ground and be working towards your greater goals.

NOTIFYING AND ENGAGING TEAM MEMBERS

You know who your Tiger Team is, but you also know who it isn't. Now it's time to gather those creative minds and encourage them to work together towards a common goal—which can sometimes be a tricky ask.

This delicate step requires two sets of messages: 1) clear instructions for the people you've selected to become Tiger Team members, and 2) a well-crafted message that encourages the rest of your employees to provide support even if not selected.

The second challenge at this stage is to get the Tiger Team members excited to be part of the project. To do so, lean into the project's biggest benefits, such as:

- Professional skills development
- Increased connections with colleagues
- Career mobility
- Organizational influence and visibility
- Personal growth and learning

Engaging team members is on-going work. People should be constantly reminded of why they've been selected in the first place and how their contributions impact the bottom line.

When the Deploy stage starts, you should:

- Execute the communication plan
- Get the team members excited about the opportunity and motivate them to get to work

MAKING THE KICK-OFF REMARKABLE

The kick-off is where your Tiger Team takes shape, so be prepared for the big moment. Everything you've worked towards will serve you to put the wheels in motion. When everybody gets together, you should develop the guiding principles that will make the Tiger Team functional. Here's what your battle plan should look like:

BEFORE THE KICK-OFF	DURING THE KICKOFF	AFTER THE KICKOFF
• Develop the agenda • Secure virtual platform • Plan experiences or gifts to make it amazing • Align with leaders and assign roles	• Establish guiding principles • Refer to charter and objectives • Provide any context • Review the roadmap, timeline, and metrics • Recognize specific achievements	• Send out the calendar of meetings • Initiate the onboarding process • Operate towards objectives

During the kick-off, you determine how the group will operate by drafting a set of guiding principles to guide actions inside the newly founded group. These should include tactics for raising issues or concerns, resolving complications, making decisions, and other strategies to ensure the initiative runs smoothly.

During the kick-off, establish principles to:

- Build trust
- Develop or deepen team unity
- Establish a team-first mentality
- Instill accountability
- Ensure all members live, love, and embrace the work they do

SAMPLE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We operate in a safe space, where team members can be open, honest, and vulnerable without fear of repercussion or judgment. We keep an open mind and assume positive intent
- We are prepared, on time, and present for our sessions
- Our purpose as a team takes precedence over personal goals or interests
- We engage in healthy debate, respecting others' points of view
- Every decision includes consideration of how this will help us achieve our intended outcome. Everyone weighs in: silence = disagreement

DO THE WORK AND TRACK PROGRESS

As a leader, you'll want to remain close as the Tiger Team project comes to fruition. Help them find common ground and evolve as a team to secure successful outcomes.

The essential questions to ask at this point are:

- What technology or apps are necessary to ensure seamless collaboration and communication?
- What resources are needed to ensure team success?

Besides providing the right tools, make sure you also track progress in a transparent, collaborative manner. Measure and share the metrics that show the work and the return on team efforts. This way, everyone will know what's working and what should be improved to increase efficiency and get more done in real-time.

What to do when the Tiger Team does the work:

- Create and maintain a project plan
- Create a way for the team to communicate and collaborate between working sessions
- Identify how the team members will hold each other accountable

DELIVER

As the project evolves, you'll want to share achievements with stakeholders and other persons of interest. Regular evaluation and reporting will help you prove that the system is working and benefitting your company—as well as easily identify gaps, issues, or bottlenecks that should be addressed.

ASSESSING IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

It's been a long journey, but you're almost finished. Your Tiger Team has proved its worth, and it's time for you to share success with the people involved and the rest of the organization.

At this stage, you should concentrate on three components that will make up your final to-do list:

- Scheduling a dry run presentation where the Tiger Team and stakeholders can align, discuss feedback, and refine the integration plan.
- Notifying the Tiger Team that they will formally present final deliverables to the entire team.
- Tracking and assessing progress to evaluate the impact of the Tiger Team's efforts.

This step will ultimately prove that your Tiger Team is not only beneficial, but adds value to the company and the people involved. Just as importantly, it will also show that your organization is ready to respond to change in a timely and effective manner through innovative business models.