



## BERLOT GROUP

*Coaching Teams . Changing Cultures*

### **Team Coaching: Connecting With Systemic Intelligence**

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**Link:** [https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2021/02/18/team-coaching-connecting-with-systemic-intelligence/?sh=1bdc98546039&fbclid=IwAR36\\_J3DnjzkziLMz9WKL9QpdqQLcE4x8Sx-boKejQheuXeRLGAMRqKdaI](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2021/02/18/team-coaching-connecting-with-systemic-intelligence/?sh=1bdc98546039&fbclid=IwAR36_J3DnjzkziLMz9WKL9QpdqQLcE4x8Sx-boKejQheuXeRLGAMRqKdaI)

Coaching a team is energizing, complex, gratifying, fun, surprising and challenging work. In fact, it is all of that and so much more.

This article shares one activity that a team coach can enable the team to "play with" to deepen learning and enable positive transformational, long-lasting impact to take place. It can also enable the team to notice what enables them to perform at their best.

#### **Team coaching and its complexity.**

Team coaching takes place in a visible environment — live online or in person. It builds on the layers of relationships in the room and beyond while acknowledging potential power struggles with team leaders and team members, strategic needs, team purpose, clients' voices, the regulator's rule and so forth. Amid these many struggles and conflicting voices, tapping into the knowledge in the system and uncovering what is *not* being said is invaluable. This requires deep listening, a kind of listening beyond words to pick up on nonverbal cues and what they mean as well.

#### **Why use a systemic focus with teams?**

Systems theory reveals that a system is the sum of its parts and that problems in the system affect the entire system. Working with a systemic lens can support balance and synergy. A constellation is a tool for discovering what is not working in a system while also unveiling a means for reaching the needed balance and healing. Just as a constellation creates meaning from a cluster of stars, a constellation tool can reveal the real shape of a team.

Systemic constellations enable us to surface systemic intelligence so that we can partner with the team to work future-past and outside-in. The Systemic Constellation process, according to a [study](#) published by the Fresh Pond Research Institute is a "trans-generational, phenomenological, therapeutic



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intervention with roots in family systems therapy, existential phenomenology and the ancestor reverence of the South African Zulus."

### **Reviewing the nightclub example.**

One example of a constellation is asking the team members to share metaphorically where they experience the team in relation to a "map" on the floor or an image on the screen of a nightclub (hotel resort, theme park, or another culturally sensitive location).

One team member may place themselves in the parking lot representing, "the team has not properly started this project yet," while another may be on the dance floor as though to say, "we are in full flow together enjoying the music," and with yet another on the balcony projecting, "I personally feel outside the team, not a full team member." Questions that can then follow include:

- What are you noticing?
- What data is present here?
- What are you surprised at?
- What resonates?
- What is happening at the team level?
- What would your stakeholders experience if they heard this?
- What is still not being said?
- What can be learned?

We can then move to explore with the same stimulus where the team members feel they need to be. For example, one may say, "behind the bar serving others" or "at the door letting others in" or "in the DJ box orchestrating."

Again, questions can follow so that similarities and differences are noticed. Drawing upon strengths is important, and retaining them, effectively aligning individuals and team tasks, is as important as working with development areas. Team "ghosts" may appear — team members who left yet their presence, influence and knowledge still remain. The activity can



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end by deciding on individual and team level actionable tasks, mapped to purpose, that will move the team forward in the right direction together.

To be most effective, this activity needs at least a two-hour time commitment for enough exploration to take place. Using the names and faces of team members in a digital meeting space can work just as well as doing this work physically in a room.

A team coach needs emotional intelligence, facilitation skills, systemic knowledge and understanding, as well as the confidence to challenge individuals and the team, including the team leader. The process of team coaching is a powerful mix of group dynamics, coaching conversations, action items and new team behavior.

Co-coaching with teams using such an activity means that team coaches learn more about themselves, their skills, their presence, their impact and about team coaching itself. Reflecting in and on the team coaching session together is a powerful way for teams to gain immense benefit from team coaching. Supervision is another safe space to share concerns, recalibrate, resource and benchmark, and it is even more important for team coaches due to its complex nature.

Team coaching requires the ability to act with confidence during constantly shifting dynamics. It is a dance that requires great agility, working in iterations and moving with the changing landscape and horizon. Team coaching can be deeply satisfying and meaningful work for the brave and the bold. Above all, team coaching can create a significant positive transformation impact for the whole system.