

THOUGHTS ON GREAT RESULTS

By Geoff Bellman

In *Extraordinary Groups*, Kathleen Ryan and I offer a set of core concepts as a lens, through which you can **see** and **be** in groups differently. This new view will enable you to take action to support your group's ability to be high performing in all ways—in achieving results and in the experience of working together. This article engages you in thinking more deeply about Great Results, one of eight performance indicators of extraordinary teams. This profile served as the basis for the development of the *Extraordinary Teams Inventory*, to be published by HRDQ Press in 2014.

Great Results is when--by many measures--a team exceeds both tangible and intangible expectations jointly held by the team and others working with the team. In an extraordinary group you'll know that Great Results are alive and well when the group frequently...

- Defines what ordinary and extraordinary results are.
- Intentionally and regularly assesses itself against expectations it holds for itself.
- Uses accomplishments along the way as opportunities to reinforce team achievement and motivation.
- Recognizes and celebrates individual accomplishment in relation to team results.
- Uses its great results to identify its positive uniqueness in the larger organization.
- Takes pride individually and collectively in what they have actually accomplished.
- Recognizes that their results include and reach beyond the tangible into less tangible realms.

Before reading on, consider:

- What themes do you see in this list?
- What behaviors could you add to this list that would be signs that one of your groups was truly outstanding when it comes to Great Results?
- What could you do or say within your team to encourage any of these behaviors?

Great Results alone do not make an extraordinary team—at least not in terms of what we learned during our field study. Let’s face it, some teams get great results through luck. And others are deprived on great results for the same reason. Examples from our field study show that luck, or outside forces, are certainly a factor. One team that worked together beautifully was highly successful on all eight indicators except Great Results. Their months of extraordinary work and their hopes for amazing accomplishment were dashed when their executive committee cancelled their project. To this day, they would say that was a matter of chance—and they still see themselves as extraordinary.

The groups we studied more often did experience Great Results: They exceeded their own expectations and the expectations of those in the organization that had chartered them. This wonderful and more public bonus sat on top of the other seven performance indicators that helped them get there. Sometimes exceeding their own expectations was a goal; always it was affirming. There’s the internal affirmation of the team knowing together that what they did was an outstanding accomplishment. Then, there’s the external affirmation that comes when important others recognize the team results that serve the larger organization.

Notice the many dimensions on which you can judge a team’s results. Everything from ‘We all became friends!’ to ‘We came in a million under budget!’ to ‘We shared a deep belief in the importance of our project!’ to ‘We did this job together faster than anyone ever has!’ And more. Given these many dimensions, team success correlates with being explicit about which results are most important and the path to getting there. It’s not as simple as, ‘We all know we are here to make money.’ Results held at that level alone are not the mark of an extraordinary team; our field study teams were very clear on that. And if you doubt it, ask your team.

Great results are not just about the eventual, important outcomes; they are also about what happens along the way. Most team members need interim markers and accomplishment to stay on track for the larger results of their work. These smaller interim signs point toward the larger success hoped for, bolstering morale and effort in the process. Great Results are both an ingredient necessary to success and an outcome of extraordinary work together.

For further thought:

- What do you see as the benefits of Great Results, including ones that are not so obvious?
- When have you experienced Great Results in your group-life?
- What are examples of action you have taken to encourage Great Results?