

Jason Mausberg
President IDS Scheer Canada
j.mausberg@ids-scheer.ca

Building a better team focuses on the need for efficient teamwork in order to maximize project or business process success. The paper first investigates what constitutes a team environment, and then, puts forward an educational model/framework in order to better foster a team environment. By using the ARIS tool, businesses and/ or project teams can develop evaluative and visual aids to build a more efficient team.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teamwork within and across organizations and cultures is a key criterion in the success of the development and implementation of new business modelling structures, data standards, and business process improvement initiatives. A lack of change management and cooperation at a team level is a primary reason for the failure of these initiatives. The inability for organizations, inter-organizations, and development groups to work as an efficiently functioning team can lead to failure or less than ideal results.

In this paper I propose to attempt the following tasks: first, to increase awareness of what best constitutes a team environment, and secondly, to provide suggestions as to how to create the skills at an individual and team level necessary to foster this kind of environment. To better understand what constitutes a team environment, various examples/ levels of team environments will be examined. The ARIS tool will be discussed as a platform and a central framework around which workshops can be based to help the individual and the team develop what I refer to as “team thinking” skills

The paper will be divided into three major sections:

- Exploring what constitutes a team environment
- Examining a process to help build skills at the individual level and the team level that will increase team work
- Brief discussion of how to utilize the ARIS toolset in the team building exercise

2. UNDERSTANDING THE TEAM ENVIRONMENT

Teamwork can be defined as joint work towards a common end or goal performed by a group of people organized to work together. This definition of teamwork can be interpreted to allow for the possibility of individuals working on individual tasks with a common goal.

Individual organizations, development symposiums, and cooperative development groups often define their working environment as team oriented (Hammer, 2003). Common to mission statements of such groups is the definition of goals around which periodic meetings are held to update other team members on progress. In contrast, mountain emergency rescue teams work in a much more integrated manner. In fact lives depend on the ability for rescue workers to support each other. Within the emergency rescue environment, the helicopter pilot is dependent upon the evacuation team to determine a suitable area for pick up. An error at the top of a mountain in a wind or snowstorm in terms of wind direction and proximity to the mountain peaks could result in the death of the pilot and or team. Similarly ropes and rescue attempts are most often performed by two to three individuals working as one unit with one person holding or securing the ropes/ safety systems and the others securing the victim and transporting the victim to safety. Clearly there are various levels in which a team functions. In order to assist and develop the skills required to foster a team environment, it is critical for the individuals to understand the differences amongst various “team” environments.

I would like to use the comparison of America’s pastime, baseball, to the global sport, soccer, to gain a better understanding of teamwork. Prior to examining these two sports, it is important to understand that a broader definition of a team environment in sports could include social interaction, commitment to the team, and a sense of belonging. However the primary goal in professional sports is to be victorious. Victory is achieved through on field processes which are fostered through morale and “off field” bonding. Ultimately it is the processes on the playing field that illustrate the results of teamwork and showcase teamwork in action. For this reason I will focus and discuss on field activity.

When examining different levels of teamwork, a framework of questions needs to be developed. These questions could include:

- What level of interaction do team members have with each other?
- How often does this level of interaction occur?
- How dependent are individuals on each other in order to achieve a positive outcome?
- How fluid/ dynamic is the environment in which the team performs?

2.1 Soccer or Baseball, which is more team oriented?

In examining the team concept within the sports of baseball and soccer, attention will be focused only on the field of play (the actual process of competing within a game). Based on the questions above, soccer would be considered a sport requiring greater interaction amongst the players necessary for a positive outcome. In relation to the question above regarding interaction, frequency, dependency, and fluidity, consider the following points in regards to this argument:

- In soccer there are 10 players and a goalie. Within any given game it is common for any player to pass the ball to another player including the goalie. Within baseball the interaction of players is limited defensively to only certain players (for example a left fielder would never throw the ball to a right fielder). In addition in baseball the offensive interaction, which is not a pass/ receive

relationship but more a succession of individual offensive attempts at bat is limited to only the players in close proximity within the batting line up.

- The level of interaction in soccer is continuous. Players are constantly running and readjusting their positions based on ball position and other player positioning (from their own team and the competition). Baseball does involve readjustment in positioning based on the same factors however the level of readjustment is much more restricted from a distance perspective and much more limited due to the fluidity of soccer versus baseball. In terms of interaction from a passing perspective, soccer revolves around passing where in baseball passing is limited to the throwing that occurs in an one dimensional basis on a single play.
- In soccer passing/ball movement is fundamental to achieving a positive outcome of scoring a goal or defending the other team. In baseball individual success can dictate an entire game for example a home run with no one on or a perfectly pitched game can dictate the entire outcome of a game.
- The fluid/ continuous nature of soccer requires significantly more coordination as well as infinite passing possibilities compared to the stop and go timing of baseball. Within the stop and go flow of the game of baseball, decisions can be made at an individual level to change strategy, introduce other players, rearrange defences, etc. In soccer with a continuous flow the players must instinctively work as a unit to achieve success.

It is important to understand the subtle and not so subtle differences in team interaction in order to apply these differences to the more complex business environment. Whether you are in agreement or not with the comparisons between baseball and soccer, the important aspect is to analyse the differences and thus gain a better understanding of what constitutes teamwork. Sport can be considered a less complex environment because the focus is well understood and universally shared (that of winning) and the result very well defined for each competition (the score).

2.2 Strategies to create teamwork

There are many variables that contribute to developing an environment that will foster teamwork. Some of these traditional variables include: remuneration plans, leadership styles, motivational tools, corporate structures, methods of communication, methods of problem solving and idea generation.

In this paper I will not discuss how the above variables contribute and enhance a team environment. Rather, I will focus on the ways in which a team applies its strengths and weaknesses in the midst of changing environmental factors to perform business practices. The purpose of this paper is not to develop a training schedule or plan but to put forth an educational training model that would lead to an increased awareness of what constitutes a team environment. This educational model is built with the following principles in mind:

- Team skills are learned first at an individual level and then refined and improved in a group environment. Using the soccer analogy passing and kicking a ball are both skills that are paramount in the play of a team. These skills when combined together are defined as team play, however these skills occur at an individual level as part of the team process. Similarly in business, individuals must first be educated in the skills necessary to function as an efficient team member prior to becoming immersed in collective processes.

- Processes/ functions of a team occur at the individual level. So once again process knowledge must first be grasped on an individual basis before the individual can interact with the team. Using the soccer metaphor, player positioning is based on ball position and other player's movements. A player must understand moving without the ball prior to interacting with other players.
- Team skills and creating the most efficient team environment are both highly complex areas and can be improved on an ongoing basis. The framework that I am suggesting can be simply used as a starting point. The most important principle is the ongoing discussion and analysis of what is responsible for fostering the team environment.
- The business environment is ever changing. An optimal process employing highly aggressive sales tactics in a growing industry such as high tech in the late nineties may be entirely inappropriate today. Today a more customer centric process involving increased customer support and education may be more appropriate for this industry.

3. BUILDING A TEAM ENVIRONMENT

The following educational model and steps could be used to foster an increased teamwork environment:

- Minimize the focus on the individual self.
- Determine and document individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Compare strengths and weaknesses with others within the immediate team.
- Examine and document processes that need to be executed in order to achieve success.
- Map individual strengths to the process model. Determine primary and secondary roles of individuals in relation to the processes.
- Identify business environment variables that affect these processes, which change over time.
- Discuss optimal applications of people's skills to the processes within changing environments.

Within each step different workshops and/ or teachings methods could be used to educate the participants. The paper will not discuss how each workshop should occur and should be structured. The paper will focus on the key objectives of each step and the importance of each step within the framework of the ARIS software tool.

4. USING ARIS TO FOSTER TEAM BUILDING

The ARIS Toolset enables the enterprise and inter-enterprise wide design of business processes, as well as their analysis and optimisation. In addition ARIS allows for the identification and graphic application of individual skill sets. The output of the ARIS toolset is multi level/ intersecting process modelling across data, process, and people plains. The ARIS tool can be used to systematically go through the steps identified in section 3 outlining how to build a team environment (with the exception of "self negation"). See Figure 1 on the following page for a graphical depiction of the steps in ARIS.

4.1 Self negation / relational conception of the self

The first task in building a cohesive team is to convince all team members that a team functions as a whole and that success is ultimately measured at a team level not an individual level. This task will be difficult to accomplish, as individuals are motivated based on their own personal success. The Western mindset typically revolves around promotion, individual bonuses, and self-advancement. Much has been written on the subject of team dynamics and motivation (for a more detailed discussion on this see Chris Harris and/ or Daniel Levi).

In an effort to promote the team concept, a more detailed discussion of an individual versus a relational conception of the self should be discussed which would highlight the array of dependencies that exist within daily life and the interdependencies that are necessary to achieve business success. This objective would not be mapped in the ARIS tool other than highlighted in an initial overview diagram.

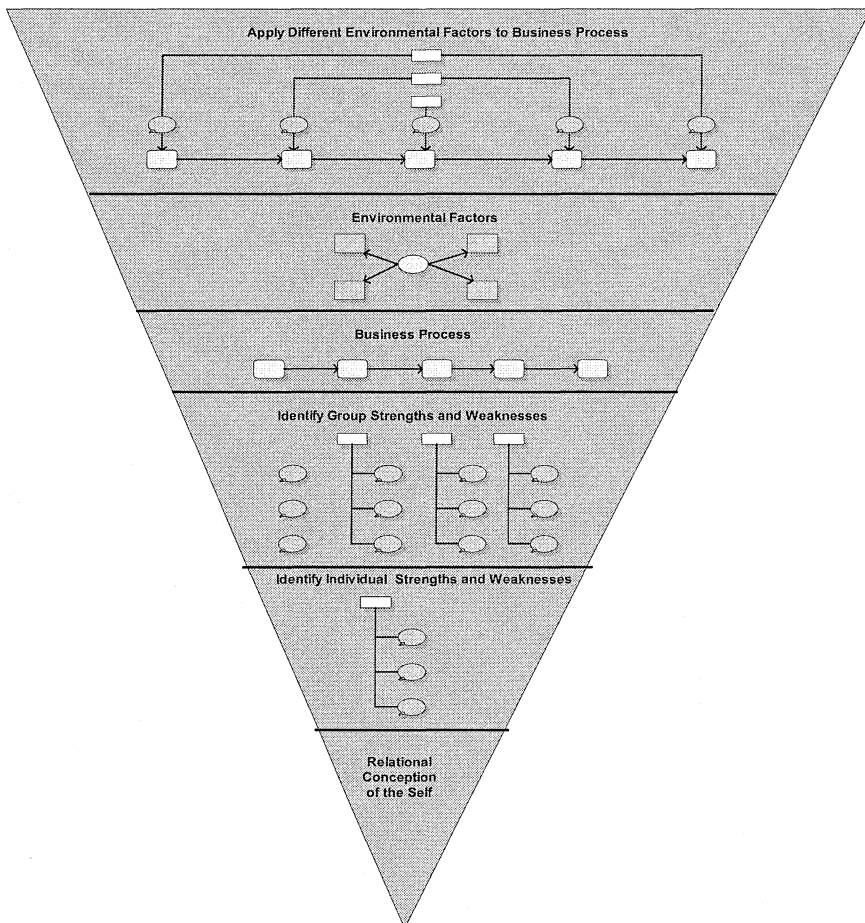


Figure 1. Team Building in ARIS

Figure 1, which is an overview of the Team Building model, illustrates the levels / steps in the education process. The model moves from the bottom upwards starting with the individual and building upwards with team members, process, and the business environment.

Figure 2 represents the 2nd level of information in ARIS. The idea is that in ARIS you can “drill down” from one level to the next. In this case, the 2nd level diagrams illustrate “identifying individual skills” and “analysing skills on a group basis”.

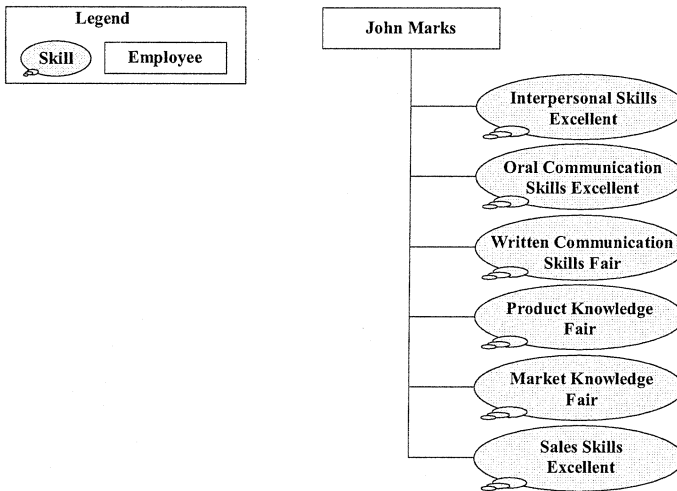


Figure 2a. Identify Individual skills (Self Assessment)

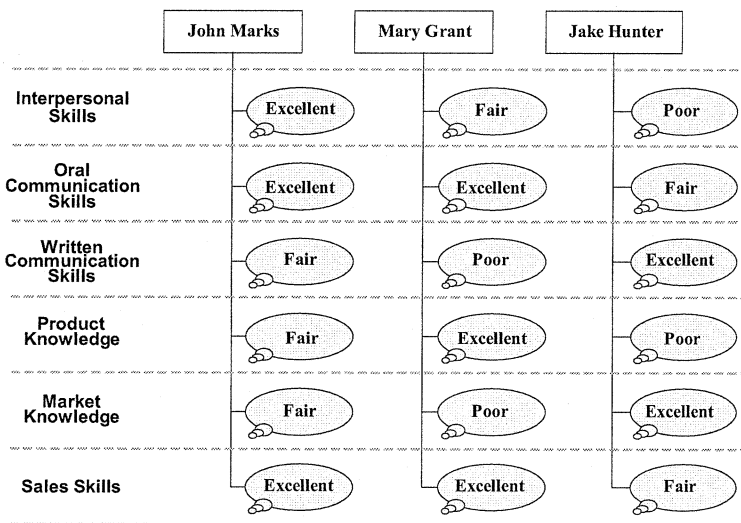


Figure 2b. Identify Strength and Weaknesses on a Group Basis

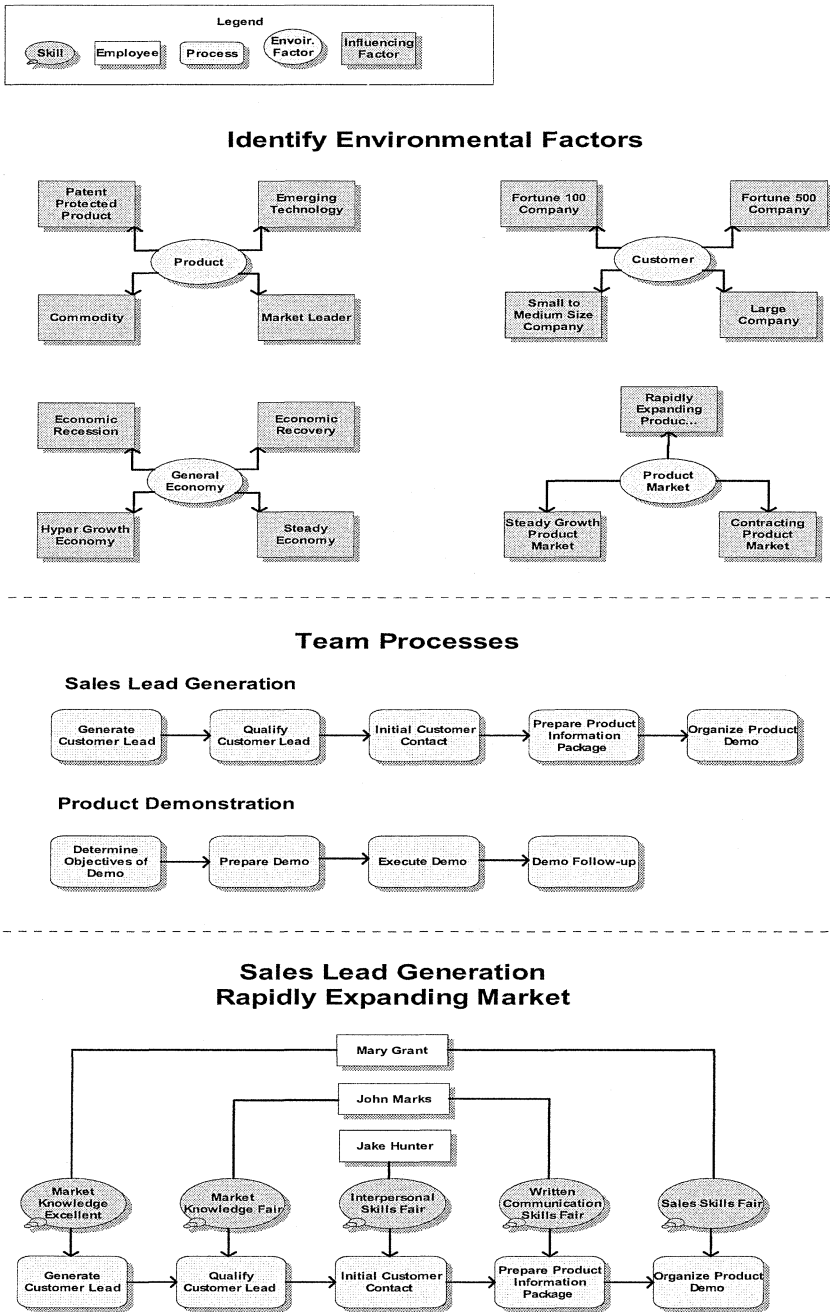


Figure 3. Second level “drill downs” from Figure 1.

4.2 Identify individual strengths and weaknesses (figure 2)

The objective of this level is to create awareness within the individual to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of others. The tendency in performing this task is to determine with precision exact strengths and weaknesses of the individual. While this accuracy is desirable, the goal in performing this analysis is to create awareness for the need to identify individual skills so as to maximize a team's ability to best perform processes. As progression through this model continues, individual strengths and weaknesses can be revisited and redefined.

4.3 Compare strengths and weaknesses across the group (figure 2)

Once individual assessments are complete, group assessments can be performed. The objective in this step is to determine at a group level where strengths exist at a primary and secondary level. By attempting to define where strengths lie within the group, the team members will gain a better understanding of when it is appropriate to use such strengths and how to minimize any weaknesses.

4.4 Define key team processes (figure 3)

Key business, project, or development processes should be documented to act as a framework for the application of individual strengths. Using ARIS modelling techniques, processes should be discussed and documented.

4.5 Define business environmental factors (figure 3)

Define environmental factors that are relevant to the business environment. These factors would typically be categorized into four areas product, customer, market maturity, and economically related. It is not essential to have an exhaustive list. The important part of the modelling exercise is to understand that under different circumstances different strengths of the group would be applied.

4.6 Analyse the processes based on different environment factors (figure 3)

Within this step, first examine a process without considering environmental factors. For example, if the typical sales process entails an initial site visit, followed by a technical presentation, and subsequently presentation of a contract one week later, then examine this sales process. Do not examine variations at this point. Apply an individual name (s) to processes that possess the skill (s) to best complete the task. There may be discussion as the best type of skills for a given task. Do not try to be overly precise in the mapping, instead record a second name (s) if required. Following the initial exercise of examining a process in its' basic element, rework the process using different environmental elements.

5. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER WORK

As teams go out to face business challenges, within and across organizations, the ARIS tool could be used as a basis for process modelling, teamwork facilitation, change management, simulation, and performance management. The teamwork model that has been put forth starts with a single task of re-examining the self from a relational perspective and ends up with a complex matrix involving people, process, and environment, which in turn circles back to a reflection on the individual.

Similarly the ARIS tool encompasses the complete lifecycle of team/ project mission statement development, strategic direction, project execution, performance monitoring, and readjustment of goals.

Globalisation, end consumer sophistication, and advances in technology, have contributed to dramatic increases in the capabilities of software packages and business modelling tools. The level of sophistication both from a process, business, and technology perspective is increasing. Despite the increase in sophistication of tools and project approach, the ability to manage change is still a key factor in determining success. At the core of change management is teamwork- teamwork within a company, teamwork across organizations, and teamwork within development and standards bodies.

Much has been studied and written about change management. I believe that organizations that function in a team environment are most able to adapt to change. The question becomes what is a team environment and how does an organization create a team environment? This question is not easily addressed and the answer can always be improved upon. In this paper I have set forth a basic educational model built upon the ARIS tool that focuses on the complexities and intersectionality of people's skill sets, business processes, and changing environmental factors. By using ARIS to apply this model, an increased awareness of individual's roles and intersectionality to a team process can be better understood, resulting in a more efficient performance for the team.

REFERENCES

- August-Wilhelm Scheer, Ferri Abolhassan, Wolfram Jost, Mathias Kirchmer (2003) Business Process Change Management ARIS in Practice, foreword by Michael Hammer . Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag
- August- Wilhelm Scheer (1994) Business Process Engineering. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo: Springer-Verlag
- Chris Harris (2003) Building Innovative Teams. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Daniel Levi (2001) Group Dynamics for Teams. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications
- James T. Scarnati (2001) Team Performance Management. Bradford:2001.Vol. 7, Iss. ½:pg.5
- Joannie M. Schrof (1996) US News & World Report. August 5, 1996 v121 n5 pg 53
- Joni Daniels (2004) The Collaborative Experience. Industrial Management, Norcross: May/Jun 2004. Vol.46, Iss. 3; pg 27
- Melissa C. Thomas-Hunt, Katherine W. Phillips (2003) Leading and Managing People in the Dynamic Organization, edited by Randall S. Peterson and Elizabeth A. Mannix. Managing Teams in the Dynamic Organization: The Effects of Revolving Membership and Changing Task Demands on Expertise and Status in Groups, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Patricia K. Felkins, B.J. Chakiris, Kenneth N. Chakiris (1993) Change Management, A Model for Effective Organizational Performance. Teamwork as a Structure for Change,. Kraus Organization Limited, New York