

Deloitte.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Stories of purpose and lasting impact



**Forget the dream; it's all
about the seam**

Making the team work—stitching together an unstoppable team for a bold new venture

22 LABS x 17 EXECUTIVES = **1 UNSTOPPABLE TEAM**

THE SITUATION

In the National Football League, teams played 16-game seasons from 1978–2020 (minus two strike-shortened seasons). And in those 34 seasons, two teams won a grand total of zero games in a single season: the Cleveland Browns in 2017 and the Detroit Lions in 2008. (Since the shift three years ago to a 17-game season, no team has gone 0 for 17.)

To be clear: these were teams comprising some of the best athletes on the planet, players who had advanced to the very top of the profession. And yet, as *teams*, they struggled—catastrophically.

The question of what makes some teams excel (and some teams not) has vexed coaches, teachers, directors, conductors... and business leaders ever since we have had teams. And it was a question that was very much on the mind of the CEO who would be taking the wheel of a carve-out from an extremely large, global, and complex public company. The CEO knew the success of the newly independent, soon-to-be publicly traded, enterprise depended in part upon his executive team's ability to come together as a unified, aligned, and trusting team that could operate as more than the sum of its parts. But how to get there?



THE SOLVE

Through his CFO and CHRO, the CEO was familiar with two [Deloitte Greenhouse® Experience](#) offerings: [The Executive Transition Lab](#) and [Team Alchemy](#). The Executive Transition Lab is a single-day experience designed to help recently appointed executives make a successful and efficient transition into their new executive role—and, by its nature, is focused on the individual. Team Alchemy, on the other hand, is very much focused on the team, with Deloitte bringing a reliable framework for helping to uncover the mystery behind high-performing teams. In collaboration with Deloitte, the team built a novel approach: 17 individual Transition Labs combined with three Team Alchemy sessions and additional full-team labs. Together, these experiences would form a sort of crucible in which these executives would build trust, gain clarity and alignment on multiple priorities shared across leadership team members, and come together as a unified team built for success. For example, this novel approach allowed the team to align their individual Executive agendas with the broader Enterprise agenda and priorities. In many cases, the pressure inherent in standing up a new company, combined with the need to move quickly to establish credibility with investors, can create friction between these agendas; the lab series design minimized that friction by enabling each executive to look at what they needed to accomplish from the lenses of *both* the Enterprise and their own functional teams.

An initial Team Alchemy survey revealed that trust was a big element for this team to focus on, in particular moving from “transactional trust” to a higher order of trust. And so the topic of trust was built into both the team experiences and the individual labs. For each of the individual Transition Labs, the teams also dug into practical, pragmatic concerns regarding building trust as a team—with all 17 members of the Executive Leadership team identifying specific actions and behaviors to adopt, individually and within each of their organizations. And organically, these actions and behaviors then cascaded down into each leader’s broader organizations, helping to foster not only a success Executive Leadership team, but successful teams and *teaming* throughout the entire organization.

All of these labs were executed in safe environments where open, frank conversations were the norm—in the process, promulgating a new and enhanced culture of “compassionate candor” within the team. One example? A February 14 team lab in which executives wrote “valentines” to each other to better understand how they perceived each other and build trust!

STITCHING TOGETHER A TEAM WITH **TRUST AT ITS CENTER**

THE IMPACT

In the months since these labs were delivered, the company has completed its carve-out and transitioned tens of thousands of employees as it has begun operating as its own independent, publicly traded company. And in the process, the Executive Leadership team has deftly prepared for analyst calls and built its operating and reporting structure—daunting tasks all, and each executed cohesively as a unified team.

The individual:

Looking at the impact on *individual relationships*, one particular unhealthy and disjointed reporting relationship within the team was rightsized through the labs and work via a reorienting of objectives and focus on avoiding unforced errors. The relationship was greatly improved—with the reporting executive in the pair now leading a major region!

The team:

Looking at a specific *team* success, the Executive Leadership team has been able to tackle a cost and operating model transformation of a sort that is typically quite fraught in complex organizations like this one. Here, the team has completed the project in nearly half the time originally allotted for the transformation!



BECAUSE GREAT TEAMS DON'T
TAKE LUCK—THEY TAKE ALCHEMY

LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



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