



SEVEN-PRINCIPLE (7P) MODEL

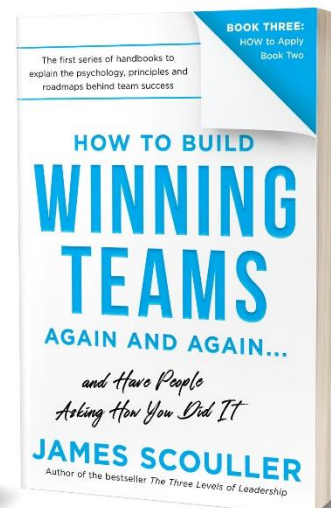
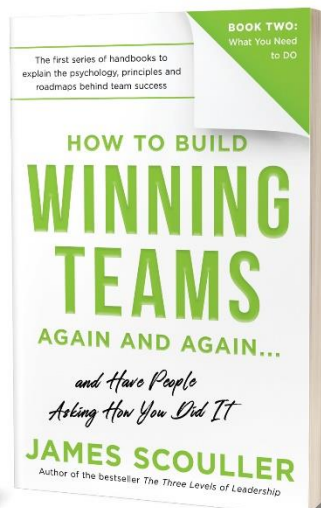
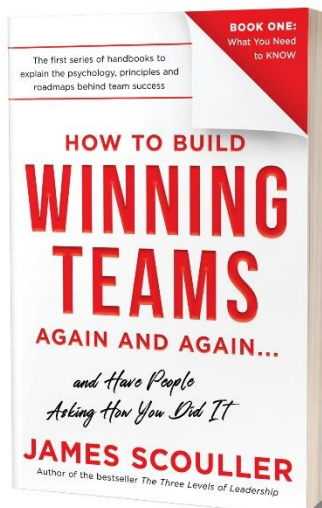
06 Team Ethos & Standards Questions

From James Scouller, author of the trilogy, **How To Build Winning Teams Again And Again**

Visit his website: www.leadershipmasterysuite.com



A 7P TOOL FROM JAMES SCOULLER, AUTHOR OF THE TRILOGY **HOW TO BUILD WINNING TEAMS AGAIN AND AGAIN**



SEVEN-PRINCIPLE ACTION MODEL: QUESTIONS

FOR DEFINING TEAM ETHOS & STANDARDS

Although there's no formula I know of for defining your team's ethos and standards, if I'm coaching a client team, I start with their values and then move on to behavioural standards. You might find these questions stimulate your thinking:

Team ethos (set of values)

- If you are to fulfil your team's **basic purpose**, what **character qualities** must you all display?
- Given your team's **context** – recent history, strategic issues, your different backgrounds and responsibilities outside this team – which **character qualities** must you all demonstrate if you're to succeed in delivering results together?
- If together you are to solve problems, create things, execute successfully and generally get things done at the speed you need, what **common mindsets** (ways of thinking) or **beliefs** (ideas you hold to be true) must guide your attitudes to one another?
- If together you are to successfully connect with and influence people **beyond the team** (especially if you're a leadership team needing to build a particular culture), which **character qualities** must you all exemplify?
- If yours is an indefinite-lifespan team, what **legacy** do you want to leave behind for the people you serve or those who'll come after you?
- In **tough times**, when you're not getting the results you want, or the team is facing criticism, what **qualities** will you display to get yourselves through it?

Team standards (of behaviour)

- When you're working **together**, what behaviours will best **reflect** the values and beliefs underpinning your ethos?
- When you're working **together**, what behaviours will most obviously **violate** your ethos?
- When you're connecting with or influencing people **outside the team**, what behaviours will best **reflect** your ethos?
- When you're connecting with or influencing people **outside the team**, what behaviours will most obviously **violate** your ethos?
- What are the two or three essential "housekeeping disciplines" you think you **must** adopt if you are to succeed?

On the next page I offer some advice on how to approach these questions...

Advice in approaching these questions

I'd offer four pieces of advice as you work with your teammates in thinking about your **team values**.

1. One, insist that members are **clear** and **specific**. There must be little – and ideally no – room for ambiguity. To help with this, I suggest you either ask for examples of this value in action or suggest that members agree a short paragraph explaining it, written in plain English without management jargon or clichés. That way, people know what it looks like.
2. Two, choose only the top 3-5 values as you don't want a long shopping list.
3. Three, if you have to edit them down to 3-5, don't be tempted to combine the values as that only blurs them, reducing their usefulness.
4. Four, spell out the consequences of serious or repeated violations.

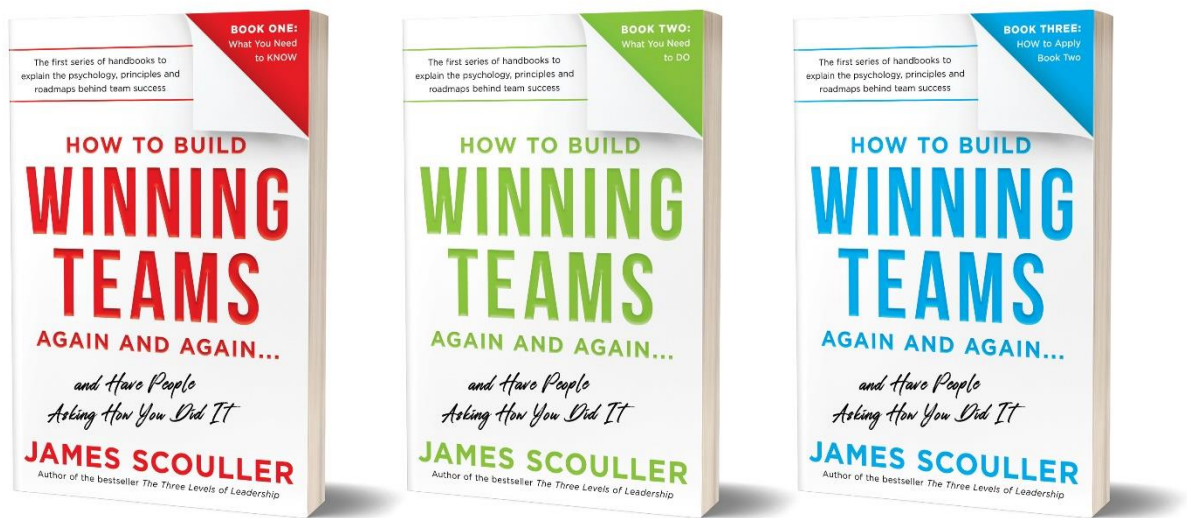
On **team standards**, I'd limit them to a **maximum of six** because, again, you don't want a shopping list. The "housekeeping disciplines" referred to in the last question can cover whatever's important to the team, for example: attendance, punctuality, what to do about mobile phones and laptops or Slack messaging, or what can be allowed to interrupt meetings.

You may find the process of defining your ethos and standards isn't straightforward, especially in more senior teams.

But the experience of discussing and agreeing this stuff helps the team address all three psychological challenges – Commit, Combust and Combine – because it pushes people to get real with one another.

It's worth going through it.

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