

Dream Team Formulas

Paula Kramer adds new formulas as she identifies them.

Dream Team Formula #1

Function: Creating a new version of something that's been done before

Formula: Old hands who had been colleagues on another team/project
Old hands working together for the first time
One rookie

Examples: Groups that brought plays to Broadway
Teams that published high impact science papers

A team of researchers identified this formula. They used the Broadway musical *West Side Story* as one example of this dream team formula.

The number of functions necessary for the task determined the size of the team. Each team member worked on one function.

The researchers described a dream team as "the right balance of diversity and cohesion". Diversity means new collaborations. Cohesion means repeat collaborations.

"Dream Teams Thrive On Mix Of Old And New Blood"

Northwestern University

May 3, 2005

<http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2005/05/network.html>

"Recipe for building 'dream teams' revealed"

Shaoni Bhattacharya

New Scientist

April 28, 2005

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn7322-recipe-for-building-dream-teams-revealed/>

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Dream Team Formula #2

Function: Creating something entirely new
(Also see Dream Team Formula #3)

Formula: One old hand
Rookies
Rookie colleagues

Examples: Richard Perez, *Home Power Magazine*
with
Founding members of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Old hand Richard Perez called for a people's renewable energy fair in *Home Power Magazine*. He was tired of renewable energy fairs inside big cement buildings hosted by corporations. The rookies who answered his call founded the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Their annual renewable energy fair is now the longest running and most successful renewable energy fair in the world.

A number of the rookies had worked together creating a food cooperative. Other rookies were strangers to everyone. All of the rookies were new to hosting a renewable energy fair.

The Energy Fair: Getting Our Energy from the Sun for 20 Years
Book
Midwest Renewable Energy Association, 2009

Renewing Energies: The Ingredients for Spectacular Success
Documentary
Paula M. Kramer, 2007

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Dream Team Formula #3

Function: Creating something entirely new
(Also see Dream Team Formula #2)

Formula: Old hands who are rookies at the task
Old hand colleagues who are rookies at the task

Examples: The media team of eight people who got voters to the polls
to vote for presidential candidate Barack Obama

These eight people were all old hands at social media. Some were old hand colleagues at campaign work. All were in their twenties. The "old hands" designation depends on experience, not age. This group created a first time ever Internet platform to mobilize the grassroots community that got Barack Obama elected president.

Little Bets: How Breakthrough Ideas Emerge from Small Discoveries

Peter Sims

New York: Free Press, pages 55-58

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Dream Team Formula #4

Function: Improving communities

Formula: Government leaders
Business leaders
Nonprofit innovators
Celebrity donors

Examples: Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)

CGI brought people from different sectors around the world together to discuss solutions and commit to action. Each action plan had to be new, specific, and measurable.

Whether or not you like the Clintons, this formula is a dream team formula. It includes the diversity necessary for dream team success. Even if the team members are rookies at improving communities, they are old hands in their own fields. Making sure the team includes old hand colleagues provides cohesion. See Dream Team Formulas #1 and #3.

Use this formula with requirements that measure commitment and success. The Clintons, for instance, did not invite donors back to meetings if they failed to donate what they promised to donate.

"How Clinton Changed Philanthropy"

Bryan Watson

Time Magazine

October 1, 2012

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2125006,00.html>

"Nearing its second decade, how will CGI evolve?"

Floyd Whaley

Devex

September 16, 2013

<https://www.devex.com/news/nearing-its-second-decade-how-will-cgi-evolve-81801>

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Dream Team Formula #5

Function: Giving people the skills they need to succeed

Formula: Old hands training rookies to become posses of rookie colleagues helping each other succeed

Examples: The Posse Foundation

Using its Dynamic Assessment Process, the Posse Foundation identifies promising high school students from cities across the country. These students come together in posses of 10 to learn team building, group support, cross-cultural communication, leadership, becoming agents of change, and academic excellence. Posses attend college together and help each other succeed. Posse members graduate at a rate of 90 percent.

possefoundation.org

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Dream Team Formula #6

Function: Providing recommendations for success based on research

Formula: Old hands and old hand colleagues working to benefit a rookie

Examples: Consortium of Behavioral Scientists (COBS)

COBS was a group of academic advisers working to benefit President Barack Obama. President Obama was an old hand politician, but he was a rookie in behavioral science. COBS suggested ways for Obama's 2012 campaign to counter false rumors, characterize Mitt Romney, and get voters to the polls.

"Academic 'Dream Team' Helped Obama's Effort"

Benedict Carey

The New York Times

November 12, 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/health/dream-team-of-behavioral-scientists-advised-obama-campaign.html>

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Dream Team Formula #7

Function: Repeatedly performing a challenging task in demanding circumstances

Formula: Old hand colleagues who are both people-oriented (can have fun with each other) and task-oriented (are good at the task) with a broad range of backgrounds and personalities

Examples: Network, the team with the most wins in the worlds' largest Trivia contest. Thom Aylesworth organized Network when he was about 15 years old.

Trivia is hosted through the University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point, Wisconsin (UWSP).

Thom Aylesworth chose friends he thought would be good at the game and be fun to play with. He purposefully chose friends from a broad range of backgrounds with different personalities. When he made these decisions. Aylesworth's reason for starting the team was to take advantage of an opportunity to stay up late and have fun with friends. Most of Network's original members are still on the team.

Network lost for the first several years, but kept moving up in the rankings. They placed 1st through 3rd for at least thirty years. They began as all rookies and become old hand colleagues together.

Trivialtown (Documentary)

Trivial Pictures, 2006

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The Rookie Factor

Thom Aylesworth was only about 15 years old when he put together a team that became the winningest team in Trivia history (Dream Team Formula #7). A 15 year old rookie came up with a dream team formula all by himself. Thom demonstrates why every team should have at least one rookie.

The Orientation Factor

Using the formulas does not necessarily guarantee a dream team. You can increase your chances of success by paying attention to task and people orientation.

Match people-oriented people to people-oriented positions.

Match task-oriented people to task-oriented positions.

Match people who can perform a task cooperatively with other people to positions that require both task and people skills.

Visit the website below for information on identifying behavior styles. The Quick Look section in S&R Keys will help you identify people with both task and people skills. S&R Keys is a PDF download on the website's home page.

smilesparksuccess.com

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The Friend Factor

We often enjoy working with our friends, but sometimes we shouldn't work with them. The research team that discovered the formula for creative dream teams (Formula #1) found that the least successful teams were composed of people who had all worked together before, as in friends working only with friends.

On the other hand, Network (Formula #7) is a dream team of only friends who have worked together for decades. The difference lies in team function. Team creativity requires a wide variety of perspectives in situation, education, experience, age, gender, culture, race, connections, region of origin, etc. Repetitive tasks require mastered techniques. While Network's team includes members from a broad range of backgrounds with different personalities, they were similar ages living in the same area when the team was born. They had similarities as well as differences.

Work with friends when they fit the function of your team. Be understanding when *you* don't fit the function of a friend's team.

If you want to work only with your friends, find a repetitive and challenging task in demanding circumstances. Then you can have all kinds of fun while becoming old hand colleagues together.