

WORLD CLASS TEAMS

**WORKING ACROSS
BORDERS**

Lynda C. McDermott, Nolan Brawley, & William W. Waite

WORLD- CLASS TEAMS

Working Across Borders

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*To Carylyn and Sasha,
who provide balance and love to our team,
and to Prakong,
who has the patience of Job.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origins of this book date back to July 1996, at a place called Chateau Limelette, just outside of Brussels, Belgium. We had just completed the successful launch of our third European product team for Pfizer Europe and were feeling quite pleased with the results of our “High-Performance Team Development” process and the accolades we had been receiving from our clients. In his strong Texan drawl, Nolan turned to Lynda and said, “By damn, I think we’re on to something here—and I don’t think anyone has put it all together—at least not in writing. . . . Why don’t we write a book?”

Lynda, having already authored one book that took a year and a half of weekends out of her life, was less than enthusiastic. Bill, who had consulted on and supported her in that effort, was also clearly not interested in losing his partner to another long project. But as the summer went on and we continued to work with other teams in various companies worldwide, the three of us continued to talk about a book. Finally, in the spirit of “global teamwork,” we developed our book proposal via e-mail when Bill and I were in China adopting our daughter and Nolan was working in Turkey. We found an agent who was enthusiastic about the concept and, before we knew it, we were committed to sharing with the world our extensive work and experiences with cross-functional/cross-cultural teams.

As with all of our projects, this one could not have been successfully completed without much help along the way. We went back to our clients for insights and feedback, and we sought help from new contacts—in surveys and interviews, and on the Internet—as we developed our ideas. Although many of them are named in the book, we have used pseudonyms for others who preferred anonymity. We are grateful to all those who contributed to these chapters in so many ways. These wonderful folks include Frank Hickson, Dick Levine, Paul Maloney, Mike Halloran, Julie O’Mara, Vivian Eyre, Paul Habegger, and our colleagues at Management Research Group.

Special thanks go to John Willig, our agent (and Kathryn Hall, our wise publicist who suggested him to us), who somehow knew that despite the proliferation of books on “teams,” this one would fill a unique niche in the marketplace. He wisely guided us from the book proposal phase right through to final hard copy.

From the very beginnings of the book proposal, we have had the continued support of our colleagues. At EquiPro International, Steve

Monaghan has helped to keep our business growing and our clients' needs met. He deserves a gold medal for having lived through two book projects since joining our staff in 1991. Stefanie Robinson was in on the ground floor of researching other companies' experience with global teams, and Steve Potter also lent a helping hand. Our heartfelt thanks also go to our colleagues at Pfizer: Willy Hernandez, Iraj Ajir, Jeff Blakely, and Angella Jones, and to all the Pfizer teams that helped us to learn and develop our ideas. Our sincere appreciation to all of them.

This book would not have happened were it not for the effort of a global team. We are deeply grateful to Karen Petty, a premier writer and editor with expertise in management development topics, who joined our team to help pull the final product together. As you will learn in this book, teams can only achieve high performance if they recognize their own limitations and then reach out for help. Thank goodness Karen was available. Much credit for our "performance results" goes to her wordsmithing talents and her steadfast commitment to the team.

Finally, we want to thank our families and personal support group who helped us meet our deadlines while still having fun along the way. To Prakong Brawley, Nolan's dear sweetheart and loving wife, who immersed herself in New York University studies while we labored. To Carylyn, Lynda and Bill's precious daughter, who, with the loving help of her caregiver, Lora Yusupova, has grown into a joyful two-year-old while we completed the book. And particular thanks to Rick Beck for his moral support during a critical phase of the writing.

We all agree that writing a book is a bit like being a parent. As we close the pages on the writing stage, with both incredible joy and some sadness, we will now move on to the next stage of our own team development.

LYNDA CARYL McDERMOTT
NOLAN BRAWLEY
WILLIAM W. WAITE

New York City
August 1998

THE AUTHORS

Lynda C. McDermott is President of EquiPro International, Ltd., an international strategic and organizational consulting firm headquartered in New York City. She and her firm are recognized by clients and colleagues as experts in leadership and team development.

The firm's client list of corporations and professional service firms includes Pfizer Inc., Coopers & Lybrand, Hearst Magazines, Virgin Atlantic Airlines, Mobil Oil, and Consolidated Edison Company.

Before starting her own firm in 1987, Ms. McDermott spent over eight years as a management consultant with Ernst & Young and KPMG Peat Marwick. Prior to that, she was a line manager and internal organization development consultant for Ohio Bell and AT&T.

Ms. McDermott has a BS degree in psychology from Miami University and a Master of Science in organizational development from Bowling Green State University. She served over ten years on the National Board of Directors of the American Society for Training and Development, the world's leading and largest professional organization. Ms. McDermott received the ASTD's Torch Award in 1986 for outstanding contributions to the profession and, in 1983, was selected by *Working Woman* magazine as one of "73 Women Ready to Run Corporate America." She is a frequent author for the *Training and Development Journal* and *Accounting Today*, and her first book, *Caught in the Middle: How to Survive and Thrive in Today's Management Squeeze*, was a bestseller and designated as a main selection for the Newbridge Executive Book Club.

Ms. McDermott has been a featured speaker for over fifteen years at international professional and trade conferences, such as ASTD's International Conference. She is sought out as an interviewee by media such as CNBC, Wall Street Journal Radio, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, *Boardroom Reports*, *Training Magazine*, *New York*, *Newsday*, *Working Woman*, *New Woman*, and *Executive Directions*.

Nolan Brawley is Associate Director of Pharmaceutical Development and Training for Pfizer, Inc., a leading pharmaceutical company. Mr. Brawley specializes in the design and implementation of programs and processes aimed at improving field force productivity. He consults regularly with 52 international subsidiaries on a wide range of organizational issues.

During a career at Pfizer that spans 18 years, Mr. Brawley has held numerous positions. Initially a field sales representative in Dallas, Texas, he has since served in several key positions in domestic and international sales development and training along with professional relations.

Mr. Brawley began his career in the public education arena and at one point became the youngest athletic director in Texas at a major high school in Fort Worth. He supervised a staff of 13 people.

Mr. Brawley has a Master's degree in biology and a BS degree in mathematics and biology from Texas Christian University.

William W. Waite is Executive Vice President of EquiPro International, Ltd., headquartered in New York City. Over the past several years with EquiPro, Mr. Waite has specialized in leadership, coaching, and development, and has consulted extensively with international executive teams.

Prior to joining EquiPro, Mr. Waite was Director of Corporate Management Development and Training for the CIGNA Corporation. During his years with CIGNA, he managed a staff of 40, with whom he developed training programs that were recognized throughout the industry as being leading-edge. Mr. Waite and his staff also consulted with senior management on a wide variety of business issues.

Mr. Waite began his career as a field sales representative with Procter and Gamble. He was then recruited by the Ohio Bell Telephone Company into a high-potential line management program. Over the next eight years, he held increasingly responsible management positions in large divisions such as network operations and customer service.

Mr. Waite made a major shift in his career when he became Director of Manpower Utilization for the entire company. In this position, he developed and implemented Corporate Human Resource Utilization Systems for overall performance management, career development, and human resource planning. After eighteen years with Ohio Bell, Mr. Waite accepted the position of Director of Corporate Management Education and Training for the American Can Company, where he directed his staff in evaluating, implementing, and revising existing core programs and designing and introducing new pilot programs. Mr. Waite then went on to Connecticut General Life Insurance Company as Director of Corporate Training. During a two-year period, he and his staff developed a corporate training plan that resulted in the formulation of an entirely new curriculum for first-line management programs up to and including programs for senior management.

Mr. Waite has a Master's degree in human resource development and a BA degree in business administration from Baldwin-Wallace College.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Companies that want to compete successfully in the global marketplace must be able to develop innovative products and services and get them into the hands of their customers in record time. This requires organizations that are lean, flexible, and responsive to local customers and customs.

To meet the need for *creative, quick, and customized* organizations, companies are increasingly rejecting hierarchical, functionally driven pyramidal structures and replacing them with flatter, team-based organizations that pull together people with diverse backgrounds and skills and set them to work on critical business issues. These *cross-functional teams* are very powerful tools for strengthening strategic problem-solving capabilities.

For multinational organizations, it is becoming evident that not only must people move across the “functional silos” within their companies, but they must also learn to work in teams that cross regional and national borders. Much has been learned and written about cross-functional teams, but there is little shared knowledge about best practices for *cross-cultural teams*, whose members not only represent different functions but also bring different national and cultural values and experiences to the team.

Many organizations today are jumping on the team bandwagon. Teams are addressing a multitude of business issues, from “How do we reengineer our information systems throughout the company?” to “How do we launch a product in the Pacific Rim?” However, the authors’ own experiences in consulting with a wide variety of organizations around the world suggest that although many organizations are investing time and resources in setting up *cross-functional/cross-cultural teams*, few are harvesting *real success*.

World-Class Teams will benefit organizations that want to initiate or have already established cross-functional teams, as well as those that seek to form teams to address business issues that cut across regional/national borders. The book is designed to provide specific advice and practical “how-to” tools and techniques that can make these teams “*world class*.” It is not a collection of anecdotes about teams; no “top ten” world-class teams are cited that do everything so well that the rest of the world has only to benchmark them for best practices. The book, instead, offers detailed help for those who will lead, facilitate, and support world-class teams. It will answer such questions as:

- What are the economic, cultural, and technological forces that are spawning cross-functional/cross-cultural teams?
- What business and performance challenges can these teams address?
- How should senior management set up cross-functional/cross-cultural teams for success?
- What is the best way to “start up” these teams so as to maximize their chances of success?
- What are the critical elements of *world-class performance* and how can a company diagnose whether a team is succeeding or failing?
- How should the successes of world-class teams be measured and rewarded?
- What is the impact of functional, language, and cultural diversity on team dynamics and performance—that is, what is the effect of having team members who:
 - work 4,000 miles from each other?
 - speak different languages?
 - work for different functional bosses (who continue to want *their* work performed)?
 - have different work and cultural norms and values?
- What kinds of technology facilitate the work of cross-functional/cross-cultural teams?
- What roles and skills are necessary if team leaders and team members are to be effective? How are those roles and skills selected and developed?
- How should the “stakeholder borders” of cross-functional/cross-cultural teams be managed?
- How is cross-functional and cross-cultural collaboration developed?
- How can a balance between “high tech” and “high touch” be achieved on world-class teams?

➤ The Audience

We wrote this book for people who are looking for *answers and practical strategies*. It is written as a handbook. Its concepts, learnings, and exercises are taken directly from “the field”—which has been our workplace

in over thirty countries. Several types of people will want to read *World-Class Teams* and keep it handy for reference:

- *Executives and senior managers* who are considering whether and how to establish cross-functional/cross-cultural teams and are looking for guidance from and lessons learned by other organizations. They will be particularly interested in Chapters 1 and 3.
- *Cross-functional/cross-cultural team leaders and members* who are looking to maximize their chances of success and their contributions, and want a methodology and framework for diagnosing how their team is performing. These team leaders and members will want to read the entire book!
- *Human resources and organization development professionals* who have been given the responsibility to assist in launching or developing cross-functional/cross-cultural teams. They will want to focus on those chapters that will help them facilitate the teams that are expected, by management, to become “high performing.”
- *World-class team stakeholders* such as the functional bosses, the “clients,” the sponsors, the support specialists, and others who contribute to or benefit from the work of these teams. They will want to absorb Chapters 3, 5, 15, and 16 to understand their role in participating with and supporting their team from the very beginning, so that needs and expectations can be addressed.

➤ Start at the Top and Then Go Anywhere

This book does not need to be read in strict chapter order. Instead, you could read Chapters 1 and 2 to get an overview, and then select those sections or chapters that have the most relevance to your need to better understand particular areas—for example, World-Class Team Launch, Team Development, Team Measurement, Team Technology, or Team Border Management.

➤ Practice as You Go

We encourage you to mark up the pages as you read. Write your ideas in the margins or in a notebook. Much of what we have experienced in the field (and included in the book) will only come alive for you as you think about and, in fact, apply and practice world-class team performance in your own organization.

► Icons

Throughout the book, we use various icons to indicate different types of material:



Individual Exercise. A thought-provoking exercise to encourage you to reflect on your own experiences or to practice a concept or technique alone, before you try it out with the team.



Team Exercise. An exercise that you will want to apply with a group of people, facilitated either by a team leader or an external consultant.



Learning Lights. Principles, concepts, and ideas that we have found to be meaningful and worth remembering.



Toolkits. Techniques, models, sample documents, and other practical accoutrements—a world-class team “toolbox” that you can put to use with your team.

► World-Class Team Learning Continues

We certainly do not know all there is to know about managing the complexity of cross-functional/cross-cultural teams. Much more can be learned, and we want to continue refining our models, tools, and lessons. If you want to stay connected to our work and/or provide us with feedback, you can write or call us at the following locations:

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"*World-Class Teams* is an invaluable resource for any company executive looking to break through functional and cultural walls to compete effectively in the global marketplace."

—Vic Micati, Executive Vice President, Pfizer
Pharmaceuticals Group

"As a global company, we know what it takes to compete in the international marketplace. This book offers valuable answers and practical strategies for doing just that. *World-Class Teams* is in a class by itself."

—Cathie Black, President, Hearst Magazines

"A well-focused book with immediate practical application for global businesses. The toolkits will help avoid reinventing best practice and enable teams to get off to a running start. Everyone is setting up teams but hardly anyone is setting them up well—this book will help you do that."

—Andy Owen-Jones, General Manager, Information Services,
Virgin Atlantic

"While there are many books written about 'teams,' *World-Class Teams* is the best book I have read recently. It provides practical insights for creating and leading teams that are highly diverse and, perhaps, geographically dispersed. A must read!"

—Julie O'Mara, O'Mara & Associates, Past President,
American Society for Training and Development

"The practical strategies and tools contained in *World-Class Teams* make it a must read for those who create, lead and work in the complex and exciting world of team-based structures."

—Rob Norton, Senior Vice President, Employee Resources,
Pfizer Pharmaceuticals Group

"It's great—easy to read, practical, punchy. I predict *World-Class Teams* will be a best-seller."

—Richard A. Levine, Managing Director, BT Wolfensohn—
Bankers Trust

"A comprehensive, insightful and practical compendium of everything you need to know to set up World Class Teams. Sage, sound, and practical advice accompanied by tools to make it happen. A very valuable contribution to the field. Many thanks!"

—Paul Maloney, Ph.D., Paul Maloney & Associates, Former
Director, Management Development, NBC

"Terrific! *World-Class Teams* is user friendly, practical, experienced-based and comprehensive . . . [it is] a veritable toolkit for both team leaders and consultants."

—Donna McNamara, Director, Global Education & Training,
Colgate-Palmolive Company

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INTRODUCTION

The Quest for World-Class Teams

