

Searching for the answers to drive team productivity?

Don't look outside, look inside.



Discover what your top performing teams do, then replicate and scale those practices, driving team excellence across your organization.

As business leaders are continually challenged optimize costs, maximizing team productivity has never been more important. There is no shortage of team improvement models to consider. Most of these team improvement models prescribe the best practices for your teams and implement their “one-size-fits-all” model.

This approach has several shortcomings. Team effectiveness assessments measure how well the team, as a unit is working together. Improvement programs involve the entire team. Team measures overlook the most important driver of team productivity: the productivity of each team member. Our team assessment, the Talent Optimization Index (TOI), measures overall team productivity *and* the productivity of each team member. Team leaders can pinpoint gaps and focus improvements where they are needed most.

Another shortcoming of the “best practices” team performance model is that it assumes that every team in every company has the same challenges. But those practices may not be best for your business environment. You need the Team Excellence model that leverages your technology, tools, and talents.

Our approach to building your company’s team excellence model includes three steps. First, we discover what your top performing teams do differently, then we turn insights into actions to improve your underperforming teams. We replicate and validate the Team Excellence model, then we help you scale your Team Excellence model across every team in your organization.

The Team Excellence Advantages

- Establishes the standard for Team Excellence that works best in your business environment.
- Removes the “not invented here” stiff team resistance that occurs by introducing a standard “off the shelf” team performance model.
- Underperforming teams learn how your top performing teams that are facing the same context and constraints are overcoming obstacles
- The TOI team assessment is designed to maximize the productivity of every team member- it does not support the “heroic, extraordinary efforts” of a few that tamp down contributions of others
- By maximizing the time, talents, and productivity of every team member, it increases skill building, productivity, and accomplishments, elevating on-the-job performance.

The Team Excellence Steps

Discover and Define	Replicate and Validate	Scale and Accelerate
Key Actions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You'll define a set of KPI's that measure team performance and productivity in your company. Using these KPI's, you'll identify high performing teams and underperforming teams to participate in this phase. We conduct a 45-minute meeting with each team to share the project objectives and ask team members to complete the TOI team assessment. Next, we conduct a 60-minute focus group session with each team to get a better understanding of the team's processes, practices, and challenges. We analyze all the data to identify the statistically significant differentiators of your top performing teams and share our findings with your key stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We apply the insights gained from your high performing teams to implement team improvement plans for the underperforming teams. Following the implementation of the action plans, we re-administer the TOI team assessment and collect team productivity and performance metrics. We measure change scores and assess impact. To validate the Team Excellence model, we pilot the model with additional teams, following the same steps: assess, diagnose, address, improve, measure impact. We identify the initiatives that consistently improved team productivity to write the Team Excellence Playbook for all teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We work with you to develop the implementation plan to scale your Team Excellence model and playbook across your other teams. Our portfolio of services range from training solutions to strategic organizational change engagements. Some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing the training and resources for your internal teams to deliver the Team Excellence Playbook and continue to refine it Developing the communications and engagement plans to enlist and enroll internal stakeholders Aligning your Team Excellence model with your business processes and people practices
Deliverables		
Team Excellence Model	Team Excellence Playbook	Implementation Roadmap
Timing*		
4 – 6 weeks	6 – 12 weeks	12 – 18 weeks

**Timing dependent on team availability*

Interested in learning more?

The next section of this document summarizes our findings from the Discovery and Define step we completed for one of our clients.



Executive Summary of the Team Excellence Model

Prepared for the Business Operations Unit Project Teams

Background

The Business Operations unit invested in workflow automation tools to streamline processes across their organization. Project teams were established for each of the six functions to develop their function-specific implementation plans. The productivity and performance results of the teams varied significantly. To get a clearer understanding of each team's strengths and challenges, we administered the Talent Optimization Index (TOI™) to each team, then we conducted focus groups to learn more about each team's practices and processes. Our findings informed the Team Excellence Model for the Project Teams.

Contents

The first page provides an overview of the TOI assessment.

Team TOI assessment results are on pages 3-4.

The Team Excellence Model and our findings are on page 5.

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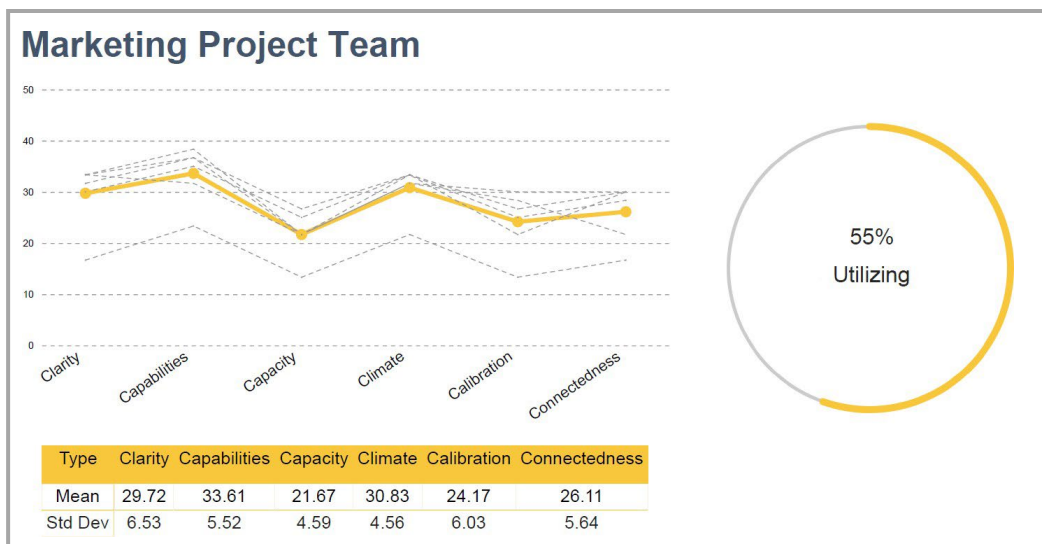
About the Talent Optimization Index Team Assessment

The Talent Optimization Index (TOI) team assessment measures six practices that impact individual and team productivity: Clarity, Capabilities, Capacity, Climate, Calibration, Connectedness. We have tested the TOI extensively and have shown a direct link to the TOI scores and team performance results¹.

The TOI assessment is designed to optimize team productivity by measuring how effectively the team, and each team member, are applying these practices. The TOI "snapshot" indicates where the team stands on each practice – and where each individual stands.

How to read the Team TOI Snapshot Visuals

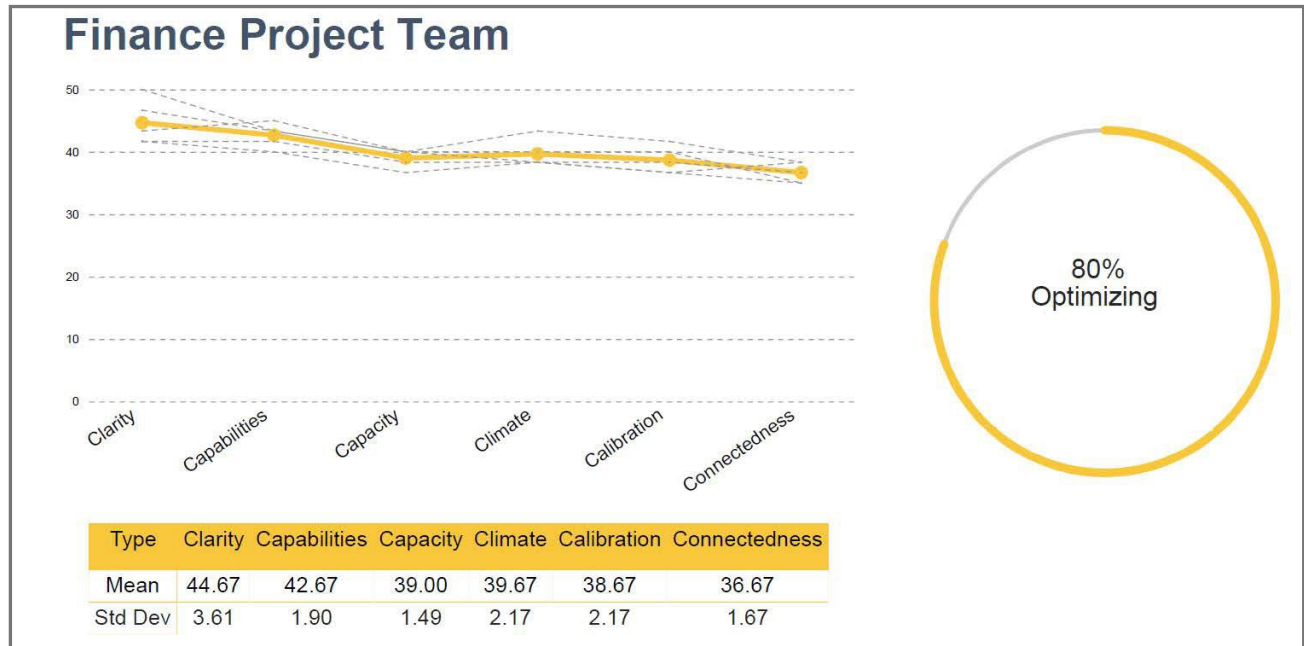
The TOI measures the six practices that impact productivity and the team's overall productivity indicated by the team TOI score. TOI scores are categorized into one of five levels: optimizing, multiplying, utilizing, diminishing, depleting. The overall score and score category are shown on the yellow circle next to the graph.



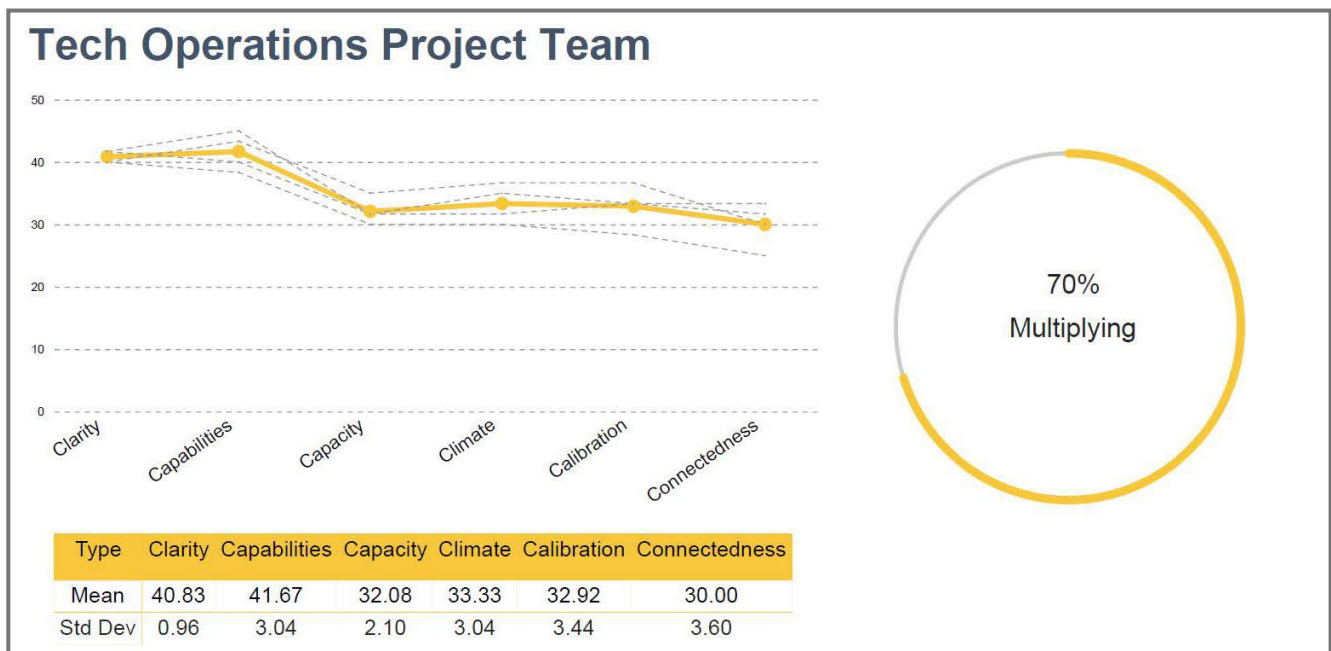
How to read the graphs

The graphs show the team scores and the scores of each team member on the effectiveness of the six practices. The solid yellow line on the graph shows the average team score. The dotted lines show the scores of each team member on each of the practices.

Finance and Tech Operations Project Teams

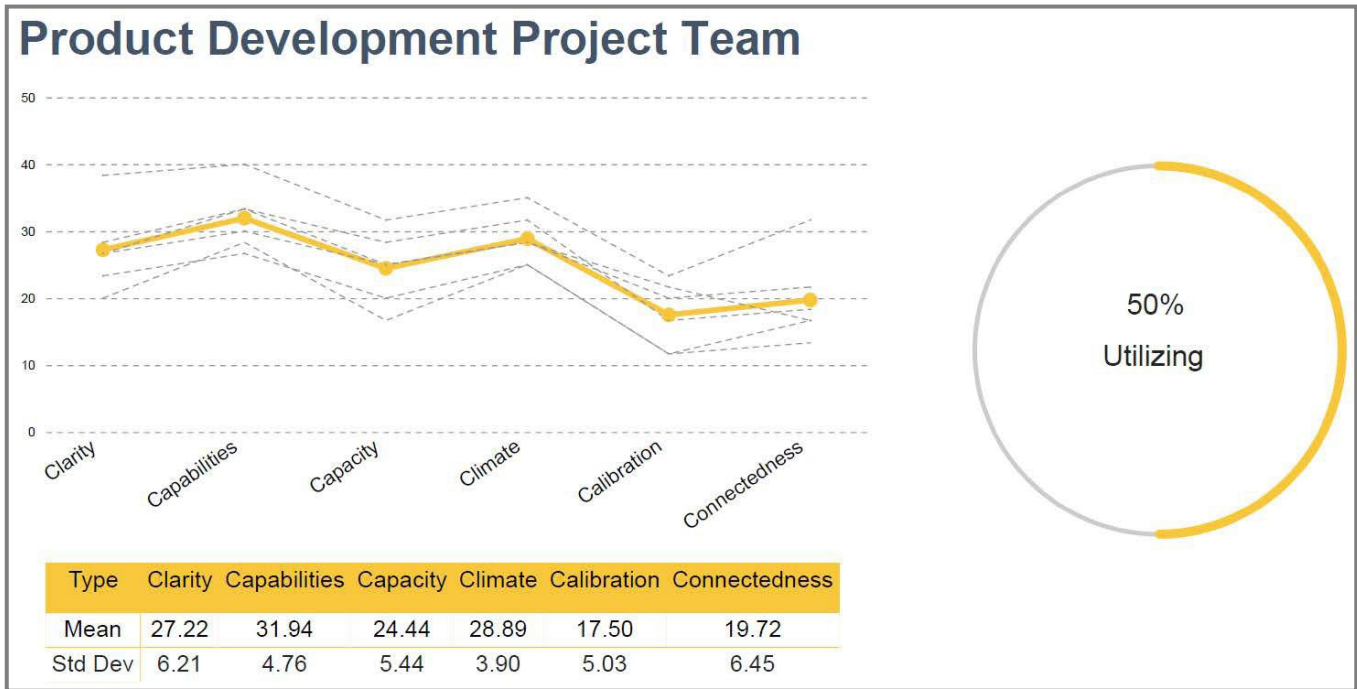


The Finance project team has an overall talent optimization score of 80%. The team's average score on each practice is high and each of the team members' profiles are high. The average (mean) practice scores are above 37 and the low standard deviation indicates that the team member experiences are similarly positive.

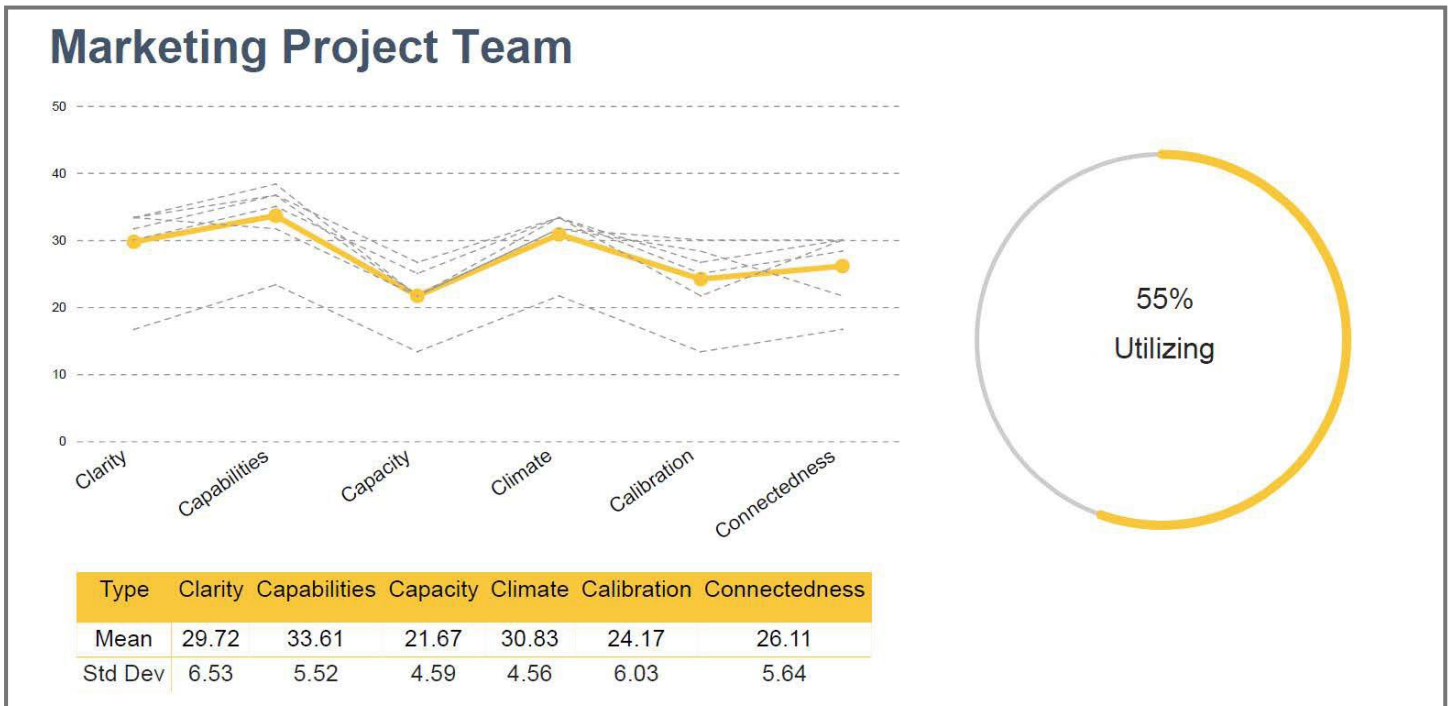


The Tech Operations project team has an overall talent optimization score of 70%. The average team scores on each practice indicate some key strengths Clarity and Capabilities. Team member profile scores indicate team member experiences are not as consistently positive in areas of Calibration and Connectedness.

Product Development and Marketing Project Teams

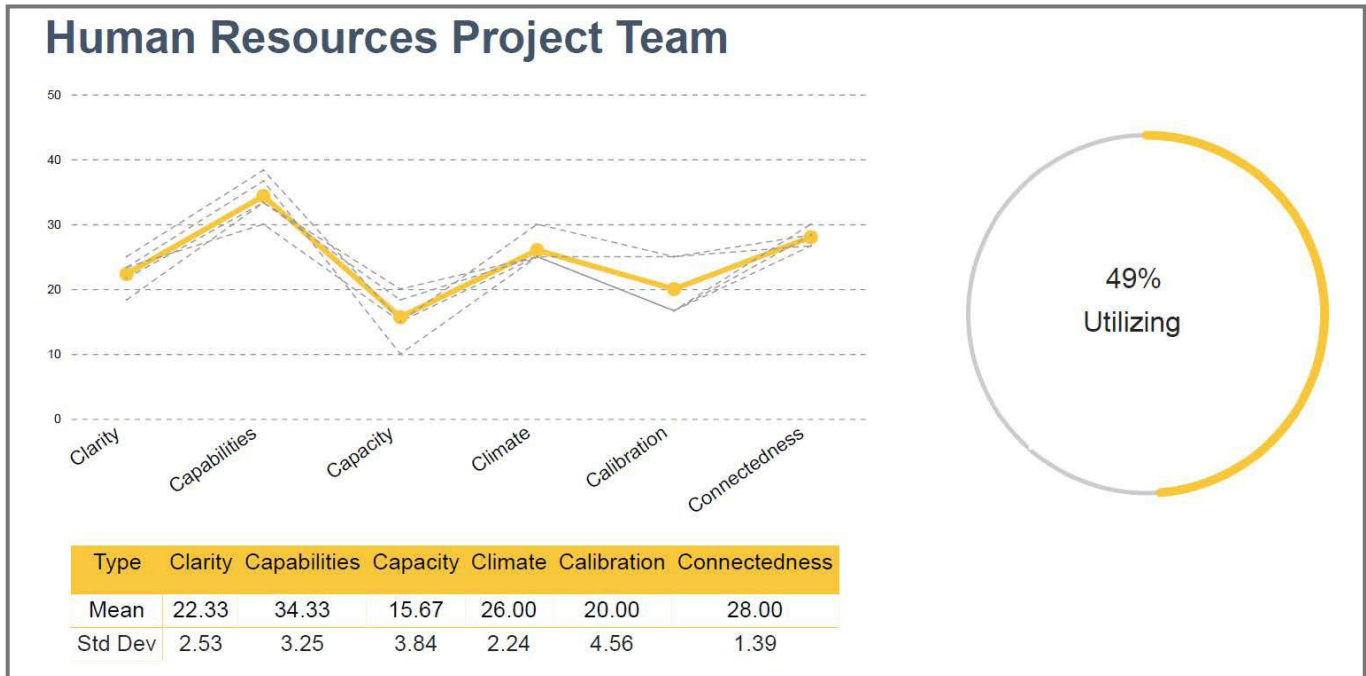


The Product Development Project team's talent optimization score of 50% indicates team productivity could be better, but the overall score doesn't raise a "red flag". However, the individual team profile scores show that one team member's scores are much higher than the others, artificially inflating the 50% score. Most team members are not as productive as they should be.

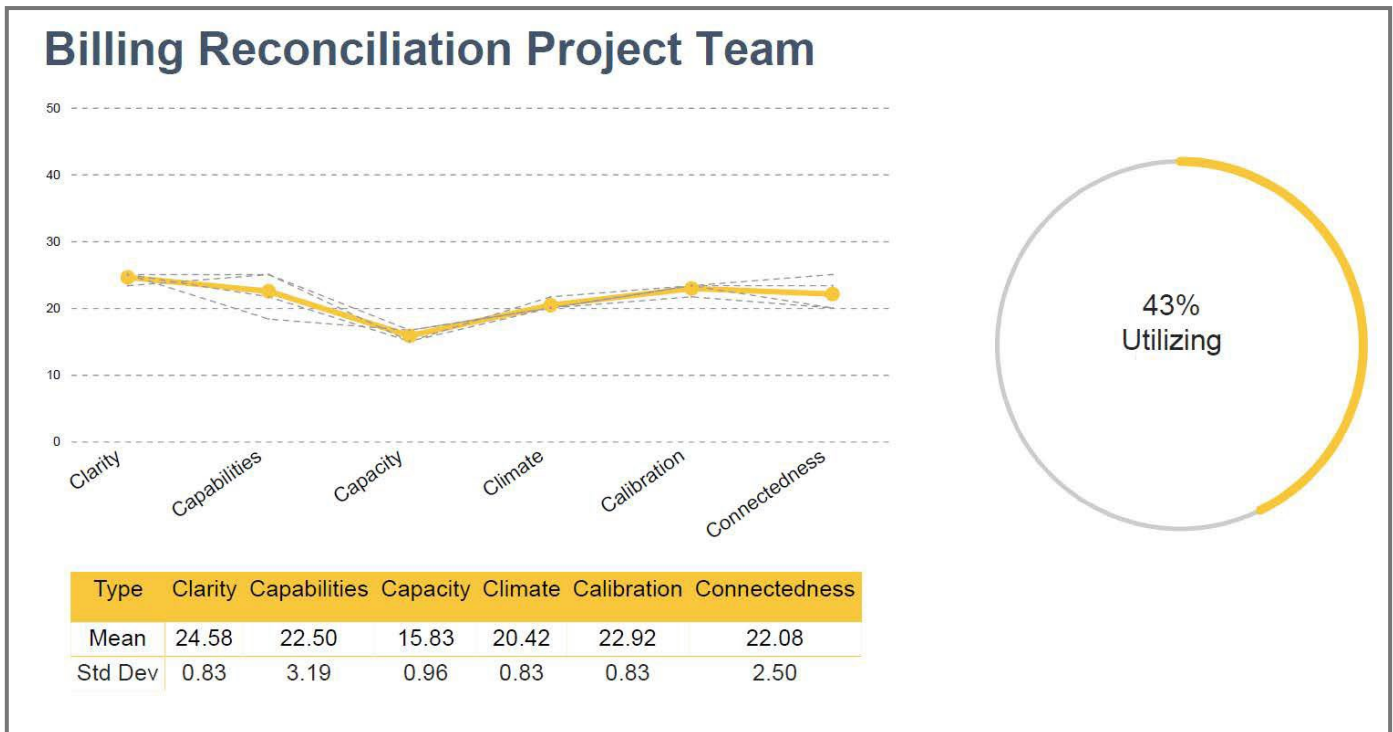


The Marketing Project team's overall TOI score of 55% is artificially low due to the low productivity of one team member. The team leader should address the challenges of the team member before engaging the entire team in improvement initiatives.

Human Resources and Billing Reconciliation Project Teams



The Human Resources project team’s TOI score of 49% indicates the team should be more productive. The greatest challenge impacting each team member is Capacity. The team members are challenged by time and resource constraints.



The Billing Reconciliation project team’s TOI score of 43% signals low productivity. All team practice scores are low and team member experiences are consistent, as evidenced by the data and visual. The team leader needs to engage the entire team in improving the practices and processes.



Project Team Excellence Model

The practices listed below were consistently applied across high performing project teams. These practices were inconsistent or absent in the lower performing project teams.

- All team members have a clear, consistent understanding of project scope, requirements, progress measures and success metrics
- Team members know each other's skills and areas of expertise and work together to leverage complementary capabilities
- Disciplined weekly reviews of team accomplishments and progress metrics as well as individual team member productivity, contributions, and obstacles
- Full engagement and commitment of the team sponsor: timely communication of stakeholder requests, support in removing obstacles and obtaining resources
- Weekly calibration meetings to prioritize the work to be done and rebalancing resources to deal with delays, obstacles, and changing priorities

Our goal was to identify what the higher performing teams did and how they applied these practices.

The highest performing teams didn't "jump right in" to get the work done. They held a kick-off meeting to align on team goals and success metrics and learn about each other's skills, experiences, and areas of expertise. Team leaders set the tone, or team climate, up front, emphasizing that team members were accountable for maximizing the contributions of others.

In all but the lowest performing teams, consistent information sharing, and communications practices were established up front. The low performing teams did not centralize project information.

The highest performing teams also conducted rigorous weekly reviews to identify individual team member obstacles and implement targeted actions to remove barriers. The other teams' improvement efforts focused on fixing the entire team. In some cases, team members felt that the activities were not necessary and took time away from getting the work done.

Team leaders received a comprehensive report of their team's TOI assessment results. All team leaders thought that the visibility into individual team member profile scores provided valuable insights and would have enabled them to increase team productivity more effectively and efficiently.

We recommend that team leaders implement the action plans recommended in their team TOI report, then assess improvements in individual and team productivity.



References

1. Wagner, M. J. (2021). *The Development of the TOI: Methodology, Research and Initial Findings* . Optimizing Talent, LLC.

To learn more about how we can help your teams optimize the talents and productivity of every team member, visit our website at www.optimizingeverytalent.com or email us at hello@optimizingeverytalent.com.