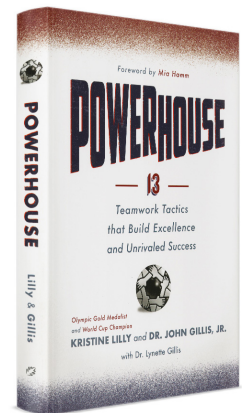


Powerhouse

13 Teamwork Tactics that Build Excellence and Unrivaled Success

by **Kristine Lilly and Dr. John Gillis, Jr.**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A high-performing team must be more than a collection of high-performing individuals. In the sports world, these synergistic groups are called powerhouses. You can learn to cultivate well-oiled teamwork in your organization.

Author Kristine Lilly was only sixteen when she was asked to join the US Women's National Soccer Team. In *Powerhouse*, you will learn more about how she and her teammates successfully and continuously won World Cup championships and Olympic gold medals, and how you can apply these same “tactics” to shape your business’s journey forward to success. Complementing Kristine and her teammates’ expertise, you’ll find research on teamwork and business examples from John and Lynette Gillis.

Four pillars frame the tactics that teams need to take. These pillars are: Transform, Empower, Achieve, and Motivate. The final tactic, “Doing What Is Right,” serves as a foundation for everything the team accomplishes. It will not always be easy, but with practice and perseverance, you can be well on your way to building your own powerhouse.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To select the right talent and align them with the team direction.
- How to empower a team, both individually and collectively.
- To lead a group to generate, evaluate, and implement team solutions.
- Ways to build a team grounded on trust.

Transform

Effectively transforming a group of individuals into a powerhouse starts with selecting the right talent to join your team. This team determines its purpose as well as its strategy. Once a strategy is set for execution, each team member acts interdependently to contribute to the completion of a clear, specified, and common goal.

Selecting Exceptional Team Members

When Kristine was a freshman at UNC, members of the soccer team had to pass a fitness test to play in each game. The test measured the player's fitness levels, but it also built respect and trust among the team. With a lap to go, as a "green" inexperienced player, Kristine was struggling. Tracey Bates Leone, a "gray" senior on the team, decided to help by running backward next to Kristine and encouraging her, even though this meant Tracey would have a slower finish time on the fitness test. They pulled each other through and finished the lap on time.

Team composition matters. If you have a collection of team members with different working styles and various levels of experience, your team will be stronger and more effective. At your corporation, your team members will come from a continuum of "green" and "gray" colleagues. These different generations bring different skills, experiences, expectations, and other factors to the workplace. As you build successful teams, the key is to identify and optimize each person's diverse offerings for the benefit of the unit.

Aligning the Team Direction

All successful teams need a reason for being—their *raison d'être*. Organizations that have a meaningful and understood purpose will outperform those that do not. The reason for this is simple: Those organizations have focus and ambition behind their work. Purpose answers the question, "Why do you do what you do?" Purpose drives performance.

Coach Dorrance once told the women's national soccer team, "Every time you step on the field you're selling the game, changing minds, and changing the culture of what is possible for women and everyone." When Kristine first heard this statement, her response was, "I just want to play soccer." Eventually, she came to understand everything he taught them, and each action they took on the field was selling the game. They were helping not only themselves as athletes become more successful but also their team, and by extension, they were helping to establish women's soccer as a professional sport.

Scoring a Goal

Building a powerhouse comes from being focused on scoring goals. These goals should be specific to align team activity. A team should have both stretch goals and attainable goals so they can achieve small victories in the short term, while simultaneously challenging themselves to achieve greatness in the long term. Goals should be shared with the team to hold all members accountable in a competitive environment.

When Kristine was younger, there was no women's soccer in the Olympics, but as a young girl, she thought maybe one day she could compete in the Olympics. With the dream to win gold, she set out to accomplish smaller, more specific goals first. To contribute to her team's success, her objectives were about individual preparation, working hard, and making a difference. Later, she and her teammates had a constant mission: to win. Not just the World Cup or the Olympics, but every game. Every game reflected their team's capability and gave them opportunity to work together.

Empower

In a powerhouse, there is a leader who inspires, sets expectations, and develops others. Principled leadership asserts authority in an empowering manner, aligning individual rewards with the team's goals. If the situation is global, there is an opportunity to cross-pollinate better practices from different countries.

Setting the Team Foundation

When a leader effectively sets a foundation, they must build on solid ground. To create a solid base for the team, a leader should inspire the team, set clear expectations, and develop talent. Without these actions, the foundation is more like sand, and the team's performance will be unstable.

One CEO set his company's team foundation by focusing on product quality. One day, he was walking through the assembly plant and saw that one of the finished products had a slight imperfection. To make a point about the expectations he had about product quality, he went over to the end of the assembly line and destroyed that product. This action was extreme, and the story went viral throughout the company. By doing this, he set a team foundation: quality was essential, and imperfection was not acceptable. This leader's behavior was much more impactful than a "value" posted on the wall.

Leading the Team

A captain is the leader of the team who connects and builds

trust on the team. When Kristine didn't serve as team captain, her role was to follow the teammate who had been selected to lead. This following of the leader is still a leadership role; it just doesn't come with a title. It is more pull than push, showing up the way you want others to show up. As a team member, you need to know when a team needs you to lead and when the team needs you to follow. If you are leading, then remember to empower and recognize those supportive followers who are aligned to the team's direction.

Serving on International Teams

When serving on international teams, be culturally aware, as your culture's norms and expectations are different than others. You also want to cross-pollinate, to learn about better practices from other countries that you can adopt and bring to your business.

A global technology team was dealing with different cultural expectations. The company, headquartered in Canada, had deployment phases around the world. This global team had to adapt to local preferences to be successful. In Great Britain, this meant small differences like the size of standard paper in the printer or the preference of a raincoat for team swag (useful for their weather) instead of the usual company-issued hoodie (which was culturally looked down upon). In Asia, the attempt to survey employees for input had minimal impact due to their hesitation to give feedback. In South America, meetings always started late even though timing was critical to the team. The company's financial cost grew the longer the project ran, yet in Europe, no one works in August, and the organization burned millions while the local employees took their annual vacation. The team adapted to each regional variation to overcome the differences and implement the technology on budget and on time.

Achieve

To achieve, the powerhouse must learn through preparation, practicing, and then, performance. Honest communication and listening to each other ensures each decision is made collaboratively. When a problem does emerge, the team engages to generate, evaluate, and implement a proactive or reactive solution.

Learning Teamwork

Basketball has isolation plays, baseball has individual execution, and even American football short set plays dictate exactly what a player is supposed to do. Soccer players, however, are always interdependent on one another in a fluid, creative,

and ever-changing context. Players must know each other so well that they can intuitively sense what other players are going to do. What one player does on the field impacts what another does—where they move and what the strategy is.

Preparation, practice, and performance are integral parts of a powerhouse. Team members prepare themselves to help the team reach its potential. They then practice their teamwork process through a dress-rehearsal simulation. Finally, they perform when it's time to execute their winning strategy.

Communicating with the Team

Communicating effectively within the team includes active listening. It also entails establishing a social network so that team members understand whom the central person is. And lastly, it involves collaboration so that the team functions as a unit.

A business school dean has a practice of listening 80 percent of the time and only speaking 20 percent. He also says that 20 percent should be full of questions. He uses inquiry to fully understand what is going on, seeking to understand and challenge the assumptions below the conversation's surface. The dean ends the conversation by asking, "Is there anything left that you have not told me? Is anything that we have discussed unclear? Is there any other information you need that I have not yet provided?" These questions effectively communicate his desire to help the person he is speaking to. What would be the point of hiring a good team member with excellent experience and potential if you're not going to trust them?

Handling Team Conflict

Out of all key tactics in this book, the mismanagement of conflict is the most significant potential derail. Task conflict is a "what to do disagreement." By contrast, relationship conflicts consist of disagreements based on interpersonal issues, political norms and values, and personal taste.

Kristine's team captains took care of business. They put out fires when most of the team or the public didn't even know there was a fire. When needed, the captains facilitated a conversation to hear everyone's opinion. They never avoided anything. They dealt with the issues head-on, whether that was talking with the head coach about the team being burned out or talking with unhappy players to understand each player's perspective.

Motivate

The members of a powerhouse create a team culture,

based on trust, with specific roles clarified for each person. Through the work that the members of the team are committed to, they build friendships and a sense of belonging as well as their individual self-awareness. They have a positive mentality while seeking a standard of excellence. Working synergistically brings satisfaction for all.

Creating Team Chemistry

To be effective, a powerhouse needs chemistry—created by clarifying roles and engaging every player on the team. They also achieve chemistry by building trust from being benevolent, reliable, and honest in team relationships. Finally, they demand accountability.

At the 1999 World Cup Final Game, Brandi Chastain, scored the final goal for her team to beat China, a shot that would change their lives forever. Brandi spontaneously took off her jersey in celebration and slid on her knees, flexing her arms with fists clenched. The moment was captured in one of the most famous soccer photographs ever. Yet, it wasn't about Brandi and her achievement. The team needed many crucial plays to get the win that day. The game consisted of ninety minutes of hard-fought regulation time and two fifteen-minute grueling overtimes. The game was years of work by twenty women pushing each other to be the best. It was a team putting the team first.

Cultivating the Team Ethos

A team ethos is the guiding character of an organization, its reputation. A corporate ethos exists, whether a leader engages to create it or not. The team ethos comes down to three principles: build friendships, increase self-awareness, and develop team awareness. Friendships are important to

have on the team, as this creates a healthy bond and psychological safety net for team players. Increased self-awareness comes by knowing yourself. Team-awareness is also vital so that individual members of the team can understand how they are perceived by others while also focusing on the specific dynamics within team relationships.

Seizing a Winning Mentality

Rudy's Bar-B-Q has a motto that drives quality: "The Love of Excellence." Whether it is in ingredients or customer service, Rudy's delights guests with a memorable dining experience because their "why" is quality. They accomplish this quality by overcommunicating, overlearning, over-measuring, and trying to be perfect—even down to the amount of lemonade to pour into a glass so that it satisfies the customer without overflowing when a lid is put on.

Doing What is Right

Finally, when doing the right thing, powerhouses overcome adversity by confronting their failures. These teams should seek diversity for the positive business impact by finding their centered set. A powerhouse is ethical, clearly knowing right from wrong and working to transform its culture so that it can effect societal change.



Kristine Lilly is an expert on effective teamwork and provides lessons gleaned from her remarkable career as an Olympic midfielder for the United States Women's National Soccer Team.

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