

# ***Unity of Effort***

## **in a Positive Direction**

### **Performance Development Manual for Educators**

**Excerpt with Enhancements**  
**Team ESP (Excellence on the Same Page)**



## **Organizational *ESP***

***Excellence on the Same Page***

A T.A.L.K. Associates Project

by

J. Bert Freeman



Using the Power  
of Direction



Concentrating on front line  
performance and delivery



Unifying toward  
a shared vision



Positioning Relationships,  
Performance and Morale in a  
Consistent Positive Direction



Sustaining  
A Climate of Interaction  
for student-focused success



Exercising  
Complete Respect  
in a positive direction



Multi-level  
Leadership Consistency



Accelerating Progress



Forward Movement &  
Continuous Improvement



Managing Excellence  
in a positive direction



Synchronizing Everyone's  
Direction of Excellence



Data-Based  
Decision Making

*Organizational ESP for Educators*  
**Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction**  
*Performance Development Manual*

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# *Organizational ESP*

*(Excellence on the Same Page)  
for Educators*

*Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction  
Performance Development Manual*

## **SECTION IV**

### Team and Leadership Development

## **An introductory note for the Team ESP excerpt**

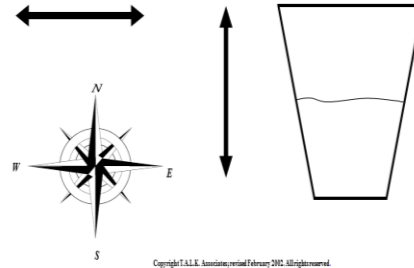
In a Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction (Unity of Effort) Framework, ‘Positive Direction’ includes:

- Everyone functioning in the direction of student success
- Skills, approaches and practices called Consistent Positive Direction

Consistent Positive Direction is speaking, writing, learning and approaching the realities that we face, day-to-day, in the direction of the outcomes, the results and the successes that we want – the positive direction. It increases the assurance of forward movement and continuous improvement by the direction of our verbal activity. That direction can be short term or long term, forward or reverse, up or down. In our personal lives, it could be anything from getting across the street to getting an ‘A’. In our professional lives, it could be anything from getting along to getting promoted. In education, ‘Student Success and Growth’ is always a part of the “Organizational Positive Direction”. In a Unity of Effort framework the direction of excellence is always in the direction of student success. It is manifested in the effectiveness, efficiency and execution of tasks, all concentrated on supporting front line performance and delivery.

**Which way is positive  
direction??**

**Half Full/Half Empty?  
Forward/Reverse?  
Up/Down?**



**...whichever direction moves you closer to student success!**

Positive Direction is the direction of the successes that you want, the outcomes that you want, the achievements that you want all in a way that you are focused in the *direction* that you want to ‘move toward’ rather than what you want to ‘get away from’. It can be a full glass or an empty glass, up or down, left or right, forward or reverse.

[talkassociates@UnityofEffort.com](mailto:talkassociates@UnityofEffort.com)    302-983-9976; 704-820-0794    [www.positivedirection.net](http://www.positivedirection.net)

*T.A.L.K. Associates is a National Endorsing Partner for the Common Core State Standards.*

## *Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction* **Team Excellence on the Same Page (ESP)** **Team Development for Educators**

In a Unity of Effort framework, **Team Excellence** is the effectiveness, efficiency and execution of team tasks, either routine or special:

- **Effectiveness** is:
  - the degree to which students meet/exceed grade level requirements and expectations (Frontline Educators)
  - OR the degree of meeting/exceeding internal support requirements and expectations in a way that best concentrates on supporting frontline performance and delivery (Smooth OpS)
- **Efficiency** is the management of resources, time, space and cost for effectiveness.
- **Execution** is the delivery of services [and products] for effectiveness.

The **Direction of Excellence** for organizational teams is:

- The Direction and Flow of Support
- The Direction of Concentration
- The Direction of Focus

The Direction of Excellence connects the team and its hierarchy in the direction of student success. If it is a self-directed team then it is supported by the principal or supervisor to whom it

reports. Otherwise, the immediate connection is from the team's principal or supervisor supported by his or her manager or supervisor. That is reflected in a flow of support chart. The Direction of Excellence also includes the delivery recipients of the team's efforts. The team is one of the following:

- A Smooth OpS branch of the organization
- A frontline branch (the entire team is considered frontline; however, the leader is still considered to be Smooth OpS or must exercise leadership consistency roles and practices)
- A branch that contains a combination of Smooth OpS and frontline individuals (in this case the role of the Smooth OpS is to exclusively support frontline performance and delivery)

Whether it is an individual, a team or an entire organization, everyone knows where to concentrate, everyone knows the support connections and everyone focuses on student success as being a part of the 'reason why'.

Reminder: In a 'Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction' framework the entire organization concentrates on supporting front line performance and delivery in a way that the front line can have the very best performance and delivery so that students meet/exceed grade level requirements and expectations.

Setting goals helps teams to get closer to achieving the organization's strategic plan which gets the organization closer to its student-focused vision.

**Goals** are longer term outcomes which must be achieved in a specific period of time.

**Objectives** are shorter term student achievement outcomes which must be accomplished in a specific period of time to achieve related student-focused goals.

**Tasks** are executed to achieve specific objectives connected to student achievement.

The Direction of Excellence is applied to the RPM's (human activity) working together to execute student-focused tasks. Every team in an organization has its unique Direction of Excellence while the excellence of any of the organization's teams is in the direction of the student success.

The TEAM NINE Approach is an organizational check that helps teams to assure the successful execution and completion of tasks and objectives. It is the fastest way to get teams to work together effectively. It includes the primary ingredients that everybody wants and needs. The accelerator of the team effort is communication and information.

- Clear Tasks and Objectives
  - Time Period
  - Student-Focused
  - S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)
- Communication and Information (Talking to each other; sharing information)-the accelerator
- Support for Performance & Delivery (Direction of Concentration, Direction and Flow of Support)
- Accurate & Successful Delivery (increasing student success or meeting internal support requirements)
  - Accuracy (Getting it done right)
  - Success (Getting it done)
  - The Power of **AS**

In a Unity of Effort framework there are four types of teams or groups.

- Work Teams (Frontline or Smooth OpS) – Execute day-to-day requirements
- Project Teams (Frontline or Smooth OpS) – Execute specific improvements
- Focus Teams (Usually Smooth OpS) – Facilitate use of organizational goals and boundaries
- Management Teams (Smooth OpS) – Plan, Organize, Direct and Control Organizational Strategies in ways that concentrate on supporting front line performance and delivery; ensure the directions of excellence

For a School Improvement Team, it is wise to include a synchronizer with the team or to ensure that someone is on the team with the knowledge to synchronize the direction of excellence as well as use the Unity of Effort practices. For project teams, once the team members are assigned or recruited, the team can establish its direction of excellence. That ensures that each member of the team and the team itself knows where to concentrate its efforts, understands and uses the support protocol as internal partners and includes student success as part of the 'reason why'. Under those circumstances the project will be executed in a way that assures continued successful frontline performance and delivery. It also increases the assurance of sustained hierarchical support.

In a Unity of Effort framework, the tools, practices and procedures that are used to measure and assure success should include 'Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction' supplements. For example, a School Improvement team should be able to identify its Direction of Excellence and other Unity of Effort practices to accelerate progress, assure successful front line performance and delivery and to sustain management support throughout the project. That way the team could always identify its connection to front line performance and delivery. The generic representation of the Unity of Effort supplement for a School Improvement team would be in the table below. The table shows the Unity of Effort tools and practices that are useful for each phase of the school improvement process.

**Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction  
Tool and Practices  
for a School Improvement Process (Generic Example)**

<b>Using Unity of Effort Practices</b>	<b>Team Development &amp; Direction of Excellence</b>	<b>Establish a Vision or align with the Vision</b>	<b>Identify Student Needs</b>	<b>Identify Staff Needs</b>	<b>Identify Learning Community Needs</b>	<b>Sequence, Prioritize &amp; Implement Tasks</b>	<b>Evaluate Outcomes &amp; share for improvement</b>
<b>Core Questions</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>PD Power Principle</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>FITS 4 Success</b>					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>DM Round Table</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Leadership Consistency</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Data-based Decisions</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Direction Check of Current State</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Synchronize Direction of Path Forward</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

For work teams, focus teams and management teams the directions of excellence are most likely permanent. They function with organizational standards, practices, policies and procedures. Adjustments are made for deviations or for changes in organizational structures. For project teams, directions of excellence are specific to the individual projects. However, the direction of excellence of a project team should always be aligned with the direction of excellence of its parent organization. If the project team is contracted, then the project team requires a dual focus: focus on its customers and the students of its customers.

If an organization uses contract employees, the contract employees should be aligned with the organization’s direction of excellence in their work assignments.

Many organizations require the implementation and deployment of project team programs. When an organization promulgates such a mandate, focus and excellence in different directions throughout the organization may likely occur, requiring the need for team improvements or interventions. A ‘Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction’ framework accelerates the team’s progress because, from the beginning, the Direction of Excellence unifies everyone on the team in every phase of the project. Also, because project teams are usually making improvements, the project most likely would set its concentration of effort in a way that successful frontline performance and delivery would even be better.

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A project team *can* provide a Unity of Effort framework for itself and it certainly can use the Unity of Effort practices such as the Core Questions or Decision-Making Round Tables.

## **Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction** **Generic Tool Applications** **for Generic Project Team Phases**

Using Unity of Effort	Define	Plan	Unify	Execute	Monitor /Control	Close
Core Questions	X	X	X	X	X	
PD Power Principle			X			
FITS 4 Success		X				
DM Round Table				X	X	
Leadership Consistency		X	X	X	X	X
Direction Check			X	X	X	X

Derived from PMI Body of Knowledge

Whether a project team is working on frontline processes or support processes, it should examine the impact on frontline performance and delivery in each major phase. It should also find out what support the frontline needs for continued successful performance and delivery. If the project team includes someone with a synchronizing responsibility, that person can coordinate tasks for using Unity of Effort practices and sustaining a Direction of Excellence.

The primary Unity of Effort applications that increase the assurance of team excellence are:

- a. **Leadership Consistency** – Whether it is a titular leader or a project team leader, the leader practices and assures the appropriate Direction of Excellence. The leader’s primary role is to support the performance and delivery of those who report to him/her directly in a way that they can best concentrate on meeting or exceeding internal support requirements and expectations or students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations. The leadership effort is to concentrate on supporting frontline performance and delivery. Team leadership requires balance. For example, leaders have multiple roles of interacting with other leaders as well as interacting with their own teams. There are some elements of balance that are essential:
  - Balancing leadership styles with leadership practices
  - Balancing technical competence with people competence
  - Working with other leaders while working with your team



- Performing as a leader while performing as a manager
- b. **Direction of Excellence** – The Direction of Excellence keeps the team connected to the organization’s front line performance and delivery.
- c. **TEAM NINE Approach** – The TEAM NINE approach increases the frequency of the team’s accurate and successful performance and delivery. It also assures continuous improvement in Team Excellence (effectiveness, efficiency and execution of tasks). Growth leads to more growth. Possibilities lead to more possibilities.

In schools, it is most effective to establish grade level teams (for elementary schools) and content teams (for middle and high schools) focused on academic success. In a ‘Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction’ framework, such a team would at a minimum:

- Synchronize and know its Direction of Excellence
- Focus on improving the academic performance of the students most in need of improvement
- Maintain focus on improving the academic performance of all of its students at the inclusion of students most in need, rather than at the expense of students most in need
- Establish high expectations of their students and themselves
- Understand and use data-based decision making
- Talk to each other and share information
- Adjust content, performance and delivery to accelerate student learning
- Use the TEAM NINE Approach

See Unity of Effort practices on the next page.

ref. The Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction Performance Development Manual for Educators  
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**Unity of Effort Practices for Team ESP for Educators**  
**Everybody on the Same Page with Excellence on the Same Page**

- Concentrate on supporting front line **performance and delivery** in a way that the front line educators can have the very best performance and delivery for *student success - students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations and students can exceed qualifications for college and career readiness.*
- Support is one way in the direction of student success (the *organizational* positive direction)
- Ensure that the team's Direction of Excellence meets or exceeds acceptable performance levels
- **Use the Organizational Core Questions** for decisions pending or made, interventions, corrective actions, performance evaluations, time/responsibility adjustments, improvements/innovations:
  - What is the impact on front line performance and delivery?
  - What support does the front line need for excellence in its performance and delivery?
- **Use the Direct Core Question** for performance and delivery issues regarding the team or team members relating to decisions pending or made, interventions, corrective actions, performance evaluations, time/responsibility adjustments, improvements/innovations: **What support do you need to...**
- Use the Positive Direction Power Principle to determine the silent factors that contribute most to help the team's relationships, performance and morale work together in a positive direction – the direction of the required and desired outcomes for success.
- **Use Meetings-before-the-Meeting:** for response to mandatory change. Ask only three questions.
  - What is the impact on front line performance and delivery?
  - What support does the front line need for excellence in its performance and delivery?
  - What support does the Smooth OpS need in a way that it can best concentrate on supporting front line performance and delivery?
- **Use the FITS 4 Success:** for ideas, proposals, suggestions and report supplements
- **Address the System First:** for making corrections and/or examining cause and effect – adequacy of communication, information, support, training, or leadership consistency
- **Use the Decision-Making Round Table** for resolution of differences, attitudinizing circumstances, when you have tried everything or when you have yet to try or do anything:
  1. Select a Single Issue
  2. Dialogue 10-15 minutes – Ensure that data and real time evidence are included in the discussion(s) whenever appropriate
  3. Brainstorm actions to take
  4. Select actions unanimously from the suggested actions in step 3
  5. Sequence the execution and timing of the selected actions
- Student Success is the 'reason why' (Direction of Focus)

Using these practices helps to keep teams on time, on task because they help team members to consistently concentrate and focus their efforts in the same direction (**ESP**): **Everybody on the Same Page with Excellence on the Same Page.**

Ref. Organizational ESP Performance Development Manual for Educators, Section IV (J. Bert Freeman 2010)