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SUBJECT: Building High Performance Teams with Network™

During my *Building High Performance Teams* program I use the NetWork device three times. Using the NetWork this way each subsequent use builds upon the previous experience and allows the teams to utilize their learned skills at the given task. I make the task difficult enough so that the team is challenged and must make a conscious choice about improving their performance. That choice will show up in the results of the exercise. Some teams start the task sequence with low performance and by the time we do the last activity they resemble a pit crew changing a tire at a racetrack.

Since the companies I work with are all global competitors, I have bench marked the results of the NetWork task to reflect scores in a global competition. In general, the companies do not use their teams in the same way in the global competition and the perceived necessity for teams in one company can be quite different from another. In the class setting some teams do poorly on the benchmarked scale, which usually indicates that teams and/or teamwork is not a priority on the job. It is difficult for teams to demonstrate high performance in the learning environment when it does not exist on the job. So the value of using bench marking with NetWork is you can actually test a teams progress and ability to attain what Ken Blanchard has identified as the “D-4” zone.

The benchmark scores and D-level zones align as follows. I have seen scores as high as 895 for the last round of the activity.

D-4	D-3	D-2	D-1
450---	271 – 450	136 - 270	0 –135

The first time I use NetWork, I have the teams set up the device from a photo. They have just been taught the team development level stage analysis, so they realize they are at stage D1 on the device. I tell them the stage D1 benchmark is 0 –135. Without making this explicit, some will still

think they will be able to achieve D2 or D3 level performance right from the beginning. I have also seen teams that did not build a solid procedural foundation that were able to score as much as 260. However the teams were usually not able to maintain the same level on rounds 2 and 3.

The second use of network is after we cover stage D2 . The class must progress from stage D2 with NetWork to eventually get to D4 so the fit is perfect. They actually need to use stage D2 skills on themselves to improve their performance with NetWork. This takes some queuing up by the presenter, as many teams do not habitually use team-building skills on the job. They use plenty of “do the job better” emphasis, but not much team building emphasis, to do the job better.

The third use of NetWork is after the D-4 module is presented. I use it as the transition from the course to the job. “You built a D4 performing team here in the learning center and that is what we need to use on the job to gain achieve maximum performance.”