WoW, or Ways of Working is the blueprint of how you should operate within a given framework, summarizing how individuals cooperate, usually focusing on team collaboration and success.

What are the Ways of Working?

The Ways of Working for professional services is a behavioral framework, designed to support colleagues to be successful and happy through sharing expectations around how we work.

The nine Ways of Working are clustered around three central themes:

• Personal Excellence
  How I show up at work, how I am expected to do my job
• Working Together
  How we work as supportive and collaborative teams
• Achieving our Mission
  How we deliver on what is important to mission and goals

Ways Wheel shows the central themes and the nine Ways of Working.

The Ways Supporting Indicators give examples of typical behaviours
that **support** the nine **Ways of Working**. These reflect different grades and can be used in activities such as recruitment or team-building.

The Ways Development Indicators provide in-depth examples of typical behaviours at each grade that can hinder the nine Ways of Working, and suggestions for development to keep on track. These indicators can be used for activities such as appraisals and personal/ professional development.

**Ways descriptors**

**Personal excellence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>We are persistent in our shared commitment to our goals, our overall mission, and to taking care of ourselves, our students and each other.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding service</td>
<td>We take pride in delivering a positive and proactive service to our colleagues and communities, striving for high quality outcomes and smarter ways of working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>We insist on honesty, inclusion and respect for each other inline with core values, recognising excellence in different forms. We take full accountability for our actions and leading by positive example.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Working together**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>We communicate with intention and clarity, building strong relationships - listening and responding with fairness and compassion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>We work creatively in empowered cross-functional teams and partnerships, where</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
we build trust and recognise each other's contributions.

Shared Learning

We create learning-focused working environments, where we ask challenging questions, encourage respectful inquiry, seek continuous improvement and development, and value constructive feedback

Achieving our mission

Vision

We know why our work is important, and we respond to the 'bigger picture', drawing out opportunities through being ambitious, united and forward-thinking.

Innovative Practice

We review our practices and innovate where necessary to use our resources effectively, to achieve our long-term aims and support our objectives.

Ownership

We understand our responsibilities for delivering timely and effective outcomes, which we achieve through decisive, clear strategies, and well communicated consultative plans.

Ways of working – definition and key principles

At the management level, the term “ways of working” refers to how a team collaborates and executes tasks. There are five principles of ways of working that help high-performance teams to thrive:

- **Be purpose-driven** – have a clear focus, and well-defined shared set of goals that all the team is committed to
Focus on progress and outcomes – measure and evaluate progress and results instead of processes and procedures; this will ensure constant improvement

Collaborate – prioritize building a cohesive team that supports and works towards a shared goal

Work in the open – ensure complete transparency in communicating with your team for it to be able to do its job

Be people positive – give autonomy and end-to-end responsibility to your team; it’s a way to show trust.

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When talking about individual ways of working, the term refers to how each employee interacts and collaborates with others at work. Some examples of ways of working include:

- How you do a certain task and what tools you use. For example, someone may prefer Google Docs for drafting notes, while others – pen and paper
- The sequence in which you carry out tasks – some people start with the easiest tasks first, while others prefer to start the morning by “eating the frog”
The frequency of certain work processes, activities, and events – eg., how often you organize meetings, fill out reports, etc.
• And more.

**How to modify your ways of working to maximize team productivity**

To work with a team – and even more so to manage a team – requires being flexible and open to a variety of different ways of working. And in order to maximize your team’s productivity, you may need to adjust your individual way of working to the majority of your team’s.

For example, you may be obsessed with time-blocking, while the majority of your team prefers to leave their working days unplanned and open to whatever task comes their way. If you’d request everyone to adjust to your way of working, it would lead to frustration, dissatisfaction, and even high turnover.

So, in such a situation, you may want to modify your way of working for greater benefit – higher productivity and employee satisfaction. Here’s the step-by-step process to approach this:

**Step 1: Evaluate your employee’s current performance**

The first thing you should do before changing the way you work is to measure your team’s productivity to have your starting point. Otherwise, you won’t know whether these changes help or hinder your staff’s performance.

The easiest way to measure your team’s work performance is by using a [time tracking app](#), such as DeskTime, that will automatically calculate employees’ productivity. All you’ll be left to do is to make the comparison and draw conclusions.

**Step 2: Survey your team**

Create a survey for your team to find out what they think is working well and what needs to be improved. Maybe there are things in the way you work that your colleagues don’t want you to change. You can create a simple framework for auditing your current way of working like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Continue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Be more responsive</td>
<td>- Micromanage</td>
<td>- Be honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Set realistic deadlines</td>
<td>- Focus on failures and not enough on successes</td>
<td>- Provide constructive criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- etc.</td>
<td>- etc.</td>
<td>- etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Allow your team members to submit their answers anonymously, as respondents then are more inclined to provide more detailed and honest feedback.

**Step 3: Create your new way-of-working framework**

Now that you’re aware of how your team performs and what they want you to change or keep in the way you work, you can create your new way-of-working framework. It should roughly define how you will work from now on and state some basic guidelines, rules, or behaviors you agree to follow in specific work situations, eg., when you:

- Delegate tasks
- Provide feedback
- Resolve conflicts
- Resolve crisis situations
- Make large decisions
- Ensure work quality
- etc.

For example, when providing feedback, you’re expected to be honest and provide constructive criticism, as well as focus not only on the failures but also on what’s been done well. Or, when ensuring work quality, you’d trust your team’s expertise and avoid micromanaging, and also be responsive when they ask for help and reply to all questions within 24 hours.

**Step 4: Share your new way-of-working framework with your team**

Your team deserves to know what they can expect from you, especially if that’s something you’ve just recently added to your way of working. If, for example, you’ve so far been slow with answering emails, then your team should know that from now on, they can expect a reply from you within 24 hours.

**Step 5: Implement, test, and refine**

Implement your new way of working and analyze if and how it affects your team’s performance. The first step was to measure their productivity, remember? Now, make sure you compare the before and after data to draw your conclusions. If necessary, do this “exercise” again – survey your team to find out what’s working well and what’s missing, then refine your way of working and add new improvements.

**To sum up**

It doesn’t always have to be broken to be fixed. Even if your team’s performance already is excellent, there is always room for improvement. A tiny adjustment in your way of working can help you take your company’s success to the next level.
Why You Should Eat The Frog Every Morning

Mark Twain once said that if you eat a live frog first thing in the morning, you know that the rest of your day will be better because the worst is behind you. After all, you’ve already eaten a live frog, what’s the worst that could happen?

Author Brian Tracy applies this same theory to productivity and business. But of course instead of “eating the frog,” he suggests to “complete your worst task.” This can be an assignment you’re dreading, a major project with a tight deadline, or a high-priority task that’s giving you anxiety. Whatever it is, do that one thing at the start of your day.

*Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.* - Mark Twain

Morning is a friend to your productivity
It’s hard to focus on other tasks when there’s something else in the back of your mind that’s stressing you out. Getting your most dreadful
assignments out of the way first thing gives you a sense of relief, making the rest of your day more productive as a result.

Research suggests that we have more willpower in the morning. As the day moves forward, you become more tired and exert less self-control. Willpower is a finite resource, so mornings are the optimal time to tackle the most dreadful assignments.

Don’t trust yourself to swallow your “frog”? Here’s how to prepare your mornings for maximum productivity:

1. Identify the task you’re looking forward to the least.
2. Write it down the day before and gather all the materials you need so you can jump right in the next morning. Doing this will help you mentally prepare for the day ahead.
3. Tell yourself that it’s just one task and then your day will be infinitely better. Make it your mantra – do this one thing and you’ll be invincible.

And if you have more than one task you’re not looking forward to? Take the frog metaphor a step further. As Brian Tracy says, “If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first.” In other words, if you have multiple projects, start with the biggest, most complicated ones first and work your way through them. As your self-control dwindles, you’ll have already tackled your worst assignments.

Swallowing your frog, or finishing your most dreadful or important assignments first, will give you the productivity boost you need to get it done.

What to do if the “frog” is too big?
However, sometimes the “frog” can be a “real toad” and hard to swallow even for an experienced frog-eater. You know the feeling—when you’ve got this crazy task to be done, it suddenly feels like you’re frozen, completely unable to “let it go” and unable to start doing anything to move towards the finish line? Don’t worry, there are a few more techniques that can be used to help in dealing with the least favorite work tasks ever.

1. Divide the task into smaller parts and develop a positive addiction
The first tip that may be useful when dealing with an overwhelming workload is dividing Mr. Big into smaller parts. You know how they say that it’s better to take one thing at a time? It definitely applies to difficult tasks. So instead of having a “complete the X project” written on your to-do list, break it down into smaller consecutive parts that can be done one by one.
By using this approach you’ll feel less overwhelmed with the extent of the work, as it’ll trick your mind into thinking of small tasks that can be accomplished easier rather than the mission impossible. You can also cross out the things that you’ve done from your task list — this approach will bring you a sense of accomplishment, motivation to move forward (as you’ll start to see that the task is developing), and a great overview on the whole big project/task X situation.

Besides, as Brian Tracy has explained, our brain can develop a positive addiction “to endorphins and to the feeling of enhanced clarity, confidence, and competence that they trigger”. That means once you start to deliberately move towards completing smaller tasks, the brain starts to get used to the joy that accomplishment brings. And on an unconscious level, it begins to organize your daily routine in a way that more and more tasks are completed. Over time and without noticing, you’ll become addicted to your success and contribution in a very positive way.

2. Be honest with yourself and set realistic goals
Another useful tip for eating the frog is not falling into the trap of setting unrealistic goals.

Similarly to the previous tip, this one refers to your mindset and brain. We all tend to fall into the trap of perfectionism by overestimating our abilities and thinking that a week’s workload can be done in two days. Well, it can be sometimes, but low-quality results and nervous breakdowns caused by stress aren’t what we aim for, right? Instead be honest with yourself, accurately estimate the amount of time you’ll need to accomplish everything that needs to be done and set a realistic deadline.

3. When things go well, don’t stop working
There’s another trick that our mind plays on ourselves when it comes to completing unpleasant tasks.

Whenever we’re starting to do well and things feel like they’re heading somewhere, our mind may suddenly want to hit the brakes. It feels like everything’s under control, there’s plenty of time and we might as well scroll through social media feed instead of working. But—alert, alert, it’s a trap and procrastination is around the corner! So, instead of lying back, keep moving forward even if everything feels under control and it seems like the task could be completed a bit later. “Later” can easily become “never”.

If Mark Twain had lived in the 21st century, he probably would host a productivity-boosting podcast with the slogan: “The secret of getting ahead is getting started”. Luckily, our brain is like a muscle that can be trained, so once you’ve found your specific “frog”, make it a habit to deal with it first. How to begin? Well, just get going!
getting both teamwork and team-building right can be the difference between sinking and swimming. So how is each defined?

**Teamwork** is “the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal”.

And **team-building** is “the ability to identify and motivate individual employees to form a team that stays together, works together, and achieves together”.

Teamwork selects teammates for their individual skills and unites them to achieve a **common objective**.

Team-building involves the initial formation of groups to achieve said objective.

**Team-building is the glue that produces good teamwork.**

**team-building**

**Team-building** centers around selecting the right people to make a team to complete a common goal. The team leader should be choosing employees with a diverse mix of talents and experiences so that there are different perspectives and expertise to be input into the task.

Key to the process of team-building is the nurturing of the internal relationships. Healthy and productive relationships are integral to **high performing teams**. That’s why you commonly hear of (or experience first-hand) team-building exercises. These are used to develop relationships amongst team members. They also encourage teams to work as a unit, and create greater trust and understanding.

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**Difference between team working and team building**

10
So what is the difference between team working and team building? Are they 2 phrases for the same thing? I have seen the terms used interchangeably in articles and in the workplace, but does that help or hinder?

In our article on collaboration how is it different from team work we explored the definitions of some terms. It often helps to start with some commonly accepted definitions:

Definition of Team Working

Team Working, The earliest definition I could find is:

**Definition of team working “... is the simultaneous working together of various specialists with the possibility of instantaneous face-to-face communication”**

My Concise Oxford English Dictionary says:

Teamwork – the combined effective action of a group

Definition of Team Building

The earliest I have traced the term “team building” to is to the late 1940s. However “team building” seemed to take hold in the late 1960s. Until that time, the common term was “team spirit”. A phrase that has dropped from favour in recent years.

One of the first people to write about this in any detail is James Lincoln in his 1951 book “Incentive Management”. Whilst he does not use the term “team building” in the way we do today, he talks about its importance. He says:

“*We have the use of the organization as a team with the team spirit for the common end sought by all. Such organization is very helpful. Such unit action perhaps could be obtained in no other way.***

And

“*Get the new workers of the firm to feel that they are part of the team playing a worth-while game. Make sure that the purpose of the activity is one that will appeal to the members, then make them a part of it.***"
Lincoln was putting this in the context of incentives and productivity. In a modern organisation the same is true to a greater or lesser extent. Today his book is hard to find, but a full text version is available

- https://archive.org/stream/lincolnsincentiv00linc/lincolnsincentiv00linc_djvu.txt

Since this writing in 1951, others have built on it. One of the earliest was in the book *How to Make a Habit of Succeeding* By Mack R. Douglas.

My Concise Oxford English Dictionary says nothing about the phrase “Team building”, but of Team Spirit it says

*(Team spirit) feelings of camaraderie among the members of a team.*

Thus we can say that Team Building is the process of developing Team Spirit in the members of a team in order to improve relationships and productivity.

**Difference between team working and team building**

Thoughts of others on the difference between team working and team building

Some have written to the effect of:

Team building focuses on the formation of groups, while teamwork concentrates on the function of groups; both are vital for success.

To some extent I agree with this, but the nature of teams are that in my experience team building is not just a formation step. It is a continuous process.

**Team relationships and team processes**

I tend to take a different approach. I believe that team building is the relationship part, and team working is the process or mechanics of how the team cooperates.

The **Team building** has to come first. A team needs a sense of “spirit” or *comradery*. A team without a common set of understanding or relationships is not a team but a group. For a team to be effective, each member needs to understand the personality of each other as well as clarity on the end goal or result. Their strengths and weaknesses as human beings. The relationship between each other.
Team work is the processes and mechanics the team use to achieve their goals, the structure, the “ruler”, the culture. A well-formed team will go out of their way as humans to help other team members. This is how we get exceptional performance in teams towards a common goal.

Time to go back to the future?

The term “Team Building” has long been miss understood, Having been encouraged to write this piece to develop clarity around teams, I am now of the mind that it is time to bring back the old term of “team spirit”. It is more easily understood, and in many ways is more measurable. It is easy to see if there is or is not team spirit in a group of people, than it is to say “they are a team”.

Team building activities and events

Talk to 10 different psychologists or learning professionals and they will give you 11 different activities to build teams. A search on the internet provides over 11 million results. In my practice as a consultant i have been contracted countless times to run events and activities to build teams and to encourage team working.

99% of “team building activities do not work

Here is the killer...99% of “team building activities do not work”. As much as I love techniques such as Lego Serious Play (LSP), MTA Experiential Learning and many other such tools, they do little for real team building. They are great for creativity, problem solving, team working… BUT NOT TEAM BUILDING.

Real team building happens in SOCIAL situations. Where the WHOLE TEAM do things together that show off personality. Where people can relax, have fun and get to know each other. Charity activity like garden clearing for vulnerable people, decorating community spaces etc. Yes these activities can be facilitated, and it is about spending time together. There is no real short cut. Even weekly/ monthly social events for the whole team can mage a big difference.

Effective Team Building Interventions

A good team building intervention will have some structure (but not always led) and lead to improved team bonding. Having a facilitator can help, but it is not essential. Where having that “expert” input is in the design and timing of the interventions rather than actually having a professional facilitator lead the events specifically. Of course many team facilitators/ psychologists will dispute this! If you want a REAL TEAM, the “team Leader” needs to be a part of the team and NOT the lead in these development interventions!
Effective TEAM WORKING, and issues within the team can be highlighted and addressed through the team tools mentioned above. but this is not team building. Effective activities can help to accelerate team building, done badly, they can also slow up team building. Competitive activities such as bowling can also have negative effects, unless sub teams work together in these activities.

So there you have it. A little of the history and origins of team building and team working. An exploration of the Difference between team working and team building. The important but subtle differences between team building and team working, and some of my thoughts on how to develop these attributes in teams.