

Team Assessment

NY Life Investments has developed insights on The 5 Behaviors of High Performing Teams as seen through the lens of the elite and revered, Navy SEALs.

This tool is designed to help you (and your team members) rate yourself in the five key areas.

Enclosed you will find statements for each of the five key areas that are defined below. Your scores will help you identify team strengths and find opportunities for development.

While this exercise is worthwhile for team leaders, it takes on added significance when the entire team participates. We have developed a team worksheet that you can use to aggregate your scores along with some suggestions as to how to make the most of this assessment.

The 5 Behaviors of High Performing Teams

1. Shaping the Battle Space

Part A. Focus on Mission – Client Experience

A few hallmarks of high performing teams are to have a clear mission, a unified vision of the client experience, and defined roles and responsibilities to support it. The first part of "shaping the battle space" is to examine the soup-to-nuts processes in the practice and assess how well the client experience is executed at each stage.

Part B. Culture of Engagement

The second part of "shaping the battle space" looks at the kind of environment that exists on the team and examines the degree to which team members are engaged. Is the team benefiting from the collective mental horsepower of all team members?

2. Plan the Dive, Dive the Plan (Planning and Preparation)

High performing teams are more disciplined about planning and better at execution than other teams. This section will help you assess how well the team strategizes, plans, sets goals, and executes against them.

3. Jack of All – Master of One (Specialization and Knowledge Sharing)

The Navy SEALs are highly trained, highly skilled warriors, and yet SEALs also possess specialty knowledge that allows them to contribute to team missions. This section will help you assess the level of specialization on the team and determine what skills you may wish to acquire, hire, or leverage in the future.

4. Hot Wash (Debriefing to Improve)

To stay ahead of emerging enemy tactics, the Navy SEALs use the Hot Wash, a debrief that allows everyone involved in a mission to share insights, mistakes, and key learnings for the benefit of all. This section will help you examine how well your team learns from experiences and institutes positive changes.

5. Mindset of Continuous Improvement (Creating a Growth Mindset for Practice and People)

Today's environment places greater demands on teams to evolve skillsets to meet increasingly complex client needs. Those teams that operate with a mindset of continuous improvement will be better prepared to win new clients and set themselves up for sustainable growth.

1 Shaping the Battle Space: Focus on Mission

Please use the statements below to evaluate your team in the area of Shaping the Battle Space – Focus on Mission and Culture of Engagement.

N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Question		Rating
1	Our team engages in tactics to create awareness of the practice in the community.	
2	Our team has a proactive plan for prospecting and client acquisition.	
3	Our team has a well-defined discovery process.	
4	All investment and wealth planning services have well-defined processes behind them.	
5	We have a formalized on-boarding process for new clients.	
6	New clients know what to expect from us, are clear on who to call, are trained on how to read our statements, and know how to access their accounts.	
7	Our team has a structured, segmented, service model in place.	
8	Service expectations are clearly understood and well-communicated to all clients.	
9	Our team works collaboratively to create and/or refine processes and procedures.	
10	All team members understand the process and procedures in place across the practice.	
11	Each team member knows their role and responsibilities in the various processes and procedures.	
12	We consistently deliver great service and a high-quality client experience.	
13	Our overall client experience is reflected in the branding for our practice (brochure, website, social media profiles).	
14	We have a formal mechanism for client feedback on service, process, and overall client experience.	
Tally your score here		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 14 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

Are there areas of the practice that lack clear processes and procedures? Yes | No

If yes, what are they? And what ideas do you have for implementation?

What could be done to improve the internal efficiency of the team?

What ideas do you have to enhance the client experience?

Shaping the Battle Space: Culture of Engagement

Question		Rating
1	Team members are highly engaged.	
2	Team members feel their opinions and ideas matter.	
3	Leaders regularly solicit ideas from junior team members.	
4	Team members feel obligated to share insights that can improve internal processes.	
5	Team members feel obligated to share insights that can improve the client experience.	
6	Team members feel empowered to act when they see an opportunity to make positive changes.	
Tally your score here Total:		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 6 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

If your team were to improve its planning and preparation, where should you start?

2 Plan the Dive, Dive the Plan

Please use the statements below to evaluate your team in the area of Plan the Dive, Dive the Plan (Planning and Preparation).

N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N/A	1	2	3	4	5

	Question	Rating
1	Our team has a written business plan.	
2	Our business plan has clearly defined growth goals (i.e. revenue, AUM, net new households, % fee based, % of clients with financial plans).	
3	Our business plan has defined the specific tactics (i.e. education events, COI strategy, networking, referrals) required to achieve growth goals.	
4	The tactics in our business plan have assigned owners, timelines, and action steps.	
5	We have clearly defined our "ideal client(s)".	
6	Our business plan is a "living document" guiding our practice, and we have frequent check-ins to evaluate progress and make refinements.	
7	Our business plan has a detailed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.	
8	As part of our planning process we identify "known unknowns" (threats facing the business – could be industry threats, market dislocations, underperformance, unexpected changes in client situations).	
9	Our team engages in contingency planning for "known unknowns".	
10	We have conducted training for the team to help ensure everyone feels prepared to perform when known stressors occur.	
Tally your score here		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 10 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

If your team were to improve its planning and preparation, where should you start?

3 Jack of All, Master of One

Please use the statements below to evaluate your team in the area of Jack of All, Master of One (Specialization).

N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Question		Rating
1	Client-facing team members possess a mastery of our financial planning process.	
2	Client-facing team members are able to articulate our investment planning process.	
3	Team members have distinct areas of specialization.	
4	Team members regularly share insights with the team.	
5	Our team has the expertise needed to be successful.	
6	Our team has good relationships with external partners that assist in broadening the expertise we make available to our clients.	
7	Our team does an excellent job of coordinating and helping to deliver the expertise of external professionals.	
Tally your score here		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 7 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

Are there specialty knowledge and skills that would help the team better compete in the future? What are they?

What knowledge and skills would you like to acquire to perform better in your role/or a future role?

4 Hot Wash

Please use the statements below to evaluate your team in the area of Hot Wash (Debriefing).

N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Question		Rating
1	Our team values debriefs (formal and informal) and the sharing of information, perspective and insight.	
2	We have formalized debriefs in several areas of our practice (i.e. discovery meetings, client reviews, finals presentations, client events, family meetings).	
3	Team members feel empowered to share honest feedback, in general, but also specifically in debriefs.	
4	Our debriefs result in action items and accountability to improve the practice.	
5	We have a process for scheduling debriefs.	
Tally your score here		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 5 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

If the team were to institute a new debrief process (or enhance an existing one), what activity would yield the greatest benefit? (i.e. prospect meetings, win/loss reviews, client events, team meetings, etc.)

5 Mindset of Continuous Improvement

Please use the statements below to evaluate your team in the area of Mindset of Continuous Improvement (Growth Mindset Practices – Team, Team Members, Self)

N/A	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Question		Rating
1	The team is always seeking ways of doing things better.	
2	The team learns from its mistakes.	
3	Team members are excited to learn new things.	
4	Team members are not afraid to take risks.	
5	Team members have access to training to help them acquire requisite knowledge and skills to improve.	
6	Team members regularly coach one another.	
7	Team members feel comfortable giving each other feedback.	
8	Each team member has an individual development plan.	
9	Each team member has a clearly developed career path.	
10	Performance reviews are regularly delivered.	
11	Self-assessments are included as part of the review process.	
12	Real-time feedback is delivered via coaching.	
Tally your score here		Total:
Average for this section (Total divided by 12 minus N/As)		Average Score:

Questions for Exploration/Discussion:

Where do you feel the team should place priority for growth: the individual development of team members, coaching for performance, training and development, other?

Why is this a priority? What ideas do you have for discussion/implementation?

Team Assessment Scoring Key

Compute your total/average score for each section of the Team Assessment. Remember to remove any N/As from the denominator to come up with an accurate score. Compare these numbers to the scale on the right.

Scores in the low to medium range represent a significant opportunity for development/improvement.

Scores in the medium range require some attention to achieve high performance.

To avoid becoming overwhelmed, we suggest stack ranking your section scores from low to high and doing a deeper dive into the lowest scoring sections to assist you in defining specific action steps.

In addition, we encourage you to compare notes with other senior partners and/or the entire team. Use the Team Assessment Worksheet to tally team scores and for ideas on how to take action.

High 3.75 and above

Medium 3.25 to 3.74

Low Less than 3.25

Highlight the areas with the lowest scores and the areas where you feel team effort is most critical to enhance efficiency and/or the client experience.

Answer the open-ended questions and discuss with senior partners or entire team, as appropriate.



"New York Life Investments" is both a service mark, and the common trade name, of the investment advisors affiliated with New York Life Insurance Company. FOR INSTITUTIONAL USE ONLY - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION TO CLIENTS OR TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.