

Well-Aligned vs. Poorly Aligned Teams



A well-aligned team with clear ways of working together and expectations for each other resembles a fitted jig-saw puzzle. Members of a well-aligned team generally report that the team experience is “smooth”, “effective”, and that they are “working well together.” For new team members, it is often fairly easy to adapt to this type of team due to the existing clarity. New team members can begin contributing quickly because it is fairly obvious how they fit into the existing structure.

In contrast, this picture below shows a chaotic team with little alignment and resembles a scrambled jig-saw puzzle.



The team’s ways of working together are unclear and even the quality of communication between the existing members is in question. Members of these types of teams rarely talk about their the team and often experience a disconnected feeling in team meetings. Because it is hard to see exactly how team members are working together, it is very difficult for a new person to join. About all he/she can do is to pick an outside edge (anybody’s) and start there, trying to connect with everyone in due course while building a shape of their own to fit the odd structure already in place.