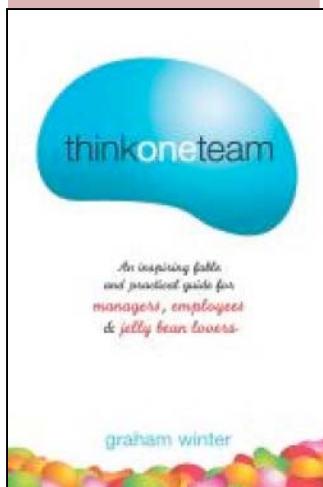


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## Think One Team

An inspiring fable and practical guide for managers, employees and jelly bean lovers



By Graham Winter

### OVERVIEW

The story of the big jelly bean team.

The think one team™ model.

“Imagine the possibilities when everyone in your organization thinks and acts as one big team.”

“This proposition is based on the experience that most organizations (both big and small) are populated with mini-kingdoms that fail to collaborate with each other. Call them whatever you like –‘silos’, ‘fiefdoms’– they are enemy number one in the business world because they add costs, irritate customers, and are considered the root cause of countless lost opportunities.”

“Ironically, it is not the silos themselves that are the problem but rather the inability of organizations, or more particularly the people in them, to foster team-work across boundaries.”

“In an increasingly networked world, there is much to be said for giving business/operating units the sort of focus that comes from being a silo; however, few, if any, can genuinely succeed without the ability to open doors and windows of their silo to collaborate with others on problems and opportunities.”

“This book and the related think one team™ program have been specifically designed to help readers, and everyone in their organization, to create and sustain the team-work across boundaries that will enable them to experience the rewards of working as one team.”

“Beginning with the fable of the big jelly bean team the reader joins one company’s engaging, enlightening and at times funny journey through silo-afflicted to working as one team. From its experiences you learn the five practices that define the difference between ‘think silos’ and ‘think one team’, and see what these practices mean for leaders and employees across an organization.”

“From the vivid story a think one team™ model is built, which is easy to understand and apply in any organization. The model provides the language needed to share across the organization, and lots of ideas for thinking and acting as one team.”

“It is important to stress that ‘think one team’ means being accountable, having clear boundaries and allowing for specialization. It is not intended to be used as a reason to create one big department because that will create an even more limiting bureaucracy. Rather, it is a simple yet powerful message to build the effective and enduring partnerships needed among the people in any organization to successfully implement the business/organization strategy.”

“Think one team is both a mantra and a philosophy of work because it offers a more productive and enjoyable way to live and work”.

## Real Conversations

The fable starts with a morning meeting at O'Donnell's Jelly Bean Company with the executive team representing the heads of the six key divisions. The group's expectations were that the meeting was going to be unpleasant and depressing, due to unsuccessful attempts to resolve a multi-year deterioration of sales. Managers are expecting to hear of drastic measures that would be put in place as a result to save the company. As the meeting starts, the arrogant and pompous CEO recounts the worst board meeting he has ever attended and what people expected materializes in the form of cutbacks and a deadline to turn the business around in one quarter. As the meeting continues, the division and differences within the group appear. Managers defend their actions and seek to deflect responsibility. It becomes clear that there will not be any real conversation here.

Real conversations, according to the author Graham Winter, don't happen in the boardrooms but in the cafeterias and hallways. He shares that: "People in boardrooms can lose connection with what actually makes the organization tick. They miss the conversations, the emotional moments and the open tensions. Things are often controlled in boardrooms because of status and agendas."

As the managers continue their meeting, they take a look at their core purpose and start to evaluate the effectiveness of their old business model in the context of the current reality. Their conclusion is that they have two choices: they can continue on the same path in their departmental teams and silos and the business will slowly wither away or they can get rid of the roadblocks to communication and teamwork and do something different.

The author points out that the arrogance of senior managers hides something. He notes the best leaders have long passed the stage where they need to strut arrogantly around the business. Arrogance is usually a sign of low emotional intelligence or lack of confidence—or both.

Either way, a business is never going to fulfill its potential if that is the style of the people in charge. They'll soon find that everyone just strokes their ego and lets Senior Managers do all the thinking. That might work in the short term but it's a recipe for disaster in anything but a one-person business.

## Values 24/7

After the executive meeting is adjourned, managers go back to their respective departments to meet with direct reports who have already heard rumors about the substantial changes. What they learn is that a new CEO has been appointed and change is inevitable to get the company back on a profitable and effective course.

The fable continues to take the reader through the thinking and conversations the new CEO, Jenny O'Donnell, has with a number of managers and with a consultant, Nick Fox, hired to help guide the organization to a new operating strategy. Through these conversations and reflections the reader is introduced to a series of challenges that leaders of organizations and teams need to be aware of in order to create a united team.

For example:

Winter "recalls that when he took over a team someone advised him that 'you are only a new boss once.' Unfortunately, there is a difference between being told something and actually listening!"

Six months into the job he realized that he hadn't had the conversations with his team that clearly defined the 'rules' of the game that they were playing. The conflicts and misunderstanding showed a serious lack of understanding on his part. He'd missed the chance to shape the important things; to create a clear picture while still new, and as the newness wore off it, seemed ten times more difficult to change.

New managers/team leaders need to keep in mind that when implementing change it is important to remember that despite the challenges faced by a company, people do not easily embrace change unless there is a strong, logical case and an equally strong emotional case to discard the past for a new future. The 'indisputable need for change'.

The logical case is easy. Most leaders can explain logically why their business could or should improve things such as customer service, speed to market, consistency of processes and so on. It's creating the emotional case, the motivation to act and withstanding the challenges, that is the key. That motivation might come from fear and loss ('the platform is burning so we better jump') or pleasure and gain ('let's leap into a bigger and brighter future'). Most corporate initiatives fail because they don't create an emotional case to challenge and change the status quo. Sometimes that's about inspiring words and actions, and sometimes it's about setting fire to a few platforms. One way to support a team through change is to clearly articulate the team values and practice them on a day-to-day basis.

As the story unfolds the reader is introduced to the think one team™ model being implemented by the new CEO. The model identifies five practices that distinguish two types of organizations. Each of these practices has an opposite or 'shadow'.

## (Values 24/7 Continued)

think one team	think silos
Share the big picture	Pursue other agendas
Share the reality	Avoid and deny
Share the air	Stifle communication
Share the load	Look after your own turf
Share the wins and losses	Play I win, you lose

1. **Share the big picture** is the first practice, and means that everyone and every team member knows and shares their part in the bigger picture. That picture might be of the corporate vision and values, or simply just understanding what is happening in the next department. The shadow, *pursue other agendas*, is characterized by the individual parts of the organization pursuing other things that are more important than the big picture.
2. **Share the reality** is the second practice and is about speaking the truth, confronting the harsh reality and being open to giving feedback. The shadow is *avoid and deny*, and its guises include putting an overly positive 'spin' on issues and avoiding them altogether. When reality is avoided or denied, the whole organization is at risk.
3. **Share the air** is essential if potential is to be tapped. The lifeblood of organizations is communication. Open two-way communication, active listening and clear communication stops the damaging silo behavior from flourishing. However, when the shadow *stifle communication* is in place, people dominate others or, alternatively, they hoard information and foster a 'them and us' culture.
4. **Share the load** is the fourth practice, and happens spontaneously as people understand what the load really is, and they collaborate to get the job done while playing their own part. The shadow, *look after your own turf*, reveals itself as in-company competition and narrow self-interest.
5. **Share the wins and losses** is the fifth and final practice, and reminds us that in big teams everyone wins and loses together, whereas in the shadow, *play I win, you lose*, people take credit for wins, while blaming losses on others.

As with most things in organizations, it is the quality of the leadership at all levels that is key to creating teamwork across boundaries or energy-sapping silos.

The rest of the book explores how the reader can kick-start a think one team culture by revealing the leadership requirements and some of the key strategies to engage others in the journey. An assessment is also provided for those readers who would like to establish how often, in their day-to-day work, they see people displaying silo behaviors that are described.

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## About the Author

Graham Winter is the founder and principal of Graham Winter Consulting, a privately owned consultancy based in Adelaide, South Australia. It has a spread of clients and assignments across Australia, Singapore, China, Malaysia and New Zealand. Graham trained as a psychologist and is an advisor to top leaders and teams across Australia and Asia. He was three-time Chief Psychologist for the Australian Olympic Team and, for five years, was engaged as the exclusive designer of High Leadership Performance Leadership programs for clients of the PwC Consulting Asia Pacific Strategic Change Practice.



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- Transformative learning experiences

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