

RESEARCH REPORT

SYSTEMIC TEAM OF TEAMS COACHING: WHAT'S NEW, WHAT'S NEXT?

What if the way we currently lead teams is actually holding us back from the future we need to create? In an era where complexity outpaces our ability to predict outcomes, organizations that fail to evolve their leadership approach risk becoming obsolete.



Over the past decade, organizations have invested millions in leadership development – yet many still struggle to create truly future-fit teams. What if the missing piece isn't individual leadership, but a fundamental shift in how teams operate as dynamic, systemic entities?

Despite increasing recognition that teams drive organizational success, most leadership development still focuses on individuals. This paper explores how regenerative teams can move beyond high performance to become net-positive forces for their organizations and the wider ecosystem. It is a call to action for leaders, leadership teams, organizations, and policymakers to embed systemic team of teams coaching as a foundational approach for navigating complexity and accelerating collaboration within organizations. It links the many services that organizations are disconnectedly engaging in but not maximizing their return on investment.

The report presents findings from research conducted by Renewal Associates in 2024-2025, in collaboration with global research partners. It draws on insights from over 70 organizations across diverse sectors, countries, and stages of development, providing a comprehensive perspective on the state of Team of Teams Coaching worldwide.

While much has been written about team effectiveness, this paper introduces a regenerative model – one that enables teams not just to perform well, but to actively enhance the organizations and ecosystems they operate within.



Executive Summary

- Organizations today face increasing complexity, requiring a shift from traditional structures to dynamic, interconnected teams.
- Organizations are increasingly adopting Systemic Team Coaching®, for their people, teams, leadership and organizational development.
- Systemic Team Coaching® strengthens collaboration, resilience, and strategic agility across executive teams, boards, and business-critical networks. However, only a small minority have adopted an integrated approach of linking Systemic Team Coaching® to their organizational transformation.
- We discovered two different pathways to achieving this: a) a step-by-step iterative approach, starting with one or a few teams and then gradually expanding, and b) starting with strategically agreeing on the necessary organizational transformation, and then designing how a team of teams approach can enable this transformation.
- Organizations that successfully adopt a Systemic Team of Teams model experience enhanced decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability.

“Harnessing our innate capacity for cooperation is crucial. On a global scale, the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us valuable lessons. We witnessed entire societies pivot to remote work, adopt public health guidelines, and come together to collectively combat disease. These are the kinds of tipping points we urgently need to address the metacrisis that we are in—and they must happen soon. We can’t solve these issues without bringing everyone along.”

Organizations today face an increasingly complex and interconnected business environment that demands new approaches to structuring teams and leadership. A Systemic Team of Teams Approach (STOTA) has emerged as a critical framework for navigating complexity, breaking down silos, and fostering dynamic, cross-functional collaboration.

This research report builds upon existing thinking on the team of teams approach by integrating expanded insights from Systemic Team Coaching® methodologies and client case studies. It highlights strategies for effectively developing executive teams, boards, senior teams, business-critical teams, and interconnected team of teams networks.

This report presents key research findings, explores systemic team development, and provides practical strategies for embedding this transformative way of working. Additionally, it deepens the discussion on development pathways, illustrating the iterative and transformational journeys organizations undertake when adopting the Systemic Team of Teams approach.

Introduction

The modern organizational landscape is characterised by constant disruption, rapid technological advancements, and increasing global interdependencies. Traditional hierarchical structures often struggle to keep up with these shifts, resulting in inefficiencies, misalignment, and employee burnout. In response, the Team of Teams (ToT) approach offers a decentralized, flexible, and adaptive structure that fosters collaboration across different organizational levels.

Building future fit Team of Teams culture requires leveraging Systemic Team Coaching® as a tool for sustainable success. This paper explores how organizations can apply systemic thinking to leadership development, enhancing both internal collaboration and stakeholder engagement. By integrating case studies, this report provides tangible evidence of how ToT adoption leads to improved performance, innovation, and resilience.

“Every organization, in every sector, needs to discover how it can positively respond to the meta-crisis of our times by becoming a future-fit and net-positive organization.”

Case Study:

Peel Regional Police

The Peel Regional Police in Toronto, Canada embarked on a transformational Systemic Team Coaching journey in response to external pressures such as the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for police reform. By leveraging Systemic Team Coaching®, they developed a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. The introduction of a coaching culture model led to improved engagement, stronger inter-team partnerships, and enhanced responsiveness to community needs. Today, Peel Police is regarded as a forward-thinking policing organization, setting a benchmark for systemic transformation in public service sectors.

Heather Clayton, Research Partner

The Importance of a Systemic Team of Teams Culture

A Team of Teams culture is built on the principles of interconnectedness, adaptability, and collective intelligence. Unlike traditional teams that operate in silos, the ToT model encourages cross-functional collaboration, ensuring that knowledge, resources, and skills are effectively shared. Organizations that successfully adopt this model report improved efficiency, higher-quality output, and reduced resource expenditure. Furthermore, fostering a collaborative environment helps to mitigate the risk of burnout, as responsibilities and decision-making are distributed more evenly across teams.

A key driver of the ToT culture is the ability to navigate complexity by leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise. Traditional, siloed teams often struggle to address multifaceted challenges that require interdisciplinary solutions. In contrast, a collaborative and synergistic approach allows organizations to unlock a broader pool of insights and capabilities, empowering them to adapt swiftly to market shifts and strategic demands. Our research confirms that companies with a well-developed Team of Teams approach are more resilient and innovative but also better positioned for sustained long-term success.

Systemic Team Coaching® and Its Growing Adoption

Systemic Team Coaching® has gained significant traction as organizations strive to enhance leadership effectiveness and teamwork at multiple levels. Unlike individual coaching or traditional team-building exercises, this approach addresses the complex interdependencies within and between teams. It fosters a culture where teams co-create value with and for stakeholders, ensuring alignment across the organization. A key distinction of Systemic Team Coaching® is its ability to scale across networks, fostering an organization-wide transformation rather than isolated team improvements.

An increasing number of companies are incorporating Systemic Team Coaching® into their leadership development strategies, recognising its potential to drive organization-wide transformation.

This approach emphasises not just the performance of individual teams, but the overall connectivity and cohesion across the organization.

It ensures that all teams work towards a shared purpose, leveraging collective intelligence to maximise impact. Pioneering organizations have successfully employed Systemic Team Coaching® to address leadership challenges, enhance organizational agility, and foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, positioning themselves for long-term success in an ever-evolving business landscape.

Case Study:

Deloitte's Leadership Development Approach

Deloitte UK adopted an incremental journey by first embedding Systemic Team Coaching® within senior leadership before expanding to business-critical teams. Their structured Team Coaching Essentials program empowered senior partners to develop and coach their own teams, leading to increased collaboration, efficiency, and strategic agility across the organization.

Source: Leadership Team Coaching 4th Edition, Peter Hawkins, 2021, Kogan Page

The Emergence of Two Key Development Pathways

As more organizations adopt Systemic Team Coaching®, two dominant transformation pathways have emerged - each with its own benefits and challenges. Whether through a step-by-step evolution or a large-scale strategic shift, the choice of approach significantly impacts success. Both of these two pathways and journeys are written about in detail in our forthcoming book.

Organizations typically follow one of two main pathways when adopting a Team of Teams approach.

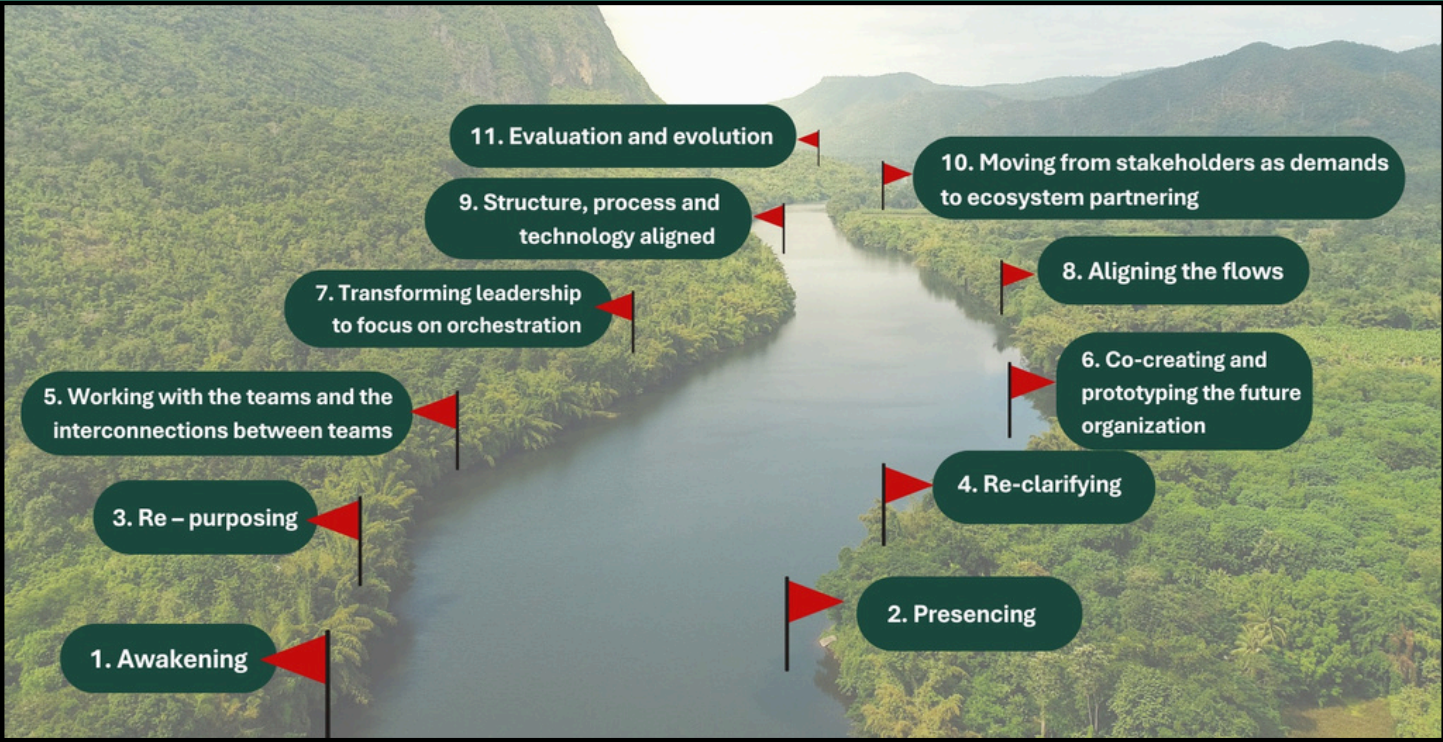
1. The Incremental Journey

This involves gradually coaching one or two teams before expanding based on insights, successes and emergent needs. This iterative approach ensures that the transition remains effective and sustainable. As teams experience the benefits of Systemic Team Coaching®, the practice naturally gains momentum, leading to a more integrated and aligned workforce.



2. The Planned Organizational Transformation Journey

Alternatively, some organizations recognize the need for a fundamental overhaul due to external pressures such as market disruptions, mergers, or leadership changes. These companies embrace a big-bang approach, embedding a Team of Teams approach into their transformation strategy from the outset.



Both pathways emphasise the need for systemic thinking, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation to ensure successful implementation and long-term effectiveness.

By combining the best practices that the research discovered around the world we developed the following ‘best of the best’ wheel of best practice.



The Team of Teams
Wheel of Best of the
Best Practice

Hybrid Approach: Leveraging Both Pathways

Many organizations are now combining elements of both pathways, starting with an incremental approach before accelerating change through strategic interventions. This hybrid model enables organizations to remain agile while ensuring systemic alignment with long-term transformation goals.

Case Study:

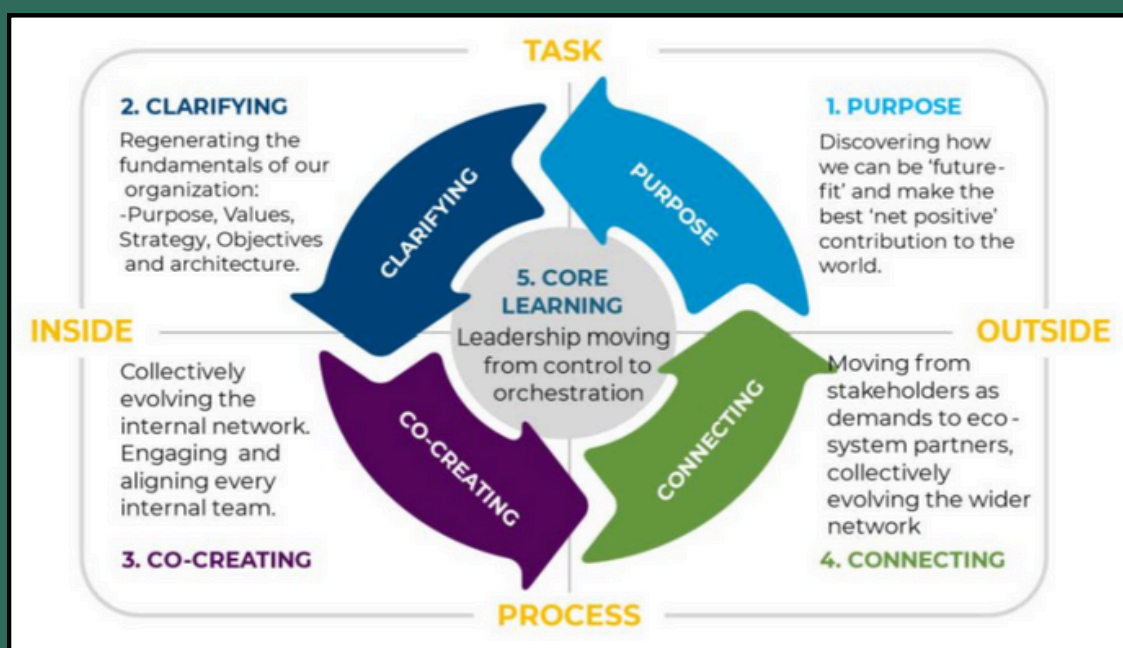
GHD's shift to a Globally Networked Business

GHD, a global engineering consultancy, faced challenges in breaking down internal silos after rapid international expansion. By adopting **Systemic Team Coaching®**, they transitioned from a nationally structured company to an internationally networked business. Their **One GHD** initiative strengthened inter-team relationships, enhanced knowledge-sharing, and improved global responsiveness, illustrating the power of ToT in large-scale organizational change.

Jan Sipsma, Strategy and People Director, GHD

The Five Disciplines of Systemic Organizational Transformation

Expanding upon Peter Hawkins' Five Disciplines of High Value Creating Teams framework, we introduce a revised model tailored for Systemic Team of Teams adoptions. This model provides a practical framework for organizations to assess and develop their Team of Teams capabilities. The model provides a structured approach for organizations to develop interconnected, high-value creating teams.



Purposing and Repurposing

The first discipline, Purposing and Repurposing, is about aligning the organization's purpose with the evolving needs of its ecosystem. Organizations exist within dynamic environments, and their purpose must be regularly revisited and refined to remain relevant and impactful. A strong, shared purpose provides coherence and direction across teams, ensuring that collaboration is not just efficient but also meaningful. We ask, what can you uniquely do together than you can't do alone? What does the world need you to step up to?

Clarifying

The second discipline, Clarifying, focuses on clarifying roles, responsibilities, processes and the interdependencies between teams. Traditional hierarchical structures often create confusion and inefficiencies, whereas a well-commissioned team of teams understands its collective objectives and how different groups contribute to the whole. This discipline emphasizes the need for clear agreements, mutual accountability, and a system-wide approach to leadership and decision-making.

Co-Creating

The third discipline, Co-Creating, highlights the necessity of breaking down silos and fostering inter-team relationships. No team operates in isolation, and successful organizations prioritize the quality of connections between teams just as much as individual team effectiveness. This discipline involves enhancing communication channels, creating shared learning spaces, and ensuring that teams actively co-create rather than compete for resources and recognition.

Connecting

The fourth discipline, Connecting, extends beyond internal collaboration to include the wider ecosystem of customers, suppliers, investors, and communities. A systemic team of teams does not merely optimize internal efficiency; it actively engages with and contributes to its broader environment. This discipline encourages organizations to shift from transactional stakeholder relationships to co-creative partnerships that generate shared value.

Core Learning and Leading

The fifth discipline, Core Learning and Leading, ensures that teams of teams remain adaptable and continuously improve. Organizations must develop a culture of learning where teams reflect on their collective performance, integrate feedback, and experiment with new ways of working. By embedding reflective practice and developmental coaching at all levels, organizations can sustain long-term agility and resilience.

Factors Helping or Hindering Systemic Team of Teams Coaching

Factors helping team of teams coaching	Factors hindering team of teams coaching
Aligning with senior leaders who role model and endorse the process	No support from senior leader(s)
Working on common challenges	Absence of common purpose and goals in the team
Creating a common language and tools	Not feeling safe enough to speak up let alone align
Working toward goals between sessions	Lack of consistent follow-up and support
Using team diagnostics and ongoing measures of success	Just relying on team members' views of what change is needed
Creating connections between teams as well as within teams	Not making time for the team coaching or to do things differently
Sharing learning across the organization	Learning and development staying within the teams
Addressing differences and conflict	Leaving differences and conflict unprocessed
Effectively using face to face and virtual approaches in effective ways to engage	Mix of face-to-face and virtual techniques and participation not effective
The use of external coaches	Not having external support
Ensuring coach-team-organizational alignment before engagement	Bad fit between team and team coach

Case Study: Hitachi Energy, HVDC – Successful Growth Through Teaming and Sustainability

Background:

Hitachi Energy HVDC is a global leader in High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) technology, which facilitates the transmission of vast amounts of electricity over long distances. The company plays a pivotal role in integrating renewable energy into modern power systems. Given the surging demand for sustainable energy, the organization has experienced rapid growth, quadrupling its workforce in Sweden over recent years. The expansion has required extensive hiring, with 1,000 new employees per year joining the organization.

Despite its success, the company faced a major challenge in 2023: how to sustain growth while maintaining efficiency and quality. They needed to increase productivity without proportionally increasing the workforce. This dilemma prompted Hitachi Energy, HVDC to explore systemic approaches for enhancing collaboration, resilience, and leadership capabilities.



Applying the Five Disciplines of Systemic Organizational Transformation

1. Purposing and Repurposing

Hitachi Energy, HVDC recognized the urgent global need for renewable energy solutions and aligned its corporate mission accordingly. The company needed to scale operations rapidly while ensuring alignment and synergy across teams. Leadership actively redefined the organization's core purpose to emphasize sustainability, efficiency, and long-term partnerships.

2. Clarifying

Several strategic objectives emerged to create organizational clarity:

- Focusing on customers who could become long-term partners through multiple projects.
- Growing the business at a faster rate than workforce expansion to maintain cost efficiency.
- Enhancing inter-team collaboration to drive alignment and operational efficiency.
- Implementing a clearer decision-making structure to support rapid scaling.

3. Co-Creating

Leadership prioritized co-creation by engaging senior teams in shaping strategic direction. The company introduced Systemic Team Coaching® across management levels, ensuring that leaders were not just recipients of change but active participants in driving transformation. The senior management team, having undergone Systemic Team Coaching®, cascaded these coaching principles to their teams, fostering an interconnected approach to collaboration.

4. Connecting

Beyond internal transformation, Hitachi Energy, HVDC also redefined its relationships with external stakeholders. They adopted new teaming models with customers, suppliers, and industry partners, emphasizing long-term partnerships over transactional relationships. This shift enabled greater collaboration in problem-solving and increased resilience in navigating market changes.

5. Core Learning and Leading

A learning culture was embedded into Hitachi Energy, HVDC's transformation journey. Leaders were trained to become team orchestrators and systemic team coaches themselves, fostering a networked coaching model throughout the organization. This helped accelerate cross-team knowledge sharing, ensuring that best practices were rapidly disseminated and implemented.

Results and Impact

By embedding the Five Disciplines into its operations, Hitachi Energy HVDC achieved the following outcomes:

- Increased efficiency and resilience, allowing the company to double productivity without doubling headcount.
- Strengthened team collaboration, both internally and with external stakeholders.
- Greater transparency and communication, reducing costly operational errors caused by siloed working.
- A more sustainable organizational model, ensuring long-term growth without excessive resource strain.

Hitachi Energy, HVDC's transformation showcases how the Five Disciplines model can drive systemic organizational change. By aligning its purpose, clarifying roles, fostering co-creation, strengthening external partnerships, and embedding a continuous learning culture, the company successfully navigated rapid expansion while maintaining operational excellence.

Jenny Sima, Research Partner

Linking the systemic teams of teams approach to the life-cycle stage of the organization

The research showed that a team of team approach can be used for organizations at very different stages in their development and life-cycle. However, a different approach is needed for each of these.

1. When first moving from a one team business where everyone knows each other and what is happening to separate levels and functions with separate teams.
2. When moving to multiple locations or developing international businesses.
3. When moving from an international business to one that is globally networked.
4. When developing a new strategy requiring engagement and alignment from many teams across the organization.
5. When needing to develop a new organizational culture.
6. As part of mergers or acquisitions integration.
7. When there is need to turn stakeholders into closer partners.

Next Steps

If you would like to have conversation or an in-house bespoke webinar with one of the research group; or would like to be invited to one of our open webinars or workshops on the Systemic Team of Teams Coaching findings and methodology, please contact Jo.Ellis@renewalassociates.o.uk.

The Book “Team of Teams Coaching: Using a Teaming approach to increase in business impact.” by Professor Peter Hawkins and Dr. Catherine Carr, will be published by Kogan Page in June 2025.

[To pre-order a copy through Amazon click here.](#)

[To pre-order a copy through Kogan Page click here.](#)

The McChrystal Group

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Renewal Associates would like to acknowledge the work and support of the McChrystal Group who have pioneered work in both the concept of 'Team of Teams' and helping leaders in organizations apply it. <https://www.mcchrystalgroup.com/>