



Top Teams & You

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Stephanie Schoss, Director of the Competence Center for Top Teams poses four questions on Top Teams to Prof. Dr. Winfried Ruigrok:

1. **Stephanie Schoss: Prof. Ruigrok, you have been recognized for your research about top management teams. What is the problem here?**
 - Prof. Ruigrok: Teams are on the rise—at all levels and across all organisations. However, many teams are not living up to their potential because they fail to exploit their members' strengths. In many teams, cooperation is suboptimal, and performance well below expectation. While we know how to manage departments and divisions, many companies are still struggling to create teams that excel.
2. **Stephanie Schoss: Are teams really becoming more important? Why?**
 - Prof. Ruigrok: Yes. Companies are facing ever more complex environments, due to globalisation, continuous technological change and demographic shifts. It takes specialists to understand and keep up with all these changes. And it takes teams to integrate specialists' expertise and competencies. Growing specialisation and teams go hand in hand. A recent survey by the University of St.Gallen confirmed that HR and L&D directors see the biggest need for executive development at the team level.
3. **Stephanie Schoss: How do you define a top team?**
 - Prof. Ruigrok: Top teams...
 - i. ...are based on specialist expertise and complementarities of its members (*composition*);
 - ii. ...are situated at the apex of the organisation (*level*);
 - iii. ...recognise and successfully manage surface and deep level diversity (*process*);
 - iv. ...embrace highly demanding tasks (*task orientation*);
 - v. ...contribute to sustainable growth and performance of the organisation (*outcome*).
4. **Stephanie Schoss: How will you tackle the challenge; what are you planning to do next?**
 - Prof. Ruigrok: We are conducting interviews with innovative business leaders in order to discuss our views and identify where they see the biggest need for action. We will organise a workshop (autumn 2013 or winter 2013) with a number of highly innovative business leaders in order to discuss the interview results. As a next step, we will join forces with selected business leaders keen on top teams and ready to co-develop our project. A pre-launch event in December will define the research agenda. We will also identify the high-impact Top Team questions that most matter to participating member firms.