

Teamwork or Team-woe – converting teamwork perceptions into realities

New research on teams and teamwork from Leadership Management Australia’s Leadership Employment and Direction (L.E.A.D.) Survey series reveals some profound and disturbing gaps between the **perceptions** of leaders of teams and the **experiences** of team members they lead.

The extraordinary extent of difference between leader perceptions and team member experiences clearly illustrates there is a great deal of work to be done to enable better teamwork and ensure teams are able to perform to their potential.

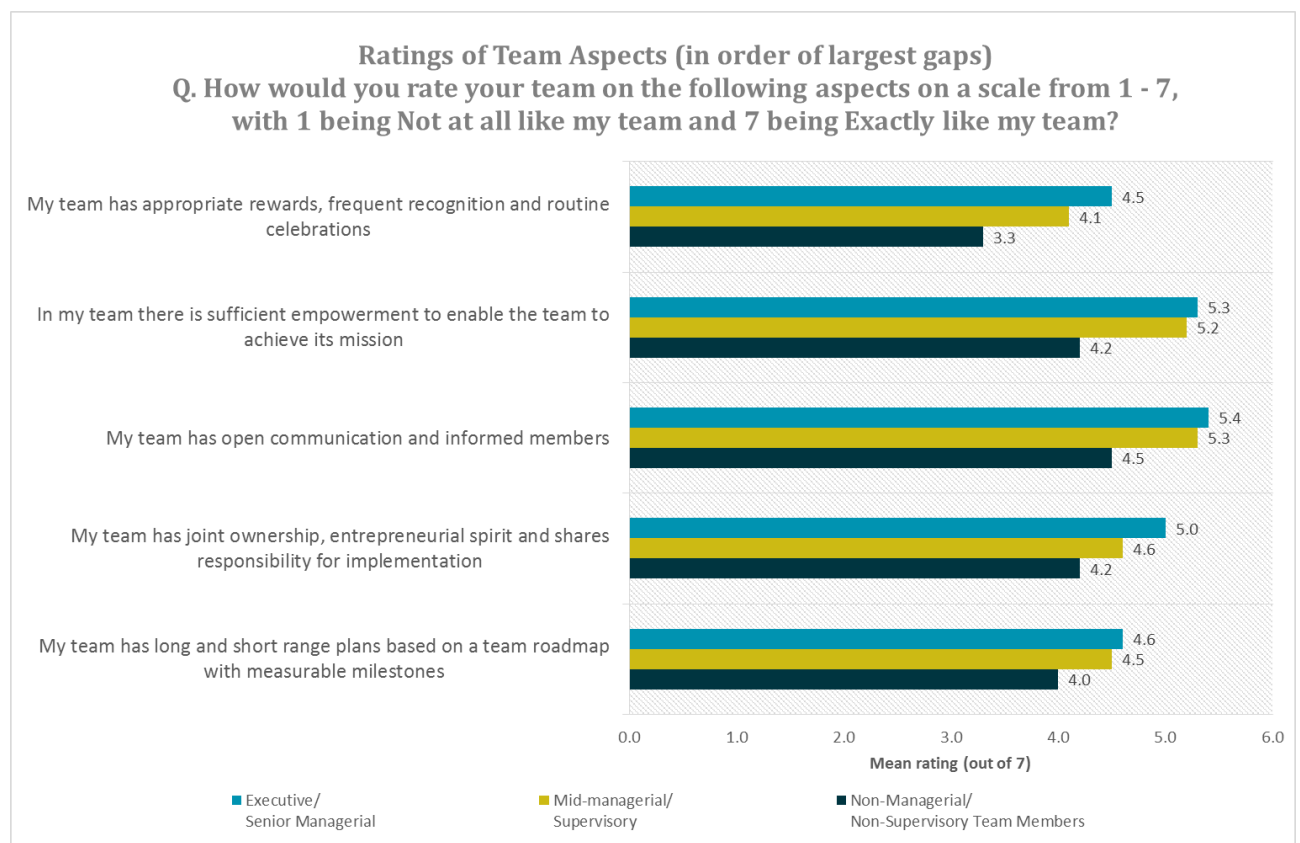
The findings provide the ideal opportunity for leaders at all levels of organisations to take a much closer look at the teams they lead and work collaboratively with team members to close the gaps and deliver more effective team dynamics.

In essence, leaders need to invest in the development of better team relationships and processes to provide enhanced support and encouragement so desperately sought by team members.

Let’s take a closer look at the numbers to see what needs to be done:

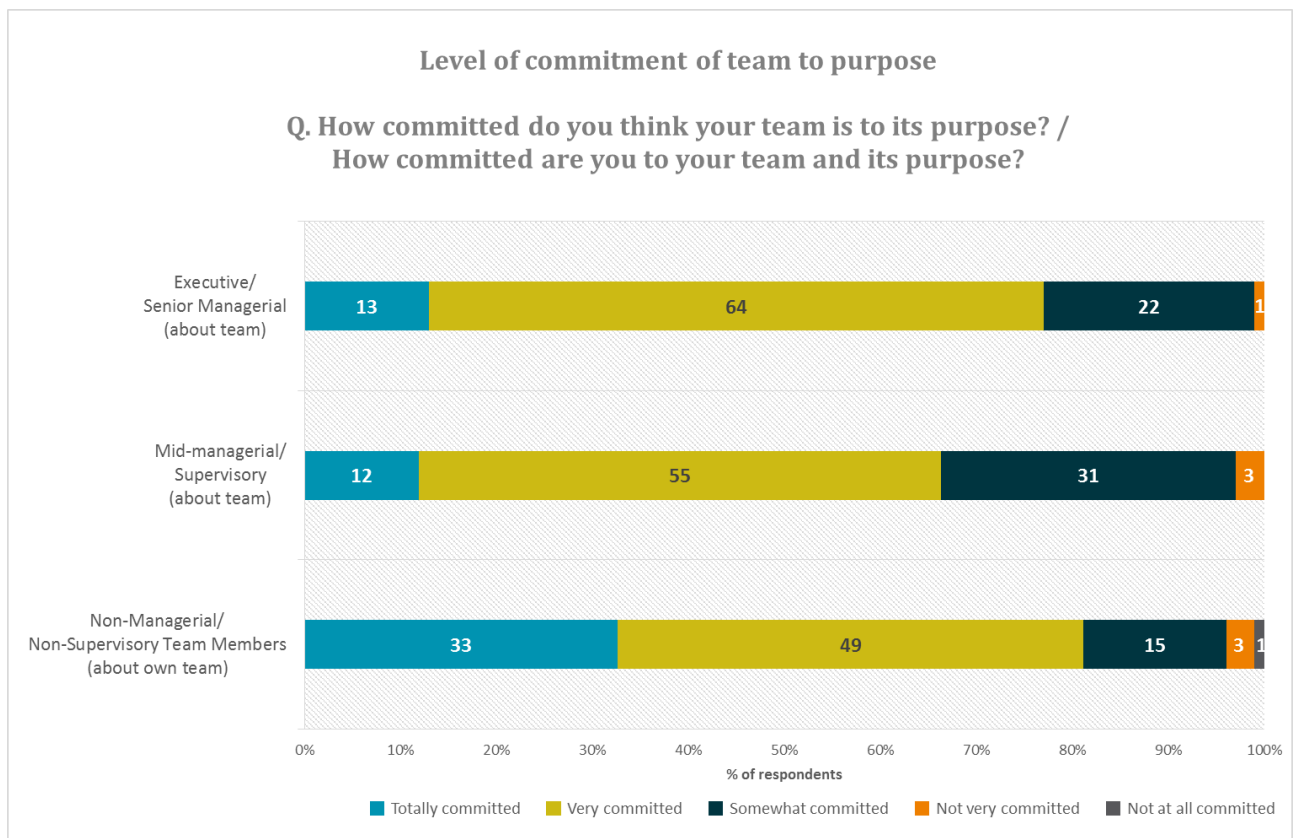
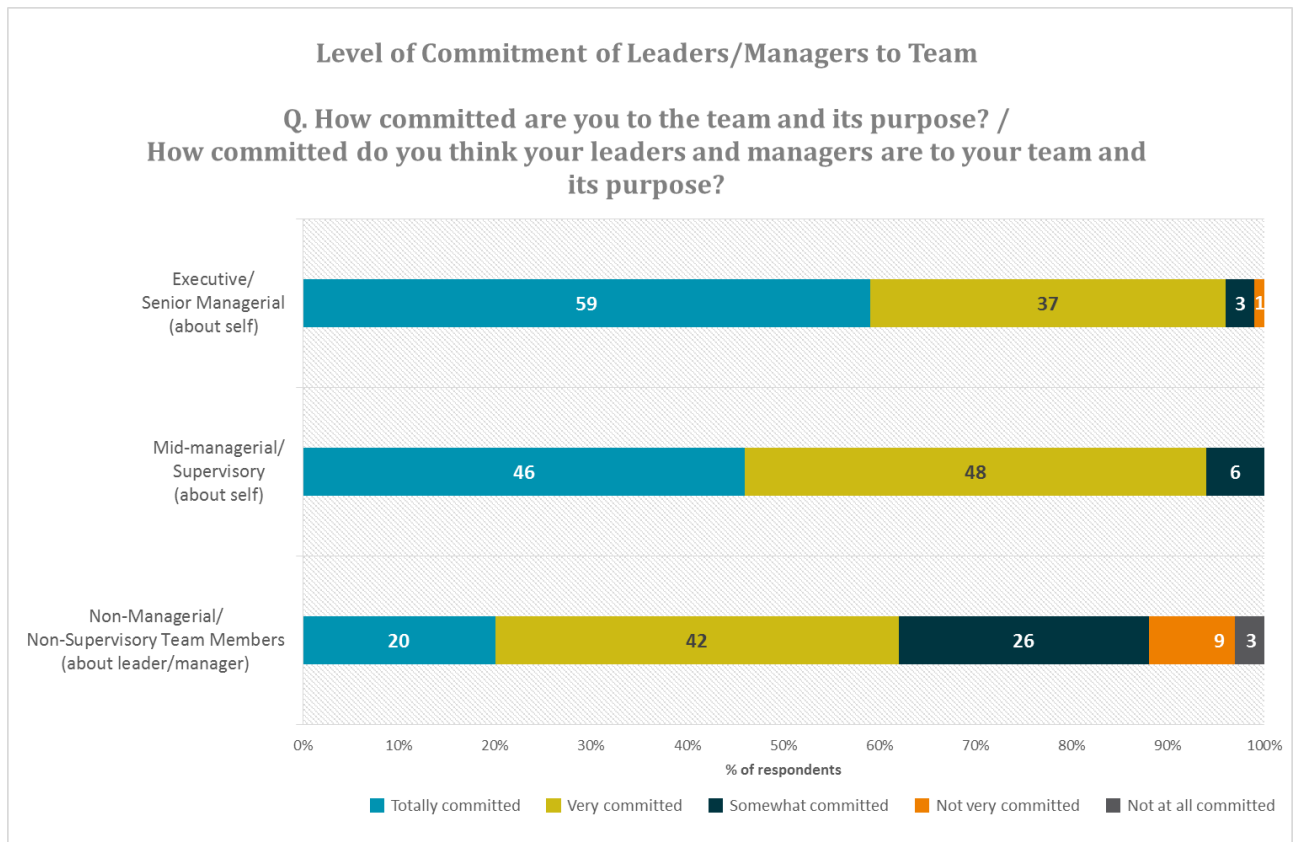
Ratings of teamwork aspects

Team members rate a range of **teamwork aspects** much lower than their leaders – reward and recognition, empowerment, open communication to name just a few. Looking at the magnitude of the gaps highlights the areas most in need of attention:



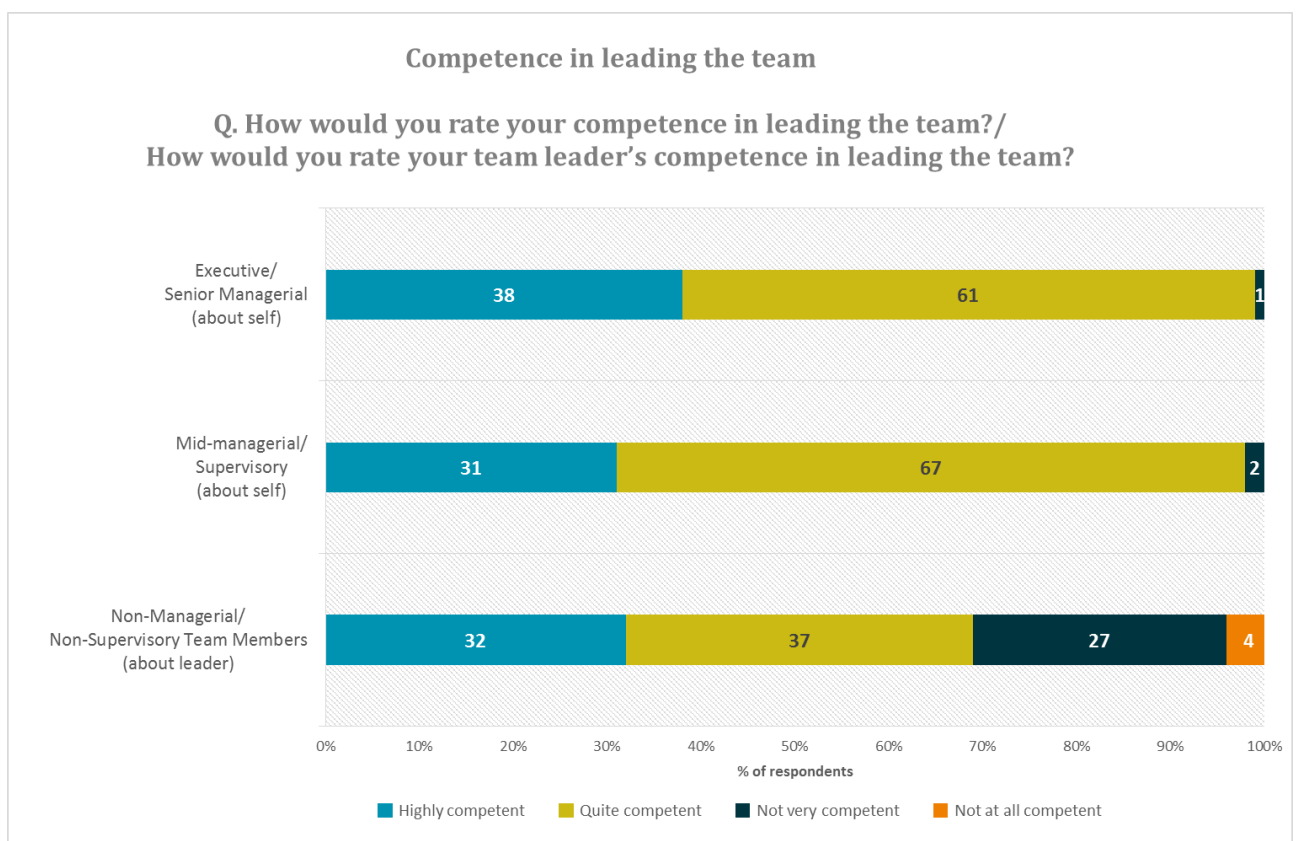
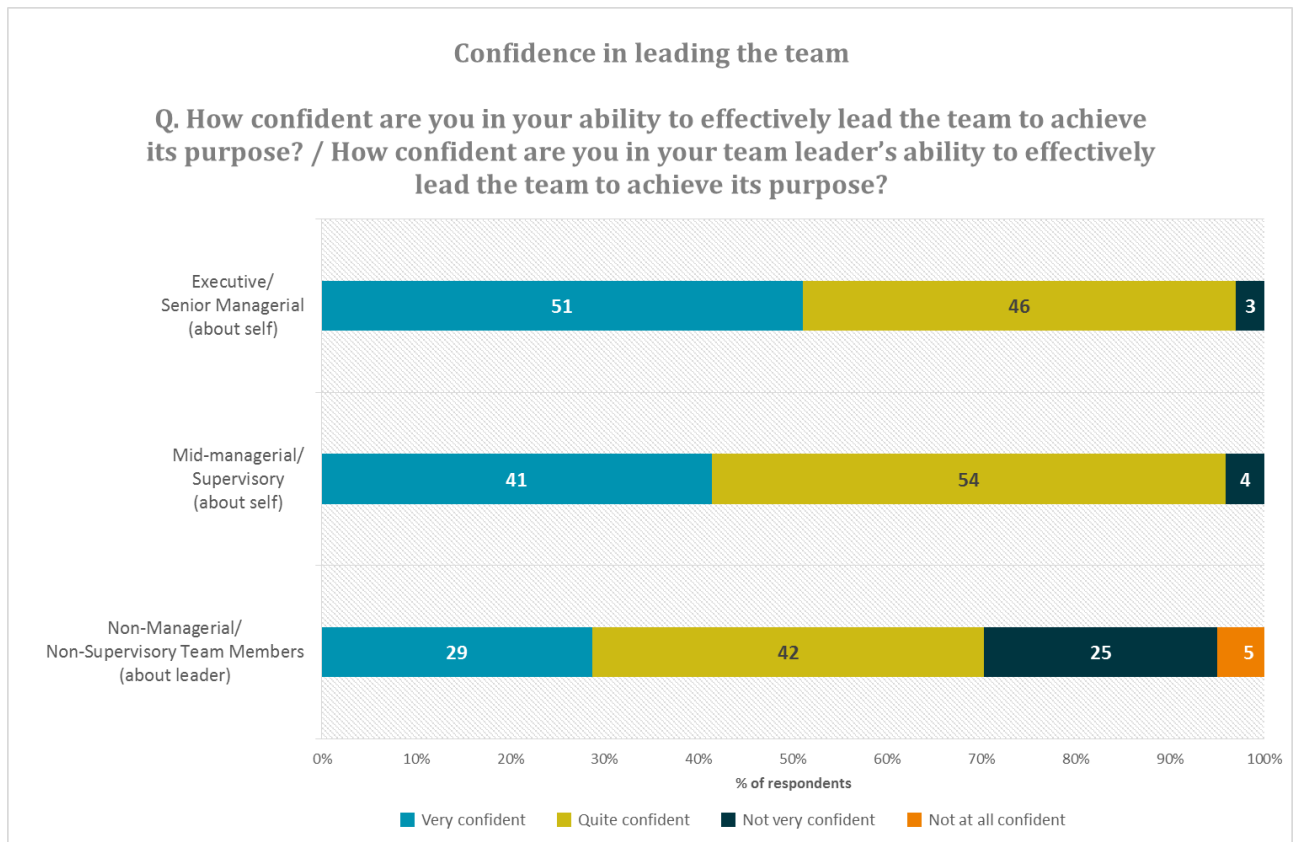
Levels of commitment to the team

Perceptions of **levels of commitment to the team** vary across the groups with team members far less certain of their leaders' commitment to the team, despite themselves being more committed to their team than their leaders believe:



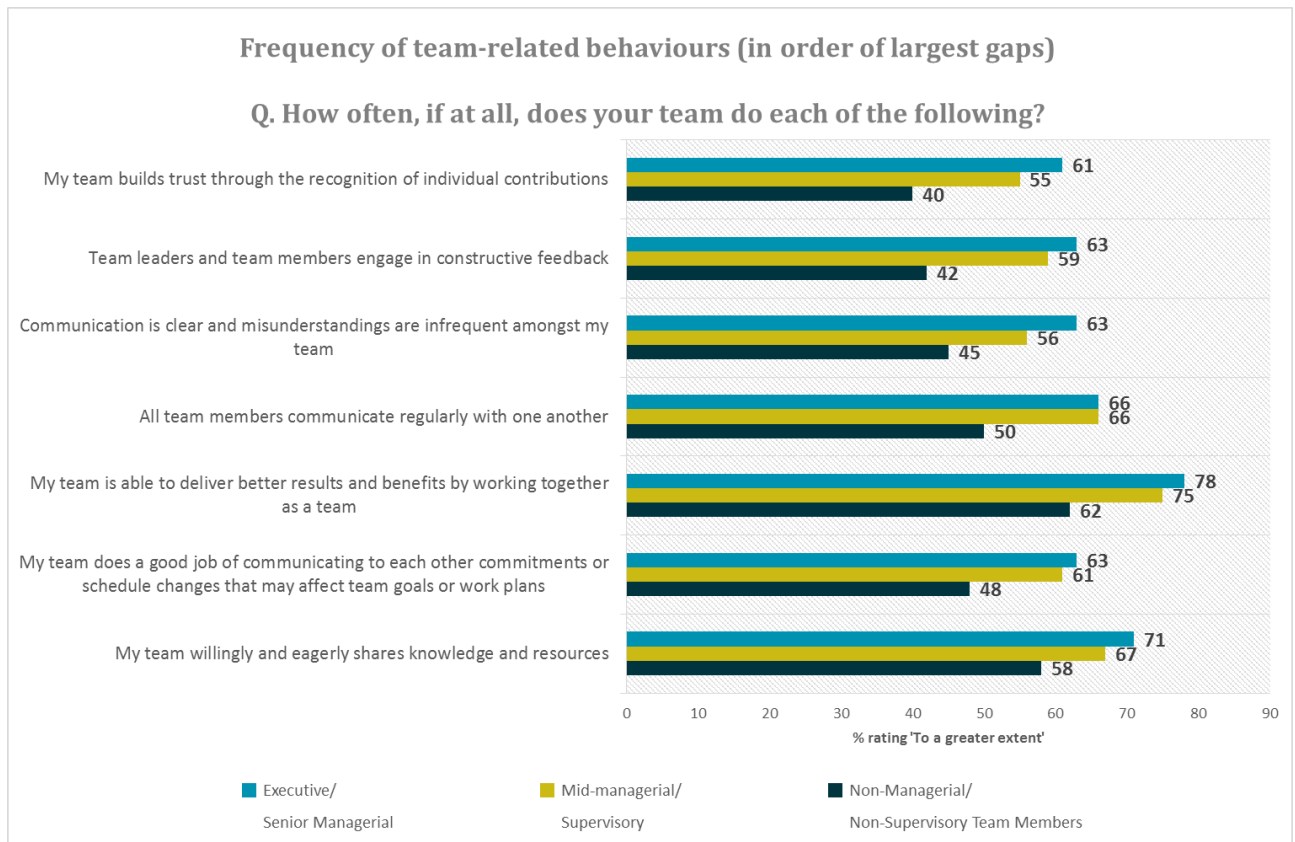
Confidence and competence in leading the team

Ratings of **confidence and competence in leading the team** are very high amongst leaders, with team members rating their leaders on these dimensions at a notably lower level:



Frequency of team-related behaviours

Large gaps exist between the reported frequency of a range of team-related activities in support of the team's purpose between team members and their leaders – recognition, feedback, communication being the areas where major gaps exist:



In summary...

Overall, the gaps identified clearly can be and need to be closed.

1. Firstly, organisations should be equipping team leaders with enhanced skills and knowledge to lead the team more effectively to achieve its purpose and in doing so, to derive the greatest benefit from teamwork and the team's work.
2. Secondly team members need to be nurtured through recognition and feedback and the relationships between team leaders and team members need to be fostered and channelled towards the team's purpose.
3. Thirdly, team leaders and team members need to work collaboratively and connectedly to support the team as it pushes to achieve its objectives and fulfil its purpose.

The findings highlight significant potential benefits to be gained by investing time, energy and money to develop effective team dynamics and better relationships and routines within the team.