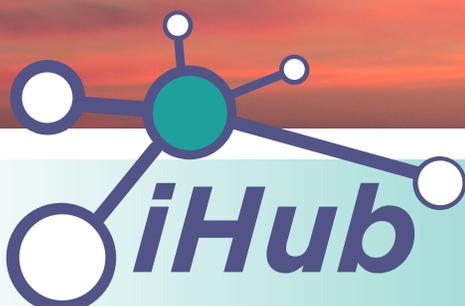


High Performance Culture Coaching

A Description of iHub Learning Inc's
Organizational Culture Coaching Program



iHub Learning Inc. (iHub) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization specializing in innovative education, engagement and organizational culture.

iHub is a research and support organization with a strong commitment to facilitating organizational cultural change and openly sharing research, ideas and innovations to better support its community.

We hope you find the following materials helpful in assessing the current state of your organization's culture, and look forward to hearing from you if you feel the *High Performance Culture Coaching Program* will help you achieve your goals.

Please visit us at www.iHubLearningNB.ca for more information.



High Performance Culture Coaching

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Part I.....	2
Part II.....	2
Coaching.....	3
Operationalizing.....	3
A Closer Look at HPCC.....	4
What is your Culture Right Now?.....	5
The Four Organizational States.....	6
A Closer Look at Operationalizing HPCC.....	9

Dr. Ross Leadbetter

For three decades, Dr. Ross Leadbetter has been researching the key orientations and work-systems of high-performance teams and organizations. He has created a simple, structured coaching framework and method that is now available to teams and organizations.

Introduction

Whether we recognize it or not, every organization has a culture that is both powerful yet dangerous. Like a volcano, an organizational culture looks like one thing on the surface while below there is much going on that remains unseen.



Most organizations pay lip service to their culture-volcano and throw in a ‘donut Friday’ now and then, or a golf game at the end of a cycle, or an office party etc. with a hope that the culture will change, and the team or organization will find a positive performance path forward. But, while these initiatives are nice, they have no strategic basis. They are akin to expecting to be a great musician by buying a Stradivarius – we know that money does not buy excellence, but it can help set up the structures and conditions for excellence.

High Performance Culture Coaching (HPCC) is the ‘something’ you can do to deliberately create a high-performance culture in your team or organization, and it is simple to set up and maintain, once you have had some coaching.

Many organizations have been burned when their culture has taken a turn for the worse becoming highly stressed and reactive, existing in purposeless mediocrity, or when it becomes entrenched in mindless bureaucracy without any ‘discernable’ reason for being less than it can be.

The truth is, there are clear reasons for underperforming organizational cultures. Many of them. We just typically do not see them because most of what we see in organizational cultures is a confusing mess of overlapping causes and effects that starts well-below the surface where most people do not know how to look or have influence to make a difference.

In HPCC you will be guided through the two major parts to building a high-performance culture that will clarify the confusion and make leverage points out of its hidden causes:

1. understanding and influencing the foundation your path will be built upon, and
2. deliberately constructing and visioning the path ahead.

Those are the two broad conceptual areas of the HPCC framework and method: making sure the foundation for your path is solid, then constructing and visioning the path you want to take.



What you do to create a high-performance culture matters greatly yet it is not difficult to do. All you need is some crucial support to establish the key elements of this framework and employ the HPCC method. With some eye-to-eye coaching, you and your team or organization can build the foundation and path that will create and manage your own high-performance culture.

Part I – Base Construction & Maintenance

Understanding and influencing the foundation for your path to a high-performance culture uses the **Critical Realist** organizational philosophy to question, understand, and provide you with leverage indicators for constructing and maintaining the three levels of culture that are well below the material level that we all see.

Critical Realism (CR) is a philosophy for understanding social-organizational behavior, and it is used across the globe to query and align each of the four levels of organizational reality to create a strong foundation to build a path and vision upon.

The four levels of organizational reality for all teams and organizations starts with the *material* that we observe as the physical action and interactions of group. Below the material are the *ideal*, *artefactual*, and *social* levels.

Part II – Path Construction

Once the initial base work has been sorted and the work of continuous ‘base-development’ and ‘base-maintenance’ is underway, your team or organization is ready to deliberately construct and see (or vision) the road ahead. This activity uses four clear and observable signposts that are referred to as the **Four Orientations of Highly Effective Teams**:

- **Ends:** common understandings of strategic outcomes, measures, purpose, and alignment
- **Process:** common understandings of processes, measures, standards, and codes
- **Learning:** the ability to learn and innovate collaboratively, and then put this into action
- **Relational:** the abilities to relate, value, include, have conflict, lead, resolve, and agree

Like CR, the Four Orientations are research-proven areas of effectiveness that are used and practiced by the highest performing teams in the world.

Of course, there is a lot more to the finer workings of HPCC, but the overall framework is constructed of only these two parts: Critical Realism – Base Construction and Maintenance, and The Four Orientations of Highly Effective Teams – Path Construction. Importantly, you do not have to understand the inner workings of either of these to begin, as we use a coaching model to give you and your focus team credibility within your organization before you take what you have learned and practiced to personally customize an approach that matches your organizational wants, needs, and desires.

HPCC is not prescriptive but it does have shape and form, and your first runs through the method are supported with coaching.

Coaching

Coaching is important. In HPCC, we engage a focus team, focus groups, use questionnaires, and lead the guided activities and discussions that need to be had within every organization to create an accurate and consistent culture picture of who and what you are presently, and who, what, and why you can be in the future.

HPCC will give you keys to attaining the results you are trying to achieve.



HPCC keeps you and your team accountable in the observable material realm, while it also reaches beneath the surface to find out what is causing the culture you have now to provide you with key leverage points and activities for continuous improvement.

Operationalizing

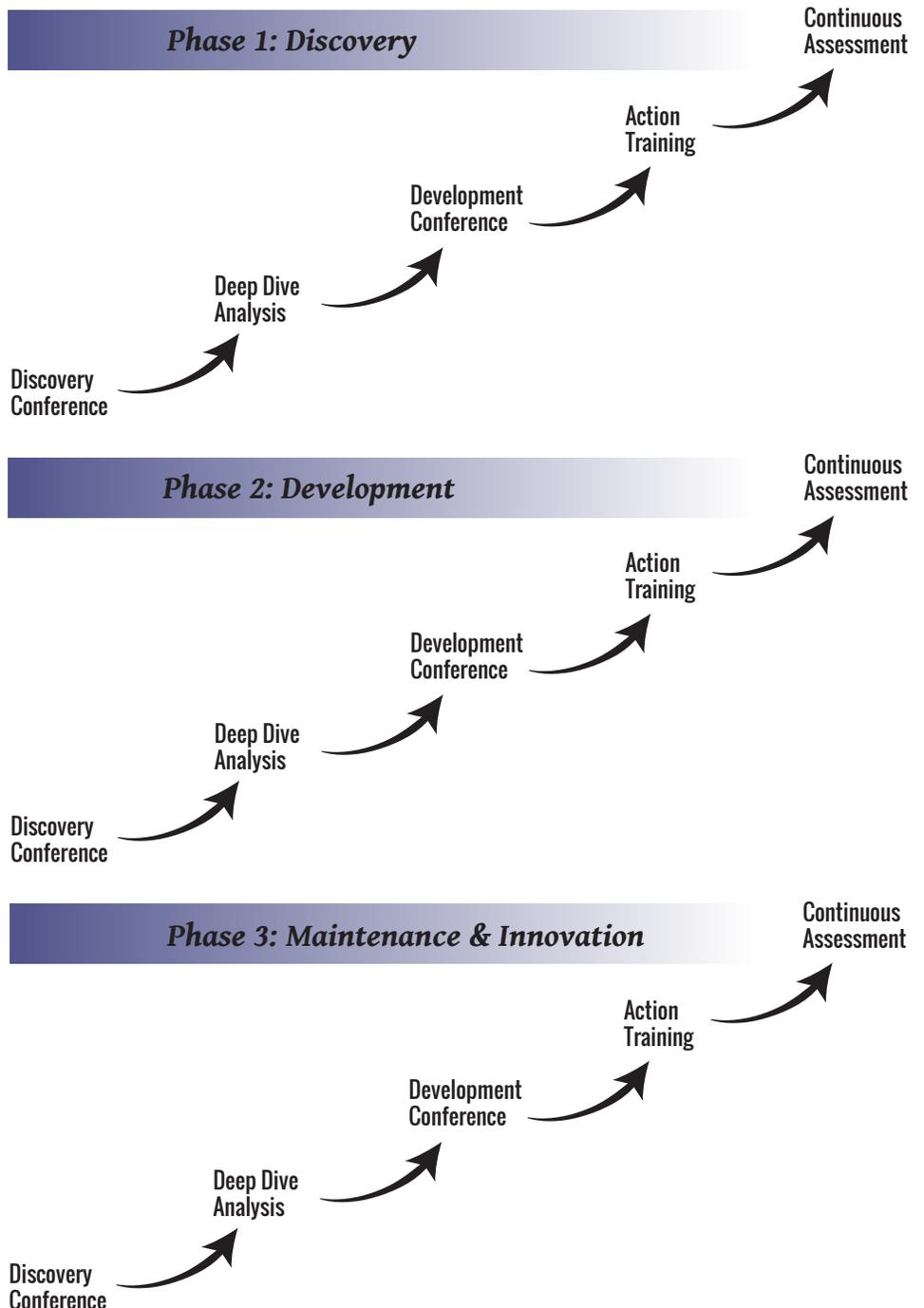
HPCC is operationalized in three phases: discovery, development, and maintenance and innovation.

Each phase has five parts:

1. Discovery conference
2. Deep dive analysis
3. Development conference
4. Action training
5. Continuous assessment

There is an up-front commitment of 15 hours spread over several days and weeks, and then ongoing support is offered for several months or longer depending on your needs.

To begin, you need only reach out by telephone or e mail and we will have a completely free and no-obligation first conversation where, if you decide to move forward, you will be given one task to complete – the formation of a focus team. From there, we can begin the journey to leverage your efforts and dramatically improve your organizational culture.



A Closer Look at HPCC and Why You Need It

Every team and organization across the globe share fundamental elements, as they have purpose, processes to achieve purpose, some form of knowledge acquisition and development, and ways and means of dealing with one another. While it is true that how members and management choose to work with these elements creates and maintains each unique team and organizational culture, there are two general themes that intersect to create four basic culture types: intensity and alignment. These are the two essential aspects of any culture that give it a unique signature and its unique level of positive worker engagement.

Engagement is mentioned a lot in the current management

literature: a recent 2018 ADPRI study* found that across multiple sectors, in 19 countries around the world, only 16% of the 19000 workers they interviewed are fully engaged with their work.

That leaves a significant loss of return on investment on the efforts of 84% of the workers in these organizations. The intersection of intensity and alignment provides a snapshot of the Four Organizational States, and each of these states has a relationship to engagement.

As you will see, and as you are certain to already know from experience, it is not 'just' engagement that matters, but the type of and nature of engagement with and within the culture of the team or organization that creates the structures and conditions that make the difference between high-dysfunction and high-performance.

Before proceeding to the Four Organizational States matrix, each of intensity, alignment, and engagement will be defined.

Intensity refers to the amount of drive in an organization. In its highest form, people are constantly moving, acting, and doing.

In its lowest form, people are present and working but not realizing the higher organizational goals and strategic objectives needed to be a high-performance culture.

Alignment refers to the cohesiveness of the action taken. In its highest form, people are working and collaborating with a common purpose, pulling together. In its lowest form, action is pitted against action and the net result is wasted effort and a toxic culture.

Engagement refers to the purpose an individual feels in their organizational culture, and the value and ability they are given to use their strengths at work. It also refers to the perceived effectiveness of their actions, the recognition they receive, and the confidence they have in the future of the organization and their opportunity to grow.

The research is clear: positive engagement matters to the lives of workers and managers, the bottom line, and the potential for organizational growth and competitive advantage. This and more is what you get in a High-Performance culture.



* Hayes, M., Chumney, F., Wright, C., & Buckingham, M. (2019). Global Study of Engagement.

What is Your Culture Right Now?

Each of the organizational states listed in the Four Organizational States diagram below show the result of organizational intensity intersecting with organizational alignment. The product of each intersection is one of four distinct organizational cultures, each with its own relationship to engagement.

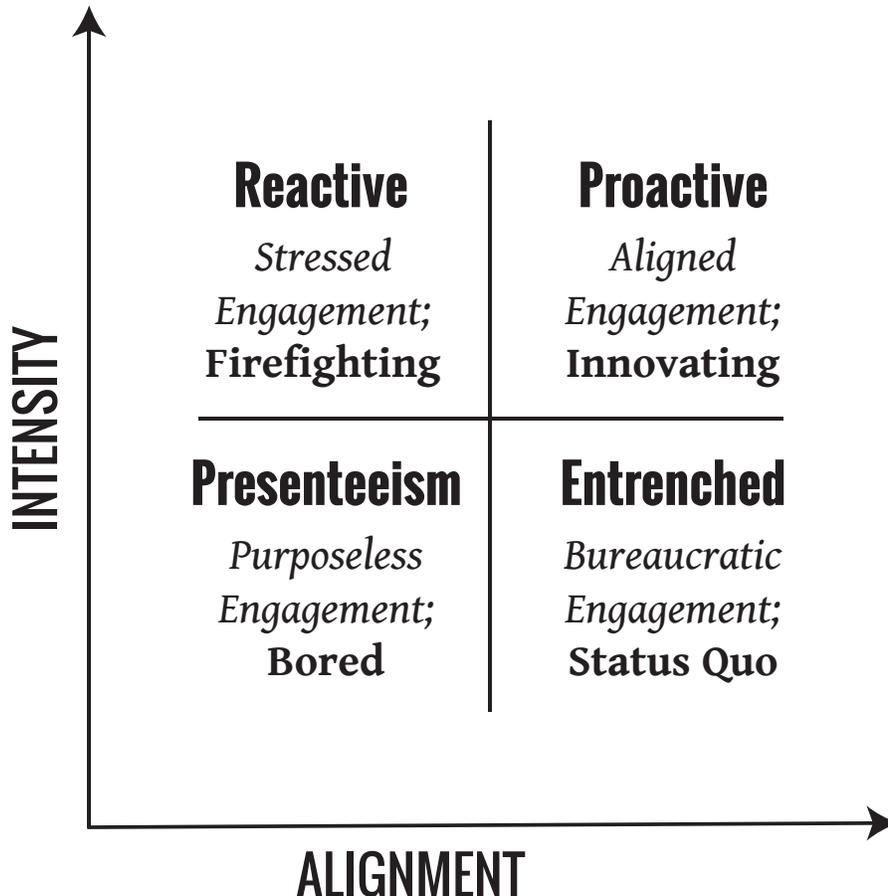
After 30 plus years working in and conducting research in multiple organizations including government, higher education, construction, not-for-profit, public education, and for-profit

business, the following matrix represents a culmination of practical experience, practical research, and academic research.

It is likely that you will see your team or organization represented in one (or more) of these quadrants. The focus of this section is to describe each quadrant, while keeping in mind that High-Performance Culture Coaching (HPCC) can migrate any one or a combination of states towards the development and maintenance of a Pro-Active, Aligned Engagement culture of Innovation and continuous improvement.

Organizations are at first conceived of and built with an intention to achieve specific objectives and outcomes unique to that organization and its stated purpose. In time, however, and without constant attention to the continuous development of an organizational culture, three of these states will occur by default. Only one of them, the Pro-Active state, is desirable writ large; however, while your organization may be in one or more of the three less desirable states, movement over the short-term and the long-term can be achieved by teams and by the entire organization through HPCC.

Four Organizational States



General Description of the Four Organizational States

Working from bottom right – Entrenched – and then left to Presenteeism, followed by the Reactive state, each of these three ‘less-desirable’ states will be defined and described through the headings that follow in this section. Finally, the Pro-Active state, the focus of High-Performance Culture Coaching, will be defined and described. This is followed by a detailed table that includes the actors, effects, and actions of each culture and which will more fully demonstrate the differences and similarities between each of the quadrants.

Entrenched

In the Entrenched state, those who are good at or used to keeping things the same, managing what was and bringing that forward into the future, benefit from, and protect the status quo. In fact, these people will often defend their maintenance of status quo by describing it as a solid and secure platform for working and providing accountability to all organizational actions. They will therefore point to innovation as dangerous folly that has no form, function, or boundary. The entrenched bureaucrat is clearly the beneficiary of this state, as they hold the dusty playbook of what worked in the past and use it as their guide to the future.

This bureaucrat is open to engagement that functions to maintain status quo as does, for example, a committee that iteratively meets to talk about what they will talk about at the next meeting and never advances beyond the confines of keeping things the same. Entrenched cultures often venture to create an innovative program or two, and then measure the results of these against the standard yardstick of the status quo. Consequently, if an innovative program exists within an entrenched culture, it eventually loses endorsement, support falls away, and funding disappears, all of which is proof to the entrenched worker that innovation is folly, and it is best to stay safe in what they know rather than venture into the unknown. Engagement in this culture is counterproductive as it exists in the constant maintenance of what was, and not what could be.

As the name suggests, the entrenched culture is the most difficult to transform and will take clear and stated endorsement from the top to move it; and it will also require the testing and development of new and more innovative high-performance measures that all workers can use to align their culture towards positive, proactive action.

Presenteeism

Presenteeism benefits the loafer and freezes the lost worker in a state of inactivity. In this state, the ‘performance art’ of working is paramount, as looking busy, seeming to do things of significance, and maintaining a safe stasis are all central to presenteeism. The complete lack of intensity or alignment to meaningful goals provides a murky grey culture where appearances are everything, and everyone lacks clarity of role and function. People in this culture are exhausted by their engagement in impotence.

This culture is a beaten culture, and the thought of innovation can bring back memories of failed initiatives that long ago drifted away and settled into obscurity and ineffectiveness. Due to the lack of volition and clear direction, workers in this culture drift into a state of meaningless engagement where nothing really matters, or if it does, it is impossible to discern it from the greyness surrounding every other action. Innovation is failed before it begins because there is no organizational meaning or purpose that supports the action of innovation. So, why bother to begin? It will go away soon enough if workers stay busy and ignore it.

This culture can be transformed through consistent messaging that provides purpose and direction to workers. It also requires the development of high-performance measures that help all organizational members see that progress can be made and maintained in pursuit of meaningful objectives.

Reactive

Though this is a terribly fatiguing state, there are many workers who enjoy the constant jolt of adrenaline provided by a high-intensity reactive environment. Anyone working in this culture knows that they are fully engaged in working hard, and the proof is that they go home exhausted each night. The challenge in this culture is finding alignment to a greater purpose. Time is a major challenge in this culture, and innovation is regarded as a roadblock to getting a hundred other things done. The martyr loves the reactive culture and will tell anyone who will listen how they come in early, stay late, and miss their breaks. There is a certain heroism to this state and those who love it will defend it against such time wasters as innovation and alignment initiatives. The cost of this state is burnout and a deep engagement with things that are reactive. In a reactive state, everything is a fire, and everyone is engaged as a firefighter, and the deep, meaningful work of the organization and the potential of the organization to become more than reactive is disregarded because there is just too much to do.

When operating in a reactive state, it is difficult to see measures of high-performance other than what they are already doing, as there simply is not time to get heads above water. The transformation of this culture requires time, however, and it also requires systems thinking and strategic leverage activities and strategies to turn the tables on reactivity and towards converting the considerable effort of this culture towards a proactive state.

Proactive

In this culture state, members understand and have continually reinforced ideas of what is expected of each person and the collective as the organization pursues meaningful organizational goals and strategic objectives. The processes of pro-active alignment are developed and practiced before being codified, and they are always open for negotiation in the pursuit of continuous improvement. Learning and the development of new knowledge and the conversion of knowledge to action is key to the Proactive state, and people relate to one another with goals of collaboration, cooperation, and improvement constantly in mind. Engagement in progress, innovation, and improvement is easy to define and track.

Measurement is part of the fabric of this cybernetic culture, and everyone loves the proactive state as it satisfies the needs of autonomy, mastery, purpose, and hope present in all fully engaged workers. It recognizes that people really do want to come to work to do a good job but need the structure and conditions of the organization to support them to do so.

The major challenge of the Proactive state is the encroachment of the other three. Without constant attention to end goals, process development, knowledge conversion, and relational functions, an organization can slip backwards and have good work eroded as the culture becomes entrenched, presenteeism, or reactive oriented.

Developing and supporting the Proactive state is the goal of HPCC, and within it, the HPCC method provides tools and leverage strategies for movement from less-desirable cultures while installing safeguards to backwards slippage.

The Four Organizational States Table

While there are more items that can be added and presented in the left-most column, the following table hits the highlights of each of the Four Organizational States through several lenses. Perhaps you will see your organization represented here. If you do, there is always some work to do to either make the journey to Proactive or to maintain a Proactive state if you are already lucky enough to be in one.

	<i>Entrenched</i>	<i>Presenteeism</i>	<i>Reactive</i>	<i>Proactive</i>
Intensity	Low-level as there is a playbook that has all the answers, and which dictates action	Low-level as there is little discernable goal orientation or need to function at capacity	High-level and frenetic as there is much to do, but little aligned action	High-level with meaning and direction providing common purpose to achievement
Alignment	High-level as there is a strict set of rules and regulations that govern action	Low-level as there is little discernable goal orientation or need to function at capacity	Low-level as there is too much to do and sort to take time to align	High-level with meaning and direction providing common purpose
Engagement	Bureaucratic	Purposeless	Stressed	Aligned
Goal Direction	Do what we did yesterday and do it better (but the same) in the future	Do whatever appears to be the correct thing to do. Hide in the work	Do everything you can to get things done. Our work is important	Collaborate to develop a system of solid, hard work that is healthily paced, meaningful, and directed to appropriate purposeful action
Processes	Already done. Follow what worked before	Not sure	Triage rules	Develop, refine, feedback, refine, codify, and leave open to improvement. Constantly evolving
Learning	Why?	What?	How?	Deliberately create and convert knowledge to action
Relational Work	Based on hierarchy. Do what I say, and you will be fine.	Be nice. We have got to get through this together	Pull together and do it quickly. Niceties are not affordable	Deliberate structures and conditions value all members, provide autonomy towards excellence, and support individual growth as is relates to ongoing organizational performance
Leadership	Focused. Rational and rule-bound hierarchy	Present. Hierarchical but without direction	Dynamic and reactive. Quick thinking chains of command	Not without hierarchy, but inclusive and collaborative; everyone understands and can measure their own performance and its effect
View of Innovation	Very suspect. It is folly	Very suspect. It doesn't really matter	Loathing. It will take time from work	Competitive advantage
Function of Action	Do more of the same	Be here. Use time to showcase the performance art of work	Put out fires. All hands on deck	Deliberate achievement
Psychological Safety	The rules are safety	Staying still is safest	Heroes are safe	We provide the space for everyone to be successful and to report their success in terms of organizational goals and strategic objectives

A Closer Look at Operationalizing HPCC

High Performance Culture Coaching is not prescriptive, as the Four Organizational States each require different work and activity to move beyond or to keep from sliding into. However, there is a structure to HPCC that involves two parts, three phases, and five steps. The two parts – (I) Base Construction and Maintenance, and (II) Path Construction – have been outlined above.

The activities of coaching in HPCC takes place in three major phases: (i) Discovery, (ii) Development, and (iii) Maintenance and Innovation. These three phases describe the flow of coaching and culture development over time. In the Discovery Phase there is early assessment, discussion, and the establishment of general performance targets. In the Development Phase the focus shifts to structured growth and activity, experimentation and prototyping, and decision making. The third phase involves mini cycles of codification and constant improvement and is called the Maintenance and Innovation Phase.

Within each of the three phases, there are five basic steps: (i) Direction Setting conference, (ii) CR analysis, (iii) Development conference, (iv) Four Orientation training, and (v) Performance Assessment.

Because this phase is about discovery, there is some continuity and similarity to the process between organizations. Beyond, the Discovery Phase, however, the steps remain the same, but the actions will differ based on each team or organization's needs. For demonstration purposes, the following is how the five steps appear in the Discovery Phase.

*Phase 1: Discovery**

1. **Direction Setting Conference:** as your organization is interested in innovation, engagement, and constant pro-active improvement, you need a Performance Team who will guide the process with the coach. During the first Phase, the Direction Setting Conference members of the Performance Team discuss aspirations and set general goals for culture improvement.
2. **CR Analysis:** through conversation, focus groups, and questionnaires four critical levels of organizational reality are assessed to uncover incongruencies with what is stated, what is done, and what lies beneath the surface in deeper social and individual influences. This analysis is customized to each team and organization based on the aspirations and goals for culture improvement stated in step one, and leverage points are illuminated.
3. **Development Conference:** The Performance Team will be provided a summary of the Discovery conference and CR Analysis to forge early Performance Metrics and Targets in the areas of Ends Alignment, Process refinement, Learning and knowledge conversion, and Relational capacity.
4. **Four Orientation Training:** the Four Orientation of High-Performance Teams is applied to action in the organization, and customized training is provided to the Performance Team in each of the orientation areas with the goal of this knowledge being converted to action.
5. **Performance Assessment:** early assessments are completed and evaluated for intensity, alignment, engagement, and high-performance culture effect. These discoveries are used to inform the next iteration of the five stages.

*In the development (Phase II) and maintenance (Phase III) phases the five major stages are followed, but with slightly different emphasis and depending upon the needs of the organization.

To sign up for iHub's High Performance Culture Coaching Program visit www.iHubLearningNB.ca or contact Michelle at michelle.duncan@ihublearningnb.ca