

Singapore Management University

## Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University

---

Perspectives@SMU

Centre for Management Practice

---

5-2019

### Why not all failing teams are equal

Singapore Management University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/pers>



Part of the [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#), and the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#)

---

#### Citation

Singapore Management University. Why not all failing teams are equal. (2019).

Available at: <https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/pers/481>

This Magazine Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Centre for Management Practice at Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspectives@SMU by an authorized administrator of Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. For more information, please email [cherylds@smu.edu.sg](mailto:cherylds@smu.edu.sg).

# Why not all failing teams are equal

31 May 2019

This article is republished with permission from [BusinessThink at UNSW Business School](#). You can access the original article [here](#).

*New research identifies five team archetypes and an understanding of their trajectories can help managers foster a more effective collaboration*

According to Catherine Collins, a senior lecturer in the school of management at UNSW Business School: "Managers can learn a lot about how to get the best from their team by observing team effectiveness as a dynamic process rather than the traditional binary view of 'is this a high performing team, or not?'"

The five team performance trajectories identified by the research team draw on Greek and Roman mythology:

- Jupiter: the consistently 'high performing teams'.
- Neptune: 'stay the course' delivering necessities', with steady, average performance.
- Pluto: on a 'losing streak' with low performance.
- Icarus: fall from high performance into a 'losing streak', with a downward spiral.
- Odysseus: 'breaks the streak'; initially low to mid-range performance, with an upward spiral.

Collins adds that one of the most crucial changes in management is to shift thinking from predicting "levels of performance" to "patterns of performance", and even the largest and most complex teams can work together effectively, if management finds a tool that is working.

"Quite often you can see a team member who has a trajectory that has more in common with the story of Odysseus than with the story of Icarus, but managers need to understand key characteristics of their team members if they want to build a high-performing team," she says.

Collins says a vital management technique is to change the team archetype by turning around the stagnation and poor performance of the Pluto and Icarus archetypes. This would give rise to the achievement of the personality type named the Odysseus.

"Rushing in to support a team too early will undermine the team. However, managers need to study their teams to find out what works, and carefully consider the timing of such initiatives."

*Follow us on Twitter (@sgsmuperspectiv) or like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/PerspectivesAtSMU>)*