

Team Focus 2026

The targets are hard. The way there is human.

18 perspectives from leaders and key people on goals, capabilities and learning in high-performance teams

Main conclusion

Teams are measured on growth, operations, efficiency, implementation and transformation. But what will help them deliver is largely human behaviour: cross-functional collaboration, learning, ownership, clear direction and the ability to turn new knowledge into everyday practice.

- 1. Cross-functional collaboration is the clearest capability need.
- 2. Learning, curiosity and readiness for change appear both as capabilities and as areas for development.
- 3. Embedding new behaviour in everyday work is the clearest challenge in training and development.
- 4. Psychological safety features strongly in descriptions of well-functioning teams – but is rarely trained directly as a separate area.
- 5. Digital, data and AI capabilities matter, but feature less than the cross-functional human and organisational capabilities.

Overall recommendation: Organisations do not necessarily need more specialist expertise. The bigger challenge is getting the expertise they already have to work better together. This points to a development task where the focus shifts from individual knowledge to the team's ability to create shared direction, collaborate across boundaries, learn together and turn new insights into everyday behaviour. Psychological safety is an important part of the foundation – but it only creates value when it makes it easier to ask questions, disagree, learn from mistakes and bring different professional perspectives into play.

Among the participating organisations

Novo Nordisk • Novonosis • Københavns Lufthavn • Falck • Nets | Nexi Group • KMD • f&p • among others

HumanGartner • Lars de Fries

Five findings, one clear connection

Team Focus 2026 is a qualitative snapshot – not a representative survey. Its value lies in the patterns that repeat across 18 different cases.

12/18	10/18	16/18
mention cross-functional collaboration as a required capability	mention learning, curiosity or readiness for change as a capability	include embedding learning in everyday work as part of training/support

The five key findings

- Business goals are concrete – but the way to achieve them runs through behaviour.
- Collaboration is rarely a goal in itself; it is a condition for delivering the goal.
- Learning can no longer sit alongside the work. It has to be part of the work.
- Psychological safety appears to be a strength in several well-functioning teams – but is rarely used as an explicit development lever.
- There is a desire to shift from individual expertise to collective performance: from “mine” to “ours”.

Overall recommendations

1. Make the direction shared – not just clear

The team must be able to translate the goal into shared priorities, choices and trade-offs in everyday work.

2. Train collaboration – not just expertise

When the expertise is already there, the next opportunity often lies in how people, disciplines and teams work together.

3. Move development into everyday work

Connect learning to meetings, tasks, feedback, reflection and practical experiments – not only to courses and workshops.

4. Use psychological safety as a foundation for performance

Make psychological safety concrete through open communication, constructive disagreement, learning from mistakes and active use of differences.

A simple model



The report’s central point is that development only creates value when the link between goals, desired behaviour, practice and everyday work is clear.

Three questions for leaders

- What behaviour needs to be different in six months if you are to achieve your most important goals?
- Where is that behaviour actually practised – not just talked about?
- What in your everyday work makes the new behaviour easy or difficult to sustain?

What did we explore?

Team Focus 2026 is a qualitative snapshot based on 18 interview cases with leaders, HR professionals and other key people from Danish and international organisations. The aim is to identify patterns, dilemmas and focus areas in team development – not to describe “Danish companies” in general.

The questions

- What team behaviours are helping the team succeed right now?
- What 1–2 results does the team need to deliver by the end of 2026?
- What specific behaviours or capabilities will be critical to success?
- How will you practise or support this behaviour in everyday work?

The questions are framed from a strengths-based perspective: first look at what already works, then explore the next goal and the behaviour that will move the team forward.

Who took part?

Organisations: Falck Teknik • Nets | Nexi Group • Falck Danmark A/S • Brita Nordic • f&p • Novo Nordisk • wienerberger • Fibia • Redmark • Statens-IT • EGN Danmark • KMD • Det Danske Madhus • Novonesis • Københavns Lufthavn • UL Solutions • CBS

Job titles: Operation Director • Head of Data & AI products • Head of Data, Insights and AI. Senior Director • Director • Head of HR • Senior Manager • Senior Vice President, Head of Human Resource and Organisation Development • Managing Director • Head of Department • HR Engagement Manager • Transition Manager • Business Unit Director • Lead Business Analyst • CEO • Head of Leadership Development • Senior Business Executive • Head of IT • one respondent with no job title stated

What can the study not tell us?

- It is not representative, and percentages should be read as patterns across the 18 cases – not as market statistics.
- The coding is analytical. One response may be coded under several themes, and frequency says nothing about quality or maturity.
- The question about existing strengths/success is documented in 11 of the 18 cases. This part of the analysis therefore carries less data weight than goals, capabilities and training.
- The interview notes are confidential. The report summarises and paraphrases patterns and does not use direct quotes.

What goals are teams working towards?

The goals are largely classic business goals: growth, efficiency, quality, implementation, customer value and transformation. But many of them also require the team to change the way it works together.

A broad but recognisable set of goals

GROWTH revenue, more customers/members, retention	OPERATIONS shorter cycles, higher quality, fewer manual processes	IMPLEMENTATION new systems, projects, standards and strategic initiatives
CUSTOMER VALUE closer link between professional delivery and the customer’s actual needs	AI & DATA better use of data, AI in workflows and scaling solutions	DIRECTION priorities, choices and trade-offs, and translating strategy into practice

A clear pattern around direction

Shared direction and prioritisation appear in 10 of 18 cases in the responses about goals, but in only 3 cases as an existing strength. This suggests that for many teams, direction is not simply something you have; it is something that must continually be created, translated and kept alive.

So the interesting question is not only what the team must achieve. It is also whether the goal has been translated clearly enough for people to see what it means for their everyday choices.

The examples range from operations and revenue to AI implementation, digitalisation, capability sharing, safety, transformation and new systems. That makes it difficult to talk about one common “team task” – but easier to spot the behaviour patterns that repeat.

RECOMMENDATION 1 • Make the direction shared – not just clear

A goal only gains real force when the team shares an understanding of what to prioritise – and what to leave out.

Which capabilities and behaviours will be critical?

This is where the main point of the study is clearest: the most common needs are not specialist skills. They are about getting existing expertise to work better together.

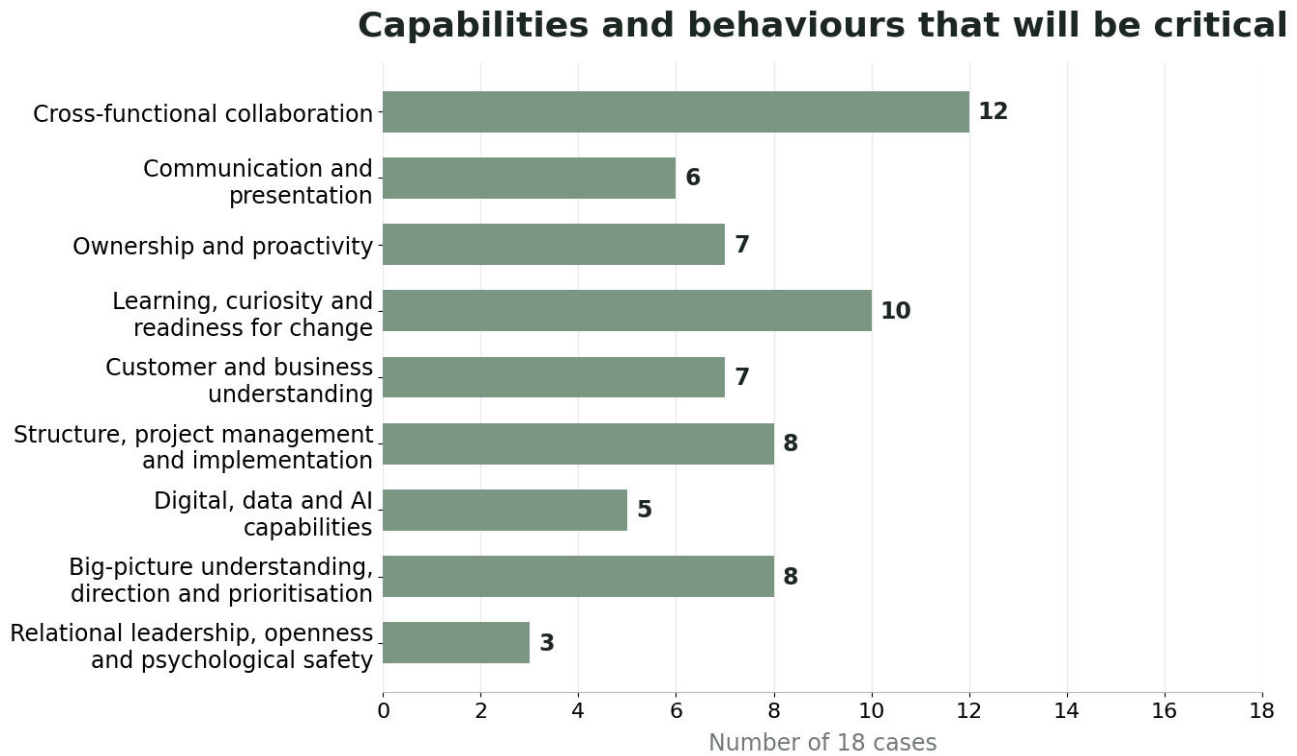


Figure 1. Number of cases where the capability/behaviour area is clearly mentioned. One case may appear in several categories.

12 of 18 point to cross-functional collaboration. 10 of 18 point to learning, curiosity and readiness for change. By comparison, 5 of 18 mention a specific digital, data or AI capability.

This does not mean technology is unimportant. On the contrary, AI and digitalisation are key goals in several organisations. But technology often only creates value when the team can also collaborate, prioritise, learn and take ownership across professional boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION 2 • Train collaboration – not just expertise

The data points to a greater need for cross-functional collaboration than for even more individual specialist knowledge.

How is the behaviour practised?

Respondents describe many different approaches – from formal courses to changed meeting formats, peer learning, coaching and shared models. The most interesting point is that development rarely stands alone as a one-off event.

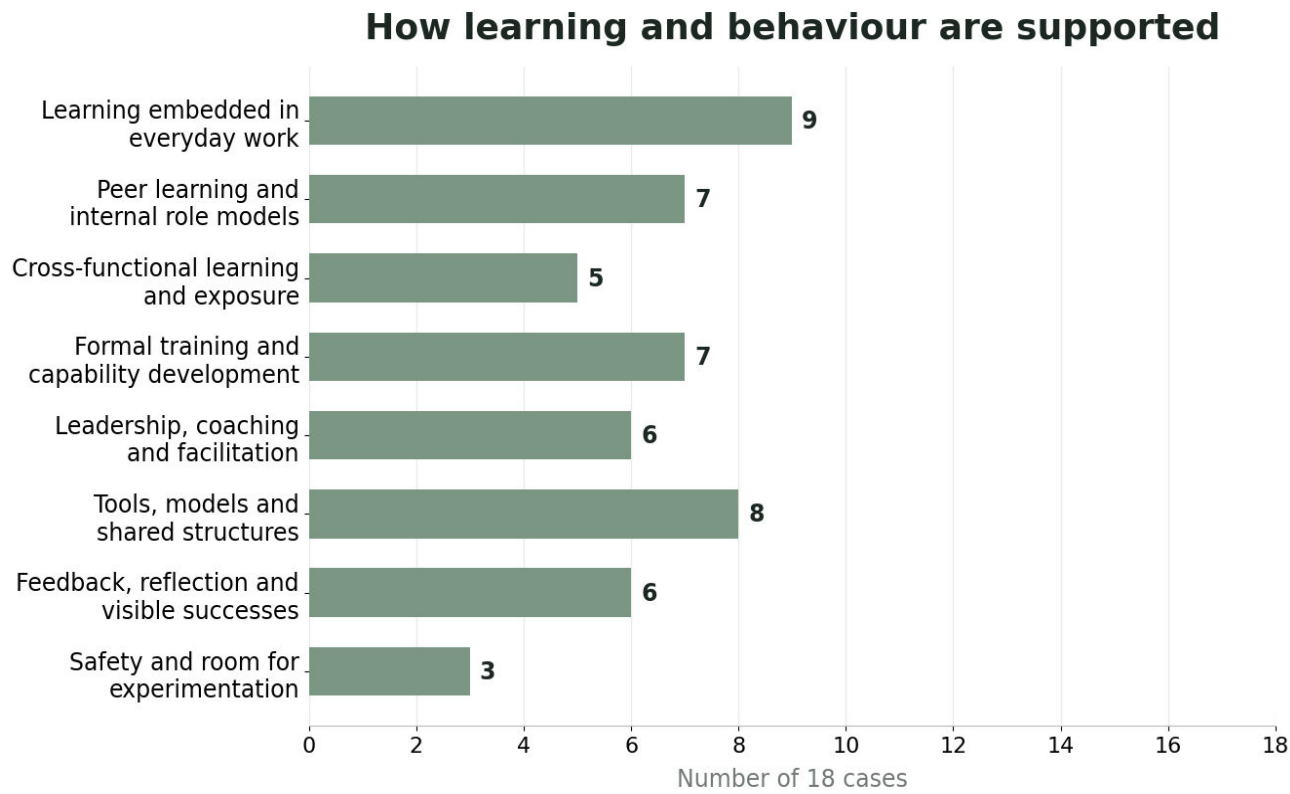


Figure 2. Focus areas in descriptions of training and support. One case may appear in several categories.

9/18 embed learning in everyday work	8/18 use tools, models or shared structures	7/18 use peer learning/internal role models
7/18 use formal training	6/18 use leadership, coaching or facilitation	6/18 work with feedback/reflection/visible successes

Across the overall thematic coding, “embedding in everyday work” appears in 16 of 18 cases under training/support. That is a stronger signal than a preference for any one method: development needs to connect to the actual tasks, meetings, decisions and relationships.

RECOMMENDATION 3 • Move development into everyday work

Embedding happens when the desired behaviour becomes part of tasks, meetings, feedback and decisions – not a separate development track.

What characterises teams that are already succeeding?

The strengths perspective is documented in only 11 of the 18 cases and should therefore be read more cautiously. Even so, there is an interesting pattern in the responses available.

Themes in descriptions of what already works

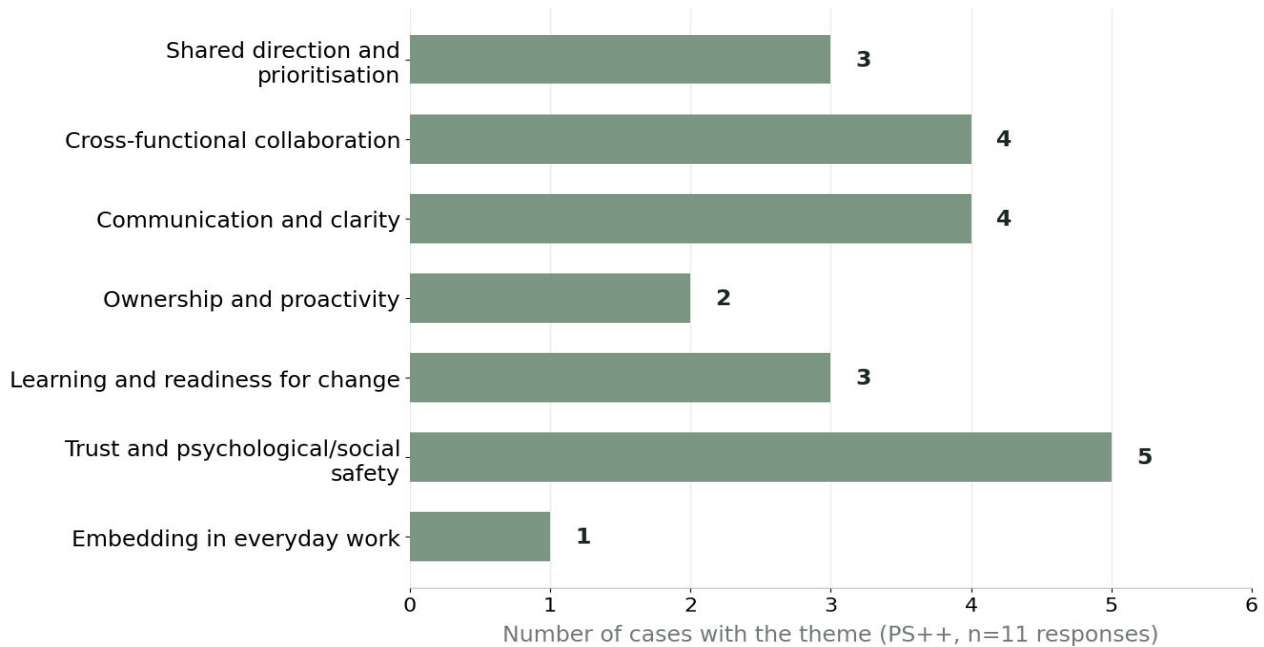


Figure 3. Themes in the PS++ descriptions. n=11 cases with a documented response; themes overlap.

Trust and psychological/social safety are the most prominent themes in the strengths perspective: 5 cases. Collaboration and communication appear in 4 each.

The descriptions include being able to show uncertainty, share mistakes, ask “stupid” questions, help outside your own area, share experience, and having a leader who creates clarity and space.

This suggests a possible blind spot: psychological safety is recognised as a strength when it is present, but appears far less often as an explicit development approach. In the underlying count, safety appears in 3 of 18 cases under training/support.

RECOMMENDATION 4 • Use psychological safety as a foundation for performance

Psychological safety should not stand alone as an initiative. It should be visible in how the team asks questions, challenges, learns and uses differences.

The key tensions

The study does not point to one recipe for high performance. Instead, it highlights tensions that leaders and teams need to handle at the same time.

HARD TARGETS	HUMAN CONDITIONS	Results are measured in growth, quality, operations and implementation. The way there often runs through collaboration, learning and ownership.
MORE SPEED	MORE DIALOGUE AND LEARNING	Shorter cycles and faster technology do not only increase the pace. They also increase the need for feedback, cross-functional contact and the ability to adjust along the way.
STRONG EXPERTISE	STRONGER COLLABORATION	Several respondents describe strong expertise as the starting point. The development need lies in getting those areas of expertise to work better together.
MANY INITIATIVES	EMBED BEFORE ADDING MORE	Several cases are not about finding yet another method, but about making what has already been decided come alive in meetings, priorities and behaviour.

In this material, high performance looks less like “more of the same” and more like the ability to create shared direction and new behaviour while the work continues.

What does this mean for leaders?

The report does not point to one universal method. It points to questions that are difficult to avoid if development is to show up in results.

1

How clear is your shared direction?
Can people translate the strategy into choices, priorities and trade-offs in their everyday work?

2

How well does expertise work across boundaries?
Is collaboration strong enough for the team's combined capability to be greater than the sum of the individuals?

3

Where is development practised in everyday work?
Which meetings, routines, 1:1 conversations or feedback loops make the desired behaviour easier to repeat?

4

What behaviour needs to change to reach the next goal?
Is it clear what people need to do more of, less of or differently – not only what they need to deliver?

5

What makes it safe to learn?
Can people show doubt, share mistakes and challenge habits without losing status or being made the problem?

Team Focus 2026 was conducted by HumanGartner. The analysis is based on 18 interview cases collected in 2026 and a qualitative coding of the responses.

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