

Teamwork goes to the movies assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The movie that was selected to illustrate a high performance team in action was Armageddon which is directed by Michael Bay and stars Bruce Willis. Much of the material that we have studied illustrate that teams out perform individuals within an organization. This is most evident when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). In analyzing and comparing the characters and events in the movie, Armageddon, one sees many of the elements of a high performance team such as problem solving, goal setting, conflict resolution, and team dynamics.

The traits of a leader were also visible through Bruce Willis's character Harry Stamper. Hackman (2002) states that a leader must possess two critical skills; the first is skill in diagnosis and second skill in execution.

Characteristics of a high performance team are evident throughout the movie. Armageddon is an action adventure film in which a meteor the size of Texas is careening towards the earth. NASA scientists discover it after a meteor shower destroys the Space Shuttle Atlantis, killing the entire crew.

They only have 18 days before the asteroid destroys the earth. NASA devises a plan to insert a nuclear bomb 800 feet inside the asteroid, when detonated, will split the asteroid into two pieces that will safely fly past the Earth. Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis) is asked by NASA to help because he is considered the best deep sea oil driller in the world. After learning the details Harry tells NASA officials that the only way he will go on this mission is if he assembles his own team.

According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993) there are three types of skills necessary to build a high-performance team and they are 1) technical and functional, 2) problem-solving, and 3) interpersonal. The team that Harry assembles is made up of a couple of Geologists and four drillers for a total of seven. NASA adds six more members to the team to operate the Space Shuttle and detonate the nuclear weapons. The total number of the entire team was 13 members. This was the first problem that NASA and Harry's team had to overcome because NASA did not want Harry's team to fly into space on the shuttles.

Hackman (2002) states that teams are likely to get into trouble if members are not experts in the technical aspects of their work. Harry and his team knew how to drill the hole, but they knew nothing about flying a space shuttle and conversely the astronauts knew how to fly the space shuttle and detonate the bomb, but knew nothing about drilling a hole to 800 feet. Once the issue of who was going to make the trip was settled the team was divided into two groups and the goals of the mission were presented. The goal was to drill to 800 feet and detonate the nuclear bomb.

According to Wheelan (2010) groups containing three to six members are significantly more productive than larger groups. By dividing the team into two groups increased the likelihood for success because only one group needed to reach the goal of 800 feet and detonate the bomb for the world to be saved. The main group dynamic that was evident in this team was that once a clear objective was set everyone collaborated and worked earnestly for a solution. Once a solution was developed they all worked toward making it a reality. The most important characteristic of a high-performance team is <https://assignbuster.com/teamwork-goes-to-the-movies-assignment/>

that its members are clear about the team's goals" (Wheelan, 2010, p. 41). Members also have to agree with the team's goals which mean they have to believe they are important, reasonable, and attainable. Even though saving the world from an asteroid is not an everyday occurrence this team formulated a plan to get to the asteroid, drill a hole 800 feet into it, and detonate a nuclear bomb. Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis) exhibited his leadership and coaching on several occasions.

One of the more memorable scenes in which he showed his leadership was when Harry instructed and helped his team to start dismantling the mobile drilling rigs that were to be taken on the mission. NASA officials were appalled in seeing their million dollar machines almost destroyed. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993) all members of a high-performance team are required to do equal amounts of real work, including the leader. Harry did not stay back on Earth and send his team forward; instead he was the first to volunteer to go on the mission.

The scene where he displays motivational coaching is when the bomb is on a timer and is set to explode before it is placed in the hole. At this point NASA had given up on the drill teams. He instructs some of the team to work together to disarm the timer to allow them enough time to finish drilling the hole. Hackman (2002) states that motivational coaching is used to minimize free riding or complacency and it is meant to build and renew shared commitment to the group and its work.

He is able to motivate the team in believing that they can reach their goal of drilling 800 feet. Conflicts were plentiful between leader and members and

between members themselves. Harry's biggest conflict was with A. J. Frost, one of the lead drillers. A. J. was young and careless, in Harry's opinion, but he was very good at his job. Harry did not have complete trust in A. J. however Harry was able to put his total trust in A. J. which allowed A. J. to complete the job that was assigned to him. Lencioni (2002) affirms that trust is the foundation of real teamwork.

This allowed Harry and his team to reach their goal of drilling to 800 feet and detonating the bomb. The depiction of group dynamics within the movie Armageddon were realistic in that it portrays the ten key areas that Wheelan (2010) describes as being necessary to ensure the productivity of a high-performance team those areas are: " goals; roles; interdependence; leadership; communication and feedback; discussion, decision making, and planning; implementation and evaluation; norms and individual differences; structure; and cooperation and conflict management" (p. 41).

Without these elements, though fictional, assembling a team to carry out a mission in whom the entire world depends is a formidable task, only a high-performing team would be able to devise, carry out, and successfully complete such a task. It was fun watching this movie again with a different perspective and purpose. One truly does notice certain elements of teamwork and leadership which would normally go overlooked. The Armageddon team lead by Harry Stamper was a high performance team. Harry was able to diagnose the problem and execute the plan to save the world. Bay, M. Bruckheimer, J. , & Hurd, G. A. (1998). Armageddon. United States of America: Touchstone Pictures. Hackman, J. R. (2002). Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances. Boston, MA: Harvard
<https://assignbuster.com/teamwork-goes-to-the-movies-assignment/>

Business School Press. Katzenbach, J. , & Smith, D. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*. New York, NY: Harper Business Essentials. Lencioni, P. (2002). *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Wheelan, S. (2010). *Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.