

“FOR US, IT’S THE ONLY WAY:”
CHARACTERISTICS OF ACE
ACHIEVEMENT AND BARRIERS
TO SUCCESS

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to describe the barriers to achieving ACE and to identify characteristics that indicate success with respect to achieving and maintaining ACE status.

METHODS

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the “success case method.” A subset of the most successful ACE achievers was selected to participate in the study; additionally, researchers selected agencies that either never achieved ACE or achieved ACE then lost that status. Representatives from these agencies were interviewed to gain insight into barriers to ACE and characteristics that indicate success with respect to sustaining ACE status.

CONCLUSION

Sustaining ACE-level performance appears to be a team effort, and those agencies that display the characteristics of team effectiveness identified in the study—such as having an external focus or a supportive work environment that promotes employee learning—are more likely to be top performers.

SUSTAINING
ACE-LEVEL
PERFORMANCE
IS A TEAM EFFORT

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Summary of key differentiators between successful and unsuccessful ACE agencies

ACE Achiever	Non-ACE Achiever
Pride focus	Protocol focus
External focus	Internal focus
Connected champions	Lone star champions
“Change your life” timeline	“Baby steps” timeline

