

Leading as a team

Anne Archer

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to enable a leadership team to have clarity about their effectiveness and the impact they have on their business.

Description

Most leadership development will focus on individual leaders. Often the description leadership team is used to describe a loose collection of individuals who come together to agree strategy and monitor progress. By exploring the purpose of a leadership team with an emphasis on the 'team', effectiveness and impact can be considerably enhanced.

Process

It is essential for all members of the leadership team to be present for the session. The leadership coach needs to be able to challenge defensive answers whilst creating an open and honest environment. The first step is to establish what leadership means to individuals within the group. It is usual to have three broad areas of strategic direction and communication, change management and team performance. Keep it simple. The most important part of the process is the quality of the discussion. Suggest that they ask the following questions about themselves as a team:

Strategic direction

- What do we do as a team to determine the strategy?
- How do we know everyone in the team is truly bought in?
- What is the purpose of the team in achieving the strategy?
- How do we set team goals that are aligned to the vision?
- How do we leverage our collective knowledge/wisdom?

Change management

- How do we as a team balance ambiguity and certainty?
- What does our team leadership style say to our staff about what we value?
- How inclusive are we as a team?
- What changes are we expecting and how do we make them stick?

Team performance

- What do we need to shift to optimise our team leadership impact?
- What measures are in place, or need to be in place, to ensure we are performing well as a team?
- How do we demonstrate high-performing team behaviours?
- How do we learn as a team?

For each question, be clear that as coach you get a sense of how they think, feel and act, as a team. Your goal is to help the leaders to recognise the difference between their own leadership and leadership as part of a leadership team. Once you have built a collective picture of the team, rephrase the questions to illicit how they would like the answer to be.

The gap between intention and the current reality provides useful data as part of a development plan.

Pitfalls

Be aware that the above questions can evoke defensive behaviour. Use when you have developed your own coaching skills and have an understanding of group and team dynamics.

Bibliography

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