

The Coach Approach to the 5 Stages of a Team Workshop

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Scenario

The Cuddly Toy Factory, Teddy Bears and Other Best Friends

You are the founder of a start-up that produces plush toys made of organic materials. You are a pioneer in making earth-friendly toys that kids will love and that will last an entire childhood. You will bring your product to market in the most sustainable, eco-friendly way known to humankind and you will keep your footprint as small as possible.

To achieve your goals you need to form and lead a team and you are on a quest to lead a HIT! A High Impact Team.

The forming stage is the foundation of all the stages. Get this right and you will have the navigation system in place for successfully passing through all other stages. Put on your coaching hat and let's get going!

Forming

This is the time where the team is coming together to work on your project.

- In the earliest of forming, there may be a lack of clarity around the true purpose of the team and what you expect of them.
- They may not all share the same level of enthusiasm or commitment.
- Members can be cautious and some may avoid responsibility.
- Communication dynamics are not yet established.
- Members are most likely to be dependent on you for direction at this stage.

The more time you spend in this phase, the faster and more peacefully you will move through the next phases. The longer it takes, the more potential for painful and expensive dynamics.

Your first task as a leader is to clearly communicate the purpose, vision and mission

Why do we exist? For example:

Purpose: We exist to make earth-friendly toys that kids will adore for life.

Describe the success we are aiming for as though it is already true.

Vision: The Cuddly Toy Factory is loved worldwide by children of all ages and their grownups.

Describe how you are going to go about achieving your goal.

Mission: We succeed by honouring the life, and wellbeing of humanity and the planet: the earth, air and sea.

Guiding Principles

What is your charter for how work gets done?

Guiding Principles: the quality of our experience is directly related to how we behave. These principles unlike rules are not imposed from the outside, but rather a set of shared values needed to accomplish the purpose and goals. This becomes the foundation of your culture.

Pick three or four top human values that you commit to upholding at all times and require all team members to do the same.

For example:

Children matter: All of our decisions center on the well-being of children including our own.

Our employees matter: All of our decisions center on the well-being of our team members. The well-being of our employees is critical to the well-being of our company

The Planet matters: All of our decisions respect the well-being of the planet

Money matters: If we respect our guiding principles, money will take care of itself.

Now you:

Be guided by your personal values as those are at the root of your leadership promise.

Expectations for Roles and Responsibilities:

Who do you need on your team?

What is the purpose of each role?

What is each person responsible for

Goals

Goals are a way of aligning our actions to our purpose. Goal setting is most effective when the goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Framed). The exercise of preparing smart goals also helps to identify barriers, allocate resources and identify gaps.

Choose one SMART goal and flush it out.

Who do you need to be as a leader to build the team that will achieve your goals?

Who are your stakeholders?

What are the needs of each group?

“People want to be successful and to feel that they’ve made a contribution. Charting the team’s progress along the journey creates focus and clarity. Not only does the co-created journey identify contributions, it also empowers the team to proactively overcome obstacles. The high performance team knows where they’ve been, where they are, and what’s ahead to accomplish their goals.”

- Cynder Niemela and Rachael Lewis

Storming

Now that the team has begun, conflict and even chaos will likely arise. It’s predictable and normal. This is a critical time in the team’s development.

This time is a great gift as it shows you where there are cracks in your foundation and allows you to pinpoint where you need to go back and strengthen things up.

Also, the sooner you can get to norming, then performing.

Stay alert to undercurrents of emotions and address them. Do not let them fester or you will allow toxic dynamics to emerge.

How do you know you have reached stage two?

Members begin to struggle with issues of power and influence. Frustrations begin to emerge. Disagreements present themselves, sub groups and cliques begin to form. Team activities may be resisted by individuals or subgroups.

You must be strong during this time and will be glad to have done an excellent job at the early leg work mentioned before.

Upsets usually stem from lack of communication, failure to set and clearly articulate expectations

Refer back to the guiding principals Vision, Mission and purpose. Review roles and goals. Go back to your personality assessments and practice valuing diversity

Encourage open dialogue by hosting frequent team meetings to encourage trust and transparency. Do not turn a blind eye during this stage! Things will not get better on their own and turning a blind eye is not a behaviour that will foster respect for your leadership abilities.

Norming

Congratulations! You have successfully lead your team into the norming stage! Confidence is building in each other and in you.

The team is now driven by the need to be productive

Constructive interactions

- Members feel a sense of belonging to each other the work.
- Sharing of ideas, resources and constructive feedback.
- Your to do list.

Symptoms

- Things seem slower and more expensive than you think they should be.
- You are noticing overlap or redundancies in some outputs.
- A friendly team spirit seems to be taking shape.
- Members are forming positive relationships with outside stakeholders.
- The line of people needing your input seems to be thinning.
- Ideas with real potential for processes improvement, product development, client service and team engagement seem to be emerging from the team members.
- Choose one thing and decide how you can use the foundation from the forming stage to build on the positive momentum that you are seeing.

Performing

You are now noticing synergy, the team is reaching milestones and there is collaboration, even harmony.

Feels like full steam ahead...is burnout on the horizon?

There is a comfort zone... is boredom on the horizon?

There is self-confidence....will members start looking for challenges outside your firm?

Deadlines are looming.... are some members becoming stressed out or in silos?

The light is at the end of the tunnel.... will some feel sad that the team may be disbanded soon?

During this stage, the leader should pay attention to wellness and signs of stress that could derail further progress.

Choose one thing to address. What will you do and why do you think it is the most important?

Adjourn – How can we celebrate success?

Adjourning

The project is now complete. Now what?

It is now time to disband or move on but first... CELEBRATE

This is good leadership because it helps to energize the individuals for future projects. Formal adjourning also helps prevent the fear and depression that may accompany the disbanding of the team or anxiety that comes from starting a new project.

Recognize individual contributions.

Revisit the victories along the way.

Review learnings and takeaways.

Renew and recharge.