23

PPP Report

Team Company Name: Apollo   **WAYA Topic: Team Culture**

Prepare
Problem statement

"Due to misaligned exit strategies and differing personal priorities among team members, there is reduced commitment to the course. This leads to a lack of accountability, which erodes trust in the team's culture. How can we address and improve this?"

In the preparation phase, we had two activities facilitated by Emma over two training sessions, where she used the boat metaphor model* to identify the team's culture. During these activities, we identified: what in our culture helps the team (the wind), what unobservable beliefs/philosophies can act as drags (anchors) and unobservable, unconscious, implicit beliefs that may cause us to be stranded (rocks). We then formed a working group of people to put this content into a presentation to bring to the community and facilitate the activity.
*Problem Statement Slide

Before the WAYA, the working group decided that, due to the format of the activity, we may not get maximum value out of the experiences of the other team companies by having set questions.
The focus areas of our culture, as per the model, are as follows:
Wind = Shared ambition to succeed and achieve our goals.
Anchor = Lack of Engagement/Professionalism
Rocks = Individualism

Participate

During the WAYA session, we used the boat metaphor model mentioned above to clearly explain our cultural issues to the other teams. Some team members stayed at our table while others moved between groups within the world cafe process, allowing us to gather insight from multiple learning organisations before regrouping to identify the strongest themes.
Engagement With Other Teams:
We engaged with other teams in two ways. Firstly, most of our team were moving around the world cafe and provided guidance on how they can improve their culture. During this, we asked them probing questions like "What does a typical training session look like for you?" to try and identify the root cause of their cultural problems and then suggested actions on those issues. One suggestion made to Zenith was to allow the members on their team to sink rather than trying to save them, as a method of pushing those unengaged members to swim rather than rely on others.
The second way we engaged with other teams was when they visited our table. We had four members of Apollo who provided further insight into what our cultural issues were. These four members then got advice and feedback from the other teams on ways we could solve said problems and enhance our culture.

Key Outcomes of the WAYA
• Enhance the Winds: We decided against SMART objective checkpoints, as they felt unnecessary and repetitive. Instead, we preferred sharing exit strategy updates at the start of sessions to improve accountability, alignment, and shared growth.
• Deal With the Anchors: We rejected the idea of "imagining a role model in the room" due to its lack of authenticity. Instead, we prioritised more team socials to build relationships and strengthen trust. We also recognised HUB Time as something that a few members of Apollo were using, however, by publicising it, we could strengthen its impact.
• Avoid the Rocks: We chose not to condense the constitution into four points, but instead decided to include our current values at the start of every training session, where the session lead says how they expect those values to be shown throughout their session. We also identified implementing Competency Clinics as an important step for developing entrepreneurial and transferable skills.

Practice

Implementation Plan Based on Critical Evaluation Carried out within Follow up Session:
• Exit Strategy Updates (from 11th Dec): Session leads give 5-10 min updates to build accountability, alignment, and peer learning.

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- Exit Strategy Updates (from 11th Dec): Session leads give 5-10 min updates to build accountability, alignment, and peer learning.
- Core Values & Behaviour Reminders (from 11th Dec): Values shown on the first slide of each session, with the lead sharing their interpretations to improve the application of our values within sessions
- Team Socials (after Strategy Sessions): Informal gatherings to build trust and morale, addressing limited interpersonal connection identified in the WAYA session.
- HUB Time (ongoing): Increased promotion of our co-working space to encourage collaboration and support outside formal sessions.
- Competency Clinics (from 18th Dec): Workshops to develop entrepreneurial and transferable skills, especially for those without ventures.
- Mark Variation Policy (from 11th Dec): Reintroduced to reinforce fairness and accountability, tackling perceptions of uneven contribution and effort.
- Trial Period Review Point (13th Jan): Hosted at our strategy training session.

Critical Evaluation

Prepare: Initially, we applied Deep Democracy to encourage open dialogue and surface unobservable issues within the team. The use of this technique allowed the quieter voices to be heard first, while still ensuring all team members could contribute to the ideation process. We quickly realised that using Deep Democracy to reach the deep unobservable issues would take a lot longer than initially planned, as we needed time to continuously question "Why?" the observable actions were taking place. This extra time commitment then resulted in us using a working group to consolidate the findings from the preparation sessions.

While this approach allowed for efficiency, it became apparent that relying on a small sub-team risked underrepresenting diverse perspectives previously gathered. This could have potentially limited the validity of the insights presented. Furthermore, accountability issues within the working group meant

that only one member produced the final problem statement and slide, raising questions about engagement, shared ownership of outputs. Despite these limitations, the process was valuable in consolidating key insights efficiently.

As a team, we overlooked the opportunity to prepare questions for the World Café. In hindsight, doing so could have empowered quieter members to contribute more confidently, rather than relying on a few individuals to generate questions spontaneously.

Participate: During the WAYA, we used the boat metaphor model to clearly explain our cultural issues to the other teams. This framework helped simplify the discussion and allowed us to identify what was driving or holding back our culture. The World Café format enabled us to gather insight from multiple learning organisations and was highly engaging for most of the team. However, we felt that louder voices tended to dominate the conversations throughout the process, potentially limiting the contribution of quieter members and reducing the value gained by other teams.

The WAYA provided a space for Apollo to live out its vision of being supportive entrepreneurs, as we were able to exchange advice and offer constructive feedback to others. However, due to the overarching theme, many of the cultural issues identified across the community felt repetitive, creating a sense of "the blind leading the blind." Additionally, feedback from other teams was primarily interpreted and relayed by four Apollo members, meaning personal bias could have influenced how solutions were understood and communicated. A more structured method for recording discussions would have improved our ability to capture insights accurately and reflect on them collectively. Finally, limited time prevented us from developing a detailed action plan, leaving some valuable ideas without clear next steps for implementation.

Practice: The practice section of the WAYA was the most influential part for Apollo as it is where we critically evaluated all the feedback recorded during the World Cafe and then in turn built our implementation plan. The process used for this was extremely weak with the only facilitation being through a guided dialog around each piece of feedback. Despite this, the process effectively led to the creation of our plan, including time frames of when these actions would specifically start and the time frame for trailing them.

On the other hand, our action plan might not be fully representative of apollo as the lack of clear process may have led to unconscious group think and attendance at the training session where it was discussed was low with only 10 of 18 team members present. This was caused by a lack of communication around the discussion taking place

Overall, we somewhat effectively engaged with the practice section of the WAYA, and we have created a strong action plan to address challenges and improve strengths, which we will then evaluate the effectiveness of within the New Year.

Across Prepare, Participate, and Practice, the team showed growing self-awareness and willingness to tackle difficult issues. This marked a shift from individualism to shared purpose, underpinned by stronger accountability and trust. Sustaining these changes will realign exit strategies, enhance collaboration, and reinforce a values-led culture of supportive entrepreneurial teamwork.