Promoting Ideas and Team Building

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There is an expectation for the new CIO to build a team of IT leaders who are empowered to inspire their teams and deliver results through an organizational culture of trust and respect. This document will serve to articulate the *leadership approach* and *self-awareness* that the new CIO intends to exercise. The CIO’s purposeful interactions and decision making will set up the teams for success, using *innovative thinking, building commitment, overcoming obstacles, handling conflict,* and *communication barriers.*

**A. Innovative Thinking**

A couple of strategies that the new CIO will use for promoting and encouraging innovative thinking and solutions for team members are **asking for input** and **empowering leaders.** The CIO has already received the green light to migrate the company’s IT infrastructure to the cloud. As an example of *asking for input*, the CIO will ask the team leaders’ helpin the decision-making process, to come up with the best cloud services contractor. The CIO would then take actions based on that input. This will encourage the team leaders to continue providing input because the CIO treats it like it is valuable, and puts it to use as it is applicable. An example of *empowering the leaders* would be to designate parts of the cloud migration project to the different leaders and give them power over that part of the project. For example, the CIO will place one leader in charge of evaluating the migration costs and needs, and the others in charge of other parts of the project. This will allow these leaders to use their own innovative approaches, solve problems, and come up with solutions in new ways.

**B. Building Commitment**

The CIO will encourage the team of leaders and help build their commitment and buy-in for overall team success **by showing that they are trusted**, which would mean that their creativity and skill are valued and important to the team. For example, the leader who was chosen to create a web page to show clients that the company is migrating to the cloud, will be given some leeway and freedom to come up with the design and content for the project. Another leader may be designated to communicate with several different contractors to determine cloud migration options for the company. The CIO will not impose on either of these leaders the details of *how* to design the web page, *how* the contractors should be communicated with, nor frequently check-in on these leaders to see how the projects are coming along, but instead allow them trust and freedom to work on their own. Leaders will be more readily **committed** and **bought**-**in** to overall team success when they realize that they are given that level of trust; and they are valued and essential to the overall success of the team.

**C. Overcoming Obstacles**

The CIO will use two strategies or approaches for **overcoming** **obstacles** from competing sources of power and influence, by **stepping in to resolve conflicts** and **offering mentoring.** In the company, some of the team leaders have been supervising teams of employees, who are responsible for supporting clients in some way. Within some of these teams, team members are *not* answering online chat support requests within the timeframe whic is specified in the company’s policies. Therefore, the other team members are overloaded with handling too many support chats at a time, and customers are asked to wait several times before they are given a response. This causes an ongoing tension in the office amongst employees. An example of **stepping in to resolve conflicts** would be to hold a meeting with the leaders, listen to their feedback on the causes of this problem, and then to act in consideration of this feedback. Examples of actions taken would be to re-align the teams to the company’s policies or implement some other solutions that will empower the team leaders to solve this issue within their teams. An example of **offering mentoring,** would be to allow team leaders to come to the CIO for coaching on how to handle their team members and implement resolutions to the chat support problem. This would give team leaders the level of confidence needed to interact with their team and solve the problem.

**D. Handling Conflict**

The CIO will encourage team members to identify and implement effective strategies for handling conflict to maximize team results, by coaching team members to **communicate directly with the conflicting party,** and coaching team members to **find the middle ground**. The company has an open floor plan which means that most of the team members are stationed in the same large, one-room office. Team members are free to take their lunch breaks whenever they would like to, around the normal lunch period.

One of the team members, **Employee A**, who suffers from a selective sound sensitivity syndrome sits near another team member, **Employee B**, who insists on taking his or her lunch break at his or her desk and eats loudly, causing the **Employee A** to have reactions and lack of focus on work. There is an unspoken tension between these two team members because **Employee A** displays looks of annoyance and disgust towards **Employee B**, which **Employee B** perceives as rude.

An example of coaching the team members to **communicating directly with the conflicting party**, would be for the CIO to encourage the **Employee A** to have a talk with **Employee B**, explaining to **Employee B** about his or her condition, and follow with a requesting that his or her condition be respected. If this doesn’t solve the issue, then other steps could be taken for this conflict to be resolved.

An example of couching the team members to **find the middle ground** would be for the CIO to encourage these **Employee A** and **Employee B** to decide to take their lunch break at the same time, during which one or both leaves the office for lunch. This way both, employees can have a middle ground that works for both and relieves the conflict.

**E. Communication Barriers**

The CIO will implement strategies for overcoming *communication barriers* within the team by **facilitating professional communication** and facilitating **in-person communication.**  In the office, there is a lot of shouting going on during the day. Employees will shout back and forth to each other across the large room as a way of communication, which causes annoyance and an unhealthy tension among employees who are on the phone with customers and those who are shouting. An example of **facilitating professional communication,** which the CIO will implement, is integrating an internal messaging system into the company’s IT infrastructure. This way, members within the company can communicate *professionally*, often, quickly. They will no longer have to shout across the room and the problem will be solved. Plus, the CIO will clearly prohibit shouting from then on.

Team members often seem tense and do not talk to each other when getting up from there seats and passing each other in the office. An example of **facilitating in-person communication,** which the CIO will implement, is to ensure that the team members have a comfortable and innovative space to hold team meetings and take breaks. Offering coffee throughout the day and encouraging team members to utilize the break room and to talk to each other will greatly aid in facilitating in-person communication.

In summary, The CIO is expected to build a team of IT leaders who are empowered to inspire their teams and deliver results through an organizational culture of trust and respect. This will be done by promoting and encouraging innovative thinking and solutions for team members and helping the team of leaders build their commitment and buy-in for overall team success. The CIO’s purposeful interactions and decision making will set up the teams for success, using *innovative thinking, building commitment, overcoming obstacles, handling conflict,* and *communication barriers.* Examples of how the new CIO will accomplish these things was explained in detail above.