**Practice overview**



The market of skills is an exercise which main focus is establishing the foundation for team trust. This is achieved through different acts, starting by the team presenting each owns perspective on what she/he can contribute to the team effort, and evolving towards a collective appreciation over time, allowing to highlight new learned skills as assets for the team.

Market of skills was developed by Peter Lang, a psychoanalyst in the field of systemic organizational theory.



**Run the Market of Skills Exercise**

Participation in the market of skills activity strengthens the team's awareness of their combined skills as well as the areas in which team members can support and educate each other. The activity is both an appreciative aspect of team identity, ability spotting and a way to know one's teammates better. The activity is especially useful in the team's forming phase.

The results of market of skills can be used as input for Skill Star Map. This tool is used to map what the Team Member skills are, what might be useful for the project, and their level of competence on those skills.

C:\Users\cl\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\10CE552F.tmp Skill

C:\Users\cl\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\1A348615.tmp Feedback

C:\Users\cl\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\648D75EB.tmp Trust

**Steps**

1

**Facilitate the creation of market booths**

It starts by creating a collaborative context and by setting the stage explaining the whole team that they are going to participate into a special market place. In this market place the team member presents the skills he can contribute to the team, and the skills he wants to develop over time (eg. during the project), and for which he wants assistance and guidance.

It is important to emphasize to the team that this is an appreciative exercise. They might find it a bit difficult to write good stuff about themselves, as a lot of people are not used to this. If possible it can help to provide them with an example.

2

**Ask each member to build a chart**

During first part of this exercise each member is asked to build a chart representing their own booth at which they market their interests and their talents. Each chart will be free form – allowing also different personalities to emerge. For this it is good to have paper, scissor, pens in different colors.

The chart should contain the following three sections:

* The competences, skills and abilities relevant to the team goal that are available at your booth
* The things that are available under the counter of your booth. (In other words, which competencies, skills, and abilities do you possess that may not be relevant to the goal of the team, but still think it is worth mentioning)
* The competences and so forth you would like to achieve, or that you want learn from some of the other team members

Production of charts should be time-boxed to twenty minutes.

3

**Let team members present their "goods"**

Once everyone has prepared their own chart, they will proceed with short presentations of their “goods" and express their intentions to learn. They do this one at the time. During the presentation everyone else notes the following (one note on each sticky label and different color for each category):

* The competences etc that you are especially excited that this person offers. Expressing gratitude or appreciation about the fact that the presenter has the chance to contribute with important skills to the team. Or it can be any other type of positive observation to welcome the “goods" the person is bringing into the team (this could be on green sticky labels)
* Other relevant competences etc that you know this person possesses but didn't mention based on previous experience. (note: this might not work if people never worked together before; still I have seen it work after two days training) (this could be on red sticky labels)
* How you can help the person to gain the competences, skills or abilities he wants and engage in further conversation. It is important that this is only things he asked for and not things you think he should learn (this could be on yellow sticky labels)

4

**Invite members to give each other feedback**

After the presentation, the other team members give their feedback one by one by adding sticky notes to other persons chart and explaining why. Try to limit this part to ten minutes per presenter (the presentation and feedback).

5

**Close by reflecting on capabilities**

When everybody in the team has presented their booth and collected feedback, the exercise can be closed by having the team reflecting on their capabilities as whole team. For this, it is good practice to have all charts with all feedback notes hanging on the same wall.

Ask some powerful questions like:

* “When you look at this wall, with all the charts of skills and all the feedback hanging there, what do you then think about your self as a team?"
* “What are you capable of doing as a team?"
* “How can you use this information in your daily work?"

Give people good time to reflect and answer, and appreciate their answers.

References

Market of skills was developed by Peter Lang, a psychoanalyst in the field of systemic organizational theory.