

Managing Team Conflict – Exercises

Exercise: Team Manifesto

The below is an excerpt from my book *Wired for Authenticity*. In this book I share the seven practices of authentic and agile leaders who create teams who are inspired, adaptive, and engaged.

When I arrived in my assignment as country general manager in Mexico, I found a group of functional experts who didn't yet operate as a team. Our business was in a crisis. We had a new competitor in the market and were losing market share and profits rapidly. Our innovation pipeline needed to get revived quickly, which meant that Marketing, R&D, and Manufacturing had to work closely together. It was clear that people held old grudges against each other, and some simply didn't consult with or communicate with one another.

One action that proved critical was to create a team manifesto. It covered the behaviors we were going to adhere to in order to be a team.

Here is an example of a team manifesto.

1. We hold the team goals and mission above personal agendas.
2. We get curious about and respect the values and perspectives of team members.
3. We leverage the experience and strengths of each member of the team.
4. We have conversations that matter to the business and to the individuals on the team.
5. We are willing to be uncomfortable to take a stand for the business and create team trust.
6. We openly express our disagreement, but once a decision is made, we fully support it.
7. We admit our mistakes and communicate transparently.
8. We resolve grudges within 48 hours and don't let personal agendas get in the way of team trust.
9. We care about each other's success and share information and expertise openly.
10. We hold ourselves accountable and see feedback as a gift to achieve our goals.

Everyone on our Mexico team signed the document. We handed out framed copies of it so they could keep them in their offices as a reminder of who we wanted to be with one another. Two years later we had turned the business around and tripled the rate of innovation, with nearly 25% of sales coming from new products.

Take the time with your team to create a manifesto that is best suited to your goals.