



Using Co-Active Coaching Skills With Teams

Description

This guide serves as a reminder that all of the Co-Active skills and tools apply equally well to teams as they do to working with individuals. Specific suggestions are offered for typical non-productive group behaviors.

Instructions

Review the “Co-Active Skills in Teams” list before leading a meeting. From your experience with this group, anticipate which skills will be particularly helpful and concentrate on using those.

Over time, train your team members in the basics of these skills and enroll them in using them for the success of the team.

The “Shifting Unproductive Behaviors” chart offers suggestions on how to respond to common obstacles.



Co-Active Skills in Teams

Skill/Tool	Application
Level 2 Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sort out data from underlying issues. Understanding what is important to individuals and groups. Distinguishing assumptions and interpretations from fact. Coupled with summarizing and paraphrasing, encourages participation.
Level 3 Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing what is happening at the group level. Coupled with intuition, enables the team leader to know when to act, when to challenge and when to hold back.
Powerful Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates important information that otherwise would be missed. Engages team members to contribute. Encourages ownership for resolving issues.
Roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use to move the team out of complaining or blaming. Use to help the team generate creative solutions or ideas that are tied to a vision, which generates motivation.
Articulate What Is Going On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tied to listening, it redirects the group's attention to underlying issues or dynamics that may be undermining the group's success.
Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads to clear action items and ownership.
Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminds the team of their talents and strengths and encourages building on those. Makes participation rewarding.
Designed Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds a solid foundation of agreements and offers a context to evolve the agreements as the environment changes.
Intuition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages new thinking and a variety of perspectives. Keeps the team leader's attention from diving too far into the details.
Self Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps the team leader model a productive attitude, staying non-defensive and flexible.
Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps balance between advocacy and inquiry. Helps individuals stay open to a variety perspectives and ideas.
Saboteur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the idea reduces the frequency of negative thinking and reduces the escalation of self-fulfilling negative thinking.



Shifting Unproductive Team Behaviors

Symptom	Suggested Action
Talking Over Each Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train in levels of listening. • For a set period of time, require that team members must ask a question before making a statement.
Low Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate what is going on. (This might be a Level 3 observation.) • Inquire about it, listen and ask a powerful question. • Make a request.
Unbalanced Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate what is going on. • Inquire about it, listen and ask a powerful question. • Make a request. • Ask question directly to one who has not spoken.
Blaming and/or Complaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate what is going on. • Train in idea of the Saboteur. • Apply the Roadmap, to focus on what is desired outcome. • Ask, "What is our responsibility for this situation?" • Ask, "What request are you willing to make of ____?"
Arguing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a set period of time, require that team members must summarize the other's point of view before they state their point of view. • Facilitate finding common ground by finding out what is important to each party (values); what they want; what requests they have of each other; what they are willing to do to support common goals.
Reluctance to Take Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate what is going on. Inquire about it, listen and ask a powerful question. • Make a request.
Underlying Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate what is going on. (This might be a Level 3 observation.) • Inquire about it, listen and ask a powerful question. • Have team members take a moment to think about what is on their mind but that they are not saying to the group. Turn to a partner and discuss it to get clearer about it and the cost of not saying it versus the risk of saying it. • Make a request to have the concerns spoken. Then just listen without trying to defend, explain, or solve anything. • Ask the team what they need to resolve it and move forward.

(Adapted from, John P. Kotter, *A Force for Change, How Leadership Differs From Management*, The Free Press, 1990.)