



LESSON 9

Leading the Team: The Power of Purpose

Team Purpose Statement

Unlike the mission and vision statements which are used to create destination for the entire organization, the team purpose statement explains the reason why the followers are on the team, and also gives them an understanding of how their work will add to the success of the entire organization. Amongst other things, it helps the team feel important and connected to the mission of the organization.

Stages of Team Development

In 1965, Bruce Tuckman, a noted psychologist, first came up with the phrase “forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning”. It describes the stages of development of every team unit.

Forming Phase: This is the ‘getting to know you’ stage. Members of the new team tend to be on their best behavior – polite, excited usually spouting positive comments. Everyone is trying to figure out how the team will work, what their roles will be, and what kind of leader is leading the team. This stage don’t tend to last very long before transiting to the second stage – storming.

Furthermore, at this point in the team formation, it is the role of the leader that is clear and dominant. The leader should make it clear that he/she have a handle on what the team will be doing. The leader should begin to work on building trust, demonstrating integrity, and understanding which team members will do the best in which roles.

Storming Phase: This is the stage where reality sets in. As roles and means of working are clarified, some members may express discomfort in their roles, or in the way that the work will be done. Personal conflicts between team members might rise up as members are still jockeying for position or for the leader’s favour.

A lot of questions will arise at this phase some members may even question the decision of the leader. This is a crucial stage to the success or failure of the team. The leadership skills of the leader must come to play here. The leader needs to address conflicts, clarify roles, redirect behaviors to hat is expected of the team, and give clear and straight-forward instructions. The leader should also be flexible during this stage and willing to adjust roles or assignments as necessary.

Norming Phase: This is the phase after the storming stage. In this phase team members are beginning to know and accept the duties and abilities of each other, and are getting used to their respective work. Team members request help and accept constructive criticism from each other.

The leader should play the role of reinforcing their commitment to the team goal and to monitor for any slips back into storming phase behavior.

Performing Phase: This is the stage after the norming phase and the team is functioning at its best, the team members are working under agreed upon methods with the joint purpose of reaching the team's goals. The team structures, procedures, policies, and processes are set up such that they form a sort of team culture. The team could lose members or add new members but would still function well because of the established culture.

Leaders find this as the easiest stage. The leader is able to delegate a great deal of work and trust that it will be done well.

Adjourning Phase: This stage in a team's formation is also referred to as the 'mourning' phase. All teams are temporary – people will leave the team due to promotion, retirement, or transfer. A team could also be disbanded once it has fulfilled its purpose. At this stage, there might be some agitation and anxiety as the team members recognize that their time together is coming to an end.

The leader at this stage should celebrate team and individual achievements, solicit lesson learned from team members, and assist team members in transitioning to new positions or new roles.