

Leading BASIC Teams

The degree and nature of leadership support required by teams varies with their level of development (Druskat & Wheeler, 2004; Hackman, 2002; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Solansky, 2008) As will become clear in the following few weeks, the leadership strategies that are needed for BASIC teams will be very different than those required for SMART and GREAT teams.

Leadership Support of BASIC Teams

Many different leadership strategies have been used to encourage and enhance the performance of teams that are just beginning to work together. Some of the strategies that I have found to be particularly effective are described below.

1. Clarify Mandate of Team: In the early stages of team development, the leader should encourage team members to review the mandate of the team and discuss the expectations that different stakeholders might have for them. In educational settings, an important discussion at this time should focus on how the mandate relates to the vision of the school or centre.

2. Encourage Clarifying Questions: During initial meetings, team members should have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the mandate and purpose of the team as it is important for team members to understand more fully why the team has been created and its specific purpose. Information on the resources that are available to support the team should also be provided and discussed.

3. Discuss Relevance of Mandate: Asking team members whether they believe the proposed mandate and potential purpose of the team seems relevant to them can be a helpful way to assess whether the members will be sufficiently motivated to contribute their time and effort to it. It is important for team members to appreciate why the team has been created and understand why the work of the team is relevant to the organization as well as to them.

4. Identify Initial Team Objectives: After taking time to discuss the purpose of the team, the leader should encourage members to identify potential objectives for it. As suggestions are made, the leader should encourage members to note the degree to which they can contribute to the emerging common purpose of the team. During this discussion, the purpose of the team may be revised as members come to understand how different objectives and activities might relate to it. Shaping a shared vision is an important task that usually takes several meetings.

5. Encourage Contributions from Team Members: Over the course of the first few meetings, the leader should encourage members to think about how they might contribute to the team. In fact, from the first meeting onwards the leader should try to ensure that a variety of members are taking responsibility for different actions that will

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contribute to the team's major goals and objectives. In doing so, the leader underscores the importance of collegial collaboration and its benefits.

6. Recognize Expertise of Team Members: As members of the team get to know each other and contribute to the team, the leader should openly recognize the contributions that the members make to the team. In doing so, the members begin to identify the different sources of expertise on the team. This information allows the team to shape more fully its common purpose and set realistic objectives related to it.

7. Note Progress of Team: As the members begin to complete tasks related to the team's objectives, the leader should note the progress the team is making and reinforce the value of the contributions that the team members are making to the team and through it to the school or centre. In doing so, the leader encourages the members to view themselves as a team, which results in increased pride in the work of the team and the way it is doing it.

References

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