

COACHING YOUR TEAM FROM STORMING TO PERFORMING

Managing a team can sometimes feel like being given a jig-saw puzzle without the vital ingredients; a picture of what it should look like, having all the pieces, and knowing where to start.

Have you had one of those days when no matter how hard you try, there is still conflict, unresolved issues, unhappy staff and outcomes not met as you trudge home wondering why you bothered?

This is because as managers we don't know what brought our team to work that day, nor do we have any control over how they are feeling when they get there. The important thing to remember here is that even though you can't control what other people say, or how they initially make you feel, you can control how you respond.

When developing teams or dealing with individuals within them it is imperative to be aware of our emotional intelligence (EI), i.e. the ability to understand and master our own emotions and those of the people within our team.

When we are aware of how our emotions control our responses and how our responses control our behaviours and how our behaviours control our outcomes and ultimately our successes, we are truly utilising our emotional intelligence.

When building a team, or enhancing an organisational structure, there are many stages a team goes through. I believe when teams are in the forming or storming stages of team development, they are in fact not yet teams but groups; a number of people working with each other towards common goals.

Whilst they may initially act with all good intentions, they never quite seem to reach the heights they set for themselves as a whole because they are either internally focused or driven by personal agendas. Under the guidance of a leader who fully understands what EI is and has the ability to apply this knowledge, teams can progress through the stages into becoming teams who begin to experience success.

We know when teams are performing, they actually P.E.R.F.O.R.M.¹. They are a team; a number of people working for each achieving common goals. They have the team as the focus not the individual members.

S - SUSPICIOUS
T - TURBULENT
O - OBSTINANT
R - RUDE
M - MIS-ALIGNED

TO

P - PURPOSE
E - EMPOWERMENT
R - RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNICATION
F - FLEXIBILITY
O - OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE
R - RECOGNITION
M - MORALE

So how do we move our team from storming to performing?

There are a number of steps to follow when progressing your team through these difficult stages.

A team mission statement should clearly identify how what the team does, enables the larger organisation to achieve its vision. An effective team mission statement provides team members with clarity and a reason for being, identifies stakeholders for the team and team outputs and most importantly, aligns team members to a common purpose.

Once your team mission statement is in place then you can go about working on issues of trust and integrity in order to develop and strengthen the relationships both within the team and with key stakeholders.

Coaching is imperative, as it enables you as the manager to guide your team through the process of developing and building trust, showing empathy and compassion towards others and the passion to believe that what your team is working towards is worthy of everyone's 'team' effort. By ensuring that your team 'head' is in the right place and has clear goals, clear individual job roles and sound procedures in place, you can then set to work on the team 'heart'.

With patience, integrity, courage, passion and compassion, you can, in time, successfully progress your team to one that is experiencing success on all three fronts, with its tasks, individually, and as a team.

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