

The #1 Issue Holding Back Leadership Teams



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A Leadership Team Definition...

A leadership team is a group of individuals, each of whom has personal responsibility for *leading some part of a system* but who also *are interdependent* for the purpose of providing overall leadership to a larger enterprise.



Ruth Wageman, Senior Leadership Teams

Why are Leadership Teams So Important?

- Effective Leadership Teams are critical to the health of organizations...
 - Engagement starts at the top. Without engaged senior leadership, companies are not able to engage the hearts and minds of their employees.
 - Engagement is derived from the way a senior leader connects with other senior leaders in the organization and how effective and accountable they are as a unit.
 - Our premise is that effective leadership teams enhance an organization's likelihood of achieving business results.





Great Leadership Teams...

- Oversee and contribute to the achievement of tangible, measurable results.
- Have impact above and beyond the contributions of any one individual.
- Grow in capacity to solve increasingly challenging problems over time.
- Have confidence in their ability to get back in sync after inevitable periods of dysfunction.

#1 Issue Holding Leadership Teams Back!!

"Productive dialogue is the ability for teams to challenge, debate and discuss their most important issues in a manner that progresses the issues and leaves minimal relational scars."



Examples of Non-Productive Dialogue...



CEO DOMINANCE: The CEO's perspective overpowers the team. She pushes her point of view, doesn't listen to or is dismissive of other perspectives, and cuts teammates off in mid sentence.



ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: There is a clear 'elephant in the room' but everyone just seems to skirt the potentially controversial topic. Sometimes the CEO forces the issue and sometimes he doesn't.



LOVE FEST: Teammates are extremely complimentary to each other, shower praise on each other, and clearly struggle to give negative or constructive feedback without starting with a shower of praise or comments that might minimize their feedback.

Examples of Non-Productive Dialogue...



PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE: Ideas are knocked down indirectly or via subtle insults ('it's almost as good as last year'), direct confrontation is avoided, people pout or present a stubborn demeanor.



LOBBYING: All appear to agree to the course of action discussed in a meeting but after the meeting individuals lobby the CEO about a different approach AND the CEO engages in the discussion.



TURF PROTECTING: Regardless of the issue raised, teammates argue for what's best for their department rather than what is clearly best for the organization.

Root Causes...

- The CEO shuts down dialogue.
- Teammates are afraid to look bad in front of their colleagues.
- Teammates don't want to make their colleagues look bad.
- The team has created an environment where the loudest voice gets heard.
- There is a perception (real or imagined) that the CEO plays favorite to certain team members.
- Most team decisions have been negotiated and agreed prior to 'decision' meetings.
- Incentives weigh much higher on driving individual department performance over corporate performance.
- Teammates don't appreciate perspectives that are different than their own.



Factors That Enable Team Effectiveness...

Structural Factors

Factors that help teams focus on and achieve specific business outcomes.



- What is the team's specific purpose?
- Are the right people on the team?
- Does the team operate by a set of agreed principles?
- Do incentives support teamwork?

Relational Factors

Factors that help teams develop productive and healthy work environments.



- Do team members trust each other?
- Does the team encourage diverging viewpoints?
- Does the team engage in productive debate?
- Do team members hold each other accountable?

How to Create Productive Dialogue?

STEP #1: Formal team leaders are responsible for establishing the conditions for leadership teams to engage in productive dialogue.

They must 'practice what they preach' or model the behaviors that reinforce productive dialogue.

- ✓ Be open to others' perspectives
- ✓ Be receptive to feedback
- ✓ Set clear expectations
- ✓ Give feedback and hold the team and individuals accountable
- ✓ Promote open challenge and debate AND drive resolution
- ✓ Encourage face to face conflict management
- ✓ Resist 'back office' deals



How to Create Productive Dialogue?

STEP #2: Build trust among team members.

Building trust is one of those ‘throw away’ phrases in leadership lexicon but it’s not so simple (particularly rebuilding trust). It requires time, patience and commitment.

- ✓ Create space for team members to get to know each other (beyond lunch and drinks). Learn a bit about each others’ personal journeys to gain some insights into what makes each other tick.
- ✓ Take some time for team members to learn about their relational style similarities and differences (MBTI, DiSC, Insights, SDI) AND most importantly to make individual behavioral commitments to be more effective teammates on this team.
- ✓ Showing vulnerability (even at a cursory level) and demonstrating diligence in executing on behavioral commitments begins is a good start at building (or rebuilding) trust on leadership teams.



How to Create Productive Dialogue?

STEP #3: Foster an environment of feedback and accountability.

- Ultimately, productive dialogue needs to be present so that leadership teams can hold each other accountable for driving business results.
- Truly great leadership teams evolve into ones where...
 - ✓ individuals feel accountable to the team,
 - ✓ the leader serves more as a coach rather than the primary source of accountability, and
 - ✓ the team becomes competent at holding itself accountable.
- Leaders have to model being direct and holding the team accountable AND demonstrate that they are accountable to the team.
- Without trust team members will struggle to give and receive the feedback required to hold the team accountable.



Examples of Productive Dialogue...

- From CEO Dominance to Multiple Perspectives being heard.
- From the Elephant in the Room to Confronting the Challenge.
- From a Love Fest to Comfort Giving/Receiving Feedback.
- From Passive Aggressive to Direct.
- From Lobbying the CEO to Debating Openly.
- From Protecting Turf to Doing What's Best for the Organization.

Complimentary Offer...

Limited to CEOs, Presidents, GMs

Complimentary Leadership Team Assessment



(Limited to CEOs, Presidents, and GMs)

DIAGNOSE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM'S PERFORMANCE AND IDENTIFY WHAT DIALS NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO BUILD A TRULY GREAT TEAM.

Take advantage of this valuable offer to use a proven instrument to gain a better understanding of what's working, what's not and how to fix it. The online Team Leader Diagnostic from Team Coaching International, which takes about 20 minutes to complete, will enable you to diagnose your team's performance from two perspectives – 'What results is the team achieving? and How is the team achieving these results?' An experienced RI consultant will then sit down with you to help you evaluate the diagnosis and create a preliminary plan to attack the gaps.

URL: www.relationship-impact.com/free-team-assessment/

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