

FOUR ACTIVITIES TO BOOST YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE

Help boost your team's performance by taking them through these four activities- 1 per week. Each activity takes less than 10 minutes with a challenge for them to complete during the following week.

So you have no excuse - help them to get activated right now!

Activity 1: What makes a team?

Exploring the three elements that are common in great teams

Activity 2: Vision and values into action

Developing a keen understanding on the organisation's vision and values to help maintain a keen focus even in uncertain times.

Activity 3: What's the target?

Helping your team develop a strong sense of purpose and a balanced approach to work.

Activity 4: Overcoming obstacles

Ensuring your team focus positively on things that have control over and stop worrying about things they simply cannot control

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT MAKES A TEAM?

Great teams have three key elements in common

- Talented individuals - who are able to play to their strengths within the team.
- Team cohesion - a mutual understanding and respect between the players, their manager, and support staff.
- A clear goal - setting their sights on the ultimate prize, whatever that may be in their level of the game.

So how does your team rate against these criteria?

ACTION

Ask which sporting team would your team like to emulate?

Why not borrow the best bits from a variety of teams, from different sports if you like to create your ultimate fantasy team.

Once you've done this, ask for a rating on each of the following questions on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being 'we're already up there with our fantasy team' and 1 being 'in your dreams!'

Compare scorings for each question and explore ideas for improvement.

Q1: How would you rate our team's current performance?

Q2: How would you rate your individual performance?

Q3: How would you rate your current levels of motivation?

Q4: How would you rate your team spirit?

CHALLENGE 1: GETTING CLEAR ON GOALS

If one of the elements of a great team is having a clear goal, then do you know where your organisation is heading?

Your task, as a team, is to find out as much as you can about goals and objectives at a corporate level.

You will need answers to the following questions.

- What is the mission or vision of your organisation?
- What are the main objectives for the coming year?
- How is the company currently performing against these objectives?

You can use any documentation and literature you can find, or why not get the information from the horse's mouth? Arrange to see the most senior manager you can get access to.

- Ask them to explain their take on the mission and vision and the importance to the business of hitting current targets.
 - What will it mean to the business to meet each target?
 - What will be the consequence of not meeting a target?
- Make sure you ask them how they believe your role supports the business in achieving its targets.

Take a few minutes to discuss how you plan to achieve this as a team and bring the findings along to the next session.

ACTIVITY 2: VISION & VALUES INTO ACTION

Increasingly the world of business is becoming more unpredictable and it's becoming harder to make long term plans as they need consistent revision if you are to keep up with the competition.

That's why having a big picture vision and purpose is so important. You'll have a clear target to work towards. Equally important are your organisation's values as these will also help everyone to make great decisions and to continue to behave in a way that is consistent with these values.

ACTION

Start by sharing your stories gathered in the previous challenge. Keep this short - no more than two minutes for each person.

To stretch your team's thinking ask *"what does this mean to us in our work?"*

Now, working in two groups, begin to collate your findings and do the groundwork for this week's challenge. Each group is to create a poster that will be displayed in the team for the next few weeks and that will be added to on a regular basis.

Make these posters as big as you have space to display them - flip chart size is ideal.

Group 1: Values

- Write the company values randomly on your poster in big bold letters.
- Now each person choose one image that represents a value from newspapers/magazines and stick it on to the poster by the relevant value.
- As you are doing this start to think about how you would know that someone in your team was living a value - what would you see them do or hear them say?

Group 2: Vision and actions

- Write the company's strategic vision at the top of your poster.
- Using post-it notes add actions that your team can work towards that support the strategic goal. These can be your existing targets or new ideas.

CHALLENGE 2: Values into Action

The task this week as a team is to build on the posters that each group has created.

Continue to talk to each other about this task and then each individual has to complete the following:

1. Add at least one picture to the Values poster.
2. Spot a value in action from a member of your team and write their name and description of what you saw or heard on a post-it note and add to Values poster.
3. Add more team actions to the Vision and actions poster - aim for 6 more collectively as a team.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT'S THE TARGET?

If a business only focuses on profits then it can lose touch with what customers want, staff become de-motivated and processes and systems can become out of date.

A business with a balanced approach will have a strong sense of purpose and focus on:

- Financial targets ...and
- Customers...and
- Staff...and
- Processes

ACTION

Gather around the two posters you've created.

Briefly discuss the Values poster using the questions below as a starting point:

- How different are the images?
- How many examples of the values in action have you got?
- Are these related to just one value or to them all?

Now look at the Vision and Actions poster.

- What resonates with you? - what do you feel proud of about the purpose of the organisation?
- Do the actions cover all four areas or are they focused on one or two?

Get a new piece of flip-chart paper and divide it into columns.

Label them with the four headings, Financial, Customer, Staff, and Processes, and place your values into action post-it notes in the relevant columns.

As a team you will have targets that are part of your key performance indicators but there is nothing stopping you from creating some targets and actions for yourselves.

- What would you like to achieve just as a team?
- Are there processes that could work better in your team that would help you achieve your other targets more easily?

CHALLENGE 3: What stops you?

Talking of targets, what stops you doing the very best job you can?

- Each person is to interview one person from your team to find out the things that hinder their performance.
 - What would be the impact of these obstacles being removed?
- Repeat this by asking the same questions of one person from another team that in some way supports the work you do.
 - Do they have the same issues or are they significantly different?
- Make a list of the key factors and highlight the top two.
- Bring this along to next weeks session.

ACTIVITY 4: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Obstacles you might encounter come in three different types.

- Direct control challenges involving our own behaviour)
- Indirect control (challenges involving other people's behaviour)
- Or no control (challenges we can do nothing about such as our past, or situational realities)

ACTION

In advance prepare some piece of paper in the colours as described below to represent the three types of obstacles you might encounter.

Make sure you have 3 different sizes of each colour.

1. Those you have direct control over (Green)
2. Those you have indirect control over (Amber/ yellow)
3. Those you cannot control (Red)

From last weeks challenge sort the obstacles that your colleagues raised into three categories described:

- Direct control
- Indirect control
- Cannot control

Write them on separate pieces of paper on the appropriate shape. Draw large pictures for big obstacles and smaller pictures for smaller ones.

Lay the obstacles out on the floor around you and briefly discuss why they have categorised the obstacles as they have. Keep all of these for next week's session.

CHALLENGE 4: Values into Action

Now you have identified the things that get in the way of you and your colleagues doing a great job it's time to start thinking of some solutions.

Over the course of the next week, consider the obstacles you raised and ask yourselves the following questions:

1. *What action can I take to make sure this doesn't stop me from doing the best job I can?*
2. *What can I do to avoid this barrier?*
3. *What can I do so that things out of my control bother me less?*

Review ideas together at the end of the week and establish some clear actions to ensure you become the best your team can be.