

TEAM PURPOSE - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

Defining a clear team purpose and constantly aligning team members on it is crucial for team performance and motivation. A clear team purpose acts as a cohesive glue and guiding compass that focuses the energy and efforts of the team. When team members understand what they came together to accomplish and are able to see how their individual roles fit with the organization's overall purpose, productivity increases, morale improves and retention rises. Conversely, without such a goal, team members will lack the clarity and initiative to perform and may not be able to realize when their tasks are completed.

Developing a Purpose Statement for your team

The following steps are suggested to help you generate stories that are a diverse representation of your team as a whole in an attempt to capture at the end of the reflection a purpose statement that resonates with all team-members

- With your team, reconnect with your organization's written purpose statement and mission.
- Take this a step further. Imagine that you could step in the shoes of your organization's founders, what could have been their reasons for creating your organization? Take the time to write down in a few words the higher purpose that the founders intended for the institution that you belong to.
- Looking at your team today, reflect together about how your work contributes to this overall goal.

One way of doing this could be by using the 5 whys technique: Start by asking "Why does our team exist?" and keep following up with "why" questions until more insights surface.

The following questions can guide your process and deepen your understanding of your team's reason for existence:

- What accounts for more than 75% of your work focus?
- What do you produce/deliver? What services do you provide?
- Who are you doing this work for and why?
- What is the final impact of your work?
- If your team didn't exist, what would your organisation miss out on?
- What organizational needs is your team helping to meet?
- How does your team improve conditions for others?
- What is the real value that your team offers?
- How does your work benefit society at large?
- Reconnect with the people your team is daily interacting with (colleagues in other departments, beneficiaries, clients...) and recall memorable stories that capture the way your team made a positive difference and left an impact. What do these stories reveal about your team purpose?

- Collect the insights that arise from this brainstorming. What are the common themes that best embody what your team collectively believes is its ultimate purpose? How can you capture them in a short, specific, clear and compelling purpose statement?
- Once a draft statement is finalized, who can you invite to comment, edit or review? How can you reword your statement in a way that connects with people's minds and hearts?
- How can you use the purpose statement you have developed and keep it alive? How will you communicate it to others? Where can you display it where everyone can see?

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Understanding the importance of purpose in building meaning and productivity
2. Formulating team purpose and relating it to the strategies, objectives and activities of the team

“The most effective way to forge a winning team is to call on the players’ need to connect with something larger than themselves.”

Phil Jackson