# TALENTPREDIX ∞

Exceptional talent. Thriving workplaces.

# 12-WEEK **TEAM EFFECTIVENESS CHALLENGE**

Improve the effectiveness of your team with this 12-week challenge. The challenge is designed specifically for team leaders and managers to deliver better team collobation and outcomes.

## WEEK 1: CLARIFY YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE TEAM

Teams without clear goals and standards cannot perform at their peak. The best team leaders are clear on what they expect. They share and regularly restate their priority goals, values, and standards. Start by writing down the most important outcomes, behaviours, and standards you expect from the team. Once you've done this, share your expectations with the team, using examples to clarify each expectation and how these will contribute to the overall goals of the business area and company. Invite team members to share any expectations they have for you, in order for them to do their best work. Take time to explore and clarify these so you fully understand how you can support them.

## WEEK 2: GIVE THE TEAM SOMETHING BIG AND EXCITING TO AIM FOR

Great leaders provide their teams with an inspirational and meaningful purpose and vision to aim for. Set aside time as a team to discuss and agree on your purpose as well as your vision. Encourage your team to commit to a BHAG, a Big Hairy Audacious Goal! As the term implies, this should be ambitious and stretching but also achievable. To find out more about the importance of an inspirational purpose, check out this excellent video "How Great Leaders Inspire Action", by bestseller author and business guru, Simon Sinek.

## WEEK 3: DEVELOP A SCORECARD TO MEASURE THE TEAM'S PROGRESS

It is important to be clear on how you will measure the team's performance, including what success looks like for the team and the metrics you will use to evaluate progress. Work with the team to develop a simple scorecard of no more than 8-10 key metrics to measure key aspects of the team's performance. To ensure a good balance between leading and lagging indicators of performance, include customer, process, and people & learning metrics as well as financial ones.

Help team members understand and clarify their roles and responsibilities in achieving team goals. Spend time with the team to surface and clarify any confusion arising from overlapping responsibilities. Ideally, there should be a single point of accountability for all key projects and tasks. This promotes ownership and reduces the likelihood of role ambiguity.

By helping the team understand what's expected and how they will be evaluated, you will improve clarity, transparency, and motivation.

# WEEK 4: FOCUS ON SPOTTING AND APPRECIATING WHAT'S GOOD

Teams with a positive team climate where people feel empowered and appreciated outperform others. Build trust and positive energy by spotting and praising team members' strengths, achievements, and improvements. Start team meetings with a quick-fire round where team members share their successes and achievements from the previous week. This will help energize the team and unlock positive emotions and behaviours such as optimism, encouragement, and peer support, propelling the team forward into a self-reinforcing success cycle.

# WEEK 5: ENCOURAGE STRONG CONNECTIONS

Allocate time for team members to get to know one another better and build camaraderie. Organise regular social events, offsites and get-togethers. Rather than deciding on what social events are best for the team, ask the team for ideas. We recommend committing to a cadence of team socials at least once a quarter. If your team works remotely and it is difficult or too expensive to get together in person, there are now numerous ways to make virtual team events fun and engaging. Spice up your virtual team meetings by checking out creative activities, games and ideas here.

Once a month, begin regular team meetings with a 10-minute chat about non-work topics such as sports, books, family, and other topics of interest to the team. This can be done virtually or in person. If you are doing it in-person, try combining it with a cost-effective, light breakfast in the morning or a simple takeout lunch. Having regular social interactions will help build strong connections, trust and better teamwork.

# WEEK 6: COMMUNICATE OFTEN AND BE INCLUSIVE

Exceptional team leaders are intentional about communicating regularly with all their team members. Remember that it is difficult to over-communicate as a team leader, but it is easy to under communicate!

Avoid the common trap of spending too much time with team members whom you relate to easily while neglecting those who you have less in common with. To help ensure fairness and an inclusive approach, schedule regular check-ins with everyone. Ideally, these should be weekly or at least every two weeks. Take the time to get to know each team member and what makes them tick, as you won't be able to get the best out of them without this in-depth insight. Begin the meeting by discussing non-work topics (e.g., family, sport, hobbies, etc.) that are important to the person, as this helps build trust and a strong connection. Follow up with open questions such as: "What would you like to achieve in today's meeting?" or "What would you most like to focus on?" Check in with team members periodically on how the meetings are going for them.

Ensure it is easy for team members to get in touch with you if they want support or guidance. Consider blocking out "coaching time" where team members can book meetings with you for additional guidance or coaching during the week. Always try to respond as promptly as possible to questions, requests and comments and be careful not to over-rely on email, instant messages, or other technology-based channels in favour of more personal communication methods.

## WEEK 7: LISTEN TO AND EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

As a team leader, it is important to challenge any assumptions you have about having superior know-how and expertise. This so-called "illusion of expertise" will undermine your effectiveness as you will fail to consult with team members and capitalize on their ideas and expertise. This will undermine their motivation, initiative, and creative problem-solving. Accept that you can't possibly have all the answers. To get the best out of people, you need to empower them to find the best solutions using active listening, questioning, and coaching. As a rule of thumb, the adage of listening twice as much as you speak is a good one to follow as a team leader.

The more you provide opportunities for your team to contribute to projects, change initiatives and decision-making, the more productive and motivated they'll be to go the extra mile for you and the team. And when they fail, deploy empathy and coaching to help them learn from the experience and do better next time.

## WEEK 8: HELP TEAM MEMBERS REFRAME PROBLEMS AS QUESTIONS

A powerful way to help team members deal with their problems more effectively is to teach them to reframe problems as solution-orientated questions. For example, if the problem is "We don't have budget to deliver the project!" try asking "How can we deliver that project within the budget constraints we have?" This generates new thinking and possibilities, builds confidence, and accelerates innovation.

## WEEK 9: BUILD YOUR QUESTIONING AND COACHING MUSCLES

Focus on developing the art of asking powerful questions so it becomes one of your leadership superpowers. This will enable you to become a better coach, communicator, and influencer, as good questions draw out others' ideas and perspectives, accelerate learning and generate new thinking and possibilities.

Practice using the GROW Coaching Model to help team members become better problem-solvers, overcome challenges, and take ownership for coming up with good solutions. GROW

is a mnemonic for **G**oal, **R**eality, **O**ptions, and **W**ay Forward (or **W**ill). You'll find a more detailed explanation of the GROW approach here. You can also use the GROW technique to improve the quality of your career conversations with team members. You can find practical guidance on how to do this here.

## WEEK 10: PROMOTE A CLIMATE OF CURIOSITY AND LEARNING

To lead effectively through times of rapid change, growing complexity and ambiguity, great team leaders facilitate a growth mindset, continuous learning and experimentation. Practice using some of the high-impact techniques below to promote a climate of curiosity and learning:

- Conduct a learning review on a recent project or key deliverable. Ask the team questions such as: "What went well?", "What didn't go as well as expected?", "What actions can we take to improve this next time?"
- Initiate monthly knowledge-sharing sessions at the end of your team meetings. Invite each team member to take turns preparing and delivering a short 5-minute talk on a topic of interest to the team.
- Challenge the team to improve team processes and workflows. Assign team members into small groups (4-5 people is ideal) to come up with recommendations to improve a specific process/workflow that could be better. Get each group to present their recommendations to the whole team and decide as a team how to act on the ideas.

## WEEK 11: ENCOURAGE OPEN AND HONEST FEEDBACK

Create a feedback environment that encourages honest, constructive, and timely feedback. Set the example by asking for feedback and encouraging others to openly express their concerns, ideas, and opinions. Identify and make the most of opportunities to provide feedback including mentoring and coaching, helping underperformers, delegation, helping others learn a new skill and implementing a new work process or standard.

Rather than coming to you with feedback about their peers, encourage team members to give one another direct feedback using the SBI (Situation, Behaviour, Impact) approach:
- In what situation did you observe the behaviour?
- What behaviour caused the outcome?
- What is the impact, on you, the team and the business?
- What behaviour/s would you like to see repeated or done differently?

Teach people to always give the person an opportunity to respond to their feedback by listening closely to their ideas, concerns, and opinions.

# WEEK 12: SET TIME ASIDE TO DEVELOP AS A LEADER

The greatest leaders are open-minded learners; they invest strongly in their personal and professional development. They constantly look for ways to build their self-awareness and stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone. This involves prioritizing and setting aside sufficient time for upskilling and ongoing development. Development steps you can take to sharpen your leadership capabilities include:

- Get a mentor (ideally someone from outside your business area) to guide and advise you
- Invite feedback from your manager, team, and other stakeholders to determine your effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. To increase your chances of getting specific and useful feedback, ask questions like: "What can I do more of, less of and differently?" or "What 3 actions can I take in the next 30 days to improve my impact?"
- Increase your knowledge and network by signing up for a seminar, conference, or networking event. Share a summary of your learning with the team afterwards.
- Teach someone in your team a technique you have learned from this challenge or any other training and development experiences you have found valuable. Teaching others a skill or technique is one of the best ways to reinforce what you've learned.
- Stretch yourself outside your comfort zone by experimenting with a new leadership technique or behaviour that still feels uncomfortable for you. To increase your chances of success, invite others who have well-established competence in this capability area to guide and support you.