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YOUR STYBEL PEABODY GUIDE

FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF WORK GROUPS

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Thank you both!

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In the 21st Century, the unit of work is typically a team. Increase
your effectiveness in team management and you will make more
impact on your corporation. This is true whether the work group is
called a Board of Directors of a Project Team.

In 2012, Google created a project team called "Project Aristotle" an
initiative to closely study 180 workgroups across the enterprise.
Google's research question:

Why are some teams more effective than others?

Variables examined included the frequency colleagues socialized outside the office, similarities in hobbies and academic backgrounds, extrovert versus introvert personality, etc.

What IS Important to Team Effectiveness?

Google researchers found that equality of distribution of conversation was the most important factor. In other words, no one or two people dominated the conversation.

> The team leader had created a safe space for everybody to speak up.

Wooley and his colleagues (2008) studied the collective team's IQ using similar methods to those used to examine an individual's intelligence. The researchers of this study identified that the primary differentiation of a "good" versus a "bad" team is proportional to one factor:

> "Equality in distribution of conversation."

If only one or a subset of members took up most of the meeting time, the collective team intelligence was jeopardized.

Harvard Business School Professor Amy Edmondson (1999) calls this issue "psychological safety": it is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. There is confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up.

Comparing Two Pharmacy Teams in Hospital Settings.

Both hospitals are world-class teaching institutions in the same city. The pharmacy group at each hospital has identical patient-service missions and operates in similar facilities.

Team 1 has had a pharmacy staff turnover of 1% in the past 24 months. Team 2 has had a 30% pharmacy turnover during the same time period.

Why should there be such a big difference?

As an attempt to assess psychological safety in both teams using a Likert scale, Idriss surveyed a total of 8 people (4 people from each team).

1.   From a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being most difficult and 1 being least difficult, "how difficult is it to ask other team members for help?" The mean response for Team 1 was 1.5. The mean response for Team 2 was 7.75.

2.   From a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being always and 1 being never, "if you make a mistake on this team, how likely is it that the team leader will hold it against you?" The mean response to this question was 2 in Team 1. The mean response to this question was 7.25 in Team 2.

Clearly, these are two teams with similar missions in similar institutions. And yet the psychological safety could not be more different. And you can see the relationship between psychological safety and turnover.

Qualitative Research:

Idriss next observed team meetings at Team 1 and Team 2. He assessed the overall dynamics of the team by closely examining "equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking."

 During Team 2 meetings only a small subset of people spoke. These people included the manager and two employees. The rest of the group listened.

In Team 1 meetings there was more equality of conversation.

Pick a Card:

The Rotterdam Eye Hospital used this unique approach to starting team meetings: at the beginning of each meeting, participants would select a card that reflects how they are feeling. Cards were colored amber, red, or green.

Green means "fine." Amber or red means that there is something negative going on in that person's life. (van der Heijde et al, 2018).

Prior to getting into a substantive discussion, those who selected red or amber were invited to speak about why they selected that color and how the team might be of value to them.

Those who selected that color were wanting to discuss something important and to trust the team.

It is a great tool to create a trusting team environment.

An inexpensive way of creating color cards is to purchase blank index cards from a stationary store or online. Go to a hardware or

paint supply store and purchase small cans of red, amber, and green paint.

Want to create eighteen cards?   Dip six blank cards into each color.

If you use this technique, use a set of disposable gloves that can be purchased at hardware or drug stores.

Consistently starting your team meeting with a technique like this might help create a culture where it is safe for members to bring up risky issues.

Another Technique:

As team leader, bring a note pad or an Ipad. Write down this phrase: "Who is silent?"

During a meeting, it is not uncommon for one or two individuals to take over the conversation. Do NOT assume silence means consent. This phrase will urge you to interrupt the person dominating the conversation and ask a quiet person on the team what this person thinks.

Your goal as team leader is not to provide a forum for those who are loud.

Your goal is to bring out the best in all team members.

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