

REDEFINE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

9 steps to successful leadership
teamwork

UKON
HUMAN RESULTS

INTRO

REDEFINE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM – How do we create shared direction to ensure that our company’s potential is released? How do we organize our interactions and align our efforts to make the greatest impact? And how do we build commitment to what is necessary throughout the entire organization?

On the following pages, we invite you to have a sneak peek at our Direction-Alignment-Commitment model. The model sums up 9 typical steps that successful leadership teams take to build their next level of shared direction, alignment and commitment. It also presents the most typical pitfalls many developing teams fall into. The model is based on research and publications of PhD Anders Trillingsgaard, as well as UKON’s 25 years of leadership development experience. We hope this excerpt inspires you and your leadership team to identify the areas where you can lift your team performance.

SHARED DIRECTION

Shared situational awareness

Identify leadership tasks for the team

Develop plans, sub goals and priorities

ALIGNMENT

Experiment with meeting types and facilitation

Continually clarify roles and structures

Practice leadership communication

COMMITMENT

Breed individual success

Debate critical issues in a direct and exploratory manner

Build personal relationships

LEADERSHIP

RESULTS

Typical steps to create
SHARED DIRECTION
IN THE TEAM

CREATE SHARED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

This can be anything from a SWOT analysis to a thorough empirical analysis and feedback. But you must be able to fill a whiteboard with the most important traits of your current organization, most important stakeholders, and the most significant movements in your area of expertise. In a complex and changing world the shared situational awareness is key to ensure that you act in alignment even in periods without time and possibility to coordinate and make shared decisions.

Typical Mistake

You skip the creation of shared situational awareness and then wonder why the team struggles to rise above easy solutions and tending to one's own interests.

IDENTIFY LEADERSHIP TEAM TASKS

Based on the shared situational awareness you can identify the most vital leadership tasks, which can only be solved together. It must be the 3-5 most significant challenges in the organization that call for high mutual dependency between the team members.

Typical Mistake

You end up solving tasks together that could have been solved more efficiently one-on-one, in sub-teams or in cross-functional teams. The right tasks, suited for teamwork, are pivotal for the leadership teams' success.

DEVELOP A PLAN WITH GOALS, SUB-GOALS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEADLINES

Even in the best teams most of the work is done individually by the leaders. You need the leadership team's plan to line out who does what and when. Otherwise you will forget what you agreed upon and you will lose sight of the shared goals before you leave the meeting room. This will also force you to prioritize and decide on the realism in your ambitions and the need for resources.

Typical Mistake

You do not complete the planning because planning involves difficult negotiations and compromises between you. Other groups tend to (too quickly) make or dictate a plan that is too rigid. Both avoidance strategies undermine the implementation of the plan.



Typical steps to create
**ALIGNMENT IN THE
TEAM**

BOOST YOUR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

Every leadership meeting can be improved – even the best ones. Experimenting will renew the energy. First, look at your types of meetings. Are they the right types? Addressing the right content? And do you prepare them properly? Then, consider who is facilitating the meetings and how the participants actually participate. Last, look at the structures: Do you receive the right material? Is the room appropriate? Do you use the whiteboard? Do you get the help you need?

Typical Mistake

You only have one type of meetings, you do not use any visuals, and you forget to develop the meetings as you would develop other crucial workflows in the organization. The consequence is low quality decisions, lack of commitment and waste of time.

CONTINUALLY CLARIFY ROLES AND STRUCTURES

In a dynamic organization, you need to clarify and adapt roles and structures continually. The structures must be able to adapt to situations and persons. To do that you must frequently make them simpler and clearer. Without forgetting that in reality, despite the best simplifications, organizational structures and roles are infinitely complex.

Typical Mistake

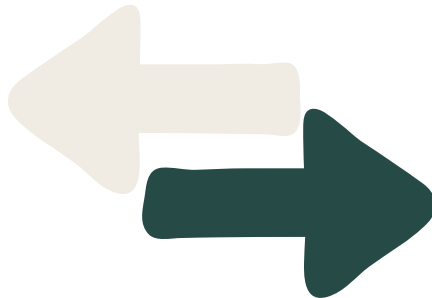
You clarify roles and structures too rigidly or permanently causing the structures to stand in the way of making the most of the situation (or persons). Or you neglect to clarify roles and structures because you think that they change all the time anyway.

PRACTICE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Make it a habit at the end of every leadership meeting or team seminar to practice the communication of your work. What are you going to tell the rest of the organization about the work you have done? Split the team into two and let each group prepare a communicative situation. Then you rehearse the situation for the other group. Learn by doing it and keep trying.

Typical Mistake

It seems awkward to practice communication in front of your colleagues. It is also time consuming, which makes it easy to skip. However, all dedicated professionals practice before a decisive situation. It will surprise you how much better you will become.



Typical steps to create
**COMMITMENT IN
THE TEAM**

BREED INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS

We often tend to think that the team is only there to create results for the organization. But if every member does not experience personal success they will unconsciously invest their energy elsewhere. And even worse, if team members experience failure it will start the worst group dynamics such as scapegoating, splitting and stereotyping. Make sure to have sub-goals that can be reached frequently, know what motivates your leadership colleagues, and do not forget to celebrate your successes.

Typical Mistake

You have no sub-goals, or you are too fast to stretch the goals before you have reached them. In this way, it will be difficult to experience success.

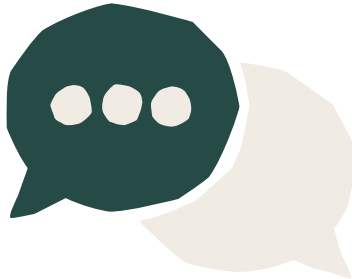


DIRECT AND EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE

This might be the most important step in creating commitment – to the whole and to the team. It is all about identifying key issues and potential conflicts and then put them on the agenda with enough time to discuss the items. It is pivotal to be direct and open; you say what you mean and ask exploratory questions. The more of the previous steps the team has completed, the easier it will be to identify the most important issues and practice a direct and exploratory dialogue.

Typical Mistake

Some teams believe themselves to be very direct and confrontational. That is often characteristic for macho-cultures which practice attacks and counter-attacks. But, this is only conducive for the most powerful to speak their minds and undermines the utilization of the strength in team diversity. Typically, in such situations a lot is not addressed at all.



BUILD STRONG PERSONAL RELATIONS

Trust and the strength of relationships decide how open the team members are with each other. Openness and relationships determine the amount of facts that are shared, and the number of difficult issues that can be handled.

Relationships are built over time when you understand each other and can predict each other's actions. You can also strengthen the relationships by telling personal/professional stories, or by working with personality tests together.

Typical Mistake

You start with social team building or believe that team building is nothing but building personal relationships. If you do not identify the most important tasks you must solve together, and if you do not establish the right meetings and alignment around the tasks, you will grow apart faster than social team building can bring you together.





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