

Leadership Beyond the Border ...

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In the era of globalization, businesses often find their teams spanning across various countries and geographic locations. Even within the same country, teams may operate in different locations with diverse primary languages. Each geographic setting introduces cultural, time zone, expectation, professional and personal value, and political differences, making the leadership role more dynamic than ever before.

When building or inheriting teams in such diverse environments, leaders encounter challenges that go beyond industry domains. Whether it's in Pharma, the automobile industry, or the food and beverage sector, each industry comes with its unique set of challenges, making the leadership landscape multi-faceted and complex.

Representing these challenges on a graph may require more than three dimensions, with thousands of combinations within each team. Leadership isn't just about managing a small team of hands-on associates; it could also involve overseeing a large team of leaders, adding an extra layer of complexity.

When forming or inheriting a team, open and transparent communication is crucial. This paper explores general strategies and ideas behind effective team management. These strategies have been categorized in three areas:

Team Setup:

To kickstart the team organization process, begin by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the skills and strengths possessed by each team member. Conduct one-on-one meetings and group discussions with your direct reports to grasp their perspectives on priorities and challenges. This understanding will serve to preemptively address potential conflicts within the team.

It is crucial to articulate and share the vision, goals, and ethical values of both the team and the organizational unit. Leadership devoid of high ethical standards tends to be short-lived and erodes trust and respect among team members.

Crafting the team's structure and design should be a thoughtful process, taking into account the strengths, weaknesses, and personal aspirations of each member. Motivated team members form the foundation of organizational success. Establish a well-defined organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities for each team member.

Before making a mass announcement to the entire team, engage in discussions about the team structure and execution plan with key stakeholders independently. This

proactive approach facilitates consensus-building and addresses any potential resistance that may arise during the implementation phase. Be prepared for some resistance to changes but maintain clarity in explaining the rationale behind decisions.

Operational Team Management:

As the team commences its operations, it's crucial to recognize that the expectations and actual performance of team members may vary due to various factors. Ensuring continuous motivation for overachievers and systematically documenting performance gaps is a key activity. Simultaneously, communicating these gaps in a positive manner becomes paramount to realign expectations for those who may be lagging behind. Some individuals may struggle to meet expectations, potentially placing an additional burden on high achievers. In such instances, the leader's professional, ethical, organizational-centric, and clear communication skills come into play.

Offer fair chances for success to all team members, but be prepared to execute Plan B when necessary. Plan B involves discussing alternative positions or finding suitable replacements.

Continuous competency building is essential for the team's overall growth. Cross-training team members to manage unexpected workloads and resource shortages becomes imperative. Regular in-person workshops should be conducted to enhance alignment and improve overall group performance.

Facilitate periodic discussions to ensure that every team member comprehends current business priorities. This practice enables the team to realign itself with organizational goals and ensures that everyone is on the same page regarding the team's direction.

Corrective team management:

Corrective management typically involves identifying and addressing issues or challenges within a team to improve overall performance and achieve better outcomes. Vigilance towards toxicity within the team is crucial. Investigate the underlying dynamics and root causes of issues, recognizing that those who appear to be the problem may not be the actual root cause. Avoid hastily picking favorites, maintaining neutrality until a thorough understanding of the complete team dynamics is achieved.

Define your team's tolerance limit for deviations from established goals. This involves setting clear expectations for acceptable behavior and performance. Utilize risk management protocols to ensure that major nonconformances are handled appropriately. Implementing these protocols helps in addressing issues systematically and maintaining a healthy team environment.



In conclusion, a leader's role is similar to that of the head of a household, keeping things in order and setting guidelines for the success of the "family" – the team.