

Flexible leadership - the key to recovery

The contribution of leaders to organisational success increases during economic crises. With the drive towards responsive government, the public sector needs flexible leaders who can reduce silos, increase teamwork and create synergy.

CHPD's High Performance Behaviours are fundamental to success for all leaders from first time manager to CEO.

To build the right leadership solution and improve return on investment CHPD offers:

- Assessment and development centres
- High performance team interaction
- Role profiling
- Behavioural frameworks
- Executive coaching
- Training



“CHPD offers a robust and practical approach. There is no doubt that the programme has helped our leadership group constructively tackle some difficult issues and improve their performance both individually and collectively.”

Public sector participant

For a free copy of CHPD's white paper “Flexible leadership”
email: leadership@chpd.com

**CHPD - making the business leaders of today
the success stories of tomorrow**

Leadership *insight*

We've got some issues with teamwork in our business. It's not widespread, but in some departments people hardly work together at all. We've put together some teams to address some specific and urgent issues, but they just don't seem to be producing the results we need. *What can you suggest?*



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Effective teamwork remains one of the on-going challenges facing businesses today. I'm afraid that putting together a group of people and giving them an issue to address is rarely enough to get results.

The first thing to establish is what kind of organisational culture you have. If you have a generally directive, top-down culture then I would suggest adapting my recommended solution which is most suitable for a more collaborative culture.

The second thing to establish is whether you're really talking about a team or a task group. There are some clear differences. Many people use the words team and group interchangeably, but there are actually a number of differences between a team and a group in real world applications. A number of leadership courses designed for the corporate world stress the importance of team building, not group building, for instance. A team's strength depends on the commonality of purpose and interconnectivity between individual members, whereas a group's strength may come from sheer volume or willingness to carry out the activities or a central leader.

With a team, you want to ensure that you've established a vision, values and core operating practices of the team upfront. Avoid taking actions to work towards your vision until you have established these practices and agreed acceptable behaviours. This is particularly

important in turbulent times. People start to question how valued their input is compared to others and unless there are strong foundations it can cause conflict, so it's even more important to have a common understanding.

Let's assume that we're talking about a genuine team here and that you've gone through some work to establish the common values and vision of the team. One approach that you might find helpful in kick-starting really effective team work is something we call team interaction. You work with each group in isolation and take them through a very specific process. The first step is to get all team members in a room, explore the issues and where they want to get to. This is essential as the team must have agreed what good looks like in terms of better team working. I often use the analogy that you wouldn't get in your car before you knew where you were going, so the team must know where it wants to end up.

Step two is to explore what the root causes of the lack of teamwork are. You can use a range of techniques for this to ensure that participants are as open and honest as possible, for example brainstorm gallery or silent voting.

Step three involves grouping the issues together. You are very likely to see common themes coming up. They might be communicated differently, but in reality people's issues are often formed from similar roots. Understanding people's barriers to working collaboratively is essential. Then the group can start to look at solutions. This is where you need

to try to encourage some of the behaviours that are key to effective teamwork – empathy, collaboration, tailoring their influencing approach and building confidence in each other.

Once you've brainstormed the solutions, you then need to evaluate ideas and develop an action plan which will drive you towards your vision.

Finally, I just want to stress the importance of performance management in all this. If you need people to be working in teams, then you should make sure that you review the behaviours we know are crucial to effective teamwork in appraisals. Address them in a one-to-one environment alongside specific, tailored development interventions and the kinds of teamwork processes I've outlined above. The rewards of leading an effective team outweigh the pain sometimes involved in getting them to a point of high performance.

If you're interested in reading around this issue further, email info@chpd.com for our team information sheet. Harvard Business Review also has an excellent article - Emotional Intelligence in Teams – that could be stimulating.

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