

Article

Turn Around an Underperforming Team

“One factor that differentiates “dream teams” from “teams from hell” is a strong platform of understanding.”

“Teams fail because of mismatched needs, unresolved conflict, personality clashes and lack of trust. All these can be addressed through understanding and recognizing how each person in the team behaves and responds in different situations”

Rebuilding an underperforming team or department can be a huge challenge to a manager. The issues they will face from their team could include low morale, rapid staff turnover and high absenteeism levels. The manager involved could also have poor leadership skills, which is likely to hinder the situation. If employees are uncertain about their own future, this could make matters worse. A manager in this situation may feel so overwhelmed by all the problems that they will stick their head in the sand and hope it will go away.

A team needs to analyze its structure – how it works, what its strengths and weaknesses are and the role each individual plays within it. The root cause of the problem needs to be identified quickly and remedial measures planned from this. Self awareness plays a huge part in this. People often don't know how other members of their team see them. One guy might see himself as an assertive leader but in reality he is an autocratic dictator. He, in turn, might have a low opinion of the quietly spoken back office person. Everyone needs to appreciate that both types of people are essential to the success of the team.

Success relies on three factors:

- Self and team awareness – identifying individual's strengths and limitations
- Recognize different contributions – teams bring together complementary skills and experience
- Plug the gaps – modifying behavior brings enhancements to the team.

One factor that differentiates “dream teams” from “teams from hell” is a strong platform of understanding. Self awareness and an awareness of other people's style are crucial if a team is going to reach more ambitious performance goals. There needs to be an acceptance that WE have a joint problem and WE need a joint strategy to tackle it. Differences are not good or bad, better or worse

Article: Turn Around and Underperforming Team

A High Performance Team will be aware of the work styles of the different profiles and that each contributes to the team in its own way. Each member must recognize their own limitations and recognize that there are people on the team who can do things better than themselves. People need to cover the bases they are good at and concede to others where they are better.

Teams fail because of mismatched needs, unresolved conflict, personality clashes and lack of trust. All these can be addressed through understanding and recognizing how each person in the team behaves and responds in different situations. Self awareness will create a strong platform of understanding from which more ambitious performance goals can be achieved.

Resist firefighting

When you start a turnaround process, there will be no shortage of people telling you what the problems are and how to fix them. However, you need to form your own views, so immerse yourself in the culture of the department, watch it in action, spend time with managers, talk to people and sit in on team meetings.

The problems of any failing department will involve people, processes and technology. While success depends on addressing all three, people are the most important and HR needs to ensure that all members of the turnaround team recognize this. Highly motivated and skilled people will make poor processes and IT work, but the best technology and processes available will still fail if people lack the appropriate skills or motivation.

Get the buy-in of all involved

You need to be open and honest with people to get their buy-in. Remember that no one understands a service like the people who actually deliver it. It's not change agents, managers or consultants who turn things around, but the staff themselves. If you can engage most of them, you'll have a powerful force for change.

Try to win employees' confidence by listening to their concerns, rather than coming in with a one-size-fits-all change methodology. Ensure any action plan you introduce takes account of concerns, as well as performance and service issues. Discuss the action plan with people in the department and monitor progress, ideally through staff opinion surveys. At this stage it is also a good idea to identify internal champions – people with a can-do attitude who will support you in driving through change.

Article: Turn Around and Underperforming Team

About Thomas International

Thomas International is a global leader in the provision of on-demand behavioral assessments and reporting used to recruit, develop and retain top talent. Thomas International's DISC-based behavioral assessments are delivered software-as-a-service (SaaS) and are designed to meet the unique requirements of small, mid-sized and enterprise level companies in every industry.

For over 25 years Thomas International has enabled its clients to more effectively manage their human capital and with a presence in 60 countries and availability in over 56 languages. Thomas International is one of only a few truly global on-demand human resources solution providers focused on behavioral assessment. More than a million Thomas International software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivered assessments are completed each year. www.thomasinternational.net