

Transforming a leadership team through coaching and team development

Following reorganization, a leadership team in a not-for-profit housing organization need to resolve old tensions and work together. How can they rebuild their trust in each other and perform well as a group?

Launchpad works in a highly competitive sector, where reductions in grants and budgets have resulted in an extreme form of the survival of the fittest. The organization was competing well in this difficult climate, undergoing a period of increased growth and success. But with expansion came change, new managers, and the realization that issues of teamwork, conflict and communication would have to be addressed if Launchpad was to thrive.

Growth was large enough for the organization to need to reinvent itself. Managers needed to find new ways of working together effectively if they were to consolidate and build on Launchpad's hard-won successes. The measure of success for this type of organization is of fundamental significance: i.e. more people getting their lives back on track, with safe housing, and settled communities.

Solution

Launchpad brought our consultants in to help diagnose the best starting point for development work, and to map out a program of coaching and team sessions. The consultant began by 'holding up a mirror' to the organization, for a diagnosis of key themes, problems and their potential solutions. Diagnostic interviews were carried out, not just with the management team but with other stakeholders – board members, staff, and external partners – to see how

Business Challenges

- Competitive sector with reduced budgets
- Change management
- Loss of trust between leaders
- Rebuilding and reorganizing the leadership team

Company Profile

Launchpad is a UK charity that helps some of Reading's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people fulfil their potential. It seeks to provide accommodation, support, education and counselling to people in need, with the philosophy that everyone deserves a second chance.

Launchpad

individuals and teams were perceived, and to see what was holding them back. Each leader also took part in a 360-degree feedback exercise to understand their own individual strengths, development needs and what they were contributing to the team. Three personal coaching sessions and six team sessions were then devised, which ran concurrently.

We began by presenting the data back to the team to help them fully understand their starting point. The team then defined the overall aims of the program, on personal and team levels, with a focus on how to boost cohesion, creativity and innovation. The sessions examined how they could bring about constructive change. They took a long, deep, fearless – and sometimes painful – look at what could be left behind, and what should be kept, if they were to transform the organization and move forward.

The team recognized that positive working relationships between leaders are vital, as they translate directly into efficiency and effectiveness. Launchpad's managers were all focused on this key aim.

Through the development program, the approach to change was very emergent, letting underlying issues rise to the surface. Our consultants provided the environment and inroads for discussion, but it was not easy. There was a bit of tension because a certain amount of trust had been lost prior to the development sessions. People needed to accept the confidential and 'leak-proof' nature of the sessions.

"If we were to achieve our goal, the management team had to lose old resentments", comments Ian Caren, CEO at Launchpad. "We needed to work together and move forward to make things better for everyone. It was a case of making sure we were able to pull in all the commitment and enthusiasm."

In these sessions, we managed to create a safe space for the development program to unfold, where risks could be taken and

Solution

- MBTI one-to-one coaching for leaders
- MBTI team development for leaders

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Ian Caren,
CEO, Launchpad

Launchpad

views expressed with absolute honesty. This was vital for building bridges between the various managers and establishing new relationships within the team.

Results

Launchpad came to recognize that team development is ultimately about the development journey of individual leaders and overcoming the challenges and attitudes that hold them back. Running individual coaching sessions alongside the team sessions was critical in providing space for each manager to explore the issues that were most relevant for them. The team came to realize that development is not just about techniques and models, but about really engaging with change within team relationships to turn a group of managers into a cohesive, high-performing leadership team.

“In session after session it became easier, going in without a hidden agenda and being open and honest,” says Caren. “This was really important. The work offered an interesting angle on differences between team members. Disagreements were aired, based on the conversations facilitated by the program. It has made a fundamental difference to the organization.”

The development program has been a great success, transforming relationships within the leadership team, and winning new business.

“It was a brilliant proposal, and we seized it,” Caren comments. “It was crucial to the team to take that first step to bond people together. Having had the experience, there is now confidence that we can talk as a cohesive leadership team and develop further.”

“We have recently won our biggest ever contract, on the back of this development program. It was a hard-won contract – managers bust a gut to get it. They wouldn’t have been so focused and committed were it not for this program.”

“I wouldn’t hesitate to call the consultants back in if I felt we needed further development.”

Results

- Managers transformed into a cohesive leadership team
- Greater cooperation, increased trust and strengthened relationships
- Greater efficiency and higher levels of team performance



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