

Team Interventions - Stop wasting your time and start realising the potential

Collaborative working holds potential due to the ability to share resources, flexibility and the relational benefits that come with a true team mentality.

However with the positives come challenges due to confusion, miscommunication and poorly understood dynamics - leading to underlying resentment and tension.

These challenges mostly emanate from a need in groups for people to relate well. Learning to relate well with others (as opposed to just being yourself) requires a willingness to engage in learning new ways of being. This requires courage, thoughtfulness, caring and positive intent.

Challenges in a team can also develop from complex demand, remote location, insufficient time together building common ground and an unwillingness to tackle poor relational behaviour.

Leaders and teams need to attend to both sets of challenges. They need to address business plan fulfilment **at the same time as** scrutinising and developing their team's dynamic and individual capability. To do this requires effort, conscious preparation and the support of a specialist coach.

This is not a capability that can be developed overnight. One off interventions and off site team building seldom build sustainable capability. They can miss out the leader, be overly didactic or disconnected from business. When this happens serve to maintain an illusion about "team building" and that "we are an effective team" without addressing the real issues needed to build differentiated team capability.

This has to change. The onus is on successful leaders to invest in acquiring long term capability through ensuring three basic things.

- Team development needs to be compellingly linked to delivering the business plan. In leadership teams the business plan also needs to include an "organisational health" plan.
- The coach and leader need to work in partnership - developing a sense of shared risk and reward - alongside maintaining a dual focus on developing leader and team capability.
- This needs to start prior to a team intervention and continue during the team development phase.

How clear are you about the benefits to be gained from having people working well in teams? Are the benefits compelling enough to invest your personal time / heart in a partnership to create an effective team?

-Richard Knight, Director at Maasai Camel.

