

Team values exercise

Values are an important driver of behaviour in our teams, and it's helpful to identify the values your team wishes to work by.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this exercise is for you and your team to discuss, and agree, a set of values, along with the behaviours that represent and support them

OUTCOMES

- Everyone understands what the team expects
- Provide an agreed basis for team culture
- Give certainty around acceptable behaviours
- Promote accountability
- Improve performance
- Improve Psychological Safety

MATERIALS

- Post-it notes and pens
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- Flipchart and markers
- Sticky dots (or similar) for 'voting'
- Time: 1-4 hours, depending on how quickly you agree. Can be one session or over time
- Tea and coffee
- Copy of organisational values

THE WEEK AND DAY BEFORE

- Take some time to reflect on values
- Write down values you think the team has
- Write down behaviours that support or undermine these values
- Bring these to the team session

FRAMING THE SESSION

Remind everyone you're there to agree team values, so that:

- Everyone understands what the team expects
- You have an agreed basis for team culture
- There is certainty around acceptable behaviours
- The team is accountable to each other
- Performance improves
- Psychological Safety increases

DEFINING OUR IDEAS

- Write the organisation's values on a sheet or board
- Ask each person to write down values they believe the team has, one per post-it
- Ask each person to write down values they would like to develop, one per post-it

ALIGNING OUR IDEAS

- Write the organisation's values on a sheet or board
- Ask each person to write down values they believe the team has, one per post-it
- Ask each person to write down values they would like to develop, one per post-it

REFINING OUR IDEAS

- Give each person 5 sticky dots
- Ask them to put dots on the post-its that resonate most with them
- Remove any with zero votes

CONFIRMING OUR IDEAS

- The team now needs to discuss the votes and agree a set of values that the whole team supports
- Aim for between 3-9; but about 4-5 is ideal
- Use more voting if you need to reduce the number of options
- Some things to consider are on the next slide

To help in your values discussion, think about:

- How can we demonstrate it? Is it useful?
- Do we all understand it in the same way?
- What does it mean to us?
- How actionable is it?
- How will we recognise it? Can we misinterpret it?
- How will it benefit our team?
- How will we reinforce it when we see others display it?

ACTIONING OUR IDEAS

- The next phase is to identify behaviours that support the values
- Values are intentions. Behaviours are actions.
- You may wish to do this after people have had some time to reflect
- List the agreed values on separate sheets
- Using post-its, ask people to write behaviours that represent the value, and stick them on the corresponding sheet
- Keep them in the positive (i.e., do this, rather than don't do that)
- Be specific and aim for 3-4 behaviours per value. Some examples follow

Value	Behaviour	Behaviour	Behaviour
Respect	<i>We listen with curiosity and ask questions for clarity</i>	<i>We help each other to speak up and share views</i>	<i>We make decisions on merit, not favouritism</i>
Trustworthiness	<i>We readily share what information we have</i>	<i>We break bad news early and practice 'no surprises'</i>	<i>We say what we mean, with learning as our goal</i>

REINFORCING OUR IDEAS

- Display them (print and pin, stickers, desktop, email footers etc.)
- Communicate them regularly and frequently
- Give public shout outs. "I like how you..."
- Consider a rewards system for values as part of KPIs/OKRs and performance appraisals
- Include them in recruitment processes
- Make them 'just what we do around here'
- Revisit in 6-12 months