



Getting everyone rowing in the same direction

Case Study

Curiousmind (CM) works with an executive team to improve alignment and efficiency

EXECUTIVE TEAM ALIGNMENT

THE CHALLENGE

With poor alignment and invisibility to most of the workforce, the executive leadership team had a long history of friction among several members that was impacting efficiency, effectiveness, and morale.

THE SOLUTION

CM personnel attended a scheduled three-day offsite to observe and then offer training and coaching as the meeting progressed. Rather than teaching theory, the focus was to use our observations of their process to show them more effective, less stressful ways of relating, running meetings and dealing with conflict.

THE RESULTS

Immediate, observable improvements in the way the team listened to each other, spoke to each other and approached difficult issues.

A much stronger sense of an aligned team that was able to lead the organisation through change.

With many years' experience working at most levels of management the CM facilitator was able to use the conflict that arose in the room to help the participants "let go" and engage in more supportive conversation



THE CHALLENGE:

This was a group of high-functioning executives with strong engineering backgrounds. Their meetings' style was very fact, information-focused, with a robust, adversarial, debating approach.

Teamwork, by its very nature, is about cohesion and the synergy that occurs when the focus moves from competition to collaboration. Where the team place more value on understanding than winning an argument. Egos, win/ lose mindsets, and debating are all factors that typically get in the way of high-performing teams achieving their potential.

Like many organisations, this leadership culture was deeply steeped in beliefs, attitudes and habits that are diametrically opposed to the stated intent of teamwork.

The challenge, therefore, was to help the leadership team members develop an awareness of their biases and start building trust, respect, commitment, and accountability.

It took less than 10 minutes for the first friction to arise and make apparent that there were many legacy issues at the table



THE SOLUTION:

With already high levels of trust with most in the group, the CM facilitator stepped in as soon as conflict arose. After introducing a little theory on leadership and intra and inter-personal awareness, he helped the group reflect on many of their assumptions.

With trust slowly building amongst the group and with them being prepped on taking some risks to change the status quo, the CM facilitator asked a question that caused everyone to pause and reflect on some of their most deeply held assumptions.

The conversation that ensued resulted in a significant shift in attitudes as team members opened up and began sharing more about themselves and what drove them to think as they did. By opening a traditionally taboo issue – their relationship with conflict (and the elephant in the room) and inviting a little vulnerability, understanding grew and, the group began trusting each other's motives more. In turn, this improved trust led to cycles of reduced defensiveness, and increased openness, honesty and ultimately respect.

With the relational side of issues improved, the group then went back to their meeting with more open minds, more generosity of spirit and improved curiosity about different perspectives. At the end of day one, the team commented on how much faster everything was going.

By the end of day three, with inter-weaving coaching and a deepening experience of behaving as a high-functioning team and having achieved all their agenda items (a refreshing surprise for them), the group committed to including trust development as part of their strategy.

Shorter versions of this team alignment workshop were then run at all major sites across Victoria.

Building a sense of team

**“Low trust is the highest tax
most organisations will ever
pay.” (Steven Covey)**

**When trust is low every
single activity that involves
people will take longer.**

ABOUT CURIOUSMIND



Curiousmind is the coming together of a team of passionate educators and change agents. With many years of experience in the personal and professional development sphere and diverse career backgrounds, CM facilitators and coaches have unified around a desire to re-engage people with their innate curiosity.

We see curiosity as the catalyst for all forms of engagement leading to improved exploration and discovery, creativity, problem-solving, team bonding and learning.

We have uncovered several key parental, educational and managerial assumptions that actively suffocate people's curiosity. By unveiling these assumptions, we help engage and empower people to learn and change.