



The new regional leader of a global business is faced with a team that delivers to target, but refuses to work collectively, and does not see the need for development. How can he build strategic focus in them?

Peter is the leader of a country board of an international organisation. He was promoted internally from a different division against other in-country applicants. He is battling to build a cohesive team, particularly with outspoken individuals who believe they should have been chosen.

Combined with these interpersonal issues, there is also a lack of competency and capability across the team. Peter hasn't put in place a core strategy that aligns everyone. His board members are operating as individuals, building their own fiefdoms and failing to see the need to work collectively.

However, the region has been doing well and is delivering above its remit. While the rest of the organisation is struggling to meet some challenging targets, Peter's region is outperforming on growth. He and his team are therefore receiving increased profile with the group board, which is adding further pressure.

Many, although not all, of the team, refuse to see the need for personal, or indeed group, development, because they are already delivering the goods. How can Peter lead and build a cohesive team that has a strategic focus?

Jacki McCartney : International business director, Syat

Peter has:

- Two key opportunities – market growth and leadership appointment.
- Two key enablers – individual experience and business need.
Two main challenges – current/future performance and engagement of the team.

He finds himself in a paradoxical situation. As 'the new kid on the block', he needs to make his mark. An appropriate intervention is to build this as a Me/Me and You/Us structure.

We can assume the group board chose Peter because he is right for the job. What does the board need from him and members of his senior team in terms of business performance?

The key challenge for the coach is to work with Peter and team members to think through what each wants his tenure to represent and how this fits with current and future business needs.

The second aspect is to work with Peter to coalesce this group of individuals into a highly functioning team. The priority is to focus on defining future direction by working collaboratively while coming to terms with personal and collective challenges.

The coach can focus the team to progress its individual and collective leadership capability, as members clarify and refine shared purpose and vision, and agree the organisational strategy and implementation plan.

By locking in coaching to business needs and personal aspiration, individual, team and business performance are improved in parallel.

Kate Lanz Owner, Lanz Executive Coaching

Peter needs to get the attention of all the team members quickly and assert his authority fast, otherwise the resistance could set in. Team or personal development is unlikely to work. Peter needs to put in place some real stretch targets that can only be achieved through more effective and cohesive teamwork.

He should hold a short series of team events, asking team members how they would drive performance by say 10, 15 and 20 per cent, pushing them beyond their comfort zone.

Watching them work together will give Peter insight into who is a positive force and who is resisting.

This event should be followed up with individual sessions. Peter can ask for their observations about their contribution at the event. He will see their degree of self-awareness and commitment, and can feed back his own observations, including tough feedback to those who are disruptive and resistant, making it clear that he will not tolerate unproductive behaviours.

Peter should now task the team members with discussing how they are going to work together to deliver the stretch target. Key milestones should be agreed as part of this process, with SMART deadlines. This exercise will get members treating their team development as a concrete task in the service of delivering results.

If Peter observes any of the initial poor behaviour he will need to address it quickly with those team members, feed back his observations firmly and clearly and ask them how they will change their behaviours.

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