

# Developing Teams: The Leader's Role

## – Activity Summary –

### 1. **Knowing Me**

There are a vast number of factors that impact on team learning and development. Identifying the key ones, and the ones where an individual team leader has leverage, is crucial to success. This activity provides an opportunity for participants to identify key factors and then to assess their current role in promoting team learning and development.

### 2. **How Does Your Garden Grow?**

Participants create pictures to identify the extent to which their team climate is appropriate and any steps needed to promote a positive climate. Next, participants address their team's current approach to learning – is it reactive and incidental, to some extent reflective, or proactive? They then identify changes.

### 3. **Releasing Potential**

Artwork and language are both used to help team leaders visualize how they are seen, by their team, as promoters of team learning. Participants complete an audit of their own skills in promoting team learning, before preparing an action plan for releasing some of their own potential.

### 4. **It's Good to Listen**

To what extent do your team members actively listen to each other and have real dialogue? Both are essential for effective team development and learning. This lively exercise helps participants recognize key active listening skills, and a goldfish bowl exercise is introduced as a tool for observing dialogue in teams.

---

## **5. Time for Growth**

Reflection and questioning are essential skills for learning. A short, physical problem-solving exercise starts this activity in a fun way. It helps participants explore what happens in whole-team learning. The group develops ideas for a team Learning Cycle and uses this to work on a team-management problem.

## **6. Knowing You**

This activity explores the different roles team members take and gives the opportunity to practice observation skills. The group discusses what happens to team performance when roles become stuck or disabled, and the role of the team leader in promoting a healthy team. Small groups look at the implications for team learning, and then individuals consider the application for their own work team.

## **7. If I Didn't Think You'd Judge Me**

Sculpture can be a powerful medium for understanding how teams work and the interrelationships that help or hinder team learning and development. They can give a clear demonstration of how we judge each other. Teams make models and depict their working relationships, consider what helps achieve tasks and supports working together, and reflect on its application to their own teams.

## **8. Movers and Shakers**

What is the role of competition in team development and learning? How can the team leader harness competition and build on diversity to promote team learning and development? A lively, competitive team exercise provides a process for team leaders to explore these questions and to plan how to move forward.

## **9. Taking a Chance**

The activity starts with a creative exercise to introduce ideas about the consequences of risk-taking. Participants assess their own attitude toward taking risks at work, and the implications for their team. Groups help each other generate ideas for action, including risk-taking, where people have tried, but so far been unable, to make changes in real work situations.

---

## **10. There's a Hole in My Bucket**

Encouraging creativity in teams promotes innovative problem solving and team learning and uses team members' full range of skills and energies. Taking time for creativity pays dividends. The activity introduces different creative-thinking and problem-solving techniques, which are applied to the issue of promoting team learning and development.

## **11. $L = P + Q$**

Action Learning has become well known as a way of enabling people to tackle work problems by focusing on the productive interaction with others in teams and across networks. This activity enables team leaders to recognize how Action Learning can contribute to team learning and development. After a trust-building exercise, small groups run a mini Action Learning Set.

## **12. Building Success**

Team learning and development require that all team members have a clear understanding of whole-team strengths and weaknesses. The use of metaphors can provoke new insights and promote a deeper understanding of the current situation.

## **13. Tell Me About It**

Knowledge Management is a key strategy for an organization's effectiveness. This activity starts with a brief discussion to share understanding of what Knowledge Management is. Participants then share some of their own knowledge on a variety of topics to provide hints and tips to solve Knowledge Management problems. Participants use a questionnaire to look at current trends in managing knowledge before they work with a partner to envision (through pictures or stories) their team's management of knowledge in the future.

---

## **14. Picture This**

You need to know your destination in order to get there. Helping the team develop a clear picture of, and establish objectives for, the future makes success in achieving that future far more likely. This activity introduces and provides a practice opportunity for three different visioning techniques to promote team learning and development.

## **15. Smart Plans**

This activity gives people the chance to use analytical planning as a learning opportunity. Small teams work together to plan a team event. Planning tools and Learning Logs are provided to help the teams. The teams then review their experiences to consider what they have learned about the behaviours they use to learn together as a team. A lively exercise reinforces learning about the planning process.

## **16. Growing Up and Team/Life**

Teams go through recognizable stages of development, not necessarily in a linear fashion; a new team is formed with each new arrival or departure. In this activity, participants plot their team's stages over the past nine months. A team/life balance continuum is introduced and used to assess team/life balance; participants then consider how to promote an appropriate team/life balance with their team.

## **17. More Than the Sum of the Parts**

There are different types of teams in any organization and the leader's role in promoting team learning and development will vary with different types of teams. This activity provides an opportunity for participants to explore their leadership role, using a linked series of energetic, participative exercises.

## **18. Keeping the Wheels Turning**

Coaching is a crucial aspect of a team leader's role. In this activity, participants explore when team coaching is an appropriate intervention and then discuss the difference between team and individual coaching. They use a case study to identify the skills needed for team coaching and then have the chance to practice and receive feedback on some of these skills. After self-assessing their current levels of competence in team coaching, individuals decide on areas for improvement.

---

## **19. Taking a Back Seat**

Participants simulate either a project team or a self-managing team to undertake a simple non-work project. The group then explores similarities and differences between the two types of teams and the pros and cons of each. Individuals consider their own attitude to taking a back seat and its appropriateness in their own work setting.

## **20. Never-Ending Journey**

Attending the training course is an early part of the journey toward full competence. The next part of the journey is putting learning into day-to-day practice, to achieve unconscious competence in the use of possibly new, or reviewed, skills and processes. This activity provides participants with an opportunity to consider their role in leading change, their continuing learning and development needs, and how best to implement their learning from your program with their teams.