

First Time Leadership

– Activity Summary –

SECTION ONE: What is a Leader?

1. What Is A Leader Like?

What does the word mean to you? Who are your leadership models? Are leaders born or made? An outline for an opening session to bring participants' ideas about leadership into the open. This should help the group to see the variety of models we have and some of the limitations we traditionally put onto the word – and the fact that leaders are not always nice people.

2. What Does A Leader Do?

What are the key tasks of a leader? How does a leader make a difference? Following from the opening session, this presents the chance to move away from defining a leader in the elusive terms of qualities and character and go into clearer territory – defining leaders in terms of what they need to achieve. The session should make the role seem more accessible.

SECTION TWO: Are You a Leader?

3. What Kind of Leader Are You?

A personal audit to help groups explore their leadership potential and style, and consider its implications. An individual questionnaire, designed to assess natural leadership style, leads into a discussion of the different approaches and their pros and cons – in particular looking at the tendency of some to focus almost entirely on task and others to focus too much on process.

4. What Kind of Leader Can You Be?

An activity in which participants work in small groups to explore the realities of action-based leadership. Each small group decides on the appropriate leadership responses to a variety of situations and then negotiates their solution with the other groups. Valuable in forcing individuals to think through situations more fully and recognize the need for different approaches at different times. An opportunity to experience teamwork with an appointed leader.

5. The Perfect Leader

An opportunity to discuss expectations of leaders and decide upon areas where participants could make their own leadership behaviour more effective. Working in small groups and individually, they tackle the idea that leaders are sometimes expected to be perfect. Having considered the arguments on both sides, they set themselves some personal challenges for more effective leadership behaviour.

6. Knowing Yourself

Recognizing your values and their impact on your leadership role. The participants carry out a series of short exercises designed to help them clarify their own key values and those of the organization they work for. Finally, they are challenged to consider the messages they are giving to their teams and to decide whether there are discrepancies between their real values and those they display.

7. Managing Yourself

Knowing what matters. Introducing the Rule of Four to sort out some of the issues of important versus urgent tasks.

8. Managing Time

Some ideas to help with what often feels like the toughest challenge of all. A round up of simple time-management techniques with the challenge to go away and apply a few and then meet to discuss what's working.

9. Taking Care of Yourself

Coping with stress and keeping life in balance. A brief look at the causes and effects of stress. An audit of the group's current stress levels and life balance. Some simple stress busters and a personal action plan to start reducing stress.

10. A Personal Charter

Developing a personal charter of rights whether for the training event or the workplace. The participants are involved in developing a charter of rights for the training event, and then move on to consider rights at work and in life at large.

SECTION THREE: Leadership Skills

11. Learning to Lead

An activity centered around the importance of taking responsibility for personal development. A discussion of the importance of self-development is followed by a personal audit of development needs and a discussion of the many ways in which participants can find opportunities to learn.

12. The Gentle Art of Feedback

Introducing the key skill of giving feedback. A brief activity during which the participants discuss the importance of effective feedback and then look at basic guidelines for achieving it.

13. Communicating the Essentials

However busy a leader is, there is always time to use the three leadership arrows of communication. A discussion of the three arrows is followed by a role-play which provides the opportunity to practice and discuss the skills involved.

14. Making Yourself Heard

Learning to be heard – especially when you have to say NO. A brief introduction to some assertive approaches and an opportunity to practice the delicate art of saying NO.

15. Communicating Effectively

Listen twice and speak once. Making your case. First a brief exercise to encourage and raise awareness of listening skills. Then practice in reducing vital ideas to the sound bite or metaphor which will make them memorable and contagious. Finally, the two elements are combined as the participants test out their own ideas and their colleagues' listening skills.

16. The ABC of Planning

Planning tools and approaches. A selection of simple planning tools and a framework for approaching planning tasks with an opportunity to use the group to help in planning for a real work issue.

17. Moving Toward Decisions

Asking the right questions. Making decisions. Working through a Pareto exercise in teams, the group get practice in asking key questions and moving toward a valid decision.

18. Negotiating to Win

Can you only win if the other side loses? The group plays a simple card game designed to encourage them to look at negotiation from a win-win perspective. They learn the value of careful preparation and the kind of strategy needed to achieve a win-win outcome.

Valuable for groups who have difficulty thinking outside the box.

19. Leading the Team

How many leaders does the team require? A teamwork exercise designed to encourage an understanding of team roles and the effects of different forms and styles of leadership.

20. Building the Team

Recognizing the team's strengths and needs. Playing your part. A brief introduction to team development and the implications for leadership style. An opportunity to audit the teams participants are responsible for.

21. Learning to Let Go

The vital art of delegation. Building on the lessons from the team sessions, this is an introduction to the stages of effective delegation and a planned approach to using delegation to develop other team members and spread the leadership load.

22. Coaching for Growth

Passing on the task. This session provides a framework for understanding and planning the coaching process. It's designed as a coaching session so that the participants see the principles in action.