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7 PRACTICAL STEPS TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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 **ENGAGE
LEADERSHIP™**



7 PRACTICAL STEPS TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

For 20 years, we've been transforming leadership approaches to create sustained high performance across a wide variety of organisations. By focusing on behaviours that create a positive climate, leaders can transform engagement and drive performance across their teams.

To support managers, at all levels seeking to make these changes, we created this toolkit to

provide practical, actionable steps that can be taken, today, to help drive excellence.

Each of the following activities can be completed with small to large groups of staff. We use these within our own leadership development programmes. They are most effective when facilitated by someone who is confident in leading a group, who can challenge and maintain engagement.



ENVISIONING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We recommend that you start every activity outlined in this document, with this initial exercise. It can also be used as a standalone activity to inspire and motivate leaders.

To start with, to help leaders understand what we mean by 'transformational leadership' we initiate a simple reflection exercise:

Think back to the best boss you have had (or teacher or mentor).

1. How did they behave?
2. What did they stand for?
3. What did they do to ensure you performed at the best of your ability?
4. What did they expect of you?
5. What did they assume of you?

The answers most people provide to these questions usually reflect transformational leadership. Memories will generate feelings and emotions around how it felt to be part of the team. People will rarely respond to say that their leader was organised, or technically gifted. Although these are important management skills, people are more likely to mention words such as 'trust', 'inspire', 'challenge' and 'support'.

To reinforce the message, ask your leaders to also reflect on the worst manager they have had, with the same questions. This tends to inspire a range of even more powerful and often toxic memories of 'vulnerability', 'coercion', 'humiliation' and 'disrespect'.

This activity is a great way to help managers start to get into the mindset of the power that transformational management can have. They will likely be keen to know more! Most of us want to have a positive impact on our team, and to be remembered as one of the best (and certainly not the worst) managers.

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A VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY FOR YOUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Arrange for a suitable opportunity to meet with your Senior Leadership Team for a brainstorming session. You'll need your organisational values to hand!

Firstly, work through each value individually, and think about which leadership behaviours, tasks and processes may align or misalign with each value.

For example:

Fair

Aligned behaviour

Treats people as equal individuals, values diversity and inclusion. Protects privacy and dignity of others.

Misaligned behaviour

Favouritism, judges performance on the basis of unrealistic targets and looks for fault, shares confidential information and gossips.

Next, think about which rarely used behaviours, tasks or activities may help reinforce the values within your organisation.

For example:

Fairness in decision making

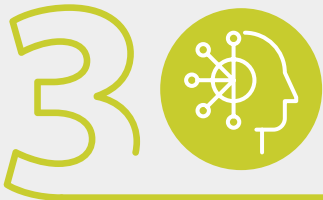
People involve others with different opinions and priorities from their own in decision making, they prioritise understanding views of others with diverse experiences and backgrounds,

rather than seeking ways to reinforce their own view points. In this way they robustly challenge conventional thinking to ensure the best outcomes for everyone impacted.

Each senior leader should then decide and explain how they can commit to personally champion the values, on a daily/ weekly/ monthly basis.

Leaders speak publicly to their team and wider stakeholder group about unfairness, they address favouritism and acknowledge mistakes and the impact they have had on people. They are strict and vocal about removing a gossip and rumour driven culture and reinforce the importance of respect and dignity for all. They don't accept unfairness as an ingrained cultural issue but actively lead change at an organisation level.

Finally, arrange for a follow up session, whereby the leaders can report back on the impact that each activity had, the lessons they have learnt, and how they can continue to reinforce each value.



A BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR TEAMS

This is a fairly simple activity which doesn't require too much explanation. First, ask your leaders to define the behaviours they expect amongst their teams, and how these can be demonstrated/ incorporated into the everyday activities of each employee.

Leaders then take this activity to their own teams. Ask team members to produce their own behavioural frameworks, to gather ideas on how they feel they might be expected to behave.

After they have done this, take the opportunity to reflect, look at areas of agreement, and also those where different expectations may lie. This provides an excellent means of ensuring that your behavioural frameworks are aligned to the priorities of your team members, and that their individual ideas are taken on board.



DRIVERS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The best leaders understand that every individual within their teams is unique and will have different motivations to succeed. In this activity, to facilitate this thinking style, managers are asked to write down what the drivers are for high engagement in each of their team members.

After recognising each of the individual drivers, ask leaders the following:

- What evidence do they have to inform their decision?
- How will they confirm and better understand these motivations further (or at all if they don't know)?

(It is crucial to do the above without appearing to be intrusive about personal lives. Allow people to share as little or as much about themselves as they are comfortable with.)

- Next, to help embed the different motivators into your leaders' mindsets, ask them to categorise each driver into themes, for example: opportunities for professional and personal growth/being respected for doing a meaningful job helping others/reward and recognition/being part of a collaborative and mutually supportive team.
- Ask your leaders how they will apply individualised consideration of different needs to engage and achieve highest performance from each team member.
- Challenge differing viewpoints about the autonomy that your leaders have to make decisions at an individual and team level. Most leaders can make a big impact through their own actions and behaviours and be flexible to meet individualised needs, provided they maintain a sense of fairness.

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THE UMBRELLA EXERCISE

An important leadership skill is for leaders to know when to shelter team members from issues of a more senior level. These are issues over which they have little influence or control. They have the potential to derail team engagement, if they were to be unnecessarily shared.

In this exercise, we use a metaphorical umbrella to help leaders consider how they can successfully carry out this responsibility.

- Ask your leaders to visualise themselves under a large golfing style umbrella, with their team underneath. The team are sheltering from a terrible rainstorm, while attempting to play a game of Jenga!

- Ask your leaders what sort of behaviours they would need to encourage, and what they would need to discourage, to ensure that everyone can be safely protected from the 'weather'.
- Following this, ask your leaders to apply this thinking to their day-to-day roles. The 'umbrella' they hold up to protect their teams can be protective but there is a possibility that their actions might also damage or threaten team members.

This activity will help leaders generate a sense of how significant their own role is. Hopefully, everyone will be able to relate to how the behaviour of one team member can threaten the capability of others to maintain high performance and mutual support.

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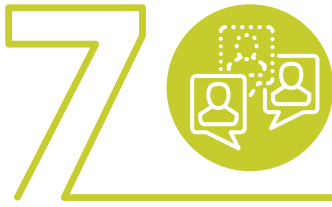
VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

If you've found any of the above activities helpful and feel they have triggered a mindset change amongst your leaders, then we would love to support you in developing your leadership effectiveness further.

Our values-based leadership programme is a 2-day course, offering a blended learning approach to develop leadership awareness, knowledge and competency in creating engagement for sustained high performance. The sessions are led by world class facilitators, and we offer individual bookings on our open access training courses, or can deliver the training in house to larger staff groups.

Please [click here](#) to find out more.





CONFIDENT CONVERSATIONS

The ability to effectively handle challenging conversations, confidently, is a cornerstone to effective team management, leadership, employee relations and human resources management.

Difficult conversations are needed for various reasons. These include: addressing disagreements, resolving conflict and managing staff performance. Holding such

conversations, especially during times of change and uncertainty can be traumatic and stressful.

Our 1-day training course develops delegates' skills in holding challenging conversations, managing performance and giving bad news. Please [click here](#) to find out more, including our upcoming open access training course dates, and to make an enquiry for in house training.

An ongoing approach to transformational leadership

When working with managers to adopt a transformational approach, the first step can often be creating clarity around what may be a confusing collection of ideas as to what exactly transformational leadership is. We hope the activities outlined above will prove useful in supporting your leaders to adopt such a mindset.

At TCM, our leadership offering is built around what we believe to be the 7 key leadership enablers:

- **Courage**
- **Connection**
- **Collaboration**
- **Common Purpose**
- **Communication**
- **Compassion**
- **Curiosity**

We find that introducing these key dimensions is a good starting point, to support with the understanding of how they can achieve a transformational impact within their teams. In doing so, leaders' focus should shift from being technical/ task oriented, to being climate and engagement focused.

There is a wealth of evidence to support the impact that a transformational approach to leadership can have upon employee engagement and team performance. Don't fall into the trap of selecting leaders based on their technical competencies.

Please [get in touch](#) and see how we can support you in any way from expert consultancy, training and bespoke leadership development programmes.

When leaders transform their teams, they transform your organisation. Highly engaged organisations outperform their competitors.

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