

## FIVE WAYS TO STRENGTHEN TEAM COMMITMENT

**Strengthening team commitment is essential for fostering a high-performing and cohesive work environment.**

It seems fairly evident that big things, like clarifying the team's essential purpose and goals, will make a difference, yet it is still surprising that some teams fail to spend enough time on this.

But what about the little things? Teams spend a lot of time in meetings: meetings to strategise (although many teams don't spend enough time planning), meetings to coordinate activities, meetings to review progress against plans, and meetings to solve problems. These interactions lead to insights and decisions, which benefit from robust team commitment.

**Here are five ways teams can strengthen commitment**

- 1. Clarify the meeting's purpose.** When team members understand their discussion's purpose and intended outcomes (whether a whole meeting or an agenda item), they're more likely to stay on track and feel a personal investment in the topic. Before a meeting, leaders should communicate what they intend to discuss, why it's important, and the intended outcome (to share information, seek ideas, or decide).
- 2. Encourage Open Dialogue:** Commitment grows when team members feel their opinions are valued. Giving people adequate time before a meeting to prepare, think about the topic, and marshal their thoughts allows everyone to be well-prepared. In the meeting, promoting diverse perspectives and open and respectful communication allows everyone to voice their ideas and concerns. When everyone knows their input impacts team decisions, it fosters a sense of ownership and buy-in.
- 3. Build Trust Through Accountability:** Teams become more committed when they hold each other accountable. One way to improve accountability is to end every meeting with a brief review of what was decided and who is expected to take action after the meeting. When we clarify responsibilities and encourage people to hold one another accountable for the actions the team agreed to, everyone is invested in team success.
- 4. Reduce barriers to commitment.** People unwilling to commit to a team decision usually need more time or evidence before setting their personal concerns to one side and committing to the team solution. Leaders can reduce barriers to commitment by inviting people to commit to the team's decision rather than change their views. Andy Grove (ex-CEO of Intel) described this as 'disagree and commit'. Grove actively encouraged conflicting views and challenging debate but expected

commitment once a decision was made. Leaders might also set a period for review to ground the assumptions on which any decision (particularly about future events) relies.

5. **Celebrate Wins Together:** Recognizing achievements as a team can reinforce a sense of unity and pride – that elusive feeling that ‘we’re in this together’. Whether big or small, celebrating wins is good for morale and reminds everybody of their value, strengthening their commitment to future goals.