

LACK OF TEAM ALIGNMENT LEADS TO POOR PERFORMANCE



An Evidence Based Approach to Team Alignment

Many team leaders are frustrated by their team's failure to execute the team's strategic objectives, and may assume this is due to a lack of engagement or commitment. The reality, in many cases, is that there is a lack of alignment in the team - team members are either not clear about what they're doing and why they're doing it, or they simply don't agree. It's a sobering thought for leaders, but there is a simple solution to the problem.

THE HIDDEN COST OF A LACK OF ALIGNMENT

Your organization suffers when your teams are not in alignment - when they don't have a clear understanding of the vision for the organization, how they contribute to that vision, and what they need to do to achieve it.

Most organizations rarely focus on aligning employees with the organization's purpose, values and vision - the focus is mostly, if not totally, on goals and objectives - KPI's. The cost to an organization of failing to align leaders and employees with the purpose, values and vision is a lack of inspiration and engagement. KPI's typically do not inspire people - well designed purpose, values and vision statements do.

How can the leaders in your organization provide direction for their teams, when they themselves are not clear, or don't buy-in to the vision? Imagine this paralysis afflicting all the employees in your organization who ultimately report to them. That's a lot of confusion and disengagement!

ALIGNMENT CAN BE MEASURED AND ANALYZED

You can measure the degree of alignment that currently exists quite easily. Not only that, you can pinpoint exactly where the problem lies so you can take action. This is exactly what Bob, the CEO of a software company, did recently.

In the graphic on the next page the line and dots show Bob's perception of his team's level of clarity and approval across the six factors. The shaded areas show Bob's leadership team's actual levels of clarity and approval. As you can see, this team is not in alignment, and Bob could not see the extent of it until we measured it.

Bob wanted to organically grow his business to double revenue within three years. However he was struggling to get his leadership team behind his vision, and there was consistent failure to execute action plans to achieve it. The Team Alignment Survey™ completed by each team member showed that Bob had a significant problem. The gap between Bob's perception (as shown by the dots) and that of the rest of his team, was a blow to his belief about his ability to communicate - he thought he had made everything clear, and that the team was on board. But now that he knew that there was a lack of alignment in the team, he had the information he needed to take action.

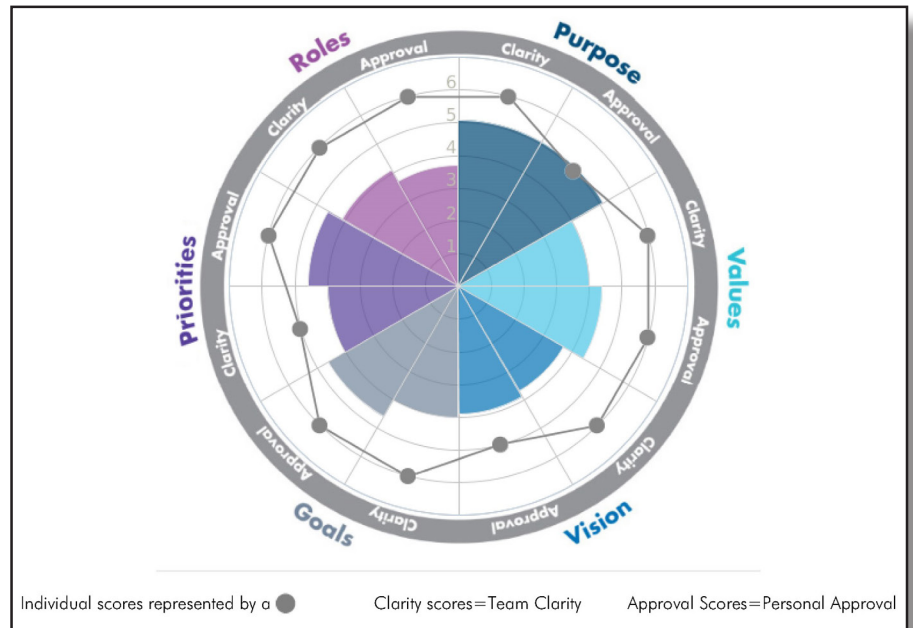
CLARITY AND APPROVAL ARE BOTH ESSENTIAL

In this assessment, Clarity is a measure of the degree to which team members think "the team" is clear, not how clear they are themselves. Approval is a measure of the degree to which team members personally approve.

Both are measured on a 6-point scale. As the chart shows, Bob believes the team is clear about everything, and he personally approves of everything. The rest of the team, however, were not clear on anything but Purpose, and although their Approval scores were a little higher on Values, Goals and Priorities, they don't demonstrate a real commitment to Bob's plans.

Bob worked with his team to reconfirm their Values, and to identify a shared vision and goals, and got a verbal commitment from all team members to support him in achieving the Vision. As it turned out, the team's failure to get behind and execute his vision was caused by a lack of clarity, and a fear of speaking up to say that they weren't clear.

Bob's Leadership Team:
Levels Of Alignment Across Six Categories



The team's alignment scores have now consistently improved over time, and continued measurement allows Bob to address any remaining gaps.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE

In this case the CEO understood that there was a problem, which is one of the reasons he sought help. However, he didn't realize the lack of commitment was caused by a lack of clarity, or how severe the gap was. The danger for leaders is that when they present their purpose, vision or goals, team members are reluctant to say "I'm not clear on that" so they don't appear foolish, and they are seldom going to say "I don't agree." They just nod their heads.

It took Bob some courage to face up to the fact that he hadn't clearly communicated to the team. However, because the measurement enabled him to clearly understand the nature and extent of the problem, he was able to immediately start taking action.

Bob was able to dramatically improve performance, simply by taking a data driven approach to a problem he had assumed was unmeasurable and therefore unsolvable.

Do you know how aligned your team is? How long does it take your team to reach agreement on important strategic decisions? If you would like to measure the alignment in your senior team, contact your local Intégro Associate.

Intégro Leadership Institute is a research-based consulting firm, providing assessment-driven solutions for leaders who aspire to creating a workplace culture based on trust and personal responsibility. We have an international array of clients ranging from Fortune Global 500 companies to government institutions and not-for-profits.

Our offerings range from individual, team and organization-wide assessments backed up with leader's guides, workbooks and PowerPoint decks for debriefing results and developing action plans.

Underpinning our work is a constantly evolving body of research and analysis focusing on the impact of trust on employee performance, leadership behaviors that build trust, and the key contributing factors to high levels of employee passion.

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