



Of the Art and the importance of the kick-off meeting

The kick-off, an integration exercise, promotes future collaboration among team members by activating the power of the collective. Its importance, essential for the success of the assignment, program or project, is the foundation of team spirit.

The goal is to put up serenity in the team. It is then necessary to add the needful ingredients for the materialization of the collective intelligence which will be the key to success. The potentialities of this intelligence will be released if the team is united and feels protected. The feeling of protection will exist if the foundations of trust are shared. They will ensure mutual assistance between team members. Reciprocal benevolence will set in and then seal the last brick necessary for the blossoming of collective intelligence. With the impulse of the head of assignment, the team will then be ready to act with the necessary energy.

The key to the kick-off meeting: "sharing the coat of arms"

see the coat of arms and its components given as illustration

Everyone creates their own coat of arms; the primary inspiration must be safeguarded. I recommend not to leave more than 5 minutes for its realization. Then each one presents his own to the collective, I recommend 5 to 10 minutes for each presentation.

After this exercise, the main fundamentals or determinants of a team and thus the main human conditions of collective intelligence¹ are gathered and have been shared. The right balance between collective and individual can be found in a KISS² spirit.

At the end of this session the team was built, and the collective intelligence is ready to emerge.

4 fundamentals of a team are discussed

- Mutual trust is encouraged by the dials "What state am I right now?" and "What fascinates me in life".

¹ @ Sarah Franko – Ecole Polytechnique Executive Education – Learning Book « Activer la puissance du collectif »

² Corpus of guidelines and recommendations to respond to the current environment by simplifying operation at work and increasing efficiency and fluidity (BNPP Personal Finance Program)

- Values the dials "How do I see myself in the company? " and " How do I see the company in its environment?".

4 human conditions of collective intelligence are activated

- Psychological security (I know that I can speak without being judged, that I can take risks and make mistakes without being penalized: "I have confidence") begins to be established during the exchanges around the 2 first dials.
- Reliability (I can rely on others, on their skills, on their responsibility) is established with the discussions around the 3 first dials.
- The sense the meaning (which can be different from one person to another) is shared with the 3 last dials and the impact (I contribute through my work to the result of the company) by the 2 last dials.

The team then gets to know each other, and mutual benevolence begins to set in.

The immediate benefit is felt through the group dynamic

Each team member will activate their emotional intelligence and seek to practice the art of getting along with others³. NB: The team must keep the coat of arms.

We come to the "moment of truth" of the head of assignment. The last founding brick necessary for the success of the kick-off meeting is the establishment of clarity (term used for collective intelligence) or of the common horizon, of the rules of the game / roles and responsibilities of each (terms generally chosen in the determinants of a team).

The key role of the manager in the conclusion

Its role is to share a common horizon (clear promise), the rules of the game (on the bilateral and collegial operating framework) and the roles and responsibilities of each (displayed and assumed).

These elements of vision (horizon, promise and objectives) and operational organization (roles, responsibilities and rules) are the last ingredients necessary to perfect the kick-off. For this, the preliminary preparation will have been important, the possibilities and / or constraints related to the mission must, of course, have been studied before. From experience, rigorous preparation, nourished by the richness of the exercise of sharing the coat of arms, makes the exercise rather easy.

The kick-off with sharing of coat of arms helps the head of assignment to establish a leadership based on trust which is based on the axes of the model Trust Leadership Profile⁴ : Vision, Agility, Collaboration, Organizational Confidence, Interpersonal Confidence and Humility. This approach is perfectly suited to our complex and changing environments. (VUCA⁵).

The foundations of collaboration have been laid. The team is ready to act with the energy necessary to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts⁶.

Now it will be about maintaining the confidence and momentum created by continuously improving them (« Of the importance and the Art of the morning kick-off », *to come up*).

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³ @ L'intelligence émotionnelle – Daniel Goleman, Editions J'ai lu, 2014 – p166

⁴ @ Confiance et leadership – Ali Armand, ESF Editeur, 2016 – p158 ; p232 & p248 (exercice)

⁵ Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity

⁶ @ Confiance et leadership – Ali Armand, ESF Editeur, 2016