



Stage 1 - LEADERSHIP FOR ORGANISATIONS

Module 6 – LEADERSHIP MIND-SETS FOR TEAM WORKING

The Leadership Academy is a learning and action programme for mayors, senior officials and elected representatives of local government.

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1	MODULE OVERVIEW.....	3
1.1	BACKGROUND.....	3
1.2	LEARNING OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.3	LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	3
1.4	DURATION	3
2	MODULE STRUCTURE	4
2.1	INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION	4
2.2	GROUP EXERCISE 1 – THE CHALLENGE OF TEAM WORKING	4
2.3	INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – ASSESSMENT OF TEAM WORKING IN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION	4
2.4	GROUP EXERCISE 2 – ENHANCING EQ FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN TEAMS.....	4
3	WORKING DEFINITIONS.....	5
3.1	MIND-SET.....	5
3.2	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ).....	5
4	KEY CONCEPTS.....	6
4.1	PERFORMANCE MINDSET	6
4.2	TEAM-WORKING.....	6
4.3	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	7
4.4	FACILITATION.....	7
5	EXERCISES	9
5.1	EXERCISE 1 – INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION – STATIC/GROWTH ORIENTED ATTITUDES	9
5.2	EXERCISE 2- GROUP EXERCISE 1 – THE CHALLENGE OF TEAM WORKING	9
5.3	EXERCISE 3 - INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – TEAM WORKING IN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION	11
5.4	EXERCISE 4- GROUP EXERCISE 2 – ENHANCING EQ FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN TEAMS.....	13
6	REFERENCES	15
6.1	FURTHER READINGS	15

1 MODULE OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

- Effective organisations work mostly through teamwork. The value of a team is that it can harness the expertise of its different members, allowing them to tackle cross-cutting issues that go beyond the scope of any action of one of them. Good leadership widespread within the members of a team implies that the organisation can overcome challenges thanks to the synergies that arise by working together.
- Working within a team, however, is not always easy and intuitive. It requires specific skills as well as a good level of self-awareness. Most of this self-awareness is based on the emotional intelligence (i.e. EQ) of the members of a team. EQ is defined as a person's ability to identify his/her ability emotions, understanding their relevance and their appropriateness in the specific context/situation.
- Beside own self-awareness and self-mastery skills, team work also benefits from facilitation. Facilitation helps groups get their work done more effectively, especially in complex organisations that are responsible towards a community, and in times of change. Facilitation is the attitude that helps individuals to link up with others in professional situations.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the kind of mind-set that is better aligned with good performance within a performance-oriented organisation.
- To understand the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) and its essential role in effective team working.
- To recognise the importance of facilitation for effective team working, that in turn leads to improve public services performance.

1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants acquire competences to understand their own and others' emotional intelligence attitudes and make them functional within a team
- Participants understand and experience the value of facilitation for effective team-working.
- Participants acquire competences to assess the level of team-working in their organisation.

1.4 DURATION

- 180 minutes

2 MODULE STRUCTURE

2.1 INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION

- Participants are introduced to the concepts of “static” and “growth-oriented” mind-sets;
- Participants then work in groups (3-4 people) to identify attitudes/behaviours related to people working in a “static mind-set” and in a “growth oriented mind-set” organisation.

2.2 GROUP EXERCISE 1 – THE CHALLENGE OF TEAM WORKING

- Participants in their group assess their own performance as a group during the interactive introduction;
- Participants work in groups to identify consequences and solutions of obstacles that might arise when working in a team.

2.3 INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – ASSESSMENT OF TEAM WORKING IN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION

- Participants work individually to assess a team working experience in their own organisation.

2.4 GROUP EXERCISE 2 – ENHANCING EQ FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN TEAMS

- Participants are introduced to the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ);
- Participants work in groups (3-4 people) to identify positive effects that EQ competences have on team performances, as well actions/practices that could be used to develop/enhance such competences.

3 WORKING DEFINITIONS

3.1 MIND-SET

A mind-set is a set of assumptions or methods, held by one or more person, that is so established to create a strong incentive for groups to adopt or accept behaviours or choices based on it, and thus to shape a so called 'groupthink'. A mind set can be static, or growth oriented¹. For the purpose of LAP, the expression 'performance mind-set' will be used to refer to a growth-oriented mind-set liable to positively influence the work an organisation towards collaboration, so to realise good governance.

3.2 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)

Emotional intelligence² (EQ) is defined as a person's ability to identify his/her ability emotions, understanding their relevance and their appropriateness in the specific context/situation.

¹ Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: the new psychology of success*, Random House. For the purpose of this work, the work of Dr. Dweck has been further elaborated with the support of Abdullah Hamad.

² Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books.

4 KEY CONCEPTS

4.1 PERFORMANCE MINDSET

A mind-set defines about how people use their intelligence³. The range of mind-sets is as wide as the number of people on earth. The synergy of individual mind-sets shapes in turn the mind-set of an organisation. While there might be as many mind-sets and the number of people on earth, broadly speaking and for the purpose of this LAP, it is here important to understand the difference between 2 of them: the so called “static” and “growth oriented” mind-sets.

- Static mind-set

In an organisation characterised by a static mind-set towards opportunities and challenges arising in day-to-day activities, the staff typically tends to:

- Avoid challenges;
- Give up easily in the face of obstacles;
- Disregard effort and not value it as a worthwhile investment;
- Live up to minimum standards of performance (minimising the effort);
- Ignore criticism as it might imply the need for change;
- Feel threatened by the success of others;

- Growth oriented mind-set

In an organisation characterised by a static mind-set towards opportunities and challenges arising in day-to-day activities, staff typically tends to:

- Embrace challenges;
- Persist in the face of setback, to overcome obstacles;
- See effort as the path to mastery and good performance;
- Listen to and learn from the criticism of others;
- Adapt and change to capitalise on opportunities and reduce impact of challenges;

- Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others.

A static mind-set staff, within an organisation, may plateau early and never achieve their full potential. They will feel that they cannot change anything and will accept low standards of performance. With a growth-oriented mind-set, staff within the organisation could instead reach ever higher levels of achievement; they could gain a greater sense of confidence and a will-power to overcome the obstacles that they find in their way.

Growth-oriented mind-sets drive performance-oriented organisation behaviour.

4.2 TEAM-WORKING

A growth-oriented mind-set is more often than not grounded in sharing of burdens and responsibilities, ideas and suggestions. In one word, a growth-oriented organisation works as a team. The value of teams is that they can harness the expertise of the different members of the team. They can tackle cross-cutting issues that go beyond the scope and resources of each individual. Good leadership within the team increases the capacities of each team members by building on the synergies that arise by working together.

Teams are more effective than individuals as within the team members:

- share the risks (reducing the burden that might be overwhelming on the shoulders of only one person);
- bring together more perspectives (thus adding new solutions to emerging challenges);
- bring together more knowledge (thus allowing for a systemic management of the organisation, since all know their own work but also what is going on in the organisation as a whole, aligning methodologies and objectives).

The starting point for effective team-working is, in

³ This approach is inspired by the work of Dr Carol S Dweck and developed with the help of Abdullah Hamad.

fact, the existence of a common goal, a sense of direction.

In order to sparkle within the organisation the desire to work in teams, the identification of a common challenge is key.

In a successful team, members trust each other. They discuss ideas without reservation. They make decisions and act according to plans. They hold each other to account. They show that each individual is important and his/her work is valuable to the team. Team members keep their eye always on the goal.

But team-working is difficult. In times of stress a team can easily break down. Teams can develop biases. They can be driven by conformity; they can become a self-serving clique. One team member may not like to cooperate with another. Another might be unwilling to share information. A third might be more focused on his/her own interests than the interests of the team.

Good team-leadership recognises these potential dysfunctions and works to avoid or minimise them, through appropriate facilitation skills (ref. Section 4.4).

4.3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

However, mastering facilitation skills and being able to work in team requires a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ).

EQ lies at the core of good leadership and is a specific way of looking at ourselves and at other people. It is about being aware of, and managing, our own EQ. It is also about being aware of, and managing, the impact we have on other people.

EQ implies different levels:

- Self-awareness (being aware of own emotions and what moves them);
- Self-management (controlling manifestation of emotions so not to be overruled by them);
- Social awareness (knowing roles and relations and understanding appropriate behaviour for different situations);

- Social management (being able to act as facilitator/mediator within social situations).

Through self-awareness and practice a person can improve his/her own EQ level.

Within an organisation, developing a good level of EQ implies understanding our own approach to work, while acknowledging that each member of the team might have a different attitude in the same circumstances. The different working approaches could be broadly summarised (although this is by no mean an exhaustive list) as:

- pragmatic (people with the primary objective of wanting to get things done);
- intellectual (people needing understand things at a deeper level before getting to work);
- social (people valuing the interaction with others as the main drivers of their commitment).

These natural preferences stem from the different styles of emotions' management. All these attitudes are needed within a team, as they tend to compensate each other. More pragmatic people might be very productive, but tend to avoid deeper discussions that could create a wider understanding. More intellectual people may prefer the discussions but find it more difficult to be productive or to relate to their colleagues. More social people may take care of creating a good harmony within the members of the teams, but might not be interested in getting their work done individually when tasks are shared.

Knowing these attitudes is key for properly balancing team-working efforts. Turning round a poorly performing organisation will require a specific balance of EQ competences among team members, to ensure project goals are met.

If organisations can begin to take account of EQ in their every-day work, they should soon be able to raise the levels of their performance.

4.4 FACILITATION

Facilitation is an essential feature when working in a team.

Leadership as facilitation means supporting each other within a team to share perceptions of what needs to be done, to see the issue from other perspectives, to cooperate on tasks, understanding each other's preferences and qualities rather than pointing out others members' flaws.

Facilitation within leadership means providing a structure to encourage progress of work within a team, enabling each member to take responsibility on their specific tasks.

If leadership implies:

- Taking a long-term view;
- Pointing out the challenges;
- Articulating vision;
- Focusing on the future, on innovation and change;
- Seeking collaboration and commitment;
- Delegating work;
- Listening to the hard questions;
- Minimising conflict and preventing its escalation;
- Seeking to support others.

Facilitation offers the tools to make it operative through:

- Helping people see the goal;
- Clarifying different values and creating a common purpose within the team;
- Relating challenge to staff / work;
- Helping people clarify own hopes;
- Helping people make sense of the new and consider alternatives;
- Exploring opinions and commitment;
- Helping staff get work done together;
- Challenging assumptions;
- Guiding team members through conflict, seeing it as a way to reach a common understanding starting from different viewpoints;
- Focusing staff on practical ways to deliver better services⁴.

⁴ Pedler et al (2010). A Manager's Guide to Leadership, Mc Graw-Hill Publishing Company, Berkshire, UK.

5 EXERCISES

5.1 EXERCISE 1 – INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION – STATIC/GROWTH ORIENTED ATTITUDES

Static mind-set	Growth oriented mind-set

5.2 EXERCISE 2- GROUP EXERCISE 1 – THE CHALLENGE OF TEAM WORKING

The chart below lists 5 typical obstacles to team working (a).

- Can you imagine what practical effect they might generate among the members of the team (i.e. what behaviours would the team members enact when such circumstances arise?)?
- What consequences do you foresee in terms of performance of the group?
- Did you ever meet any of these obstacles in your experience of team working? If yes, how did you solve these situations?

In your group, consider these issues and complete the chart.

	a) OBSTACLES	b) EFFECT	c) CONSEQUENCES	d) SOLUTIONS
1	Lack of trust			
2	Fear of confrontation			
3	Absence of commitment			
4	Absence of accountability			
5	Poor focus on goals			

5.2.1 Possible Consequences/Solutions

	OBSTACLE	EFFECT	CONSEQUENCES	SOLUTIONS
1	Lack of trust	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Afraid to communicate honestly and openly - Hide real thoughts and feelings - Less willing to take responsibility - Fear of making mistakes - Defensiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share each other's personal history - Collectively identify a key strength and an area for development of each team member
2	Fear of confrontation	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not engage in constructive debate to overcome disagreements - Muted, indirect and shallow discussion - Don't work through ideas - Low mutual understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise constructive value of conflict - Identify areas of disagreement among team-members and work them through - Clarify purpose and facilitate communications
3	Absence of commitment	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go through the motions - Appear to follow up - Fail to seize opportunities - Poor communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use decision-by-consensus and wrap-up processes - Show no decision is worst outcome - Set deadlines; start with small things - Use scenario planning approach
4	Absence of accountability	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not hold each other to delivering required standards of performance - Lack focus, dissipate energy - let things fall apart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage peer pressure - Make goals and responsibilities clear - Offer team-based awards
5	Poor focus on goals	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pursue personal or departmental agendas - Score ego points - Undermine rivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make public the commitment to achieving team goal and results - Tie rewards to achieving goals - Facilitate better understanding

5.3 EXERCISE 3 - INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – TEAM WORKING IN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION

Think of a team working experience in your own organisation. Assess the quality of team-work in that team by completing the questionnaire below. Next to each behaviour listed in the table below, please indicate whether that happens:

- As a general rule (3)
- Occasionally (2)
- Infrequently (1)

Score	
1	Team members talk about ideas without abandon or reserve
2	Team members point out each other's shortcomings or problems
3	Team members understand each person's task and know how that task adds to the team's work
4	Team members sincerely say they are sorry when they offend each other or inadvertently undercut the team's work
5	Team members give things up to forward the goals of the team, even power, personnel, money or perks
6	Team members freely admit when they have made an error or when they have a weak skill
7	Team members are interesting, not dull
8	After each meeting, team members are sure that they have reached agreement, even after debate, and that everyone has signed on to the mission
9	If the team does not attain its objectives, morale suffers
10	Team meetings tackle critical issues, even if they are difficult to discuss
11	Team members worry about disappointing their team-mates
12	Team members are aware of each other's home lives and talk about them easily
13	Team members wrap up their conversations with firm decisions and actionable tasks to perform
14	Team members question and argue with each other to determine tactics and blueprints
15	Team members freely praise each other, but demur about claiming individual credit

5.3.1 Scoring

Trust		Confrontation		Commitment		Accountability		Focus on goals	
Question	Score	Question	Score	Question	Score	Question	Score	Question	Score
4		1		3		2		5	
6		7		8		11		9	
12		10		13		14		15	
Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:	

The domains identified to assess performance of a team have been here summarised with a) Trust; b) Confrontation; c) Commitment; d) Accountability; e) Focus on goals. You can broadly evaluate the level of performance of the team working experience you have in mind for each domain by looking at the total scores. If you score:

- 8 –9 *OK*
- 6 –7 *Possible problem*
- 3 –5 *Attention required*
- 1- 2 *This aspect needs to be re-thought of within your team*

5.4 EXERCISE 4- GROUP EXERCISE 2 – ENHANCING EQ FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN TEAMS

For each EQ competence below, try to imagine its positive effects on team working and an action/practice that could be useful to develop/enhance such competence.

EQ COMPETENCE	POSITIVE EFFECTS	ACTIONS TO ENHANCE COMPETENCE
1. Self-awareness a) Reading own emotions b) Knowing strengths and limitations c) Self-confidence		
2. Self-management a) Self-control b) Transparency (integrity, honesty, trustworthiness) c) Adaptability d) Search for achievement e) Ready to take initiative f) Optimism		
3. Social awareness a) Empathy b) Organisational awareness c) Sense of service		
4. Social (i.e. relationships) management a) Inspiring b) Influence c) Developing others d) Change catalyst e) Conflict management		

5.4.1 Effects of EQ Competences - Completed Template

EQCOMPETENCE	POSITIVE EFFECTS	ACTIONS TO ENHANCE COMPETENCE
1. Self-awareness a) Reading own emotions b) Knowing strengths and limitations c) Self-confidence	Facilitates intuition; ability to see patterns and connections; implicit learning; sense of what works / doesn't work and what's important / not important; creativity.	--
2. Self-management a) Self-control b) Transparency (integrity, honesty, trustworthiness) c) Adaptability d) Search for achievement e) Ready to take initiative f) Optimism	Able to justify action through reason; encourages trust; controls impulses; can respond quickly and take initiative; creates climate by setting an example.	--
3. Social awareness a) Empathy b) Organisational awareness c) Sense of service	Share wavelength; express messages appropriately; supports diversity; generates sense of purpose and unity.	--
4. Social (i.e. relationships) management a) Inspiring b) Influence c) Developing others d) Change catalyst e) Conflict management	Generates authenticity; gives purpose to friendliness; facilitates focus on what is important; creates climate.	--

6 REFERENCES

Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: the new psychology of success*, Random House

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books

Pedler et al (2010). *A Manager's Guide to Leadership*, Mc Graw-Hill Publishing Company, Berkshire, UK

6.1 FURTHER READINGS

Chernoff, M., Toxic behaviours that push people away from you. Available online at <http://www.marcandangel.com/2014/08/10/12-toxic-behaviors-that-push-people-away-from-you/>