

Case Study: Building Leadership/Followership capacity

What do cooking, serving each other, and living together have to do with growing leadership / followership capabilities in an organisation?

Answer – more than you might realise!

Picture the scene...

A large European manufacturing firm with a factory and head office in the UK (yes, we still have some people who make and build things!)

It's in a turnaround position, and it's investing in its people and technology.

All good so far...

Yet its people are not connecting to solve problems together across the departments and units.

What might be the missing ingredients needed to improve things?

- > A sense of **community**: people have to connect before they trust and work together
- > A helping hand for people to become **authentic** leaders and followers: to be able to do things in their own style, while being aware of their own raw learning edges (self-awareness)
- > A realisation that people have a **significant** role to play, wherever they are: we all matter (as Margaret Heffernan says in her TED talk about super-chickens: https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan)
- > Creating a sense of **excitement**: fun and play in how we learn and solve problems together

This was the brief we created together with the manufacturing firm's People Team on site.

It's quite a risky strategy to merge groups of people who have not worked together before. There's a suspicion between the groups, they may have heard stories about each other – they have two heads! Approach with caution! Don't trust them!

How can you remove these barriers that make it difficult to work with each other, where team members are 'too comfy not to make a personal shift'? To spend a few days together without going on an outward-bound course? (which, let's be honest, is not everyone's cup of tea!)

So...

Leave out the fancy hotel rooms, the restaurants, being looked after by people serving us...

And instead...

If this has piqued your interest, why not get in touch with us to have a chat and explore how we can help your business?



- > Put in requests before the workshop for volunteer cooks, sous chefs, dishwashers, fire stokers, room beautifiers, shoppers etc... and see what happens; no social loafing permitted, everyone can contribute in some way
- > Build in sessions of learning in a non-boardroom environment, using the outdoors wherever possible
- > Get Subject Matter Experts on board and train facilitators from the group to really question, inquire and investigate their strategy for the business going forward
- > Make this happen often enough over a period of months; they have time in between to cement the working relationship back in the factory

Our skill lies in deeply understanding group dynamics, and being able to be a 'calm non-anxious presence' to hold and facilitate this process, while the team members work on their 'stuff'.

It means that we become part of the dynamics and system to steady things, role-model the shifts, and then gently hand back the reins to **everyone** in the team.

Simple to say, not so simple to do, with compassion and humility.

Once the early groups go back to the business and tell their story, the next set of participants can then follow with more ease.

At that point, our job is to get out of their way, and to remain connected enough to only intervene when the system needs it.

It's not everyone's bag to get this 'down and dirty' with people.

But to experience living it and to witness the outcomes... it's so worth it!