

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Team Purpose and Culture
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#team-culture #team-work #goal setting #intragroup openness #brainstorming #decision making #collaboration #define intentions
PHASE	#opening #debrief
SKILL / CONTENT	#evaluation #communication #leadership #big picture #creativity
TIME FRAME	Between 60 and 120; more than 120 minutes;
GROUP SIZE	1-5 / 6-15
FACILITATION LEVEL	Skilled
COMFORT ZONE	Stretch

Introduction

This is an essential process designed to help teams define their purpose (why they exist) and their culture (how they work together to achieve that purpose). Defining these two things will help any team to be more focused and aligned. With support of tangible examples from other companies, the team members work as individuals and a group to codify the way they work together. The goal is a visual manifestation of both the purpose and culture that can be put up in the team's workspace.

This tool is split into two distinct parts, purpose and culture. Both are essential to define for any team. This can be used to generate these from scratch or re-energize an existing purpose and/or culture. Use this workshop to generate a common purpose and stated cultural norms in a team.

Purpose is the reason why your team exists. Why it was formed. Why it is needed in the organisation.

Culture is how your team works together. How you get the job done. And the values, norms and behaviours that are expected.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Pick an online whiteboard tool that allows using large, zooming able canvas.

Steps

1. Kick off the workshop by asking your team members to reflect on these questions:
 - a. *What is our job as a team?*
 - b. *What is our goal? How do we know when we have done our job?*
 - c. *What benefit are we bringing to the company and the world?*
2. This step uses the wisdom of the crowd to develop a broad idea of how your team purpose might be defined. First, share some examples of company purposes. Here are a few, but consider bringing in your favourite examples from within or outside your company. Put them up on the wall so they are visible to team members:

Patagonia - *Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.*

Amazon - *The Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online.*

Greenpeace - *To ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity.*

Facebook - *To give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected.*

Google - *To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.*

Now ask each person write their version of this team's purpose.

In this step you'll combine these individually written purposes to make one for the whole team. It's always a challenge to go from multiple opinions to a collective opinion, and this step may take some patience. The best thing you can do here is to provide constraints. We will use the 20x20 rule for group decision making. Give them no more than 20 minutes to craft a collective team purpose with no more than 20 words.

Do not shy away from word smiting and finessing the language, words are important: words shape worlds.
3. Make sure you give them 10, 5, and 2-minute warnings before their time is up. Often a group will arrive at a collective purpose before the end of the time. You will feel the vibe change in the room when that happens. If so, stop them and move onto Step 4.

Once the purpose has been generated. Take a moment to celebrate.
4. Now you have a collective team purpose. In the next few steps you'll run a similar process for culture. Culture is how your team works together. It is often hard to pin down and define in words, but it's easy to feel and experience. Culture is expressed in the way that people talk to each other, the way that work is assigned and completed, the way that the CEO treats the cleaners. First, share one or more examples of company culture. We recommend flicking through the Netflix Culture deck as a famous and outstanding example of a clearly defined working culture. Explore and find other examples that inspire you.

Now give the team post-its and markers and ask them to write down words that represent the best of your team culture - these can be aspirational or actual - as many as they like. One per post-it.

After 5-10 minutes doing that, get them to lay them out in front of them on the table, wall, or floor.

Give them 1 minute to remove half of their post-its. Leaving them with just the good half. Do the same again but ask them to keep only 3. The 3 most important elements of your team culture.

5. Ask the team to post up their notes on the whiteboard.

As a group, cluster the words that have a similar meaning or feeling behind them. This step can be quite discursive. As a facilitator, it is your job to recognize when the group is off track and bring them round to making a decision. When the clustering is finished, ask if there is anything missing for the team. Did they get rid of any culture elements that they think should be up? If so, get them up there.

6. Now you have a draft of your culture. These words or statements only work if they are brought to life.

You need to explain each one - define what the behaviour looks like when it is being met, and what it looks like when it is not. For example:

TRANSPARENCY

We do work in the open, using collaborative documents that anyone can access and having conversations in open channels that anyone can join.

We are not secretive, we do not talk behind each other's back, and we do not work in isolation.

Either do this collaboratively as a group, or assign culture statements to each person to write.

7. Congratulations, you have articulated your purpose and culture!

Now make huge versions of them and ensure they are visible in your team work space. Revisit this work in 1 month. It should be a living document that shifts and changes as your team changes.

Facilitator's notes: *Even if you are a remote team you should still make your purpose and culture visible. Do this in whatever way suits your working process.*

Tips & Tricks

- If you are not using online whiteboard, we'd recommend using a collaboration tool such as Google Docs to collect the information for each step under a separate heading. Invite everyone into the document but be very clear in regards to editing rights.
- Pre-create your screen deck and screen share this with your participants through your video conferencing software. We would also recommend sharing this so participants can go through the deck again during the reflection steps.
- When facilitating group discussion, we would recommend that participants use non-verbal means to indicate they would like to speak. You can use tools like Zoom's nonverbal feedback tools, a reaction emoji, or just have people put their hands up. The facilitator can then invite that person to talk.

Source

<https://www.sessionlab.com/library?>

