PEOPLE**A2Z**
Advisory 'n Solutions

LEADING
REMOTE & VIRTUAL TEAM

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Leading Virtual/Remote Teams

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Before we begin .. Let us answer this…???

How many of us did a site project without actual/physical meeting before COVID-19 … the answer will be very few, may be in IT Sector

Context Setting

Leading & Managing a remote team is tough, but add to that pressurized conditions, heightened uncertainty and an overall sense of dislocation & job.. it just got even harder….

Covid 19 virus has disrupted & rearranged the workplace with breathtaking speed… In a span of week, the organizations across sectors have sent millions of employee's home to work remotely…

Without warning & without any preparation of any kind the Managers have been thrust into the position of leading a virtual teams, many for the first time…

There is a need to reset expectation for how work gets done and adapt to management & leading style to a new normal….

What do we mean by Virtual Team

A virtual team is a group of employees from different locations that work inter-dependently across time, space & sometime organizational boundaries via technology. Virtual team members can be expected to share information, brainstorm, find solutions and often to produce reports & products

Virtual team communication tools/technologies:

E-mails

Platforms – Zoom/Google/Micro Teams/

Go to Webinar etc.

Gamification as enabler

Teleconferencing

IM/Blogs/Wikis /RSS feed

Other online collaboration websites

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Virtual Team Concept

- Common Goal
- Process & workflow
- Trust
- Management Support
- Mutual Benefit
- Rule of Engagement
- Connecting through Technology

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Common Challenges

- Geographically Dispersed
- Lack of face-to-face supervision
- Lack of access to information & data
- Lack of Trust
- Social Isolation
- Distraction at Home
- Enhance issue with already existing silos
- Confidentially & Data Privacy
- Span of attention
- Technology usage etiquettes

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Technology Challenges

- Learning how to use new technology to foster collaboration and effective team process
- Difficulty to adopt to new practice
- Capturing individual voice/ feelings/ emotions
- Recording agreements & ownership
- Technology or network glitches
- Stable internet connections
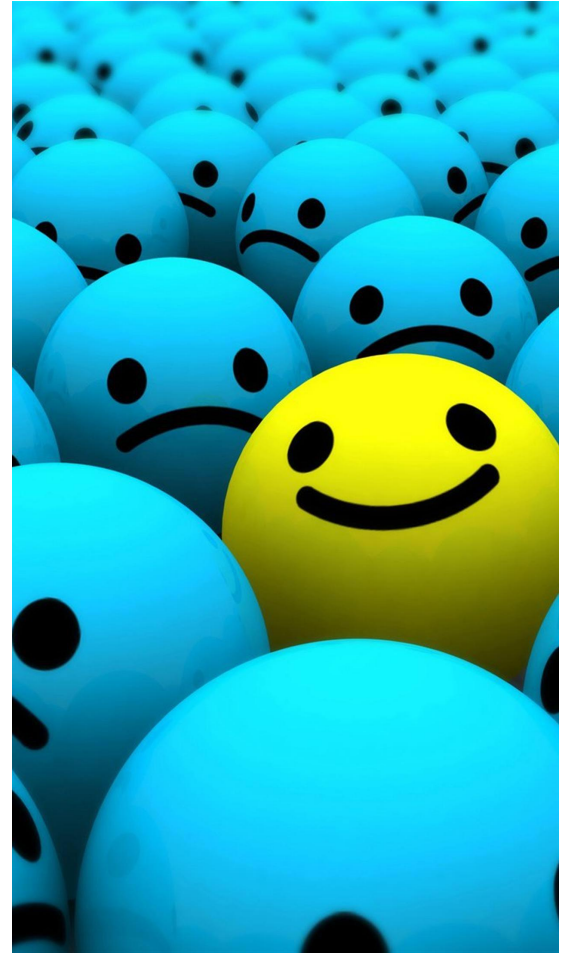
PARTICIPATION IS THE KEY

Leaders

VIRTUAL/REMOTE TEAM
LEADERS ARE **NO** DIFFERENT

LEADERS DON'T EVER QUIT

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5 Basic Essentials for Virtual Leaders

1. Overcome Co-ordination barriers
2. Cross Cultural & Language barriers
3. Trust & Team Cohesion barriers
4. Overcome Members feeling of Isolation
5. Team Engagement

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Etiquettes for Virtual Meetings

1. Be conversant with the software /platform
2. Prepare ahead of virtual meeting to avoid glitches
3. Stick to the timeline
4. Dress Appropriately
5. Have a clear background
6. Try to avoid distractions
7. Know when to speak/Raise hand
8. Speak to the Camera
9. Less use of the keyboard/mouse
10. Less of hand/body movements
11. Have breaks in between meetings
12. Avoid eating/drinking during meeting
13. Leave the group after informing
14. Protect sensitive & confidential information
15. Wrap up professionally

Effective ways to Lead & Manage

1. Re-set your expectations – define the purpose
2. Stay in regular touch & emphasize - schedule daily check ins
3. Support continued learning but keep it short
4. Interpret tone & voice as proxies for face-to-face feedback
5. Model optimism & remove obstacle/fear… to innovate
6. Communicate & update even there is nothing much to add to remove anxieties
7. Take advantage of technology & provide resources
8. Continually gauge the stress & rules of engagement
9. Focus on Outcome & Not on activities – show flexibility
10. Assign buddies & peer Mentors/ Coaches to add a layer of mutual support

TEAM PERFORMANCE MODEL
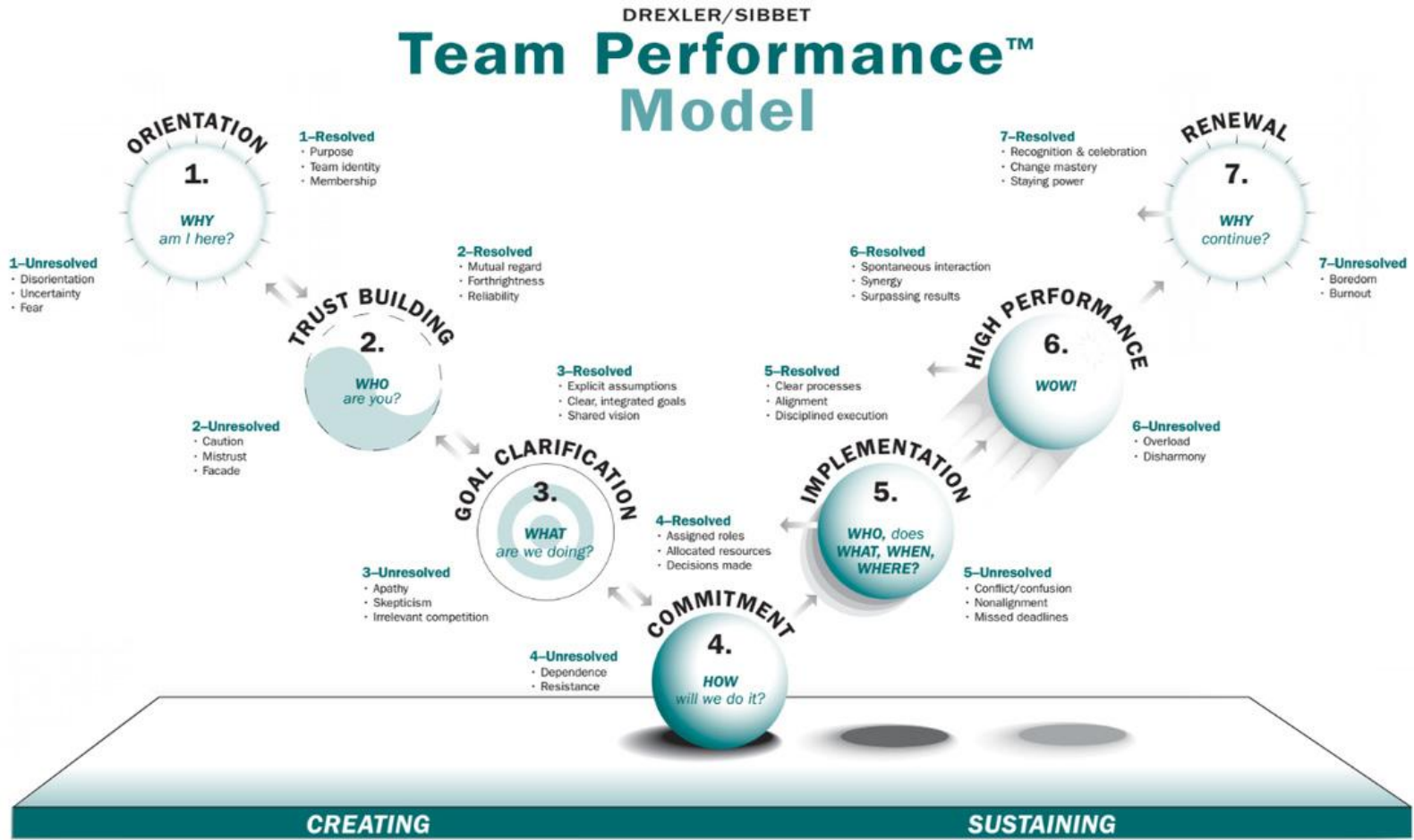
Monitoring Progress

1. Compare what is happening with what was planned
2. Closely examine communications patterns (Asynchronous & Synchronous)
3. Virtual meeting participation
4. Digital Dash Boards
5. Posts in repository
6. Experimentation of Technological means
7. Monitor tools that work & allow flexibility as technology evolves

We need to do our job but HUMAN side is important as well -
Use Empathy

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Benefits & Risks

Benefits:

- Travel cost saving
- Skill based teams
- Ability to work around the clock – Flexibility
- Appreciation of Diversity

Risks:

- Communication delays
- Time Zone issues
- Stress & Fatigue
- Relationship & Trust issues

Tips for the future…

Given the challenges associated with leading a virtual and remote project teams , the pay offs need to be substantial for an organization to embrace this relatively new way of working.

Because virtual teams have access to specialized expertise across geographical boundaries, they are poised to develop better informed creative solutions to complex, often global organization problems

In summary…

Leader's needs to demonstrate the following:

- Focus on People – Energy & Enthusiasm level
- Adaption to Technology – New Normal
- Willingness to unlearn & re-learn
- Agility & Flexibility
- Manage Team Dynamics
- Establish Accountability & Ownership

SUMMARY

WELCOME & EMBRACE THE NEW NORMAL

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