

Team Growth Coaching Building connections



What was the challenge?

The Alliances Portfolio Delivery lead team comprised of nine senior managers with engineering and project management backgrounds. The team was formed within Auckland Transport (AT) just before COVID hit, never really had the opportunity to connect or bond, tending to stick to their silo's.

Six months later the team restructured and although team membership stayed the same, there were changes in role responsibilities, which again impacted capacity to connect.

Why this type of development?

The team leader wanted everyone to feel equal, to work together, collaborate, and learn from each other - role modelling AT's values of connection, togetherness, safety and caring.

The style of team coaching and development I offer, completely tailored to the team and their circumstances, appealed to the leader. The team comprised of seasoned professionals, which plenty of past exposure to development and team building. He wanted something different and was conscious his team would not suffer fools gladly.

The brief:

- Support the team to discover what being a HPT meant for them in their particular circumstances.
- Encouraging openness, trust and collaboration.
- Bring to life AT's values, what they meant for this team and each individual in the team.
- Work in alignment with another staff development initiatives underway focused on the wider Alliances team comprising 80 staff.

What next?

Another restructure is in play, resulting role changes and new functions merging with Alliances and I have been asked to work with the team again. A great illustration that in our VUCA* world the team development journey is never over!

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How did it work?

The engagement began by meeting team members individually, discussing how they liked to work, what motivated them, and what they thought the opportunities for the team were.

Around the same time a HPT* assessment was completed.

I shared themes coming forward with the team, and we collaboratively painted a picture of the future and outlined a team development plan to get there.

Over the next year a series of monthly team development sessions followed, including interventions designed specifically for them.

Early work included: connecting silo's; creating a team charter including agreed norms, purpose, aligning values, and application of team and individual strengths.

Later the team worked on collaborative learning techniques, and building trust and psychological safety.

What happened?

The HPT* assessment was repeated after 12 months with the score increasing from 3.6 to 3.8, out of 5.

Development goals set by the team at the start of the engagement were reviewed and all agreed significant progress has been made.

Engagement scores of the wider Alliances team increased, and stakeholders were being invited to team development sessions – extending the umbrella of intentional collaboration and building trust.

*VUCA = volatile, unpredictable, complex, ambiguous

*HPT = High Performing Team



What was the benefit?

Despite challenging circumstances, we have made progress with our team purpose and boundaries, collaboration, and understanding our strengths better.

Team coaching has enabled us to have the conversations we need to have together, and ultimately this enables us to better deliver what we need to deliver.

Christian Messelyn, General Manager Alliances, AT