

Effective leadership for the Residential Team

Question:

1. What is a great working environment? What are the features of a great working environment (maybe like Google)? What does a perfect working environment look like in a student boarding residence?

2. Of these features, what we can we affect or influence as leaders?

Five Strategies

- Foster a team culture.
- Develop and support each individual in the team.
- Lead from the front.
- Know where you are going.
- Model good behaviour

1. Foster a team culture.

- a) A team culture – a pervasive team culture. An agreement from everyone in the team that teamwork and collaboration are respected and valued. The group is more effective than the sum of its members. We all take part in decisions we all own the decision and the outcomes / good or bad. We value the team and value collaboration. Reward and recognize teamwork.
- b) No lone rangers. No one completely owns a work area or process all by himself. People who own work processes and positions are open and receptive to ideas and input from others on the team.

- c) Form teams to solve real work issues and to improve real work processes.
Provide training in systematic methods so the team expends its energy on the project, not on figuring out how to work together as a team to approach it.
- d) Celebrate team successes publicly. The residence excursion, basketball event, prize night. Get T shirts, hats etc made.
- e) Do things together. Team type activities -regular dinners together, at the end of term. Celebrate milestones or achievements, light hearted fun. Make sure there are fun events and shared occasions.
- f) Team practices. One organization that held a weekly staff meeting, and participants took turns bringing a “fun” ice breaker to the meeting. These activities were limited to ten minutes, but they helped participants laugh together and get to know each other – a small investment in a big time sense of team. We had a post mortem at the end of every term where team members could openly talk about the successes and failures of the term and what we could do next term to have positive change.
- g) Generosity; Creating a team culture of generosity is healthy for the team.
"Research shows that engaging in acts of kindness is associated with greater happiness," she says. While being stressed and in a negative mood puts our bodies into fight-or-flight mode and limits our range of thoughts, making us less effective problem solvers, positive emotions can improve productivity and inspire innovation. In addition, a culture of generosity encourages employees to work collaboratively. It also gives employees a sense that what they are doing is valuable: "Having opportunities to feel they're getting fulfilment through their work and not just a paycheck is increasingly important,"

2. **Develop and support each individual in the team.** If there are too many then make sure your group leaders are developing each individual.

- a) Enabling, supporting each person in the team, so that they feel supported and encouraged, particularly if they are going through personal difficulties. It is not our role as leaders to fix the personal issues of a team member but neither should we ignore these personal issues. There are times when we will need to support, listen and maybe even help out practically. Good leaders should express sincere care and concern for the members of their group both verbally and nonverbally
- b) Encourage and support each team member to develop and acquire leadership qualities. Spend time with each member of the team regularly. Talk about work issues that are affecting them. Talk about their professional development. Encourage professional development, training, further education
- c) Listen and Communicate Effectively. An important characteristic of effective leadership involves a focus on providing one-on-one communication with team members. Develop your own communication skills and keep the lines of communication open with team members.

3. Lead from the front.

- a. Leading from the front. Get down in the trenches with the rest of the team – not just directing from the office where it is safe and not too stressful.
- b. Don't escape the pressure by being absent.

4. Know where you are going.

- a) Have clear expectations and direction for your team members. Make sure direction is clear and unambiguous. Try to avoid constant changes in direction and new and different trends or focus.
- b) Provide inspirational motivation to encourage their team members to get into action. Be genuinely passionate about ideas or goals, helping team

members to feel included in the process and offering recognition, praise and rewards for people's accomplishments.

5. **Model good behaviour** – collaborative process, positive relationships, restorative process. great leaders exemplify the behaviours and characteristics that they encourage in their followers. They walk the walk and talk the talk. As a result, group members admire these leaders and work to emulate these behaviours. If you want to become a better leader, work on modelling the qualities that you would like to see in your team members.

Discussion

How does all of this work in a residential context?

What is it is not working? Someone not doing the right thing? Someone affecting and damaging the team. A team members who cannot or will not change?