

Transcription - Case Study: Team Dynamics When Leadership Changes

Welcome back. I'm Kim Baillie she's Fulyana Orsborn, this is Inside Exec. Today, we have a case study for you. The situation is that we have an organization with the management team and there's been a change in the management team so that the person who was the former boss of the management team is now part of that management team, but not the boss any longer. There is another boss of the management team, so another leader of the team, but the person who has now become part of the team has been a leader for a long time of that team and the team is in the situation where they won't make a decision unless this former leader speaks first.

Okay, well, I think there's two levels we have to work on here. One is between the current leader and the previous leader, a conversation there, one on one has to be had and I'm just guessing in this case study it might be that the person who has been a leader for a long time, well regarded, respected and all of that, and for whatever reason, the arrangements in that organization are they change leaders.

The new leader might still feel that the previous leader is better than them. For whatever reason they like them, they respect them and what they're trying to do is defer to them now. That has to stop because between those two people there must be absolute confidence and respect. So it's going to be a conversation where it says you're the leader and I encourage them to lead without being patronizing, but also kind of say, you know, I trust you, I believe in you as much as you believe in me etcetera without using those words. And so encourage that there's a whole lot of things you can do in that space in regards to the public, that that's going to continue to happen because everybody, including the leader, continues to do it. So I guess one way to encourage or to break the ice is to rotate leadership, to rotate the chairing of meetings.

So with that conversation with the new boss is the current boss say, look how about let's say if you want to change it and make sure that you as the former boss, if you like, don't say anything to the last when you rotate, it's easier for a person to chair. The other thing is to say let's go around the table and get the new boss to say let's go around the table and leave the old boss to last and have everybody else have a say. It will be uncomfortable at first, but at the end of the day, it is important if everybody, which sometimes it can happen, you can do all these things and it sounds really good in theory and it does work by the way after I did and it does work.

But if it didn't for whatever reason, what you could do when they just say yeah, but what do you think? And they're all looking at you is to say nothing and if they then say what do you think?

Just say, oh I think we had enough of me. Don't you reckon? Smile, smile. Can somebody else have a go? I'm just gonna let someone else have a go. I'm always hogging this, take it on as if you caused it and let them do that. Another method is to say It really doesn't matter what I think because it's only one view. We've got the richness of 10 people around the table and that's really what matters.

Why don't we just go and put it under headings and if you've got a whiteboard in the room, just get up but don't say anything, you just transcribe and then get them to speak. This way you're capturing what they're saying, it will not happen immediately and easily. But it becomes the norm and just personally with it because firstly it's good thing that the person noticed it and not happy enough to be the person with all the talking because you get nothing out of that only what you already know, you want to know what other people are thinking, you want to know what they have to add.

But I really would encourage somehow to have the leader, current leader, do these sort of things. It should come from them. And it's actually helpful for that leader because that person seemed to me like more reserved rather than up front leader and that might help them find their space and engage the whole team. They probably bring the team together very well because of their personality and this way their views are equal and not above in a situation, sorry, that is opposite.

Where the leader does all the talking, you'll be talking about different ways by saying, let's have a ground rule and one of the ground rules, there's no rank in the room. We are all equal. I think that that can be incorporated into this situation as well, is to have a meeting that says we're looking for everyone's opinion and at this point in time everyone's opinion is equal because we're all going to have to vote on it and make a decision whatever we're doing.

But I think there's also an opportunity to recognize that there is a transition period. We've talked about leadership transition in lots of other podcasts. You need to recognize that there will be a transition in a change in leadership of that kind. But also that some of it could have been forestalled if there had been pre change activity that happened, because you know that this is a regular occurrence that happens at a certain time of the history of the team that the

leader changes. There could be a bit more sharing of the role, more obvious sharing of the role, so that the changeover is seamless because if you don't do that lead up part of things when the changeover happens, it's a hard line, it's bang this and now it's this and everyone thinks they need to adjust to something different when it might not be very different at all. In terms of process, it shouldn't be very different.

Someone that comes in as a unit leader is not going to change every process on the first day. So the actual activities that happen and the work that gets done is not going to change so much. The transition shouldn't be seen as this hard line in the sand of one thing and the other. It should be seamless. It should be this is what we do. So this is the next phase of what we're doing. But the process of the two individuals involved talking to one another and making it clear to everyone else that they have done that and that the transition, the handover, the physical handover has happened because the conversation has happened, I think would have helped in this particular situation to make it a lot easier.

It's not just, I will say it's not just about physical meetings. It's also about the email meetings and the communication that happens around decisions as well. So we need to be clear. It's the same thing. It's that when the request goes out for votes or opinions or views on something that you make it clear that everyone's in the same position, everyone's got to put in on this, everyone needs to know what you think about this so that we can move forward.

And maybe it's not a situation, you know, there's so much more technology available to us.. Maybe it's not a situation where it's one email follows another follows another, a virtual whiteboard so that everyone has the opportunity to go in and just throw up their ideas without reading anyone else's or reading everyone else's whatever it is. But use the technology to help you in a situation as well, because increasingly that's what's going to keep us moving forward, is bringing the technology into part of what we do. We've taken on all sorts of things in the last 12 months that we would never have considered before in managing our team's and managing workplaces. So just continue doing that. But make it work for you in these situations where you're a bit less comfortable about the process than you might otherwise have been.

Kim there was a new technology that you introduced me to that probably worked for this and I can't articulate it where you send me an update and then Air Table. That one.

Air Table. Thank You. Air Table technology we're talking about. If you share it with your team that gives them all the opportunity to put notes down, to list out the

activities that you're doing, the decisions you're making, processes that you're working through and to have the collaboration on that activity. There's lots of project management tools that are out there that you can do the same thing with. Just in a straight conversation, there's meeting rooms where you can do it. So plenty of choices. Find one that is going to work for everyone. That means that they can throw their opinion up there, their views up there, their thoughts up there without it being a stepping process of one person and then that goes around and then everyone else makes a comment. Cut through the process that isn't working and find one that will.

I think we've covered that as a nice little case study for you. So for now we'll leave it there. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.