Team Mandates

Worksheet

Writing a Team Mandate - Part One
Individual Exercise

To complete, break into groups and work through the questions below.

Goal: To agree a written mandate for regular meetings of the executive team.

What not to discuss at this point:

Structure of the meeting. Detailed agenda. Communication protocols. Reporting processes. Accountability. Attitudes and behaviors during the meeting.

Suggested questions for discussion:

What is the purpose of us meeting together?

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What do we intend to achieve by meeting?

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What must we achieve?

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What can we not achieve in this meeting that we might be tempted to try?

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Is the meeting primarily for decision-making, or information-sharing?

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What authority should the team have?

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Who most benefits from holding this meeting? How do they benefit?

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Additional Thoughts

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Writing a Team Mandate - Part One Team Debrief

Record the findings from the additional groups here.

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Additional Thoughts

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Writing a Team Mandate - Part Two
Individual Exercise

To complete, break into groups and work through the questions below.

Goal: To agree the agenda & structure of the Executive Team meeting.

What not to discuss at this point:

Attitudes and behaviors during the meeting.

Suggested questions for discussion:

What are the non-negotiable agenda items?

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What should we purposely exclude from the agenda?

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What should the default structure be? Physical, virtual, mixed?

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What is the optimal timing of these meetings?

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Who else should be available when needed?

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Who fills each of the VOPS roles?

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Who manages the process?

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What communications should emerge from the meeting?

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To whom, and by whom, are these communications made?

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How will we hold ourselves accountable to execute decisions we make?

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Additional Thoughts

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Writing a Team Mandate - Part Two
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To whom, and by whom, are these communications made?

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Additional Thoughts

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VOPS Tips for Team Mandates

VISIONARY

The Visionary

We all know that Visionaries have a tendency toward over-excitement with possibility and 'new stuff'. One result of this is that sometimes they can hijack a meeting right from the get-go by imposing an overarching goal or topic they 'want us to focus on' - irrespective of whether or not it meets the team mandate. If you are a Visionary with authority over your team, try to avoid this by scheduling 'single topic sessions', outside of the regular meeting cadence.
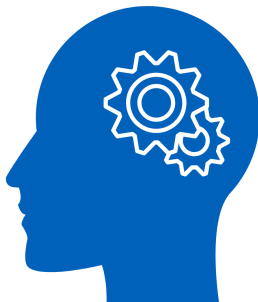
OPERATOR

The Operator

When it comes to adhering to the team mandate, Operators are great assets to a team - assuming they're bought in to the mandate to begin with. If they are, they will police adherence to it pretty strongly, out of self-survival (meetings are already painful to them, and they'll see the mandate as a way to ensure they don't drag on too long or stray too far from the topic). The key, of course, is in ensuring they're bought in to the mandate to begin with.

PROCESSOR

The Processor

Processors are typically also strong supporters of the mandate, and can often tag-team really well with the Operator to make sure the team stays on track. Their challenge is in not shutting down discussion too early because it seems like it might go off track, and in allowing occasional diversions both for the sake of sanity (not everyone can stay on-topic 100% of the time), and because serendipity can sometimes be very fruitful.

SYNERGIST

The Synergist

Usually, Synergists will sit comfortably with the team mandate and work happily within it. Their Achilles' heel is if / when they spot colleagues disengaging, or if the topic under discussion is causing discomfort to a fellow team member. Skilled Synergists will often address such issues gracefully, without disrupting meeting flow, but sometimes they can derail the meeting in an attempt to 'make it ok' for everyone. Learning the use of sidebars and break times to work with others is a key skill here.