

10 leadership challenges and how to overcome them

Working in a team or managing a group of people is something almost everyone will have to do at some point in their career, and that means most people will be familiar with the communication problems and personality clashes that inevitably occur from time to time.

Having worked with some of the world's highest-profile brands, including American Express, IKEA, H&M and the NHS, Mandy Flint and Elisabet Vinberg Hearn have witnessed almost every possible reason for conflict and underperformance in teams. In their latest book, *Leading Teams – 10 Challenges: 10 Solutions*, they have identified and summarised the 10 most common challenges for teamwork and outlined practical steps leaders can take to solve them.





Challenge 1: How do you build trust?

Encourage your team members to talk, and explain to them why it is important to know each other in order to work well together. Disclosure breeds disclosure, leading to greater openness, so you must decide what you are willing and prepared to share. Crucially, make sure you keep your promises.

Challenge 2: How do you overcome conflicts or tensions?

Communication is the key. Bring people together and ask constructive questions so you can see situations from other people's perspectives. It is important to let go of the need to be right, so assume their intent was positive and voice disagreement in a good way. Try to connect up team members' goals so they can see they're pulling in the same direction.

Challenge 3: How do you encourage everyone to share relevant information with each other?

It starts with leaders setting an example and making people aware of the wider effect and the bigger picture. Try creating and running 'sharing PODS' (Power Of Dynamic Sharing) and celebrate successes when it's worked and delivered results.

Challenge 4: How do you create engagement?

Clearly communicate the team's purpose and the role everyone plays in it. It is important to tell people how they are doing, take a genuine interest in each individual, have ongoing discussions about their development and encourage finding



innovative new ways of doing the job. Celebrate success and make it contagious to build team self-esteem.

Challenge 5: How do you create transparency and respect?

Tell the truth and reward others that show the same level of transparency and you can develop an open organisational culture. Leaders are again key role models, so actively reach out to stakeholders to set a positive example.

Challenge 6: How do you encourage long-term thinking?

Many people get too focused on getting things done in the short term, so it is important to strike a balance between short-and long-term reporting. Develop people's ability to think long-term by studying the competition and the marketplace and communicating the overall purpose and the role each individual plays in the bigger picture.

Challenge 7: How do you create a team that delivers and is well perceived?

Success is something that can become a habit. Focus on performance management and ask for feedback to understand the perceptions of others, and you can begin to build your team's brand and reputation.

Challenge 8: How do you get a team to manage change effectively?

Create a strategy and communication plan that

positively reinforces strengths. Outline the change curve, recognising that you are not at the same stage of the change curve as others. Different people are convinced in different ways, so you will need to demonstrate emotional intelligence.

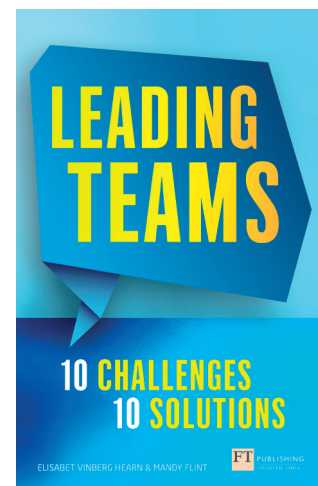
Challenge 9: How do you get people working together 'all for one and one for all'?

Stop gossiping and making assumptions. Highlight reasons for and benefits of the project. It is important to create a culture of "we," so stamp out gossiping and enforce talking respectfully, because the answers to everyone's shared challenges are within the team – you must create a transferable team skillset to overcome them effectively.

Challenge 10: How do you get everyone going in the same direction?

It is a leader's job to create a vision. This common purpose must be grounded and create a link between people for shared responsibility.

Regardless of what team challenges you face, keep this in mind: if you want to achieve real, lasting change, pay particular attention to behaviours (how you implement these solutions). How we behave and conduct ourselves has an impact on others, creating a ripple effect. It's when we change our day-to-day behaviours that we can achieve transformational change. ✎



"LEADING TEAMS – 10 CHALLENGES: 10 SOLUTIONS" BY MANDY FLINT AND ELISABET VINBERG HEARN IS OUT NOW FROM FT PUBLISHING. SEE WWW.LEADINGTEAMSBOOK.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.