

CASE STUDY: PROCTER AND GAMBLE

After 18 years in development and millions invested, Procter and Gamble was in jeopardy of missing a critical launch date of a blockbuster new product. The issue? The 17-person Product Development team was in disarray. Characterized by turf protection, lack of trust, and a silo-mentality, this geographically dispersed team was even unable to agree on the volume of product to be produced by the ship date. Decision-making processes were nebulous at best, and a toxic finger-pointing environment was the norm. After two failed intervention attempts to align this team, Procter and Gamble engaged in a year-long Team Coaching process.

The Team Coaching process began with the deployment of an anonymous 80-item Likert questionnaire followed by 5 open-ended questions. Results of the assessment were then delivered in a live two-day Team Coaching session. This first Team Coaching session consisted of:

- *Creation of a “safe” environment that allowed for unfiltered “straight talk” about the state of the team as surfaced in the team assessment.*
- *Open and creative conversation about the mission, goals and priorities for this team on two levels: the compelling business issues and the dynamics of the team itself.*
- *Development of a “Team Contract” with rules of engagement for times when there is conflict or differences of opinion or approach; communication styles training to increase positivity and decrease negativity and improve collaboration.*

- *Training in listening with a “systems” ear to de-pressurize the environment as the team brings to the surface important underlying issues*
- *Creation of Action Plans and an accountability structures to ensure follow through on the issues uncovered in the session.*

Following this initial Team Coaching session, the team engaged in an ongoing series of live and virtual sessions focused on setting goals, clarifying roles and responsibilities, tracking accountabilities, making decisions, and nurturing strong relationships among the team members. At three different occasions in the year-long coaching process, the team assessment was re-administered as a means to foster the team’s awareness of the environment it was creating to catalyze critical conversations to ensure continuous improvement in the functioning of the team.

Today, the Procter and Gamble team is proud to have met its critical delivery dates, and continues to thrive as it works on the next phase of product development.

Matt McGoff, Technical Program Director describes the impact as follows: “It is hard to describe in one sentence or even one paragraph everything the Team Coaching provided. The Team Coaching was the key to our team gelling. This project had a reputation for operating with a Functional Silo mentality—and people played their parts true to character. With the Team Coaching, the exercises helped everyone view their position on the team through a different set of lenses. We dropped the focus on individuals and began to

focus on the Team. We also aligned on the Common Goal—so that everyone is now pulling for the same end point. Finally, the Team Coaching allowed everyone to clear the air, drop the baggage from previous insults or slights, and start from a clean slate. Without trying to sound too dramatic—I'd credit the Team Coaching as the turning point on this project.”

PROCTER AND GAMBLE TEAM CONTRACT

CREATING A POSITIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT

- *Open, honest communication*
- *No gossip*
- *Go to the person you have an issue with*
- *No filtered honesty*
- *No fear of sharing problems*
- *Ask for help*
- *Seek/listen to understand*
- *Celebrate those who move on; welcome newcomers*

OPERATING WITH INTENT

- *Believe in the strength and capability of team members*
- *Operate with good intent*
- *Assume benign intent*
- *No surprises*
- *Hold up the truth*
- *Think holistically—no turf*

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

- *Actively listen*
- *Seek regular and timely communication*
- *Make scheduled time for building the team (that honors commitments)*
- *Focus the conversation on how we will make the goals happen*

PLANNING THAT LEADS TO ACTION

- *Get clear on the issues*
- *Allow time for data analysis before decisions are made*
- *Joint understanding of how we will get to the goal*
- *Work from data*