

Commitment tool

Introduction

People sometimes say that they are committed to a course of action or decision but they do not demonstrate that commitment.

Use

Use this tool to help you clarify what real commitment looks and feels like in your team. You can use it as a group discussion starter. (Use the questions in the left hand column). You can also use it as a diagnostic. (Use the information in the right hand column).

Topic	Commitment
What is it?	The extent towards which team members buy in to and work toward team goals
Why is it important?	Unless team members are committed to the direction of the team, its goals and each other, it is likely that both team dynamics and team outputs will suffer. Lack of belief in what the team is seeking to do is one of the most common reasons for team failure and can be closely linked to values. Not believing in the team makes it less likely that a team member will be committed.
What are the symptoms that this may be an issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverables do not happen or are delivered late and below standard • Team members nod in agreement/stay silent on issues but do something different/ their own thing • Team members work covertly to undermine decisions • Team members seek to find a way out of the team • No early warning signs that deliverables may not be met • Teams seem to work in cliques • Team members show up late to meetings
Troubleshooting tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If commitment is an issue decide whether it is a result of a lack of skills which have led to frustration and reducing commitment or is it a question of belief and attitude 2) If trying to get ideas, reasons, decisions etc over to a team to get commitment, remember 'E S R A' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain- Explain what the topic is, what the objectives are and why it /they are important • Show- If you are explaining a concept give examples, if you are talking about a skill demonstrate it • Reinforce- emphasize key messages frequently, using a variety of communication media • Advice- Give ongoing advice to team to prompt, nudge and lead in the right direction 3) Develop a team charter (or Price of Team Membership) with commitment as a key ground rule/value which then allows legitimate challenge of inappropriate behaviors. Get the team to articulate what kind of behaviour would demonstrate a high level of commitment.
Tools	Goodstein Cooke and Goodstein, 'Team Orientation and Behavior Inventory' (Pfeiffer) Hardingham and Royal's 'Commitment Charting Tool'