

Willingness vs Ownership

Hi! So today I want to share with you a discovery that I made that's been one of the most important learning points in my career as a corporate trainer. Let me start by telling you a story.

So, there was this one time that I was working with a client who was really struggling to make that transition from a quiet-mousy little team to a strong vibrant-energetic one. And as we had a really deep discussion about it one of the team members, a young lady, a really quiet young lady finally stood up and said, "You know I think the difference is that we are all really willing but nobody really has ownership of the journey!". Now, the minute she said that there was silence as everybody, sort of you know, took a minute to absorb what she said. But what she said turned out to be the turning point in the teams journey.

So today I am going to talk about, "Willingness vs Ownership"! So, John you say, "What's the difference between willingness and ownership?". Well, the difference is small but it's the difference between Good and Great. You see when a team is willing, its not a bad thing. You know, when a team is willing they are working hard, they are following instructions, they are doing what they are told and they are really, really compliant. So, its not a bad thing. However, if they are just willing then they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing for a great team.

See great teams have ownership! What is ownership then you ask? Well, ownership is they are not just working hard, they are thinking hard. They are not just following instructions, they are setting direction. They are not just doing what they are told, they are doing what is needed. So, when a team has got ownership, they really really start to fly.

So, I can hear you guys asking, "How? How do we get the team from being a willing-hardworking team to a team that's got full ownership on the journey that they are on. Well, if you are a manager then there are two questions that you need to answer.

First question is, "Do you have something good to sell?". And when I am talking about something good to sell I am not referring to the products that you are selling. I am referring to the journey itself. Is it interesting? Is it inspiring? What's the meaning? What's the purpose? What's the rationale for that journey? You've got to get that clear.

The second question is you've got to answer as a manager and you have got to be brutally honest about it is, "Are you good at selling it? Have you done a good job telling people what it's about?". This is about communicating, its about articulation, about the ability to, sort of, structure your story really, really well.

The third thing you have got to consider and this is for all you team members out there, "Do you want to buy it?". Cause a lot of times we have discovered

that willingness shifts to ownership only when the individual is willing to make that transition. So, ultimately, it is really up to you!

What I would recommend right now is, if you guys are struggling between willingness and ownership, the easiest and most obvious thing to do right now is to sit down and have a conversation about, "What ownership in your organisation looks like? What are the behaviours that indicate you have full ownership?" Don't let people assume that!

So, if you are leading a team or even if you are just a member of a team, that's working really hard, that's you know, not toxic, its not dysfunctional, there is nothing really wrong with it but is just not flying. You might want to ask the question of wheather we are willing or wheather we have full ownership. And, one of the easiset way to tell is by sitting down and having a conversation and asking people where is it that they really think we are going. Mapping out the behaviours of willingness and ownership sort of heps people make that little tranisition in their mind that says hey maybe it's time we should do something about it.