

## Team Conversation Survey – CASE STUDY

August 2016

### TEAM

A senior Human Resources Leadership Team consisting of 19 professionals in a Fortune 50 company was led by a leader with over 30 years experience. The group's success was dependent on their working with multiple departments in a complex matrix structure.

The team was relatively new in that half of the members had been on the team for less than 12 months at the time of the survey. They had been working with an experienced organizational coach.

### PROBLEM or OPPORTUNITY

The team leader wanted to improve the level of the team's performance, enhance the value provided to their internal customers, and ultimately build a world-class HR organization. She saw the Team Conversation Survey as a way of helping them understand their how best to achieve these goals.

*"We always knew that this was an issue, but until we had the survey results we couldn't get our heads around it"*  
*Team Leader*

### STEPS TAKEN

The coach introduced the survey and its potential value to the HR leader in the context of ongoing team building, and the rationale was explained to her team in order to enlist their support. An email explaining the purpose of the survey, with

the link to the survey was sent to each team member. The team members were given a period of 10 days to complete the survey, which took an average of about 15 minutes per person.

*"The tool is more focused than many tools I've seen . . . it helps the team see where they are and how to take action"*  
*Team Leader*

A report of the survey scores was produced for the coach and the findings discussed with her, together with ways of engaging the team in the results. The leader elected to share the survey results in advance of the workshop and to have her scores highlighted on the report, so that the team could see their distribution of scores in the context of the leader's view.

In a 3-hour workshop that was part of a larger team meeting, the coach introduced the ten constitutive (non discretionary) conversations of teams and then provided a summary of the survey results, highlighting areas of relative strength and weakness.

*"As a result of the survey, our decision-making became more streamlined and efficient. This has been sustained for over a year "*  
*Team Leader*

### CONVERSATIONS

The team initially discussed the results as a group, identified top priorities for action, and then divided into 2 working groups. The members of each working group explored one of the top issues and recommended actions to address their issue. The full team then reviewed the recommendations of the working groups and agreed upon actions, next steps, and specific accountabilities.

### OUTCOMES

The leader felt that the survey provided clear data about the team's current abilities to communicate, work inter-dependently, address conflict, and make decisions.

As a result of the survey data as well as conversations held during and after the meeting, the team implemented more rigorous processes, team standards, and behavioral norms regarding how they worked together and made decisions as a team. Over a year later these improvements have been maintained. The leader is now considering running the survey again to help integrate new team members and take the team to the next level of performance.

*"In working with a team, the survey helps me create a new awareness of team performance, and translate that awareness into new team practices"*  
*Organization Coach*