The 15% Solution Tool

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION:

The 15% Solutions Tool is designed to help a group of people to discover and focus on what each person in the group has the freedom and resources to do now.

By revealing – and sharing – the actions that each member of the group can do immediately (no matter how small), the group will be focusing on what is possible and building momentum. This can make a BIG difference in overcoming fear or feelings of powerlessness and ultimately advancing the work of the group.

This tool encourages everyone to shift their focus away from things that they cannot change and instead to focus on what is within their discretion to do immediately. This tool has been known to help identify solutions that are often distributed widely across the group and are often not known in advance. Benefits of the 15% Solution Tool include:

- Each person’s 15% solution helps to co-create a shared sense of what is possible
- This exercise often leads to BIG things being identified because of the Butterfly Effect

EXERCISE HOW-TO:

Time required: 20 minutes

Instructions:

1. Individually ask each member of the group to answer the following questions:
   - Where do I have the discretion and freedom to act right now that can contribute to addressing our challenge?
   - What can I contribute to help address our issue or opportunity that does not require any additional resources or authority?
   - What is my 15% contribution to our solution?

2. Individuals gather into pairs or triads. Each member is invited to quickly share their ideas (3 min per person)

3. Members of each triad ask clarifying questions and/or offer advice to one another (5-7 minutes per person)

4. Each small group shares the results of their discussion and prioritization with the entire group

EXERCISE DEBRIEF:

Possible debrief questions:

- Are there new possibilities that we can now see because of the synergy between various people’s 15% solutions?
- Can we prioritize the list of 15% solutions using a matrix (ease-difficulty to implement and small-large impact)?
- Will each person commit to implementing at least one of their 15% solution ideas within the next month?

Source: Gareth Morgan in The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures

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