

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

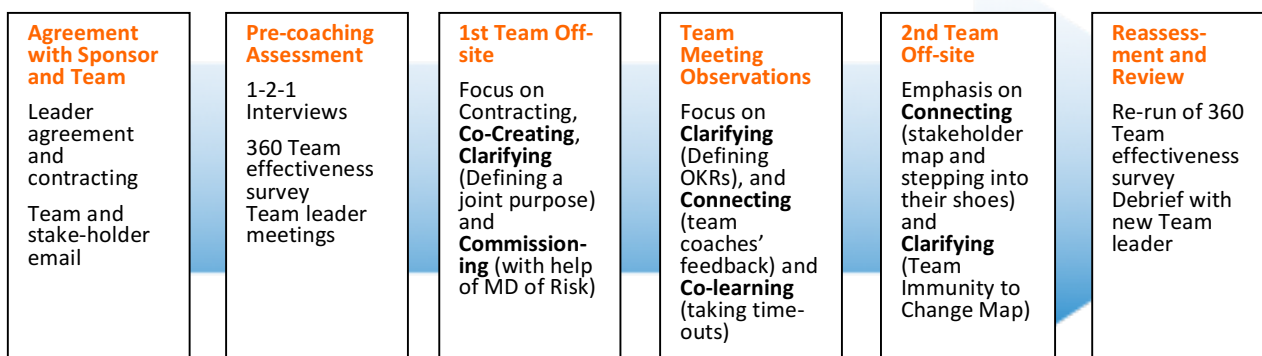
The leadership team for this team coaching intervention is integrated in main business unit of a publicly listed company with 50.000+ staff located in more than 100 countries and looks after one of the fastest areas of growth in the business. Each member of this senior leadership team leads a different product line or geographic area, and supervises direct reports. The team is known for being an innovative and entrepreneurial team. And yet, at the start of the team coaching process, there was a general agreement within the team and amongst stakeholders that the team could achieve more.

The team coaches started the coaching engagement at a time when the team was restructured with roles and interdependencies within the team being redefined by the Team Leader. Essentially the team was becoming a matrix of product leaders (verticals) and regional leaders (horizontal).

As the organisation was moving to this matrix system, the Team Leader saw an opportunity in aligning the team as well as shifting mindsets and mentalities. Objectives for the team coaching were defined as:

- ✓ Develop and/or clarify a team identity
- ✓ Develop a sense of purpose
- ✓ Raise the team's profile
- ✓ Increase collaboration and mutuality within the team
- ✓ Consolidate performance through pro-active innovation and design
- ✓ Engage more effectively with key stakeholders

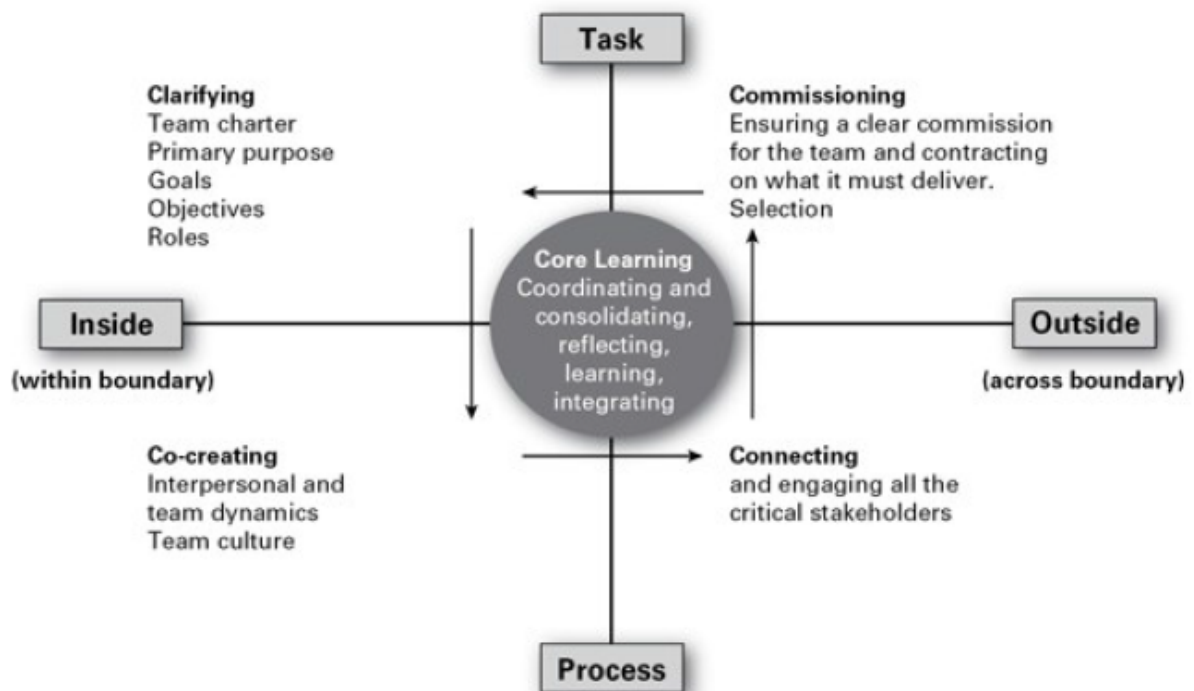
The coaching team set out the following process over a 9-month team coaching intervention:



The Systemic Team Effectiveness 360 survey used provided insights into the team's performance by addressing both internal dynamics and external relationship with stakeholders. The coaching team focused primarily on internal team dynamics (Co-Creating, Clarifying) during the earlier stages of the coaching engagement and gradually moved to a more outward focus (Connecting) in the latter

stages of our work. The terms in bold in the chart above are the five disciplines used in Peter Hawkins' book 'Leadership Team Coaching' (Fig 1).

Fig 1.



The following are the key areas that were addressed:

➤ **Aligning team members with each other and developing relationships within the team**

The team coaches invited team members to explore and define what the team can *uniquely* deliver together within their new structure. The challenge was not just to define goals but really to focus on the specific strengths, value-add and ambitions of this particular group.

The team also developed its level of internal collaboration and mutual support to build the way forward by spending time acknowledging joint achievements and some challenges inherited from its history. While the team readily managed to let go of many internal challenges, frustrations vis-à-vis external stakeholders surfaced as inhibitors and were addressed in the final stages of the coaching.

➤ **Fostering relationships with key stakeholders**

As the team's relationships with stakeholders gradually appeared as a key stumbling block to the team's performance, the team coaches decided to bring stakeholders 'into the room'. We clarified who key stakeholders were. Then, rather than invite real stakeholders, we asked each team member

to represent one stakeholder in turn and to express, as that stakeholder, a high and a low point of working with the team over the past 6 months. This appeared like a watershed moment where team members deepened their understanding of the stumbling blocks and managed to see the part they played.

As the team was being restructured following the completion of the coaching, it is unfortunately difficult to measure the benefits of the coaching in relation to stakeholder relationships.

➤ **Growing through disagreement**

Team members were very polite to each other. Some seemed to perceive disagreement as a team dysfunction. The team coaches worked on changing this belief, demonstrating the richness of supportive disagreement and challenging the team to use disagreement as a way to harness and make the most of their diversity.

**The Coaching Team**

The coaching team was a partnership between an internal Performance & Development Coach and an independent Executive Coach. Both brought a wealth and variety of complementary coaching experiences. The team coaching was helped by the internal coach's connections, experience, knowledge and buy-in, as well as the external view and the fact that the external coach was less influenced by organisational beliefs and the hierarchical culture. Supported by the organisational insights provided on an on-going basis and in real-time by her coaching partner, the external coach could work effectively as the supportive challenger.

Here is a **selection of feedback** received from the team which validates some of the above observations:

- 'I believe the impartial observation on some of our actions was really important and thought provoking. In a sense, and with hindsight, I think perhaps more interventions would have been beneficial.'
- 'Thank you for your help and that last session although unexpected did at least present some very unique opportunities which I felt we responded to well as a team.'
- A team member described his experience during the first team off-site as 'transformational'.