

A Systemic Shift Towards Sustainable Impact

Client Success Story

Client Profile

A leadership team from a non-profit organization in the environmental education sector sought to increase their team's effectiveness and amplify their impact. Although the team had a clear organizational purpose and values, they recognized a need to improve their cohesiveness and morale. The team excelled at engaging stakeholders but recognized the need for stronger internal alignment to maximize their future impact.

Challenge

The team faced resource constraints and instability in their sector, creating stress and overwhelm. The team faced a disbalance between short-term pressures and the long term strategic goals undermining fundraising and organizational sustainability. The day-to-day firefighting often overshadowed team cohesion, leading to misunderstandings and misalignment on roles, priorities, and accountability. The team leader was overwhelmed, constantly leaned upon by others, and needed support in redistributing leadership responsibilities.

Approach

To address the team's challenges, Fenneke implemented a structured team coaching engagement, encompassing seven team coaching sessions. The approach grouped into three main areas: assessing team dynamics, developing key team skills, and creating sustainable change.

1. Assessing Team Strengths

Fenneke began by gaining a deep understanding of the team's current state. This was accomplished through individual interviews, an online survey and the High Value Creating Team Questionnaire to gather quantitative insights on team effectiveness and identify areas of strength and improvement. A "current state vs. desired future state" exercise helped the team reflect on where they were versus where they wanted to be, both individually and collectively.

2. Developing Key Team Skills

The coaching sessions focused on enhancing core team skills to improve collaboration, communication, and accountability. Clarifying roles and workstyles helped team members better understand their individual and collective contributions to the team's success. Communication was improved with skills for accountability, empathetic listening and transparent exchanges, while conflict resolution strategies enabled the team to navigate misunderstandings and stress, fostering a culture of openness and collaboration. A leadership exploration allowed the team to explore leading from the front, middle, and back.

3. Creating Sustainable Change

To ensure that the improvements would endure beyond the coaching engagement, Fenneke focused on creating actionable, long-term change with the team. To track progress and ensure alignment with the team's strategic priorities, SMART goals and KPIs were defined with the team. A team sculpt exercise was facilitated to visualize the team's readiness for future challenges. Shared practices were established with clear start/stop/continue actions to guide how the team would operate moving forward. And "Champions" were appointed to sustain coaching outcomes, ensuring accountability beyond the engagement.

The Results

By the end of the coaching engagement, the team saw significant improvements in team dynamics, had improved organizational effectiveness and sustainable leadership development. The coaching engagement led to significant improvements in team dynamics, creating a more cohesive, collaborative, and engaged leadership team. Communication became more open and transparent, reducing misunderstandings and fostering a culture of trust. With greater psychological safety, team members became more proactive in seeking support from one another, leading to stronger collaboration and a shared sense of responsibility. This shift in team culture not only improved morale but also reinforced a collective commitment to the organization's purpose.

Beyond team dynamics, the coaching process enhanced organizational effectiveness by aligning the team's ways of working with strategic priorities. Clearly defined roles, SMART goals and KPI's for ongoing progress helped streamline decision-making and increase accountability, ensuring that daily operations were more efficient and prioritizing fundraising efforts. A refined meeting structure provided the necessary framework to maintain alignment and track progress while creating time for strategic and visionary work. These improvements reduced operational friction, allowing the organization to maximize its resources and scale its impact.

To sustain these changes, the coaching engagement also strengthened leadership development, ensuring long-term success. Team members felt empowered to take ownership of key initiatives, reducing over-reliance on a single leader and building a culture of shared responsibility. Champions ensured maintaining momentum, reinforcing accountability and embedding a culture of continuous improvement.

By integrating the Systemic Team Coaching approach, this engagement not only improved internal team effectiveness but also strengthened the organization's ability to create lasting external impact. The team is now better equipped to lead with confidence, engage stakeholders effectively, and work collaboratively towards their shared purpose of environmental education and advocacy.

"Fenneke's coaching created time and space for honest communication and allowed us to share things we wouldn't normally share. We learned each other's communication and working styles, establishing a strong foundation of trust and open communication. We are now a cohesive, happy team with the tools to communicate effectively and work together to make the world a better place."

Executive Director