

Karen Mathews & Associates Newsletter

Team Problem Solving

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In this edition of Intentional Leadership we will be exploring the structure of team problem solving and decision making. This topic is about intentionally leading a team through the process of arriving at the best solutions within a structure that can effectively support that process.

"One's destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things."

- Henry Miller

Your Tips are Welcomed!

Do you have a tip to share regarding intention and/or leadership? Send us what has worked for you and we'll publish one tip per month.



Karen Mathews and Associates can help.

Is your business ready for better results? Contact Karen Mathews & Associates to find out how we can help take your leadership and company to the next level. Call 408-988-2361 or email us by [clicking here](#).

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• **Team Problem Solving (Read Time: 4 minutes)**

As with most of today's leaders you probably have the good fortune of having very bright, well educated and capable team members. That's the good news. The difficulties that arise with that benefit is many times these employees, whether they are managers or individual contributors, believe that they have the best solutions. On one end of the spectrum they passionately argue their strong opinions, are inflexible in hearing other options and unwilling to compromise. At the other end, they offer their suggestions, listen politely but secretly remain attached to their point of view while they go along with the dominant team member's opinion, afraid to risk dissenting, but don't really commit to their solution.

Neither of these behaviors gets the team to the best productive solutions. It's likely that you have seen this at some point in your career. I remember hearing from a witness that I consider to be honest and not taken to exaggeration of a manager so passionately engaged in disagreement with the remainder of the management team that he banged his shoe on the conference table to emphasize the strength of his opinion. It was explained to me that he was from New Jersey and so this "in your face" behavior was tolerated. How scary is that?

What can you do to be intentional and lead your team to

something is done, for example, it is useful to just say so and allow the others who do have considerations to find a compromise. It is easier to arrive at a compromise with fewer opinions.

In addition, the format of the meetings – the meeting room, using an agenda, facilitator, attendees, ground rules etc. should be consistent every time so that the participants are clear about the expectations for the purpose and anticipated outcome of the meeting. I also recommend that the team be cognizant about how much time should be spent on discussion of a topic. This allows the team to have consideration of the value of time compared to the import of the topic being decided upon.

Do you have time critical decisions to make with your team? Having a trained facilitator is an enormous support for teams so that all members may contribute and not have the added burden of leading, facilitating and participating. Assist your team and secure your investment of time and money in your decision making with a trained facilitator from Karen Mathews & Associates. We are available to facilitate meetings, off-sites and retreats where leadership and other teams come together to set goals or make decisions. Contact us via email [by clicking here](#) or phone us at 408-988-2361.

In the April newsletter we will discuss intentional trust building.

Thank you for reading and I hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Please feel free to pass it onto your friends and colleagues. We never intend to spam anyone, if you would like to opt out please click on "SafeUnsubscribe" at the bottom of the page.

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• Team Problem Solving Tip (Read Time: 1 minute)

Intentionally building trust in the workplace is one of the most significant actions a leader can take to increase team effectiveness. This is done by displaying predictable behaviors to your team members over time. Studies reveal that employees report they are less stressed and more confident with a boss who is tough but consistent, meaning they know where they stand and what to expect rather than a boss who is congenial all the time but unpredictable in her/his decisions and policies.

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