Leading with Purpose:
Building Communities that Thrive

Leading with Purpose:

Leading with purpose means that we not only know our mission, but we also align our goals, meetings, and projects with it. This way, all council members and the community at large also know our mission and can share the "why" of our existence. This process creates lasting change and builds our impact story. The impact happens when we share our story and the excitement for our purpose grows.

Leading Effective Meetings

There are numerous types of meetings. It is not a one-size-fits all model. Meetings can be virtual, in-person, or hybrid. When preparing for meetings, there are a few crucial steps. Ensure attendees know the purpose or objective of the meeting, connect the steps to long term goals, and keep in mind what you want to get out of the meeting.

Meetings have different purposes. They are:

- To solve a problem
- To make a decision
- To brainstorm ideas and solutions

When closing meetings, always review the commitments made by team members during the meeting and any decisions made by the group. Agree on*, by whom, and when* decisions will be communicated to the rest of the council and the community. Identify the best delivery method and the content of the message, as well.

Business vs Coalition

Businesses and coalitions have some common goals but there are certainly things that are unique about them both as well. One important distinction to make is that we are not selling a product or service; we are seeking buy-in from our partners so they can receive our free services. However, since there are similarities, a coalition must operate similarly to a business in many ways.

There are some similarities and differences between businesses and coalitions, as illustrated in the table below:

BUSINESS	COALITION
Forecasts future cash needs	Forecasts future cash needs
Builds equity to sustain operations	Builds revenue to sustain mission
Sells a product/service	Offers a product/service for free
Generates income	Fulfills mission
Accountable to customers	Accountable to funders and community

Building Strong Coalitions

As a coalition, we are offering things to a community. We must keep asking ourselves how we, as a coalition, can run in a sustainable way to continue our mission of helping others. How do folks in the community access information about the coalition? What is your mission? Are you sharing your coalition's story and mission? Once you have done that, you are on your way to creating lasting change in a community. Keep sharing that story.

Coalition Positioning

There are many things to consider when positioning your coalition.

Here is a review below:



Identify the niche: Figure out what your coalition is going to do and what resources are already available in your community.

Create infrastructure: Address things such as policies & procedures, bylaws, written job descriptions, organizational chart, accounting system, mission statement, logic model, evaluation plan, strategic plan, and state charter.

Tell your story: Make sure to give a great elevator speech for your coalition!

Brand your image: Make your coalition memorable and recognizable

Be accountable: After you make your request, follow through! And document everything!

Leadership in Coalition Operations

Coalition Operations

A coalition needs to plan for any situation. By considering all of the facets of Coalition Operations, a coalition can prepare itself to be sustainable in the long term. Sustainability is one of the most important facets to consider in Coalition Operations.

There are many facets in coalition operations. These include the following:

- Clear mission and vision
- Strong leadership and governance
- Effective communication
- Collaborative culture
- Strategic planning and execution
- Resource management
- Capacity building
- Stakeholder engagement
- Data-driven decision making
- Sustainability planning

When deciding upon an event or for a coalition, you must consider if they align with the mission and vision statement of the coalition.

When deciding upon a strategy for a coalition, you must consider if the data aligns and supports the strategy being put in place.

Financial reporting and monitoring, program reporting and monitoring, and separation of duties also should be considered in coalition operations.

Leadership Styles

There are many types of leadership styles. However, this isn't one leadership style that fits every team.

These styles include, but are not limited to, the following:

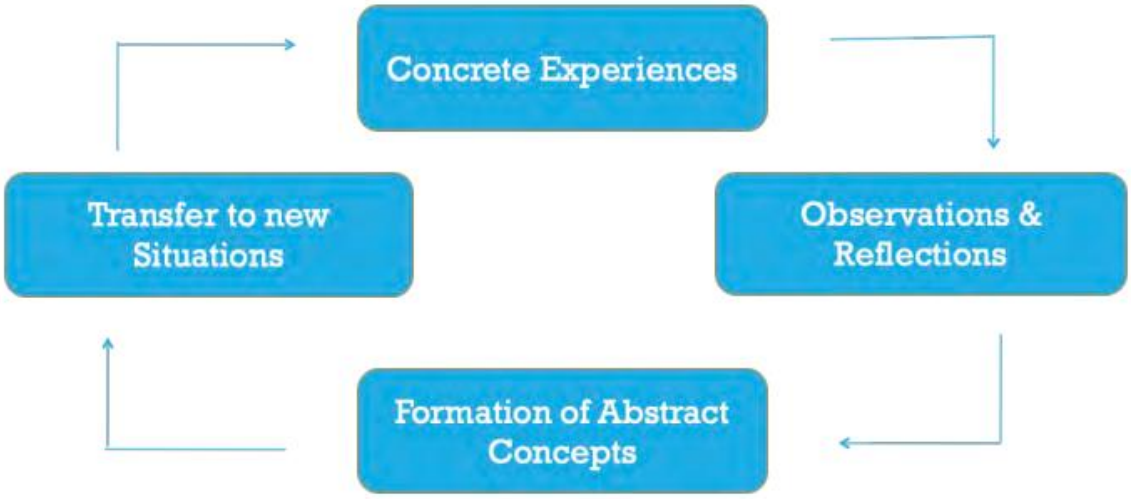
Laissez-Faire	Empowers members, may delegate decision-making authority to team members
Transactional	Establishes performance metrics and rewards team members for meeting milestones; operates on rewards and punishments
Interactional	Fosters regular interactions with key stakeholders to gather feedback, ensuring that their expectations align with project outcomes
Servant	May actively seek to understand and address the needs of team members, creating a positive environment
Charismatic	Articulates a compelling vision for the project, rallying the team around the coalition's goals and values
Transformational	Drives positive change and encourages team members to innovatively, fostering a culture of improvement

Team Building

Team Building

Team building is essential. It helps teams reconnect and regroup. It also can help team members take what they have learned and use it in their field. Team building can be as complicated as the Color Game or an obstacle course or as simple as ice breakers like 2 Truths and a Lie.

With the Experiential Learning Cycle, we can bring together team building with our work.



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is a scientifically proven cycle we use when learning something new. This also applies to team building activities.

Concrete Experience: Engaging in an activity or experience

Observations & Reflections: Reflecting on the activity or experience

Active Experimentation: Trying out and testing new skills and abilities

Abstract Conceptualism: Gaining knowledge or skills from the experience

What happened in the activity? What can we learn from what occurred? Now, how can we use this in our community? Those are all questions we should ask ourselves as we reflect.

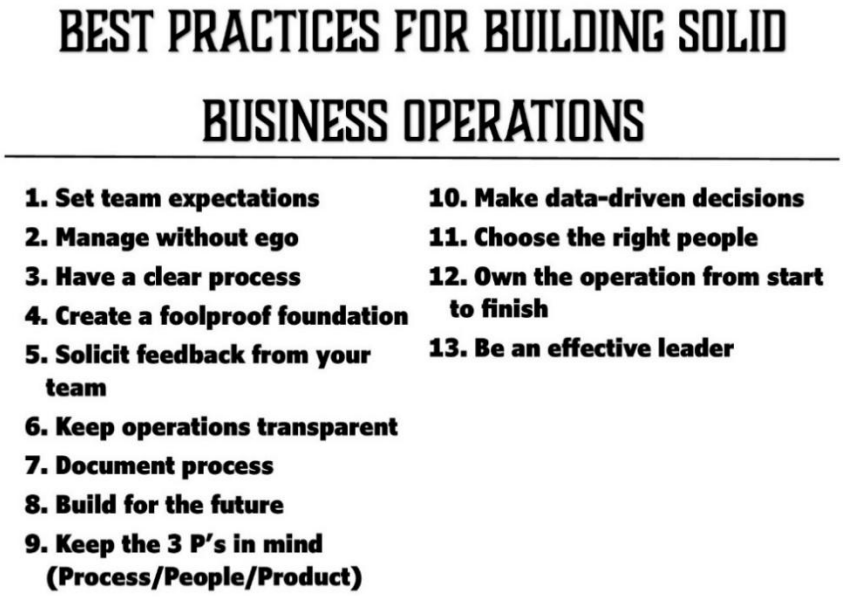
Not everyone loves team building, but it is a challenge by choice. Hopefully everyone leaves team building feeling a bit better and a bit more connected. It helps us build trust with those around us.

Best Practices

Best Practices for Building Solid Business Operations

While a coalition and business are different things, they do have to run similarly to a business. These practices help coalitions to be sustainable and impactful in the long term.

Here are some best practices to consider.



Leading with purpose is more than just a leadership philosophy—it's a transformative approach that drives both individual and organizational success. By aligning actions with a clear, meaningful mission, leaders inspire greater motivation, commitment, and trust among their teams. Purpose-driven leadership fosters a sense of direction and belonging, enabling organizations to navigate challenges with resilience and innovation. As we've seen, leaders who consistently articulate and live by a strong sense of purpose can cultivate an environment that not only promotes productivity but also enhances well-being and long-term success. Embracing this model allows leaders to create lasting, positive change—shaping organizations and communities that thrive on shared values and a common vision.

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