

 Leadership Checklist

POSSIBILITY

The following exercises are designed to guide and support you in keeping possibility alive and well in your decision making and leadership conduct.

Keeping Possibility Alive

I. Possibility Team

Each year, appoint a “possibility team” to come up with an innovative product, project, or operational change for your organization. Make it an honor to be on the team, and give the results exposure. Publicly recognize the new ideas that they contribute to the future well-being of the organization.

II. Back to Kindergarten

Go and speak to a kindergarten class. Ask the students what they want to do when they grow up or what their greatest wish is. You will witness possibility in its pure form. Take a little of the kindergartener back to work with you.

III. Think Different

Put something in your office that reminds you of possibility, like a picture or a quote that inspires you. For me, it’s a black-and-white photo of Amelia Earhart with a caption that says “Think different.” Do the same for your organization as a whole: post inspirational posters or quotes all around. Make sure they reflect the culture of the organization.

IV. Create the Right Atmosphere

The next time you have a meeting to discuss an issue that is difficult to resolve, start off with a brainstorming exercise like the one below. Encourage a free flow of ideas and possibilities:

1. Divide the group into small teams, making sure to pair people of divergent interests and opinions. Give the teams fifteen minutes to come up with five possible solutions with no qualifiers (fifteen minutes is enough time to be creative but not enough time to be overly analytical).

2. Instruct each team to present their five possibilities.
List all the possibilities on a whiteboard.
3. Have the whole group choose three.
4. Divide into three larger teams and task each with analyzing one of the three chosen solutions, including its pros and cons, benefits and costs, and time and resources and to come up with recommendations.
5. Hold another meeting, present and discuss these possibilities.
Seek consensus on a course of action.

V. Step Away

Consider whether you need to lift yourself out of your routine and clear your head by stepping away from analyses, opinions, and reports. If so, commit to taking a trip, attending a retreat, going on a hike, finding solitude, or stepping into a whole new world.

POSSIBILITY THINKING NEEDS SPACE IN A BUSY BRAIN—MAKE ROOM FOR IT.