

Team Purpose Discovery Workshop Guide

In today's complex organizational environment, teams that operate with a clear, shared purpose consistently outperform those without one. The Team Purpose Discovery Workshop Guide provides leaders with a structured approach to uncover and articulate what truly matters to their team. This collaborative process moves beyond generic mission statements to create a purpose that resonates emotionally, provides practical direction, and aligns with organizational objectives. By investing in this foundational work, leaders establish a north star that guides decision-making, enhances team cohesion, and creates meaningful connection to daily work.

Author

This tool was developed by Michelle Watson-Grant.

Goal

This tool helps leaders and teams uncover or refine their collective purpose that aligns with the organization's mission while engaging team members meaningfully in the process.

Advice

- Schedule at least 2 hours in a comfortable, distraction-free environment
- Position this as a collaborative opportunity, not a top-down exercise
- Consider using an external facilitator if team dynamics are challenging
- Pre-distribute reflection questions to maximize in-person discussion time

How to Use the Tool

- Preparation (1-2 weeks before) - Send the pre-workshop reflection questions to all participants.
- Gather organizational mission/vision statements and/or strategic plans.
- Prepare a space with whiteboard, sticky notes, and markers.
- Facilitate the Purpose session.
- Follow-up (1 week after) - Distribute refined purpose statement and collect additional feedback, using Testing Questions.
- Finalize and ceremonially "launch" the purpose.

Pre-Workshop Reflection Questions

1. What makes you most proud about the work we do?
2. How would you explain the value of our team to someone outside the organization?
3. What impact do you believe we should be making that we aren't currently?
4. If our team ceased to exist tomorrow, what would the organization lose?
5. What motivates you personally about our work?

Facilitator's Agenda: Co-creating Team Purpose

Team: _____

Date & Time: _____

Intended Outcome: Collaboratively create a team purpose statement.

Timing (2 hrs)	What	Why	How
10 min.	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Quote: “The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.” – Mitch Albom</p> <p>Discussion: What does this quote mean to you in the context of our team?</p>	<p><i>To strengthen community and cultivate connectedness</i></p>	<p>Whole group discussion</p>
5 min.	<p>Setting the Context</p> <p>Purpose of the Meeting: Explain the purpose of the meeting and connect the quote to team purpose.</p> <p>Agenda Overview: Briefly outline the agenda and the flow of the meeting.</p> <p>Agreements: Establish ground rules for productive dialogue</p>	<p><i>To establish psychological safety and set expectations for the session</i></p>	<p>Facilitator sharing</p>

Timing	What	Why	How
15 min.	Individual Purpose Reflection Write responses to these prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our team exists to... • We're at our best when we... • The unique value we provide is... • Five years from now, our greatest accomplishment will be... 	<i>To surface personal perspectives before group influence occurs</i>	Individual Written Reflection
20 min.	Purpose Discussion Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What common themes emerged from individual reflections? • What surprised you about others' perspectives? • What elements feel essential to include in our purpose? 	<i>To deepen understanding through dialogue and begin synthesizing ideas</i>	Small Group Discussion
30 min.	Purpose Elements Brainstorm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate key words/phrases that should be in the purpose statement • Cluster similar ideas • Vote on the most important elements (each person gets 5 votes) 	<i>To democratically identify the core components of team purpose</i>	Whole group activity using sticky notes on wall/board

Timing	What	Why	How
30 min.	<p>Draft Statement Creation</p> <p>Our team exists to [primary function] for [stakeholders] by [key activities] so that [impact].</p>	<i>To transform conceptual elements into concrete language</i>	Small group work with template
5 min.	<p>Q&A</p> <p>What questions or comments do you have?</p>	<i>To clarify wonderings and deepen understanding</i>	Whole Group Discussion
5 min.	<p>Closing & Next Steps</p> <p>How would you like to conclude the meeting? (e.g., gratitude, kudos, summary of key points, etc.)</p> <p>Share next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up (1 week after) - Distribute refined purpose statement and collect additional feedback, using Testing Questions. Finalize and ceremonially "launch" the purpose. 	<i>To strengthen community and clarify next steps</i>	<p>Whole Group Discussion</p> <p>Facilitator closing</p>

Post-Workshop Team Purpose Statement Testing Questions

1. Is it memorable? (Can people recall it easily?)
2. Is it meaningful? (Does it inspire and guide decision-making?)
3. Is it unique? (Could this apply to any team, or just ours?)
4. Is it authentic? (Does it reflect who we truly are and aspire to be?)
5. Is it action-oriented? (Does it help us know what to do and not do?)