

# Team Growth Coaching Creating a buzz



## What was the challenge?

The Creative team's remit was providing creative advertising and design related functions for Auckland Transport. Chris was appointed Creative Director and led the team. Chris and team members were talented and energetic, yet delivery timeframes weren't meeting expectations.

In addition to leading a team, Chris's was expected to be an intentional disruptor within the organisation, adding creative and diverse thinking to an otherwise risk averse and process focused culture. Yet, a lot of Chris's time was occupied with people and process issues, and administration.

Unless something changed, the Creative team would lose credibility and their remit would not be met.

## Why this type of development?

More traditional development approaches such as leadership courses and team building events, although useful, were unlikely to get much traction in this situation, with hyper-innovative characters. The team, and Chris, needed a focused relationship-based approach, and support with applying practical new approaches on a day-to-day BAU basis.

Anna, Chris's boss, thought I was a good fit, as everything I do is tailored to the specific needs of leaders and teams I work with. I was also a good match for the team's energy and use of creative tools and methodologies.

## What was the benefit?

We needed to rebuild the team culture to one that was high performing, aligned and supportive, allowing the team to thrive, and ultimately do what they do best - amazing creative work. After initial hesitation from some, the team responded and became more courageous, collaborative and curious. I saw a real shift in thinking and energy and their value being recognised across the business.

**Anna Lawrence, General Manager Brand, Marketing & Customer Engagement, AT**

## How did it work?

Anna, Chris and I agreed an approach involving one-to-one coaching with Chris over several months. In parallel I worked collectively with senior members of the Creative team, a sub-group of the wider team, involving 5 key people.

The rationale for focusing on senior team members was carefully considered. They had significant influence on the rest of the team, mentored more junior staff, and were visible across other parts of the organisation, building stakeholder relationships. The Senior staff members also had the capability, talent and life experience to support Chris and share leadership.

## What happened?

Initially – resistance! Senior team members were suspicious of why I was there and in their eyes, the case for change was weak.

Over several team coaching sessions trust and psychological safety improved. We talked about expectations of Chris versus reality, work delivery and process, and ways senior team members could support Chris. The team experimented with different ways of collaborating, and embedded new routines that worked. Time was invested understanding strengths, appreciating diversity, and understanding what each team member could contribute.

A few months later – positive change was evident! The senior team was more collaborative, Chris delegated more, and delivery improved. A team member said "it felt like we were given permission" to contribute and share leadership. The Creative team was buzzing!

Chris continues to work on delegation and priorities. However, one of the most noticeable shifts has been the change in Chris's mindset. The burden of team success is not his alone – it's shared!

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