

Software for Our Minds

Patterns and Anti-patterns for creating and maintaining a shared vision.

Team and Team Building

- **Team = Product** is a core philosophy that says:
 - The behavior of the team directly maps to the qualities of its work product, and vice versa.
 - If we want a work product with certain characteristics, we must ensure that the team has those characteristics before the work product is developed.

Building Teams Through Coaches

- ❑ Coaching teams is a critical success factor for our “self directed” management style
- ❑ Having coaches that understanding the core process of “teaming” and “team building” is the starting point.
- ❑ This was poorly understood in the first round of “team building.”

This Presentation ...

- ❑ Is abstracted from Jim and Michelle McCarthy's book *Software for Your Head: Core Protocols for Creating and Maintaining Shared Vision*.
- ❑ Is edited to fit the **CH2MHILL** Strategy and IT Leadership process.
- ❑ Puts forward a "new" idea that may take some time to absorb.
- ❑ Is one approach to moving forward into the world of "commercial best practices," but also one that has proven successful at the McCarthy's former employer - Microsoft

Patterns and Anti-Patterns

- **Pattern** – describes solutions that yield desirable results.
 - Patterns are a means of transmitting solutions to common problems.
 - The pattern is not the solution, it is the means to the solution.
- **Anti-pattern** – describes solutions that yield undesirable results.
 - Anti-patterns are conventional wisdom, coded as the opposite folly.
 - Anti-patterns have *False Solutions*, but the *Actual Solutions* are more difficult to implement.

Meeting Management

Never do anything dumb on purpose.

Meeting Check-In

Problem

- Our results are unsatisfying.

Solution

- Publicly commit to rational behavior and efficiently disclose our feelings at work.

Meeting Check-Out

Problem

- When we can't be mentally present, we stay in a meeting anyway, regardless of the cost to our false presence to our self and our team

Solution

- When we are not contributing, we must leave the environment without distracting our teammates.

Passer

Problem

- We “go along” with group activities that we don’t believe in, with increasing cynicism and a sense of powerlessness for our self and our team.

Solution

- Explicitly decline to participate when we don’t want to do something productive.

Connection

Problem

- Others have desirable qualities that we lack, and vice versa.

Solution

- Connect before transmission; get close enough to others so that all will share the desirable qualities.

Too Emotional

Problem

- ❑ We think that we or others are too emotional at work.

False Solution

- ❑ Constrain our emotions.
- ❑ Help others do the same.

Actual Solution

- ❑ Maximize our emotional abilities and support them in others.

No Hurt Feelings

Problem

- We don't want to hurt the feelings of our teammates, so we fail to add the value we have to our team's work product.

False Solution

- If we can't find a way to tell a truth without upsetting people, we don't speak.

Actual Solution

- Focus on team results, not on team member's feelings.

Wrong Tolerance

Problem

- ❑ We tolerate behaviors that don't work well.

False Solution

- ❑ We learn to live in the "real world" or complain to others who we think can fix the problem.

Actual Solution

- ❑ Acknowledge that if we tolerate it, we insist on it.

Team = Product

Problem

- It is easy to identify symptoms but difficult to diagnose team problems and take the appropriate steps for their remedy.

Solution

- Team = Product.
- What is in the team will be it's work product.
- What isn't, won't.

Self Care

Problem

- We take care of others and expect them to take care of us.

Solution

- Take care of ourselves.

Thinking and Feeling

Problem

- We act on our feelings without thinking, or act while ignoring our feelings.

Solution

- Check both our “thinking and feeling” and the “thinking and feeling” of others.

Pretend

Problem

- We reject new alternative beliefs before we understand them.

Solution

- Don't resist a new idea.
- "Pretend" that it is valuable and experiment with it, until we understand it.

The Greatness Cycle

Problem

- Mediocrity.

Solution

- Smartness leads to greatness, via presence, integrity, conflict, and passion.

Decider

Regular excuses and exculpatory stories are often used to rationalize ongoing half-heartedness or failure must be neutralized up front by the team's simple requirement:

Unanimity before action

Decider

Problem

- Our team's decision process does not provide each member with an explicit say, or provide a means to hold members accountable for the result.

Solution

- Use a reliable, unanimity-driven process within the team.

Resolution

Problem

- We have difficulties reaching unanimous support for a proposal.

Solution

- Only talk about what it will take to get the outlier “in.”

Work with Intention

Problem

- We don't know if our behavior will be what we want.

Solution

- Decide on our intention before we act or speak.

Ecology of Ideas

Problem

- We don't get the best ideas into our work product or processes.

Solution

- Create a healthy "Ecology of Ideas."

Resolution Avoidance

Problem

- We don't deal efficiently with conflict because we're afraid of it.

False Solution

- Lay low.
- Don't cause problems.
- Avoid conflict.

Actual Solution

- Seek resolution.

Oblivion

Problem

- We act according to habit or business norms instead of mature thought, informed intention, and creativity.

False Solution

- Blame others, or say, "it was out of our control."

Actual Solution

- Treat every problem as if we could actually do something about it and as if we are personally accountable for the solution.

Turf

Problem

- ❑ When getting results is difficult we focus on “role” definition.

False Solution

- ❑ Create individual ownership.
- ❑ Police boundaries around work responsibilities.

Actual Solution

- ❑ Share all turf with anyone who wants to help.

Boss Won't Give Power

Problem

- ❑ We're afraid that a team will go the wrong way if team members make more decisions.

False Solution

- ❑ Control of teams reporting to us.
- ❑ Don't support ideas or practices that interrupt this control.
- ❑ "This project is not a democracy."

Actual Solution

- ❑ Insist that team members grow up.
- ❑ Encourage them to reach their full possible potential.
- ❑ Parents are not required in a mature work place.

Team Quackery

Problem

- ❑ Team performance is deteriorating.
- ❑ There are always remedies at hand, like the nostrums of the past.

False Solution

- ❑ Improve “team work” or add new “processes.”

Actual Solution

- ❑ Lead and participate in team solutions that focus solely on results.

Aligning

Personal **goals** motivate people; team **goals** motivate teams. Team **goals** are derived from **Visions**. **Visions** are derived from personal **goals**.

Tie Goals to Vision

Tie Vision to Goals

Alignment

Problem

- We think there are not enough people or other resources to get the job done well.

Solution

- Align the team around what each member wants.

Not Enough People

Problem

- ❑ We blame a headcount shortage for our lack of results.

False Solution

- ❑ Add more people, remove features, push out schedules.

Actual Solution

- ❑ Instead of adding head count, make the heads we have count.

Align Me

Problem

- ❑ In a work session we can't or won't come to the point; instead we specify bogus "wants" or are "passive."

False Solution

- ❑ Be patient.
- ❑ Play along.
- ❑ Offer lots of help.
- ❑ Don't offend.

Actual Solution

- ❑ Be intolerant of blather, obfuscation, confusion, and passivity.

Personal Alignment

Problem

- We don't know what we want.

Solution

- Discover what we want, tell our teammates what that is.
- Ask for their help.
- Expect them to do likewise.

Investigate

Problem

- ❑ We see others as better than ourselves.
- ❑ Communication barriers prevent us from stating this clearly.

Solution

- ❑ Inquire into one another as a naïvely curious and nonjudgmental investigator.

Receptivity

Problem

- When we feel stress, we assume that something is missing.

Solution

- When we feel stress, we are not receiving what's available to us.

Web of Commitment

Problem

- ❑ It's difficult to know what we want.
- ❑ It's even more difficult to ask others for help.

Solution

- ❑ Create a structure within our team that will help us get what we want.

Ask for Help

Problem

- We act as if help won't help.

Solution

- Use each other as a resource.

Shared Vision

A shared vision is not a statement or goal, it is a “state of being” which is intentionally created by a mature team.

Shared Vision

Problem

- We work without first together deciding what we are going to create.

Solution

- First and always, make sure our team is aligned around our vision.

Meta–Vision

Problem

- There is no purposeful, institutionally supported approach to the management of Visions.

Solution

- Envision the practice of Vision making and then practice it continuously.

Far Vision

Problem

- We work hard, burn out, and wonder why we bother.

Solution

- Insist that all projects have a long term noble purpose.
- Our first and foremost noble purpose is to "Close the site..."

Version of the Vision

Problem

- We have an unwieldy list of features or demands from our customers.

Solution

- Create a sequence of “solution versions” that must be accomplished in a step-by-step manner in order to satisfy the customer.

Blinder

Problem

- Our team is sometimes hindered by its blindness to the need to create a "Shared Vision."

False Solution

- Go along.
- Get along.
- Vision is someone else's job.

Actual Solution

- Don't work on a team without a "Shared Vision."

Technicality

Problem

- People are categorized as technical or non-technical, and technical seems “better.”

False Solution

- Control the participation of the technical members.

Actual Solution

- Evaluate people on the basis of results.

Recoil

Problem

- After achieving something of significance, we experience a feeling of hopelessness, anxiety, or guilt, and a sense that the achievement was without meaning altogether.

False Solution

- Back off a bit. Be more “realistic.” Don’t attempt to achieve at such a fast pace.

Actual Solution

- Get mad. Get help. Decide to recommit to greatness.

Feedback

Problem

- There is no standard way to gain value for our work or personal performance from another person.
- Or to add our value to the work product or the personal performance of another person.

False Solution

- We give or seek feedback.

Actual Solution

- When asked, rank the creative products of individuals and groups, detail the positive basis for the ranking, and describe additional attributes that we believe would make the work product “perfect.”

Is All This a Bunch of Hooey?

Simple Answer?

NO!

Team Building Boot Camp

- McCarthy runs a “boot camp” for IT developers and their managers.
- This is the Microsoft style extracted and refined.
- Other firms have similar “culture” training activities
 - Booze Allen Hamilton
 - General Electric
 - Chevron
 - Boise Cascade

How to See This in Context

