MODULE OVERVIEW

Diverse teams: From friction to performance

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Teams are becoming more diverse, and many managers end up disappointed. The team is slower, meetings more tense, and doubts grow about what diversity promises. This module starts with a frank observation: left to itself, diversity splits into cliques and holds teams back. It then shows what makes diversity perform—people feeling safe to be different, a better balance of who speaks—through everyday actions anyone can take, not a policy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Understand why diversity left to itself produces cliques and friction, not performance.

02 Make it safe to be different through inclusion, so people can be themselves and still be accepted.

03 Balance team communication: shared speaking and listening, informal exchanges, no one at the center, no one left out.

04 Build a bridge every day: speak simply, rephrase, invite quiet people to speak, and make unspoken rules explicit.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers and members of newly formed teams, where generations, cultures, and backgrounds are still learning to work together.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- 2 mechanisms of diversity left to itself (cliques and discomfort) – Afthonios method, inspired by homophily (Lazarsfeld & Merton) and "faultlines" (Lau & Murnighan)
- MIT model of high-performing teams – Alex Pentland: balanced speaking and listening, informal conversations
- "Diversity trumps ability" – Scott Page
- Psychological safety – inspired by Amy Edmondson

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- McKinsey – "Diversity Matters Even More": companies in the top quartile for diversity are 39% more likely to outperform financially
- MIT Human Dynamics Lab (Alex Pentland) – Harvard Business Review: communication patterns matter as much for team performance as all other factors combined
- Deloitte Australia & VEOHRC – "Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup?": perceived inclusion is associated with an 83% higher ability to innovate
- BetterUp – "The Value of Belonging at Work": a strong sense of belonging is associated with 56% higher performance and a 50% lower risk of leaving

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