

FINDING YOUR TEAM'S TRUE NORTH

In orienteering, True North is found at night by looking for the star Polaris. This star never shifts in the sky (at least, from our perspective on Earth), no matter what time of year. It's an anchor for finding your way in the wild.

In business, True North means Mission, Vision and Values. It's the point on the map that your team is moving toward, with you at the helm. You determine the principles they'll follow and understanding your team's True North is a key leadership development skill.

Try this exercise during a team meeting (Incidentally, it's also a great way to stretch and take a brain break during a long meeting.).

- Have team members all stand up and spread out about 6 feet apart.
- Tell them to close their eyes. (If anyone has vertigo, they may not be able to do this, but they can still observe.)
- Call out a few specific directions for them to follow with their eyes closed. Things like:
 - Team members who've been here less than a year, turn left.
 - Team members with more than a year on the job, turn right.
 - If your commute into work takes more than 30 minutes, turn 45 degrees left.
 - If your commute to work takes less than a half hour, turn 90 degrees right.
 - ... and so on, using your own directions tailored to the environment.
- Keeping their eyes closed, tell the team to extend their right arms and point north, or what they think is north.
- Tell the team to open their eyes.

Unless everyone was peeking, or they're members of the Avengers, everyone on the team will be pointing in wildly different directions.

The lesson for the team is easy to point out and elaborate on. When everyone on the team is doing their own thing, and aren't focused on a common goal, it can be easy for the team to lose its sense of direction – its True North.

Now, have everyone on the team point in the same direction: North. Ask them how it feels to have everyone facing and pointing in the same direction, as one team.

Use this as your starting point for forming, re-forming or strengthening a team. Once they understand the importance of everyone working together and moving in the same direction, reiterate the team and the organization's Mission, Vision and Values.

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A diverse, twenty-year background in real estate, mortgage banking, event planning, and production, as well as radio and television broadcasting, created a perfect storm that put Gregg Gregory where he is today. Gregg works hard to ensure that different personalities can work together successfully to accomplish your organization's mission, goals, and objectives.

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