

The Caravan: Team Assignment 1

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The Caravan is made up of 5 members: Zobair Deen, Joy Ibomor, Mohsen Rouhollahi, Sahajpreet Sidhu, and Dominic Shonhiwa. For this assignment, we each completed the STRAT survey on our workplaces. The surveys provided interesting results which are outlined below. Of particular benefit to us was the differences in our answers as it offered an opportunity to compare routes to the success of each of our teams.

Findings:

Please [click here](#) for the spreadsheet with full details on the scores.

Looking at the scores of the teams represented in this SLT, there are very marginal differences concerning average ratings in different aspects of the teams. The scores recorded by Zobair for his team reflect the highest functioning team in the group with average scores ranging between 4s and 5s in the STRAT tool. Joy's and Mohsen's team scores indicate high functioning teams as well, with scores between 4s and 3s. Dominic and Sahaj's teams had slightly lower average scores ranging from 4s to some 2s as well. There are five key areas addressed by the STRAT tool scores (Hughes, Beatty, & Dinwoodie, 2006) that the Caravan team reflected on, in light of the average scores of all our teams combined:

- Assessing where we are
- Understanding where we want to go
- Learning how to get there (business strategy and leadership strategy)
- General SLT effectiveness
- Making the journey

Q1. Regarding scores for questions 1, 2, and 5 which address the question: **Where are we now?**

Hughes et al., state: "A critical foundation of maintaining sustained competitive advantage and vitality is ensuring widespread and shared understanding and embrace of the organization's most important aspirations" (2014). Knowledge of the organization's aspirations and internal assessments of an SLT's S.W.O.T of the external environment coupled with keeping abreast of cultural, marketplace, and technological trends helps determine the position of the SLT to answer the question "Where are we now?" The teams' scores on this question averaged 3.8, which indicates a relatively average to good knowledge of the relating subjects (STRAT questions 1,2 and 3).

Q2. Regarding scores for questions 3 and 6 which address the question **Where do we want to go?** The direction has so much to do with the shared vision for the future of the SLT. Disagreements can arise causing the team to lose focus and alignment with the vision. The Caravan team agrees with Hughes et al., (2014) when they suggested:

There are other challenges that all groups face that become even more consequential in the case of SLTs— including; disagreements on the team about key priorities and investments needed to achieve the vision. These challenges almost certainly will occur if the team has struggled to create a shared vision and can also happen if the team is generally aligned around a vision and strategic intent but does not have a shared understanding concerning resource allocation (2014).

It is therefore of such great importance that an SLT be on the same page regarding vision, values and focus as this facilitates accountability of each individual for their contribution or lack of contribution. An average score of 4 was registered with all the SLT members. This score is a relatively good result.

Q3. Learning how to get there (business strategy and leadership strategy), (Question numbers listed in Appendix 1). This area is crucial to SLT success as it encompasses both the business strategy and the leadership strategy. According to Hughes et al., (2014) “SLTs generally can only be as strategically effective as the organization’s overall strategy itself is both well reasoned and clear” (p. 207). Following the business strategy is the team strategy which should ideally define the boundaries of each team which prevents teams from encroaching into each other’s space. The teams should ideally be cooperative rather than competitive with each other. Our teams’ scores averaged 3.68 for both business and leadership strategy but an overall 4 for just the business strategy. This reflection indicates the teams’ overall understanding of the organizational strategic approaches.

Q4. Assessing the general effectiveness of the SLT: In assessing the general effectiveness of our SLTs, our average score is 3.88, which is a fair score according to the rating scale in Hughes, et al. (2014) This indicates that there is a positive outlook to the effectiveness of the SLTs. There is room for improvement regarding trust among team members, and the aspect of undiscussable issues. The teams score well on integrity which indicates trust and positivity towards discussing more personal issues to improve team bonding.

Q5. Making the journey to where we would like to go as a team: The teams scored 3.6 and this is an average score. That it is not higher requires revisiting the topic, particularly in clarifying how each individual’s role supports the organizational mission and striking a balance on addressing short and long-term goals. The SLTs also need to improve on responses to opportunities and threats in the environment. Hughes et al., (2014) encourage a balance between long and short-term goals and highlight that; “strategic change inherently requires commitment to developing new capabilities” (2014).

Conclusion:

The Caravan has found this exercise to be engaging in many ways, including seeing the differences in successful teams and determining areas for improvement in all five teams. Despite partial success in some areas, the accumulating number of 3s may break the teams' hope for achievements. Although the responses show that the teams welcome fresh ideas, the accomplishment is not promising unless effective measures are taken to improve the areas scored 3. For instance, low scores in items 2 and 11 (understanding external threats and clear strategy) will cause conflict for the whole team.

When considering business drivers and strategy it is paramount for SLT members to understand the value of the team's contribution to the overall mission of the organization to promote commitment and alignment. Once the vision, mission, and values are understood, a commitment to a common goal ensues, facilitating investment from the overall organization. (Hughes et al., 2014).

Addressing external threats and adopting a clear strategy for the desired outcomes is highly recommended for the teams' survival. The items with scoring 3 are essential for the business growth and, if the team drag their feet, the consequences will be less than desired.

References

Hughes, R. L., Beatty, K. C., & Dinwoodie, D. L. (2014). *Becoming a strategic leader your role in your organization's enduring success*. Jossey-Bass.

Appendix 1: Teams' Scores according to Hughes' et al., Categories

Questions	Dominic	Sehaj	Mohsen	Zobair	Joy	Average scores
This strategic leadership team regularly and realistically assesses its organizational strengths and weaknesses.	4	2	4	5	4	
This strategic leadership team understands the threats and opportunities in the external environment	4	3	3	4	4	
This strategic leadership team keeps abreast of technological, cultural and market trends	4	4	3	5	4	
Totals	12	9	10	14	12	
Average Individual score	4	3	3.333333	4.666667	4	
Team average						3.8
Q1. ASSESSING WHERE WE ARE						

Questions	Dominic	Sehaj	Mohsen	Zobair	Joy	Average scores
This strategic leadership team has a shared vision of our future	3	4	4	4	5	
This strategic leadership team is clear about our basic purpose and core values	4	3	4	4	5	
Totals	7	7	8	8	10	
Average Individual score	3.5	3.5	4	4	5	
Team average						4
Q2. UNDERSTANDING WHERE WE WANT TO GO						

Questions	Dominic	Sehaj	Mohsen	Zobair	Joy	Average scores
Our strategy is discriminating: clear about what we will do and clear about what we will not do.	4	4	3	3	3	3.4
This strategic leadership team encourages others to improve by experimenting with new or different ways of doing things.	4	2	2	5	4	
Members of this strategic leadership team have constructive interactions with others throughout the organization.	4	3	4	4	4	
This strategic leadership team actively supports executive growth and development.	3	3	4	5	5	
Getting ahead here depends on performance not politics.	4	2	3	5	4	
This strategic leadership team encourages an appropriate level of risk taking.	3	2	3	5	4	
This strategic leadership team fosters cooperation rather than competition across organizational units.	4	3	4	5	4	
We share best practices across individuals and departments.	4	2	4	3	4	
There is a positive sense of energy and excitement around here.	4	3	5	5	4	
Totals	34	24	32	40	36	
Average Individual score	3.777778	2.666667	3.555556	4.444444	4	
Team average						3.688889
Q3. LEARNING HOW TO GET THERE (BUSINESS STRATEGY) AND (LEADERSHIP STRATEGY)						

Questions	Dominic	Sehaj	Mohsen	Zobair	Joy	Average scores
This strategic leadership team thinks globally	4	2	3	5	3	
These are few undiscussable subjects here.	4	3	4	5	3	
Different opinions are welcome	4	3	5	4	3	
This strategic leadership team works well together.	4	3	5	5	4	
This strategic leadership team is composed of diverse individuals with complementary talents.	4	4	4	5	4	
This strategic leadership team shares information well with each other.	3	3	5	3	5	
Members of this strategic leadership team trust and respect each other.	4	3	4	5	4	
This strategic leadership team exhibits a high level of integrity.	4	2	5	5	4	
I am proud of the way this strategic leadership team handles issues of right and wrong.	4	2	4	5	4	
Totals	35	25	39	42	34	
Average Individual score	3.888889	2.777778	4.333333	4.666667	3.777778	
Team average						3.888889
Q4. GENERAL SLT EFFECTIVENESS						

Questions	Dominic	Sehaj	Mohsen	Zobair	Joy	Average scores
Individuals at all levels understand how their roles support the organizational mission	3	2	4	4	4	
This strategic leadership team strikes an appropriate balance between dealing with short-term and long-term needs.	4	2	3	3	4	
This strategic leadership team does not waste its own or others' energy on unproductive activities.	4	3	3	5	4	
This strategic leadership team responds effectively opportunities and threats in the environment.	4	3	4	5	4	
Totals	15	10	14	17	16	
Average Individual score	3.75	2.5	3.5	4.25	4	
Team average						3.6
Q5. MAKING THE JOURNEY						

