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The Five Behaviors™
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Turning Frustrations Into Fun

How one virtual team learned how to stay connected from over 1,000 miles away.

A Success Story featuring : **AmerisourceBergen**®

Discover how one virtual leadership team took a proactive approach to engage their team members and team culture in their online workplace.

With today's technology, people tune in to work from virtually anywhere at any time. This provides great flexibility on the employee side, but poses a unique challenge for the employer. As workforces continue to expand across the physical and virtual space, companies search for ways to create a positive employee experience for all employees, regardless of their location.

According to Deloitte's 2017 Global Human Capital Trends[1], more organizations are expanding their perspective of engagement to encompass the entire employee experience, bringing together all aspects of the workplace that impact employees. "By focusing on the employee experience, HR leaders can improve employee engagement, empower teams and leaders, and develop workforce solutions that will be useful and compelling to employees." However, this can be particularly challenging to do with virtual teams that have limited in-person engagement.

For the Enterprise IT senior leadership team at AmerisourceBergen, a global healthcare solutions leader, working in a virtual environment put a strain on individual working relationships. These senior leaders each brought great talent to the organization, but being located across the company's Texas, Philadelphia, and Idaho locations made it difficult for them to stay engaged and bring their talents together as one team.

Dale Danilewitz, the team leader and CIO of this international enterprise organization,

noticed how the distance created a physical and interpersonal barrier to teamwork. He noticed signs of disengagement and a strain in some communication. "We needed to break down barriers and evolve the team into something productive," said Danilewitz. He wanted his team to have a positive employee experience and create a team culture based on collaboration, innovation, and most importantly, fun.

"Fun can mean being motivated to come to work every day, but it can also mean you're not looking over your shoulder. You're not afraid to be your true self," he said. "When you're not having fun, you're wasting energy struggling with these challenges, rather than using that energy to build, create, and innovate." Danilewitz knew if he was not able to break down barriers and create a fun, engaging virtual environment for his team that he was at risk of losing great talent.

A TEAM SOLUTION THAT WORKS

Danilewitz wanted each person to feel like he or she was part of one team. He needed a solution that would keep team members engaged and connected even if they weren't physically working side by side. In his search for a solution, he discovered the best-selling teamwork fable, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni. He immediately recognized his own team in the story.

He connected with Roy Davis and Mary Anne Wihbey-Davis of Peak Performance

Solutions and learned that the book was the springboard for the team program *The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team™.* As Authorized Partners of *The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team,* they invited Danilewitz to a showcase event where he discovered the impact that the simple, yet powerful *Five Behaviors™* model has had in other organizations. He arranged to bring this solution to his team.

"The Five Behaviors was an accelerator to help build those trusting relationships and get our team operating more effectively."

— Suzanne Kosub, Head of Delivery Management

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR TEAMWORK

The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team is an assessment-based learning program that helps teams discover what it takes to become a truly productive, cohesive team. Teams learn how to apply *The Five Behaviors* model of Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, and Results to improve teamwork.

"We wanted to make progress. We were open and honest and agreed on common issues that we were facing," said Danilewitz. "For example, some of us admitted to not feeling fully onboard with the team, and being afraid to hold each other accountable." Despite these concerns, each member was committed to finding a way to work better together.

"It takes heavy lifting but the ROI is worth it. There's just nothing that beats a cohesive, collaborative team that functions together," said Roy Davis.

The Five Behaviors model defines vulnerability-based trust as the foundation of teamwork. Successful teams must fully trust each other and have honest communication. This is particularly important for virtual teams that have limited in-person interaction.

"Trust is such an essential behavior to effectively operate in any kind of relationship whether it's with teams, vendors, customers, employers, or supervisors. *The Five Behaviors* helped us understand how to establish that trust and continue to build upon it," said Danilewitz.

The team found that sharing personal and professional successes and failures helped put vulnerability-based trust into practice and was something they could do in-person and online. Connecting on a deeper level and developing empathy helped them see the value that each person brought to the team and motivated them to work together more effectively.

"*The Five Behaviors* was an accelerator to help build those trusting relationships and get our team operating more effectively," said Suzanne Kosub, the head of Delivery Management. "The sooner we were able to build conditions of trust, the sooner we were able to have transparent conversations about

holding each other accountable and driving toward results."

ADAPTING TO THE TEAM

The Five Behaviors™ program is paired with the personality inventory of *Everything DiSC®,* providing a framework for effective communication and relationship building. Understanding the different personalities on the team helped the Enterprise IT leaders adapt to each other's working styles and preferences.

With *Everything DiSC*, each person learns about his or her own personality style as well as the styles on the team. It can be difficult to gain a deep understanding of your colleagues within a virtual environment, but the language of *Everything DiSC* helps people apply their insights into their daily interactions whether in-person or online.

For Kosub, the combination of personality styles and *The Five Behaviors* model helped her to adapt to a new position in the company. She became more aware of the team's dynamics and how to better engage with her coworkers.

MAKING COMPARISONS AND CONNECTIONS

Building strong individual relationships is important for any team, but it's even more critical for virtual teams. Virtual teams must overcome their limitations to in-person interaction and find ways to cultivate their relationships with their team members.

To build those relationships, the team used *The Five Behaviors Comparison Reports.* With these reports, each person compares their assessment results with another team member and gains personalized insights on how they can work better together. *Comparison Reports* provide a framework for a productive one-on-one conversation that builds upon vulnerability-based trust.

The Enterprise IT team knew they needed to be proactive with *The Five Behaviors* if they wanted to see results. They took full advantage of *Comparison Reports* and reviewed a report with each person on the team, extending this activity beyond the initial *Five Behaviors* retreat.

"The comparison reports were a decoder that gave me clarity on how to work better with my coworkers and boss," said Kosub.

The *Comparison Reports* brought clarity to their work relationships and helped the team bridge the physical and interpersonal gap that kept them from collaborating as one team.

TEAMWORK TAKES PRACTICE

"As one of the leaders within our group, I knew how important it would be for our management teams to align and truly demonstrate first hand what it meant to act as a unified and united workforce," said Perry Sandberg, Vice President of Service Governance and Improvement.

After the heavy lifting of vulnerability-based trust, the remaining behaviors of the model seemed to naturally fall into place. For instance, the team learned how to approach Conflict, the second behavior of the model, as a debate around ideas, not personal opinions. Practicing healthy conflict helped them commit to decisions—even if not everyone initially agrees—and hold each other accountable. By continuously putting these behaviors into practice, the team stayed focused on collective goals and set the gold standard for teamwork.

Five months after their first *Five Behaviors™* session, Peak Performance Solutions took the team through *The Five Behaviors Progress Report* to assess their growth. The report highlights the team's improvement or decline and provides an action plan to help teams prioritize and set specific goals moving forward.

Although the team showed growth in each of the behaviors, they knew there was always room for improvement. "Getting to the point where our interactions come across as real and sincere is essential," said Sandberg. "You have to practice. It doesn't always come naturally to everyone and it takes work."

As the team incorporated the Five Behaviors into their daily work, the team concepts trickled down to their direct reports. On the company-wide engagement survey, "Manager Effectiveness" scores increased, demonstrating the value The Five Behaviors

has at both the team level and leadership level. For survey items such as "I rarely think about looking for another job," and "I am proud to work at AmerisourceBergen," scores increased by 10 points and fell well above the external norms.

The improvement in employee experience for the Enterprise IT leadership team was evident in their increased engagement, productivity, and camaraderie. Their growth as a team was well-known throughout the company. With other divisions exploring the program for their teams, the Human Resources department adopted the program as a standard. Several people have earned *The Five Behaviors Facilitator Accreditation* to deliver the program and implement the behaviors into the organization.

The team makes a deliberate effort to continue improving in each of the behaviors. They check-in with Peak Performance Solutions and still comment on the insights and clarity they gained from the program. Their new team culture of collaboration and teamwork helps them stay engaged across their virtual work environment.

"If one of us is struggling with a challenge, we see how we can help resolve it as a collective team. For me, that's fun," said Danilewitz. "We carry responsibilities as a team. Sharing that load makes things a lot easier and makes it enjoyable and rewarding to come to work."

1. 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, "Rewriting the rules for the digital age," https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/human-capital/articles/introduction-human-capital-trends.html accessed on August 21, 2018.