Survival of the fittest: Fostering change readiness through the CRUX intervention

Facilitators: PhD Lisa Vivoll Straume[1*], MA Håkon Tveiterås, MA Christine Storø Bischoff

[1]MIND, Norway, *e-mail: lisa@mind.no

Who should attend?

This workshop is for anyone who wants to learn a strength-based method to increase adaptiveness to change and challenges, in themselves or people they lead.

Background:

The forecast we are often offered on tomorrows working life is that the pace of change is exponential. Typically, it refers to technology and digitalization, but the ripple effects stretch to how we build societies, run organizations and lead teams and individuals. In many cases the demand for change is not internally motivated but forced upon us by external factors. What seems like ripple effects may turn out to be tsunamis – and when changes are disruptive – survival of the fittest kicks in. What Darwin referred to in his famous quote was not the strongest, but the most adaptive to change, and this applies to organizations as well. Thus, riding the wave presupposes that we are change ready – meaning quick and flexible in adjusting goals and working styles, aware of our resources and possible barriers, believing in the potential of ourselves and our team. Being change ready is a psychological state as much as an external demand and can be increased through systematic training in micro interventions. In the present pre-conference workshop, we focus on at least three crucial aspects needed to be addressed when fostering change readiness and implementing change initiatives; 1) Understanding the underlying mechanisms that motivate people to change, 2) provide tools that help people foster a psychological state of development, and 3) create sustainable plans which increase the likelihood of succeeding in implementing change. The CRUX intervention is inspired by the research on psychological capital (PsyCap, Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006), strength-based leadership (MacKie, 2016), and job-crafting (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017).

PsyCap is "an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on, and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success" (Luthans & Yousef, 2007). Empirical studies have proven it possible to increase PsyCap through relatively short interventions (e.g., Luthans et.al, 2006; Dello, Russo & Stoykova, 2015). Furthermore, these four characteristics are known as important factors for sustained motivation, goal achievement, and performance.

The intervention in this workshop is termed CRUX – with reference to the vocabulary of climbers planning a climbing route. The CRUX is the hardest point to pass on a climbing route and

symbolizes the difficult barriers leaders and employees face when implementing change initiatives. CRUX also serves as an acronym that abbreviates the main steps of the process (Compass, Route, Uncover and X-cute): A **C**ompass is an instrument for determining directions – a freely rotating magnetized needle that indicates magnetic north. Your magnetic north equals a meaningful goal derived from a need to change something. **R**oute: In order to reach the goal, you need to create routes to get there. Each route need sub goals on its way, and actions leading to goal fulfilment. **U**ncover: Every route will have hurdles. Uncovering the strengths and resources you possess and need in order to overcome barriers and reach your sub goals. **X**-cute: Ready to take action and implement the change.

Content:

The workshop is designed as a micro-intervention with the aim of making individuals and teams psychological fit for change. Participants will learn a practical tool for crafting responses to a demand for change with emphasis on applying strengths, and a tool for goal setting and goal orientation which aim to increase the psychological states of hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience (i.e., PsyCap).

As a preparation for the CRUX intervention, we will start with a set of exercises that aims to map the characteristics of context, tasks and relations. This is to get a clear picture of which factors in a change process you can influence and not, and how external demands can be aligned with personal meaningful goals. Participants will then be asked to define a meaningful personal or organizational goal as „*the mountain top they aim to climb*" and state the reason for why the particular goal is important. Next, participants will be guided through predefined steps to form several alternative routes to the top and identify opportunities, barriers, available resources and possible solutions to reach the top. These steps will provide a good foundation to 1) decide which route to climb (i.e. how to implement the change), and 2) prepare for efficient adjustments if the chosen route is blocked (if external or internal factors disrupts the plan). The intervention is run in smaller groups to enable vicarious learning processes.

References

Dello Russo, S., & Stoykova, P. (2015). Psychological capital intervention (PCI): A replication and extension. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *26*(3), 329-347.

Luthans, F., Avey, J. B., Avolio, B. J., Norman, S. M., & Combs, G. M. (2006). Psychological capital development: toward a micro-intervention. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *27*(3), 387-393

Luthans, F., & Youssef, C. M. (2007). Emerging positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Management, 33*, 321-349.

MacKie, D. (2016). *Strength-Based Leadership Coaching in Organizations: An Evidence-Based Guide to Positive Leadership Development. An Evidence-Based Guide to Positive Leadership Development.* UK Kogan Page.

Rudolph, C. W., Katz, I. M., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017). Job crafting: A meta-analysis of relationships with individual differences, job characteristics, and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *102*, 112-138.