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We are often working with teams that are adrift. This reality is as a result of both internal organizational strife and external and (sometimes) uncontrollable realities like reduced revenue or funding sources and demands for ever increasing work deliverables. Regardless of the reason behind a team's state of affairs, the outcome is most often dysfunction to the point of paralysis.

When we work to dig deeper and provide an objective review of the cause and potential for remedy, the solution often rests first and foremost on the mandatory need for acknowledgement by the leader that he/she has a style that is contrary to team health and wellbeing. Symptoms of leadership misalignment often includes employees moving to workarounds (methods for avoiding direct involvement by the struggling leader) and/or team destructive behavior such as undercutting each other for the sake of survival. If these realities are acknowledged and if there is a readiness for change, solutions can be proactive and easily brought to daily use by all members of a team.

The key to readiness for positive change is the ability for a team to both identify and adopt their own carefully designed form of decision architecture. Design architecture includes but is not limited to at least four levels of inclusivity and willingness to recognize their own internal sources for power as well as the ways in which this power will be constructively shared. The most well-known decision process is simply 'top-down' leadership over a team. Who lives at the top of the team in terms of organizational design, controls and holds all of the real as well as perceived power for every single decision. While at times this may work, for the long haul it is extremely restrictive in terms of empowering all team members to grow and apply the full range of their skills.

The second form of design architecture involves a limited (sometimes very limited) use of inclusion of team input before the designated leader still controls the final decision (albeit with some reflection on any input received). This provides for at least an overture of inclusion; in the worst application, this engenders resentment that input is not utilized (aka valued).

The third form of decision architecture involves genuine give and take with a high value placed on collaborative team exchange of ideas as well as final recognition of how a measurable amount of team input will be incorporated in any and all ultimate decisions. Participation at this level creates a real dimension of vulnerability for the designated leader, often resulting in the question of whether his/her judgment of the skills and intuition of subordinates is off mark. If so, team failure could affect everyone.

The fourth level of decision architecture includes free-wheeling freedom to act for all members of a team; usually with the acknowledged parameter that all actions must be within the scope of the designated mission and business goals of the organization. This fluid process of ongoing involvement absent the need to seek and receive permission from the top of the organization before carrying out best judgments is seldom fully applied. Whether it be financial considerations, a reliance on the need to be risk adverse or ego limitations from Boards of Directors, elected officials or private investors something controls implementation of teaming at this highly refined level.

Where is your use of decision architecture in relationship to your leadership style? Why have you

elected to use the level of decision processes that you have? How has that process inhibited your/the team's success in the most recent past? How does your sense of survival at all costs influence your choice of the level of decision architecture in use? Have you asked your team their opinion about your choice? None of these questions are easy to navigate. To leave them unasked and unanswered guarantees mediocrity at best.