# HOW TO INCREASE TEAM ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION



**If you were to rate your typical team problem solving meeting or brainstorming session in terms of its effectiveness, involvement and engagement of the team members and productivity, where do you think it would be on a scale of 1(low) to 10 (high) ?**

From my conversations with clients, I would say they would be patting themselves on the back if it was at least a 6.

As I work with business leaders, heads of departments and managers across different industries over the years, I often hear a similar comment or concern from them. One of their frustrations is how to get the team members to speak up more, to contribute ideas, to challenge them to think out of the box.

"How do I get them to be speak up more?" they asked. One line leader said "Whenever we meet and discuss to problem solve, I'm always the one who is talking and leading the discussions. I would really like the team to participate more and contribute their ideas."

I believe many leaders share his sentiment and thoughts.

This leads us to the question: "How do we help solve this leader's problem?"

Well, I have on many occasions posed these questions to the leader:

- "Do you ask them questions?"
- "What questions do you ask?"
- "Do you assign roles to the team members?"
- "Would you consider facilitating the session instead of telling them what they

need to do?"
- "What are your thoughts about creating a safe space for them to be willing to ask questions or share their ideas?"
- "What other approaches have you tried...?

While these questions may be valid and may be useful pointers for the leader to change the way the meeting is conducted, it is still a 'hit and miss' on most times.

When I was first introduced to the Action Learning process, it really caught my attention and I was very intrigued. I was also curious as to how this would make a difference in helping leaders and organizations harness the collective wisdom of the team in problem solving and in increasing team engagement and participation.

## What is Action Learning?

**"Action Learning is a problem solving process that involves a small group working on a real problem, taking action, and learning as individuals, as a team, and as an organization while doing so".**

Looking at the description of Action Learning above, one would notice that it is different from the typical problem solving approach. As a trainer-facilitator-coach, I love the focus on learning as a team as we problem solve.

In an Action Learning session, the role of the Action Learning Coach is crucial in guiding the team to follow the process.

The Action Learning Coach therefore tactfully ensures that the team members adhere to the Two Ground Rules. The Action Learning Coach also skilfully explains the roles of the team members and Problem Presenter and the goal of the session by establishing the Six Components.

**"2 Ground Rules + 6 Components" is the secret sauce of Action Learning!"**

Since 2020, I have facilitated many Action Learning Sessions in my leadership development projects and without fail (10 out of 10 times), I've seen high engagement levels and participation from team members. In addition, the value of learning and sharpening your leadership and communication competencies in the process of gaining clarity and solutions to your pressing problem or challenge is just priceless. It's money in the bank!

Comments we often hear from team members at the end of the Action Learning Session are like: "We should do this from now on in our meetings"; "This is so different"; "This is so good"; "A very powerful approach".

**These days, if I was asked, "How do I get my team members to speak up more in meetings?" my response would be "Have you heard of Action Learning?"**

Curious? Would you like to know more?  Do reach out: angeline@first-joy.com

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