Leading change micro-tools

Change used to be about a strong leader taking people on a journey between two stable places. Not anymore. Change is continuous and accelerating. And no one person owns this change.

The volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment we live and work in means everyone has a role to play leading themselves and others.

It takes effort, empathy and energy to lead people in the VUCA environment and these tools will help. They are suitable for everyone to use, regardless of their job title or position in the organisation.

These tools are quick to learn, easy to use and give instant benefit. All you need is the courage to experiment and discover which work for you and your colleagues and which don't.

They are loosely themed into tools for:

- Looking after myself and my people
- Building our team
- Setting our direction
- Making things happen

Using these tools

✓✓✓ = no prep, just need pens, post-its, flipchart, confidence. 5-10 mins
✓✓ = some prep – may need additional materials and/or a receptive team. 15-30 mins
✓ = practise with friends or observe someone else using this tool. >30 mins

This tool is for individual use

This tool works well with a team

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

Why not start with our favourite tool?

| One word mood... | At the start of a session, ask everyone to write ONE WORD describing their mood RIGHT NOW onto a post-it note. Ask them to read out their word as they stick it to the wall. You may wish to probe a bit.

Great for understanding the mood in the room so you can adjust your style, content, approach and pace. Repeat at the end and explore any changes.

Variations: do this anonymously if your team isn't comfortable discussing emotions, or draw pictures instead of using words |

HAPPY TIRED CAFFEINATED WARY OPTIMISTIC

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Page	Micro-tool	When should I use it
LOOKING AFTER MYSELF AND MY PEOPLE		
3	One word mood	To understand the mood in the room so I can adapt my leadership style in the moment
3	What have you learned today	To encourage the importance of learning (to better prepare for when things go wrong!)
3	Hot desk hello	To help people feel welcome
4	Discovery questions	To understand people's emotional state
4	Ask my leader	To hear what people really think
4	Sunshine book	When I've had a bad day or week
5	Box breathing	To slow my brain (and other people's) and calm everything down
5	Story time	To re-boot people's brains ready for focused discussion
5	Big yourself up	To remind me that I'm awesome!
6	Magic teleporter	To calm and focus my team and reduce stress in the room
6	Choose my mood	To help me feel how I want to feel
6	Walk and talk	To create a relaxed atmosphere for a difficult (or otherwise) conversation
7	We're proud of	To remind us that we're awesome!
7	Song lyrics	To explore how people are feeling right now
7	Mindfulness jigsaw	To provide a calm place to re-set your team's brains between heavy meetings
8	Out of the limelight	To build a feeling of empowerment and being valued
BUILDING OUR TEAM		
8	Fantasy job	To encourage my team to build personal connections
8	Previous life	To encourage my team to build personal connections
9	Skills mix & match	For my team to understand how they can help each other
9	My aunt went shopping…	For a fun way to understand how my team can help each other
9	When did you last cheat?	To encourage a culture of sharing
10	What experiment did you do last week?	To encourage a culture of learning through experimentation
10	Superpower	To understand what the team needs to work more effectively
10	…out of 10	To understand how your team is feeling about a particular decision or course of action
11	Long screwdriver alert	To understand how much you disempower your team by meddling
11	How we want to work	To agree team principles of how we want to work together
SETTING OUR DIRECTION		
11	The long & winding road	To reflect on the past as a means to think about the future
12	Future headlines	To encourage creative future thinking
12	Building team consensus	To make priority decisions owned by the team
12	Wear another person's shoes	To get my team thinking about the people they are impacting on
13	Dotty voting	To rapidly prioritise as a group
13	The only picture you'll ever need	To explain a complex thing in a simple, repeatable and easy to remember way
13	The 5 whys	To test strategic purpose behind proposed activity
14	Curiosity wall	To challenge our traditional approach and explore new ways of doing things
14	Helicopter	To help me choose to focus on the strategic not the tactical
MAKING THINGS HAPPEN		
14	Post-it pledge	To gain commitment to make a start
15	Retrospective	To get used to learning as we go and continuous improvement
15	Force-field analysis	To identify blockers and test if we can overcome them
15	Hopes and FEARS!	To give confidence I am addressing people's concerns
16	Celebrate STOPPING	To encourage a mindset of switching off less beneficial activity
16	Thankyou speed dating	To build morale and mutual emotional support
16	Chain reaction	To start a word of mouth campaign
17	Progress wallcharts	To encourage my team to do the jobs they don't want to. With stickers.
17	Trim your backlog	To focus on what to do – not worry about all the things you haven't got time for yet
17	Email signature block	To share a short and important message with all the people you work with
18	T-shirt slogan	To agree a snappy tag line for your communications
18	User stories	To ensure you focus on what your end customer wants
18	Elevator pitch	To be prepared for that chance encounter with the big boss
19	Kill those zombie tasks	To identify and stop doing the tasks no-one really cares about
19	Doing the simplest experiment	To empower your team to start experimenting by trying the smallest possible thing
19	Kanban	To get your team organised, build momentum and transparency

One word mood...

HAPPY
TIRED
CAFFEINATED
WARY
OPTIMISTIC

Easiness ✓✓✓

At the start of a session, ask everyone to write ONE WORD describing their mood RIGHT NOW onto a post-it note. Ask them to read out their word as they stick it to the wall. You may wish to probe a bit. Great for understanding the mood in the room so you can adjust your style, content, approach and pace. Repeat at the end and explore any changes. Variations: do this anonymously if your team isn't comfortable discussing emotions, or draw pictures instead of using words

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

What have you learned today?

L

or
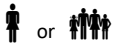
Easiness ✓✓✓

A way to encourage people to constantly think about learning...
Ask this question in a group meeting (or on your own) and write answers on pot-its, stick to the wall and discuss.
Can expand the question to ask "what have you helped someone else to learn today"

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Hot-desk Hello!

HELLO!
HELLO BACK....

or
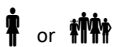
Easiness ✓✓✓

Simple. When someone you don't know sits next to you – or you sit next to someone you don't know just say hello, introduce yourself, ask their name, how they are doing and if you can help with anything. DON'T BE EMBARASSED you've never spoken before - even if you've been sitting next to each other for ages!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Discovery questions

Easiness ✔ ✔

Great to judge the emotion in the room. Your team needs to be in a calm place and receptive to emotional discussions. Try using the 'box breathing' tool before asking these questions. The answers can be work or non-work related.

- What's stressing you out right now?
- What are you most proud of achieving recently?
- What made you smile most in the last week?
- What's on your mind right now?
- If you weren't here, what would you be doing?
- What were you most / least looking forward to when you got up today?

Just ask one of these (or make up your own) at the start of a meeting and don't push people who don't want to answer. Adapt how you run your session according to the emotion in the room.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Ask my leader…

Easiness ✔ ✔

Some people are comfortable asking their senior leadership questions to their face, or in a meeting – many are not. Some leaders are good at responding off the cuff – others get defensive and flustered. Cut out this stress by asking people in pairs to think of a single question they want to ask their leadership, write it on a Post-it note and put in a hat (or envelope). Then have a break, give the leaders time to prepare answers then pull them out of the hat and let the leaders answer in front of the group. Keep the questions anonymous unless people volunteer to ask follow-up questions. Put some fun questions in too!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool


Sunshine book

Easiness ✔ ✔ ✔

For personal resilience if you are going through a difficult time…

Keep a little notebook with you (your sunshine book), the brighter coloured the better, and at the end of each day write down three things that you're proud of or that you are grateful for.

These could be as simple as……I left work on time, my train wasn't delayed, it didn't rain on me today or heavier stuff like my presentation went well, I made time to do some learning, I stood up to some poor behaviour.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Box breathing

👤 or 👪👤
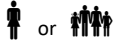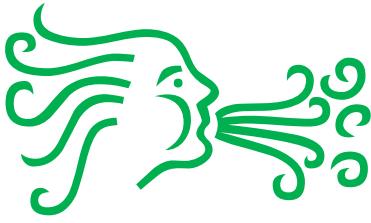
Easiness ✓✓✓

Give yourselves 5 minutes of quiet time to sit comfortably and breath slowly in for a count of 10, hold for 10, out for 10 then hold for 10. Repeat ten times. If running a group do the counting for them. Ask the team how they feel afterwards if you need convincing of the benefit of this!

Really good at calming yourself before a big presentation or meeting or getting your team in a calm frame of mind for a group discussion

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Story time

👪👤
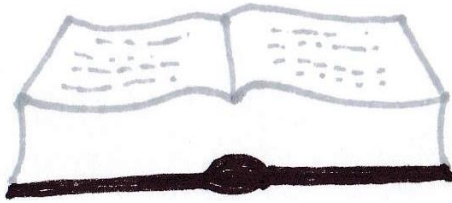
Easiness ✓✓

Make sure everyone is sitting comfortably (including yourself) then read out part of a story or poem. Pick a passage that is high on description with minimal reference to people, emotion or conversation.

Don't be frightened to read slowly and quietly. This will calm your team (and you), ready for discussion. Good with a large group.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Big yourself up

If I hadn't …… then …… wouldn't have happened

👤

Easiness ✓✓✓

An easy one when you have 30 seconds to yourself and you are having those constant doubts as to whether you are doing a good job or not…

Simply say to yourself,
**If I hadn't ……… then ………
wouldn't have happened**.

Great to remind you how awesome you are!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Magic Teleporter ®

Where would YOU rather be?

Easiness ✓✓✓

Great to de-stress everyone in the room…

Draw round your hands on a big piece of paper and write "Magic Teleporter ®" on it. Then ask people in turn to place their hands on the handprints (the teleporter only works if people do this bit!) and describe the place they have been teleported to – what does it sound, smell, taste, look and feel like?
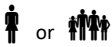
Once people have described their favourite beach, music festival, painting, mountain, market, meal etc you will feel the room calm down……ask people how they feel to see how well it works.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Choose my mood

Today, I choose to feel….

or

Easiness ✓✓✓

On your way to work say to yourself…"Today, I choose to feel……" And remind yourself of this throughout the day and you will make little choices that will help you feel the way you want.

For example…"Today I choose to feel calm"… and you might find yourself walking or eating a bit slower, or not trying to check your emails between meetings. And no-one will choose to feel stressed, angry etc!

You can also ask your team how they choose to feel today…

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Walk and talk

Easiness ✓✓

There's something about walking while you are talking that makes it easier to discuss more difficult subjects. And you get a bit of fresh air and exercise too. And it relaxes your brain a bit which helps you when you return to your desk.
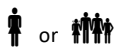
So try having a 1:1 meeting with someone by going for a quick walk around the block rather than sitting face to face across a coffee table. Don't forget your umbrella!

Good for getting to know new people in your team.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

We're proud of...

Something we do really well is...

👤 or 👪   Easiness ✓✓✓

With all the talk of changing, it's important to remember the things we do really well. Start a group discussion with "**One thing we do really well is...**"
And don't be tempted to get into the discussion about hmmmm...do we really do that well? Save that for another time.

This is good to help ground your team with some stability when all about them is changing. Works just as well on your own or in pairs.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Song lyrics

👪   Easiness ✓✓✓

A good meeting opener to judge the mood, reset people's brains and get people laughing.
Ask **what song lyric comes to mind right now?**
Give people a bit of time, maybe kick off with your own example, then let the discussion wander and explore why people are thinking of each lyric. Could also do with movie quotes if this doesn't get too nerdy!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Mindfulness jigsaw
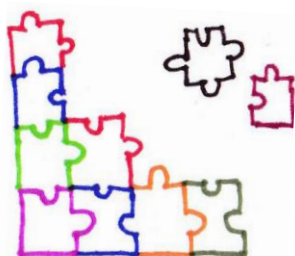
👪   Easiness ✓✓

Takes a bit of space, and ignore the people who say we should be working not playing games...
A communal jigsaw (choose one with lots of bright colours not a dreary watercolour of steam trains!) is a great way for the team to form ad-hoc chats around, and it really does de-stress and re-boot your brain between heavy meetings.
Pick up at charity shops & share between teams

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

| Out of the limelight	I'm out of the limelight, doing the s**t. Am I worthless, or empowered and not realising it!
Easiness ✓✓	Ask your team what thankless tasks they do that they don't think anyone realises they do. And ask if it's because no-one cares they do these tasks – or that people do care and have complete trust in their abilities to do them. How valued and empowered does your team feel? Could get emotional.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

BUILDING OUR TEAM
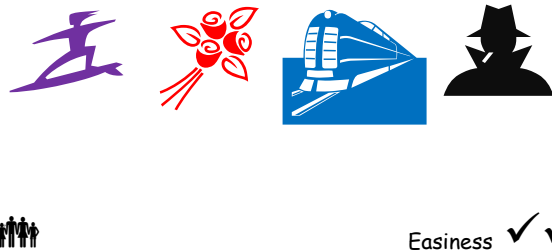
Fantasy job	Everyone in the group draws the fantasy job they would be doing if they weren't doing their current job and didn't have to worry about real life getting in the way! Get your colouring pens out. Great to help a new team get to know each other and understand what motivates people
Easiness ✓✓✓	

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

| Previous life Wow! I never knew you did that… Easiness ✓✓✓	Great to start building team coherence. Simply asking people what they did before they joined their current organisation is great for getting a non-emotional conversation going amongst people who maybe don't get on very well with each other, or don't know each other. Encourage discussion by asking what was the best bit about your previous life / what do you miss most? Great at finding out what skills people have that they don't use right now – you can always ask people to talk about skills they have that they don't use…
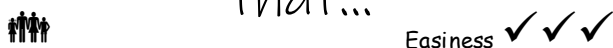
Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Skills mix & match

Alex — Trapeze artist
Jaz — Calligraphy
Hillary — Yodelling
Sam — Yoghurt making
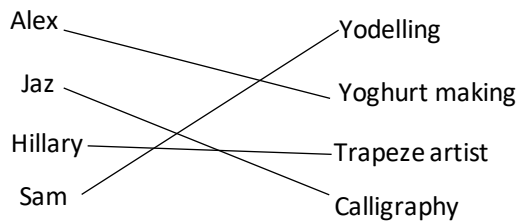
Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

A fun way for a new team to get to know each other…
Write everyone's names on separate post-its and stick to the wall. Ask everyone to write a single skill they have that they haven't yet used at work on separate post-its and anonymously put into a hat. Pick each skill out of the hat in turn and as a team discuss and try to match the skill to the person (sticking the skills posit-it next to the name). Once you have finished correct your mistakes explore how these skills could be used at work.
For variations, ask which new skill you would like to have, or what superpower you would like (no flying allowed and the more banal the better!)

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Magic wand…

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

Based on the car journey favourite…My aunt went shopping and bought a hat; My aunt went shopping and bought a hat and a pasty; My aunt went shopping and bought a hat, a pasty and a fondue set…… the list gets longer and harder to remember as you go round the table as each person has to remember the previous list AND add their own to the end…

Update for a grown up audience by asking "I'd use my magic wand to……" to get people learning what would help each other either at work or at home. You will all learn something about each other and build a stronger team. And it's fun. And at Christmas you can ask Santa!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

When did you last cheat?

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

'Not invented here' syndrome is a real thing (ask any engineer). Asking for help seems like cheating. And what's wrong with that? Celebrate those people who ask for advice and act on it and find it saves them time or effort.

Great for a team discussion to help people realise they can do much more, much more easily if they let go of their 'I can do it myself' pride.

Simply ask "Tell me about the last time you cheated at something!", followed by "and what did you learn?"

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

What experiment did you do last week?

Not everyone will have an example to start with, but asking this each time your team gets together will help build a culture of learning by experimenting.

And experiments can be small – eg – *I tried getting an earlier / later train to see if it would be less busy and I found out it wasn't, so I'm not changing my commute.*

Highlight the hypothesis you want to test, how you are measuring the result and what you learned

Easiness ✓✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Superpower

A fun way to understand the mood in the room, what challenges people have and how to solve them.
Ask people **what superpower they need to help them with their job**
And lead the discussion to understand each other's challenges and help people share ideas for solving them

Easiness ✓✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

...out of 10
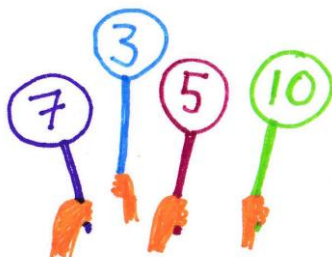
A quick way to check how things are going…
out of 10, how _____ are you?
You could ask how tired, stressed, excited, calm etc people are. You can also ask how beneficial was this meeting, how comfortable are you with this decision…
Get people to vote holding their fingers up – or by drawing on post-its. Get everyone to display scores all at once to avoid people bowing to peer pressure if scores come in one at a time. Explore thinking behind extreme high or extreme low scores.

Easiness ✓✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Long screwdriver alert
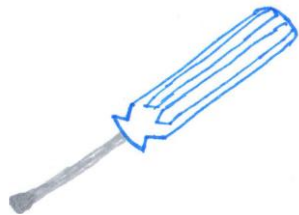
As a leader it is hard to resist getting into the weeds. But as a leader this is not where your talents should lie anymore – and it will disempower your team if you get your long screwdriver out and start meddling.

Ask your team what was the last thing I needlessly meddled with…? Be prepared to hear some hard truths so choose to react in a way that encourages others to speak more (rather than shutting them down by defending your actions!)

Easiness ✔✔

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

How we want to work
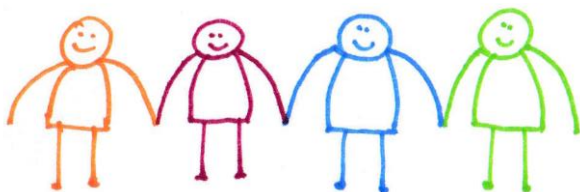
You may not know what your team's vision is yet, but you should be able to agree how you want to work together. Use the 'building team consensus' tool to draw up a list of team principles describing what it's like to work in the team. Use words you would use when describing what it's like to your friends, rather than management jargon.

In our team…
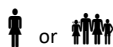- *We help each other out*
- *We share our concerns*
- *We are ok about saying when things aren't working*

Be prepared for this to take an hour, and to run multiple sessions.

Easiness ✔

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

SETTING OUR DIRECTION

The long & winding road

Draw a wiggly road marking 'NOW' at the far right and whatever start date you want at the far left. Use A3 paper for solo or multiple flip charts stuck together along a long table for a group. Draw pictures (fewer words the better) to represent the good (and bad) things you achieved or learned, or events that happened, roughly in place along the timeline. Enjoy drawing & colouring (you need lots of good pens) then discuss how much you have all achieved and learned.

Good for end of year team (or individual) reflection.

or Easiness ✔✔

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Future headlines

In pairs or small teams: write future headlines to describe a press exposé of the work they will be most proud of achieving five (or whatever) years from now. Vote on the best headline / worst pun! Great to help envisage a future state you want to aspire to.

Easiness ✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool
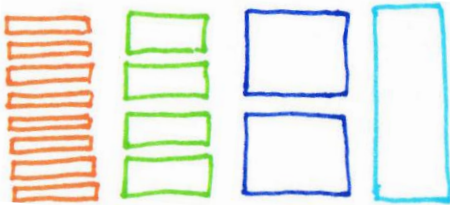
Building team consensus

Great to agree a list of working principles, a vision statement, or a why we need to change comms message. Or anything else!

Each person writes their own personal list or statement (1 minute). In pairs combine the best bits of each without increasing its length (2 minutes). Then repeat as fours (4 minutes), eights (8 minutes) etc, using the new list each time until the whole team agrees on the wording.

When there are multiple teams of 8 people, get each team of 8 to choose their top 3 points and combine into a master list.

Conversations are important so don't hurry – but decisions are also important.

Easiness ✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool
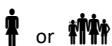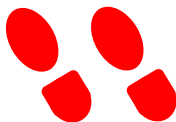
Wear another person's shoes

When leading a change it is easy to forget how it feels to the people impacted. Choose a non-work big upheaval, like moving your family to live somewhere else. Ask the group to identify the people this move affects eg partner, children, parents, friends, social clubs, work colleagues etc.

In pairs, each person chooses a stakeholder they can relate to (the same one can be chosen multiple times). Ask them to put their stakeholder's shoes on and be ready to say "I'm <stakeholder>, my biggest hope is _____, my biggest fear is _____".

or Easiness ✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Dotty voting

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓
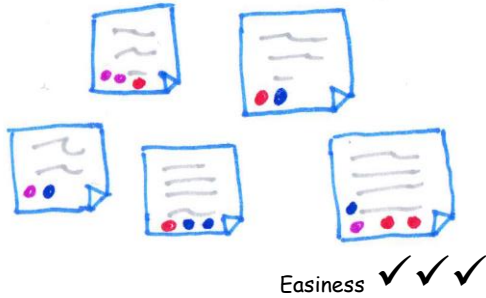
Great for drawing a team consensus out of seeming chaos… If your workshop has generated loads of ideas on post-its stuck to the wall, give everyone 5 votes and ask them to draw their dots where they would like to vote. Their 5 votes can be split however they want, eg 5 votes on 5 different ideas, 3 votes on one, 2 votes on another or all 5 votes on something they feel strongly about. Ask them to vote for the ideas most aligned with the organisation's strategy, or the ideas we are most likely to deliver in the next 12 months etc. You may find it helpful to get the group to cluster the post-its together into themes before voting and remove duplicates.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

The only picture you'll ever need

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

When explaining your idea, your team vision, your transformation goal etc to someone or a small group, you may be able to remember your sales pitch off by heart. Or you (and your audience) may find it easier to remember a picture as a prompt. Learn how to draw your picture 'live' so you can draw and explain it as you go. Don't use a pre-printed nice and smart power-point slide (although having one to give away at the end wouldn't hurt). If you can't remember to how to draw your picture then your audience won't remember what you are telling them so keep it simple!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

The 5 whys

Easiness ✓ ✓ ✓

An easy one to get to the bottom of why someone wants to do something. Keep asking why until you can get no further

I want to buy a new trombone…
Why: because my other one isn't good enough anymore
Why: because it is not loud enough and plays out of tune
Why: because it is cheaply made
Why: because it is only designed for absolute beginners and I'm more advanced than that now
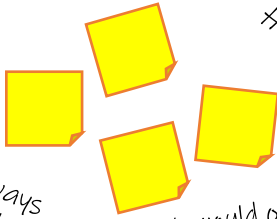**Why**: because I have practised lots and am really serious about my playing

And if you don't like the final answer then stop the initiative.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Curiosity wall

What if we....

How about...

I've always wondered why we don't...

What would our stakeholders say if...

Easiness ✔✔

Find a spare whiteboard or stick a flipchart to the wall and call it a "Curiosity wall". Put a few "what if…?" questions up and then encourage people to put their ideas on the board.

A great way to collect people's ideas for how to make things better. The trick is to get people to vote on the 1 or 2 things they should take forward (see the 'dotty voting' tool) – or better still – encourage people to take an idea off the board and run with it themselves.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Helicopter

Easiness ✔✔✔

A big challenge as a leader is focusing on the strategic not the tactical. Decide every morning:
how high will I fly my helicopter today?
above the mountains so I see the whole strategic picture or brushing the tops of the waves so I can see each fish?
Deciding *before* you start work will help you act in this way all day.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

Post-it pledge

I pledge to……
_____
_____

Easiness ✔✔✔

Great at starting to make something happen……
After a team has admired a problem and discussed what needs to change, ask everyone to write the ONE THING they will do when they return to the office onto a post-it note. These need to be small, memorable and achievable. For example, have a coffee with someone in the team you've never got to know. Invite everyone in turn to say "I pledge to…<action>", get them to keep hold of their Post-it note and remember to ask them whether they have honoured their pledge a few days later.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

## Retrospective

👤 or 👪👥
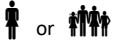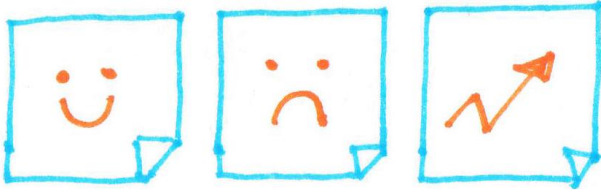
Easiness ✓✓✓

Use routinely to build a habit of continuous improvement.

Put three post-it notes on the wall – a smiley face, a sad face and an upwards arrow. Ask people to write things that went well (smiley), things that didn't (sad) and what we could do differently (arrow) on separate post-its. Stick them to the wall then discuss through them.

Use to look back over a meeting, the last week, month, 3 months etc.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Forcefield analysis

👤 or 👪👥
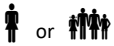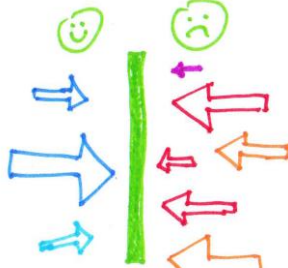
Easiness ✓✓✓

A tool that helps understand whether your change has a hope in hell of being achieved.

Draw a vertical line in the centre of the page. To the left draw pictures / words to represent the forces fighting FOR the change, and to the right draw representations of the forces against. Draw arrows towards the vertical line that represent the size of the forces.

It will be easy to see whether there is more push going left to right 😊 or from right to left 🙁

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Hopes and FEARS!

👪👥

Easiness ✓✓✓

Give everyone 2 mins to discuss in pairs their hopes & fears for the session or initiative. Collect their fears onto a flipchart, ask for suggestions how to address the fears. Then follow these suggestions!

Addressing peoples' fears gets to the heart of the likely 'people' issues that will derail your initiative.

Periodically check whether people's fears have been quashed. Great for all day workshops.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Celebrate STOPPING
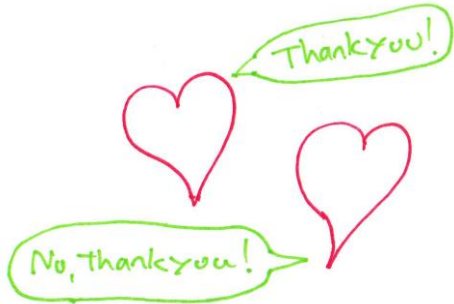

Easiness ✓✓✓

Say:
<name>, thankyou for stopping <such & such>, it was a good call because <reason>, well done.
Then invite others to do the same.

For example, Sam, thankyou for stopping organising weekly team meetings. It was a good call because we now see such a lot of each other we don't need a formal 2 hour weekly round table discussion and we have all saved 2 hours a week. Well done.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Thankyou speed dating

Easiness ✓✓

In your group, look someone in the eye and say <name>, thankyou for <doing whatever>. Ask for other volunteers to thank other people. Have a few spare thankyous so you can make sure everyone is thanked at least once! Thanking people for behaviours & attitudes is just as important as for actions.

Caution: This can feel uncomfortably emotional for some people.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Chain reaction
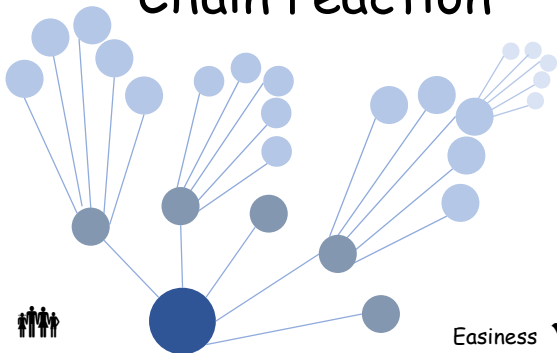
Easiness ✓✓

How does gossip get about so fast? Because everyone tells a few people, then they tell a few... Harness the power of gossip to get the word out about something...

At the end of a team meeting ask everyone to say the one key message they will broadcast, and who the 5 people are they are going to tell – and that they should pass this on to 5 more people.

Writing this on a Post-it will help them remember to do it!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Progress wallcharts

|	Training course completed		
	Fire	Safety	HR
Alex	🏆		🏆
Sam		🏆	
Charlie	🏆	🏆	
Jamie	🏆	🏆	🏆

Easiness ✓✓

Remember when you were kids and you had a wallchart and got stickers every time you did something good? It works just as well when you're all grown up! Great for encouraging your team to all do something they don't want to to…like your annual fire safety eLearning refresher.

Put everyone's name on a chart on the wall and give out stickers to everyone who has completed their task(s). People without stickers will soon do their task to get one. Peer pressure & fear of missing out are great leadership tools!

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Trim your backlog

or
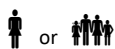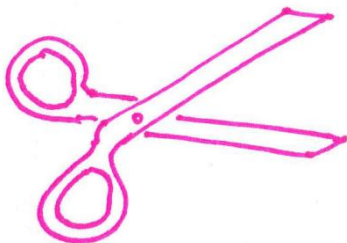
Easiness ✓✓

If you (or your team) are overwhelmed with the tasks you have on your plate then write each one on a separate Post-it note and spread them all out on a table or the wall. Cluster round and pick the tasks that can be done at least 3 months from now – put at least half the tasks in this pile. Then look at what's left and pick the tasks that can be done at least 1 month from now. You will only be left with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the original list. Focus on getting them done now and importantly – ignore the rest for a month then repeat the exercise.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Email signature block

or
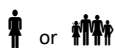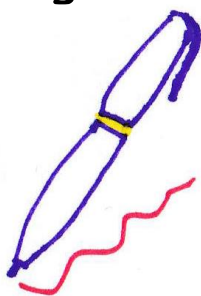
Easiness ✓✓✓

A great way to get a message out to all the people you work with is to add a very short message into your email signature block. If possible hyperlink to a web page with more details. Get your team to do the same.

Kind regards,
Alex Goodenough, Team leader
Click to explore tools to help you lead change

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

T-shirt slogan
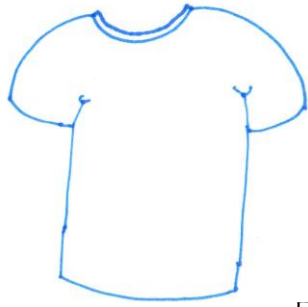
What would you put on the back of your T-shirt to sum up your team's purpose or initiative?
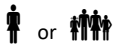
Run it as a team workshop by giving everyone brightly coloured cardboard T-shirts and pens. Then use the 'dotty voting' tool to choose the winner.

Use the T-shirt slogan in your email signature, as part of your elevator pitch, or even on a T-shirt!

Easiness ✓✓

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

User stories

As a…………..
I want………..
Because………..
I'll be happy when………...

or

Easiness ✓✓

Start thinking like your end users or customers. What do they want? As a group, list your stakeholders, use the 'dotty voting' tool to choose the most important, then in small groups write user stories for each of the most important stakeholders. Some may have more than one user story. Combine with the 'Wear another person's shoes' tool.
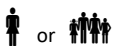
As a…person leading change
I want…a set of easy to use tools to help me lead my team
Because…I'm finding it hard to lead change when the world is so much more ambiguous than it used to be
I'll be happy when…my team feeds back that they feel more supported

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Elevator pitch

or

Easiness ✓✓

How familiar is this: You are in the elevator, a senior leader walks in, they ask you how you are and you say fine. 30 seconds later they leave. 30 minutes later you think of the thing you wish you'd said to them.

Next time – be prepared – make sure you and your team have an easy to remember 10-30 second pitch you can give to champion what you are doing and one thing the senior leader could do to help you.

Could use the 'building team consensus' tool to help.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Kill those zombie tasks!

Easiness ✓✓

Stop being the monk on the hill feeding the zombies! You will always have too many ideas or tasks ongoing. And once started they are hard to stop. Check that you are not giving oxygen to these tasks or that you are not encouraging your team to do everything on the list.

Look at what your team is doing and ask **if we didn't do that task, could we still be successful?** And stop some of the work (carefully as others will still be emotionally attached to some of the tasks!)

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Doing the simplest experiment

GIVE IT A GO!
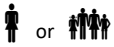
Easiness ✓✓

Build curiosity and confidence in experimenting by asking everyone to do the most simplest experiment. Something they can do on their own in their own time. Get them to use this approach:

I believe that if I go for a walk at lunch **then** I'll be more focused in the afternoon
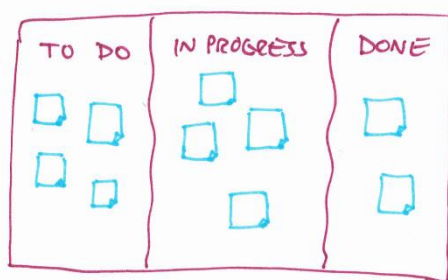**To verify that I will** go for a 15 minute walk today
And measure how I feel all afternoon
I am right if I feel more awake than usual
And if proved right, the next thing I'll do is bring a friend with me tomorrow

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool

Kanban

TO DO | IN PROGRESS | DONE

Easiness ✓

A good way to build team momentum and transparency. Use a whiteboard or flipchart and post-its. Get your team to write all their tasks on separate post-its. Pick the tasks to focus on for the next 2 weeks and put in the 'To Do' column. (Put all other notes into an envelope labelled 'Backlog'). Every day (without fail) get your team to stand round the board and say what they did the previous day, what they are doing today and what blockers they have. Move the post-its into 'In Progress' and 'Completed' as appropriate. Every 2 weeks refresh the 'To Do' column using the 'Trim your backlog' tool.

Preparation notes and what I learned from using this tool