

FLOW SYSTEM

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Distributed Leadership

Workbook: Bias Towards Action



getflowtrained.com/playbook/bias-towards-action/

Bias Towards Action

Bias towards action focuses on action. Bias towards action focuses on acting on information and ideas rather than just discussing information.



Developing a bias towards action is the combination of a willingness to take initiative, act boldly, and accept risk.

Avoid:

Action bias, our tendency to favor action over inaction, often because leaders push for action at any cost.

Deciding without evidence prevents decision-makers from evaluating alternative solutions.

Parkinson's law of triviality: avoid exerting too much time, energy, and resources on trivial or matters of low consequence.

Sayre's law: avoid investing too much time on low priority issues and concentrate your energy and resources on important issues.

Be aware of the following:

Bounded rationality, when the complexity of the environment is greater than an agent's capabilities of managing the environment.

Cognitive biases involve agents taking mental shortcuts, known as heuristics, to help us make sense of the world. These heuristics include the agent's culture, knowledge, and experiences, sometimes associated as being a bias.

Do:

Participatory leadership, which ensures leaders and followers become fully engaged and immersed in the process together.

In the following exercise, try applying the following decision-making practices to support bias towards action in your organization.

BIAS TOWARDS ACTION	
Bias analysis	Identify, assess, and challenge the orientations and underlying assumptions of the analysis and decision-making team.
Information gathering	<p>Challenge the information-gathering process to identify potential biases from (a) visibility, (b) timing, (c) limits of understanding, (d) expectations, (e) comparisons, and (f) experience.</p> <p>Search out and consider a wide variety of perceptions and claims about the situation and include perceptions from outside the analysis team and the organization (triangulation).</p> <p>Generate multiple definitions and solutions of the problem and do not settle on a definition of the problem or solution until late in the process, if at all.</p>
Information processing	<p>Challenge the information-analysis process to identify potential biases from (a) inconsistency, (b) conservatism, (c) miscalculation, (d) inertia, (e) overconfidence, (f) anchoring.</p> <p>Collaboratively analyze the claims and data related to the problem.</p> <p>Explain reasons for processing information and justify the reasons based on the data.</p> <p>Use fuzzy categories to classify problems.</p>
Information response	<p>Enlist several nonaligned sources for reality checks of analysis, definitions, and solutions.</p> <p>Attend to the perceptions, expectations, and impulses of the stakeholders throughout the process.</p>
General problem-solving and decision-making practices	<p>Consider that the problem can never be completely defined or completely resolved.</p> <p>Follow the natural, convoluted flow of problem-solving processes.</p> <p>Avoid the impulse to act early in the process (undertake early action only to test possible ideas and solutions).</p>
(Korte, 2003)	

Connect the Three Helixes:

Flow can only be achieved when the three helixes are interconnected. To identify how this could occur, the next exercise requires the reader to identify examples of different methods from each of the other two helixes (complexity thinking, team science) that might work well with bias towards action.

COMPLEXITY THINKING



DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP



TEAM SCIENCE



CONNECT THE HELIXES

Select a scenario or problem that would benefit from practicing bias towards action.

Identify three methods from complexity thinking that could work with bias towards action and give a brief description about how they complement one another.

CT Method 1:

CT Method 2:

CONNECT THE HELIXES

CT Method 3:	
Identify three methods from the team science helix that could work with or support bias towards action. Give a brief description about how they complement one another.	
TS Method 1:	
TS Method 2:	
TS Method 3:	
Provide a description explaining which methods from each of the three helixes (with bias towards action being the DL method) work best for the scenario/ problem identified earlier.	