



Client Success Story: Journey of a Leadership Team

THE REQUEST

In the fall of 2020, against the backdrop of work-from-home (WFH) fatigue and ongoing pandemic-related stress, Adelante received a request from a client for a virtual leadership team-building workshop. Adelante's Founder & CEO, Alicia Santamaria, had done previous work with this leader, department, and organization before using the [CliftonStrengths assessment](#) as a tool to support individual and team culture development.

The client's current need was for leadership team facilitation and coaching support. The high-level objective was to employ **a strengths-focused approach in creating a cohesive and collaborative new upper management team of five leaders that had been formed as a result of a recent department reorganization.**

THE CHALLENGE

Along with all the disruption to normal workplace functioning and higher stress levels caused by the pandemic, existing challenges with interpersonal dynamics and team member relationship history were also at play.

The client, Paula, a practical and compassionate leader, knew that having an outside facilitator to coach and support team development would greatly accelerate their ability to leverage their strengths, align relationships, and lead the department collaboratively as a cohesive team.

As Paula described her desired outcomes for the team session, they recognized how important team dynamics would play in their success and what a real opportunity lay ahead for this group of talented individuals to become more than

just an effective team. Using Adelante's team coaching approach, this would be an opportunity to create an exceptional team.

This multi-layered approach would call for a higher level of investment and commitment but would powerfully leverage team strengths and deepen relationships to address the intersecting challenges of:

- pandemic-related fatigue, burn-out, and team member stress levels
- Barriers to collaboration and reduced relationship building opportunities due to remote work
- long-standing relationship dynamics that were inhibiting the full trust and openness required for high levels of cohesion and collaboration



THE SOLUTION

Adelante's [approach to team development and coaching](#) uses a three-stage approach that centers people and relationships at the heart of the team. This approach provides leadership coaching to individual team members, cultivates the interdependent relationships between team members, and ultimately brings the team together to collaborate as a system. After Paula consulted with the team to gain buy-in, the process began as follows...

THE PROCESS

Individual Strengths Coaching

One-on-one sessions between Alicia and individual team members allowed each person to reconnect with their strengths and identify how to intentionally use their strengths as leaders of this newly formed team. It also provided a rapport building opportunity with Alicia.

Partnership Coaching

This foundation of trust, along with a clearly outlined purpose and process, allowed for team members to feel prepared to engage in the partnership coaching. In these sessions, Alicia facilitated dialogue around strengths appreciation and tension, uncovered historical challenges, and helped re-align and renew their partnership relationships. Reaching outside of their comfort zone but feeling psychologically safe, team members reinforced their commitment to one another and courageously mended rifts.

Team Coaching & Chartering Workshop

The next step was bringing the team of five together to develop their team charter and explore team strengths. Team chartering is a critical step in ensuring a system functions as a sum greater than its parts. Collaboratively designing the team purpose, values, expectations, and working agreements, not only provided a collaborative team experience but assured the buy-in and full investment of each team member as active participants in the process.

Having invested time in their own strengths development and going deeper with each other as partners enabled a higher level of team synergy that resulted in a positive, productive, and efficient use of group time.



Individual Strengths Coaching with each Team Member



Partnership Coaching with each pair of Team Members



Team Coaching and Chartering Workshop





THE RESULTS

Immediate Impact

Adelante's team development approach has had an immediate and ongoing impact. The team and the department already experienced the short-term benefits in their most recent high-intensity, highly demanding, and fast-paced Covid-response related project. Team members have reported a greater ability to work together and collaborate seamlessly - a task that would have been much more arduous had they not engaged in the team development work with Alicia. They describe a more relaxed, open, and more trusting atmosphere in their virtual team meetings.

As the relationship between each leadership team member has grown stronger, so have the relationships between their direct reports. More positive relationships between department team members mirror the improvements at the leadership level.

Moving Forward

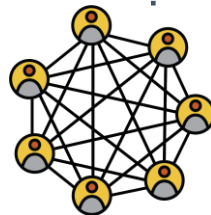
Longer-term, Paula sees how each extraordinary collaboration and constructive interaction between the team members adds another protective layer to the relational foundation of the team. She wants this to benefit all the members of the department and cross-departmentally as the culture becomes more psychologically safe, collaborative, and empowering for each person.

Particularly now in this new world of work, team interventions need to start with the wellbeing and strengths of individuals and their relationships. This leadership team of five, in collaboration with Adelante, have proven that exceptional is possible, even in our challenging times.



“Work used to feel like a series of projects, but now those projects are shared, meaningful collaborations.”

“ Because of the tension between some team members, I would avoid pairing them together at all costs. The rest of the team felt like they had to walk on eggshells around them. All of the tension on our team has gently oozed out like air out of a deflating balloon. ”



“I can more easily work through problems among our teams now. Things are very seamless. The difference is night and day.”





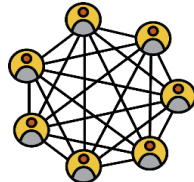
In Alicia's words

"I was genuinely moved by this team's courage and commitment to each other. In one partnership coaching session for example, two team members were able to discuss and heal from a rift dating back close to 6 years. It was very inspiring to witness these two smart and strong women share from their heart with courage and vulnerability. Over the course of a one-hour Zoom call, I was amazed to witness the self-protective armor they had each been wearing for so long, metaphorically slip off and clatter to the floor."

Lead your team **forward** with Adelante today and journey to exceptional...



COLLABORATIVE



CONNECTED



COURAGEOUS



COMMITTED



We help teams go beyond surviving in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world...so they can thrive in the new workplace. Now more than ever, we need exceptional teams that put people and relationships at the center.

Please contact us to learn more about Adelante's unique [approach to team development and coaching.](#)

10 YEARS
2011-2021
adelante
COACHING+CONSULTING



Alicia is Founder and CEO of San Francisco-based Adelante Coaching + Consulting. She collaborates with executive leaders, team managers and People Operations/HR to create high performing and positive workplaces that meet the changing needs of today's workforce.

ALICIA'S TOP 5 CLIFTON STRENGTHS: Communication® | Individualization® | Woo® | Learner® | Input®