

Why

People's actions reflect how they are treated. If you treat them as though they are small then they stay small. If you treat them like mature adults then they will act accordingly. In that spirit, it can be interesting to discuss topics and information that perhaps you reflect on alone.

What

Discuss and ask for input from your team on the bigger topics such as strategy, budget, investment, key problems and so on. To take this one step further, ask people as a team to prepare a proposal on the budget, investments etc. that will be needed in the coming year.

How

Set clear expectations and be transparent about what you want: input or decisions? Don't create false expectations - probably mostly input?

Define upfront a set of criteria for the type of input/solution you would adopt and clarify what kind of input/solutions would not make it (management funnel).

Put the topics on the table and have an open discussion:

First, host a round of questions from the group to explore and clarify the topic (as many facts as possible must be on the table before you invite opinions).

Then, ask for opinions, principles and criteria that should be respected in finding solutions.

Finally, brainstorm possible solutions/actions.

Immediately after or later on, give feedback on which input you used/did not use and why or why not.

To take things a step further ask your team to prepare proposals on the bigger topics, e.g. what they need in terms of budget, investments etc. for the following year. An intriguing possibility is also to ask each team to present these plans to other teams.

You can experiment with the degree to which you ask the other teams to challenge, advise or just listen.

When

When you want to empower your team to generate ownership and entrepreneurship.

Possible workshop exercise

Apply the steps above to an important issue. Practice the beginning of the meeting where you set expectations and criteria + the separation of asking questions, then offering opinions and then providing solutions.

Critical success factors

Willingness to allow people to give their opinions.
Good set of criteria.
Setting clear expectations.
Effective feedback.