Higher
Performance
Group

(LEADER GUIDE)
YOUR CLIMBING WALL DOESN'T MATTER

DR. JOE HILL
higherperformancegroup.com

LEADER CORE Guide: Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap
How to Align Campus Systems for Maximum Impact

Duration: 30 Minutes

Purpose:
To facilitate a meaningful dialogue about transitioning from competitive benchmarking to customer-focused problem-solving, helping team members explore how to create enrollment strategies that address real needs rather than match competitor offerings.

Pre-Session Preparation
- Send the article to participants 24-48 hours before the session
- Request that they bring one example of a competitive initiative their institution is considering or has implemented
- Set up a comfortable meeting space that encourages honest dialogue
- Prepare materials for the CARE Framework exercise
- Consider your own example of choosing amenities over actual needs

Session Flow with CORE Process Opening (5 minutes)
- Welcome participants
- Briefly explain the CORE process (Call It, Own It, Response, Execute)
- Share a personal example of when solving an actual problem led to better outcomes than matching competitors
- Establish relevance: "Today we're exploring how we might shift from competitive matching to authentic problem-solving to transform enrollment"

C: Call It - Questions of Clarity (7 minutes)
Group Discussion:
- "Based on the article, what is the fundamental difference between competitive benchmarking and customer-focused transformation?"
- "What does the CARE Framework reveal about enrollment decisions?"
- "How does the Three Bowling Balls Principle explain communication overload?"

Facilitation Notes:
- Capture key insights on shared space
- Clarify the distinction between amenities and actual needs

- Reference key statistics: "94% of enrollment decisions centered on problem-solving, 0% mentioned climbing walls"

O: Own It - Questions of Meaning (7 minutes)

Individual Reflection:

- "What expensive initiative are we pursuing mainly because competitors have it?"
- "Where do we see ourselves trapped in the 'amenities arms race'?"
- "What real problems are our families facing that we're not addressing?"

Paired Discussion:

- Have participants share their reflections with a partner
- Partners ask: "What would change if we solved this actual problem instead?"

R: Response - Options for Practice (8 minutes)

Application Exercise:

- Working in pairs, participants select one competitive initiative
- Using the CARE Framework, redesign the approach:
  - o Core Problem: What actually keeps families awake?
  - o Against Declaration: What will you publicly fight?
  - o Real Evidence: What changes week one?
  - o Emotional Truth: What feeling do you deliver?
- Partners provide feedback using the prompt: "How does this approach solve real problems rather than match competitors?"

Group Sharing:

- Invite 2-3 volunteers to share their transformed approaches
- Facilitate peer feedback on authenticity and impact

E: Execute - Commitment to Practice (5 minutes)

Individual Commitment:

- Each participant completes the statement: "In the next week, I will shift from competitive matching to problem-solving by..."
- Participants identify one upcoming decision where they'll apply customer-focused thinking
- Each person names an accountability partner who will challenge competitive assumptions

Closing (3 minutes)

- Round-robin: Each person shares one word describing their key insight

- Remind participants of the article's challenge: "What's stopping you from pivoting from competitive matching to authentic problem-solving?"
- Leader closes with commitment to question every competitive benchmark against actual family needs

Key Concepts for Reference
- "Enrollment flows toward institutions that solve real problems"
- The CARE Framework: Core Problem, Against Declaration, Real Evidence, Emotional Truth
- "They want transformation, not amenities"
- The Three Bowling Balls Principle: humans can juggle three complex ideas maximum
- "$2.3 million climbing wall vs. $75,000 mental health counselor"

Remember: Your role is to facilitate discovery about actual needs, not defend existing initiatives. Model the very principle you're discussing by creating space for honest assessment of what families truly want versus what we think they want.