Higher Performance Group

(LEADER GUIDE)
BEYOND BEST PRACTICES

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LEADER CORE Guide: Beyond Best Practices

Trading Up from Average to Breakthrough Results

Duration: 30 Minutes

Purpose:

To facilitate a meaningful dialogue about transitioning from best-practice thinking to breakthrough leadership, helping team members explore how to create collective intelligence that transforms average results into extraordinary outcomes.

Pre-Session Preparation

- Send the article to participants 24-48 hours before the session
- Request that they bring one example of a best practice their team currently uses that produces average results
- Set up a comfortable meeting space that encourages honest reflection
- Prepare materials for the Trade-Up exercise
- Consider your own breakthrough story to model the process

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 moving beyond a best practice led to breakthrough results
- Establish relevance: "Today we're exploring how we might shift from best-practice thinking to breakthrough leadership to create the results our students deserve"

C: Call It - Questions of Clarity (7 minutes)

Group Discussion:

- "Based on the article, what is the fundamental difference between best practices and breakthrough practices?"
- "What are the five common practices that guarantee average results?"
- "How does the Breakthrough Bridge framework transform average teams into breakthrough teams?"

Facilitation Notes:

- Capture key insights on shared space
- Clarify any misconceptions about abandoning all proven practices vs. trading up

- Reference key concepts from the article: "Best practices weren't designed for excellence—they were designed to prevent failure"

O: Own It - Questions of Meaning (7 minutes)
Individual Reflection:
- "Which of the five practices do you find most challenging to move beyond and why?"
- "Where do you see your team caught in the 'best practice' trap?"
- "What breakthrough result do you most want to create but feel stuck pursuing?"

Paired Discussion:
- Have participants share their reflections with a partner
- Partners ask: "What would become possible if you made this trade-up?"

R: Response - Options for Practice (8 minutes)
Application Exercise:
- Working in pairs, participants select one best practice that produces average results
- Using the Breakthrough Bridge framework, develop a trade-up approach:
  - o Question: What discovery question could replace data presentation?
  - o Identity: How does this connect to who we are as a team?
  - o Emotion: What emotions need acknowledgment here?
  - o Strength: What's working that we can build on?
  - o Catalyst: What's the one decision that could improve everything?
- Partners provide feedback using the prompt: "How does this approach maintain proven foundations while adding breakthrough thinking?"

Group Sharing:
- Invite 2-3 volunteers to share their trade-up approaches
- Facilitate peer feedback on breakthrough potential

E: Execute - Commitment to Practice (5 minutes)
Individual Commitment:
- Each participant completes the statement: "In the next week, I will trade up from best practice to breakthrough thinking by..."
- Participants identify one specific area to apply the Breakthrough Bridge framework
- Each person names an accountability partner who will check in on their progress

Closing (3 minutes)
- Round-robin: Each person shares one word describing their key takeaway
- Remind participants of the article's challenge question: "What's stopping you from making this shift?"
- Leader closes with commitment to model breakthrough thinking in upcoming decisions

Key Concepts for Reference
- "Best practices weren't designed for excellence—they were designed to prevent failure"
- The five trade-ups: Data to Discovery, Distributed to Identity-Based, Strategic to Emotional Intelligence, PLCs to Strength-Based, Evidence-Based to Catalyst
- "Breakthrough results depend more on collective intelligence than individual expertise"
- The Mediocrity Trap: "implementing more best practices creates more activity, not more impact"
- Breakthrough Bridge framework: Question, Identity, Emotion, Strength, Catalyst

Remember: Your role is to facilitate discovery, not direct conclusions. Model the very principle you're discussing by creating space for breakthrough thinking rather than best-practice implementation.