

Pressure Point

A management simulation activity



“How can I possibly decide between projects which are all so valuable? We need to do all of this ... but clearly we can't.”

Pressure Point originated in a request from the International Red Cross for a development tool which they could use in their selection and training of highly qualified medical professionals who were likely to be managing complex, multi-layered projects in emergency situations or disaster relief areas. They needed a tool which would enable them to observe managers and assess their potential or existing skills in areas related to Project Management under pressure. These skills were so relevant to operational managers in a wide variety of organisations and industries that the activity was developed for more general use.

Pressure Point is set up to work with a group of up to 8, reflecting a realistic management team. It takes 80-90 minutes to run, not including any de-brief. It is intended to be a concentrated management decision-making simulation and to explore issues around how teams make decisions when both logic and emotion are involved.

It is ideal to use as a simulated meeting, to explore how the team members establish decision-making criteria and processes and how they can influence each other to change their perspectives and opinions. It is also regularly used in assessment centres to observe a range of behaviours.



The specific management issues that Pressure Point demonstrates are:

- The importance of grasping the 'big picture' and the ability to maintain an overview of a situation when actively involved in individual/routine tasks.
- The principles of effective team-working so that all participants can contribute fully to agreed team objectives and procedures.
- The need to apply long-term thinking whilst still achieving short-term results.
- The ability to manage complex information, time and a range of tasks and priorities as well as anticipating and responding positively to change.
- Sensitive reactions to the needs of others and the use of different strategies to ensure that communication is successful even under pressure.
- Objectivity and neutrality in approach, allowing balanced rather than emotional responses.

Pressure Point raises interesting 'ethical' questions and challenges values in a team. It demonstrates clear differences in personal style and, owing to the number of different skills involved, offers an enormous amount of 'observed behaviour' which can be used to focus individual coaching.

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