MODULE 16

THREAT AND REWARD

Segment	Content
Introduction	Have you ever noticed what happens if you attempt to exercise or run for a long distance without stretching? Any number of bad things can happen…like cramps, or a Charlie horse in your leg; to name a few. That it is why experts always recommend that you stretch your muscles before beginning your task. Stretching increases your performance and helps you to avoid future problems or injuries. As a leader, you can use 'stretch goals' in a similar fashion. They will stretch your team and maximize their performance.
Learning and development objective	▪ At the end of this module, you will be able to distinguish between threat and reward stimuli and describe each. ▪ In addition, you will be able to describe the advantages of using stretch goals and you will create your own personal stretch goal.
Main text	**Threat and reward stimuli** ▪ The prefrontal cortex of the brain is wired to process information to minimise threats and maximise reward. If the prefrontal cortex interprets incoming sensory information as a threat, the brain will become ineffective. It will make mistakes in processing, and actively seek ways to avoid the threat. As a leader, if you adopt a leadership style which is threatening, intimidating, or aggressive, the members of your team will assume a protective stance, and 'be on their guard when they interact with you. Preferably, if you adopt a style which is supportive, reassuring, and encouraging, your team will be less guarded and assume a more relaxed posture when responding to your leadership. ▪ A threat stimulus causes brain resources to divert from the PFC to the Amygdala. Basically, this means that your team acts and reacts emotionally, not logically or analytically when threatened. ▪ A reward stimulus creates an engaged state which leaves the PFC free to function AND engages other parts of the brain, resulting in: ○ More cognitive resources ○ More ideas ○ More ideas for action ○ Fewer perceptual errors ○ Wider field of view **Why Stretch Goals?**

- Stretch Goals are those goals which are attained by your team when it goes beyond what the team is naturally expected to achieve. It is a goal which appears to be outside of the team's reach from a logical stand point, but which is a goal clearly within the realm of what 'might be' possible. Think of a stretch goal, as one which seems to cause the team, to reach beyond the reality boundaries. It is a goal which is impossible for them to attain with only systematic incremental steps.
- If an individual team member creates a clearly defined stretch goal, it gives them something inspiring and motivating to work toward. If a team creates and achieves a stretch goal amazing results are attained, and the team is invigorated. Even if the team does not achieve their stretch goal, due to striving for a much higher aspiration, their final result, is usually one of attaining more than they would have had they not set a stretch goal as their target.
- Defining a team stretch goal supports team members in creating new wiring in their brains (new learning.) This new learning can be unfamiliar and even uncomfortable at first. These feelings are common because a stretch goal, requires team members to look at their tasks from new perspectives, challenges them to find new methods, creates new ways of thinking, and implements new strategies. All of this new learning generates new energies and excitement for the experimental achievement of the tasks at hand. Set your stretch goal even higher, and then use a 'sanity check' on it. Is the goal still within the realm of possibility? Finally, set specific, measurable attributes for the goal, so that you will have a clear concept of what 'success' is and when the goal is achieved. Remember the words of Lawrence J. Peter, "If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else." Make sure your team knows where they are going.

How to implement Stretch Goals

- Begin by establishing a baseline for your team's performance. If your team continues doing the 'same old routine' as they have always done, or even if they do a slightly better than average job on their task, how have they performed and what have they accomplished? This is the team's baseline. Once you have established the baseline for what you can expect, then do some research. How has your team improved in the past? How have other teams performed? This information will give you an ability to make a realistic prediction of what a better than average response would be in this setting. Now you can set your stretch goal in clearly defined terms.
- When a leader challenges their team with a stretch goal, it is also important to include an intermediate performance goal. This should be a goal which the team will meet at about the halfway mark in their time allocated for the stretch goal. This will be an interim goal which the team recognizes as difficult, but achievable, if some major obstacles are overcome. All the time the team is working toward this very difficult interim goal, the leader continues to put forth the ultimate stretch goal. When the team achieves the interim goal, their energy and confidence will create the push to achieve the stretch goal also. Think of the team

	attaining the intermediate goal as having the same effect that 'catching a second wind' has for a runner in a marathon. • Now that you have set your stretch goal, forget it is a stretch goal. Consider it like any other goal. Share your goal with others. Keep the goal before your team. As you begin to execute and move forward, do not worry if your team does not make or exceed your early projections for them. Just keep the stretch goal in front of them and maintain high expectations. Celebrate all of the small 'wins and victories along the path. These small 'wins and the resulting celebrations will create excitement amongst your team members and propel the team forward as they keep working, keep exploring new strategies, and keep winning. • Stretch goals will cause your team to excel and perform beyond what you would normally expect. The end result is higher productivity and greater results. Think of it as a way to maximize your team's performance and abilities.
Key point	• Your team is most productive when you utilize rewards as a motivator, rather than utilize threats. • Creating stretch goals will maximize team productivity and creativity.
Task for the day	• Write your own personal stretch goal, one which will stretch you, energize you, and motivate you.
Questions	• How did you feel after writing your own personal stretch goal? • What is it about your goal which makes it a stretch goal for you---beyond what you would normally expect from yourself? • Is it clearly definable so that you will know when you have attained it? • Do you really believe you can achieve your stretch goal? • How will you feel when you achieve your stretch goal?