R&D Team:
Playing to a new VISION

Building a R&D Team's Vision with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

focus▶u

BE MORE!

What is: LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®?

A thinking, communication and problem solving technique for groups.

Context & Purpose of the Workshop:

The R&D team at a leading FMCG player had reached an important inflection point—marked by recent attrition, evolving aspirations, and the need for greater unity across its dual roles as GDC for Hygiene and RDC for Skin. While the team was widely regarded as an aspirational place to be, feedback revealed growing silos, declining motivation at junior levels, and a gap between the leader's vision and everyday team behaviors.

This workshop was therefore designed as a purposeful step back from daily pressures, enabling the core team to realign around a shared vision for the future. Using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology, participants explored team strengths, surfaced underlying challenges, and articulated what truly motivates them. The process encouraged every member's buy-in—moving from individual goal sheets to a compelling, collective ambition.

Key objectives included:

- Arriving at a practical, shared vision for the team that every member could own and support
- Understanding individual and group motivations at a deeper level
- Increasing team cohesiveness and mutual trust
- Cascading the agreed vision and norms to the larger team for sustained engagement
- Creating a memorable, meaningful team experience rooted in openness, creativity, and shared purpose

Through structured, experiential activities and facilitated conversations, the workshop set the foundation for a more cohesive, high-performing team culture—one where pride, ownership, and proactive leadership could thrive.

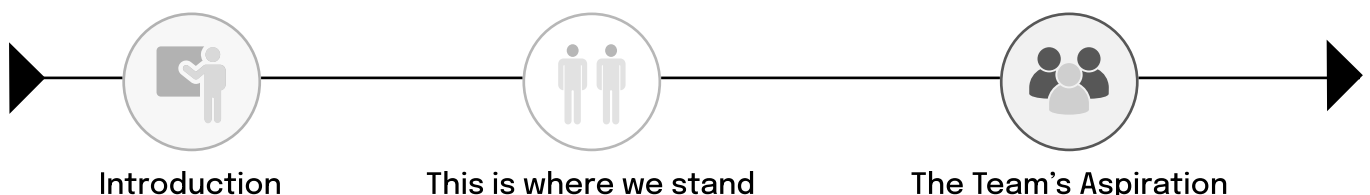# Key questions we worked on:

1. Introduction: Learning the LSP language

2. Where do we stand today?
   - What are our strengths / assets as a TEAM?
   - What are our challenges?

3. How can we get to the next level?

Introduction   This is where we stand   The Team's Aspiration

What are the strengths / assets of THIS team?

Each individual shared his view point on what are the strengths & assets of the team as he/she sees it. All of the individual models were then combined to arrive at one shared model

Aanya

- Good Alignment between the stake holders and the leadership team
- Good connection within the team
- We have people guiding and showing the right path
- Fun-loving team, not the same monotonous work
- Strong leadership, internal mood is good
- Team doesn't have shortage of resources
- People get recognized for job well done

Karan

- Different people in our team
- Lot of wealth of knowledge and experience
- Bridging gap between people, knowledge and expertise is our strength
- Extremely diverse
- Everybody is pulling in one direction to align with the ambition
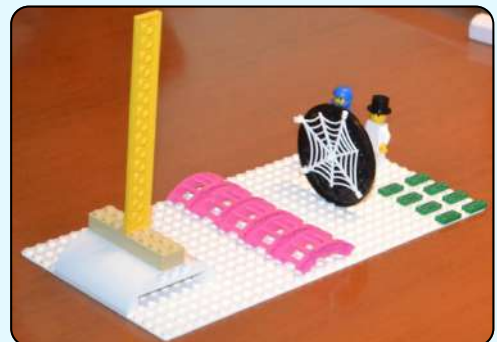
Rahul

- Biggest value generator, lots of cash
- We are nurturing the future lions
- Though we have to deal with evil forces like supply chain – we have learnt to build bridges and take them along
- It is complex business like spider web
- We are adaptable

Dev

- Multi talented
- Leader steps down and comes with the team and works when needed
- Lots of transparency within the team
- Keeps secrets when needed to for team's good
- We recognize people
- People share equal responsibility
- Everybody is aspiring to grow
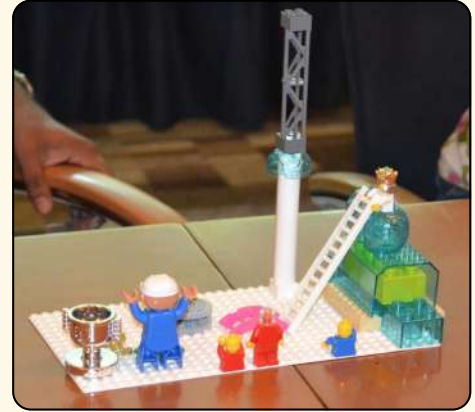
Arjun

- Lot of Transparency
- No politics and dirty games
- Wheels take the team forward
- There is a family like feeling within the team
- The team has clear direction from the top
- There is good growth and people see the growth
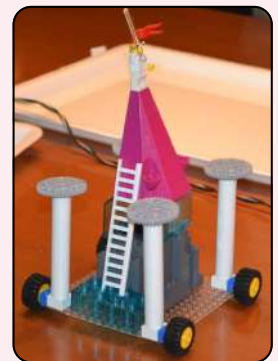
Meera

- Diverse knowledge
- We design, deploy, all of us carry a heavy load
- Good experience when we work, due to the varied kind of projects we get to work on
- Makes us stronger, we are also good at fire fighting
- Different experience levels in our team
- Strong leadership in our team
- Entire team is ready to take challenges
- We are also agile
- We have a lots of open spaces to work on

Tara

- Clear vision
- Track record of past successes
- We welcome talent from outside
- We are very wary of our competitors and react fiercely to them
- Much as we may fight internally, we have only one face to the outside world – like a good family unit, nobody lets another person down
- Very aligned people – we are strong at the front end and back end
- A Boss who gives other team members opportunities for situational leadership
- Very good at fire fighting
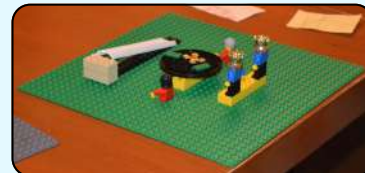- If you perform, you are rewarded

Aditya

- We are a set of hungry people who want to get to the top
- One of the best teams
- We all carry and display a lot of responsibility

Vikram

- Diversity
- People change hats based on role
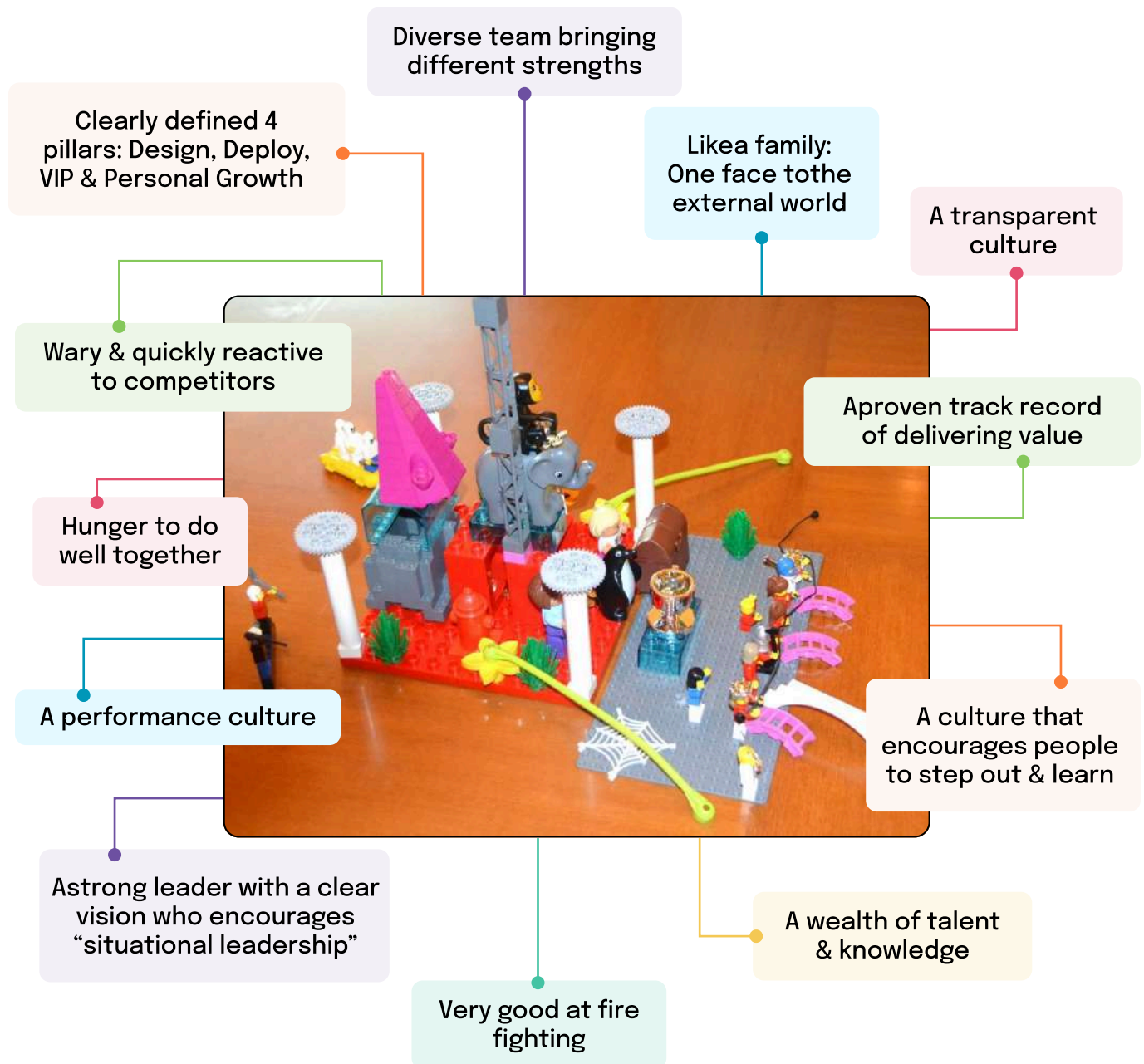- Large span of business
- Diversity is our strength

Rohit

- Very attractive from outside
- The leader always has an external view
- Open to everybody
- Leader has clear directions on external forces which may influence us
- Team performs hand in hand

R&D team strengths / assets – Combined view

Diverse team bringing different strengths

Clearly defined 4 pillars: Design, Deploy, VIP & Personal Growth

Likea family: One face tothe external world

A transparent culture

Wary & quickly reactive to competitors

Aproven track record of delivering value

Hunger to do well together

A performance culture

A culture that encourages people to step out & learn

Astrong leader with a clear vision who encourages "situational leadership"

Very good at fire fighting

A wealth of talent & knowledge

What are the challenges that THIS team needs to tackle/ work on?

Similar to the earlier section, each individual shared his view point on what are the challenges as he/she sees it. All of the individual models were then combined to arrive at one shared model

Aditya

- Lack of diversity in the talent – especially in terms of gender diversity and more diversity in talent
- We are not there completely yet as a team
- We tend to want clones of ourselves
- We need people who are more creative
- We have too many "followers"
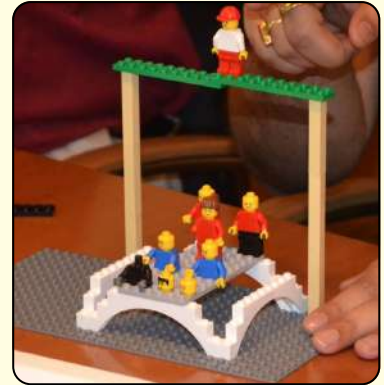
Karan

- When it comes to empathizing we don't understand the real issues
- We don't really understand the motivations of team members
- We put ourselves in cage and we don't understand
- We don't try enough to extend our hand in working with people
- At times we are not doing enough
- We have to make some serious effort to understand what real motivations are
- We have a bounded mind set
- We don't understand the aspirations of individual team member
- People sometimes don't say what they mean
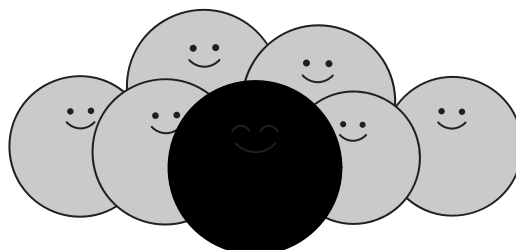
Arjun

- We are stuck in an old mindset
- Some of us have become too comfortable in the roles we do – and actually have a laid back attitude
- We are looking at people who are exactly like us

- Team is unable to engage very well with other stake holders
- Sometimes we come across as bad boys, who are too rigid
- We are not being able to drive the agenda – something which we were doing much better 3 years back
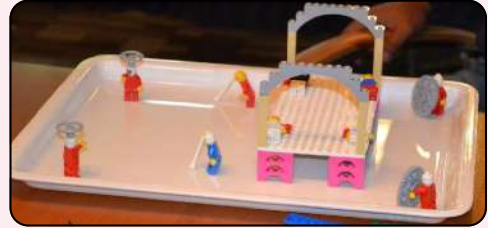
Rohit

- Some individuals feel relegated and are not able to perform because
- they are not getting attention from leaders
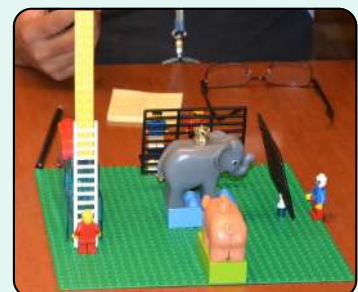- Some people in the team are not getting the exposure they deserve

Meera

- We know what the problem is
- We spend far too much energy to align multiple stake holders which is tiring and takes a lot of time
- Too many small priorities that don't allow us to focus on the big ticket items
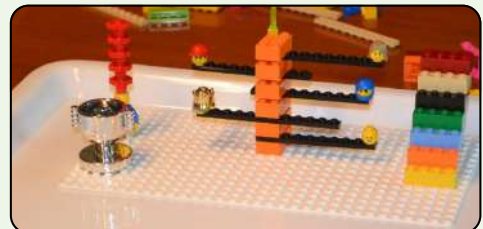
Rahul

- Lots of barriers relating to interacting with the other functions
- We spend more time on resolving issues than creating things
- One has to really think hard before speaking or communicating

Vikram

- We know what the problem is
- We spend far too much energy to align multiple stake holders which is tiring and takes a lot of time
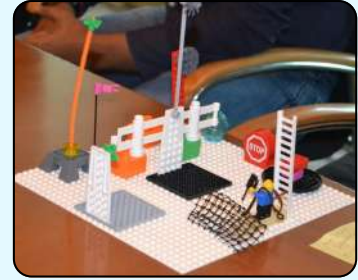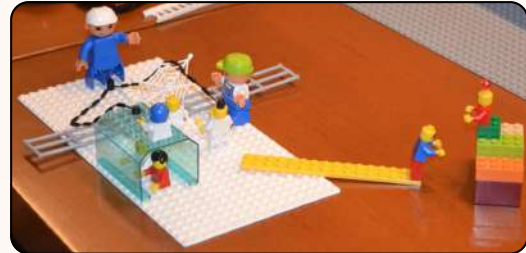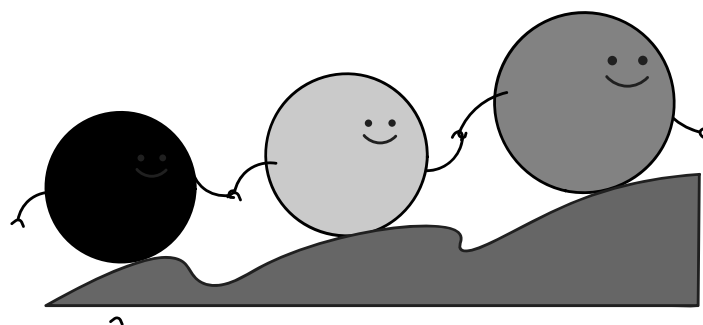- Too many small priorities that don't allow us to focus on the big ticket items

Aanya

- So much complexity in the system
- Many smaller silos inside the big group
- Very large picture, people are unable to cut it
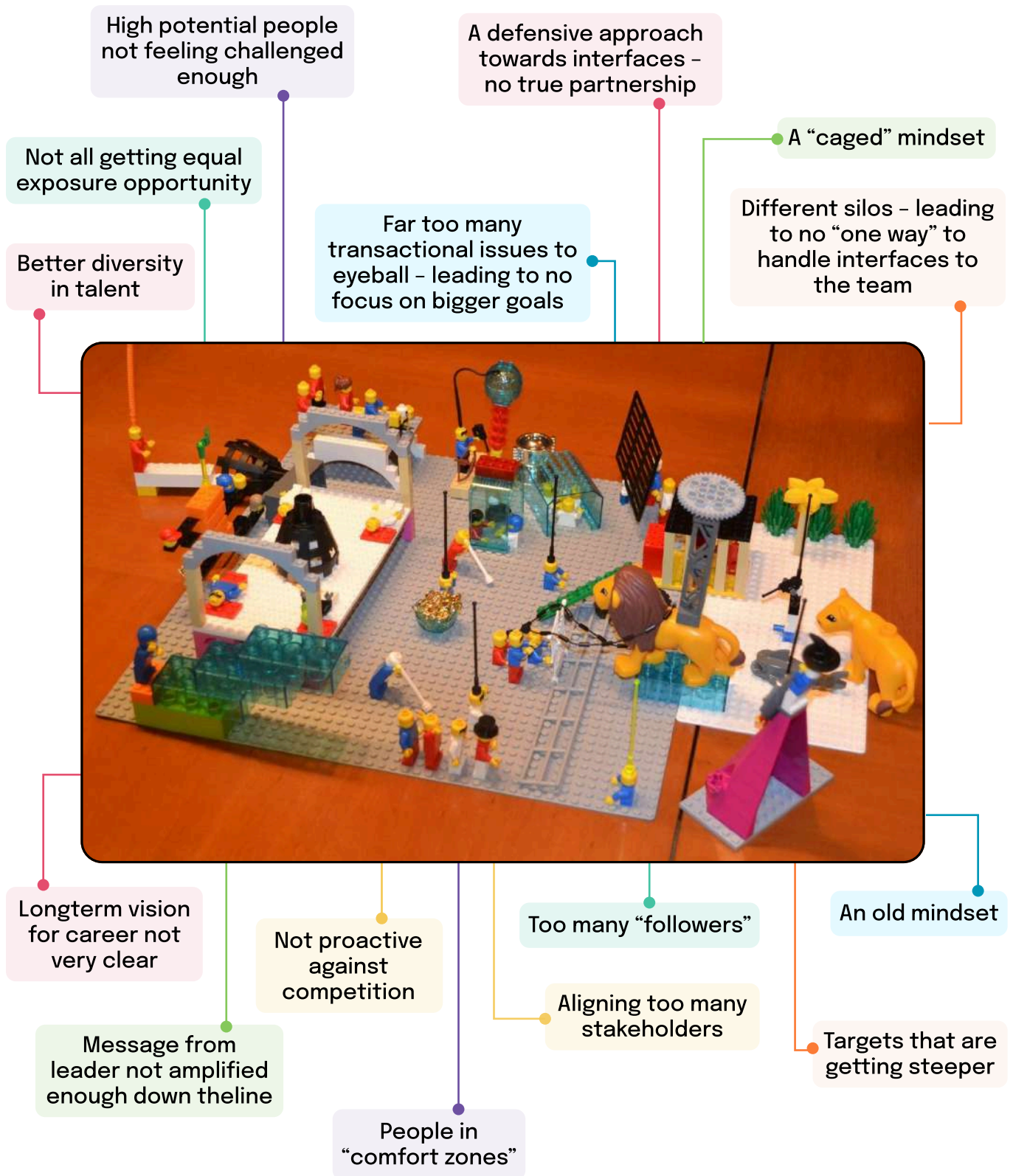- Message from leader getting lost

Tara

- Within our team we have silos clearly
- New people below are confused and don't know which direction they need to go
- Each silo has its own way of handling external functions which is visible to outsiders
- This is leading to outside people targeting us
- Too much effort needed in aligning with support functions which is a complete drain on energy

R&D team Challenges – Combined view

High potential people not feeling challenged enough

A defensive approach towards interfaces – no true partnership

A "caged" mindset

Not all getting equal exposure opportunity

Different silos – leading to no "one way" to handle interfaces to the team

Better diversity in talent

Far too many transactional issues to eyeball – leading to no focus on bigger goals

Longterm vision for career not very clear

Not proactive against competition

Too many "followers"

An old mindset

Message from leader not amplified enough down theline

Aligning too many stakeholders

Targets that are getting steeper

People in "comfort zones"

What is the VISION you have for this team?

Now that we see and are cognizant of both the strengths and the challenges that this team is faced with, we try and tap into individual thoughts on what each members holds as his/her VISION for the team. We then see which of them holds most resonance for all members through a simple process of Las Vegas voting
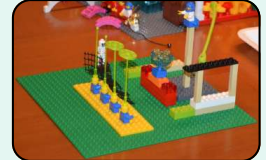
Aditya

- Transparent team
- Rewards should be transparent

Rohit

- Give equal responsibilities
- Do not block any communication

Dev

- Being transparent in all the process (Knowing the vision completely)
- Cohesive team
- Somebody in the team should track success and give regular feedback

Vikram

- There should be frequent reviews on performance
- Leader should guide the team
- Frequent group activity to be performed to achieve team cohesiveness
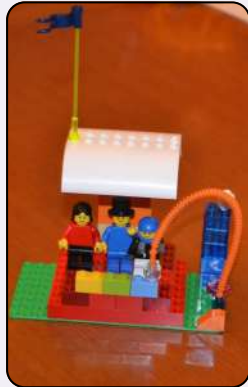

Tara

- Transparent flow of information from the leaders
- Message from the leader needs to be cascaded straightaway
- Need to take own decisions instead taking consensus decisions
- Very Solid aligned team

focusu

Tara

- There should be a lot of dialogue flow among the team members
- Collaborate and face the challenges together going forward
- Being the best

Arjun

- Tobe externally focused
- Regular interaction and effort from higher authorities to connect with the team
- Showcase the work of theteam to relevant stakeholders

Neel

- A very diverse but cohesive team where everybody is connected to each other and to the vision
- A very strong performance culture – if you perform you go up, if you don't you come down.
- A team where expertise and cross-functional knowledge will determine growth – not time spent, gender and other such

Integrating Individual Visions

VISION for this TEAM

The VISION for this team, for the next one year is:

> To be a place where cross-functional expertise will be rewarded

> To be a team that truly displays cohesiveness & consistent communication by the Leadership team

> To build pride in the team by getting due importance and recognition from key stakeholders

Translating VISION to behaviors

Turning the VISION reality, requires tangible commitment on a day-to- day basis in the form of behaviors we all commit to.

Behaviors we must all buy-in to:

Speak up	Honesty over harmony	Expertise before growth	Seeking clarity is your responsibility

Hindustan Unilever Limited

"Thanks so much for a wonderfully engaging workshop. The team was absolutely charged and energized post that. Given the tough hidden issues we wanted to surface and discuss, this could have been a heavy, emotional 2 days with everyone feeling drained at the end of it. Hence to come out of this workshop - having spoken their mind, shared a lot - and still be very positive and energized is truly a testament to the way FocusU ran this piece. The notion of using play to think and talk about serious stuff is brilliant and I see its potential for using more often in our day to day working.

For me personally, its been an absolute pleasure working with FocusU. It's not easy working around a highly introspective and tricky brief like I gave you but the experience was fabulous and I hope that the outcome in the short-medium term will be as great if not better. Thanks once again and i look forward to staying in touch and connecting again maybe early next year to do an evaluation on how far we have moved the needle."

-Dr. Vibhav R. Sanzgiri
R&D Director and Head GDC Hygiene + Skin South Asia, HUL