
Team

Dynamics

Group 7 – Chapter 9

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Workforce Teams

Teams have always been a key component in the business world. Although, many people are only just now learning to think of the standard office relationships as teams, the dynamics of the team have always been in place. Teams can be primary or temporary.

Primary Teams

The first is between an employee and supervisor and the second is between coworkers. Knowing your role and responsibilities in these teams is an important part in succeeding in your career.

Anyone that has a supervisor has a supportive role within a company. Management's ability to trust that tasks are completed correctly and in a timely manner allows them to do their work. If you had to stop at every step to have everything approved, your productivity would be dramatically reduced. The same stands true between you and your coworkers.

Offices have departments that are inter-dependent. For example, if Human Resources doesn't enter employee data in the system, payroll cannot enter the timesheet to pay them. Everything is connected. When employees understand how everything works together, this enables a company to function successfully.

No one wins if there is a negative atmosphere. Employees that cannot work within a team structure can lose their job. Those that aren't willing to lend a helping hand, resistant change or under mind someone's authority destroy the essential natural progress of the business.

When everyone has the same information and guidelines, then everyone is able to work towards a common goal to succeed. If they're working together the office flows. Employees that respect each other's knowledge, experience, abilities and differences also learn to value cooperation, good communication and have a higher success rate which in turn allows a company to succeed.

Temporary Teams

Over the last two decades, temporary teams have become a vital part of the business structure. In the past, individuals were given specific assignments or tasks to complete in addition to their daily responsibilities. With advancements in technology, downsizing staff to reduce overhead and more companies operating on a global level there is an increased need for efficiency with daily operations.

When companies downsize, the workload doesn't necessary decrease. In most cases, individuals get more to do because employers need to make the most of the staff they have to get the volume of work finished.

Temporary teams can be assembled for a number of reasons.

- **Task forces** look into a specific issue problem or improve upon an existing process. Focusing on topics that may have to be revisited periodically.
- **Problem-solving teams** solve a specific problem. Timesheet collections, training of new employees.
- **Committees** could be either permanent or temporary depending on their function. A group assembled to organize the annual holiday gift exchange.
- **Quality circles** meet on a regular basis to improve processes within the company. Steps to closing out the quarterly budgets.
- **Virtual teams** are a recent addition to the office. With companies spread out around the world, local teams at each office need to collaborate. The easiest way to achieve this is utilized electronic technology. Communications are primarily use the internet or company intranet. Organizing web meetings, video conferences or teleconferences.

Successful Teams

The success of a team is only as good as its parts. The core foundation of a team is for every person to truly know themselves and values others. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, teams should assign tasks based on who has the ability, experience or knowledge of the work that needs to be done. This allows researchers to research and word processors to type. Giving someone the task of typing and formatting a report when they aren't familiar with word processing isn't a wise decision or an efficient use of skills. This person might be more effective doing research, making calls or leading the meetings.

Characteristics for Success

Below is a list of some characteristics that have been associated with successful teams:

- Open communication
- Honest collaboration
- Friendly and confident with each other
- Participate in decision making
- Commit to achieve common objectives
- On-time Task accomplishment
- Effective problem solving
- Sense of purpose
- Share ideas and opinions
- Respect disagreement
- Passion for the project
- Equal stake and authority

Characteristics to Avoid

When we interviewed Administrative Assistants they listed the characteristics below as being weaknesses for teams:

- Poor communication
- Non- participation
- Weak leadership
- Pride
- Personal agenda
- Lack of follow through
- Late projects
- Procrastination
- Worrying about other groups
- Inability to focus
- Blaming others
- Not taking responsibility
- Lack of trust
- Fear of being reprimanded
- Negative attitude
- Low levels of loyalty and friendship

Communication Skills

Communication is more than words. Good team members have taken the initiative to improve themselves. Learning to process verbal and non verbal expressions takes time, patience, and a willingness to grow beyond your comfort zone.

Communication Process

There are four primary steps to the communication process.

- The **Originator** is the person that initially puts out information, either verbally, written or body language.
- The **message** is the thought being sent out by the originator.
- The **receiver** is the one who puts the thought into meaning.
- The **response** stage is when the receiver restates their understanding of the message to the originator.

This four step process may seem tedious but it is a necessary process to eliminate miscommunication and mistakes. For example, if a manager states “I need you to organize the meeting on Wednesday.” You reserve the conference room and send out the email notification. Then your manager calls you into the office to ask, “Why there wasn’t a meal request included?” You assigned the meaning of his request to mean book the room and notify participants. He wanted you to book the room, order food and notify everyone. When the message isn’t spelled out for you, it is up to the receiver to get clear unmistakable details. Miscommunication is easy; the art of communication is a learned skill.

Cultural Diversity

Workplace diversity is growing. Women are moving into more upper management positions. Medical advances mean people will remain in the workforce longer. As companies expand beyond the U.S. borders, we need to gain knowledge of about international communications styles. Things that we take for granted could mean something completely different in another country. Lack of personal space, hugging and kissing when greeting, handshaking, standing with hands in your pockets, extended eye contact, speaking in a loud voice, could be construed as rude, indecent or unacceptable. As we learn to communicate we also need to learn to communicate to a wide range of people, especially when we are visitors to another culture.

Sacramento Ethnic Census 2007 and 2008

Results	2007	2008
White persons	49.61%	69.70%
Black persons	9.20%	10.50%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	0.77%	1.30%
Asian persons	13.05%	13.40%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	1.02%	0.80%
Persons reporting two or more races	5.27%	4.40%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	21.07%	20.20%

Females >16yrs Economic Profile 2000 Census Data

	Number	Percent
95838-Zip Code		
In Labor Force	6052	50.10%
Civilian	6048	50.00%
Employed	5620	46.50%
95815 Zip Code		
In Labor Force	4510	48.30%
Civilian	4484	48.00%
Employed	3944	42.20%

Values affect Teams

Each generation processes information based on their personal values, life experiences, culture, teachings, and even their generation. People respond to situations engrained in memory and the current situation or circumstances.

Depending on the social forces; school, parents, employers, religion, and other close relationships we form a value system that acts as our compass for decisions and reactions to things happening around us.

These values also determine a large part of how we interact with people one-on-one and within groups. If someone is from the baby boom generation they could inadvertently talk down to a Generation X team member without realizing that they're doing it. Just as a Millennial Generation member could make a Baby Boomer feel inadequate for not having the same level of computer knowledge.

As the age gaps widen in the workforce it's evident that all generations need to take toll of their personality issues, preconceived notions and come into workplace projects ready and willing to work together on an even playing field.

Individual verses Team

Through our research interviewing Administrative Assistants, reading the textbook and sharing personal experiences; the preference of doing projects within a group or as an individual is as varied as the people questioned.

Five people were questioned whether they preferred to work alone or in a group. Two were on the indifferent, one didn't answer the question suitably to determine an answer and two liked to work individually then collaborate all phases into a completed project. ■

Overall Evaluations for Group 7

Summary for projects 9-1

Communication Between Members: 1 Being Poor -- 5 Being Excellent

Discussion Boards	1	√	3	4	5
D2L Pages	√	2	3	4	5
D2L Emails	1	√	3	4	5
Personal Email	1	2	√	4	5
Cell Phone	1	√	3	4	5
Face-to-Face	1	√	3	4	5

Comments: Communication needs to be more frequent. The D2L is not being utilized to its full potential. Whether is unfamiliarity of the system, lack of time to monitor or unsure if the posted information truly needs a response.

Thought processes to present work and information:

Textbook	1	2	3	√	5
Internet	1	2	3	√	5
Other sources	√	2	3	4	5

Comments: Although the textbook is very helpful, it states much of the same information found on the internet. The internet can become overwhelming, and frustrating trying to find valid data.

Participation levels for members and understanding of the information gathered:

Yulia K.	1	√	3	4	5
Joey N.	1	2	3	4	√
Angela T.	1	2	3	4	√
Katrina	√	2	3	4	5

Comments: The census and workforce data really didn't make any sense to Joey and Angela. Trying to tie it into the actual report was a bit of a challenge. No comments were provided by Yulia. Participation levels are not at the same level for all group members. Daily activity and responses need to be adhered to when working in groups.

Team Dynamics

Summary for projects 9-2

Communication Between Members:

1 Being Poor -- 5 Being Excellent

Discussion Boards	1	2	√	4	5
D2L Pages	1	√	3	4	5
D2L Emails	1	2	√	4	5
Personal Email	1	2	√	4	5
Cell Phone	1	√	3	4	5
Face-to-Face	1	2	√	4	5

Comments: The D2L can be a little difficult to follow when subject lines are not used or when a separate discussion area isn't set up by the instructor. Having chapter 9 information mixed in with our final project made it hard to read and understand. Joey and I found that I was easier to meet face-to-face so that we had clear communication and could collaborate on the projects. The level of dedication and desire to excel is not the same for all members.

Thought processes to present work and information:

Textbook	1	2	√	4	5
Internet	1	2	√	4	5
Interview	1	2	√	4	5
Other sources	1	2	√	4	5

Comments: Not having a specific format to follow for the report was difficult. Trying to fit all this information into a report that was able to flow from thought to thought was difficult. Using the internet was a vicious circle trying to find census information. Joey and I were getting a little frustrated clicking on different links and then several times were sent back to the initial site. I sent several emails out to different alumni that work as an administrator for assistance with the

Participation levels for members and understanding of the information gathered:

Yulia K.	1	√	3	4	5
Joey N.	1	2	3	4	√
Angela T.	1	2	3	4	√
Katrina	√	2	3	4	5

Comments: Participation of members has been unbalanced. Not all members monitor the D2L or personal emails frequently enough, which makes it difficult to ascertain if the members fully understand objectives.

There was one successful face-to-face meeting between Angela and Joey. Monday's attempt between Angela and Yulia was a no-show on Yulia's part; Joey was working and unable to attend. I believe we are now working with only three members, Katrina's name could not find her on the classlist. Joey shows a strong desire to participate, complies research, and monitors the D2L and personal emails on a regular basis. Angela has become the group leader by default, trying to pull everyone together for a successful project. Yulia does not actively participate causing others to pick up the slack. The information provided as her portion was only posted to the D2L after an email was sent advising her that the group would proceed without her if communications were not responded to.

Summary for Improvement

For Group 7 to be successful all members need to participate at the same level. The D2L is the primary source of communication. Resource data needs to be posted in a timely fashion, not two days prior to the assignment due date. Information needs to be reviewed, discussed, and assembled into a clear thought to create a successful report. This takes time and this project did not have good use of time.

Areas of Focus

- Group members need to monitor the D2L. Check at least *three times a day* for pager messages, i-Mail messages, and Discussion posts.
- Respond as soon as possible to all communication.
- Check the Content Area daily for assignments not included on the syllabus.
- Make the project a priority.
- Schedule time to work on the final project.
- Ask questions if you don't understand the topic or information.
- Follow through on plans.
- Don't procrastinate, work ahead to allow collaboration.

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