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1. TEAM MANAGEMENT

A team is a group of people but every group is not a team. A team is different from a group in the sense that it is usually small and exists for relatively long period of time till the objective for which it is formed is accomplished. A team must, ideally, consist of members who possess multifarious skills to efficiently handle various types of tasks.

Teams become components of a system, working toward the common goal of quality and process improvement. Many different types of teams exist in the business world. There are project teams, which may be called task forces or ad hoc teams; cross-functional teams; self-directed or autonomous teams; and virtual teams. Almost every business uses one form of team or another.

1.1. Team Building

The purpose of forming a team is to improve the internal and external efficiencies of the company. This is done through the efforts of the team members to improve quality, methods, and productivity.

Purpose to form a team

- ✓ Produce an item or service
- ✓ Share learning
- ✓ Coordinate resources
- ✓ Solve problems
- ✓ Plan or develop strategies
- ✓ Innovate and create
- ✓ Decreased productivity
- ✓ Complaints about quality of service

Management supports the team process by

- ✓ Ensuring a constancy of purpose
- ✓ Reinforcing positive results,
- ✓ Sharing business results
- ✓ Giving people a sense of mission
- ✓ Developing a realistic and integrated plan
- ✓ Providing direction and support

Team Types

Teams can take several specific forms or types, and although there is overlap between types, each of the team types has a best application. The variety of team types can vary over several dimensions, such as function, purpose, time duration, and leadership.

- ✓ Project Teams - Project, or ad hoc, teams are formed for special projects, especially those with a material focus. Project teams can consist of a narrow or broad range of team members, and can be interdepartmental or cross-functional.

- ✓ Self-directed or cross-functional Teams - In self-directed teams, members must have considerable training, experience, and cooperative skills, since they operate without constant direction from management. They can be assigned objectives or develop their own. In this case the team leaders give guidance, rather than direction, and on some teams, members rotate jobs and managerial responsibilities. Empowering employees and reducing company bureaucracy is the main thrust of the self-directed work team.
- ✓ Cross-functional Teams - Cross-functional teams promote the acceptance of change throughout the organization. They are useful when knowledgeable people from various departments and different areas of expertise are required to address projects, policies, practices, or operations. Cross-functional teams are often effective in generating creative solutions to problems.
- ✓ Virtual teams - Virtual teams are typically projected or ad hoc teams, and they are necessary when members are geographically dispersed. Communication technologies are used to conduct team work. Virtual teams allow companies to hire and retain the best people regardless of location.

Classification of Teams

- ✓ Formal team - It is a team formed to accomplish a particular objective or a particular set of objectives. The objective of the team formation is called as 'mission' or 'statement of purpose'. It may consist of a charter, list of team members, letter of authorization and support from the management.
- ✓ Informal team - This type of team will not have the documents that a formal team will have. But an informal team consist versatile membership as the members in it can be changed as per the requirements of the task on hand.

Another type of Team Classification

A team can also be classified into following types depending on a given situation and constraints that prohibit the formation of either formal or informal teams, as

Virtual team - A virtual team is usually formed to overcome the constraint of geographical locations which separate members. Some of the characteristics of a virtual team are as follows -

- ✓ It consists of members who live in different places and who may never meet one another during the course of accomplishment of the goal of the team.
- ✓ In a virtual team, the members make use of different technologies like telephone, internet, etc. to coordinate within the team for the achievement of the common goal.

The special constraints of virtual teams include

- ✓ differences in time zones and scheduling
- ✓ lack of face-to-face communication
- ✓ costs of communication

There are many challenges inherent in the management of virtual teams, such as

- ✓ establishing trust
- ✓ establishing a group identity

- ✓ developing clear structures
- ✓ dealing with "cliques" or subgroups
- ✓ sharing information
- ✓ ensuring that information is understood

Working in virtual teams poses problems not usually encountered when groups of people work in the same building. Developing a team culture and clear procedures are essential for the development of trust in a virtual environment. To be effective, virtual teams have to find new ways of sharing knowledge and understanding in the electronic space.

Process Improvement Team - It is formed to discover the modifications required in a particular process in order to improve it. It consists of members who belong to various groups that will be affected by the proposed changes, thus making it cross functional in nature.

Self-directed and work group teams - It has wide-ranging goals that are ongoing and repetitive. This necessitates the team to carry out activities on a daily basis. They are usually formed to make decisions on matters such as safety, personnel, maintenance, quality, etc.

Belbin Role Types - Dr. R. Meredith Belbin researched the area of team management. Belbin carried out an intensive study of management teams, working with simulations of real world challenges. Belbin discovered that nine roles exist within all teams. Belbin's nine behavioral or personality roles on a team can be grouped into three categories

Action-oriented roles

- ✓ shapers - Shapers are dynamic and challenging. They are highly motivated people who are task-minded and make things happen. Shapers tend to be outgoing, dominant, and extroverted, and they thrive on pressure. Shapers direct the team and its work to get results, keep the team focused, challenge and respond to challenge, and have the drive and courage to overcome obstacles. Shapers are committed to achieving goals.
- ✓ implementers - Implementers are practical people who are organized, reliable, methodical, self-disciplined, and not easily discouraged. They are methodical and hard working. Implementers favor hard work and tackle problems in a systematic fashion. They turn ideas into actions and work for the team in a pragmatic and realistic way.
- ✓ completers - Completers, also known as completer finishers, are disciplined, conscientious, and orderly. They tend to be the perfectionists and planners on a team. Completers deliver on time, taking care that details are not overlooked and that pace is maintained. They meet deadlines, follow through, and seldom start what they cannot finish.

People-oriented roles

- ✓ coordinators - Coordinators are social leaders, clarifying goals and seeking contributions from others. Coordinators are confident and calm, encouraging decision making and the attainment of shared goals. They spot individual talents and use them to pursue group objectives. Coordinators clarify goals and delegate well.
- ✓ team workers - Team workers are good listeners and can cope with difficult people. They are sensitive but can be assertive. Team workers will always put the group first and help to maintain morale. With sensible and sociable personalities, they foster team spirit by supporting other members, building on their ideas. They bring cooperation and diplomacy to a team and reduce any friction that may arise.

- ✓ resource investigators - Like shapers, resource investigators are extroverts. They naturally explore opportunities and develop contacts, so they are good communicators and skilled and diplomatic negotiators with a wide circle of contacts. Innately curious, they are enthusiastic about people, ideas, and anything new. Resource investigators like a challenge, are energetic and positive, and will readily look outside the team to obtain information.

Problem-solving roles

- ✓ plants - Plants, also called innovators, are creative, individualistic, and bright. They can think outside of the box to suggest new strategies to address an issue, often solving difficult problems. They provide the seeds and ideas from which major developments spring. A plant brings creativity, ideas, and imagination to a team.
- ✓ monitors - Monitors, also known as monitor-evaluators, are serious, sensible, and unemotional. They take a strategic view because they possess the ability to think critically. They can offer dispassionate advice, finding flaws in arguments and carefully considering all factors. Analytical and objective, monitors evaluate the team's ideas, analyze problems, and gather and assess data. Undeflected by emotional arguments, they bring objectivity and judgment to options.
- ✓ specialists - Specialists are self-starting professionals, single-minded, dedicated providers of expert knowledge and skills. They pride themselves in acquiring technical skills and specialized knowledge. Specialists bring dedication and initiative. They provide needed knowledge and technical skills, and they are good at remembering specific details.

Team Roles

A team performs optimally when all the members are assigned appropriate roles and they understand their roles in terms of the overall functioning of the team. Teams need balance. Teams include a number of key functional roles, each of which is associated with a number of duties. Some of the major team roles and responsibilities are as

- ✓ Team leader - It is a person who motivates guides and helps the team stay focused. Team leader heads and conducts team meetings and also supervises the performance of the team. Team leader also documents and administers the activities of the team and divides the work among members and monitors their work.
- ✓ Sponsor - They define the scope and goals of the project and provide the essential resources required to achieve the preset goals. They also monitors and the controls the team and its activities through the team leader.
- ✓ Facilitator - They facilitate the team members in expressing their ideas and at times head the team meetings. They also aids the team leaders in keeping the team focused and also aids the team in making decisions on matters of high importance. They provide assistance to the team in overcoming sub-standard performance, if any. They also assist in avoiding and resolving conflicts.
- ✓ Coach - Coach coordinates with the team leader and the facilitator to help the team function smoothly. Coach also assists the team members in fulfilling their obligations by supplying required resources.
- ✓ Team member - They participate and share their views in the team meetings and also Uses their expertise to accomplish the tasks assigned to them. Team member tries to carry out the tasks as per the schedule.

Team Member Selection

For a team to achieve its broad goals it must have members who are experts in the critical spheres of the project. Some of the major factors that influence the selection of team members are

- ✓ Ideal combination of required skills - A team must consist of members with varied skills.
- ✓ Varied behavioral styles - Apart from varied skills, the presence of different personalities or behavioral styles too is a factor to be considered during team member selection.
- ✓ Optimal number of members - Ideally a team must consist of five to eight members.
- ✓ Basic teamwork attributes - All the members must possess at least elementary teamwork training.
- ✓ Adaptability - Members must possess behavioral flexibility.
- ✓ Schedule - Team members must be available during the project timeframe. They must be able to dedicate the required amount of time and energy the project requires.

Qualities of an effective team

- ✓ diverse members with a common mission
- ✓ knowledge and expertise
- ✓ cooperation and trust between members
- ✓ effective communication skills
- ✓ creativity
- ✓ effective decision-making skills

Launching Teams

Teamwork can achieve goals that individual efforts cannot achieve. So, for a group of people to produce teamwork certain conditions have to be met before launching the team, which are

- ✓ The goals should be explicitly stated and directly related to the project work.
- ✓ Appropriate training on team dynamics must be provided to the team members.
- ✓ A well planned schedule must be prepared. The team must not be made to wait for specific work to be assigned after the project is underway.
- ✓ The team must be made aware about what they are authorized to do. They must also be assured of total support from the management.
- ✓ It must be ensured that there is balanced participation of members in the carrying out of the project.
- ✓ There must be sponsor who has vested interest in the success of the project.
- ✓ Proper communication channels must be created.

Team Stages

Most teams go through four development stages before they become productive - forming, storming, norming, and performing. Bruce W. Tuckman first identified the four development stages, which are

- ✓ Forming - Expectations are unclear. When a team forms, its members typically start out by exploring the boundaries of acceptable group behavior. Leaders must allay team members' fears and provide structure and direction. They must also provide the impetus for team members to get to know each other. The stage involves sharing information about the project's

mission and goals by leaders, establishing the ground rules for working as a team, assuring team members they will have equal participation in decision making, describing their management style and encouraging questions and answers them openly and honestly.

- ✓ Storming - Consists of conflict and resistance to the group's task and structure. Conflict often occurs. However, if dealt with appropriately, these stumbling blocks can be turned into performance later. This is the most difficult stage for any team to work through. Leaders need to respond to a team's behavior and feelings. Leaders must coach and conciliate. Leaders must prompt members to voice areas of disagreement honestly and clarify goals, tasks, roles, and responsibilities with team members. They should also establish a problem-solving process that emphasizes collaboration and resolve content and process issues with team members.
- ✓ Norming - A sense of group cohesion develops. Team members use more energy on data collection and analysis as they begin to test theories and identify root causes. The team develops a routine. The team gels and becomes a focused unit. Leaders should begin to delegate as much decision making as the team can handle and provide support with these new responsibilities. They should perform team evaluations and give positive feedback and constructive negative feedback, which helps team members grow in their jobs as they learn to self-correct.
- ✓ Performing - The team begins to work effectively and cohesively. Leaders should also delegate tasks and projects to develop each team member's potential, look for new opportunities to increase the team's scope and provide feedback on team members' contributions.

Two more stages of team are present, which are

- ✓ Adjourning - At the end of most projects the team disbands. Adjourning is also a very common practice for companies in regards to project teams, task forces and ad hoc teams. Leaders should keep team members focused on goals and help team members to detach and providing emotional support and closure. They are also involved in conducting a post-project review meeting and sharing praise received from upper management.
- ✓ Recognition and Reward - The ultimate reason that rewards and recognition are given is to provide positive reinforcement for good performance or correct behavior, with the expectation that this performance will be repeated in the future. The effect of the reward will depend on the perception of the person receiving the reward.
 - ✓ Recognition and rewards for teams and team members can be grouped into the following types, as
 - ✓ Material items of significant value or equivalent
 - ✓ Material incidental value or equivalent
 - ✓ Intangible Items

Probably one of the best rewards is "Thank you" when it is sincerely meant.

Building an Effective Team

The first rule of team building is an obvious one, to lead a team effectively, you must first establish your leadership with each team member. Remember that the most effective team leaders build their relationships of trust and loyalty, rather than fear or the power of their positions.

Some of the things to be kept in mind for building an effective team are,

- ✓ Consider each employee's ideas as valuable. Remember that there is no such thing as a stupid idea.
- ✓ Be aware of employees' unspoken feelings. Set an example to team members by being open with employees and sensitive to their moods and feelings.
- ✓ Act as a harmonizing influence. Look for chances to mediate and resolve minor disputes; point continually toward the team's higher goals.
- ✓ Be clear when communicating. Be careful to clarify directives.
- ✓ Encourage trust and cooperation among employees on your team. Remember that the relationships team members establish among themselves are every bit as important as those you establish with them. As the team begins to take shape, pay close attention to the ways in which team members work together and take steps to improve communication, cooperation, trust, and respect in those relationships.
- ✓ Encourage team members to share information. Emphasize the importance of each team member's contribution and demonstrate how all of their jobs operate together to move the entire team closer to its goal.
- ✓ Delegate problem-solving tasks to the team. Let the team work on creative solutions together.
- ✓ Facilitate communication. Remember that communication is the single most important factor in successful teamwork. Facilitating communication does not mean holding meetings all the time. Instead it means setting an example by remaining open to suggestions and concerns, by asking questions and offering help, and by doing everything you can to avoid confusion in your own communication.
- ✓ Establish team values and goals; evaluate team performance. Be sure to talk with members about the progress they are making toward established goals so that employees get a sense both of their success and of the challenges that lie ahead. Address teamwork in performance standards. Discuss with your team:
 - ✓ What do we really care about in performing our job?
 - ✓ What does the word success mean to this team?
 - ✓ What actions can we take to live up to our stated values?
- ✓ Make sure that you have a clear idea of what you need to accomplish; that you know what your standards for success are going to be; that you have established clear time frames; and that team members understand their responsibilities.
- ✓ Use consensus. Set objectives, solve problems, and plan for action. While it takes much longer to establish consensus, this method ultimately provides better decisions and greater productivity because it secures every employee's commitment to all phases of the work.
- ✓ Set ground rules for the team. These are the norms that you and the team establish to ensure efficiency and success. They can be simple directives (Team members are to be punctual for meetings) or general guidelines (Every team member has the right to offer ideas and suggestions), but you should make sure that the team creates these ground rules by consensus and commits to them, both as a group and as individuals.
- ✓ Establish a method for arriving at a consensus. You may want to conduct open debate about the pros and cons of proposals, or establish research committees to investigate issues and deliver reports.
- ✓ Encourage listening and brainstorming. As supervisor, your first priority in creating consensus is to stimulate debate. Remember that employees are often afraid to disagree with one another and that this fear can lead your team to make mediocre decisions. When you encourage debate you inspire creativity and that's how you'll spur your team on to better results.

- ✓ Establish the parameters of consensus-building sessions. Be sensitive to the frustration that can mount when the team is not achieving consensus. At the outset of your meeting, establish time limits, and work with the team to achieve consensus within those parameters. Watch out for false consensus; if an agreement is struck too quickly, be careful to probe individual team members to discover their real feelings about the proposed solution.

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