Case study in ob

Key to the achievement of its reputation was the superior computer databases and analysis lolls that Its agents used when counseling clients. These programs were developed by highly trained individuals, usually lawyers and tax accountants who had picked up programming skills on the side. The programs that these individuals produced were highly technical both in terms of the tax laws they covered and the code in which they were written. Perfecting them required high levels of programming skills as well as the ability to understand the law.

New laws and Interpretations of existing laws had to be integrated quickly and flawlessly Into the existing regulations and analysis tools. The work was carried out In a virtual environment by four programmers in the greater Boston area.

Four work sites were connected to each other and to the company by e-mail, telephone, and conferencing software. Formal meetings among all the programmers took place only a few times a year, although the workers sometimes met informally outside of these scheduled occasions.

The following paragraphs describe the members of the virtual work team. Tom Andrews was a tax lawyer, a graduate of State university and a former hockey player there. At 35 years old, Tom had worked on the programs for six years and was he longest standing member of the group.

Along with his design responsibilities, Tom was the primary liaison with Stearns. He was also responsible for raining new group members. Single, he worked out of his farm in Southern Now Hampshire where In his spare time he enjoys hunting and fishing.

Cay Crane, a tax accountant and a Computer Science graduate of State university, was 32 years 010, marled Walt two centre ages 4 Ana 6. HIS welt works Tulle-tale In a law firm in downtown Boston, whereas he commuted from his kitchen to his computer in their home in the Boston suburbs. In his spare time he enjoyed biking ND fishing, married with two children ages 2 and 6.

Marge Doctor, tax lawyer, graduate of Outset University, 38 years old, was married with two children ages 8 and 10. Her husband worked full-time as an electrical engineer at a local defense contractor.

She lived and worked in her suburban Boston home, and she enjoyed golf and skiing. Megan Harris, tax accountant and graduate of Big University, was 26 years old and single. She had recently relocated to Boston to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities in her field and to enjoy the beauty of New England.

She worked out of ere Back Bay apartment. In the course of their work, these four people exchanged e-mail messages many times every day, and it was not unusual for one of them to step away from guest or children to log on and check in with the others.

Often their e-mails were amusing as well as work-related. Sometimes they help each other with the work, as, for example, when a parent with a sick child was facing a deadline. Tom occasionally invited the others to visit with him on his farm, and once in a while Marge and Cay got their families together for dinner.

About once a month the whole group got together for inch. All of these workers were on salary, which, according to company custom, each had negotiated separately and secretly with management.

A major factor in their commitment to the Job was its flexibility. Although they are required to check in regularly during every workday, they could do the work whenever they wanted to. When they got together, they often Joked about the managers and workers who had to be in the office during specific hours, referring to them as " face timers" and to themselves as " free agents.

" When the programmers were asked to make a major program change, they often plopped programming tools called macros that that would help them to do their work more efficiently.

These macros greatly enhanced the speed at which a change could be written into the programs. Cay in particular really enjoyed hacking around with macros. For example, on one recent project, he becomes obsessed by the prospect of creating a shortcut that could save him a huge amount of time. One week after he had turned in his code and his released notes to the company, Cay bragged to Tom that he had created a new macro that had saved him eight hours of work that week.

" The stripers are running," he had said, " And I want to be in the beach.

Tom was skeptical about the shortcut, but after trying it out on his own work, he found that it actually did save him many hours. T. A. Stearns had an employee suggestion program that rewarded employees for innovations that

saved the company money. The program gave an employee 5 percent of the savings generated by the innovation over a period of three months.

The company also had a profit-sharing plan. Tom and Cay felt that the small amount of money that would be generated by a company reward would not offset the free time that they gained using their new macro.

They wanted the time either for leisure or or other consulting, and furthermore, they agreed that because the money came out AT pronto, ten money was really coming out AT ten employees' pockets anyhow. Inner seemed to be little incentive to share their innovation macro with management. They also believe that their group could suffer if management learned about the innovation. They could now do the work so quickly that only three programmers might be needed.

If management were to learn about the macro, one of them would probably lose his Job, and the remaining workers would have more work thrown at them.

Cay and Tom decided that there was not enough incentive to tell the company bout the macro. However, they were Just entering their busy season and they knew that everyone in the group would be stressed with the heavy workload. They decided to distribute the macro to the other members of the group and swore them to secrecy. Over lunch one day, the group set for itself a level of production that it felt would not arouse management's suspicions.

Several months passed, and they used some of their extra time to push the quality of their work even higher.

The rest of the time gained they used for their own personal interests. Dave Reagan, the manager of the work group, picked up on the innovation several seeks after it was implemented. He had wondered why production time had gone down a bit, while quality had shot up, and he got his first inkling of the answer when he saw an e-mail from Marge to Cay thanking him for saving her so much time with his " brilliant mind. " Not wanting to embarrass his group of employees, the manager hinted to Tom that he wanted to know what was happening, but he got nowhere.

He did not tell his own manager about his suspicions, reasoning that since both quality and productivity were up he did not really need to pursue the matter further.

Then one day Dave heard that Cay had boasted about his trick to a member of another Virtual work group in the company. Suddenly the situation seemed to have gotten out of hand. Dave took Cay to lunch and asked him to explain what was happening. Cay told him about the innovation, but he insisted that the group's action had been Justified to protect itself. Dave knew that his own boss would soon hear of the situation, and that he would be looking for answers–from him.

Study Guides 1.

Why is this group a Team? 2. What characteristics of the team predispose it to making ineffective decisions? 3. What are the characteristics of a grouping

that are manifested in the work team? . Has Dave been an effective group leader? What should Dave do now? Answers to Study Guide: 1 . This group is a team because they are engaged in a common goal, they coordinate positively and they combine their efforts for a greater result although specifically this kind of group is mostly referred as " virtual team".

Virtual teams are groups that meet through the use of technological aids without all of their members being present in the same location (Cinchonas, 1987). 2. The characteristics the team have that cause them to come up with their decision was 1) Lack of commitment o ten company; 2) Year AT conflict; 3) Inattention o Results Poor communication; 5) Ineffective leader 3. Grouping Characteristics manifested in the work team * Rationalization that what they are doing is acceptable to others. * Illusion of Invulnerability * Belief in inherent morality * Self-appointed mind guards * Illusion of unanimity 4.

Dave has not been an effective leader but it is good that he had been able to detect that three was something unusual happening in his team.

If he had been an effective leader, his group members may not come up with that kind of decision. They ay have chosen otherwise and there will be no conflict. If he had been an effective leader, his members would not think negatively, and it will never come to their mind that the organization will be the only one benefiting in the innovation that they will share.

If he had been an effective leader, his members would have been more empowered and participative not only with their team but also to the organization where they belong. L.

Executive Summary We believe that teams will become the primary unit of performance in high- performance organizations (Switchback and Smith, 2005), but how will that be Seibel if one of the teams would hesitate in contributing their ideas for their own stake? Rae Andrews 1999 Case Study entitled " The Virtual Environment Work Team," describes the Virtual Team at T. A. Stearns which is composed of four members.

This group is considered as a team because although it is composed by individuals having different personalities and personal interests, they are performing and working together to achieve a common goal of providing superior and high quality advice and excellent service on individual tax preparation thru state-of the-art computer databases and analysis tools. Members of the team are Tom Andrews, a tax lawyer, working on the program for 6 years, former hockey player, works out in his farm, and enjoys hunting and fishing in his spare time was the longest member of the group, and also the one responsible for training new group members.

Cay Crane, a computer science graduate and tax accountant, married with two children, enjoys biking and fishing. Marge Doctor, a tax lawyer, is married with two children, enjoys golf and skiing. Megan Harris, a tax accountant, single and works out of her apartment. This four member team has a good way of communicating. They are exchanging e-mail messages and their communication is always constant despite guests and family matters. They would even go to Tom's farm for leisure or work related matters while bringing with them their kids and family.

They also have scheduled dinner or lunch with group members and their family.

This Team of Stearns are employees on salary; their pay is negotiated separately and secretly with the management. In fact, they were told that they could even work whenever they opted to. They love their work because they Just have to check in regularly during workdays but they can work anytime they want. Having that clear work arrangement, they feel the autonomy they have on their Job, they have their time on their hands and they don't have to go to the office and stay there during once noirs as long as tenet work Is inclemently Ana accurately cone In accordance with the company's policies and mission / vision.

The problem in this case started with Cay's macro innovation.

This innovation helped productivity and quality of the team to shot up. Cay and the other team members decided to keep the macro innovation a secret from the company after analyzing personal interest and considerations. Dave Reagan, the manager and team leader of the group was not informed by the members, but he was able to pick-up the innovation despite its secrecy. He wondered how the production time had gone down a bit, and in addition to that observation, he also accidentally read the email message of Marge to Cay.

Dave was able to talk to Cay and found out everything about the situation.

Now Dave is the one who would be responsible for his member's action. He will now have to solve this problem and to report and explain everything to

his boss to avoid and stop the secrecy and promote transparency. II. Statement of the Problem T. A.

Stearns' Virtual Environment Work Team is composed of four individuals performing a specific task; they are able to put together all their efforts in achieving a common goal. They can be considered as a group with great teamwork.

As Newsroom (2007) described, there is teamwork if all members of a group knows their objective, contributes responsibly and enthusiastically to the task, and supports one another. There was no problem regarding the work performance of the team until the time that members Tom and Cay violated their company's trust through keeping their newly covered innovation for themselves in order to protect their own stake. The innovation was only shared within the four members of the group; no one else was informed about it, not even their own team leader and manager, Dave.

The decision made would be the root of the upcoming conflict that the members of the team and the leader would soon face.

Conflicts are inevitable because in every organization you have to work with people. People have different views, and as for the choice Cay and the team made, they believe it was the right thing to do, but in other people's point of IEEE, it is unethical to hide something, specially a great innovation that would save a lot of time and cost for the organization you are working for.

Working in a company, the group should know that their autonomy has its limit and that their every action would cause positive or negative results to

the company where they belong. It is clear that the problem now would be how the team would deal with the conflict in a way that they would not pull triggers that will cause arguments and even larger mess. Ill. Causes of the Problem Simple issues and conflicts regardless of how small can cause organization-wide robbers if not given attention.

So in order to avoid this we should find out the causes of the problem as early as we can. The causes I saw in this case are the following: 1. Poor communication – The team has a good communication as described I the case, but the communication there is between the team and their leader is not mentioned. Being a virtual team, it is given that the face-to-face interaction is limited, so the leader in order to be effective should find ways to improve the communication build trust and make the team dynamic. 2.

Grouping – The other team members Just agreed with Sys decision because it seemed to them hat it would be the best way to avoid the possible outcomes they assume would happen if the management will have the knowledge about what is going on with their team.

3. Decadence AT trust – Because AT ten Tear AT rolling ten level AT comfort TN the team are experiencing, they forgot to entrust or even inform their manager of the discovery, they also didn't trust the company enough that instead of focusing on the positive results their contribution can make they feared that the group may suffer. . Fear of Conflict – The team doesn't want to risk their present status that they cited to prioritize themselves rather than the interest and the good of the company they are working for. 5.

Inattention to Results- The team members chose their own needs (ego, career development, recognition, etc.) ahead and above anything even the goals of the team and the organizations' benefit. This desire for individual credit would greatly affect the organization's success. If only the team had chosen to prioritize the organization, it would greatly contribute to the company's success. .

Threats to Status – This is the main reason why the team came up with he ineffective decision that caused the conflict. 7. Ineffective Leadership – The leadership of Dave wasn't so effective, it is given that there is a little face to face communication in virtual teams but this can't Justify the fact that Dave wasn't able to build his members' trust on him, it even came to the point that he Just heard of the innovation from another team in the organization. IV.

Decision Criteria and Alternative Solutions In order to successfully solve these organizational problems involving virtual teams there should be roles and responsibility clarification, because lack of clarity would cause confusion to members. Clarity would also help them establish within them the ownership and accountability on their task and organization's goals.

We may also opt to use the Organizational Problem Solving Steps by William Appraisal which says we should; First, manage and resolve the current problem right away and second, learn the problem's root causes then, address and correct these issues to avoid repetition of the problem.

Another approach in order to solve the conflict as Ginseng (2013) enumerated are through these following checkpoints: * What previous efforts

have en made by the leader to address the conflict and with what results? * Is the leader comfortable with conflict resolution * Is the leader role-modeling effective conflict resolution skills? * What has the leader done to create a supportive environment within their group for effective conflict resolution? * Is the leader consistent on he/she addresses the conflicts? * Is the leader being held accountable by their supervisor in effectively addressing conflict resolution issues in their area? Are effective conflict resolution skills being practiced by the CEO and his/her senior management team? Another alternative in solving this situation is to attack one by one the root causes of the problem which are as follow: 1. Poor communication – First, " communication" was rated as the most important skill to the organization. Second, the current competency level of managers in their communication was ranked Just twelfth out of twenty items; clearly, there is room for improvement in this critical skill area (Moyer, 2004).

In this case Dave had not been so effective as far as leadership, motivation and empowerment is concerned, he can do far better than Just having to ask weeks after the innovation was used.

I can associate this with what I have read in the book " One minute Manager" (Blanchard and Johnson, 1982) People should be praised immediately on being caught doing it right and people Just as with praising should be reprimanded Immediately. 2 Corruption- Nine tendency AT a diligently Knelt group to Drill individual thinking in line with the group's thinking also referred as the leveling effect Anis, 1972).

If it happens that the team leader was earlier informed, maybe he had been able to be a mediator and they had not come up with an ineffective decision. 3. Absence of trust – The trust should have been built if only Dave reactive effective Leadership. 4.

Fear of Conflict – There will not be a fear within the group if only there are well informed of their role, contributions, importance and if they have felt that they are a significant part of the team and the organization. 5.

Inattention to Results – Due to lack of motivation and empowerment, the team during decision making had been pessimist, they only focused on the negative side, not even minding the positive results that may happen if they chose otherwise. 6. Threats to Status – Feeling of insecurity made the group think that it is possible that the current tutus they are in would change if the management would be aware of their situation, thus making them think that the company would not see their contribution and will cut down their group from four to three members having more workloads.

. Ineffective Leadership – The leader should put more effort in building open communication and practicing effective leadership so that he would also be able to empower and motivate his employees to become more participative and enthusiastic. V. Recommended Solution, Implementation and Justification In order to not make the situation worst, Dave as the team leader, after hearing everything from Cay should go ND directly report to the Management, cause sooner or later they will find out everything about it.

He may also Justify the decision made by his member so as not to waste the effort and the innovation that Cay applied in order to make their Job more effective and quantitative.

The leader should also talk to Cay once more in order to persuade him to share his innovation with the management and rest assure him that the team will not suffer on this and if he would like can avail of the incentive and benefits from the suggestion program and profit-sharing plan. Dave should also rain himself to be a more effective leader to the team so as to affect the group dynamic.

Team works at its best if the leader is in proper control of them, not so tight that it would Just be a group with an authoritarian leader, not so loose that the leader will not be needed, but a team that would work and give their best in order to achieve or even exceed what was expected of them. Poor communication, grouping, absence of trust, fear of conflict, inattention to results, threats to status and ineffective leadership can all be solve with good communication, team ordination, involvement, good leadership, motivation and empowerment.