

Group think: an analysis



Are Five Heads Better Than One?

Case No. 3—Organizational Behavior

The major theme of this fictional case is groupthink[1] (It describes situations in which group pressures for conformity deter the group from critically appraising unusual, minority, or unpopular views. It is a disease that attacks many groups and can dramatically hinder or deter their performance to a greater extent) with a more general focus on the group decision-making[2]. The case actually explains the situation in which a team having been formed by the higher management at an advertising firm. The purpose of the team was to develop a commercial advertisement for one of company's major clients. A member of the group Mr. Conner takes up the challenge of becoming the team leader and parts his opinion rather quickly. His opinion right from the beginning turns out to be rather damaging. However, sticking to the norms and the group conformity the team agrees with Conner's idea. Here we see the groupthink occurring.

As the team progresses with its deliberations, Conner's idea takes strides to win all the members, implying that group-shift[3] has occurred as well. Group-shift can be viewed as actually a special case of groupthink. The decision of the group reflects the dominant decision-making norm that develops during the group's discussion. Whether the shift in the group's decision is toward greater caution or more risk depends on the dominant prediscussion norm. Team is considered to be quite cohesive[4] that is to say that how much the team members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in that particular group. The team is reasonably autonomous and is fully in charge and responsible for managing and seeing

the project of developing a commercial advertisement on targeted time. It could also be characterized as a self-managed team[5]. This is to say that the teams that are

Another important topic which is part of this case is the team composition[6]. The team[7] is reasonably homogenous, and all the team members have matching or similar qualities and or abilities in terms of age, tenure, and personality. With regards to personality, team members are considered to be as quite understanding and open-minded.

Questions for Discussion

Q. 1. What factors contributed to the poor performance of the Advert team? As a manager, what could you have done to help the team perform better?

Answer 1: A number of factors contributed towards the poor performance of the Advert team. It was the sheer case of groupthink, without the diversity, to raise any question towards the process, and no one to say anything in disagreement whatsoever, everyone accepting fully what was decided upon and therefore groupthink was prevalent. As a manager, first of all a more diverse team with diverse backgrounds could have been chosen as well as with more diversity in ideas and variety of inputs from all the members of the group with full autonomy in order to reach a decision on the final idea.

Q. 2. According to the case, the Advert team was given a relatively high degree of autonomy. How might this autonomy have contributed to the presence of groupthink?

Answer 2: It is clear that the autonomy actually contributed towards the decision making process of the Advert team – groupthink. All members of the team had certain idea/s and they could have given their inputs towards reaching a final decision. However, the strong and dominant personality took

the floor, not really the right or the best idea as such. A member of the team called Derek for example had an idea, but no one was aware of his idea as he was not able to chip in with his idea due to his overwhelming concerns related to team and its morale, instead.

Q. 3. Teams can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. How would you characterize the Advert team, and how did this affect the team's creativity and performance?

Answer 3: The composition of the team was homogeneous. The team members were all compatible in age, abilities, tenure with the company and personality. This however reflected in blocking the passage of creativity and this in the end created the atmosphere where they were not able to perform fully as they had intended originally. To say the least, certain amount of diversity could have given extra push to get variety of ideas as well as inputs.

Q. 4. What are some group decision-making techniques that could have helped reduce conformity pressures and groupthink among the Advert team?

Answer 4: Group decision-making techniques[8] are many, however the nominal group technique is considered to be the most suitable in the case of the Advert team. This technique can be described as a group decision making method in which individual members meet face-to-face to pool their judgments in a systematic and coordinated way but under an independent atmosphere to be able to reach at a final homogeneously reached decision.

Q. 5. What different forms of communication could have been employed to improve the sharing of ideas among the Advert team? How might this have affected its performance and satisfaction?

Answer 5: All forms of communication channels could have been used to improve the flow of information among the team members of Advert team,

such as written, oral, and nonverbal. Major parts of communication normally occurs using nonverbal communication. Inputs from the senior managers as well as from the customers themselves could have enhanced the chance for the Advert team of being either on or not on track to check and control the final outcome.

Q. 6. How would you describe Conner's leadership style? Why do you think his style wasn't effective? In what situations might Conner be an effective leader?

Answer 6: Leadership styles[9] entail six styles in trying to influence their followers that are Coercive, Authoritative, Affiliative, Democratic, Pacesetting, and Coaching. In this case for sure Conner's style seemed to fit the Coercive and/or Authoritative as he did not take account of the fellow team members' ideas or inputs fully. With his rather strong-minded personality, it was lost case for the team as a whole to come up with the absolute right decision in any case. His style is most suited to the Forces, and this style in turn negated the whole idea of having a team to come up with the best results and can be regarded as a complete waste of time as far as the management was concerned.

End Notes

1Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 338-339

2 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 336-342

3 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 340

<https://assignbuster.com/group-think-an-analysis/>

4 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 335

5 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 358-359

6 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 364-365

7 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 358-371

8 Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 340-341

9 Gary Dessler, " Management-Principles and Practices for Tomorrow's leaders", 3rd Edition, Prentice Hall, 2004, Pages 262-274

[1] Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 338-339

[2] Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 336-342

[3] Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 340

[4] Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 335

[5] Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 358-359

[6] Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 364-365

[7] Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 358-371

[8] Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 340-341

[9] Gary Dessler, “ Management-Principles and Practices for Tomorrow’s leaders”, 3rd Edition, Prentice Hall, 2004, Pages 262-274