Personal experience analysis: working as part of a team

Experience, Personal Experience

There are several differences between working as an individual employee and working as part of a team. As our book states, when working with a team, the responsibilities are shared with other team members. Some employees perform better when they are part of a team, and others perform better as individual contributors. While I consider myself a team player, I also work very well on my own, and I find working with teams to be very frustrating at times.

In my most recent place of employment, I was part of a management team between two locations. As I read through Richard Chang's list in our text, regarding what a good team does, I can say with certainty that my team didn't do anything from that list. Allow me to explain.

I believe that one of the most common reasons for our team's conflicts was the ambiguity of goals. If team members aren't on the same page about the team's goals, it affects the productivity of the whole team. Because of this lack of proper direction or vision, our team became disengaged. Our meetings were very unproductive, and most of us had a difficult time actually seeing the point of having them. The owner of the company was very set in her ways, and while she asked for feedback and input, the suggestions were never really taken into consideration. The actions were there, but the follow-through was absent.

There also seemed to be a lot of role confusion among our team. Even though individuals work together as part of a team to achieve a common goal, it's crucial for each person to know his or her specific role within the team. No one on my team really had a clear understanding of what their role

was. When team members lack an understanding of their specific roles, it becomes extremely challenging for the team to develop as a cohesive, well-functioning unit. This in itself led to a majority of the challenges. There was an absence of team identity. There were several members who did not feel mutually accountable to the other team members when it came to the team's objectives. There was a lack of commitment and effort, which caused friction between team members, and reduced the quality of collaboration. Due to the heightened tensions, some team members made personal attacks and aggressive gestures, which made conflict resolution challenging at times. Because the owner of the company rarely took the suggestions of the other managers, I noticed that the management team began to rigidly adhere to their positions during decision making discussions, rather than introduce new information. Since new information was not getting introduced, the team was unable to generate fresh ideas and perspectives, which hindered capitalizing on business opportunities. Teams are complicated, complex structures. They are comprised of individuals with different personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and biases. Before individuals can form an effective team, they must first learn to work together. And this starts at the top. Our owner needed to be a leader, not just a manager with a " my way or the highway" mentality. Goals, as well as the necessary authority and accountability of each team member, should have been clearly defined from the beginning.