

Example of team organisation critical thinking

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



1: INTRODUCTION

- History and Importance of Team Work

A team is a group of people with complementary skills who work together to achieve a common purpose. (Armstrong M. 2008) The concept of team work has a deep rooted history dating back to over 2000 years ago. It is a character that exists even within animals. Early man use to collaborate together in order to hunt down large animals like Elephants. Likewise, beings such as ants collaborate to build a big anthill. In the past, Jesus Christ advised his disciples to work in teams. Human beings often have weaknesses. It only takes the eyes and the instincts of a partner to notice and cover the weakness of the other. When talking of a certain field in a workforce, making decisions based on accurate findings and within the shortest time possible is always an urgent desire. In this case, when several heads come together to execute a specific common plan, errors are easily ruled out contributing to presentation of accurate work. Teams are essential element that has helped man move from living in the caves to walking on the moon. Team work has enabled human race to continuously dominate other species and effectively control the world around us. It is an essential survival skill for us all, especially as life gets more and more complicated and stressful. (Hills, H. (2001)

- Organizational Design and Work Teams

The structure and the design of an organization influence how it operates. Wrong design structure can hamper communication and slow work processes while effective deign and structures improve the working efficiency of the organization and motivate employees. It facilitates working relationships

among employees and across organizational unit. (Phillips, J., & Gully, S. M. (2012)). In these cases the work teams will efficiently operate since all the conditions favorable for its effective operation are set by the proper organizational design. In the other case where poor organizational design is put in place, the work teams is doomed to fail. In conclusion therefore, an effective design has a positive impact on work teams while ineffective design has a negative impact on work teams.

- Challenges of implementing work team

Implementation of work teams has been hit by several hiccups. In the first case, work teams members need to go through a great deal of training prior to implementation. Training can be expensive and takes employees away from their daily responsibilities. Companies must be sure employees receive the right kind of training and do not get caught up in the cycle of " training just for the sake of training. At the same time, building of trust among team members is a huge problem. People will only work together and present quality work when they have good interpersonal trust. Lack of trust based on not believing in one another's ability to perform a certain task is the biggest challenge when implanting these work teams ([http://www. mmsonline. com/columns/self-managed-ork-teams-don39t-just-happen](http://www.mmsonline.com/columns/self-managed-ork-teams-don39t-just-happen))

- Teams and Team Member Personalities

The character of an individual or the whole team often affects the performance of the team. The first activity of the team in its first meeting is to choose a leader. Thereafter, rules are put in place. If these rules are followed strictly, the groups can be successful. The leader is always the image of the team. A time conscious, diligent and a brilliant leader often

contribute to the success of the team as all the other team members try to move at its pace. On the other hand, a lazy team member and leader who are not time conscious will lead to poor performance of the team.

- Utility of Learning Journals and Kolb's Learning Cycle

Learning is always a process where learners go through. Most people learn from their own experience or the experience of others. In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences. Kolb says, " Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (David A. Kolb 1984) (<http://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>). For any team to focus on high quality performance, they ought to teach their different team members about this learning cycle. Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages: of having a concrete experience followed by observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences. (<http://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>) This cycle is very important since it equips the team members with the necessary knowledge. This is shown in the different stages of the cycle of learning which has an impact on the efficiency of the team in the future.

- GROUP/ TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Major models

In a team development model, studies on the effect of several variables such as goals, reward systems, team composition, type of task and norms conducive

to innovation are shown as a context for a team's to develop and learn.

These models interact in some way to ensure optimal team effectiveness.

(http://www. psykol. org/nos/images/3/33/Team_development_models. pdf)

ased activities, including tasks, new product teams and top management teams, have become commonplace in many organizations, (Mark Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001)

Stages of Development Model (SOD) is based on Tuckman's review of development sequence in small groups with special emphasis on change over a period of time. Tuckman therefore developed a model that focuses on the four stages of team development. These stages are: forming, storming, norming and performing. Each of the stages focus on interpersonal relation and the content of interaction as related to the task at hand. (Tuckman and Jesen 1977)

In the forming stage, the members get a chance to share information about them and try to learn the nature of the task before them. During the storming stage, conflicts emerge as the team members strive to identify appropriate roles and responsibilities, including possible challenges to leadership, and they respond emotionally to task demands. In the norming stage, teams agree on ways of working together and optimally, an open exchange of opinions about task activity is legitimated. In the performing stage, teams become a problem solving instrument based on changes in the group structure and task activity accomplished in the prior stages.

(www. psykol. org/nos/images/3/33/Team_development_models. pdf)

Punctuated Equilibrium Model was originally based on the studies of special project groups and subsequently on laboratory studies. It states that teams

develop not through a series of stages but rather through a period of stability or equilibrium in which they try to establish a working agenda and develop norms that guide early project efforts. This framework guides the team until the projects midpoint, when the equilibrium is disrupted or punctuated, at which point the teams observe its processes, attempting to improve its performance in order to meet quality levels, delivery dates, and other requirements. In its second phase, a second period of stability with activities shaped by the decisions made during the transition point. Completion is the last period of activity that focuses on editing and preparing materials for external use. (Gersick 1988) (www.psykol.org/nos/images/3/33/Team_development_models.pdf)

3. UTILITY AND LIMITATIONS OF GROUP/TEAM MODELS.

Limitations of group/ team models

Just like any other system, limitations are bound to occur within development model. For instance during the time prior to the transition point, patterned role relationships (Gadon and Willits 2001) may have been established making it difficult for team members to change their ways of interacting. Team members may find themselves acting in such a way that the less desirable or worst behaviors of the others are reinforced. (Cohen et al, 2001). Secondly, reflection on and analysis of processes is not appropriate when done in times of stress. It is better to work on group processes early and then later to work on this basis for key tasks or time constraints or both. (Cohen et al . 2001) On the third note, analysis may be carried out by the team, or the team may ask a facilitator to intervene. If the team decides to perform the analysis by itself, its success will depend very much on the task

skills and the process skills of the team members and therefore, it can be problematic unless members have skills such as facilitating, conflict management, and problem solving. (Gersick & Hckman, 1990)

Utility of group/team models

On the other hand, team development models have some positive impact. The importance of receiving interpersonal process feedback, especially for teams that are not high in ability as well as feedback on their rational processes is especially significant given that in every team, transitional work is centered explicitly on solving task problems. (Gersick 1998) Secondly, interventions targets different processes, depending on the goals and environment. They identify and focus on three possible goals of efficiency, performance and quality. This framework provides a facilitator with a more sophisticated diagnostic tool with which to help the team during an intervention. (www. psykol.

org/nos/images/3/33/Team_development_models. pdf)

4. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning just from its definition is where an individual learns from experience or through experience got over periods of work.

- Adult learning theory

This is a set of assumptions that try to explain and make us understand how adults learn. It has an emphasis on the value of process of learning whose approaches are problem based rather than didactic, and also focuses on equality between teacher and the learner. (<http://www. qotfc. edu. au/resource/? page= 65375>.) This theory revolves around six principles of adult learning. First, adults are internally motivated and self directed. They

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would not accept when they feel someone is imposing ideas or actions on them. (Fidishun, 2000) Their internal urge to learn drives them to acquire more knowledge according to this theory. Secondly, adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences. They always prefer tackling new concepts as they compare it to their experiences in life. This helps them get a wider view and easy understanding of new concepts in the learning process. Thirdly, adults are goal oriented. They urge to learn a certain idea is through a long term urge to know it or may be life experience taught them the importance of learning the idea. Adults therefore when they get a chance to learn the concept, they give their best in order to achieve their goal. Fourthly, adults are relevancy oriented. They try to compare how relevant is what their learning to their ultimate goal. Fifthly, Adults are practical in that after learning about the relevancy of the concept, they always try to use the idea in real life situation. Through practical in the field, they realize how a concept they learnt in class is fundamental. Lastly, adult learners like to be respected. The instructor should show them respect through showing concern and taking interest in their class activities. To them, lack of interest in their work simply means not caring hence showing disrespect. (<http://www.qotfc.edu.au/resource/?page=65375>)

Experiential Learning Cycle

One learns effectively when he gets to know more about this learning cycle. This is a cycle of learning based on prior experience or continues gain of experience over time. In this learning process, a person progresses through a cycle of four stages: of having a concrete experience followed by observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to the formation

of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences. (<http://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>)

Designing, Implementing/ facilitating Experiential learning

The design of experiential learning cycle is already set in place through the four stages in the cycle. The instructor/ teacher and the learners both have the role of planning how the steps follow one. Once the plan is set the process of implementing / facilitating is left to the teacher who takes the learners round the different cycle stages. As they move from one stage to the other, we find that effective learning has taken place.

5. PERSONALITY INSTRUMENTS

The history of personality classifications

Personality can be defined based on two concepts. These are personality from inside and personality from outside. A person's ambitions, dream, hopes in life, aspirations and goals which are better defined in one word as identity. On the other hand is the way people view you. This can be best put as reputation. The people out there may look at items of self-confidence, sociability, integrity, charm, and creativity. (<http://www.hoganassessments.com/history-of-personality>) In history, personality is majorly divided into two: Introvert and extrovert. Many people are either of the two with others falling in between.

Differences and similarities Between Personality instruments

People are born differently with different characters and personalities.

Biological theories are compelling and can be combined with other theories

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of personality, such as the trait perspective . This is different from others in that it ignores concepts like thoughts or motivations. Unlike the trait approach Differences and Similarities Between Personality Instruments, it does not provide trait approach.(Carter, K., & Seifert, C. M. (2013).

6. PERSONALITY SPECTRUM

Discovering Your Own True Colors Personality Spectrum

Personality spectrum is simply how people react to changes in their immediate environment including. One can learn his personal true spectrum through answering some psychology questions and evaluate him / she based on that.

Understanding the Various Color Personalities and Spectrums and Appreciating the Differences

Some people are quick to react, temperamental, optimistic while others are generally slow in reacting to the changes affecting them. With all this difference, it may be difficult to stay with people whose personality is the opposite of yours but it is better to learn, appreciate them the way they are and try to accommodate their personality.

7. EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE TEAMS

Team member and team leadership role

A team as I said earlier works in unison to achieve a common goal. For this goal to be achieved, every member of the team should follow his /her roles to the latter. A team member has a role of carrying out any assigned duty diligently. He/she is required to always be time conscious and carryout out any role assigned without complaint. Team leadership is carried out by a

person chosen from the members of the group. The leader should have a respectable personality since his image affects the overall performance of the team. Roles of controlling, assigning duties and correcting fellow members are always assigned to the team leader.

Team dynamics and Team Norms

Teams have a culture they develop over time. Good team culture always has a positive impact on the performance of the team. On the other hand, when a team adopts poor culture, it is bound to have a negative impact of the team leading the team being ineffective.

Functional and dysfunctional teams

A functional team is one which achieve its goals effectively and efficiently with the given time constraints. This only happens when members have a better understanding of each other. They know the weaknesses of one another and always cover up in order to achieve the desired objective. These kinds of teams have good interpersonal relations; they are respectful to their leader and always practice a high degree of social ethics.

Dysfunctional teams can be described as a team where achievement of goals and objectives is difficult due to poor strategies set in place. These teams are characterized by members low motivation levels, interpersonal member misunderstandings and inefficiency due to poor leadership.

8. TEAM DIAGNOSTICS AND TRACKING INSTRUMENTS

Purpose

A team has a purpose as to why it was set up. This at the same time can be used as an instrument to evaluate the performance of the team. Questions

like, how well is the teams actions and strategies in line with the purpose it was set up for? Always comes up in this situation.

Design

In this case, we focus on the organization of the team. How well has the leader been able to assign duties to the relevantly skilled member?

Implementation

These are activities of the team which has an impact on the team's direct output. It can be how the members execute its plans and how the criteria used in allocation of duties. When plans are fully implemented, the team can be successful while when the team does not fully implement its sets plans, objectives will not be achieved hence the team is ineffective

Reluctance

Reluctance is well described by the pace in which a team executes its plans. A very slow team will have a lot of time wasted and lack of proper coordination can be a cause to this. The team will therefore carryout a few tasks within a long period of time. In this case, the team is inefficient.

9. TEAM DYSFUCTION IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING THEM

Absence of Trust

Trust is a crucial object in any team. The trust bestowed on one another by team members affects the performance of the team. Lack of trust causes some members being neglected and others left out. It is characterized by a specific person in a group carrying out almost all the activities since the ability of the other team members is not trusted. A sense of trust needs to

exist among team members. One should be assigned light duties first in order to increase trust with larger duties.

Fear of Conflict

Some members feel that when they are assigned a certain duty that is usually done by a certain different member, conflict may arise in a case where he/she does not perform like the prior person. This discourages members to get involved in new activities. These can be solved through creation of good interpersonal relations with the individual members. Through adequate training of the new field, members will be encouraged to participate.

Lack of commitment

Leaders have a great impact in this case. Their lack of commitment fully affects the commitment of the other team members. Adherence to time is the first indicator. Poor time keeping is a sign that a member is not committed. The best way to handle this case is to cultivate the sense of motivation among team members. This will improve interest into the teamwork hence improving the effectiveness of the team.

Avoidance of Accountability.

Many a times, members of a team retreat from taking charge of some assignment. These can be due to fear of losing. This fear might have been put in place as a result of a over strict leader or members with conflict motives. This can be overcome through assigning individuals and giving them all favorable conditions. A good relationship needs to be created

among the individual team members. Good relationship between the team leader and members is a key concept in tackling this case.

Inattention to results

Inattention to results can be a case where individuals carry out an activity just for the sake of finishing other than focusing on the outcome. This is a disappointment to the prior purpose of coming up with the team. These should be corrected through bringing up strategies to evaluate individual members based on the outcome of the result.

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