

Free term paper on improving performance in teams

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Despite their tactics, many leaders always forget that the strength of an organization is its people. Because of this, education systems have ensured that most people are informed on the fact that leadership is not about self exaggeration early in their careers. Education systems and other organizations have made it clear to most people that leadership is about enabling people around them as well as putting these people into positions in which they can succeed (McCann and Aldersea, 2011). The key to leadership is the ability to improve the performance of other people in a team.

There are two basketball legends who mastered this concept better than most people: Larry Bird and Magic Johnson (McKee, 2011). Playing for Los Angeles Lakers as a point guard, Johnson was considered as the master of dishing balls to a player who was open to score (McCann and Aldersea, 2011). On the other hand, Larry Bird, who played as a forward for Boston Celtics was similarly team oriented. With many industries becoming competitive, many organizations have started realizing the need to improve their team performance. This has made the term “ team” to become an

increasing norm. The term “ team” has been defined as a collection of people whose efforts individually can result in a performance level that is greater compared to the sum of their individual contributions (McKee, 2011).

In that case, teams seem to generate synergy through individual effort coordination. It is the coordination between team members that helps many organizations to become productive. However, because of the competitive nature of most industries, organizations need to improve the performance of their teams. For decades, researchers have tried to understand the key elements that prove to be reliable and valid when it comes to team performance. Most of these researchers have focused on finding out why some teams work effectively and achieve their goals while others fail. There are various concepts, which have been associated with team performance. For instance, most teams put up their best performance when they understand each member beforehand and their responsibilities. It is essential for a company to understand that, in each team, there are members who are shapers, there are implementers and there are finishers (McCann and Aldersea, 2011). A shaper will always challenge the team to improve while an implementer will always put ideas that are generated into action. On the other hand, the finisher will always ensure there is thorough, timely and complete work. While these three norms and their understanding help to improve the performance of a team, there are other tactics that are considered to be essential. Most of these have been discussed in this paper.

Improving Team Performance and its Essence in Management

Performance management is a concept that includes activities required to ensure that organizational goals are met in ways that are effective and efficient. This attribute also contributes to the effective management of teams, which is required to achieve an organizational performance of high level (McKee, 2011). Performance management, in most cases, focuses on organizational performance, departmental performance, and process required building a product, employee management or teams. Unless an organization ensures that there is a continuous development of individual employees and teams, it becomes difficult to improve the performance of the team.

The Chartered Instituted of Personnel and Development (CIPD) identifies performance management by providing that performance management is mostly about establishing a culture whereby teams take responsibilities for continuous improvement of an organizational business processes as well as their own skills, contributions and behaviors (Baldoni, 2011). Even though CIPD does not exclude individuals' improvement in its definition of performance management, it acknowledges teams more than individuals. Also, CIPD acknowledges the fact that performance management goes hand in hand with performance improvement.

Considering the nature of performance management, which is about sharing expectations, improving team performance is very essential. Organizational managers are able to clarify their expectations for their team members while team members can provide their expectations on how they want their

managers to handle their duties. Therefore, when these concepts are considered, then performance management becomes a concept that creates interrelationships as well as improvement of the quality of relationships that exist between managers and employees, managers and teams and between members of a team (Baldoni, 2011). Also, this is the reason why performance improvement in teams has been considered with high esteem.

In addition, performance improvement in teams is essential because of the planning that is required. Performance management requires one to define the expectations, which a business expresses as objectives and the company's business plan. Despite that, it also defines the measurement. The old diction provides that, if one cannot measure the performance of a team, then it becomes difficult to either manage or improve it. Therefore, managers need to measure the performance of all team members to know how much improvement is required. In this case, performance improvement is a continuous process, and not a one-time event.

In addition, performance improvement in teams is a holistic process and should permeate all aspects required to run an organizational business.

There are a number of reasons why improving performance in teams is essential in organizational management. These include the following:

- Improving the overall performance of the team

The commitment of team members is enhanced when an organization is trying to achieve what team members have decided on. In addition, it is also possible that improving team performance can enhance trust between team members. It is essential for team leaders to consider common interest issues as well as allow team members the opportunity to express their views

(Baldoni, 2011). According to research, this can produce improved relationships between team members. Another reason why improving performance in teams is essential in management is that it creates job satisfaction.

Most team members are motivated when they have a good understanding of what their activities entail, and how these activities contribute to the objectives of the team as a whole. Nevertheless, improving performance in teams encourages an association that is more flexible. Considering organizations, employers mostly help to promote good work life balance in the organization by teaching their employees on how to develop policies that are flexible and practical (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). Such organizations have emphasized the fact that, consultations and communications should not be considered as an end to themselves (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). Consultation and communications, when properly implemented, can ensure the success of a team's performance not forgetting that it can help to empower members of a team. Considering these reasons, and if team members can trust the instructions provided by the team leader, if team members know exactly what they are expected to do, if they know that the instructions provided by team leader will not change, if they are involved in decision making process, and if their decisions are considered, then they feel motivated and their performance improves automatically.

- Helps to improve psychological growth and satisfaction of all team members

Herzberg came up with hygienic needs required in teams, which he argues can be used to improve satisfaction and psychological growth (Center for

Substance Abuse Treatment, 2006). Improving performance in teams is essential since it helps to improve the relationship between team members and their leaders. It also helps to improve the conditions in which teams are operating in, as well as the relationship between each other. According to Herzberg, true motivators involve completely different factors including achievements, activities themselves, responsibilities, and recognition (Baldoni, 2011). Most team leaders have come to a firm realization that happy team members lead to improved performance that holds equally well for the leadership of the team and member training.

Counseling the performance of a team has been considered as a powerful tool for many years. By counseling the performance of a team, the team leader has the opportunity to create a formal discussion with his subordinates mainly to discuss the activities of the subordinates (Baldoni, 2011). Counseling the performance of a team can also be used to determine why the performance of a team is performing at its current level, as well as outlining ways in which team members can perform better in the future. The aim of improving psychological growth and satisfaction of a team is to enable the performance of the team to focus on the future. In this case, the manager is challenged to come up with a climate in which team members' growth is encouraged (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011).

In order to improve the performance of their teams, organizations such as Hall Hunter Partnership offer their teams different training courses (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). To improve the performance of their teams, Hall Hunter Partnership organization organizes communication training as well as performance management training mainly for the team leaders (Center for

Substance Abuse Treatment, 2006). The training courses provided include things such as communication improvement, teams' members' involvement, the use of motivation theories such as Maslow, equity, Herzberg and expectancy theories, which are mostly discussed in details. In addition, Hall Hunter Partnership ensures regular meeting between team leaders and members, whereby members' responsibilities, daily planning, strong and weak performance issues are discussed (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2006).

This concept enables Hall Hunter Partnership to improve the psychological growth of team members and satisfy their needs. The organization has clearly realized that, to improve the performance of its teams, it is required to understand members of the team in different perspectives. Proper communication between team leaders and members is well appreciated while treating all members of its teams equally has helped to improve the performance of team members. Solution to problems concerning the equality of team members are always created after a discussion between team members and their leaders has been carried out (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2006).

When members of a team are excluded from such discussions, they are demotivated resulting to poor performance. Adams equity theory clearly supports this concept and provides that motivation is all about the perception of fair and unfair distribution and treatment of resources between the team leader and members of the team (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). Therefore, it is essential that all team leaders adhere to this theory, if they desire to improve the performance of their teams as a whole.

How to Improve the Performance of Teams

Even though various theories have come up with ways in which team leaders can improve the performance of their teams, there are other ways that most people can improve the performance in teams. A widely used method is to ensure that there is proper communication between team members and their leader. While many people assume communication is mostly the interaction between the leader and his subordinates, it is essential to note that it includes other concepts. The group leader can decide to arrange for weekly meetings whereby the whole team meets and discusses past issues and share ideas on how to solve them. Such meeting can help the team to build a team spirit so that all members of the team can feel as part of the solution.

Better planning has also been regarded as a way of improving performance in teams. As the day begins, the team leaders need to meet with the organization management and inquire for the day's plan. This plan is mostly shared between other members of the team when they arrive at work. It has been argued that, by attending training courses, the team leader helps to motivate the learning ability of his subordinates (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). This concept creates psychological effect to members of the team making them to grasp the required concepts, which they can use to improve their performance. Courses that most leaders need to engage in include communication, motivation, stress management and planning courses. Treating all workers fairly and equally encourages team members to operate at their best. This concept is mostly implemented when there is a problem within the team. For instance, when a department leader knows that his

subordinates are likely to perform poorly, it is essential that he holds a meeting with all his team members to address the issue. This concept is important even though the team leader has a vague idea of which members are likely to be involved in such issues. Monitoring the performance team members without excluding any of the members can also help to exercise equality among members of the team.

At Hall Hunter Partnership, clear discipline and grievance procedures are carried out with all their members (Baltoni, 2011). The company displays both in its farm office as well as in the induction. Also, the company makes all its members aware of its policies as soon as its members arrive on site (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). To ensure that all members understand the company policies well, Hall Hunter Partnership has translated the policies in four languages, which include Russian, Romanian and Bulgarian (Baltoni, 2011). Discipline procedures are provided in three forms of warnings: verbal, dismissal and written. Therefore, if a member of the company is to be dismissed, he is invited to the disciplinary meeting, accompanied by his representative (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011).

Team members are given the chance to appeal if they do not agree with the results of the meeting. To ensure there is transparency, the minutes of the meeting are recorded and then signed by the leader and the team members (Lenox, Hahn and Lewis, 2011). This allows for the meeting to be investigated later. There are several consequences that might arise if wrong decisions are made, or the right procedure is not followed. One of the consequences is that this could lead employees to claim to an employment tribunal, whereby a subsequent award will be given. Most organizations are

also likely to incur legal fee costs and, in the worst case scenario, demoralize its members leading to poor performance.

Conclusion

Considering the competitiveness that exists in most industries today, it is essential that leaders appreciate the performance of the teams working in their organizations. Improving team performance is the key to managing the performance of the team as well as increasing the productivity of the team. In this research, it is arguable that improving the performance of teams has been questioned for many years. Theories supported by Herzberg, Adams and other scholars have been used to come up with proper ways of improving the performance of team members. This research has also shown that, by engaging team members in various discussions, the team leader helps to improve the performance of the team as a whole.

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