

Management enquiry and research methods (mba)



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Action Research One of the most vital areas of business development is that of the team and its integral role in the underlying success of the business. Functional teams serve as the basis of creating a successful company and its creation proves to be an ideal application of the tenets of action research. Team building strategies can be utilized as a means of improving the underlying goals of a business. This is evident in the overall organizational performance, design, strategic planning and problem solving. One research topic which may prove ideal for action research is how does one build an effective and efficient team within the workplace An applicable action research methodology for such research is one that incorporates seven clear and concise steps. These steps include data collection, analysis, presentation and validation as well as goal setting, the creation of a proposal for targeted team building efforts and the implementation of the proposal.

1. Data collection-In general data collection will be done in a confidential manner by interviewing each team member. During the interview process, it will be the aim of the researcher to identify the common sentiments of the group members and ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the team as a whole.
2. Data Analysis-During this stage, information obtained from the interviews is analyzed and common themes and business issues are uncovered.
3. Data Presentation-During this phase, the data collected is presented to the key players within the organization first and then to the non-managerial team members.
4. Validation of Data-This is a very important step in that the findings need to be checked for accuracy. During this process, the data collected is relayed to the team and the team is asked for input with regards to its accuracy.

5. Goal Setting-Before a team can begin to solve its problems, it is prudent that the team identify the direction in which it intends to go. This will serve as a means of shaping and formulating the future of the company in a structured manner.

6. The Proposal-This is an integral part of any action research. During this phase, the team considers the current issues and devises a plan for their solution. Much of this phase involves discussion and focuses on accountability.

7. Strategic Implementation-During this phase, the information delineated in the proposal is put to task. It is crucial that accountability be addressed as no strategic plan can be implemented without accountability.

The examination of team building proves to be ideal for the utility of Action research because team building is one that requires a hands-on approach. Such an approach can best be realized through action research. It involves pinpointing a problem and working arduously to solve the problem. In action research the solutions are uniquely tailored to suite the dynamics of the company.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is one that is not aimed at impacting change but it is one that is aimed at understanding the main concerns of the study participants and how the participants attempt to resolve those concerns. In studying the research topic of building effective teams within the workplace, grounded theory can be utilized as a means of uncovering the underlying deficiencies within a team and to ascertain the methods the team utilizes as a means of compensating for these deficiencies. One methodology for team building within the grounded theory paradigm is one that includes problem

formulation, phenomena detection, theory generation, development and appraisal.

1. Problem formulation-This involves the examination of the dynamics within a team environment and the delineation of a problem based on the collection of data and both inductive and deductive reasoning

2. Phenomena Detection-Phenomena detection can be done by analyzing the data and arriving at different explanations for the data attained. This phase is extremely speculative in that it attempts to predict facts regarding the data.

3. Theory Generation-After examining the phenomena within the team, it is prudent that the necessary theories be developed. These theories explain the data found during the problem formulation phase.

4. Theory Development-During this phase, the theories delineated during the theory generation phase is explored, analyzed and modified.

5. Theory Appraisal-During this phase, the theories are assessed based on their practical adequacy. This is done as a means of testing the predictions made based on the data collected during the problem formation phase.

Grounded theory proves effective in the study of team building because it is able to ascertain the problems facing a team through the utility of sound scientific practice. However, grounded theory does not offer solutions to ever-present problems within a team. It can identify the problems and can offer great insight into the nature of the problems. It is up to the team members to devise a problem solving strategy. In comparing grounded theory to action research, the main positive of grounded theory is that it offers a non-intrusive method of examining the team dynamics. Its main shortcoming is the fact that it offers no solution. Essentially, there is a

tradeoff when one attempts to utilize grounded theory instead of action research. The tradeoff involves accuracy in problem identification vs. the incorporation of a solution.

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