

# Group work in a consultancy project nursing essay



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This report will explain the various experiences of working in a group in a consultancy project. The report mainly focuses on my personal experience of working in a consultant team. The report would also deal with the work breakdown structure and time constraints, which helps to enhance the quality of the group work. The report will analyze the reflection of communication process among the team members, supervisor and the client. The team member's individual roles can be understood by using Belbin's team management theory. Finally an overview of the consultancy project will be done which would explain the project planning and team working constraints and reveal the interrelationship between different aspects of project management that makes a project successful.

### **Introduction:**

This report is a reflection of the consultancy project for The Cornerhouse Company, which was carried out by a team of five members. The team members are Chris Mitchell, Ranran Li (Tracy), Akande Abiodun Moshood, Xiang Li and me (Ramasangu Ramadoss). The main purpose of the project is to satisfy the client's need which involves the definition of the project, designing the way to be lead, delivering the project an a correct way and developing a better process (Maylor, 2003). A project is defined as " A unique set of co-ordinated activities, with definite starting and finishing points, undertaken by an individual or organisation to meet specific performance objectives within defined schedule, cost and performance parameters" (BS 6079 part1: 2000).

The experiences from the completed project will give a good knowledge and realization to the people. This would reveal the thoughts and events that had

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taken place in the project. This reflection would bring out the essence of strategic thinking that lead us to think why, what, when and how (Boud, Keogh and David, 1994). This critical thought of a person reflects the self-experience of a person working in a group.

Teamwork:

Larson and LaFasto (1989) say that teamwork is a way to analyze the capability of an individual person and especially the potential of an individual can be identified in the teamwork. The objective of team working is to strive for success by directing the team members towards one common goal. According to Larson and LaFasto (1989), the behavior pattern of each individual at work and the work carried out by an individual in the team can be analyzed during the teamwork.

Belbin's theory (1981) states that only selected people are within the organization, based on the individual experience, capability and features that would meet the requirement of the task to be performed. It explains that each role in a team are not molded by the expectation of other team members, but chosen individually depending upon their own attributes and the behavioral pattern. The roles are classified into nine types that would suite the best for the members. Thus our team members fitted into various sections of the framework. This categorization would help the team to assign each individual with the specific task (Belbin, 1981).

Team role

Contribution

Members

Allowable weakness

Plant

Creative, imaginative and solves difficult problems

Moshood

Ignores incidentals and pre occupied with communication

Resource investigator

Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative and exploration

Ramasangu, Ranran and Xiang Li.

Over optimistic

Co-ordinator

Confident, a good chairperson, clarifies goal and good at making decisions

Chris

Offloads personal work, over stressed in few circumstances.

Shaper

Challenging, dynamic

Moshood

Prone to provocation

Monitor evaluator

Judges accurately, sees all options

Chris and Moshood

Lacks adaptation

Teamworker

Co-operative and listens to the leader

Ramasangu, Ranran and Xiang Li.

Indecisive in crunch situations.

Implementer

Disciplined and turns ideas into practical actions

Chris and Ranran.

Situations makes them inflexible

Completer Finisher

Search out errors, omissions and delivers on time.

Ranran and Ramasangu

Attached with their own idea.

## Specialist

Single minded and dedicated.

Chris and Ranran.

N. A

### Assigned Roles:

Team members have selected their own roles after the critical self-assessment and from the previous experience of working in a group. The roles of the individual have been categorized in a way that the work is distributed equally among the team members. There was no conflict of interests due to the selection of roles in the team since everyone's role was assigned by them and agreed by all the team members. According to Benne and Sheats (1948), each member shows a specific behavioral pattern and consistent performance showed in the teamwork. Thus the individual characteristics may differ from one person to another in a team. These variations are used significantly in evaluating the performance of an individual in the team (Benne and Sheats, 1948). Though the roles to each individual in the team are categorized by using the best methods, there would be some issues in converting the plan into action, which will be discussed in Team Events.

### Team Events:

The team can function efficiently only if the team roles and the functions are distinct from one another (Hastings, Bixby and Lawton, 1986). Each team

member was assigned different roles such as team worker, team leader, note taker, coordinator, implementer and communicator. The team members assigned Chris as a team leader and coordinator in which he will check each and every process of the project. Chris also took the role of the communicator since he had good English skills and communicating skills. As a communicator he will communicate with both the supervisor and the client and this is done only after the discussions in the group regarding what to be communicated. So everyone in the team is well aware of the communication with the supervisor and the client. Everyone in the team is assigned the role of note taker. All the members should take the responsibility of taking notes during the meetings with the client and the supervisor. Apart from assigning roles to everyone in the team, each member should complete their agreed piece of work on time.

At the beginning of the project, brainstorming was held in the team regarding the objective of the project in which all the team members contributed with their ideas. Then the proposal work was divided equally among the teammates and it was agreed to send the piece of work on time to the team leader Chris. Everything went on well as a team until the proposal was completed. Chris was having a hard time in getting the reply for his emails and text messages. But the sad part of it was he did not raise this issue in our group meetings.

All the issues came into discussion when the problem started with me. I had a tough time during my project since I lost my grandfather. I did not complete my part of work since I left my research work in half way and left to Sheffield for the traditional formalities. I informed my teammates

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regarding my grandfather's death and they were very much concerned to me. The worst part of it was I lost the communication with my team members later. This was because my grandfather's loss dragged me out of my mind and I did not reply to the emails sent by Chris. Once I came back from Sheffield, I contacted my team members and I apologized for my absence in the project. I sincerely regret for my absence since it has affected the teamwork.

Immediately after that we had a meeting with our supervisor in which Chris raised all his issues. Chris said that he was frustrated with the teamwork because he doesn't get reply for his emails or texts from any of the team members. He also mentioned about my absence and my lack of communication during my absence. So once again I apologized sincerely from my heart to my team members regarding my absence from the project. At that point I learned that how the absence of an individual in a team would affect the entire teamwork and its efficiency. So everyone discussed it with the supervisor and assured that the work will be completed within the deadline and will further work as a cohesive team.

The theory of Huczynski and Buchanan (1994) can be used to analyze the progress of our project. The first three meetings were really vague for the team members, especially for me (Ramasangu), Ranran and Xiang li. This is because we were from diverse backgrounds of culture and society. So it took just about four meetings for us to get each team member into their roles. Huczynski and Buchanan (1994) stated that teamwork would be prominent only after three or four team meetings because only after that every team member will be familiar of their roles and their tasks. Thus the performance

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of the team as a whole can be evaluated only by having regular team meetings, which would probably reduce the functional problems (Kerzner, 2006).

#### Communication:

Schwalde (2006) says that communication is the key factor to success for any project irrespective of its type and size. If the communication were not proper between the team members, then it would definitely affect the efficiency of the project. While assigning a role to the individuals in the team, communication plays a vital role in it since it is used as a means of expressing the type of role a person can undertake. According to Huczynski and Buchanan (2007), effective cross-cultural communication is necessary to communicate in a growing diverse multicultural society. This statement would be applicable in my team since we are from different ethnicity such as Indian, Chinese, African and British. The intensity of interpretation will vary from one person to another based on the type of education they had in their home country. According to Schwalde (2006) people naturally interpret in their own language before expressing in the foreign language.

#### Communication Process:

The communication level of all the team members was good enough to carry on the project towards the success. Our main mode of communication is through email through which we exchange the tasks to be completed by the individuals, notes taken in the meeting, questions and also the changes and doubts. After every meeting, Chris will communicate with the team members through email regarding the tasks to be done. Short messaging service

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(SMS) and email was the mode of communication used by the coordinator Chris to communicate with the teammates regarding the timing of the next group meeting.

A model of Huczynski and Buchanan (2007) can be used to learn the communication process, which involves nine stages in which information is communicated from the transmitter to the receiver.

Huczynski and Buchanan (2007) say that the communication process is the transfer of data into meaningful information at least between two people. In our project, client is the transmitter of valuable information. Channel is the mode of communication through which the message is transferred from the transmitter to the receiver. We have chosen email and face-to-face meetings as the mode of communication with the supervisor and the client. We had the face-to-face meetings with the client three times. The first one was the introduction meeting in which the objectives of the consultancy project was briefed and the valuable information about the company was obtained from the client. The second meeting was during the proposal submission and the final one was during the presentation. In the mean time, the progress of the consultancy project was communicated to the client through email.

There is a feedback segment in the communication process in which we get response for the data transmitted to the receiver. We used to get feedback for our proposal and draft from our supervisor through email. Based on the feedback from the supervisor, changes are made to the proposal and draft. When there is a feedback, the receiver becomes the transmitter and vice

versa. In our case the supervisor becomes the transmitter and the team members becomes the receiver. It is very important that how the team members interpret the response. It is a very crucial stage in the communication process since the project will proceed based on the message that has been received. According to Huczynski and Buchanan (2007), there is a phase called perceptual filters, which is based on the individual's interest to interpret the actual message. Individuals have their own critical thoughts, which can be extensive or limited.

From this project, I personally learned how important is the communication during the teamwork. I learned this through my bad experiences. As a mentioned earlier in the team events, I was having a very hard time in the consultancy project due to my grandfather's loss. The situation was made worse none other than me by improper communication with the team members. I did not communicate to my group mates for nearly 5 days during which other team members took over my part of work to be completed. The teamwork was affected to a certain extent due to my absence. I regret that I should not have allowed my personal affairs to affect my teamwork. The most important part of it was I should have communicated with the team members about my situation to avoid further confusion.

The team member's lack of response to the email and texts send by Chris was also an issue in the communication process. But these issues were solved smoothly during the meeting with the supervisor. Everyone admitted their mistakes and felt sorry for not responding immediately to Chris. After that we decided to put away these issues and work efficiently as a cohesive team to complete the project successfully. After that I made sure that my

contribution to the project would be equal to other team members and worked on competitor analysis. I would also like to mention a point here. I personally felt that as a team leader Chris must have communicated with the other team members regarding these issues and should have tried to solve it within the group. If he did not get further cooperation then he must have taken this issue to the supervisor. So I think that will be a good leadership quality to solve the problems among the team and motivate the team members to involve in the project with interests.

General reflection of the project:

Throughout the project, it is found that both teamwork and communication plays a vital role in the successful completion of the project. Sometimes the communication chain was broken among the team members. As a team we had a team time for a week after the submission of the proposal due to improper and late communication. After those bad experiences we bounced back as a cohesive team in which all the team members equally contributed to the final draft and the presentation.

We were really working hard as a team for the final presentation. We were practicing for the presentation continuously to represent ourselves as a professional consultancy team. The client was extremely happy with the final presentation and they said that the presentation had more than what they want. The supervisor was also happy with our presentation. The client commented that everyone contributed in the presentation and it was more than the professional level, which was a great reward to us. The clients appreciated the applicable recommendations provided for the company. The

success of the entire consultancy project was evident by the satisfaction of the clients. The reason for the successful completion of the project was due to the effective teamwork and communication.

#### Conclusion:

The reflection of the chosen aspects reveals the importance of communication process and team working in the project. The project would have not been successful if one of the two important aspects did not coincide with the other. Belbin's theory was used to assign the roles to the individuals by which the teamwork was made effective. The communication process played a major role in the success of the consultancy project it needs a clear communication among the team members and also with the client and supervisor.

The communicator role is a very important role in the project since it is very important to correctly interpret the message from the transmitter. Thus the communication and the teamwork were in hand in hand in the success of the project.