Organizational behaviour

Business, Management

Assignment 3 Chapter 7, critical thinking question nº 6: Suppose that you were put in charge of a virtual team where each member is located in different cities around the country or region. What tactics could you use to build and maintain team trust, as well as minimize the decline in trust that often occurs in teams? Virtual teams are a consequence of the extraordinary evolution on the information technologies and also of the increase in the knowledge-based work methods. Due to the globalization process, these two facts play a very important role in the world market and the companies had to adjust their approach to this new reality. The virtual team's management has a very complex and different approach when comparing to other types of teams due mainly to the fact of the team members are far from each other and all the team issues are harder to manage by the team leader. Thus, in my opinion there are some crucial facts that have to be present in the characteristics and procedures of a virtual team obviously besides the ability of the team members to communicate easily through information technologies and the quality of these technologies. First of all is crucial to establish team norms according to the specific characteristics of the work and the team, respecting time constraints and the values and objectives of the company. About the members they should have a strong personality, higher emotional intelligence and strong communication skills in order to be easier to manage the relationships between team members and to provide more independence. Despite the virtual character of the team, I think that a good method to maintain the quality of the process and effectiveness of the team is to provide face-to-face meetings every month. This fact has a strong importance not only on the maintenance of the team trust and cohesion but

also to the reinforcing of team norms (adapt the team norms to the real characteristics of the team in a certain period) and to the team decision making process. These tactics that I mentioned before are, in my opinion very useful when employees are working in different regions but the main characteristic is the people that are part of the team and for me this is the key of the success in this kind of teams. Employee's choice is the base of the success of the implementation of all characteristics and methods of the team, not only in virtual terms but in these cases managers have the option to choose people that they consider the best to be part of the team. Chapter 8, critical thinking question nº 1: You have been hired as a consultant to improve communication between engineering and marketing staff in a large high-technology company. Use the communication model and the four ways to improve communication effectiveness among employees between these two work units. First of all, in the case of a high-technology company I will recommend to hire marketing staff with specializations (majors or other equivalent degrees) in the business area of the company. Other important measure would be providing some workshops to the marketing staff in order to improve their knowledge about the area of the company and its specific characteristics. These first two facts are in my opinion crucial in this case, because when we are working in a very technical area the knowledge about it has to be strong and consistent, not only to communication issues but also to the whole performance of the company. Using the communication model and the four ways to improve communication effectiveness and as a communication consultant, my previous recommendation will be the base of the communication process, both parts will have similar " codebooks" and

the engineers would be better understood and will not waste time in thinking about how to make the encode message clear (indirectly, this fact will lead to avoid loss of information because engineers will " send" the full message). This characteristic is strongly related to the mental models, the marketers will have a full perception of the engineers wants and hence, less communication is necessary. A very important aspect that has to be analyzed is the " noise" — psychological, social and company's environmental barriers that can influence and change the content of the message. And here we have to include the two last ways to improve the communication effectiveness: familiarity with the message topic and the proficiency of both engineers and marketers with the communication channel. In these means only the environmental situation cannot be controlled by the consultant, for instance in a market crisis period the message can be influenced by a negative thinking which may not correspond to real facts. However the other aspects, can be avoided through what I mentioned before and through the implementation of efficient communication software, such as e-mail software and for instance, implementing mobile plans that provide free calls between company employees. These main guidelines in my opinion will be very useful to the communication process between engineers and marketers and to the effectiveness of the company. The encoded message sent by the sender will be much clear and the feedback of the receiver will be easier to understand by the sender. However, some " noises" would not be avoided (like some external factors or psychological characteristics of the employees) but in these kind of cases, managers have to intermediate the process and make

the procedures as effective as possible. Chapter 9, critical thinking question nº 6: How do cultural differences affect the following influence factors: (a) silent authority and (b) upward appeal? Cultural differences influence business and company methods and procedures. In these both hard influence tactics, silent authority — employee respects and complies the orders of the boss — and upward appeal — refer the boss or the company's procedures like an example or a base for a specific opinion or decision — the cultural characteristics of the region/country where the company is included define how this two factors are approached. If we think about the example of India where the power distance (distance between managers and employees) is high (exhibit 2. 5, page 38) we can conclude that the silent authority and the upward appeal have a strong impact on the companies procedures, employees usually tend to fulfill the tasks that their bosses define and to refer the boss procedures like a " model" to follow inside the company. In the other hand if we look to more liberal situations such as United States (where the power distance is medium low) and we know that in general the companies procedures are more flexible and managers usually " hear" the opinions of their employees, this kind of hard tactics are less effective and usually are not so common. Cultural differences influence a lot of company's procedures and in terms of " power" the differences are more common when we analyze different countries and special countries in different continents.