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## **Introduction**

Organizations around the world have a tendency to assume that the best way to have projects accomplished is through teamwork. Richard Hackman, an expert in team dynamics, conducted various studies and concluded that teamwork was not necessarily the best way to complete a challenging project. The comment was as a result of revelations from his researches that the majority of team members rarely agree on what the team should be doing. Underperformance, therefore, arises from a lack of coordination and inspiration. Richard Hackman's comment merely suggested that use of teams to complete complex projects was entirely meaningless. Rather, he wanted team leaders and managers to understand that team formation was more than simply selection of competent people randomly and assigning a task to them (Coutu, 2009).

The purpose of this report is to provide a clear explanation of Richard Hackman's comment, since it brought about confusion to my boss, who believed in teamwork when it came to accomplishing complex projects. It will outline the various reasons that Hackman provided in support of his comment, explaining why teams fail in most cases and provide possible alternative approaches to the completion of complex projects. Analysis of the subject will provide my boss and the key decision makers with several alternatives to task accomplishment. It will also pinpoint areas of improvement especially in matters related to misperceptions of teamwork. The subject is significant because our organization relies on teamwork for the accomplishment of projects. Hackman's comment has raised an argument that tends to challenge what our organization believes. By

understanding team dynamics, the organization will realize positive improvements in the accomplishments of projects. The subject will enlighten key decision makers on matters pertaining teamwork and educate team members as well as team leaders on the importance of collaboration and teamwork.

## **Why Teams Fail**

Hackman's comment relied on the various misconceptions that a majority of organizations and people in general have in regards to team dynamics.

People often believe that larger teams are better than small ones. According to Hackman, large teams are ineffective compared to smaller ones. That is because every individual in a team needs handling; meaning that more time will be spent on managing and fixing misunderstandings among the team members than on the actual project. In today's world, technology advancements have enhanced globalization meaning business get operated remotely.

The misconception that arises, as a result, is that a person to person interaction with team members is unnecessary since people can communicate and work remotely either through the application of the internet or conference calls.

Managers and team leaders need to understand that teamwork is more effective when the team interacts directly and as regularly as possible.

Moreover, a successful project gets achieved when intervallic checks with the teams, when the project commences, when it is almost halfway done and during the final stages, occur. A well-coordinated team appears to be good

for any project. Contrary to this belief, Hackman, in his research revealed that a dysfunctional team was the best kind of team for any project. He argued that more creative solutions arose from the conflicting ideas. Conflict, when carefully managed and diverted to a group's goals, can produce viable solutions for a successful project accomplishment.

Teams appear to be in better positions when new members get introduced. The reason behind this assumption is that new members come in with a new kind of energy and fresh ideas and that groups that have stayed together for a long period tend to lack creativity. Hackman explained that this notion was false, because teams that have stayed together for long tend to perform better. The only thing that would keep them up to date was the introduction of a different individual, who would introduce ideas meant to trigger meaningful conflict and, thereby, generate multiple solutions for a particular project. In the course of the discussions team members also get to learn new tactics.

Hackman's comment was also the result of the common misconception that the success of a team is solely dependent on the leader. It is true that a leader will determine the successful completion of the project through proper launching of the team, enabling the individuals to be self-driven and nurturing group effort. It is, therefore, important to consider those attributes rather than focusing on an individual's character or behavior when selecting a leader. Continuous coaching and on the job training after the commencement of the project is also vital for the success of any project (Hackman, 2011).

## **Team dynamics**

Teams in organizations have similar characteristics in that they consist of distinguished individual roles, and interdependence is dominant among the members. They also have boundaries. Due to the different roles, leaders get encouraged to know every individual in their team. The other characteristic is that they have a group task, where all members are responsible, as a team, and are subject to valuation (Hackman, Wageman, Ruddy, & Ray, 2000). These teams incorporate their activities in an organizational context, such that they understand that there exists other teams in the same organization, and hence they manage their relations with other individuals. Every team consists of different individuals who possess different roles and behaviors. According to Mind Tools (2014), the article quotes Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, who studied group dynamics. The unique roles and characters that individual team members possess get studied under group dynamics to describe their effect on other team members and the entire team. Several factors have gotten linked to poor group dynamics. A team that lacks a strong leadership tends to have misguided directions, meaningless conflicts, as well as, misplaced priorities (Guffey & Loewy, 2014). Disruption of the flow of information is also another cause of poor group dynamics.

Individuals in a team can block the necessary continuous flow of information within the group. Such individuals include those who disagree with other group members all the time, those that are always making critical comments, and others who are always looking to have the spotlight on them. Disruption of information can also be the result of members who rarely

contribute ideas in group discussions and others who are hardly serious, and make jokes at irrelevant times. The writer continues to mention free riding as another cause of poor group dynamics. There are those team members who are passive in group discussions, and they leave all the work to their fellow teammates.

When individuals feel that other team members are judging them bleakly, they tend to suppress their opinions for fear of even more criticism. The other cause of negative group dynamics is the tendency of a team to agree to settle for a particular solution without exploring other alternatives. As a result, this habit inhibits maximum exploration of alternative solutions.

## **Conclusion**

The aspect of competition affects even the strongest and organized team. The actual progress of the team, according to Hackman, would be achieved only if the team would focus more on their goals than being in competition with another team in the organization. Team leaders are responsible for managing individuals in a team. For them to have a successful completion of the project from their team, they need to be ready and willing to take personal and professional jeopardies in order to establish the direction of the team. A complex project can only get tackled by a team that possesses a leader who has the discipline to ensure that they manage every team member and how the team is set up. Introducing people with open minds in teams is a brilliant way of promoting innovation through the arguments brought about by their ideas.

## **Recommendations**

Tackling negative group dynamics is crucial for any organization. It is, therefore, important to be aware, as a team leader, of your team members. Identify positive and negative individual characters and know their effects to the entire team. Learn about the stages of development of a group and at the same time guide it, as it will help to avoid any problems that could arise. Problems need to get handled immediately upon noticing them. For instance, certain behavior manifesting in an individual may pose a negative effect on the group and, therefore, immediate action is necessary. Provide counsel to the individual, outlining the impacts of their deeds and help them to make a positive change.

A successful team is one in which the leader takes responsibility in ensuring that roles and responsibilities get clearly defined, the mission and goals are well understood, and everyone in the team understands their part. Team building activities are vital in the enhancement of team cohesion. The practice provides a forum for team members to interact, share personal experiences and get to know each other better. Emphasize on the importance of communication and advocate freedom of expression among team members. Communication of new details regarding the project should be communicated to everyone in the team through all the normally used channels; this is to ensure that vagueness gets eliminated (Mind Tools, 2014).

## References

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