Virtual teams assignment

Business, Management

Virtual Teams in Action: Building the F-35 Fighter Case Study 1 By: Alyssa Dimeck MGT 404 10/09/2011 Professor Samuel Palmeri Virtual Teams in Action: Building the F-35 Fighter CASE SUMMARY The U. S. Department of Defense is known for their F-35 Lighting II Program; the focal point for defining affordable next generation stealth fighter aircraft. In 2002, the Department of Defense announced Lockheed Martin Aeronautic as the designer and builder of the fighter with Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems as the major partners. The fighter was noted by proponents of the program, " to bring cutting edge technology to the battle space of the future".

The immense project consisted of countries all over the world, working as a single team through what Mark Peden, vice president for information systems at Loackheed Aeronautics, said, " Was a true virtual connection". Success of the project stemmed from intricate teamwork and cooperation from countless individuals working in teams, both nationally and internationally, communicating via their computers; there were 80 suppliers working at 187 locations worldwide, but were connected as if team members were working in the same room.

After the first flight of the production occurred on December 15, 2006, Jon Beesley, F-35 chief test pilot, stated, " The Lighting II performed beautifully". ANSWERS TO CASE QUESTIONS 1. The advantages that Lockheed Martin gained by using a virtual team includes: a more efficient use of time, synergy and expertise, and cost benefits. Different time zones between teams working together internationally can be a huge communication barrier, however it also has the advantage of process of production being working 24/7; this generates a more efficient use of time for the production process.

The diverse team created tremendous synergy, that is, what occurs when the interaction and outcome of team member is greater than the sum of their individual efforts (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). Each team had their own unique skills and knowledge which enabled synergy as a whole. 2. Potential problems with using virtual teams are language and cultural barriers, unclear objectives, time conflicts due to diverse geographical locations, and selecting people who can work in a collaborative setting (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). . Characteristics that that virtual team members should possess in order to be successful are commitment to shared goals and objectives; motivation and energetic; open and honest communication; shared leadership; clear role assignments; climate of cooperation; collaboration, trust, and accountability; and recognition of conflict and its positive resolution (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). 4.

Specific training that virtual teams should receive should cover the importance of skills in team leadership, mission/ goal setting, conduct of meetings, team decision-making, conflict resolution, effective communication, and diversity awareness (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). KEY LEARNING 1: JOB DESCRIPTIONS Along with the importance of acquiring new skills and training in order for virtual teams to be successful, it is also important that employees have clear understanding of their job description.

Job descriptions will help employees know what their job duties entail and to remind them of the results they are expected to achieve (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). In addition, a clear understanding of a job description will minimize misunderstandings concerning job requirements. It is becoming more

common for virtual connection to be a necessity in the workforce, so it is imperative for employees to have a clear understanding of the special training and acquired skills necessary to communicate effectively; these qualifications should be listed in the job specifications section of the job description.

A written job description is commonly given to an employee when first hired into a company, but because it is not uncommon for an employee's job description or duties to change from project to project, job promotions, or for other reasons, just as it did for the employees that contributed to the design and building of the fighter, it is important that job descriptions are kept updated and relevant (Bohlander ; Snell, 2010).

Having a clear and specific job description would create organization within a team; this would generate a better organization as a whole for teams working together both nationally and internationally. KEY LEARNING 2: JOB DESIGN Another key learning from the case and text is also something I believe was a key success factor in the production of the F-35 Fighter, and that is job design. In only four years the project was completed and " performed beautifully".

This goal could not have been achieved without implementing job design, which is concerned with structuring jobs in order to improve organization efficiency and employee job satisfaction (Bohlander ; Snell, 2010). Lack of employee job satisfaction is critical to the success of any business or organization because it constitutes such behaviors as lack of motivation,

commitment, and promotes employee absenteeism and higher turnover rates.

Of course it is impossible to satisfy every employee's needs, but if these behaviors were more common than not, in the production of the F-35, it would not have been such a success. Fredrick Herzberg, the originator of job enrichment, defined the concept as, " fulfilling the high motivational needs of employees, such as self-fulfillment and self-esteem, while achieving long-term job satisfaction and performance goals" (Bohlander & Snell, 2010, p. 162). Another concept critical to the behaviors of employees, and what I believe also led to the success of the f-35, is employee empowerment.

In every business there are areas of improvement and I believe that it is the employees who work directly in these areas, who recognize this first and foremost. It is important for an organization to encourage their employees to participate in the improvement of the work process, create an environment that is receptive to innovative ideas and creativity, and provide employees with access to information in order to perform their jobs (Bohlander & Snell, 2010).

In my opinion, employee behavioral concerns are one of the most important concepts in the success of any business and should never be overlooked. I think a problem that occurs often in businesses, is the misunderstandings that go along with negative employee behavior. Before terminating employees, an clear understanding of why the behavior exists should be established in order to make sure the business is running efficiently.

References Bohlander, G. & Snell, S. (2010). Managing Human Resources

15E, South-Western, Cengage Learning.

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