Perceptual errors effects

Prototypes

Usually according to the group or profession you belong to, you are assumed to have certain characteristics, whether you have them or not. In our organisation, we have a team manager who has an impression of being unapproachable and unfriendly, only because of his position. Due to this reason none of the employees approach him for help, even though it might hurt productivity.

Since a few colleagues and myself have a habit of observing people's behaviour, we knew all this fear is baseless. We didn't hesitate in asking him for help and he was very pleasant and found solutions to our problems and made us very comfortable while he was at it. So, in my opinion to reduce this kind of a perceptual error, its advisable to remember principle on similarity. Wherein, its not necessary that people from similar background are similar in nature. We should always see a person as a separate individual.

Horn Effect

According to this effect/error, when a person is found to have an undesirable trait, he is automatically assumed that all his traits must be undesirable, which may or may not be true. To explain with an example, I have a colleague in my office who is precise and sticks to the point when having a conversation with a customer. Once one such matter was escalated considering that he sounded rude to the customer.

And though he was cleared after been given some advice, because of that one event he is always considered to be deficient in other necessary traits, where he actually is pretty good. Inspite of his being very disciplined, it was

assumed that he was late in his project, when the fact was the opposite! In such a case, I think the person has to make an effort to clear such a generality. Also the appraiser should take into consideration all the facts of the person's behaviour and progress, rather than assuming that he will be wrong always.

Hallo Effect

This effect is similar to horn effect, the only difference being that here the person is assumed to have all positive traits because of one desired trait. We have just such an example in our team, where one of the executives had scored the best in the first quarter. This led to a general assumption that she is good at all necessary statistics, which was not the case. This employee has a habit of coming later from breaks, of not going by rules and generally escaping slights due to favouritism. This also affects the morale of the people who work hard but their effort is not recognised. But when she was given theresponsibilityof helping with the KRO's of the few newer executives, she couldn't handle it and this led to waste of time and overall poor performance.

This could have been avoided if there was unbiasedness and proper checking done related to the statistics of the person rather than assuming she would be good at everything.

Primacy Effect

This is an error in perception when a person tends to base somebody's judgement depending on the first impression of that person. For instance, in our organisation we have a new team leader join in to handle our team. Now since this guy was a little timid initially and because it was a new rols and

place for him, most of the people in the office didn't take him seriously. To add to it some of his mannerisms were a little girlish, which led to most of the office crowd calling him ' gay'. Presently, after knowing him more, even if people are not pulling his leg about being gay, he still not given his duerespect. Anything that goes beyond his control in terms of disciplinary issues, he is blamed for saying that he doesn't have a proper hold on his team!

I think the best way to reduce such an error in an organisation would be to observe the person in question over a period of time, unbiasedly, and then form an opinion about him. Its not necessary that first impressions are always the last impressions.

Recency Effect

This is an effect where you form an opinion on a person based on what was last observed about him or what was the last thing he spoke which stood out, in a positive or a negative way. In my office, we have a team leader who is highly work-oriented and keeps to himself. I had an impression that he never talks to anyone other than work, which is a good thing, but I always founds it a little too technical or unfeeling. But recently I had to change my opinion. The same person had supported me to get holidays because of my badhealth, when I'd not even asked for any support. Though he still is the same, but that last gesture of his changed my entire opinion of him.

Ideally, here is a case of both primacy error and then recency error. Though not all effects could be errors, necessarily. The vital thing is we should not

judge others based on one single point be it initial impression or latest impression. We need to keep our minds open about the person.

Selective Perception

We tend to perceive things according to our beliefs or interests in this kind of a perceptual error. We may note only that what we like, to suit our own needs. For instance, there is a colleague of mine who never used to talk to me before. But since I've started my MBA, she's been talking and asking me all sort of information about it. It is a topic of her interest. But she wouldn't talk on any other matter. Here I feel, she perceives selectively, only according to what she wants. In an organisation, it is better for anyone to avoid such an error, because you loose out on lot of potential growth, of self and others. We need to notice and make use of all talents of an employee.

Contrast Effect

We need to be very alert when making decisions that we are not making that decision based on anything observed in contrast to the situation or the person that we are observing. Because such an error could make us go wrong when selecting right people. I can explain this error by mistake that I'd done where I was supposed to monitor the two new members who was supposed to join the team. Now from both these girls one appeared very childish and rather loud as compared to the other one who was a quiet soul and who looked professional and competent.

And I formed my opinion that the louder character was not very mature in handling some KRO's and achieving them consistently. Which later I realised, was a completely wrong opinion of her. She not only was quite disciplined and organised, she was more lively and kept things light when work became

too serious. The other girl, was rather in her own world and least motivated. Effect like this when you have two contrasts in front of you could be difficult to detect, but if you observe each person and compare their performance and behaviour to the standard norm, you would be more accurate.

Projection Error

This is a kind of error when you project your attributes and traits or emotions onto others. Here the person maybe completely different from you, but because we may not have noticed that we might assume the other person also to be like us. We have a member in our team who always talks about team bonding and team strength. I too believe that a team is strong and succeeds more often if it works together towards the same goal. I did an error of assuming that this person will also think the same and share the responsibilities and duties of a project equally.

All the work was delegated accordingly and everyone was expected to do their bit. But to my surprise that person was all talks and no show! He not only did pass on thatr work to another member of the team, his ways also brought discontent amongnst the members and divided the group further. I realised that I'd thought of him being like me and giving his 100% to whatever he does. But that was not the case sadly. If I would have recognised that earlier I would've corrected myself and given him work accordingly.