

# Groups and teams



The presentation that we had to present was based on Power and Politics. Our groups were chosen by the teacher; he picked the students and settled them in different groups. This means that we had the chance to meet and work with different people who have different personality and attitudes in making decisions at work. I was put into a group of five people, Yueming Yuan, Matt Boyce, Erfanul Haque and Lisa Buys.

The preparation for the presentation went quite quick, we didn't have a lot of time to do it, so we were quite tight with the time. However, we had a lot of time to research information about this kind of topic that we are going to do and be ready and prepared to start the project with a good knowledge about this topic.

### **Groups and Teams**

Once we were assigned to a group and a task it was left up to us to form a bond with each other and construct a team. Although it may seem like a natural event, since we were bound by a mutual goal, a formal configuration of members and arrangement of tasks did not occur. Thus, we struggled through the first stage of Formation, as described by Bruce Tuckman 1965. The main fault in our group, which remained a recurring obstacle throughout the preparation and even during the presentation, was the absence of a team-leader. ([http://www. businessballs. com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming. htm](http://www.businessballs.com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming.htm))

According to Tuckman, the stage that followed, namely Storming, is used for 'different ideas compete for consideration.' Unfortunately, in our group this discussion and confrontation of the task and the independent functions was never thoroughly discussed. However, we all agreed on <https://assignbuster.com/groups-and-teams/>

taking responsibility for different tasks, which also meant that much conflict was avoided- there was no debating or competing for the best idea. As much as this has a harmonious outlook, it also seemed that due to a lack of competition and debate, each of our contributions lacked the necessary scrutiny needed for the improvement of the presentation and the growth of the group.

It seems that our group passed the first two stages but did so unmindfully. Thus, at the Norming stage all members were still sharing the same goal but not a mutual strategy. Already at our first formal meeting some of our group members came more prepared than others, for instance Lisa who had done much research into her field. It appears that the only outline of a plan of action was designed by Lisa and myself who organised daily meetings and set deadlines for the while group.

Belbin proposes nine team-roles who can in corporation “facilitate the progress of the team as a whole”. Linked to the previous idea, this allocation of roles did not formally occur, but merely developed throughout the preparation as we all took on vague team player roles. When categorising the members of our group, Yueming and Erfanul fall into rather indecisive and more secondary roles such as the team-worker and monitor-evaluator, respectively. This means that their contribution was more mild and lacked drive and strength. ([http://www. pgagroup. com/team-roles. html](http://www.pgagroup.com/team-roles.html))

In comparison, Lisa falls into a more independent-minded category namely the Specialist. This is due to her dedication and knowledge as much as her inability to form a community-like sharing. For instance, although she had

well prepared her own topic, she decided not to turn up to meetings to discuss the bigger picture and the presentation as a whole. Myself I believe to have played the role of the shaper and Matt, due to his maturity and confidence, of the Co-ordinator, as we took responsibility to putting the pieces together, pressuring the group as well as helping other members do their work.

Clearly, the group lacked the functions of the particular roles that we chose not to pick up such as that of the completer. It is safe to say that in certain situations we did adopt other role behaviour but were mainly allocated to these performances. It is also worth examining a theory of trust that may help to explain the organisational behaviour in our group. Drawing together a typology of trust-related behaviour, using theoretical models of Sako (1992) and Zucker (1986) we can draw up three dimensions of trust that may be present and significant in a team and how its members interact.

(Newell S. Robertson M. Scarbrough Swan J.: Managing knowledge work and innovation 2nd Edition 2009 Published by Palgrave Macmille)

The first is 'companion trust', which occurs when one member of the group relies on the performance of another as a result of their friendship and the belief of their goodwill. This type of reliance was mainly found in our group as we were acquainted with each other before we were set the common task and all trusted each other to try our hardest for the benefit of all. Another form of trust that occurred in our group was 'competence trust' where one relies on another due to their abilities.

This was especially the case with one of the girls in our group who we trusted to do a good job judging from past performances and grades. The last dimension, which is ‘commitment trust’ was not present as although we were all working towards the same goal and were bound by the restraints of University policy and other limitations such as plagiarism, we did not sign a contract that ensured the quality or quantity of everybody’s contributions.

(It could also be argued that we were merely exposed to what Meyerson et al (1996) called ‘swift trust’, where “temporary groups working on short-lived complex tasks that require specialist skills of relative strangers, trust needs to form very quickly if the group is to make any progress at all.” This certainly occurred within our team and is reflected by the fact we put trust into one of our group members despite hearing comments of former colleagues on how unproductive and difficult the person was to work with. (Newell S. Robertson M. Scarbrough Swan J.: Managing knowledge work and innovation 2nd Edition 2009 Published by Palgrave Macmille)

## **Motivation**

In work performance, motivation and ability determine the outcome, thus the motivation of the individuals is an important factor for success. Although we had a common aim, our motivations varied and the degree of our motivation too. It was apparent from the first getting together that some members were more willing to do work and had already done reading around their subject than others. One person in particular was, although on time and prepared, not willing to put extra effort or spend more time than schedules. Repeated comments such as ‘it’s time to go home’ or ‘let’s do it tomorrow’ showed a

clear lack of motivation, especially when other people had not completed their tasks and were not ready to go home yet.

These differences in motivation might come as a result of the various motivational factors. Most of us were driven by extrinsic motivation, which is related to psychological rewards such as the enjoyment of achievement or the need for receiving appreciation. In the bigger picture, most of us were driven by the hope for a good mark and a great university degree.

More specifically and other than the general want for a degree, in my case, I was driven by the want for achievement and the search for personal growth and development. This type of intrinsic motivation can also be found in Erfanul who is trying to do well as it is highly valued in his family. Lisa also gets motivation from the rewards resulting from a university degree such as a good job and a high salary.

Interestingly, we also had a member that seemed to be driven by higher motivational needs- the need for “engagement and sharing, a feeling of community and a sense of belonging” as stated by de Vries. When put into context of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, we find ourselves scattered amongst the top three categories of the hierarchy.

Here, it could be said that Matt and myself fit in the top two categories, as we were seeking a challenge as well as the desire to achieve something. I would judge Lisa and Efran to fit into the Self-esteem category, in search of esteem, feedback from the university as well as the respect of others, and Yueming matches Maslow’s interpretation of “Love and Belonging” in which she seeks to build relationships with others in the hope for. Moreover, I

believe we are all at the same time in the stage of 'safety' as we are motivated by the desire to complete university and find stable jobs to ensure we can maintain a healthy quality of life.

Comparing this model to Alderfer's modified need hierarchy model, it is safe to say that our basic want for a good degree and a career are signs of what he names 'Existence needs' which are "concerned with sustaining human existence and survival, and covers physiological and safety needs or material nature." The desire for Love and Belonging is seen as 'Relatedness needs' and the want for respect, esteem and achievement seems to be the equivalent of Alderfer's 'Growth needs'

Different things also affected our motivation, such as the behaviour of others, our expectations of ourselves, and the importance of our goal. Although many of these factors are difficult to measure, it is safe to say that the importance of the goal can be measured by the significance of the presentation in our module and our degree as a whole. As we knew that the presentation counted a significant amount towards our mark – 40% of the module – we had more reason to do well and our motivation was strengthened. In addition, as we have vague expectations of the final mark we want to achieve during the course of the year, we could measure how much effort was needed to reach that goal. For instance, as I am aiming to complete my university degree with over 60%, I have plenty of reason and pressure to work hard. I think this factor was present in all members of the group.

The levels of motivation can also be measured by how we individually react to problems or critical situations. As seen in the basic model of frustration, there are three types of reactions a problem can trigger; Frustration, Restructuring (alternative goal) and Problem solving. (Mullins: ' Management and Organisation Behaviour' 7th edition 2005)

Here is an example of a situation that illustrated which one of these organisational behaviours we adopted when confronted with an obstacle during the preparation of our presentation. Minutes before our presentation was to start, we realised that we had slides missing because one of the members accidentally didn't save the PowerPoint properly. As these slides were very important and critical to achieving our desired goal- a good mark- Matt and I decided to take action to solve the problem as quickly as possible. Whilst the others seemingly turned to frustration or restructuring their goal (accepting a lesser mark), we ran back to the LRC to type the slides up again and put things back into order.

However, even after this problem was solved and we had successfully started our presentation, we were constantly interrupted by people walking into the seminar room as one of the members of staff forgot to put out a sign to ensure nobody walked into the room during our presentation. At this point, as we perceived the problem to be out of our control, we all reacted to the obstacle with frustration and lacked motivation during our presentation.

A last theory relating to the motivation of the individuals is Adams' Equity theory which focuses on how people react to them being treated fairly compared to others. As we lacked a team-leader and our responsibilities



towards helping others and doing work for the group outside our individual tasks were unclear and vague, a sense of inequity often occurred. We sometimes found ourselves discussing unequal input of work as some did more than others. One of us was also struggling heavily with finding information on a topic which led to Matt and I doing more work with helping the person whilst others were only concerned with their own. Also since Lisa had prepared a lot of researched for her topic but the other's did not, she responded to her sense of inequity by changed her personal input level by failing to attending some of our meetings.