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IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract:

Organizations are much more likely to perform well, when their employees work as a team. Good teamwork creates synergy, where the combined effect of the team is greater than the sum of individual efforts. According to specialists, teamwork in organization involve communication between employees, share responsibilities, ideas, active listening, in accomplishing the task. It is important to bond one with one another, for improving the relations between the employees. In common tasks it is important to work together, because cooperation to a common task is a chance for the new employees to learn from the other with more experience, for new acquire skills.

Key words: team, teamwork, communication, cooperation, diversity, common approach, responsibility

1. Introduction

What is a team? “A team is a minimum number of employees with complementary abilities, who are pursuing a goal, some objectives and a common approach for that it is considered mutually responsible.” (Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K.)

Team is a collection of people who regularly interact to pursue common goals. Teamwork represent the process of people actively working together to accomplish common goals.

Formal Group is a group that is officially recognized and supported by the organization.

Informal Group is a group that is unofficial and emerges from relationships and shared interests among members.

Teamwork means purposes, shared objectives and in the same time, the responsibility is collective.

A team “is a unit of two or more people. There are members interacting and coordinating their work, accomplishing a performance goals.”¹

“A team is a number of persons associated together in work or activity; as a group on one side (as in football or debate).” (Websters Ninth Edition)

2. Teamwork

¹ Daft R., Marcic D., 2004, *Understanding management, Teamwork in organization*, South-Western College

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Teamwork is the ability to work together to achieve a goal, improves the working environment, keeps communication consistent, relieves stress, reduce errors, keep communication lines open.

About teamwork, James E. Hunton was saying: "Getting together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is the success".

"... No matter what you want to do in life, it takes a team work to fulfill your dreams" (Maxwell J.C., 2003)

"Teamwork is important due to the problem-solving synergy gained from multiple minds working on a solution. When one person works on a specific company problem, that person only has her personal experience and knowledge from which to pull for solutions. Using teamwork, team members pool their collective ideas together to generate unique ideas for dealing with problems. Problems in this case are not purely negative. The problem could be developing a product for a consumer to address a need that the consumer does not know that she has."²

The results of teamwork are depending at the following criteria:

- Focusing of the team on the tasks;
- Psychological factors;
- The diversity of team members;
- Application of techniques in solving the tasks;
- Resolving conflicts through collaboration.



Fig.1. Teamwork effectiveness model³

When the manager is forming the team, it's necessary to have a mix of people with different abilities and different characters.

The manager has to be sure that the team members are equally, both within the team and from people outside the team.

There are different types of teams:

- Vertical (Functional, Command)
- Horizontal (Cross-Functional)
 - Self-Managing (Continuous)
 - Problem-Solving (Periodic)
- Special Purpose (Task Force/ is temporary)

² <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-teamwork-organizations-14209.html>

³ ibidem

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The conflict in teamwork is an antagonistic interaction in which one party attempts to thwart the intentions or goals of another. The conflict is present in the following condition: if there are jurisdictional ambiguities, communication breakdown, personality clashes, status or goal differences. For solving conflict it is necessary to proceed at: negotiations, mediation, improve communication, provide well-defined task.

“Bell and Kozlowski (in press) distinguish virtual teams from conventional face-to-face teams based on two features: (1) spatial distance—virtual team members are dispersed in space, and (2) technological mediation of information, data, and personal communication—virtual team members interact via advanced communications media. These two features enable diverse expertise—located worldwide—to be combined into a team that transcends the usual boundaries of space and time. As organizations and work continue to evolve, new types of work teams will be created and classified.”⁴

Teamwork members need to have different tasks. There is a leader, but this does not mean that he is more important than any member of the team. This equal recognition has to consider the intellectual capacity of the employees and the competencies that they have.

When they work with a team, the managers have to know that a team has some stages in their evolution (as the psychologist Bruce Wayne Tuckman has published in 1965):

a. Forming: the employees are excited about the tasks that they have to get to know each other, start to work together.

b. Storming: in general, in this stage, the team fails, because it starts when there is a conflict between team members' natural working styles. Also, it can start a storm when the team members may challenge the authority of the manager. It is a problem when the manager did not explain clearly how the team will work or the employees are uncomfortable with the approach that he is using.

c. Norming: the team members know each other very well, they can socialize together, they can provide each other constructive feedback

d. Performing: the teams are working at the high level; everyone is focused on reaching the goal as a group because at exactly this point, the team members trust in each other. Now, the team members can make decisions and solve problems effectively. Even if there is a problem, the team members solve it very quickly. The team leader is not solving the problems, but he will continue to monitor the progress of the team and celebrate milestone achievements with the team to continue to build the team. Also, in this stage, it is possible that the team may revert back to another stage:

1. back to stage "storming", if one of the members starts working independently.

2. back to "forming" stage if a new member joins the team.

In 1977, Mary Ann Jensen together with Bruce Wayne Tuckman added the fifth stage:

e. Adjourning: is the stage when the goal is achieved and the team is following a part, because the team members are going in different directions. The manager makes all possible that the team is celebrating the success of the entire work, when they can tell about best practice to others.

⁴ Kozlowski Steve W. J. ,2001, *Work Groups and Teams in Organizations*, Cornell University ILR School, Michigan State University

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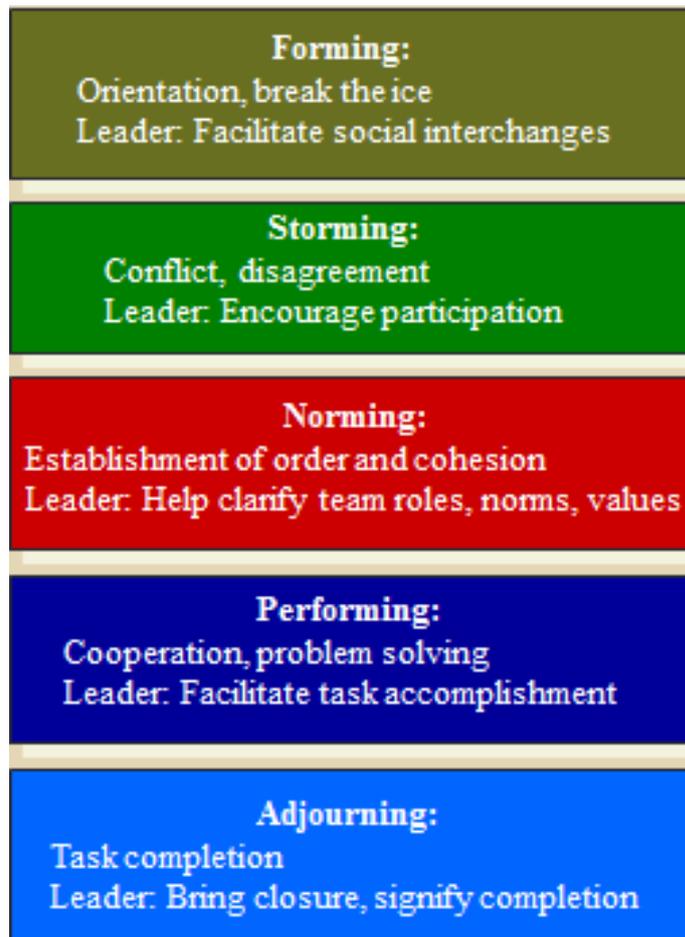


Fig.2 The stages of team development⁵

For teams to work and succeed within organizations, their managers should be concerned to respect some basic requirements:

- **The positive interaction:** for getting good results. The cooperation is necessary
- **The actual presence:** the team members need to be in continuous contact
- **The team learning:** the team members learn one from another. They learn to communicate and to collaborate.

The team forms are:

- Informal teams: the team who don't have a formal structure, well define in the organization
- Formal teams: are created by organizations as a part of the formal organizational structure.

The role of teams for organizations:

- Ensure more resources for problem solving
- Teamwork improved creativity and innovation
- Teamwork improved quality of decision making
- There is a greater commitments to tasks
- Teamwork increased motivation of members

⁵ Daft R., Marcic D., 2004, *Understanding management, Teamwork in organization*, South-Western College

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- Ensure a better control and work discipline
- Ensure more individual need satisfaction

The managers need to take in consideration the following characteristics of the teams:

- The ideal size of a team is 7 members. In the small teams, formed by 2-4 members, it is easier to reach agreement, the decisions are made quickly, there are more participants per member. Variations of from 5 to 12 typically are associated with good team performance. The team formed by 24 members ask more questions, show more agreement. In the large team, formed from 12 members or more, it will be present more the situation of conflicts, they will have more disagreements.
- The member role has to consider: Task specialist role spend time and energy helping the team reach its goal. Socio-emotional role support team members' emotional needs.

The characteristics of performance teamwork are based on clear goals, result driven structure, competent team members, unified commitments, collaborative climate, standards of excellence, external support and recognition, principled leadership.

3. Conclusion

Teamwork is essential in every institution and “the benefits to be gained from teamwork synergies are essential for the effective management of resources”⁶. Activities such as persuasion, training, and special rewards may be necessary to implement teamwork. Team performance is often contingent on the commitment of team members. This can be one of the most difficult parts of team building to control.

References:

[1] Daft R., Marcic D., 2004, *Understanding management, Teamwork in organization*, South-Western College

[2] Kozlowski Steve W. J, .2001, *Work Groups and Teams in Organizations*, Cornell University ILR School, Michigan State University

<http://the-happy-manager.com/articles/why-is-teamwork-important/>

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-teamwork-organizations-14209.html>

⁶ <http://the-happy-manager.com/articles/why-is-teamwork-important/>