



Major Requirements to Creating and Managing Multifunctional Teams

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Abstract: There are certain requirements which must be observed so that a multifunctional team can perform according to the objectives set by the organisation. Those requirements regulate team activities in order to optimize overall performance and synchronize relationships among team members. The aim of this paper is to identify major requirements for creating and managing multifunctional teams.

Keywords: team, team work, management.

JEL: M12; M54; J24.

I. INTRODUCTION

Aligning the goals of a team with those of an organisation is a major requirement for efficient performance and corporate success. This approach to structuring the activity of a team is also beneficial to the optimization of teams' potential and the accomplishment of their goals. If there is no *synchronization between teams and organisations*, positive results from performance can hardly be expected. It is therefore necessary to identify the requirements for creating and managing multifunctional teams.

II. MAJOR REQUIREMENTS TO CREATING AND MANAGING MULTIFUNCTIONAL TEAMS

In order to create and manage a multifunctional team which meets the requirements for achieving certain goals, *some crucial factors must be taken into consideration*, the major of them being as follows [1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11]:

- **Easy to understand vision, mission, and objectives**

In order to be successful, a team needs a well grounded vision and mission and achievable goals. The schedules of activities to be performed by the team are designed and updated according to the goals set. Thus team members are aware of the activity they will be engaged in and the priorities they must follow. Objectives are formulated by senior managers and the objectives of the team must be in unison with those of the organisation.

Objectives are then further specified within the team, and members are assigned tasks which correspond to their competences. A motivating factor for the accomplishment of goals is the remuneration (personal or collective) which team members will receive.

- **Favourable environment and organizational assistance**

In order for a team to perform efficiently, senior executives must ensure the necessary infrastructure and support, which depend on various criteria. Good results can hardly be achieved without appropriate work environment. The latter is a broad concept which covers several aspects, from environment in which the team works to the equipment required for its performance. The team must also receive relevant support from the managers of the organisation, such as [9]:

- *Support from the leaders*

Commitment on behalf of executives is a guarantee for efficient accomplishment of goals, rational allocation of resources and recruitment of competent staff. This is the responsibility of the leader who has the authority to make decisions and delegate rights to the other team members [2]. Therefore, the leader needs to [1]:

- Approach mistakes as something to learn from;
- Ensure consistency between words and actions;
- Be positive;
- Have an agreeable personality;
- Be polite;
- Be generous.

- *Hierarchical structure*

In order for a team to function in line with the goals set, the managers of the organisation must equip that team with relevant authorities and intervene as little as possible in its work in a direct manner. This requires the development of a 'flat' structure which gives more power to the leader and the members of a team, so as to prevent the concentration of decision-making entirely authority to senior managers. Thus the information available within the team will be more reliable and exchanged within shorter time, since no time will be lost in communicating information between managers and team members and vice versa.

- *Appropriate reward system*

In essence, the driving force for every activity is motivation and the benefit (in its positive sense) which employees within the organisation, respectively team members, will receive. To perform efficiently they need a stimulus which will motivate them to do their best [12]. In

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order to achieve positive results from the work process, organisations need working practices which regulate fair reward systems [4]. An optimum ratio between individual and team rewards must be established [5, 6]. To team members those will include:

- Personal rewards

These depend on the behaviour of the individual within the team, his personal attitude, values, and work habits.

Possible rewards might be [1]:

- money;
- praise (expression of approval);
- gratitude;
- status;
- discretion;
- responsibility;
- challenge;
- other.

- Team rewards.

This relates to the employment of strategies which aim to affect positively team members to bring them together, and to encourage them to work more efficiently. Examples of team rewards include [1]:

- team lunch;
- cold or hot beverages for the team;
- a drink for the team members after work;
- organized events in the office;
- a trip for the team;
- purchase of equipment and consumables for the team;
- providing relaxed and comfortable environment for the team;
- other.

A major requirement to team rewards is **the principle of equality between team members**. A common mistake is to reward personally individuals for work done by the team (the exception being when somebody has failed to accomplish his goals or assignments). On equal terms, there is an obvious conflict when people who have worked together receive personal rewards. There will always be some team members who are dissatisfied with the attitude they receive. This is the fastest way to get the team sidetracked from its objectives, since vanity is part of human nature and any instance of discrimination leads to drop in motivation and disengagement from work.

→ *Experience in team work*

As business activities in contemporary business organisations rely more on team, rather than on individual performance, executives prefer employees who have the qualities and experience required for work in cooperation. This means not only accumulating relevant knowledge and competences, but also having excellent communicative skills. Therefore, modern organisations run various workshops and flexible team training programs. Similar events benefit employees by cultivating in them the abilities they need in order to work in teams.

- **Motivating factors**

In order to achieve efficient accomplishment of the team's objectives and assignments, it is necessary to take into account the motivating factors which are crucial to results. One of the functions of leaders is to identify those factors as well as the way they match the overall motivation of the team. Hence the claim that: *'Everyone is motivated to a certain degree if he is successful, and would be further motivated if being a member of a successful team. It is therefore necessary to create an environment in which team members could accomplish goals together, rather than individually ... In order to motivate a team it is necessary to decide how to combine people for dealing with certain projects and assignments so that each person could assess his contribution both as an individual and a team member to the achievement of ultimate goals'* [1].

Some of the factors which motivate employees to work *productively and efficiently* include [6]:

- working with people who respect them;
- being involved in exciting work;
- receiving appraisal for work well done;
- being rewarded according to the results they have achieved with their work;
- having the opportunity to further develop their skills;
- decision-making power;
- working with people who pay attention to their proposals how to improve performance;
- having the opportunity to consider issues and not merely obey commands;
- seeing the ultimate results of their work;
- working for competent managers;
- feedback with senior executives;
- being involved in work that is neither too easy nor too hard;
- being aware as to how the work process might be improved.

Without motivating factors it would be difficult, if not impossible to ensure the appropriate social climate for achieving objectives. This depends not only on the competences of team members, but also on the attitude of the leader to their activity. In order to achieve better results, the team must be constantly motivated towards higher accomplishments [7].

- **Skills**

In order for a team to operate efficiently, its members must be equipped with relevant skills that will enable them to achieve set goals. Obviously, those skills must relate to certain sphere of the team activity, rather than represent some general skills. Since a team is multifunctional, the following skills might be highlighted [9]:

→ *Technical skills*

These refer to expertise – in marketing research, finance, management, software design, etc.

→ *Problem-solving skills*



This is the personal ability to analyse complicated or cul-de-sac situations and come up with appropriate solutions.

→ *Interpersonal skills*

These refer to the ability to interact efficiently with other people, which is essential for team work.

→ *Organisational skills*

These are related to the ability to communicate efficiently with other units, i.e. an insight into the political landscape within the organisation is required, as well as the talent to develop a network and work as part of that network.

● ***Divergent and convergent thinking within the team***

When a team is engaged in specific tasks, it is necessary to approach matters in a way different from the standard top-down decision-making approach. Best solutions are sought when there is equality among team members. In such cases both divergent and convergent thinking must be employed. *'Neither of them is especially important in the traditional work group where the manager is the person who does all the thinking and planning, while employees get the work done. Therefore both patterns of thinking are necessary within a team working environment. Divergent thinking diverges from obvious reasons for considering or doing things, as people approach old issues from a new perspective. Convergent thinking, on the other hand, streamlines ideas arising as a result of divergent thinking, into specific proposals for action... Thus, by shifting the focus of attention from divergent to convergent thinking, a team no longer focuses on newness and is more concentrated on usefulness'* [9].

Divergent thinking has the focus of attention on various techniques, such as brainstorming, mapping ideas into work documents (diagrams), recording creative solutions, etc. *Convergent* thinking is more about short-listing advanced ideas, discussing the *pros and cons*, the tools to be employed in the implementation of those ideas, reverse brainstorming, etc.

● ***Positive attitude and good communication within the team***

Good relationships and efficient communication between team members are vital for team performance. Sharing information, honesty, tolerance, trust, and social support are only some of the prerequisites for successful cooperation.

● ***Productive meetings***

Meetings and their organisation and running are essential for the efficient performance of the team. Their rationality is crucial for the future work of the team, the solution of current problems, the adoption of approaches and strategies for improving processes. Those meetings determine regulations within the team, deadlines and priorities, as well as the mechanisms and ideas to be employed in the accomplishments of goals.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Creating and managing highly-efficient teams is related to observing various requirements. Those requirements underlie the good results achieved by a team and the rational allocation of tasks to be done. They also determine not only the competitiveness of an organisation but the healthy social climate within it. This paper has accomplished two major objectives:

- In the first place, it has clarified the essence of creating and managing multifunctional teams;
- In the second place, it has revealed some crucial factors which influence multifunctional teams.

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