



Name: Ana Balteanu

Student number: 2132981

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Lecturer name: Akash Puranik

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Summary

Tom Jackson has been chosen to lead a massive international project, which has as its goal to open three big new warehouses in important locations across Europe.

The leader has some issues that have arisen between the team members, and lack of commitments is also a problem that stops the team from working effectively.

Tom will be given advice using studies made by various intellectuals, that will help him in what means being a leader, how to better his team members work experience, allocating roles and achieving the final goal.

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Introduction

Amazon has as its goal to open new warehouses in London, Paris and Berlin.

This project is handled by Tom Jackson, and he needs a flawless team for this journey to come at a perfect end and be successful.

The key to a successful business, lays in the hands of the executive team, which can often have some problems that as a domino, make everything fall into pieces.

This is happening to Tom, the fundamental issues Tom must solve are those that are specific to Teamwork, in fact he needs to help his team members have a conversation with each other, communicate and solve whatever problems have arisen, which have created disagreements and lack of commitment. They will be given analysed and specific advice from various men that have dedicated books and articles to Teamwork and how to succeed in it, such as Hackman, Tuckman, Wheelan, and few more.

Definition of a team

A team is much different than a group, even if the two words are often used as synonyms. Morgan (2017) says that a group is a few people that connect because of a common passion or in relation to some characteristics they share. The definition that he gives on a team is, on the other hand, that a team is several individuals that come together as one, to achieve a common goal in which they are committed to.

These definitions give a very distinctive idea of both identities, in fact, they have a lot of differences between them. In a team, each individual works as to fulfil his part of the job, so that the overall final work will be perfect. They plan and decide collectively on the next steps they must take and are all taken accountable for everything. King and Lawley (2016) state that on the contrary, the members of a group focus on individual goals and outcomes, they undertake individual tasks and are held individually accountable.

A common goal and being held collectively accountable is not the only motivation that gives the team members the drive to work perfectly and get to the goal at once, in fact, for a team to be working effectively, the members need a bit of a push.

Having this as a definition of a team, an advice that Tom could use, would be to analyse and make sure that his Team members have the following:

- A real interaction, because the people that will potentially work in building and running such a big affiliate of this big company, need to physically ask and give each other questions and answers.
- A common purpose, because obviously everyone that is part of Toms team, needs to agree on what they are trying to achieve
- A clear plan, each member of the group needs to be allocated its specific role and task
- They need Resources, to be able to achieve their plan, that could be money, but not necessarily.
- A coach, that will make the teamwork at his best.

These are the five characteristics that Hackman (2009) states that are fundamental, a base, for what would be an effective team.



Models of team development

Groups are dynamic social systems that change over time (Arrow et al., 2004). This means that groups of people, go through several stages in order to become effective teams.

The first model of team development Tom could analyse and consider if he could use with his team members, would be Tuckman's.

Tuckman (1965), suggests that groups go through 5 different and individual stages, these are:



- Forming, which is the first stage. During this stage, the members of the team meet for the first time, and are unsure of which responsibilities they will face, how, where and what their task is going to be. Tom should make the people feel at ease and comfortable, breaking the ice and creating a safe place for them to be creative and build a relationship with each other.

- Then comes the storming stage, which is one of a more scandalous type one, in fact the team members will be in conflict with one another and will feel unsure of the hierarchy. The leader of this massive project, during this stage, should encourage collaboration and assign roles and responsibilities, this stage is fundamental, because at the end of it, there will be a clear hierarchy created within the team.
- The norming stage, is a stage in which the conflicts spoken about above, evaporate. Trust is created between the team members and ideas are exchanged, a keen sense of identity has formed, and the team is making progress. Here, Tom must encourage this behaviour.
- Then the team will be performing, they will progress towards the common goal and solutions are found, and their leader should be prompt in leading them by example and holding regular meetings.
- The fifth and final stage is the adjourning stage, the goal is achieved, members are rewarded and appreciated by the team leader.

These stages that Tuckman gives are not a solution that will work in chronological order, in fact the team could go back into the first, second or fourth stage whenever something arises. One team could even get stuck in stage two, and mainly, the model only applies to a small group of people.

Wheelan (2016), also, has a similar model of team development, which also consists in stages, very similar to Tuckman's

Another model of team development is the one by Gersick(1988), which only consists in three phases, as he calls them, being:

- Phase 1 – stability
- Transition – instability
- Phase 2 – stability

The Gersick model is more aligned and focused on the task, rather than the relationships, and states that just by the end of the first meeting, the group is formed and stable, until when the transition happens, where a burst of energy brought the team members to reorganize themselves based on an examination of their progress, to then finally work in a more effective way.

In Tom's case, he should try and practice Tuckman's model and see in which stages his team is at.

How to create a cohesive and effective team

There are a lot of benefits in team working, such as innovation and motivations, but for a team to be working effectively, as Tuckman (1965) says, some hierarchy must form and acknowledged.

Belbin (1981), states that team composition is crucial to the success of a team and is directly connected with each team member's ability to perform different team roles. He says that a better team balance forms when each and every ideal role personalities are present in the team. He developed 9 roles divided into 3 categories, which are: Action oriented roles, People oriented roles, and thought oriented roles.

The action-oriented roles, further divide into shapers, completer-finishers and implementers, they have the role of leaders of the task, convert ideas into actions and check every detail, because they are more of 'structural and strict' personalities. They are efficient, systematic, methodical, and can be inflexible.

The people-oriented roles, however, are more of social, positive and enthusiastic personalities, that means that these team members will mainly focus on setting up roles and making decisions when they ought to be made, they are aware of individual and emotional needs, and help their colleagues not lose the touch with reality.

The thinking-oriented roles are the most intelligent and imaginative members of the team, they are experts, in fact they don't always take part in the team, as this can lead to tension within the team.

Tom could use these roles described by Belbin to further name which personalities are predominant in the team, and additionally figure out if and which roles are missing in this team. There is also an online test, which would take his team members about 15 minutes to complete, that gives a detailed description of their personalities, based on the answer they gave to the simple questions asked. This was created by Briggs (2022).

Discussion

As mentioned in the beginning, the key to a successful business stays solely in the hands of the ones that actually do the work, so an effective teamwork is essential for a goal to be reached. How can Tom ensure a happy and functional place for his team members to work in, overcome their challenges and operate in the most efficient way?

According to West (2017), the members of the team must have what is called 'team potency', which is the strong belief in their team to be successful and effective in their work. They need to be at a level of trust that brings them to back each other up in a moment of crisis, and not tear one another down.

West gives us what seems to be their perfect definition of team effectiveness, giving five main components

1. Task effectiveness, that is to which extent the team members are successful in achieving their task-related objectives
2. Team member well-being, that refers to stress, mental health and all that involves psychological factors
3. Team viability, which is the likelihood of the team to be working together effectively
4. Team innovation, that gives details about the extent that the team members go to, in developing and implementing new processes, procedures and products
5. Inter-team cooperation, how well they work together with other teams to deliver products or services.

When team members can't seem to find trust in each other, barriers big as walls arise between them, and effective work can't be born in this environment.

Carrucci(2021) says that conflicts will come up when trying to better coordinate efforts. This requires spotting and discussing any historical baggage or unresolved issue between the team members, in this case. Only when those concerns are fully cleared, all trust can be restored in the members. Empathy is key here, and sharing what each person's last drops of anger are, play a big part in stopping what would be the 'storming stage'.

Coyle (2018) also gives attentive advice on effective teamworking, identifying 3 skills that if practiced, could help in succeeding.

Skill 1 – Build safety	Skill 2 – Share vulnerability	Skill 3 – Establish purpose
A leader can build safety by showing understanding and responding in a receptive way, embracing the messenger.	The leader should show his vulnerability, in the first place, to allow team members to do the same. He should listen attentively and steer creative ideas.	It is important that the priorities are named and ranked, clearing them and not assuming they are understood by the first explanation.

This is useful advice for Tom, as clearing out the priorities will redirect Mihaela and Spencer's interest, projecting it towards the final goal, and not their personal gains.

Conclusion and recommendations

The main advice that tom should take in consideration and put in practice within his team, is find out what are the crucial issues between the team members, make them comfortable enough to open up and feel safe, express their opinion without the fear of being judged, and find their place within the team. Tom should also install a sort of hierarchy and give each member a role and a task, by doing this, the members will feel like they have a responsibility, and they will feel appreciated and useful, not leaving any space for the lack of commitment that Mihaela and Spencer are facing.

Tom should schedule regular meetings with the team, in order to have a clear channel to communicate with them and give or receive advice, he should make himself more vulnerable and give some power to the team members, so they feel validated, and not just used to pursue a successful business. Giving the team members resources could help Tom in reinstalling the excitement of working in a team, last but certainly not least, as it is one of the main characteristics that are needed to create effective work, Tom should solve the conflicts that were created at the initial stages of the project, allowing the team to roam into the other stages.

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