

Effective Team Working and Communication by Sara Qateel

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Abstract

Teamwork is necessary in every organisation whether its healthcare or education institute. Students' best work and academic excellence can be achieved by having teamwork skills. Diversity is very beneficial for the team since it puts a fresher face on the team. However, it has certain challenges that every team needs to overcome by attaining open communication, building trust and clarifying team roles. Certain barriers such as poor team skills and trust lacking can be very fatal for teamwork. These barriers can be eradicated by simple steps and everyone playing a major role. There are many types of team roles that can be assigned to people. General team roles such as executor, investigator, planner and checker can help organise teamwork.

Introduction

An effective team is a very important asset for any organisation. In university or any other education institute, it determines the best work from its students and ensures their success. As the years are progressing, there are certain problems arising with workplaces and colleges, for that a teamwork is required but it's very complex. Since people of every color, age, ethnicity are put together under one roof, though this diverse nature is very fresh and innovative for organisation, it can create issues that can compromise teamwork and organisational integrity. Such as in educational institutes, coordination between students is required for good understanding of the whole setup which includes certain modules and group projects. Diversity can cause serious issues that compromise a student's life at college and some of the possible factors contribute to distress for the individual. For example: Psychological factors, environmental factors, personal factors and social factors. To stay coordinated for a diverse team, it needs to be done with proper teamwork considering everyone contributing to play a major role. Diversity gives freshness to organisations as people from every background with different experiences reflect upon each other and that can be very inspiring and awakening. However, there are certain steps to build an effective team in a diverse environment and these steps can be compromised by specific barriers which every organisation needs to overcome. There are also certain roles every individual needs to play to have a unified approach as a team for any kind of project. In this report we will discuss steps to build an effective team and its barriers and how teamwork is impacting the organisation.

How to develop an effective team

Direct communication

Practicing communication is very important when it comes to teamwork. A team can only function effectively when students are open with each other. If students hold back and feel restricted within the team, it will negatively impact the overall team's performance. Teamwork is beneficial only when members are open to each other in terms of critique that turns into positive outcomes (Heather Walker Peterson). If students are discussing properly before going straight to work, they will be able to work effectively. For the team at school, the best strategy is to communicate (Magas). Diversity brings new ideas to the team and it's very important that minorities are not discriminated against and unequal, open communication will help them come out of their shell and contribute to teamwork better.

Clarify roles

If members of the team do not have any idea about what role they are playing and how they are executing work, it will disorganise the teamwork and create chaos within the team. Clarifying roles will create sense of discipline and goals will start to get measurable. Every member should have separate roles and when put together each role to get the desired results works effectively for overall performance. Everyone is pointed in same direction and communication barriers are overcome. It also helps keep track of team productivity and progress.

Project management tools

We live in the age of technology, every student wants to be flexible with their group projects. It can get hard for a team to get together and work together on time. There needs to be means of constant communication between members so the work is tracked. This flexibility can be attained by using certain management tools, it increases ease of collaboration and work is checked properly without any errors. Every factor can be evaluated using tools such as time managing, work progress, proofreading, drafts of work and general discussion. Some examples of the project management tools are

- Slack
- Time doctor
- Workfront
- Zoho project
- Proof hub
- Active collab

Impact of diverse teamwork

A college with diverse environment develops sense of equality in people. Minority groups tend to join colleges where there's a minority. Diversity in college affect college activities such as group projects. Diversity in team broadens people's perspective in terms of culture and newer ideas presented in college. This in turn helps people grow and help them get prepared for real world after college. (FDU). Working together as a team has become the most element for workplace.

According to the report, 39% of workers feel the teamwork is ideal method (Bradio)

It helps in the future career as well because students do not know what job they will do in future and what kind of people they will have to collaborate with so it is crucial that they get prepared in college before starting their professional careers.

Teamwork skills will always be incorporated in your modules and that can help increase your competency academically. A report said, team working has become a significant requirement of employees (Emergenetics). Students who engage in more group work have better communication skills and problem solving approaches to things. They start to feel confident and put their ideas more. Learning and collaborating through a diverse environment makes people learn about different cultures and they respect them even more. According to the research, 33% of millennials want to join a collaborative work space. (Khris Steven, 2021). Another very effective impact of teamwork in college is it reduces disrespect and bullying. Students get to know each other better and personally too. The sense of respect and equality helps feel as important as everyone. A study stated that students who

deals with diversity have richer and nicer experience of learning positively because of they feel more engaged and motivated (University of Michigan)

Barriers to teamwork

There are certain challenges that students in college can face while working together as a team especially when there is diversity in the class. Everyone comes from different backgrounds that also mean that they have different approaches for things. They can have different opinions towards the same goal and that compromises teamwork. These challenges can be overcome if certain steps are taken. However, it is very crucial to identify what is causing ineffective teamwork first. Some of the general problems that are seen in poor team work that directly affects learning of students are:

Poor communication

The teamwork only works when team members have open communication between them. Because it increases productivity and helps get to solutions in a fast manner. Poor communication leads to poor learning. If students cannot state their opinions and point of views to their classmates, they will never be able to overcome their certain confusions. This becomes the most common barrier to effective teamwork as everyone will feel separated that way and this will impact on their group work. Doing an assigned task with people of different mindsets, ethnicity, race and color is challenging and to turn this challenge into success, poor communication between students needs to be eradicated.

Lack of trust

Starting college is a major shift for every individual, coming to the place where there is diversity of people. Having to interact with them daily and doing collaborative tasks with them seems difficult in the start for everyone. Everyone feels sceptical when they are interacting with someone. These trust issues become the most unfortunate barrier for effective teamwork. When students are not trusting each other, they would not put together an extra effort in collaboration. Trust is required in every setup of life whether it's college, professional or personal. Every team member should work on their trust issues in order to thrive for better outcomes.

Lack of understanding

When students are put together for a group project, they have to do everything by themselves. As only initial instructions are provided by the professor, it leaves for students to guide themselves for the rest of the work. For a diverse team to collaborate and research together, certain problems such as poor understanding arise. Everyone starts to feel confused about the topic as there is no coordination between members. Even after the project is complete, students will have no proper understanding of the project. This barrier has a negative effect on both individual and team's learning.

Conflicts

It is common that when people are working together in a team, there will be conflicts. The differences are created because of different mindsets. Conflicts can be both positive or negative. It is the team's effort to deal with conflicts in a mature way and have a realistic approach towards the goal. Every individual has their own unique thought process and mostly people fail to inflict it on teamwork in a positive manner. This innovative approach of every member should be unified to eradicate the barrier that is affecting team's performance and productivity. There should be mutual discussion about ideas where everyone is listened to properly to get optimistic results.

Team roles

According to research, collaboration in colleges for learning increases the academic competency of individuals. (Johnson, Johnson, Smith, 2006). Thus, the challenges are still faced when a diverse team is put together. It is necessary that these challenges should be dealt with in a competent manner. One way to organise teamwork and overcome common issues that affect a team's ability is to identify and assign roles. Group roles present a very organised and cleaned teamwork because everyone knows what to do and they are set out to complete their goals. Moreover, group roles allow everyone to have complete participation in the project and they feel responsible about doing their part of the job. When team roles are assigned, team members communicate properly with each other as well. Team roles can depend on an individual's abilities for example, for students to work on a project with engineering, individuals with high stamina and strength are more likely to do physical work. Some of the general team roles are:

Manager: They manage all tasks and host discussions between team members for work to go smoothly. Manager allows everyone to speak up about their problems.

Recorder: It is necessary that someone needs a record of all the team activities to have more organised work. Recorder makes all critical points that are discussed in the team.

Presenter: When a team is working on the project, the presenter displays all ideas given by each member. Presenter can coordinate with the recorder so everyone's participation is presented.

Analyst: They observe and suggest the team process of working by closely analysing goals to get desirable end results. This helps team members prioritise common goals.

Motivator: This role can be played by everyone as motivators encourage all group members to work effectively that helps them have innovative approach and newer ideas. This role is necessary for problem solving processes.

Investigator: Investigator in a team asks questions to the team that allows members to have a three dimensional perspective to the problem and prevents any disagreement later on in the process.

Checker: After the work has been completed, the results need checking to make sure everything was done right. Checker finalises the work done by every member.

Conclusion

In conclusion, diversity is a very beneficial factor for teamwork and it increases engagement and work productivity. For students to reach academic competency, teamwork plays a major role in shaping their personality. A diverse group will always have conflicts but it can be taken positively to reach desirable goals. The team roles and development process are essential for any team and it is the only way to get rid of barriers for effective teamwork.

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