

EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction.....	3
Activity	3
Theories relating to teamwork and communication.....	4
Strategies for effective team working	6
Analysis.....	8
Conclusion	9
Reference	11

Introduction

The present competitive scenario has made communication skill to become an essential part of our personal and professional lives. Effective communication constitutes the core part of successful teamwork. Communication is the process through which an individual conveys his knowledge, ideas, and information. The basic components of efficacious teamwork rely greatly on structured communication, critical language, awareness, and effective leadership behavior. To have efficient communicative skills an individual needs to convey his thoughts and feelings with clarity and in a persuasive way. He should also have a good grasp of the knowledge he wants to convey else a clear connection fails to get established.

Activity

Effective communication constitutes the core part of successful teamwork (Ramaswamy *et al.* 2017, p.263). Communication is the process through which an individual conveys his knowledge, ideas, and information so any hindrance in this aspect will eventually lead to a disorganized team and not being able to achieve the desired results (Beddoes, 2020, p.6). Good communication determines whether a team is delivering work up to its potential. Poor communication might lead to unnecessary anxiety and tension among team members (Sharma *et al.* 2018, p.225). It also helps in saving time as in several instances faulty communication may lead to misinterpretation of the message conveyed. When there is effective communication in the team each of the team members gets a lot of motivation and satisfaction as they feel that their opinion is important.

Society is information-driven so the faster the communication is established the faster one can learn. Establishing efficient communication among the team members is crucial to execute work to its maximum potential. To achieve this activity was undertaken. Cooperation and collaboration determine how a job is executed masterfully. As human beings, our social surroundings determine our physical and mental well being. Communication is identified as a soft skill that is not easily quantified or identified. Therefore the engagement in activities facilitates our intrapersonal skills to evolve. The activity that has been undertaken during the course curriculum was to make a group presentation based on the topic of teamwork management. Initially, a team needed to be constituted

who would undertake the process of planning and execution of the presentation. The selection of the team members was an important aspect as the team had to be constituted based on the strong points of the team members. A person among the team with leadership skills was elected to lead the team activities. After the team has been constituted it becomes important to select the topic on which the presentation needs to be made. In this regard, there were several differences in opinions and several ideas that surfaced. A choice had to be made democratically without hurting the sentiments of any team member. After selection of the topic focus needed to be shifted to the path or process in which the work needed to be done. This stage requires an equal contribution from all the team members to conduct academic research on several aspects of the topic of Team Management. After the content had been decided the team members who had flair in technical knowledge and could make attractive slides presentation were selected to execute the task. In each stage, the team members had to maintain excellent communication needed to be maintained among the team members. The delivery of the speech was a task in which every team member had to take an equal part. This created a healthy work environment and the ultimate success of the presentation gave a feeling of companionship and a sense of achievement.

Theories relating to teamwork and communication

Group dynamics theory

The interaction of people in a group environment is known as group dynamics, it is influenced by individual personality and behavior. According to the findings of Knight *et al.* (2016, p.223) group dynamics can be distinctly subdivided into five aspects. Awareness is where the team members get acclimated with one another and determine the intended goal. Conflict when the team starts to work together there is bound to be interaction and difference in opinions. Cooperation phase is where after constructive conflicts the team members cooperate towards a common goal. Productivity phase where the team members show output, based on the nature of the work executed the team dynamics can be evaluated. The last phase is Closure, where the team members have a sense of pride in the work he has established.

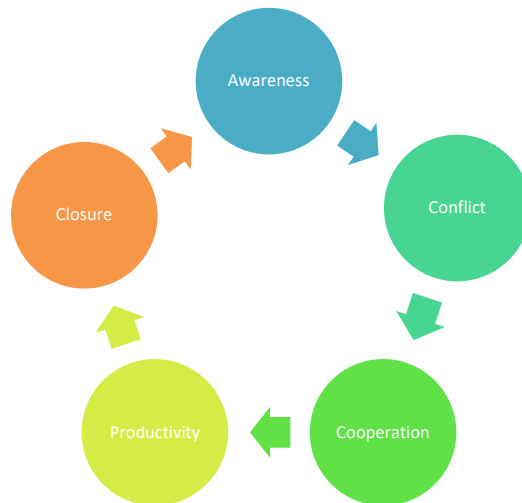


Figure 1: Key aspects of Group Dynamic Theory

(Source: inspired by Knight *et al.* 2016, p.223)

Team working theory

The study conducted by Garcia-Palao *et al.* (2019, p.216) on the historical review of Tuckman's model of group development states that there are four stages. The Forming Stage is the initial stage where the team is pairing up, understanding their responsibility, and making their niche. The productivity level is significantly low. In the Storming Phase, the individuals begin to consider themselves a part of the team. This stage is characterized by conflicts and differences in opinions. By the time the Norming Phase has reached a sense of belongingness in the group develops and the productivity starts to increase. The final Performing Stage is characterized by high-performance output from the members as they have been able to understand the goal and target and have built cooperation among the members.

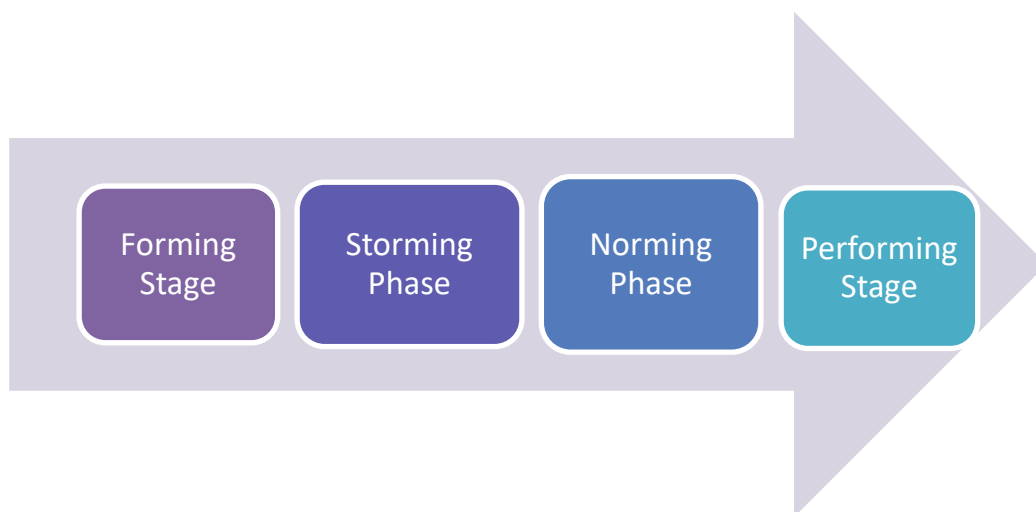


Figure 2: Key aspects of Team Working Theory

(Source: inspired by Garcia-Palao *et al.* 2019, p.216)

Communication Theory

In the study conducted by Khintchin (2017, p.35) which focuses on the historical perspective of communication and information, it can deduce that there are mainly four elements in the process of a communication relay. The primary is the source where all the important decisions, goals of the working strategy are determined. The second is the Message which consists of the elements like what needs to be relayed. Followed by the Channel which primarily focuses on the path through which the information will be transmitted from the source to the receiving end. The final is the Receiver who is allocated with the prime task of receiving the message and executing appropriate behavioral modification.

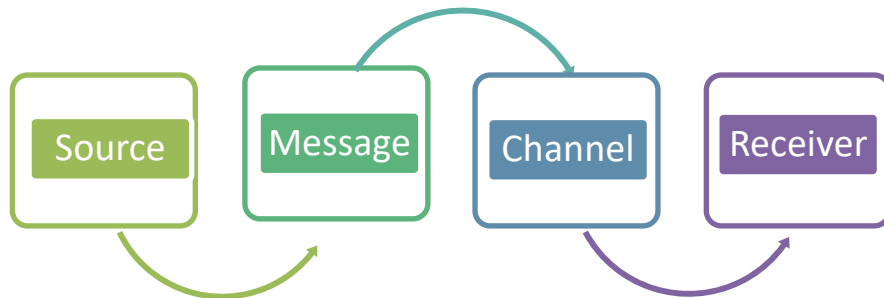


Figure 3: Key aspects of Communication Theory

(Source: inspired by Khintchin, 2017, p.35)

Strategies for effective team working

Every individual is not equipped with all the skills that are needed to execute a task. So the formation of a team not only improves the efficiency of work but every member can input according to their potential and also learn several skills from the teammates. The teams need to be dynamic, diverse, dispersed, and taking digital help (McEwan, 2017, p.0169604). Teamwork is not only an important aspect for students it is equally important in the workplace. For effective team working communication forms the pillar on which the efficacy of the team depends. Effective

communication is achieved when all the team members keep others updated regarding work progress. Clarity of the message improves team performance. Ambiguous messages can give rise to confusion. It also includes being an active listener and providing collaborative inputs. A harmonious team environment can be achieved when the team members play to their strengths and weaknesses. Exchanging ideas among the team members providing them valuable inputs and performing brainstorming can be instrumental to construct an efficient team. Every workplace presents itself with new sets of challenges. So the team members must be watchful and constantly upgrade their skills to remain relevant and productive for the team. A team consists of several team members so all of them bring their individualistic flair to the team. But they have to remain respectful towards all the team members otherwise it might give rise to ill feelings among them and reduce productivity. The team must also have a clear flow of information. Any trammel in this flow of information and low communication among the team members will bring chaos and confusion. The team members must undertake regular discussion among the team members this will help them to know about what the other team members are doing or regarding their progress. Other valuable information, diverse opinions, and perspectives can be attained. Safe communication practices can be executed in safe and supportive environments (Chowdhury and Murzi, 2019, p.245). Providing constructive performance feedback motivates all the team members. There can be several methods leading towards the same goal so the team members must discuss which method to choose to obtain the optimal output.

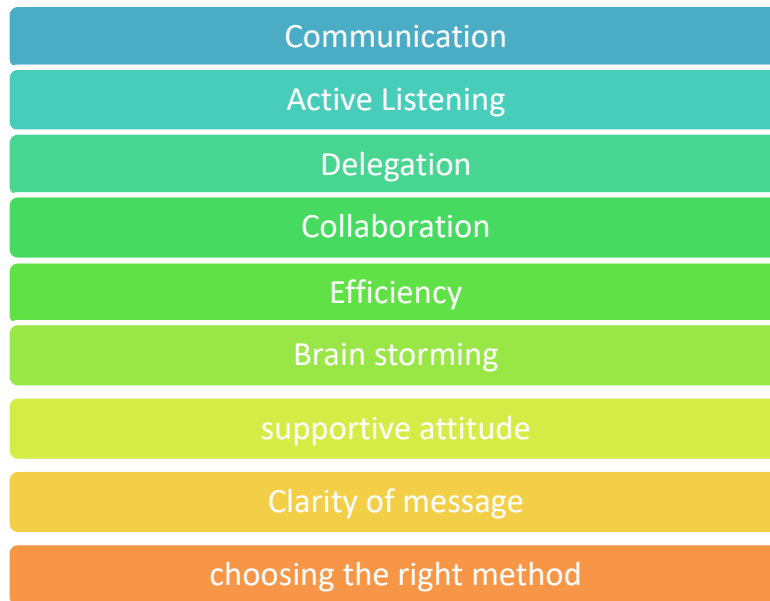


Figure 4: Key Strategies for effective team working

(Source: Self-Created)

Analysis

During the execution of the activity, it could be observed that all these phases mentioned in the group dynamic theory had been performed. In the inceptive phase, the group members took the time to know each other and build cooperation among them. This was followed by conflict when the team members could not determine the topic on which they would be working. After that cooperation developed when there was smooth communication among all the team members and proper equal job allocation to all the members. The team members had to keep the team leader informed about their progress and also their teammates. This reduced faulty works being executed thus the productivity of the team increased. After the final execution of the task, it was a matter of pride among the team members to have successfully executed it.

Executing the team activity to make a presentation, the team had to undertake several stages as mentioned in the team working theory. In the forming stage, the team members decided upon the topic they wanted to work upon and the process by which they can achieve those goals. In this stage, the productivity was considerably low as no one had a clear concept of the work that needed to be done. Brainstorming of ideas and formulating a working plan made the work progress slow but steady. In this aspect, proper communication of ideas among members proved exceptionally beneficial. Later when the task was gaining momentum and all the members were executing their respective allocated job they had to maintain communication with all the other team members to gain ideas and suggestions to improve the task.

According to the communication theory, there are four main components in the task of efficient communication. They are mainly the source, message, channel, and receiver. During the process of the task execution, it had been seen that the team leader had become the nodal point to which everyone had to report their work progress and if they had any query. The leader then decided to relay certain information to the particular person to whom some information needed to be relayed. The ultimate is the receiver who has to acquire the information and execute to meet the specific job objectives.

In every workplace the formation of teams is predominant. It helps to execute work faster with much higher efficiency. When an individual has to be a part of a team he has to have good communication skills to convey a clear message to all his team members to also be a good listener. Giving valuable inputs in the teamwork is needed, and to execute a clear working knowledge is indispensable. Undertaking the activity to make a presentation as a part of the course curriculum had several benefits which would prove essential when the individual progresses into a workspace. The individual could improve upon skills like communication among team members, conveying messages with clarity, abiding by the code of conduct, providing valuable inputs to help other team members, and being compassionate towards team members were the most significant takeaways.

Conclusion

The workplace is a challenging area where an individual has to be a team player. Communication plays a key role in this aspect. The ability to convey messages and ideas to the team is crucial. The deliverance of the message must have clarity and the use of appropriate language so that the situation of chaos and confusion can be avoided. Communicative skills are considered to be soft

skills so they cannot be measured or quantified. So, to gain an upper hand in these skills several activities need to be undertaken. Making a team to deliver a presentation was one of the methods that can be used to hone these soft skills. Associative skills like structured communication; effective leadership behavior also gets evolved. The entire process of being engaged in a team to execute a particular task has positive effects when that individual makes a progress and gets engaged in any profession.

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