

Module: Effective Team Working and Communication

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Component 1

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Executive Summary

Reflecting from the case study of Amazon, the report suggests the strategies to be undertaken to effectively form a team within the organization. Using the Tuckman's theory of team development, it is suggested to develop small teams termed "two pizza team" to build an effective communication within the team members. The report portrays the team roles to be effective for the team of amazon emphasizing on the importance of team diversity and collaboration. Final part of the report demonstrates the impact of the effective teamwork with independent research where advantages and barriers of the effective teamwork is underlined using culture code of Coyles. Hence, an appropriate team composition is a must to build a dynamic team for Amazon.

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1.0 Introduction

Efficient teamwork and effective communication is the key factor to lead the organizational success. A highly functioning team with good understanding and trust makes the project completed at the desired level. Every business organization requires an effective team to accomplish specific goals and objectives. Amazon is one of the largest e-commerce giants in the world that is planning to expand its delivery channel by setting new warehouses in three different places of Europe as per the case study (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2017). Hence, the first portion of the report depicts the importance of the team formation within the organization and the models of team development suitable for the new plan of Amazon. Second portion of the report demonstrates different roles of the team members for creating the team effective using the Belbin's team role theory. The final part portrays the advantages and barriers of effective teamwork within the organization using the culture code by Coyle and team composition perspectives.

2.0 Developing a team based on the models of teamwork

2.1 Overview of Team Working

Team refers to a group of individuals performing activities interdependently to accomplish a specific objective (Alvesson, 2016). Team members are committed to the targeted goal of the project and perform accordingly to get an effective result out there. Although it is easier to form a team within an organization, it is more of a challenge to make it effective or functioning creating a prudent teamwork. A team fosters different problems within the members and its formation process. As discussed in the case study of Amazon, an e-commerce giant worldwide, the team members of the company lacks commitment to the team progress rather focuses on the personal growth. Moreover, the team-lead, Tom Jackson, could not outline any specific channel to effectively communicate the deliverables of the project to its team members. Thus, poor leadership and interpersonal conflicts create major problems to form an effective team within the organization to accomplish new targets. An effective teamwork requires the clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of the team members. It is important to make sure that the members are working for a collective mission that also creates the learning environment for them. A collective accountability rather than the individual one is highly efficacious for the team to work. The problem of poor communications within the team, happened in the case of Amazon, can be solved if the team members can build up the trust of sharing ideas and feelings while supporting others in any situation, giving courage when taking risk and performing tasks newly (Robinson, 2015). To form an effective team, personal conflicts and lack of commitments should be kept aside. Reward system of the organization is needed to be designed in such a way, when the team accomplishes tasks, entire team must be applauded with celebrations within the members. Despite having many challenges in effective team formation, organizations can identify problems within the team and solve it immediately to better receive outcome of the project.

2.2 Models of Team Development

Many researchers have outlined different models to successfully form an effective team within an organization. Among those models, Tuckman's model of team development will be appropriate in the case of Amazon because the project task will be performed by a small group of members to make effective communication. Since Tom Jackson is assigned to develop his team for expanding warehouses of Amazon in three of the places in Europe, he can follow the model of Bruce Tuckman for formation of his team.

2.2.1 Tuckman's Model of Team Development

Bruce Tuckman has developed five stages to successfully form a team.

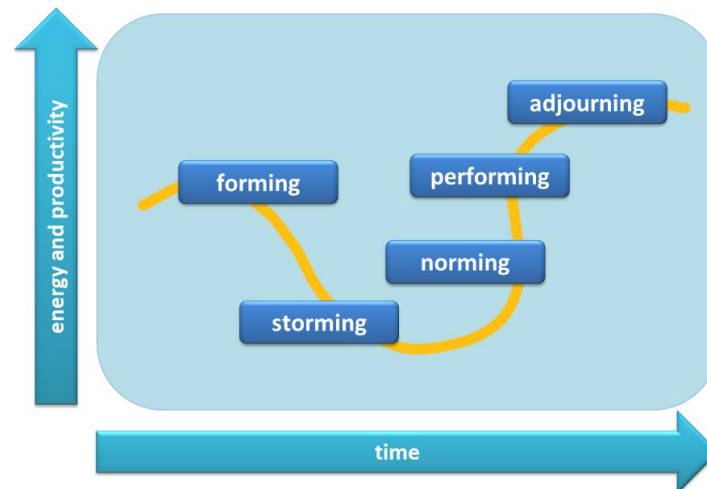


Figure 1: Tuckman's model of effective team development (Salas & Fiore, 2014)

Forming Stage: This is the very first stage of Tuckman's model when the team leader develops the team of several members small or large, defining the purpose of the team. Amazon's organizational culture follows the rule of "Two Pizza Team" so that the size of the team be minimal (The two-pizza rule and the secret of Amazon's success, 2022). Tom should follow this structure of making small teams in three different places where the warehouse is about to be opened. For a better collaboration and communication, the leader should form the team in such structure of a few team members and build a good relationship to break the ice.

Storming Stage: In the case of Amazon, the team of Tom Jackson is belonging in the storming stage where conflicts have arisen, disagreements could not be settled down. It is noticed by the attributes of Mihaela and Spencer for their personal interests. In this crucial stage, Tom should carefully notice the personality traits and the strengths of the team members to energize the communication, workflow and resolve conflict. Moreover, Tom should deliver a clear direction of roles and responsibilities and each team member to start working.

Norming Stage: Norming stage defines the close relationship among the members and team progress. Tom should share his leadership with the member delivering the best output to

encourage the efforts. This stage shapes the rules or norms of the team with which the members will support each other leaving personal motives.

Performing Stage: When all the members get to know each other properly, they will be ready to perform the task at full fledge. This stage is highly crucial for the leader to keep wheeling the productivity towards the common goal. Here, Tom should set meetings regularly to track progress and build appropriate mode of communication within the team.

Adjourning Stage: If the warehouses are opened successfully, the adjourning stage will arrive where Tom should appreciate the team success as well as reflect the individual success to capitalize the relationship. Rewarding and acknowledging the performance in this stage reflects the task to be carried out smoothly.

2.2.2 Wheelan's Model of Team Development

Another model widely used to develop a team is the Wheelan's team development model. It includes four stages of team development (Payne, 2013).

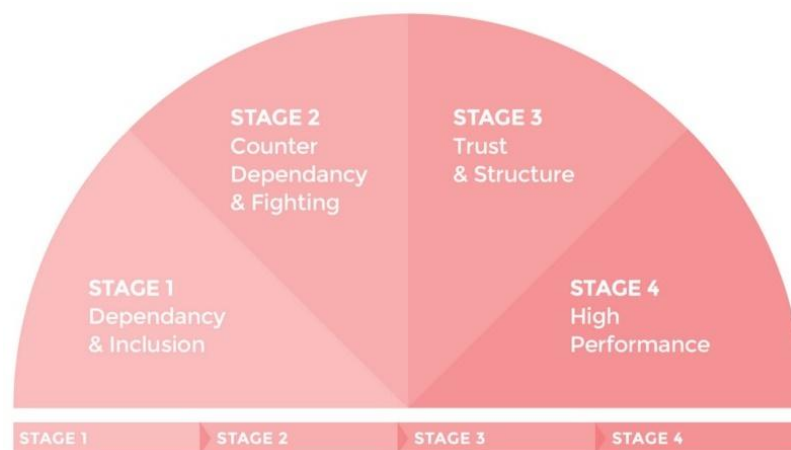


Figure 2: Wheelan's model of team development (Ebisuya, Sekiguchi and Hettiarachchi, 2017)

Like Tuckman's model, Wheelan depicted the higher stages to be productive and successful for the business. Over Wheelan's model, Tuckman's team development model creates clear communication forming small groups, clear delegation of responsibilities to the members and appreciation process.

3.0 Role of Creating Effective Teams

Team roles are needed to make the teamwork effective for a project. While Amazon is thinking about the expansion of the warehouse in three different places, it needs the presence of different roles in the team of Tom Jackson.

3.1 Belbin's Team Roles for Effective Team Development

To form a balanced team, Belbin suggested nine team roles in three broad categories to be present in a team. Under these three categories, different team roles create diversity to fulfil a team to accomplish task.



Figure 3: Belbin's nine team roles (Mulders, 2019)

As team roles creates diversity within the team, it is suggested that every team should choose members within the composition of nine categories so that different problems can be identified, solved and monitored appropriately.

Action oriented category possesses three roles; shaper, implementer and finisher. In the case of Amazon, Tom needs to choose or recruit persons with the trait of implementer who will make the plans feasible. Tom himself should hold the role of shaper to keep the team moving. Finisher is the scrutinizer of the task who makes sure the quality and errors of the task.

In the people oriented category, there are three roles portrayed by Belbin to perform an effective teamwork. Resource Investigator explore new opportunities while coordinator delegate tasks to the team members and monitors if the tasks are aligned to the objectives (The Nine Belbin Team Roles, 2022). For creating effective team in Amazon, Tom also needs to include a team worker who will support continuously when any task is required.

Thinking oriented roles include plant who solve problems with his creative thinking process. While the target is to create a fastest delivery service by setting new warehouses, monitor evaluator evaluates the plan, saving from the misguidance of the plan. Specialist are the experts of the team for that arena, sometimes hired as advisor. All these nine roles should not be present at the same time in all the members rather the team members with different abilities like these are needed when situation requires. Thus it can create productivity, boosts up motivation and support, encourage innovation within the team.

4.0 Advantages of and Barriers to Effective team Building

4.1 Advantages of Effective Teamwork

The positives of effective teamwork cannot be stretched enough. From the theoretical discoveries of the world to the inventions and the formation of giant corporations like Apple & Microsoft, effective teamwork was at the core of the formula of success.

Better problem identification and solving: Effective teamwork can identify & prioritize problems better than the work of an individual and create more well-rounded solutions. According to researchers of the University of Illinois, the best of individuals from a sample were outperformed in certain projects and tasks by teams of three, four and five members (Schmutz, Meier and Manser, 2019). With better problem identification, time and cost can be more effectively managed.

Better Innovation & Productivity: Teams composed of people from different ethnicity, religion, gender, ages are normally more creative than a homogenous team. McKinsey & Co. found these sorts of teams in one of their research projects to be more creative and on an average 35% more productive (McKinsey, 2022).

Better Personal & Team Growth: Sports can be a good example here. In a good soccer team, the individual as well as the team as a whole makes each other better. For example, Erling Haaland after joining Manchester City, one of the best teams in England according to recent form, has increased his goals per game ration to a new level. In the case of Amazon, Mihaela

and Spencer can grow more within the team which will lead them to the commitment to the goals.

4.2 Barriers to Effective Team-building in Tom Jackson's team

The barriers to a building an effective team in case of Tom Jackson can be viewed in light of Coyle's research on the culture code (COYLE, 2017). The lack of communication reflects a lack of safety building throughout the team by the leader. And members not being focused on the broader target is a symptom of lack of specific and important purpose (Tefel-Escudero, 2022). The communication gap occurs when there is lack of listening mentality in the team. Lack of addressing leader's vulnerability can also lead to this. The leader should overcommunicate listening and create an atmosphere where mistakes can be viewed normally. The lack of attention of the two members can be solved by setting and prioritizing a general and clear purpose. The leader should be clearer than the team members about the purpose. Setting precise and specific targets can help acquire and retain the attention of the team members in a very efficient way (Rehling, 2004). The most successful teams generally have less than five specific targets. A clear purpose derives from these targets and a clear purpose can retain members' attention more efficiently than constant reminding and manual reinforcement.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

As per the case study, Amazon is planning to expand its delivery channel by setting new warehouses in three different places of Europe. The report demonstrated the importance of the team formation within the organization and the models of team development suitable for the new plan of Amazon. Thus the report suggests following initiatives to be taken to improve teamwork.

- I. Team members should be delegated their roles and responsibilities appropriately to give a clear understanding about what to do.
- II. The leader should form the team in such small structure that creates better collaboration and communication.
- III. Reward system of the organization is needed to be designed in such a way, when the team accomplishes tasks, entire team must be applauded with celebrations within the members.
- IV. Organizational culture should be built up in a manner where trust of sharing ideas and feelings is valued, supporting others in any situation, giving courage when taking risk and performing tasks newly are practiced.
- V. A collective accountability rather than the individual one should be emphasized to get efficacy of the team.

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