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Introduction

”For the person trying to do everything alone, the game really is over. One is too small a number to achieve greatness ” (Maxwell, 2013).

Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple computers, put the same truth this way: “The great things in business are never done by one person, but by a team of people.”

Teams play a crucial role in successful organisation. They are important for making work faster, coming up with new ideas and making employees happy.

Let me show you the importance of effective teamwork in organisational success.

Teamwork:

- Improves efficiency.
- Suggests new ideas.
- Produces better solving problem skills.
- Widens individual abilities.
- Lessens stress.
- Creates a more supportive and positive work environment.
- Increases decision effectiveness.

The purpose of my report is to find out the ways how to build effective teams in organisations through introducing some theoretical models, discovered by Belbin, Tuckman and Kilmann; discuss team roles, understand team development and learn how to manage a conflict in the workplace.

So, what is the basic framework of a team?

Theoretical Framework

This is a framework that shows how leadership, team responsibilities, activities and each team member are connected.

In theory a team consists of various members each with different talents or knowledge all of which are relevant to objectives to be achieved and coordinated by the leader.

Modern business writers have gone further, exploring extra hidden talents to improve the effectiveness of the team.

Team Role

The Belbin Team Roles theory was created in 1981 at the Administrative Staff College at Henley, in the UK. It took Belbin"s team about nine years of a remarkable study on team productivity to find out why some teams worked better than others and how to avoid problems within the team.

They concluded that successful teams:

- Showed behavioural diversity, whereas unsuccessful teams - showed similar approaches.

- Realised that the behaviour and success of individual team members could be forecast by analysing psychometric test results - "Critical Thinking Appraisal".

- Recognised that there were nine team roles, which could be identified by the different support roles:

  Plant - creates and generates.
  Resource Investigator - explores and connects.
  Coordinator - organises, coordinates, ensures.
  Shaper - challenges, drives, pushes.
  Monitor Evaluator - analyses, provides.
  Team Worker - supports, promotes, resolves.
  Implementer - turns ideas into actions, ensures.
  Completer/ Finisher - pays attention to details,ensures.
  Specialist - provides skills and knowledge.

Belbin's nine team roles, each with its strengths and weaknesses, give a complete way of understanding individual dynamics within the team.

For the team leader, the challenge lies in identifying these features and combining them effectively to achieve the objective. It helps the leader understand how to deal with weaknesses, grow leadership skills and contribute more effectively to a team.

Successful teams benefit from a blend of these roles because it creates a more effective collaboration.

" I would claim that advanced teamwork is one of the most efficient ways we know of accomplishing complex tasks and missions" (Belbin, 2010).

Steve Jobs and Apple can be regarded as a real-world example of an organisation which has successfully applied the Belbin model to optimise team composition and task allocation.

Jobs represented the "Resource Investigator" role. He was extremely skilled in networking, exploring, applying new opportunities and connecting with people. This ability to combine extraordinary fresh ideas and partnerships contributed to Apple's success.

Understanding Team Development

Dr. Bruce Tuckman in 1965 outlined five stages of team development:

1. "Forming" :

   "Why am I in this group? Who are all those people?"

   When a group comes together and people start to be acquainted, they are polite , kind, focused on their roles and responsibilities, seek the leader's instructions and build relationships.

2. "Storming" :

   "What am I doing here? How am I going to do this task?"

   Group members now share their different opinions and challenge each other. Disagreements appear. It's a critical phase where the team must learn to manage conflicts.

3. "Norming" :

   "Who does what, where and when?"

   During this stage trust begins to develop. "Trust always affects two outcomes - speed and cost. When trust goes down, speed will also go down and costs will go up." (Covey, 2006).

   Members start working as a team, respecting each other's viewpoints.

4. "Performing" :

   "Continue? Start? Stop?"

   This stage is the most productive. People encourage, support each other to achieve their goals. Everybody is focused on successful task completion.

5. “Adjourning” :

“Hooray! The job is well done! The task is complete.”

The goals have been achieved. The team disbands and people say a reluctant good - bye.

As a practical example, when our group first met, the “forming” stage, we became acquainted and focused on understanding what we were required to do.

Once we had met the requirements, such as assignments and interviews, and realised how much time had to be spent on individual learning, many asked themselves the questions: “What am I doing here? Do I really want to work hard to pass my exams?” This was the “storming” phase and there were misunderstandings and conflicts. I felt uncomfortable, because not everybody liked active participants.

At the moment we are on the third, the “norming” stage of our team development. We know each other better; feel free to express ideas, there is less judgement and criticism and trust within the team is building. I now feel more comfortable.

At the “performing” stage, we should produce good assessments, a better understanding of the material and support to those who need it.

The adjourning stage will be our last semester together, when we enjoy the results of the learning process with coursemates who are friends. After graduating, many of us will feel sad to split up and say good - bye; others will stay in contact.

Managing Conflict in the Workplace

“In the journey toward team effectiveness, conflicts are not viewed as obstacles but rather as opportunities, contributing to a more profound and resonant team alignment” Jeifetz (2024).

Thomas and Kilmann in the 1960s examined the problem of conflict in the workplace on the basis that people should not seek to avoid conflict at all, but instead, manage and control it competently.

This model is based on two aspects : cooperativeness (when someone tries to satisfy the concerns of the other person as the most important) and assertiveness (when one tries to meet their own needs first).

The model identifies five typical approaches:

1. Competing (High Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness):

   " I am right and you are wrong".

   At this stage, team members prioritise their own objectives and interests, and even may use their authority and power to win.

2. Avoiding (Low Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness):

   " After you ! Only after you!"

   Team participants usually withdraw, delay their decisions or change the topics. They sidestep conflicts completely.

3. Accommodating (Low Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness):

   "You are right, I am wrong".

   Here, people put the needs of others ahead of their own. They maintain good relationships and harmony within the team.

4. Compromising (Intermediate Assertiveness and Cooperativeness):

   " Let us find the middle ground!"

   Both parties capitulate, compromise goals and reach the agreement.

5. Collaborating (High Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness):

   " Let us work together !"

"Nothing of significance was ever achieved by an individual acting alone" (Maxwell, 2013).

Collaboration is the most important element of the Thomas - Kilmann Model (TKM). People try to find beneficial solutions, share creative information, and work hard to achieve positive results.

Different situations may call for different approaches but understanding these conflict-handling styles can help us handle conflicts effectively.

Levine and Tyson (1990) had suggested that teams succeed when these conditions are implemented: profit-sharing or gain-sharing, guaranteed long-term employment, narrow wage differentials, and guarantees of workers' rights, conditions which all foster cooperation, cohesiveness, and solidarity.

By using TKM, managers and team leaders can identify which conflict management style they prefer and decide on the most effective course of action.

The story of two chefs wanting the only lime available is a simple illustration of the TKM technique.

Two chefs want the lime to create different dishes. An argument develops. If one chef prioritises his own requirement and uses a competing approach, only one dish can be made with the lime.

Another approach might be for both chefs to walk away from the conflict so that neither of them have the lime. The diners are disappointed.

If the accommodating approach is used, one of the chefs will take the trouble to go and buy another lime, thus inconveniencing himself to accommodate the other.

Finally, they can compromise by dividing the lime. This compromise satisfies nobody.

The chefs , actually, have two different purposes in mind: one needs lime juice, while the other needs zest of lime. Had they discussed their needs in the first place, they would have realised that one lime would have been sufficient for both.

Clearly, the best approach is to collaborate.

Conclusion:

These are the theoretical frameworks of Belbin, Tuckman and Kilmann"s models which are important in building effective teams in organisations, from ways to deal with conflicts and how people can achieve high performance within the teams.

My recommendations for organisations seeking to build and maintain high-performing teams are:

1. Collaborate and communicate within the team, learn from good and bad experiences.

2. Create a trustful and safe atmosphere for people to speak .

3. Connect team-members by providing familiarity and shared views and attitudes.

4. Encourage people to communicate openly and if issues appear, interpret them collectively.

5. Use each team member's knowledge.

6. Trust people within the team to make decisions.

7. Celebrate and award personal contributions to the team's success.

8. Ensure that all team participants understand the common purpose and adopt it.

9. Invest money in training, development of skills and growth.

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