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Activity Four

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Signed:



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Activity Four

The Concept of Group and Team Dynamics

A group of individuals with complementary skills and experiences, that are working together with mutual respect toward a common goal, sharing ideas and challenging each other to find solutions, 'more than just a collection of individuals', (Watson, 2014).

When forming a group or team there are several factors to consider; each member will bring their own personal skills and experiences, factors such as different cultures, age and gender will also add to the diversity and complexity of a group. This, in turn, brings different ideas, agenda's and opinions which can create positive dynamics such as the strength of the team, its ideas and ability to drive results, but equally can be a potential source of irritation and conflict (Watson, 2014).

Those working together as a team sharing ideas and brainstorming will generally be more creative and develop better solutions than those working independently, this is supported by Neumann, (2005) describing Kurt Lewin's 'Dynamic Approach Rule' Lewin, (1947). People also have naturally occurring roles within a team and will gravitate toward their position in the team, (Belbin, 2015) identifies those roles as;

Completer/Finisher - Implementer - Monitor/Evaluator - Specialist - Co-ordinator
Team worker - Resource Investigator - Shaper - Plant

Therefore, when creating teams and groups it is important that all role types are considered, utilising the Belbin team type questionnaire, Belbin, (2015) it is possible to determine an individual's natural role within a team (appendix 1). Furthermore, we should consider what type of team is needed and what are they required to do? Teams that have an eclectic mix of technical, problem solving and interpersonal skills are more balanced and have the ability adapt and change throughout the stages of team development, (Tuckman, 2009) describes this in five stages;

Forming - Storming - Norming - Performing - Mourning

This is a stepped process through the introduction, addressing differences, agreeing goals, success and completion/separation of the team. I relate with this particularly with regard to an office move project;

1. The project team was formed with representatives from HR, Finance, Commercial to ensure that the needs of all staff and business requirements were catered for.
2. There was a period of team members debating what was the most important criteria for the new premises.
3. Aims and objectives were defined and agreed.

4. Premises were shortlisted with Pro's and Con's – options explored and an agreement reached.
5. Project completed and the team disbanded, relationships had been formed some of which continued into other projects.

Resolving conflict in this process can be challenging and can range from trivial differences to anger and frustration. This may be caused by poor communications personality clashes and even those that set out to be troublesome or argumentative, which may lead to inefficiencies and time wasting. It can be productive for leaders to encourage a healthy level of debate, it helps to identify problems and seek different solutions, however, to achieve this all parties need to be jointly involved, (Watson, 2014).

The role of HR throughout this process is to support the team to a common agreement, demonstrating the required skills to guide and influence the team and the process, to achieve this, HR Professionals should be aware team dynamics and complexities and be able to influence the team to bring about change, Yemm, (2008) states effective influencers will display:

**Friendliness - Empowerment - Vision - Ability to Build Alliances - Expertise and Knowledge
Bargaining Skills**

HR Professionals also need to be knowledgeable to maintain their credibility throughout the process and be able to reach an agreement by utilising these skills, negotiating and finding a way forward, if they are unprepared, others could undermine their position. In order to prepare for negotiation, Taylor & Woodhams, (2016) states that HR Professionals must understand:

1. The aim of the negotiation
2. What can be traded between parties
3. Are there any alternatives
4. Relationships
5. Expected outcomes
6. What are the consequences
7. Who has the power

Political behaviour in organisations and how it can impact on the achievement of organisational objectives

Within any organisation and team, you will find those with a political agenda, defined by Horn, (2009) as 'taking a particular view or position with the intention of personally gaining from that position'. HR Professionals should avoid getting drawn into this and remain neutral, however, it is not always easy to spot and may be hidden behind what seems to be a rational argument, by concentrating on the objection the real agenda could be missed which in turn will create disharmony in the team and hinder the results and success of the team.

(Horn, 2009) breaks down team behaviours into;

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Allies | aligns with the majority and supportive |
| 2. Opponents | provocative and critical |
| 3. Adversaries | may appear to be bedfellows but could sabotage the teamwork |
| 4. Bedfellows | willing to align, for their own agenda, may switch at a later stage |
| 5. Fence-sitters | remain neutral, with a weak contribution |

(Owen, 2018) gives a new perspective, political quotient, (PQ), being able to make things happen, 'having the power and knowing how to use it', the theory of building alliances, useful for managers and leaders, more successful managers will also possess IQ, (intelligent quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient), none of which are successful on their own.

HR Professionals will be part of many types of teams and need to be aware of the behaviours and challenges within each of them, be politically savvy, understand the potential for conflict and the impact that can have in a team and organisation, Johns & Perkins, (2016) supports this 'poor teamworking can lead to serious losses in both organisational productivity and individual motivation'. HR Professionals should know how to recognise it and develop the skills required to manage those challenges.

Appendix One

Belbin team type questionnaire

The Belbin questionnaire seeks to identify your preferred role in a team. It is based on the work of Dr Meredith Belbin, whose research into team performance concluded that the most effective teams have a good mix of different personality types.

How to complete the questionnaire

On the following pages are a series of statements divided into seven sections. For each section, distribute a total of ten points among the statements which you think best describe your own behaviour. See the example below:

When involved in a project with other people:

A	I have an aptitude for influencing people without pressurising them	
B	I am generally effective in preventing careless mistakes and omissions from spoiling the success of an operation	1
C	I like to press for action to make sure that the meeting does not waste time or lose sight of the main objective	3
D	I can be counted on to contribute something original	2
E	I try to maintain my sense of professionalism	
F	I am quick to see possibilities in new ideas and developments	
G	I believe my capacity for judgement can help to bring about the right decisions	1
H	I can be relied upon to bring an organised approach to the demands of the job	
I	I am always ready to back a good suggestion in the common interest	3

Your points may be distributed among several sentences as in the example above. In extreme cases they may be spread among all sentences or ten points may be given to a single sentence. At the end, there are further instructions on how to tally your score.

Section 1

What I believe I can contribute to a team

A	I think I can quickly see and take advantage of new opportunities	2	2
B	I can work well with a very wide range of people	3	3
C	My specialist knowledge and experience is usually my major asset	1	1
D	My ability rests on being able to draw people out whenever I detect they have something of value to contribute to group objectives		
E	I can be relied upon to finish any task I undertake	1	1
F	I am prepared to be blunt and outspoken in the cause of making things happen	1	1
G	I can usually tell whether a plan or idea will fit a particular situation	2	2
H	I can offer a reasoned and unbiased case for alternative sources of action		
I	Producing ideas is one of my natural assets		

Section 2

If I have a possible shortcoming in teamwork, it could be that:

A	I am not at ease unless meetings are well structured and controlled and generally well conducted	3	3
B	I am inclined to be too generous towards others who have a valid viewpoint that has not been given a proper airing	1	1
C	I have a tendency to talk a lot once the group gets on to a new topic		x
D	My objective outlook makes it difficult for me to join in readily and enthusiastically with colleagues		x
E	I am sometimes seen as forceful and authoritarian when dealing with important issues	2	2
F	I find it difficult to lead from the front, perhaps because I am over-responsive to group atmosphere		x
G	I am apt to get caught up in ideas that occur to me and so lose track of what is happening		x
H	I am reluctant to contribute unless that subject deals with an area I know well	2	3 2
I	I am reluctant to express my opinions or proposal or plans that are incomplete or are insufficiently detailed	2	2

Section 3

When involved in a project with other people:

A	I have an aptitude for influencing people without pressurising them	2	2 2
B	I am generally effective in preventing careless mistakes and omissions from spoiling the success of an operation	1	1
C	I like to press for action to make sure that the meeting does not waste time or lose sight of the main objective	2	2
D	I can be counted on to contribute something original		+
E	I try to maintain my sense of professionalism	2	2
F	I am quick to see possibilities in new ideas and developments		
G	I believe my capacity for judgement can help to bring about the right decisions	1	1
H	I can be relied upon to bring an organised approach to the demands of the job	1	2
I	I am always ready to back a good suggestion in the common interest	1	1

Section 4

My characteristic approach to the group is that:

A	I contribute when I know what I'm talking about	2	2
B	I am not reluctant to challenge the view of others or hold a minority view myself	1	1
C	I can usually find a line of argument to refute unsound propositions		
D	I think I have a talent for making things work once a plan has to be put into operation	1	1
E	I prefer to avoid the obvious and to open up lines that have not been explored		
F	I bring a touch of perfectionism to any job I undertake	2	2
G	I am likely to be the one to make contacts outside the group or the firm	2	2
H	While I am interested in all views I have no hesitation in making up my mind once a decision has to be made	1	1
I	I maintain a quiet interest in getting to know colleagues better	1	1

Section 5

I gain satisfaction in a job because:

A	I enjoy analysing situations and weighing up all the possible choices		1
B	I feel that I am using my special qualifications and training to advantage		1
C	I like to feel I am fostering good working relationships	3	3
D	I can have a strong influence on decisions	1	1
E	I have a chance of meeting new people with different ideas	2	2
F	I can get people to agree on priorities and objectives	2	2
G	I feel in my element where I give a task my full attention		
H	I can find an opportunity to stretch my imagination		
I	I am interested in finding practical solutions to problems	2	2

Section 6

If I am suddenly given a difficult task with limited time and unfamiliar people:

A	I would feel like devising a solution of my own and then trying to sell it to the group		x
B	I would be ready to work with the person who showed the most positive approach	1	1
C	I would find some way of reducing the size of the task by establishing what different individuals might best contribute		1
D	My natural sense of urgency would help to ensure that we did not fall behind schedule		
E	I like to read up as much as I conveniently can on the subject	1	1
F	In spite of conflicting pressure I would press ahead with whatever needed to be done	2	2
G	I would take the lead if I felt the group was making no progress	3	3
H	I would open up discussions with a view to stimulating new thoughts and getting something moving	2	2
I	I believe I would keep cool and maintain my capacity to think straight	1	1

Section 7

With reference to the problems to which I am subject to in working in groups:

A	I am apt to show my impatience with those who are obstructing progress	2
B	Some people criticise me for being too analytical	
C	My desire to check that we get the important details right are not always welcome	1
D	I am inclined to feel I am wasting my time and would do better on my own	2
E	I find it difficult to get started unless the goals are clear	1
F	I am sometimes poor at putting across complex points that occur to me	
G	I am conscious of demanding from others the things I cannot do myself	2
H	I hesitate to express my personal views in front of difficult or powerful people	1
I	I tend to show boredom unless I am actively engaged with stimulating people	

Now read on, for details of how to tally your score.

Scoring

The table below is used to compile your Belbin scores.

Transfer your scores from each section to the appropriate boxes below.

Then add up your totals for each team role.

Once you have established your total scores, note down below:

- Your primary team role (the one with the most points)

Implementer

- Your secondary team role

Shaper

Roles	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6	Section 7	Totals
Completer	E	I	B	F	G	D	C	
Finisher	1	2	1	2			1	7
Implementer	G	A	H	D	I	F	E	13
Monitor	H	D	G	C	A	I	B	
Evaluator			1			1		2
Specialist	C	H	E	A	B	E	D	10
Co-ordinator	D	B	A	H	F	C	G	8
Team worker	B	F	I	I	C	B	H	10
Resource	A	C	F	G	E	H	I	
Investigator	2			2	2	2		8
Shaper	F	E	C	B	D	G	A	12
Plant	I	G	D	E	H	A	F	0

Using the team type information

Now that you are more aware of your preferred style of working you can choose how to use the information.

Playing to your strengths

Whatever your preferred team type, see it as a strength.

Seek out tasks or projects requiring your skills.

Look for opportunities to work in teams that need your team-type to achieve the right balance.

Become more flexible

Remember the team type questionnaire shows your preferred style, this does not mean it needs to be your only style!

Think about your second, third, fourth choices - would you like to work more on these areas?

If you work in a team that does not have the right balance, could you think about taking on another team type role?

See other people's team type as a strength and think about how you could work more effectively together

Seek out tasks and projects to develop strengths in other areas (often we prefer doing things we are good at)

Using the information with others

You now have information about your team type, and may wish to think about using the questionnaire within your own team

Explain what it's all about – it's not a test, it's about individual preferences

Agree how you will all be able to use the information

Share your own team type – go first

Use the information to try out new ways of working together

A word of warning

Don't become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The questionnaire shows only your preferred style, it does not mean that you cannot operate in the other areas, only that given the choice you will adopt your preference.

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