

EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

Teamwork at the workplace is a vital quality that any successful organization must promote if it is to build on and maintain its success. Understanding the value of teamwork can be essential for HR to make a strong case to management on matters to do with various policy issues spanning from employees learning and development to the organizational culture at the workplace (Da HiLLs, 2013). However, to build an effective team at the workplace, effective communication must be enhanced since without communication, teamwork cannot be achieved. Effective communication at the workplace ensures that every individual understands the role he or she has to play in the team and that enhances the team's collective advance towards meeting their organizational goals (Da HiLLs, 2013).

Teamwork enables the workforce to split difficult tasks into simpler modules that can be individually worked on and delivered in time and also enhances the opportunities of the employees developing specialized skills so that every skill is assigned to only the individual with the best qualification. The essence of this is that even as tasks get to be done faster, their quality is not compromised in the process since they would only be done by individuals with the highest level of skills. Thus, with effective communication, organizations can build a team at the workplace and that leads to increased productivity among other benefits (Da HiLLs, 2013).

Importance of teamwork

Besides the increased productivity that is brought about by team working at the workplace, there are many more benefits that make teamwork a critical requirement for success in an organization (Crick, 2014). First of all, teams can self-monitor and this means that every

member of the team checks on the progress of his or her task in contrast to that of the other members. When an individual does a task alone, there is the benefit of autonomy; but when the individual starts working slowly, becomes ineffective, and starts failing to meet the deadlines, there is no one in place to check them and set them back on track (Crick, 2014).

Teamwork puts many people with a responsibility of the same objective and significantly, every member observes and depends on the quality and progress of the other team members and should one member's progress dip, the other members will know it and intervene by assisting and motivating them to improve. This means that with effective team working, the management of an organization does not have to intervene or supervise the workforce so closely that it makes the team less effective (Crick, 2014).

Teamwork at the workplace also supports faster innovation and knowledge sharing. For any task in the workplace, there are usually countless solutions that can be adapted for the specific problem and one employee can only think of a few ways to go about the problem (Crick, 2014). However, when a team works together, sharing of ideas helps increase the possible solutions for the challenge as the individuals will help consider the outcomes, the resource availability, and the effect of the solutions on other aspects of the organization. Therefore, teammates have a chance to learn from each other and improve the quality of their skills, to the benefit of the company at large.

Another important aspect of team working is that it creates and sustains healthy competition (Crick, 2014). When employees learn from each other and boost their knowledge and skills for the work, they soon start competing with each other to showcase their abilities and

when the management provides the right challenge and rewards, healthy competition can be promoted and that improves team performance and the productivity of the organization at large. Team working also promotes development and sustenance of healthy working relationships as it enhances trust building and collaboration that allows for the employees to communicate effectively, support and motivate each other, and work cooperatively towards a common goal (Crick, 2014).

Importance of effective communication in team working

Having noted that team work is essential for the success of an organization, and that effective communication is the key factor for effective team working; managers have a significant task of establishing effective communication to support their teams. In modern office and workplace environments, a lot of changes have been experienced and employees' demands, policies, expectations, rules, and working cultures are quite different from the traditional ones. The success of a project depends primarily on the team and the strength of the team solely depends on effective communication (Asplund, 2019). For this reason, the need for flawless communication in the workplace has led to the development of different strategies of communication and working in an organization. The frequency of communication increases as the need to keep everyone in the loop through technology as well as in-person increases. Organizational managers should therefore care how to keep their employees informed through frequent communication keeping in mind the essence of effective communication to effective team working (Asplund, 2019).

The shifting technology to more complex and advanced is bringing a change in the workplace by focusing on communication as an essential factor of production. It is becoming more important nowadays to have members of a team clearly understand what their fellow team members are doing, their ideas, and their plans to carry forward the project, as well as how they have progressed towards meeting their objectives (Asplund, 2019). The team manager needs to delegate roles and responsibilities depending on what is best for the team's interests and for the general good of the organization. A communication breakdown of any kind in such a function could lead to a massive toll on the workload that could in turn bring about new challenges to be sorted out before the team makes any meaningful progress in their tasks. Thus, managers need to approach their projects bearing in mind that effective communication is the first hurdle that they have to clear and thereafter, any other challenge can be overcome and effective communication leads to an impressive overall adoption of solutions and responsibilities by the team members (Asplund, 2019).

Organizational management involved constantly setting goals and expectations on operations starting from sales to customer service and team interactions. For the organization to meet these objectives and goals set by the management, it is critical that every employee in the organization understands the overall goals and the individual requirements for him or her to play the specific role in meeting these goals (Asplund, 2019). With effective communication, it is easier to define expectations on individuals and team at large and with this definition well-communicated; it is also easier to improve accountability among the team members. Clarity in the definition of roles and responsibilities as well as the expected outcomes from each member helps to reduce confusion among the members (Asplund, 2019).

There are various areas of management and operations where the definition of expectations is vital and these include in diversity and anti-discriminatory policies, service procedures, and sales goals. For instance, in a company where the policy is to serve a customer swiftly, the manager should define what the company means by 'swiftly' and a specific time frame, such as a customer inquiry should be served within a minute, sends a clearer signal to the employees regarding what is expected of them (Asplund, 2019).

Effective communication also fosters the development of other skills important to communication, such as listening skills. For the communication process to be flawless the sender and recipient of a message need to be in sync and that means listening skills should be built and improved. A manager needs to provide the team and the team leaders with ways to communicate with each other in order to avoid misunderstanding (Pilette, 2017). This also means that the organization must foster an established two-way communication process where the questions or concerns of the employees or the team leaders are received and a timely feedback is issued to resolve each concern. The management of an organization plays a significant role in the process of building teams at the workplace because the team will reflect the nature of the organization and its culture. If the management wants the team members to communicate effectively by asking questions and receiving feedbacks on their concerns, the management requires being in a position to provide the specific feedbacks at the right time (Pilette, 2017).

Effective communication in any organization begins from the top and flows down to every level of the team. However, it is a sensitive process that is affected by the slightest deviations and managers that hold their employees accountable but in return they do not want to be held to the same standards often ruin the chances of the company making the most out of its

available resources, including the employees (Pilette, 2017). Besides providing adequate and timely feedback to its team members, an organization needs having strategies to celebrate success, motivate its employees, address the obstacles faced on the line of duty, and establishing personal action plans for those in higher levels since those at lower levels mimic the behavior of their seniors, regardless of whether it is good or bad behavior. Therefore, effective communication establishes and helps maintain a team, giving the organization a better chance of being more productive and reducing costs of supervision and many others (Pilette, 2017).

How to achieve effective team communication

The success of teams is built on members who are purposeful in their interactions through which expectations and needs of their individual roles are communicated. Organizational managers have a significant task of ensuring that they have teams that are communicating effectively and this can be achieved through a number of ways. First of these is having one-in-one interactions between the management and the teams. When the team members and their leaders are communicating effectively, it is easier to make each member understand the role he or she is expected to play in meeting the goals of the organization as well as how he or she should go about seeking assistance when needed. Open one-on-one communication helps remove many communication barriers that hamper easy flow of ideas and information and this strategy, coupled with a two-way communication process where members and their leaders can share ideas and ask for guidance, helps the organization unearth numerous options that can be applied to solve the challenges they are facing, thus making the organization more successful (Marlow et al, 2018).

Showing appreciation and celebrating or rewarding success is a significant factor of team communication. Telling employees and team members that their service and efforts are appreciated, and showing them the respect they deserve is an effective way to motivate the team and deal with low employee morale. Raising the morale and motivation of a team is one way to make them open up for communication as they will feel that the organization values them and that it is likely that their contribution will be appreciated. Employee morale and open communication can also be enhanced through team building activities through which the employees can learn to communicate better and to build relationships with one another (Marlow et al, 2018). Team building activities can vary depending on the organizations and availability of time and resources, but they are a great way of putting a team together and making every member feel significant in the organization.

Also, the use of appropriate communication platforms is essential in reaching every member of the group and how they receive the message. In modern times, real-time communication has been made more accessible by the available communication tool like the internet that supports e-mails and live conferences and these can be used varyingly depending on the needs of the project at hand, the urgency, and the available means of communication. Other effective forms of communication include team meetings, sidebar conversations, and project management tools (Marlow et al, 2018).

Conclusion

Communication and team working are at the core of any organization's success. This means that managers have to ensure they are as effective as possible to ensure the success of the

organization. Significantly, there cannot be a successful team if there is no effective communication; thus making communication the first challenge an organizational manager has to overcome before embarking on other projects. There are multiple ways through which effective communication can be developed and maintained in a team; the primary idea being to ensure that all members understand their roles and expectations clearly, and that when they have needs they can easily seek assistance from colleagues and team leaders.

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