TEAMWORK - ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY INSTRUMENT

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Abstract

In any team, collaboration and cooperation to achieve results that lead to the achievement of its performance objectives are the essential elements of success. But people are different, they have different needs and expectations, they have different beliefs and perceptions, they have different ways of behaving and reacting. Working well together when we first meet, but also when we know each other and have already developed some friendships or even friendships in accidental meetings during work breaks or at a social event organized by the company, is not an easy process, and often leads to radical changes in attitudes and can even trigger hard-to-resolve conflicts.

This paper highlights some of the little secrets of how we can, as managers, but also as simple members of a team, build effective, functional relationships based on trust, respect and mutual support in order to successfully achieve our goals team.

Keywords: teamwork, labor market, competitiveness, the human resource, professional evaluation.

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1. Introduction

The varied cultural context of different countries can influence the understanding of the term "team", due to different experiences in the use of the term in everyday language, one's own experiences at work, the influence of the media and public debates. When analyzing quantitative studies in particular, you cannot be sure about the respondents' understanding of the term “teamwork”, especially if the question does not provide a precise definition. Qualitative surveys can then complete this information.

First, various historical experiences have emerged in the countries of the former groups of countries in Western and Eastern Europe. In Western European countries, and especially in the Nordic countries such as Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, the concept of team has been used for decades, experiencing progress in the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast, in Eastern European countries, these new forms of work organization and their influence on the efficiency of companies were considered only in the early 1990s. So their development has so far been short-lived. In order to transform some sectors into key areas of the economy in these countries, the implementation of new forms of work organization has not, however, been a central topic of debate: rather, it has been and still is a matter of implementation. of these notions at the level of individual enterprise.

The way employees understand the term "team" is related to the popularity of the subject in the country in question. Employees could see teamwork as any kind of cooperation with colleagues or any working group that works to achieve a common goal, make joint decisions about what steps to take, and take responsibility for accomplishing the task.

In Bulgaria, for example, the concept of team is widely used and is reflected in the high level of the employed population working in different teams - 67% [1]. According to a qualitative study on this topic conducted in 2005, "teamwork is generally understood by employees and..."
employers as interdependent work. For example, if people are grouped in departments or only work in the same place, it is reported as teamwork.

It seems that nowadays in Bulgaria it is fashionable to put in all job advertisements "the ability to work in a team" as a requirement for potential candidates for a job. In this sense, the ability to work in a team is especially understood as the ability of the person to cooperate to be friendly and polite, which is an important but insufficient precondition for teamwork.

Romania is another example of a country where teamwork has a relatively short history. The interest of specialists and companies with experience in using teams has only begun to grow in recent years, as the economy has become more stable and progressing. Such companies conducted case studies on teamwork, but did not publish this information.

In contrast, in countries such as Denmark, Sweden and Finland, teamwork has a relatively long tradition and, due to the widespread use of this concept, numerous studies have been conducted. The development of new forms of work organization, including teamwork, has even been supported by government initiatives. This raises the question of whether teamwork has already found its place in most existing companies, at least in part, and whether the trend of organizational restructuring is stable in the form of teamwork. In Denmark, evidence from this trend supports this hypothesis, which shows a declining number of companies in which teamwork has been implemented over the past three years. Similarly, in Sweden the concept of teamwork is much less relevant and relevant than in the last two decades of the twentieth century, and only a few new studies focus on teamwork in companies.

There are at least two possible reasons for this declining interest:
- The fact that the Swedish industry no longer believes in the "Swedish model" (or socio-technical theory) and offers examples of several Swedish car factories that have returned to organizing production on the methodology of the regular assembly line. Employers who were previously highlighted as examples of good practice by using this model now avoid this way of working.
- The second reason seems more likely: "Teamwork has become a common way of organizing and working in Sweden, therefore it is nothing new so it is no longer studied by many researchers in the field."

Another methodological question concerns the usefulness of forming a team even in small companies. In the Netherlands, for example, it is pointed out that "about half of employers / organizations with 10 or fewer employees indicate that teamwork does not apply at this level". The question of whether there are teams in small organizations remains open for potential further research.

2. Workplace organization performance

Nowadays, the challenge for companies is to quickly and flexibly deliver new quality products and services to meet the growing demands of customers. Standardization and specialization are the aspects that characterize the organization of traditional work; work is divided into different segments, starting with the preparation for fulfilling different roles, in which workers specialize to increase productivity. Specialization, control and routine are suitable when the demand for standardized products is constant. However, for a rapidly changing application, this method does not seem to work and can lead to coordination and rigidity issues. Thus, companies began to look for new forms of work organization [2].

A high-performance job focuses on increasing people's influence in business, as well as the impact of processes, methods, physical environment, technology and tools to stimulate their work [3]. A high-performing job invests in human resources and supports both their technical and innovation skills and their social skills; This type of organization promotes good interpersonal relationships in the workplace from which the company can also benefit. This
type of organization is different from the Taylorist work organization, which is characterized by specialization on the task, the hierarchical structure of the pyramid type and a centralization of responsibilities.

The need for new forms of work organization as a good basis for a high-performance job is considered to be a key element and an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy, which has set its goal of making the EU economy the most efficient, competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010. Since then, this goal has been emphasized in several European Council meetings.

3. Principles in teamwork Collaboration vs competition

Relating to the organizational environment, teamwork is the main way for employees to interact, regardless of the size of the company or the complexity of the activities to be undertaken. Once more people have a goal to achieve and start working effectively to achieve the goal, they form a team. But the common goal is not enough to get more people to work efficiently. That is why it is very important for each company to have an organizational culture that encourages teamwork. What makes the result of teamwork superior to individual results is the complementarity of skills held by members. And this complementarity, heterogeneity within a team must be seen as a plus that brings value and not as a trigger for internal disputes. It is very important for the functioning of the team that the members try to discover themselves as people and not just as employees of the company.

Thus, he is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each. In the first phase, it can be demotivating for some members to find that others have more abilities than they do. They can thus trigger competitive states out of a desire to match certain skills. But when everyone realizes that skills are not counted quantitatively, but qualitatively, that you can develop only 2-3 skills and those are essential to achieving the team's goal, that you should not look at the pluses of other members as a threat, but as an important resource of the team you are part of, then it will move from a state of competition to one of collaboration within the team. The faster a climate of cooperation between members is established, the faster a state of mutual trust is achieved without which teamwork is ineffective. Only when team members no longer feel uncomfortable with the idea of being open to their colleagues do they start acting without trying to protect themselves [4]. Within a team, communication based on total trust can be seen as an ideal state. It is difficult when we are part of a team to adopt an open attitude because we develop competitive skills from an early age, moreover, if we analyze, for example, in the many articles that refer to job interviews we notice that we are advised not to acknowledge our defects if they endanger our reputation.

In Romania, Generation Y (people born between 1980 and 1995) place more emphasis on teamwork and have a clearer perception of it. Instead, for Generation X (people born between 1961 and 1979) there is a small problem within the team because these people need personal recognition and tend to take on the merits of the whole team. With such people you can organize the Team Efficiency Exercise. The members of the group must identify the most important contribution that each one makes, respectively the area that they must either improve or eliminate for the good of the team. This exercise provides objective information on the input of team members, and discussions on responses increase its cohesion. Most of the time, in an organization, we cannot choose the teams we want to be part of or the people we would like to work with, the formation of the teams being a management decision. And because, in this way, we are often put in the situation of working with people we do not know very well, it is important from the first moments to establish the rules according to which we...
will carry out teamwork. Another important aspect that helps us achieve our goals is to maintain a constant relationship with the management of the organization. Most of the time, the communication is made through the team leader, who must be constantly up to date with the stage of the activity, the resources needed to achieve the objectives, changes in plans that occur along the way, the needs of team members.

If meetings and teamwork do not take place in a climate of collaboration and openness, the leader will not be able to notice the real problems within the team, communication with management will not be objective, and lack of support from management will be delayed. To appear, which, in most cases, leads to the failure of the team. As long as the change in each member's attitude towards the team and the organization is delayed, and the effectiveness of teamwork, personal and group satisfaction will be expected.

It is also worth mentioning that a new concept has been circulating lately when it comes to the rivalry between collaboration and competition. It is about competition, a new term that removes the rivalry between the two, but captures the combination between the need to support collaboration between competitors and competition between collaborators. The advantages of each way of working are obvious, the collaboration being desirable for the positive climate it determines, and the competition for the results it generates. A telling example of competition are university consortia - these are collaborations between universities at national level, which aim to get involved together in various projects with the common goal of increasing the quality of education. At the same time, this collaboration involves a competition between the members of the consortium, leading to a fight between universities regarding the academic choices that students make by enrolling in one course to the detriment of another. However, this is a good example in which competitors have learned to optimize the results of the competition in order to provide students with quality services, by collaborating and respecting the individual merits of each.

4. The role of games in stimulating team spirit

The formal education we all have is not enough to develop those skills needed to work in a team with other members. And because individualistic work will lose more and more ground to the detriment of teamwork, the key to a better future is to (re)educate everyone in this field. But not with an ordinary, boring, theoretical, sedentary schooling, disconnected from reality. But - a practical education, through games! [2]. Some will be open, others will be reluctant, considering that games are a specific activity for childhood and nothing more. At any age, play is a good way to develop our critical thinking, logical thinking, emotional intelligence. When it was understood that forming a team of people with a high IQ does not ensure the efficiency of teamwork, more and more emphasis was placed on the importance of emotional intelligence because no matter how many well-trained employees you would have, if you work individually it will not match the results of teamwork.

Developing trusting relationships between members is the first step that needs to be taken in forming a team. We reach trusting relationships when we are willing and able to empathize with other members, to understand their emotions and actions. But in order to be able to understand those around us, we need to know our own emotions, what effect they have on the actions we take and even more, what impact they have on those around us. So, one of the benefits of a high emotional intelligence index is effective teamwork. Another important step towards team perfection is for the leader and members to understand that each person is unique in their own way, has particular needs and interests. Thus, teams are characterized by a lower or higher level of heterogeneity. A high level of heterogeneity can have both a positive and a negative impact on work results. Differences in the approach to situations will be more
pronounced than in less heterogeneous groups and the possibility of conflicts increases, but high heterogeneity also means high creativity potential which translates into innovative ways of achieving the result. The game is a tool that gives us the opportunity to increase the cohesion of the team. The philosopher Plato best highlighted this in the quote: "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."

John List said that people are not good or bad, they are human and they act according to their motivations. They can be manipulated for positive or negative purposes provided that they act on the appropriate springs. Therefore, the leader has a very important role in leading the team to successfully achieve the goal. When we understand that some of the activities we do take our energy and others give us, we will prioritize our actions more carefully. In fact, it is not the activity itself that takes us or gives us energy, but the emotions that are triggered behind the activities we undertake. Negative emotions are much stronger than positive ones. According to the attachment theory, we have to spend 3-6 times more time in the area of positive emotions to compensate for negative ones [8]. The accumulated negative emotions focus you on the weak points, take you to the pessimistic, negative area, you become vulnerable, constantly having the impression that others are monitoring your activity and have more and more demands from you. This is how dissonant relationships appear. The leader is the one who has to keep the team members in the area of positive emotions, because this is the area of visions, the optimistic area where the focus is on strengths, experimentation and innovation. The process of social change is difficult, stressful and energy consuming. But it is worthwhile in terms of the collective interest [2]. Even if we are not aware of all the capabilities we have, they do exist. When given the opportunity to test in an enabling environment that supports and encourages search, we can discover this potential [2]. The game is one of the tools that gives us this framework. And we will focus on games of collaboration, creativity, trust, relaxation. Are games able to increase the cohesion of a team? Yes, but they are not enough. Team buildings appear, lately, on most companies' budgets. Most of the time, however, they turn into team drinking.

Many team leaders do not take responsibility for the inefficiency of team buildings, moreover, they blame team members by saying that they do not agree with the specific activities of such a meeting. Here, too, the problem is the lack of communication and mutual trust. When a leader proposes a team building, he must convey very clearly to the members the activities to be undertaken, their purpose and the impact they should have on the team. Probably in an e-mail like this: “Dear colleagues, for this Sunday we have scheduled a team building. The departure is from the company at 7 am. ” I would say no. Instead, an email that is hard to ignore would say: “Dear colleagues, since when have you not given up elegant shoes? Since when have you not smelled the grass away from the noxiousness of the city? What I propose to you today is a weekend in the Retezat Mountains. Rafting, relaxation activities, paragliding, creativity games, zip line, trust and collaboration games. Let's set a date for relaxation. " The ability to work in a team is learned and must be cultivated. Therefore, the leader's responsibility for team cohesion is very high.

In the learning stage, the emphasis should be not on competition games, but on those games that encourage team building, building action strategies, relationships between players. We mentioned earlier the main tool that helps us increase the degree of collaboration of a team, namely the game. But the game is a first stage that must be followed by the summary, conclusion, analysis of activities, attitudes and results. When a leader gives due importance to this stage, the goal of team building is achieved.

At this stage, the provision of feedback, reports on daily life is encouraged, all through interactive discussions. The attitude of the leader leaves a great imprint on the attitude of the members. The usual leader to impose order without being interested in the team, the one
who goes in front of the group in the evening and asks: What did you do for me today? it gives no chance for the team to homogenize. Instead, a leader who is concerned about team members and goals appears in front of them in the morning and asks: How can I help you today to do an effective job? This is the type of leader who understands that people have individual needs and requirements, who shows trust and expects trust, and who is aware that a climate of cooperation is the key to success in achieving goals.

An environment conducive to the emergence of conflict-inducing discomfort is often created by a poorly trained leader, unable to assume leadership responsibilities, differentiated treatment within the group, lack of development opportunities, lack of a clear role structure, and responsibilities and reward contributions. Therefore, the causes that contribute to the emergence of divergences are related to the interdependence of tasks (the greater the interdependence of work tasks, the more ideas for solving them appear in the discussion and depending on the openness and objective analysis of the members involved, the probability of conflict is higher or lower), the differences in status between higher level representatives and executors (managers through their behavior must emphasize the importance of organizational values and encourage openness, cooperation, trust, loyalty and fairness. to be convincing, there must be no discrepancies between the verbal language used and the nonverbal / paraverbal one). Problems of trust and communication at team level must be resolved from the first meetings of the members in order to favor the effective management of the agitation stage that the teams will go through on the way to reach the goal.

Diversity within the team is a necessary condition for achieving performance, but several different people involve several value systems to which each individual relates. In order to avoid future interpersonal conflicts, in the decision-making process of employment in a certain organization, the values promoted by them must be analyzed, referring to our own set of values. If we consider that the respective organizational culture does not reflect our own beliefs and values, the capacity to motivate during the activity will tend to be less and less.

The internal rules of an organization, as well as the rules established at team level, are created to be followed. When some members follow the rules and others do not, dislikes can arise that become harmful if no action is taken. Thus, once the rules are established, it is important to establish the ways of warning and penalizing those who violate the regulation. These measures must be known to each member and must be applied rigorously whenever violations are reported.

To complete any activity, we need resources: material, human, informational, financial, time. When we do not have enough resources to achieve our goals and accomplish our tasks, conflicts arise. Limiting resources or depriving individuals of certain necessary resources does nothing but encourage unconstructive competition, mistrust, the desire to dispossess. These types of conflicts can be avoided through rigorous planning that involves analyzing all the tasks to be performed and the resources required.

Although the positive functions of conflict have been clearly demonstrated: it stimulates interest, creativity and prevents stagnation, promotes the identification of problems and solutions, stimulates active involvement by increasing individuals' ability to adapt, produces attitude changes at individual and group level that have positive effects on general performance - if the degree of cohesion is not high it is difficult to anticipate the moment when the constructive conflict turns into a dysfunctional one. In these cases, team leaders must have knowledge of conflict prevention, adopting full transparency in declaring organizational vision, mission and goals, maintaining organizational direction and aligning members with it, clear structuring of roles, tasks, responsibilities, encouraging collaboration between different departments, assuming the role of link to increase trust and to give due importance to knowing the members of the group, their needs and expectations.
In order to take advantage of the positive aspects of the conflict and settle the negative aspects, before adopting a way of managing the conflict, the leader must place the divergence in the category of constructive (when the coordinator's role is to stimulate confrontations of ideas) or unconstructive. removed as soon as possible. Due to the positive impact they have on teamwork, in groups with a high degree of cohesion, members can be artificially instigated into conflicts in order to progress individually and at group level.

5. Conclusions

If we do not plan the activities we have to perform we may fall prey to several pitfalls, such as: reducing time spent on certain activities to the detriment of others, believing they are less important, performing several tasks at the same time hoping to save time, not giving time necessary in relation to the urgency and importance of the task, the non-establishment of long-term plans and short-term, phased tasks; setting ambitious but unrealistic goals.

Nowadays, teamwork is indispensable, because as Lyndon Johnson said, "there are no problems we can't solve together, but there are very few problems we can solve on our own."

We thus draw attention to the psychological factors that determine our behaviors in the face of various pressures, exercises to improve collaborative skills, as well as proposals for planning, organizing and conducting activities to address obstacles to efficiency.

6. Bibliography

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