

## **TEAMBUILDING: A MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION TO ENHANCE TEAM'S EFFECTIVENESS**

Oleh:

**Dwi Irawati**

Staf Pengajar Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo

**Abstrak:** Teamwork banyak didefinisikan sebagai sebuah proses yang saling bersinergi, di mana aktivitas-aktivitas yang dilakukan di dalamnya lebih merupakan upaya kerja sama anggota grup dibandingkan upaya individual. Artikel ini membahas mengenai karakteristik dan dinamika yang dapat diciptakan dalam sebuah tim agar efektif dengan mempertimbangkan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi interaksi interpersonal dalam tim. Artikel ini membahas pula beberapa faktor kunci efektifnya sebuah teamwork dan mengemukakan 6 faktor penghambat efektivitasnya (*structure, ineffective communications, lack of resources, lack of trust, corporate cultures, dan inappropriate use of the team approach*) serta upaya-upaya yang dapat ditempuh untuk meningkatkan efektivitas teamwork. Teambuilding merupakan salah satu bentuk intervensi manajemen guna menghasilkan teamwork yang mampu bekerja efektif. Aktivitas teambuilding diberikan kepada setiap anggota dan/atau calon anggota melalui aktivitas (1) *new group formation and improved relationships*; (2) *problems in group dynamics*; (3) *barriers to goal attainment*; dan (4) *resolution of goals and game plan*; dengan strategi yang berbeda-beda sesuai kebutuhan.

**Keywords:** Teamwork, Sinergi, Team Building, Efektif

### **Introduction**

Much the same can be said of teams. Describing the characteristics of those that work always sounds trite—like platitudes from a *Reader's Digest* article on how to raise gifted children. Describing those that do not, however, is a more challenging task. Their profiles invariably contain qualities unlikely to be found in any other group. “We have some pretty unique personalities” or “You have got to understand our business to grasp how this group behaves”.

Teamwork is described as a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. Teamwork is neither a new concept nor one that is unfamiliar to most people. From elementary school through high school everyone participates in some form of team activity. A functional family environment exists whenever there is a team effort by all members to ensure the happiness and well-being of each member as well as of the entire family. Even after high school countless hours are spent viewing television and admiring the synergetic power of teamwork, such as auto racing, soccer, football, the news team or a group of detectives solving a mystery.

An uncoordinated group of musicians tuning their instruments prior to a performance makes sounds best described as irritating noise. However, once the initial tuning process is completed and the conductor appears before the orchestra,

there is a dramatic change. On cue from the conductor, the woodwinds, the brass, the strings and the percussion begin to work as a team. They produce harmonic sounds, even though each is making a different sound and each is playing a different harmony. As individuals tuning their instruments they make “noise”; as a coordinated and focused orchestra they produce beautiful music that is pleasing to the ear.

You are literally surrounded by the concept of teamwork. Take a lesson from Mother Nature who provides the ultimate team model in our insect friends, the ants and the bees. Like ants and bees, teamwork means that everyone works together and well sinks or swims together—the people on the team are interdependent. Which leads to a basic question, “Why, then, does our society have to constantly reinvent the concept of teamwork?”

Before venturing further, this is a true story. Around the area in Pennsylvania there were two brothers who owned a small firm. Although not rich by any person’s standards, they saved enough money to buy a workhorse. The brothers, being of disagreeable temperament, often did not work as a team, even though it would have been mutually beneficial. During an ensuing argument over whose turn it was to feed the horse, each accused the other of not taking his fair turn. There for, because of their stubborn and uncooperative attitude, no one feed the horse, and the horse died. The moral is to use a little common horse sense and teamwork to feed your dreams, or you will never be able put them out to pasture.

## **Discussion**

### **TEAM (Together Everyone Achieve More)**

The team has synergy. By sharing a common goal or vision, the team can accomplish what individuals cannot do alone. Synergy is a process of interaction where  $2 + 2 = 10$ . It is a magnifying effect of each component in which the whole surpasses the sum of the parts. It makes sense and does have practical application.

Would you want to be admitted to a hospital for major surgery where the operating room staff did not operate as a team? Would you want highly skilled individuals operating as uncoordinated and competitive independents agents? Of course you wouldn’t. The public expects every phase of surgical procedure to be a coordinated team effort. That is why they called themselves a “surgical team”. Proficiency is achieved as the team work cooperatively and practices procedures on a daily basis. Statistics show that patient survival rate increase and morbidity rates decrease in direct relationships to the number of surgeries performed by the operating room team.

Dysfunctional teams group often unwittingly bar the door to change, whether pursued in the guise of strategic planning, reengineering, work redesign or cultural transformation. They handle the evitable conflicts badly (or not at all), conduct themselves according to unwritten rules that limit their effectiveness and waste time in “violent agreement”. Members one another over differences in mindset and style. They tacitly consent not to learn from their collective experience for the sake of keeping peace in the family or “staying safe”. Alternatively, everyone speaks his/her mind but no one ever changes it. Only a well coordinated team can fulfill the requirements of such a complex task.

The operating room team model is used, because it clearly demonstrates key factors for team success. Nahavandi (1997) says that in order to ensure success (1) the members of a team have to be selected carefully for the complementary skills and expertise; (2) the team members need to focus on and be committed to a team goal.

Clearly, a surgical team meets Nahavandi's criteria. The team is composed of carefully selected individuals possessing complementary skills. The key point is that team members are selected for their ability to work together and for the expertise they bring to the group. There are many analogies to be made between a surgical team and industry's management team.

### **Team's Effective Efforts: Base on Different Competencies**

Individuals are limited by the narrow scope of their knowledge, their skills, and their experiences. On winding country road, traffic moves only as fast as the slowest vehicle; teamwork enables a group to collaborate in bringing everyone to speed and create new superhighways.

Equally, a team can be competent, but not effective. That is, they may not win even though they are competent in all area. There is a difference between competence and performance. The same is true for individuals. Many people are deemed competent because they have passed examinations, but in practice they may not perform well. Indeed, some individuals and teams succeed even though they may not be deemed as competent as others, but they work harder, and are more determined not to be beaten.

Properly implemented, true teamwork brings out the best in each person and enables the group to develop an action plan for superior to that of any individual. Collaboratively, all of us are more creative than one of us, and some of us collaboratively are more creative than one of us, and one of us isn't as creative as all of us collaborating together. "Genius lies within the collaborative efforts of an empowered group" (Scarnati and Scarnati, 2000). Authenticity is fundamental in this regard--a willingness to speak one's mind clearly and to support others doing the same. It is also helps if team members agree to bring a whole person to work. Beyond that, here is a six-point framework to be useful in examining the relative "health" of a team (Kipp and Kipp, 2000):

1. *Goals* (everyone in teamwork understands what constitutes "success" for the team—in this situation and overall?)
2. *Roles* (everyone in teamwork understands what is expected of them: what they expect of each other?)
3. *Rules* (everyone in teamwork understands what are team agreements on decision making, work ethic, follow-through....?)
4. *Relationships* (everyone in teamwork understands how does the team handle conflict, ambiguity, rumor, secrecy, trust....?)
5. *Results* (everyone in teamwork understands how they determine performance day to day; what are their "dials"?)
6. *Rewards* (everyone in teamwork understands what is in it for them — individually or collectively? Are they "OK" with that?).

The choice and design of intervention for creating the effective teamwork must be driven by the reason for thinking teambuilding might be a good idea.

**Factors discourage team efforts**

If teamwork is so great, why don't organizations have more of it? Why do companies continually have to criticize people to co-operate and work as part of group? The answers are complex; however there are answers. People won't work as a team unless the structure, conditions, organization, and purpose of the enterprise support a team effort. The following are factors that do not support a team effort:

1. *Structure*. The first factor that does not support teamwork is structure. Merit pay, performance incentives, management by objectives, normal distribution curves, and employee ranking are all disincentives for teamwork. Each structure creates a competitive environment in which there must be winners and losers. There is no interdependence among individual. The focus of most organizational structure, as they are typically employed, is the performance of individuals and not group effort.
2. *Ineffective communication*. Unless each member of the group has a clear understanding of the desired outcomes, they drift aimlessly and eventually become discouraged. Without guiding map reaching the desired destination becomes a matter of chance. In many cases, a well written mission statement or statements of beliefs will assist the process of providing direction.
3. *Lack of resources*. The lack of resources such as time, money, materials, moral support, or mission, has a negative effect on teamwork. Ros Perot counsels, "If something needs to be done, pull together small team, and give them a defined task and the resources to get it done" (Chiu, 1992). Without resources and a defined mission, the team can not play game, no matter how well their intentions.
4. *Lack of trust*. Three dangerous notions have been introduced to managers/leaders in recent years: (a) trust, (b) empowerment, and (c) democracy. Perhaps, the biggest destroyer of team cohesiveness is the lack of honesty and trust among team members. Creating situations in which everyone becomes a winner is completely foreign to some individuals. It takes the cooperation of every team member for a group to function, but uncooperative individuals can cause the team to become dysfunctional. Trust is a very significant teambuilding factor because it helps to demonstrate that everyone have a contribution to make. Their previous view was that "everyone else is problem, I'm OK". Member learned to trust each other and seek help. They learned what everyone else did. They will learn what is wrong with the quality of the work coming in and take action with other parties to improve it. Most people seem to agree that trust is a worth building in work teams and organizations. Most trustbuilding exercises probably help more than they hurt. Managers/leaders should give employees no reason to distrust--- where there is transparency and where employees have confidence in the rule of the law and trust the employees' judgment
5. *Corporate culture*. For teamwork, to be meaningful and effective, there must be a paradigm shift in the ranks of both labor and management. Concomitant with empowerment, teamwork requires responsibility and accountability. People who have been taught to fear the results of failure do not readily accept the team process. To develop a team mentality takes time, training, and most of all trust. Trust, the glue that holds team together, as a previous commodity that is not readily given.

6. *Inappropriate use of the team approach.* Self-managed teams take a great deal of time to grow and develop.

### **Teambuilding to enhance team's effectiveness**

Organizational performance can often be enhanced through teambuilding—a term that has come to mean everything from projective tests to hot tubs and folk songs. Without a doubt, groups can gain a great deal from a ropes course or an exchange Myers-Briggs profiles—if they truly intersect with a particular team's issues and the leader's intent. Otherwise, they are taking on the aspect of a parlor game—entertaining, but unlikely to change anything.

Kipp and Kipp (2000) suggest that there are 4 activities in teambuilding which encourage team's effectiveness ---each of which calls for different strategies:

1. *New group formation and improved relationships*; self disclosure exercises, team challenges, temperament or style profiles.
2. *Problems in group dynamics*; conflict management, reflective listening, communication, community building.
3. *Barriers to goal attainment*; role definition, decision protocols, system thinking.
4. *Resolution of goals and game plan*; business strategy, management philosophy, team charter development.

The main purpose of teambuilding intervention is to enhance performance (to be more effective) by improving the process that characterize the work of the group. Through teambuilding each member is directed and treated to have understanding others, their differences, and how to use their each ability to achieve optimum performance.

The most important thing when members are working is to achieve the true aims of the work. One of the preconditions for succeeding in this task is that everyone involved should have had these true aims clearly explained to them and they all understand and accept to the importance of achieving them. If those things are well done there would not be any hesitation that team member will take any responsibility manner to attain the aims.

The sense of responsibility towards work can be gained if the following two conditions are fulfilled:

1. the aims of work must be clearly stated;
2. the people must be given as great a degree of freedom as possible in the means and methods by which they can achieve the aims.

### **Conclusion**

We say many times about things going well by using terms like, “as smooth as clockwork” or going like a “well oiled machine”. Let us see such activity when we go into a restaurant to get a meal. If the service breaks down, we expect someone to quickly diagnose the problem and to find a solution. That requires a team that competent in all the key function of the teamwork. That involves a view of why the links in the chain break down. It requires each member of the team to be effective at linking. It means being effective in getting people to ask questions.

Leaders/managers must start with belief that they must change the culture of the team members. They have decided, knowingly or otherwise, the way the

organization is structured, the way people are measured, what leaders/managers pay attention to, how leaders/managers spend their time, the support that operators do or do not receive and how priorities are determined. The team members must learn that their thinking is responsible for how work is designed.

Team member difference competency is the key to team performance. Yet few teams are trained in the concepts of team competency and few measure their performance on such criteria.

The aims that stated clearly and great degrees of freedom of team members much encourage team achieve the aims. Last but not least, the primary condition for high effective teams is that the people have meaningful work to do and must be able to spend their time contributing, not coping with waste. #

### Reference

- Davis, Richard, Exploding the myths of high performance teams, *Team Performance Management*, Vol. 4, No. 7, 1998, pp. 306-311.
- Margerison, Charles, Team competencies, *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, Vol 7, No.7/8, 2001, pp.117-122.
- Kipp, Michael F. and Kipp, Mary Ann, Of teams and teambuilding, *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, Vol 6, No.7/8, 2000, pp. 138-139.
- Scarnati, James T., On becoming a team player, *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, Vol 7, No.1/2, 2001, pp. 5-10.