

Cross Cultural Diversity and its Challenges ***A case study of Pune Industries on Team work***

Priya P Gole

Lecturer-HR areas

S.B.Patil Institute of Management, Sec 26 Pradhikaran, Nigdi- Pune 411 044

Amarja Kulkarni

Lecturer-HR areas

Asma Institute of Management, S 85, NDA Road, Shivane, Pune 411 023

&

S.Ranganathan (Dr)

Director

Asma Institute of Management, S 85, NDA Road, Shivane, Pune 411 023

ABSTRACT

Diversity in modern organizational context needs understanding the development of team work and hence performance. Teams are essentially built by bringing together the various stakeholders and enabling them to perform in the manner that is necessary for successful achievement of goals set. Today's organizations exist with this culture of cross cultural diversities and hence the need to study the impact of such developments that are understood to have been put in place. The findings of a study on 30 small, medium and large industries in Pune industrial belt comprising of Pimpri Chinchwad and Hadapsar areas suggest that generally the trend in managing a team is difficult when it comes to diverse work force and need for team building exercises and the organizational interventions that are required in ensuring that the teams perform better to score over. The study involved the administration of a structured questionnaire designed by Tuckman's Team development model on 30 HR managers of randomly selected companies. Appropriate suggestions are given for effective team building measures to be undertaken by these companies so that organizations realize the importance of "men may come and men may go, but an organization goes on for ever"

Key words:

Team work, Goals, Trend in managing teams, Team building measures

Introduction

What is a team anyway?

- A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable
- Small Number
- Complementary Skills
- Common Purpose and Performance Goals
- Common Approach
- Mutual Accountability

Five issues to be considered in team building

1. Interdependence

This is the issue of how each member's outcomes are determined, at least in part, by the actions of the other members. The structure of the team task should be such that it requires cooperative interdependence. Functioning independently of other team members or competing with them should lead to sub optimal outcomes for the entire team. Tasks that require the successful performance of sub tasks by all team members are called divisible, conjunctive tasks.

2. Goal Specification

It is very important for team members to have common goals for team achievement, as well as to communicate clearly about individual goals they may have. The process of clarifying goals may well engage all of the issues on this list. Indeed, shared goal is one of the definitional properties of the concept "team." A simple, but useful, team building task is to assign a newly formed team the task of producing a mission and goals statement.

3. Cohesiveness

This term refers to the attractiveness of team membership. Teams are cohesive to the extent that membership in them is positively valued; members are drawn toward the team. In task oriented teams the concept can be differentiated into two sub concepts, social cohesiveness and task cohesiveness. Social cohesiveness refers to the bonds of interpersonal attraction that link team members. Although a high level of social cohesiveness may make team life more pleasant, it is not highly related to team performance. Nevertheless, the patterns of interpersonal attraction within a team are a very prominent concern. Team building exercises that have a component of fun or play are useful in allowing attraction bonds to develop. Task cohesiveness refers to the way in which skills and abilities of the team members mesh to allow effective performance.

4. Roles and Norms

All teams develop a set of roles and norms over time. In task oriented teams, it is essential that the role structure enables the team to cope effectively with the requirements of the task. When the task is divisible and conjunctive, as are most of the important team tasks in our society, the assignment of roles to members who can perform them effectively is essential. Active consideration of the role structure can be an important part of a team building exercise. Task roles may be rotated so that all team members experience, and learn from, all roles. Even then, it is important that the norm governing the assignment of roles is understood and accepted by team members. Norms are the rules governing the behavior of team members, and include the rewards for behaving in accord with normative requirements, as well as the sanctions for norm violations. Norms will develop in a team, whether or not they are actively discussed. (Scholes.P, 2004)

5. Communication

Effective interpersonal communication is vital to the smooth functioning of any task team. There are many ways of facilitating the learning of effective communication skills. Active listening exercises, practice in giving and receiving feedback, practice in checking for comprehension of verbal messages, are all aimed at developing skills. It is also important for a team to develop an effective communication network; who communicates to whom; is there anybody "out of the loop?" Norms will develop governing communication. Do those norms encourage everyone to participate, or do they allow one or two dominant members to claim all the "air time?"(Scholes, ibid)

Teams in the 21st Century: how do we define their role?

Belbin M (2002) takes a look at the nature of teamwork today and offers an optimistic outlook. The word 'team' appears to have been borrowed in the first instance from sport and signified 'being on the same side and pulling together'. But it seems the terms of reference of a team are shifting and demand further thought. At one time a 'team' was virtually synonymous with an Autonomous Work Group. However, synergy within the team, essential for an AWG, was often achieved at the expense of lack of synergy with other parts of the organization. Visions

were restricted because members of the team always kept the same company, being pinned into their positions by restrictive job descriptions.

As these formal structures are increasingly falling into disrepute, new dynamic concepts are beginning to take their place. First, it is being recognized as dysfunctional that membership of any given team should remain static. Second, perspectives within the team need to be widened. Facilitating career moves within the organization offers one means of achieving this aim while also offering the advantage of growing a 'bigger person'. Another way is to arrange periodic swaps of members between existing teams in

order to deepen understanding of the broader field. Just as there are 'horses for courses', so also there are 'teams for pitches'. If a team is to be pitched into a particular area of challenge, one needs to ensure that the team consists of the right players. In football, the fans judge the quality of the players because they view the play throughout the game. But who can judge the quality of the players participating in industrial teams? There are no independent witnesses as in football.

Managers in industry or the public service are often supposed to be assessing underlings. Common experience suggests that managers are seldom positioned to do so and are often embarrassed in having to go through the motions. So where does that leave the manager? Often in the unenviable position of being out of touch, one fears.

As to the future, it seems that teams will need to spend more time in mutual assessment and be readier to accept collective responsibility for what they achieve. In being collectively accountable to a manager, teams will need to face up to the downside of greater empowerment. The manager will be fully entitled under this new scenario to dismiss a failing team and to assemble a new one.

In the past, the presumption was that managers knew everything that was going on. Few managers these days would dare to make such a bold claim. New technology is changing culture. Wistful managers now feel they are being bypassed because websites and e-mails are generating a vast amount of information through lateral communication. As a consequence, the bedrock of traditional hierarchy is being relentlessly undermined in the process. So thoughtful managers will inevitably feel the need to change the way they approach their jobs. They will have to think more about the nature of accountability and about how responsibilities can best be transferred to well-constructed teams. The need for a better balance in decision taking is gaining wider recognition, which is why understanding the attributes of the team in Management, and in associated projects, looks like becoming one of the more promising and defining features of the 21st century. The above is an adaptation of the full article, which appeared in the December 2002 edition of *Training Journal* - a especially themed issue concentrating on the subject of teamwork. The article examines what the words 'team' and 'teamwork' mean in today's workplace. The author assesses how teams can progress to be of maximum use. He also takes a look at the future of teams and comes to an optimistic conclusion.

A case on Team Building:

(Source: www.innovativeteambuilding.co.uk)

Team Building for an International Law Firm

"Before we knew it we had learned more about each other, considered how to work more effectively together and had a lot of fun"

In September 2008 an international law firm who were keen to conclude a team away day with some high impact team building event that would be creative, unusual and fun. It was agreed to provide an afternoon's programme of team tasks that would challenge this demanding and hard-working group and encourage them to think about their individual and joint contributions to the team.

Background Information

The company is a major international law firm with its principal office in the City of London and a worldwide network of offices.

Aims and Objectives

The firm's Commercial Litigation team had planned a two-day meeting to examine practice and client needs. They wanted to complement this internal analysis with a learning session that would be somewhat more light-hearted, and would ensure the conference ended on a high note, sending the team away positive and energised.

The busy Commercial Litigation team does not often have time to take stock of their role as team members. The main objective was to therefore enable the team to work together more effectively.

Programme Development

The programme was developed with liaison with the firm's Head of Training, who wanted to know, in no uncertain terms if the programme needed to be tightly focused, in depth and busy, adding that lawyers "tend to eat up tasks - they get bored so quickly!". A brief on the role, age range, areas of expertise and seniority of the participants. Taking all this into account, a programme was drafted to ensure that the firm's objectives would be met and that the afternoon would give the group some tangible bottom line results in team development.

The programme was designed to take into account individual specialisms and aimed to get individuals to work with colleagues outside their area of expertise or level of seniority.

Delivery

Knowing that this group was very time-conscious, it was important that the first session justified this time-out for the team and underlined the value of the afternoon's activities. By referring the planned activities back to particular areas of specialism, it was ensured that the programme could be placed firmly within a familiar context to enable clear parallels to be drawn between working life and the challenges they were about to face. In particular the aim in this first session was to start to find out about the people behind the job roles and to discover the characteristics and qualities that people do not usually get an opportunity to display in the workplace.

An activity titled "Amazing Secrets" in which each participant writes on a Post was organised. It was to tell something about themselves that no one else in the room knows - they used to play in a band, have appeared on TV, saved a life etc. In their teams each group then tries to match the secret to the individual. This activity reinforces the theme of sharing and discovery outlined in the introduction.

The next session, "Silent Circle", focused on communication and required the group to form a circle based on the date of their birthday, without uttering a word. In their new teams, the group moved on to a creative challenge, "Egg Drop", in which the teams needed to build a structure that would prevent their egg from breaking when dropped from a height of 10 feet.

Next came "Saboteur" which looks at trust and blame: teams had to copy a detailed plan view of a maze from their combined memory, a difficult task in itself made even more challenging by the fact that there may be a saboteur in the team. In order to prevent the saboteur from destroying their plan the team can vote him/her out or ask him/her back in if they feel that the accused is in fact innocent. This opens discussions on trust and how it feels to be accused of letting the team down.

The final activity got the whole team working together: "Group Juggling" begins with smaller groups and just one bean bag per person, building to a point where the whole team forms a circle, simultaneously juggling two bean bags each. Co-ordination, support and pin-sharp timing are required to succeed at this challenge. It may take a little while but when it goes right the feelings of elation and achievement are unforgettable.

Feedback

By the end of the afternoon, the group had relaxed, were having fun and it was apparent that some of the barriers had begun to come down. It was felt that the activities/games skillfully put the members through their paces on

the team tasks and before they knew it they had learned more about each other, considered how to work more effectively together and had a lot of fun.” At the end the session the general feeling was that “the afternoon of team tasks encouraged team members to get to know each other better, to work more effectively together and provided a fun and energising end to two days of hard work.”

Thus we can see that effective team building is necessary in the modern organisations where managing multi-cultural and cross cultural teams have come stay and unless managers learn the skills of effective team culture, the results may not be forthcoming

Stages in team building:

According to Tuckman’s model, teams are constituted using Forming (formation of team), Norming (establishing the procedures of actions), Storming (teams sit together to plan the course of actions to be taken) and Performing (actual performance by the team). These needed to be applied in any team development and hence the study gains importance

Research questions:

- Do industries/organisations/managers in Pune Industrial areas
- Are aware of the stages of Tuckman’s model?
- To what extent they apply the model in their day to day team management activities?
- If not what suggestions can be given to these organisations?

Research Methodology:

The research was carried out in major industrial areas of Pune (Hadapsar, Pimpri Chinchwad, Shivane small scale units) and a total of 30 companies were chosen and Managers/Chief Executives were met with a questionnaire developed by Canadian Management Association and modified to suit Indian environment which asked for stating “almost never (1), seldom (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Almost always (5)” in 32 statements. Observations were recorded as how the respondents attributed their liking in the response. The research was conducted as part of presentation in the National Seminar organised by Neville Wadia Institute of Management Studies and Research, Pune during the last week of Dec 2010.

The results were analysed taking mean score, where the mean is an index of measure to ensure the level of acceptance. The earlier research had evolved a ‘mean index’ as the base and classified organisations team culture as a measure for success. Tables show the details of the nature of industries met and also the mean scores under the various elements of team building(Forming, storming, norming and performing and overall) From the table it can be seen that in Pune industries team building as a concept in the forming and storming stages are not adequately concentrated (Mean scores being 23 and 21 respectively), however, in the other two stages of norming and performing the industries concentrate with the mean scores more skewed in favour of these attributes(28 and 30). The overall score the mean is 104 which is an indication that lots needs to be done to bring in the culture of team work and achievement of results as an involved effort and not imposed.(Standard mean: 128)

Table 1 showing profile of companies responded: N: 30

Nature of companies	Number of Companies	Number of Employees
Small Scale	18	175
Medium Scale	6	75
Large Scale	6	350
Total	30	600

Table 2 showing Mean Scores under Tuckman’s Model

Particulars	Mean Score	Standard Mean as per earlier research
Forming	23	32
Norming	21	32
Storming	29	32
Performing	31	32
Overall Mean: 104/120		

(Source: data collected and analysed)

Findings:

Table 2 presents the various mean scores as responded by the managers/ chief executive officers in Pune and it can be seen that the present situation is more of an imposed one with storming and performing stages alone come closer to the standard mean scores and the other two major components do not seem to have been adequately addressed. This clearly shows that organisations tend to be more on the imposing style than an involving style of management. This may not augur well in the long run since cross cultural and multi-cultural employee force need to be involved otherwise, the attrition rate may increase and the talent acquisition may become difficult in the long run. Organisations have to recognise this so that they are successful with the right person in the right place.

2. Managers in Pune are not fully aware of the various stages of Tuckman’s team development model as it was observed during the data collection.

Suggestions:

1. Top management must know the impact of team building as a process for further development and man management
2. To this end they are to be given training in team building activities
3. They must also be oriented to know the rules of ‘involvement than imposing’
4. With millennium work force coming to the limelight, the importance of team work can never be under estimated

Acknowledgements:

The researchers thank all the managers who responded to the research tool. They also place on record the students of HR specialization in ASMA Institute of Management (Ms.Ishwari, Ms.Prajakta, Ms.Pammi Singh and Ms.Aparna Jha who helped in the collection of data and also Mr. Sayed Mudassar, Lecturer in management, ASMA Institute of Management for the support given and also Mr.Anshul Sharma, Chairman, PSD Shastri Group of Institutes, Mr.Kalbhor, Secretary, Pimpri Chinchwad Education Trust, Pune for the support extended for the research. Ms.Manjusha Bhat Librarian, ASMA Institute of Management for providing review support and Prof. Nishikant Gajakas, Head, MBA Dept., ASMA Institute of Management,Pune for the moral support given in the completion of the research work.

References:

1. www. Innovativeteambuilding.co.uk/visited on 29th Dec 10/3rd and 5th Jan 2011/pages visited: contents/case studies/shg.htm
2. Belbin M 2010 Training Journal Abstract 0112
3. Colline D 2006 Fresh Tracks, UK
4. Scholes P the Team Handbook Joiner Associates (1988,2004)
5. Tuckman’ Model Wikipedia.org/date visited 25th Dec 2010