Effective Teamwork

Effective team working can be assessed by the extent to which the team produces good business results. A good way to analyse the effectiveness of the team can be carried out using a simple framework. This framework will often indicate where to concentrate effort, when the team is not meeting expectations. The framework consists of 4 factors

- Mutual Goals

- Agreed Roles

- Clear Procedures

- Sound Interpersonal Relationships

There is a natural hierarchy to the 4 factors. Apparent interpersonal difficulties can be the symptoms of problems with goals, roles and procedures. There are several questions that can be asked at each stage of the hierarchy. If the answer to any of the questions is no, then the team need to implement actions to address the factor.

Mutual Goals

- Does everyone understand and accept the goals to which they are working?
- Are the priorities of objectives agreed?
- Do we handle any conflicts of priority effectively?

Agreed Roles

- Does each team member know what is expected of each other?
- Are these expectations clear and acceptable?
- Do we handle any conflicts in expectations effectively?
- Is unnecessary duplication avoided?

Clear Procedures

- Does information flow and is it co-ordinated and managed?
- Are problems solved, decisions made, conflicts resolved?
- Are the operating ground rules established, understood and adhered to?
- Are reporting procedures clear and concise?

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Sound Interpersonal Relationships

- Does each person feel they are treated fairly and with respect?
- Are needs for recognition, support and respect adequately met?
- Is there effective analysis and feedback of joint and individual performance?

To ensure a team is being effective the following characteristics need to be in place:

- Atmosphere – This tends to be informal, comfortable and relaxed. It is a working atmosphere in which people are interested and involved, there are no signs of boredom.

- Discussion – Everyone participates but it is pertinent to the task.

- Task – the objectives of the work are understood and accepted.

- Listen – Members listen to each other. Every idea is given a hearing.

- Disagreement – The group is comfortable with this and does not avoid conflict. There is no suppression, situations are resolved.

- Consensus – Most decisions are reached by consensus, there is general agreement. There is very little formal voting.

- Criticism – is frequent, frank, constructive and relatively comfortable. There is little evidence of attack.

- Feelings – people feel free to express their feelings and their ideas. There are few hidden agendas.

- Action – clear assignments are made and accepted.

- Domination – the chair or leader does not dominate and nobody defers unduly to him. There is no struggle for power.

If any of the characteristics are missing, identify activities and actions that you can implement to remove any problems and help introduce the factor into the working environment.

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