The given scenario is that I, the writer of this essay, is a newly appointed project manager for a team of 8 people working on a collocated software project. They have neither worked together nor known each other before. This essay will discuss my personal take on how to achieve a high-performing team and motivational factors that affect productivity of the said team.

First, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) defined a team as a small group of people with complementary skills working toward a common goal, and each member has their own role and might be dependent upon others. In this case, the goal is to develop a quality software product within the budget and given time limit. To achieve that, the team must be working efficiently throughout all the phases of the development process with the Agile principles in mind.

Sommerville (2015) said that one of the most important aspects is to establish a cohesive team by being inclusive. Richards, Carter and Feenstra (2012) further broke this down into some common factors: 1) positive climate, 2) sound communication, 3) constructive conflict, 4) shared goals.

First, to create a positive climate, I, as a manager, should facilitate a supportive environment where appreciation, recognition, concern for employee well-being, leadership, and learning and development are emphasized. The team can start with a kick-off meeting or other team-building activities to get to know each of the members’ talents, skills, and personalities. Then during the development process, each member should be given equal opportunities to present their own ideas and solutions. Team members must also be aware of the importance of their contributions to the overall success of the project. Secondly, to maintain sound communication, I need to ensure continuous and open communication between team members, be honest and trustworthy, and provide constructive feedback and suggestions. These activities open the team for a range of innovative ideas, a clear understanding of goals, and a constant tracking of progress. Frequent team meetings in which urgent issues are discussed and addressed also raise team productivity. Next, according to Kozlowski & Ilgen (2006), when conflict is appropriate, as when focused on work challenges, and discloses alternative points of view, essential information, or solutions to problems, it can be functional and contribute positively to team performance. Therefore, I should do my best to identify and resolve conflicts, as well as minimize them between members of the team. Finally, shared goals offer directions, which serve as a guide to successful deployment of the product. I should make sure the goals are realistic, reasonable, achievable, and specific. All the team members must agree to these goals and change them when necessary.

Richards, Carter and Feenstra (2012) also mentioned several other factors that may contribute to a high-performing team, and I believe the most significant among them are competence and flexibility. Everyone in the team must also possess a decent level of skills and abilities to work on the project and cooperate with other members efficiently. Therefore, I must be able to provide the team with the training and resources they need to complete the project. Furthermore, being flexible and adaptable means the team can navigate through changing requirements and conditions. As the project manager, I should be able to negotiate and communicate with clients in a suitable manner that is most advantageous to the team.

According to Dan Pink (2011), for simple tasks, incentives are great, but when a task is complicated (like software development), money is not always the greatest source of motivation. As a project manager, I must ensure that each member receives enough financial reward to keep the issue of money off the table. Dan Pink (2011) listed 3 principles to be followed. First is autonomy; each member must have enough autonomy to choose what, when, where and how they complete their task before a given deadline. Second is mastery; that improvement is always promoted in the workplace, through challenging tasks, clear goals, helpful feedbacks, and long-term visions. The last one is purpose, or 'why' we are doing the project. I must be able to make all members see what we are working on contributes to a greater cause, for the team, for the company, and for themselves.

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