Group Reflective Essay: Charity Cinema Event

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Group Reflective Essay

## **Reflection**

When reflecting on the project, we as a group concluded that this project was more than useful in developing our learning and professional skills. The team believes our learning objectives were reasonably well met. We realised our communication could have been better. Our communication when it came to the booking of the room was less than up to standard and we were not sure what was happening with the room until a day or two before. However, this was valuable experience to us. We learned a lot from these mistakes. Our communication skills improved from this mistake. We will never make the same mistakes again. As well as communication skills we enhanced our organisational skills and writing skills. We also learned more about working as a team and how to deal with certain types of people and problems that were thrown at us. Overall, we believe our movie night was a success in terms of evolving these essential skills.

We set out to meet the objectives of improving all these soft skills and we feel we met those objectives through both carrying out a successful project, but also from making mistakes and learning from them.

## **Roles and Contributions**

Before even starting to get to work we had to decide who was going to do what to make sure this project went as smoothly as possible. We decided that Saul Burgess would be the leader of the group who then gave us out our roles. Adam was given the task of writing up the proposal, and on the day of the film, was tasked with redirecting people from the incorrect room to the new room. Saul Hennessy was tasked with bringing in the XBOX and the movie (‘Spiderman: Into the Spiderverse’) that was to be viewed and oversaw communications. Shahjhan had the job of documentation and writing up the minutes for our meetings. Saul Burgess was the leader and made sure everything was running smoothly. Michael and Alan worked on the advertisement of the film. They designed the posters that were hung up around the college and Alan was also in charge of printing the tickets and the posters. Michael also sourced some popcorn for the event that we used to sell to raise even more money for Wells for Zoe.

The selling of tickets was done by Adam, and the two Saul’s. We set up a stand in the main lobby of the Aungier Street building to sell as many tickets as possible.

For the essay we all sat down and talked about the different points for each section of the essay. We then made sure we were all on the same page as to what everyone had done up until that point and then we each got a different section of the essay to write. This made sure what we wrote was accurate and that it was completed in an efficient way.

## **What We Learned About Groupwork & Planning**

Working together as a group taught us a lot of lessons about groupwork and planning and then dealing with obstacles that may have come up that didn’t go according to plan. From this group event, we learned that some people will have different ways of doing different things. You need to expect that some people will be very stubborn when it comes to an idea they have that they want to be put into place, but others do not. Sometimes there will be a clash between egos and that calmly talking it out is the best way to deal with this situation. There will always be difficult people within a group, but you just need to get on with it and try work around through that. This can be also applied to if you’re working within the computing industry. If someone wants to code a certain way and will not budge on the subject, then you need to talk and work out an alternative that would satisfy both parties while also getting the work done as proficiently as possible.

We also learned that having a precise, detailed, thorough plan is essential for success. Only having a bare bones plan with little to no detail is not enough. It causes complications down the line as members of the group were confused as to what they were supposed to be doing. Better planning would have helped with the confusion. In the computing workplace, planning is a vital part of getting work done properly and on time. For example, if you’re working on a large piece of software, planning needs to be executed very precisely. A reasonable deadline will be needed to make sure people have enough time to complete the tasks they are given. Organising and planning who does what is essential. Sitting down to discuss everyone’s strengths and weakness helps decide who should do what within the project, whether it be writing a brand-new piece of software or fixing a bug within a program, ensures that all is completed to a high standard.

## **Changes for a Repeat of the Project**

All in all, we felt the project was a success, however, there definitely were some obstacles we could have handled with greater care and diligence. If we were to repeat the whole project again, I think we would have tried to be a lot more efficient. Reflecting on what we’d done, we left a lot of things to the last minute such as the sale of the tickets which was done on the day of the event. When repeating the event, we would have sold the tickets a week in advance while also having more than one opportunity to buy these tickets. This way we would have probably sold a lot more tickets and we would’ve planned and organised the event more accordingly with the numbers we would have had.

We also concluded that our communication should have been better. We had only used WhatsApp as a means of sharing files and communication. If repeating the project, we would have used a more sophisticated program to make sure everyone was on the same wavelength and everything was done at a reasonable pace. Using just WhatsApp, in hindsight, was not good enough as it was easy to lose files and information. It ended up causing a lot of stress and at times it became slightly heated between certain members within the group. A management and/or organising program would have alleviated a lot of unnecessary stress in the group by allowing information to be more easily shared and accessible.

## **Improvement Suggestions**

Instead of using just WhatsApp and nothing else, Trello would have been a great help in organising what needed to be done. With WhatsApp it was difficult to figure out what had to be done as the messages were buried. With Trello everything would have been a lot clearer. It would have been a lot clearer as to who was doing what and when it was to be done by. All the information would have been easier to find and edit by everyone instead of having to scroll through hundreds of messages in a group chat. While WhatsApp was helpful for quick queries and setting up meetings, it was not helpful when it came to organise the event itself and distribute files amongst one another.

Better advertising is another aspect we could have improved upon. We only had a limited number of posters to send around so we could have had more to get the most coverage as possible. The information, on the poster, was incorrect too so having the correct time and venue on it would have greatly improved the outcome of the event, even though in our opinion the event still went well. We should have also utilised better forms of advertising too. We only used the posters and word of mouth as a means of advertisement. Redoing the project, social media and class emails would have spread the word of our event to a larger audience and possibly would have increased our already impressive in-take.

## **Short Conclusion on Civic Engagement**

Civic Engagement is extremely important in society today. It is essential in society today to make sure the quality of life is developed within communities. Reflecting on what we have done to help Wells for Zoe is astonishing. What we’ve managed to do is change people’s lives forever, providing clean drinking water to places without the necessary infrastructure, building schools and planting trees. Just from such a small and simple charity event we have managed to help communities thrive and develop. To us, civil engagement is integral to helping people and making sure they live fulfilling lives. And as they are developing their lives, we are also. It benefits us too.

Group Academic Essay

## **Introduction:**

In this essay, we aim to provide an in-depth analysis of our team and team dynamics through the lens of Belbin and Tuckman theory. Belbin theory discusses team roles and the interaction between the different roles in a group. (1) Tuckman theory describes group development in terms of “Forming”, “Storming”, “Norming” and “Performing”. (3) This allowed us to predict and evaluate our team’s performance and project advancement. We will begin by discussing Belbin theory and its effect on the formation of our team, Tuckman Theory and how important its predictions were to team management and concluding with a discussion on how the group divided up tasks.

## **Belbin Theory:**

At the beginning of the semester a test was taken to determine which role the members of our group were. Using this data, the group divided the tasks of the group accordingly. Below is a table showing the actual roles that were performed, followed by the predicted roles as described by Belbin Theory. (5)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** | **Group Role:** | **Belbin Role:** |
| Adam | Documentation | CF |
| Alan | Marketing | ME |
| Saul H. | Communications | ME/CO |
| Saul B. | Project Manager | CO |
| Michael | Marketing | RI/CO |
| Shah | Stenographer | TW |

As seen in the above table our true roles coincide with our predicted Belbin roles. The Belin theory is based on a self-test, (1) in theory those with an accurate Belbin Role that are given a role coinciding with their assigned Belbin Rolle will have improved efficiency and reduced inter-team conflict. (1) Over the course of this group-project and referring to previous projects we have completed in this semester, using the Belbin model of group dynamics generates measurable bonuses to productivity and a dramatic reduction in team confrontation.

Ultimately, our team members will be including Belbin theory and its applications in any future projects due to its many benefits, and only a minimal start-up time cost. This team deems this to be an acceptable cost-to-benefit ratio.

## **The Tuckman Theory**

Our experiences in this project very much aligned with the theories that Tuckman first in proposed in 1965. This model consists of four unique stages: Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. Each of these stages coincides with a stage in the group formation process. For total success, groups must reach stage four. (3) However, this stage is reached far less than most may initially assume.

## **Forming**

As with most groups in this early stage, many of us still acted relatively independently. With this being a brand-new group of people who didn’t know one another, anything that could lead to potential conflict was left alone for the time being. With the project in its infancy, the goals and steps to achieve them were not clear to anyone in the group. Very rough plans were set, laying the foundations for the project. Using the Belbin Roles attained by us, we chose suitable roles in the group itself and set out to work. (5)

## **Storming**

As the group became more acquainted, the members became more comfortable in their positions. As a result of this new comfort, opinions and views of members began to appear. In this stage, the avoidance of conflict seen in the Forming stage is now gone. This is the stage of conflict, and it is where many groups fall, never reaching the Norming stage (2). While some groups manage to skip this stage entirely due to a solid group dynamic (2), ours was not as fortunate. There was contention for leadership at points, with progress stalling in order to resolve grievances, but fortunately for us we overcame these shortcomings and advanced to stage three.

## **Norming**

With most if not all conflict resolved in the previous stage, each member had a clear understanding of their role in the group and the work that needed to be done. A firm leadership from Saul B. made delegation of tasks flow much more smoothly and resulted in tasks being completed far more efficiently than before.

## **Performing**

The final stage. Our group reached this stage rather late, but reached it nonetheless. By this point the members of the group were intimately linked with one another and far more autonomous than before. The delegation by the team leader was seldom needed, only for the initial preparations. This new-found trust in each member accelerated the progress of the group to heights never seen. As a result, this essay, as well as its sister reflection piece and presentation, were completed much more easily and efficiently than any other work done beforehand.

## **An Analysis of role division, and how it affected our team**

As stated previously the team acted relatively independently in the early, and later, stages of our project. This necessitated the introduction of a leader, or manager. After a manager had been allocated, the dividing of tasks was much improved. However, due to inexperience, there was inequality in how resources and tasks were allocated. Some members were given smaller tasks, and some were given large tasks, meaning that they were several instances where easier tasks were completed before more difficult tasks. Due to breakdown in communications the resources assigned to the easier tasks were not reassigned to the more difficult tasks. This overworked those assigned to more difficult tasks, leading to a (probable) reduction in quality and reduction in Quality Assurance.

## **How could this be done better?**

Seemingly the greatest issue limiting this project was communications: much of this breakdown can be explained by the varying distances between team members and limited time slots where meetings could be arranged. However more could be done on the managers part to facilitate communications. Concrete timing for when a task should be completed was not enforced, leading to vague timelines of “when should I do this?” and “this was already done wasn’t it?”. This could be improved by enforcing deadlines of when tasks should be completed. In addition, more direct contact with team members on the part of the manager could have been beneficial to making sure work was done quickly and fairly. A daily stand-up from the Agile system could be introduced, enforcing all members to make all other members aware of what they are currently working on and what resources they are currently using. (4) This could prevent any issues of tasks being completed, but not being reported, this allows the manager to reallocate the resources from the now completed tasks, improving efficiency and reducing the communications deficit.

## **Conclusion**

In this essay, we provided an analysis of our team’s dynamics over the course of this project. Giving an in-depth analysis of our team through the lenses of both Belbin and Tuckmann theory individually. Our team feels that this exercise was informative and helpful to the continued development of our teamwork and management skills. It is our hope that whomever reads this can learn the vital lessons evident in our analysis, and not repeat the same mistakes that our project encountered during the project.

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