

Description of the situation

During the reorganization of a large Dutch nonprofit organization, I became the team leader of a new team that was tasked with setting up and executing an internal communication campaign. This campaign would be aimed at informing the members of the organizations of a new way of working within the organization in the field of training & development. The team members (3 people, 2 men and 1 woman) did not know each other and came from different part of the country (the Netherlands). They were all of similar age (in their 20's) and had similar backgrounds (college educated). Everyone (including me) was a volunteer and had little or no experience in this topic.

The challenge faced by me was that after two months the team did not function well and had trouble to keep up with the pace of changes. As a result of this, the communication campaign was in danger of failing.

Analysis of the incident

Used theory: expectancy theory

Expectancy theory will be used to analyze the situation and to provide a solution to the problem. According to expectancy theory, people will be motivated if they believe that: there is a positive correlation between efforts and performance, the outcome of a favorable performance will result in a desirable reward, a reward from a performance will satisfy an important need, and/or the outcome satisfies their need enough to make the effort worthwhile.

Looking the first correlation (Effort -> Performance), the believe in the team was present when I formed the team. However, this quickly decreased as we found out the task would require substantial more effort than initially though.

Looking at the relation between performance and reward (Performance -> Reward), a similar thing happened. As the team and I realized the reward for our work was less than what we expected it to be, motivation decreased.

The relation between reward and need (Reward -> Need fulfillment) however did hold as we all strongly kept believing in the idea.

The key problems in this situation therefore the increased work burden and the lack of reward.

As a leader, I could have addressed this by looking for ways to decrease the burden and by increasing the rewards. Decreasing the burden would mean we could have results earlier (increased performance). This would then lead to a greater reward and need fulfillment. A possible way to do this is by increase the size of the team or decrease the scope of the project. Another way was to increase rewards. As we were all volunteers these had to be non financial. Given our limited budget this would have been very

hard. However, I tried to do this by inviting the team members over for dinner to bond. Another option would have been to give them more recognition within the organization for their hard work.