

DAPM07T

First Semester, Assignment 2

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Title

You are a Public Manager employed by the Department of Public Works who has been tasked to oversee the construction of a community hall. You were appointed as the project manager and have selected your team. There is a need to do some team building as the team members need to get to know one another better.

In your answer, briefly explain and discuss the following:

1. Distinguish between team building and team development. Illustrate your answer with practical examples.
2. The characteristics that can be linked to effective project teams.

Below is a discussion of the distinct differences between team building and team development:

Team building is a practice that involves solving a specific problem within a project team, such as: lacking in communication between team members and team leads, difficulty or negative atmosphere between team members, deterioration of creativity or innovation etc. When this occurs, a project faces the risk of not being done on time – or done according to the project objectives/outlines. There is a short-term focus placed on team building, it strives to fix whatever challenges there are within the teams, with immediate effect. Team building focuses on the strengths of said project team, and works to strengthen a teams bond, as to create a more high-spirited and effective project team. These team building exercises can last anything from a few hours to a few days, depending on the exercises put in place. With team building, focus is put on the positive strengths of the teams, and not on the problems within the teams. That being said, team building does collaborate with team development, in the sense of dealing with challenges that the teams might be facing in their personal work environment.

(Reference: Gido&Clements, 1991 : 121 – 122; Kinlaw, 1991 : 25 – 31)

An example of team building: There has been a strong lack of communication between team members, as their communication systems have broken down and is in the process of being fixed. Conflicts has started surfacing due to the project teams stress levels growing increasingly high. The project manager has drafted a team communication exercise which involves the team to divide into pairs and sit on the floor back to back. One person in each pair receives a picture of a shape, and the other is given a few sheets of paper and a pencil. The team member holding the picture, is then asked to give verbal instructions to their partner on how to draw the shape - without revealing what the shape is. When they are done, it is imperative that you ask the following questions:

- How well did the first person describe the shape?
- How well did the second person interpret these instructions?
- Were there problems within the sending and receiving parts of communication?

What the outcome is:

- This has created a fun yet effective way, to show where people's communication strengths and weaknesses are.
- It puts team members to work on their negative aspects of the way the communicate with one another.
- It has improved the over all team spirit, and given each member a reason to reflect.

(Mind Tools: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm)

Whereas with **team development**, which focusses more on human resources management, strives to develop team members' individual skills in order to vastly improve the over all skill and competency of a project team. Problems which may occur that would call for a team development exercise, would include a situation where one or more individuals of the project team are not performing to the best of their abilities. Other team members would then either have take on their responsibilities (which would cause an over-flow of work to other team members and the inability to perform positively with their own responsibilities), deadlines not being met or conflict within the team. In order to fix these problems, team building exercises would have to focus on creating positive opportunities for all individual team members continuously, as to improve the teams over-all performance in the long-term. Team development is a daily procedure, and something that calls for on-going work.

(References: Project Management Institute, 1996:99. Lewis, 1998:98; Wilson-Murray, 1997:107. Kinlaw, 1991 :25)

Example of team development: There have been a a few team members within the team struggling to keep up with the increasingly demanding work flow of the company, therefore falling behind on what the goals and objectives are of the project, as their knowledge base of the project does not cover what they are busy with. The project manager has scheduled training sessions for all of the team members, and has started implementing training sessions and lectures each month.

Outcome: Team members are enabled to learn on an in depth level what it is is they are working on, and are kept up to speed with trends forming within their specific field. Lectures assist with understanding the theory, and training assists with hands on experience with what they are learning. Team members are constantly gaining insight and experience.

(References: Gido*Clements 1999: 96-114; Lewis, 1998: 99-106. Pinto et al 1998: 78-79)

List of characteristics of an effective project team:

- A clear understanding of what the objectives of the project are.
- A clear understanding of what each team members's position and responsibilities are.
- Result driven, each team member should work hard towards the effective completion of a project.
- Each team member should have a high moral for co-operation and collaboration.
- Clear communication between team members.
- There should be a strong sense of trust between team members.
- Work that is produced by the team, is far better in quality and quantity than the work of an individual.
- A team can get creative with their options, as there are more opinions to listen to.
- They share the same view of what it is they want the outcome of the project to look like, and work hand in hand to achieve it.

(References: Gido&Clements 1999: 115-116, Maylor, 1996:127, Baguley, 1995:98; Lewis, 1998:71, Boddy&Buchanan, 1992:66.