



GROUP PROJECT UNIT 7 (0001C)

BUS 4402-01 ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR – AY2025-T1

October 23, 2024
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BUILDING A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM: LEVERAGING ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR FOR EFFECTIVE TEAM DYNAMICS

1. INTRODUCTION

Importance Of Organizational Behavior



In contemporary organizations, organizational behavior is a major factor in determining team dynamics. As aspiring professionals, we must acknowledge that building cohesive and effective teams requires a basic understanding of human behavior in organizational contexts. We can forecast, explain, and control both individual and group behaviors using this knowledge, which eventually improves team performance and organizational success (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Impact On Team Building

Effective team formation is greatly aided by organizational behavior principles. By putting these ideas into practice, we may establish settings that encourage teamwork, communication, and respect for one another. This knowledge aids in creating plans to inspire people, settle disputes, and match group objectives with corporate goals. According to Luthans et al. (2015), creating high-performing teams that can adjust to the constantly shifting business environment requires a firm understanding of organizational behavior concepts.

Example

Imagine a software company is building a new team to develop a healthcare application. The team consists of:

- 2 senior developers (highly technical, introverted)
- 1 UI/UX designer (creative, extroverted)
- 1 healthcare specialist (detail-oriented, process-driven)
- 1 project manager (outgoing, deadline-focused)

Without understanding organizational behavior, a manager might simply put these people together and expect them to work effectively. However, this often leads to problems like:

- The developers get frustrated when the designer suggests frequent changes
- The healthcare specialist feeling rushed by the project manager's pace
- Communication gaps between the introverted and extroverted team members
- Conflicts over different working styles and priorities

By applying organizational behavior principles, the manager can:

- Recognize different personality types and communication styles
- Set up organized processes that meet the needs of both people who focus on details and people who look at the big picture.
- Set up ways for shy and outgoing team members to talk to each other that work for everyone.
- Create team-building activities that help people see things from different points of view.
- Set clear roles for everyone that make the most of their skills.

The result? A team that gets along better with each other, respects and knows their differences, communicates well, and works together to reach their goal.

2. FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Overview Of Team Building



The methodical process of enhancing a team's capacity for productive collaboration is known as team building. It includes exercises intended to improve connections between people, define responsibilities, and deal with issues that impede teamwork.

Successful team development necessitates a defined objective, precise performance targets, and a dedication to a shared strategy,

claim Katzenbach and Smith (2015).

Key elements of team building include:

- Establishing clear objectives
- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Developing effective communication channels
- Fostering trust and mutual support
- Encouraging creativity and innovation

Characteristics Of Effective Teams

Effective teams share several common characteristics that contribute to their success.

These traits enable teams to overcome challenges and achieve their goals efficiently. Based on

research by Kozlowski and Bell (2013), some key characteristics of high-performing teams include:

- Clear goals and objectives
- Open and honest communication
- Trust and mutual respect among members
- Diverse skills and perspectives
- Adaptability to change
- Strong leadership
- Shared accountability for results

Teams exhibiting these characteristics are more likely to collaborate effectively, solve problems creatively, and deliver superior outcomes.

Importance Of Cross-Functional Teams

Cross-functional teams bring together individuals from different departments or areas of expertise to work towards a common goal. These teams are increasingly important in today's complex business environment, where problems often require diverse perspectives and skill sets to solve. As noted by Denison et al. (1996), cross-functional teams offer several benefits to organizations:

- ❖ Enhanced innovation and creativity
- ❖ Improved problem-solving capabilities
- ❖ Faster decision-making processes
- ❖ Better resource utilization
- ❖ Increased organizational flexibility

By leveraging the diverse knowledge and skills of team members, cross-functional teams can tackle complex challenges more effectively than traditional, siloed approaches.

Challenges In Cross-Functional Teams

While cross-functional teams offer numerous advantages, they also face unique challenges that must be addressed to ensure their success. Some common obstacles include:

1. **COMMUNICATION BARRIERS:** Different departments may employ specialist lingo or communicate differently, resulting in misconceptions.
2. **CONFLICTING PRIORITIES:** Team members may struggle to combine their departmental obligations and team goals.
3. **POWER DYNAMICS:** Team members with unequal status or influence may struggle to collaborate and make decisions.
4. **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES:** Misunderstandings or confrontations may arise because of diverse backgrounds and work cultures.
5. **LACK OF CLEAR LEADERSHIP:** Ambiguity in leadership responsibilities can cause confusion and inefficiency.

To solve these problems, businesses must employ tactics that foster successful collaboration and communication. Mathieu et al. (2017) recommended giving team members with cross-functional training, developing explicit team charters, and fostering a culture of open communication might help reduce these challenges.

3. TEAM SELECTION AND CANDIDATE JUSTIFICATION

Criteria For Team Selection



When forming a cross-functional team, the selection criteria must focus on balancing skills, expertise, and interpersonal traits.

Key criteria include:

- **RELEVANT EXPERTISE:** Each member should have specialized knowledge directly related to the project's objectives

(Organizational behavior, 2017).

- **PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY:** Candidates should demonstrate the ability to think critically and adapt to changing situations, essential for addressing the complexities of cross-functional teamwork.
- **COMMUNICATION SKILLS:** Strong communication is essential for collaboration, ensuring members can articulate ideas effectively and resolve conflicts (Goleman, 2006).
- **CULTURAL COMPETENCE:** Understanding and respecting diverse cultural perspectives ensures that collaboration is inclusive and productive, particularly in teams spanning multiple departments.

Justification Of Candidates

Each candidate was selected based on their unique expertise and their capacity to complement other team members. For example:

- ✓ **JOHN SMITH (IT DEPARTMENT):** His in-depth knowledge of systems integration allows the team to handle complex technical requirements. His problem-solving mindset ensures that technical roadblocks are swiftly addressed (Wheelan, 2020).
- ✓ **JANE DOE (MARKETING):** Jane brings a strong understanding of consumer behavior and creativity to the team, which is crucial for developing customer-centric solutions. Her experience in cross-functional projects will foster innovative approaches (Goleman, 2006).
- ✓ **MICHAEL LEE (FINANCE):** Michael's financial expertise ensures that the project remains within budget and that resources are allocated efficiently. His analytical skills make him an invaluable asset for data-driven decision-making.

Roles And Responsibilities

- ✚ **JOHN SMITH (IT):** Oversees all technical integrations and ensures smooth implementation of the IT infrastructure.
- ✚ **JANE DOE (MARKETING):** Develops customer engagement strategies and oversees marketing communications.
- ✚ **MICHAEL LEE (FINANCE):** Manages the project's budget and ensures financial resources are appropriately utilized.

4. BUILDING A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM

Team Dynamics And Collaboration



Effective collaboration in cross-functional teams requires a balance of diverse skills and a clear understanding of roles. According to Tannenbaum et al. (2012), successful teams operate with mutual respect, where each member understands how their expertise contributes to the overall goal. This dynamic fosters collaboration, as team members rely on each other's unique insights to solve complex problems. Establishing trust and a shared commitment to success are critical to overcoming challenges like conflicting priorities and communication barriers.

Communication Strategies

Clear and consistent communication is vital to managing cross-functional teams.

Effective communication strategies include:

- **SCHEDULED MEETINGS FOR PROGRESS UPDATES:** Weekly meetings ensure all members are aligned and able to contribute (Wheelan, 2020).
- **UTILIZATION OF COLLABORATIVE TOOLS:** Platforms like Microsoft Teams or Slack can streamline communication, allowing real-time discussions and document sharing (Goleman, 2006).
- **CULTURAL AWARENESS:** Recognizing and respecting different communication styles and cultural backgrounds reduces the risk of misunderstandings and fosters a more inclusive environment.

Leadership In Cross-Functional Teams

Leadership is critical in guiding cross-functional teams through the complexities of collaboration. Effective leaders should act as facilitators, encouraging open dialogue, resolving conflicts, and ensuring that all team members contribute to decision-making. Leadership must also focus on maintaining team cohesion, particularly when the team consists of diverse skill sets and departments. According to Wheelan (2020), strong leadership can help the team stay focused on its objectives while navigating challenges such as differing departmental priorities.

5. CONCLUSION

Summary Of Key Points

In summary, organizational behavior principles are essential to the formation and success of cross-functional teams. By understanding the behaviors of individuals and teams, leaders can create an environment where collaboration thrives, leading to better innovation and problem-solving. Cross-functional teams offer significant advantages, but they also face challenges like communication barriers and conflicting priorities, which can be mitigated through strong leadership and well-defined communication strategies.

Final Thoughts



In conclusion, developing effective cross-functional teams involves a strong understanding of organizational behavior principles and team dynamics. By recognizing the importance of these concepts and solving the unique problems faced by cross-functional teams, organizations may maximize the potential of diverse knowledge to drive innovation and achieve superior results. As future professionals, we must build the abilities essential to thrive in such collaborative contexts, assuring our readiness to add to and manage high-performing teams in our future jobs.

The success of a cross-functional team lies in its ability to effectively utilize the diverse skills and perspectives of its members. Moving forward, it is essential to refine communication strategies further and ensure that leadership provides clear guidance. For future projects, continuing to emphasize the development of cultural competence and inclusivity will lead to even greater team success.

Wordcount: 1528

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