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| Johns Hopkins |
| Module 13 Assessment |
| Team Building Strategies |
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**Problem Statement**

Briefly describe a scenario in which a software development team is experiencing team-building related problems.  Based on your scenario, recommend three strategies to the team to improve communication and successfully rebuild itself.

**Assumptions**

N/A

**Computations**

N/A

**Discussion/Conclusions**

There are a few possibilities to discuss for scenarios where software development teams are experiencing team-building related problems. One of these possibilities that can come with new teams is poor morale. Poor morale can occur for a multitude of reasons. One possible reason for low team morale is a sense of chaos and disarray in the team or task. Another possible reason for poor morale could be a large project with no end in sight seemingly crushing employee spirit to attack problems with valid solutions. A third possible problem that could result in poor morale is the sense that the team/organization is simply boring, which can cause new team members to not want to contribute their time and effort to the task at hand. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss some possible ways to combat low morale in new teams.

One way to fix this problem with poor morale for new teams is to create an outline or plan which effectively communicates the current state of the project, the end state of the project, and a plan for how to get to the desired end state with work breakdowns and schedule. This can combat a sense of chaos and disarray with the team. While there may be struggles with the plan along the way, simply providing a plan and a structured way to achieve the goal in mind is often very helpful to employees to see that leadership is organized and thinking ahead. Having the plan in place also allows employees to find their own way to contribute to the goals of the plan, and allows employees to delegate which tasks in the plan are best suited to which employees, thus increasing worker efficiency. Effective communication of the plan to all stakeholders is also critical to get buy-in from new employees and stakeholders. Thus, creating a plan can benefit the state of morale during the team-building stage of a software team.

Another way to fix poor morale on new teams is to assign small, accomplishable tasks which provide “little victories” for a team to feel a sense of accomplishment and progress. This can help a team that has taken on a large project with no end in sight by allowing the team to complete a task and enjoy the feeling of progress toward the end goal. Oftentimes morale cannot be changed overnight. Thus while at times it is important to look at the general state of morale, it is often more important to look at the direction that morale is heading. If the momentum of morale is trending down, then that is a sign that some action should be taken. If morale is trending up, even if it is generally low, that means that the proper steps are being taken to improve morale. A state of low morale with positive momentum is no place to rest easy, however, positive progress on morale should continue to be made to ensure that the new team is operating as smoothly as possible during team-building. Thus, assigning tasks which provide “small victories” can provide an effective way to benefit the state of morale during the team-building stage of a software team.

A third way to combat poor morale in new teams is to make sure to have some fun. Working day in/day out for 5+ days a week all year long can get repetitive or unfulfilling. Some time should be taken at times to have some fun, especially on new teams where team members are getting to know each other. You can have a team barbecue, go to bowling, or even just go out to lunch to relax. This will go a long way to improving morale, and especially on new teams, can improve the speed at which employees get to know each other and form relationships with one another. Thus, taking the time to have some fun both allows new team members the opportunity to get to know each other outside of a work environment, it also helps with the state of morale on teams.

Poor morale is one of the worst types of team-building related problems, it can put you behind on an efficiency and productivity standpoint immediately, and teams with low morale can quickly fall behind expectation. Watching out for low morale during team-building is imperative, and while not all the methods to combat poor morale are discussed here, there are three good solutions to combat poor morale, improve communication, and successfully rebuild the team to get back on track.