**Team Leadership**

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Team Leadership

After creating a new department in the company the senior leadership has tasked you with leading a team of individual contributors. What is your plan to be successful in this new position?

# Evaluate Team Membership

There are four individual contributors that will report directly to me, each has taken a personality test. This will assist in assigning work to their personalities.

## TIM – INTJ

The first member has an introverted, intuitive, thinking and judging personality. He prefers to keep to himself and have strong opinions about how the work should be handled (Heiss, 1998). He would be a good person to involve during the initial testing phases, as he will have input toward the design and quality of the product.

## Syreeta – INTP

The next member has an introverted, intuitive, thinking and perceiving personality. She has a tendency to be second guess herself and be overly critical (Butt, J, 1998). This can be met with patience and spending time upfront to create well-formed plans. Typically a 1:1 setting will be more productive than a large room of people.

## Maria – ENTP

Maria will also second guess what the expectations are and be overly critical of the final results. She differs in being extroverted and will seek answers from other members of the team. Having a subordinate that does not silently spin their wheels, making managing them easier. It also provides a contact within the immediate team to get a general pulse of the others.

## Erica – ISTP

As an introverted, sensing, thinking, and perceiving individual, which means that she will be a “Performer with capital P” when needed and dormant other times (Butt, J, 1998). As her manager would need to find new and interesting work to keep her engaged. If the task is not exciting then it needs to be sold as important.

## Ashley – Unknown

If a direct has been assigned and little is known, the best approach is to start with a neutral view and see how the relationship organically forms. This can be accomplished by using control functions.

A control function could be established by providing her tasks, evaluate the results, and providing feedback. After a couple iterations of the process perception and reality will calibrate.

## Nate – ENTP

The extraverted, intuitive, thinking, and perceiving personality describes a person that is “cerebrally quick and loves to argue (Heiss, 1998).” The best way to manage such a person is not beat around the bush, state the objective and be direct. They will respect the straightforwardness and deliver better results.

# Evaluate the Situation

The team was formed to take on a new market segment within a new division of the organization. This presents challenges due to the urgency, culture, and risk.

## Urgency

The department was recently formed to go after a new market segment. This will require the team to quickly get up to speed so operational plans can be formed. Until those plans are formed the group will exist as a cost center. Transitioning to a profit center needs to be a top priority to support the longevity of the team.

## Culture

As a newly formed team there is potential for initial contention or other culture issues between the different team members. For instance Tim and Nate have personalities at opposite ends of the spectrum. They might butt heads or have opposing views toward the way work is handled.

Trust will also be an issue, especially with the introverted members. It might take some time for them to warm up to the team and feel comfortable. During this time communication and the sharing of ideas will not be as open.

This can be addressed through team building exercises, such as having lunch together. Another solution would be spending the first part of team meeting talking weekend plans or hobbies outside of work. By humanizing the other members they will feel closer and more connected (Boyatzis, 2014).

## Risk

Given the newness of the area, team, market segment, and department; there is a large amount of risk that needs to be considered. For example time lines to complete tasks are likely to need additional buffer (Marchewka, 2012).

There is also risk that the efficiency and effectiveness of the team members themselves is largely unknown. Irrespective of personality profiles some directs might have a poor attitude or work ethic (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Until they have a chance to demonstrate results there is additional unknowns.

This needs to be carefully monitored during the initial phases until a baseline has been established. Then periodically the employee’s performance needs to be evaluated and feedback provided to guide them toward optimal results (Robbins & Coulter, 2012).

# Determine Leadership Approaches

The purpose of the team leader is to gain the most productivity out of the team members, while impeding them the least possible. This takes an understanding of the situation and applying the right catalyst to get the job done.

## Situational Leadership

Using Hersey and Blanchard’s contingency theory, we need to first look at the team’s readiness. This is “their ability or willingness to accomplish a specific task (Robbins & Coulter, 2012).” If the team is not fully engaged then it will not be possible to the best and most efficient results from them.

Depending on which members of the team have low readiness different corrective actions can be applied. For example Erica will want to be assigned something big and important that is worth her time. This might require presenting assignments in terms of the problem that it solves and the measureable value it provides.

## Path-Goal Theory

Path and goal is another leadership theory, which sets the focus on team members choosing the business problems that interest them. The manager is then tasked with ensuring the works align with the goals of the organization.

For example Maria enjoys interacting with partner teams. It would make sense to task Maria with the cross team liaison work. Then through coaching it would be possible to build up her skills in this area, and grow an effective program manager.

## Facilitator Approach

People do not like to be micromanaged and want to feel that they have a degree of creative input into their work (Boyatzis, 2014) (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). To foster such an environment it is important that a manager be able to delegate tasks then facilitate the group.

In the facilitator role, the manager needs to handle requests of the team and provide the best practices and proper guidance. For example when Ashley is designing a new system, the manager should review it and provide feedback. Then Ashley can presents to the broader audience with added confidence of solution acceptance.

Another core function of the facilitator is to be the escalation point for any political asks. For example Tim starts working on a project that has a dependency on a third party team. Tim’s manager and the manager of the dependent project would need to discuss the support terms, budget swaps, and other administrative requirements.

# Conclusions

The company has requested a lot of responsibility that needs to be addressed with a strong leadership plan. This needs to consider the team dynamics, situational aspects, and which leadership theories to apply.

Team dynamics can be understood by using personality tests and then identifying strengths and challenges of each member. This can be used to form an initial baseline but will not detail exact results.

To get the desired results the manager needs to understand the readiness of the group. One approach to getting perpetual readiness is using the path-goal model, where employees are tasked with areas that interest them. After they are working on tasks that interest them, the manager can move into the facilitator role. This gives the employees the most opportunity to grow on their own, while still ensuring the results align with the needs of the organization.

# References

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