

BELBIN ANALYSIS OF TEAM BUILDING: LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper is focused on team building. The research paper argues that team building is key factor for an effective performance of any organization. The paper has used Belbin technique to analyze the importance of key roles required by efficient team. It is also argued that these team roles increase the strength and power of team to achieve team goals.

Keywords: Team building, Team roles, Team dynamics, Scientific management.

CONCEPT OF TEAM BUILDING

The concept of team building has revolutionized the way of working together. It has played a significant role in developing scientific team management. The team building has also given a new shape to business and it has become a source of efficiency and effectiveness. Unlike a group, the team consists of 'people working together with accepted goals and agreed ways of working.' This definition of the team differentiates it from the group where people work together with their own objectives. Thus, team performance is judged from the collective efforts of team members. They are collectively responsible for team performance. They share the common goals of their team. The team members have variety of skills and work experiences. Thus, there is a greater opportunity for learning and sharing new ideas within the team. These new ideas could be used to improve various aspects of work the team members do together and this new information could be used to take creative decisions about the effective management of resources. The teams also promote communication and cooperation and they discourage competition which could cause conflicts. In addition teams create new possibilities for improving performance

and growing new business ideas. Thus 'teams are where ideas are generated, decisions get made, and work gets done (McKee, Annie, 2011).

Team building is an important task to achieve the objectives. We need a strong team in order to perform various tasks which reflect the commitment of the team to its objectives. Every team has its own objectives. Thus, team members have to perform various roles to enable the team to achieve its objectives. For example the cricket team which needs to be composed of various roles including batsmen, bowlers, fielders and wicket keepers. It is not possible to win if the team is composed of just fielders. Similarly every business team needs variety of roles to perform various tasks. 'When a task is multifunctional in nature, no single person or crew of functionaries can compete with a team of versatile members (Robbins, *et.al.*, 1998)'.

The introduction of technology and use of new techniques has made the business activities more challenging. It has created specialized functions rather than general tasks to be performed without training and information. The individual role within the team has emerged as challenging. The responsibilities which make it challenging require specific training and skills to perform them effectively. Therefore, a strong team is composed of those team roles, who possess variety of skills and aptitudes. Thus, selection of team roles is a greatest task ahead of team leaders. They can't choose on the basis of their liking or disliking or on the basis of general criterion. But they need to select the members according to the needs of team they are going to form in order to achieve specific objectives.

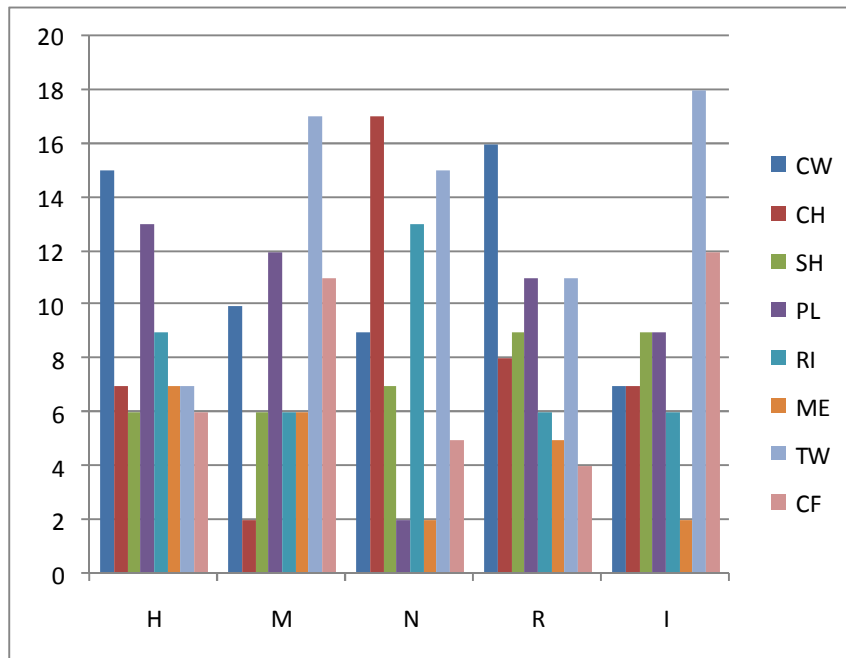
BELBIN ANALYSIS

According to Belbin the selection could be made by inquiring about the attitudes and behaviors of individual roles. Thus, questionnaires were distributed among the target respondents of Vice Chancellor's Secretariat University of Sindh to find out their responses. This data was put in the form of tabulation and then the tables were analyzed. It was found that the team of Vice Chancellors Secretariat was consisted of following members. Their scores are also given to highlight the characteristics of the members.

TABLE: 1
TEAM ROLES

Initial	CW	CH	SH	PL	RI	ME	TW	CF
H	15	07	06	13	09	07	07	06
M	10	02	06	12	06	06	17	11
N	09	17	07	02	13	02	15	05
R	16	08	09	11	06	05	11	04
I	07	07	09	09	06	02	18	12

The data is presented in the following chart.



Source: Questionnaire

Individual/Team Weakness and Strength

Belbin analysis has identified eight team roles necessary for a strong team. These roles have both strengths and weaknesses. These team roles are analyzed as under:

- **Company worker:** This team role is known for his /her discipline, efficiency and reliability. These qualities make this role very important contributor to the team strength. He /She also turn various ideas into practical actions. He works for the company and thus he does not priorities his self interest (Belbin, R., 2004).

However, the considerable weakness of this role is his/her inflexible attitude. This attitude sometimes affects the interaction among team members which could affect the team performance.

- **Chair/Coordinator:** This role has great importance for team. His/Her mature thoughts are a real wealth for the team. His /Her confidence enables him/her to perform a leading role as a good chairperson. This role not only clarifies the goals but also promote decision-making process. The role can be a good delegator. However, the risk associated with his /her delegation is that he could delegates his own work. Thus, the role can be seen as manipulative.
- **Shaper:** This role of team member is challenging and can play important role to overcome the obstacles. The weakness of this role is that he /she sometimes hurt the feelings of others. Therefore, his or her behavior could affect the relationships within the team.
- **Plant:** Plant is an asset for a team. His /her creativity brings newness in the business. This role can discover new ideas and solutions for the difficult problems which ordinary people cannot solve. His/her new ideas bring new changes which promote innovative way of working as a team.
- **Resource Investigator:** This role is also very useful for the development of team. His contribution to the growth of skills cannot be over emphasized. He/She always explores new opportunities to bring new experiences in the team and enable the team members to learn from these experiences for the benefit of the team. However, his/her over optimism could cause him to lose interest once enthusiasm has passed.
- **Monitor Evaluator:** This person has an eagle eye. He or She evaluates critically the different aspects of work and judges the activities accurately. He works like a judge in the court of team performance. However, he could negatively contribute to the team if he becomes overly critical. This role lacks the ability to inspire other team members.
- **Team Worker:** This team role has good qualities which promote good relationships and team spirit. He/She is a cooperative and helpful. According to Belbin the team workers place 'group objectives above self-interest' (Belbin, R. 2004).
- **Complete finisher:** Complete Finisher role is a careful and anxious. He/She gives considerable attention to the perfection and does not overlook errors and omissions.

These roles have both strengths and weaknesses for team. However, most of these weaknesses could be removed. The table 1 indicates that the Vice Chancellor's team is consisted of company workers shaper and team workers. These roles clearly contribute to the strength of teams. In addition, some team members have second higher scores in the categories including plant, resource investigator and complete finisher.

Impact of Weakness and Strength on Team Dynamics and Interactions

The team is normally consisted of various individuals who are supposed to work together and cooperate with each other to accomplish goals. However the team work always needs motivation. Team workers need to know why they are working and how their work satisfies their needs. They think about the impact of their work on their lives and their environment. For example some people do something because they enjoy it. For them work is a source of utilizing their time productively and enjoying a good time. The other workers like to do work because they consider it important. They feel that they are contributing to the achievement of a noble cause. The best way to motivate them is to recognize their contributions. If their work is recognized it gives them immense pleasure and satisfaction. These workers are more conscious about their position and social status in society.

However, some workers do work in order to maintain themselves. They feel that they could face undesirable consequences, if they were unable to perform their duties. Thus, the team members have some common interests and some different from the interests of the others. As a matter of fact the individual psychology suggests that every human strives to secure his own interest. The clash between the personal and team interests affect the behavior of team. In addition, confused objectives and unclear decisions made by team sometime affect the behavior of team members. These behavioral changes cause conflict in the teams. The conflicts thus turn into weakness for the team. Therefore, the team leader has to diagnose these behavioral changes before they turn into conflicts. These strengths and weaknesses can be diagnosed with the help of Belbin analysis. They can be treated

with means of effective communication and motivation provided by the team leader.

It is clear from the above discussion that the teams have both strengths and weaknesses. Some teams work because they have strengths more than they have weaknesses. Some weaknesses can be removed or managed by new ideas. However, the idea building needs energy which comes from the motivation provided by team leader. If team has developed a good leadership it can be considered great strength for the team. The leader would not only possess vision but also possess the qualities to turn this vision into reality with the support of a team. The lack of leadership is a key factor for the failure of team to achieve its targets. The teams led by bad leaders cannot satisfy the information needs of team members. Bad leadership does not appreciate team performance and causes decline of team spirit. Thus, Belbin considers leadership very important. He believes that ‘the quickest and surest way of changing the fortunes of a firm is to replace the man at the top’ (Belbin, R., 2004).

OBJECTIVES OF TEAM

2.1 Objective No. 1 Providing electronic communication services

timescale: 2 Months

Desired outcomes: The team would adopt measures to ensure the quick communication procedures in order to avoid wasting time of faculty members and students. This way the team will be able to achieve the objective of achieving effectiveness of services. The outcome could be measured by observing the quick delivery of services.

2.2 Objective No.2 Promoting variety of new degree programmes and training workshops

Timescale: 3 Months

Desired Outcomes: With the promotion of new programmes, the students will be able to choose from a variety of new programmes. They would have positive attitudes about the services the University provide. These attitudes will help in attracting new students and communities. The outcomes of new methods of marketing products would be observed from the increasing popularity of products among the students and communities.

2.3 Objective No.3: Improving quality of research

Timescale: 3 Months

Desired outcomes: The team would be able to create best methods of improving quantity of education and research. The measures can be judged through tests and interview methods.

2.4 Objective No.4 Promoting positive student experience through excellent customer services.

Timescale 3 Months

Desired outcomes: The team will achieve customer satisfaction through the good student experiences of services. These experiences would further promote our goal of increasing efficiency and quality of services provided by University of Sindh. The objective would be measured through student feedback.

SUMMARY OF ROLES UNDERTAKEN BY TEAM MEMBERS

- Mr. H According to Belbin analysis the company worker is a reliable, efficient and disciplined team worker. He is also a person who can ‘turn the ideas into practical actions.’ Mr. H is a company worker. In addition, he has second highest score in the plant category. Thus, he has also characteristics including creativeness and skills to solve the problems.
Mr. H would help team serving students and solving their problems. His duties include student affairs and handling student complaints.
- Mr. M emerged as a team worker and he has also some creative and problem solving skills.
Mr. M has to make since that all orders issued by Vice Chancellors secretariat are implemented in the University.
- Mr. N got the qualities such as confidence, maturity, decision making skills. He could also chair meetings, delegate duties and clarify goals
Mr. N will also help Mr. H to perform his duties effectively. In addition, he is supposed to deal with official correspondence.
- Mr. R is a company worker according to Belbin analysis. He is working as personal assistant to Vice Chancellor. He is responsible for booking appointments for meetings.
- Mr. I is a team worker. He is composing official letters and prepares reports for Vice Chancellor’s Secretariat.

This summary of team roles indicate that every team member knows about what needs to be done. However, the team members not necessarily perform the same duties every day. The team can

rotate them in order to promote team work. The work philosophy behind the rotating team members is to avoid the feelings of discrimination. Providing equal opportunities of work and learning is a key to manage the expectations of team members. This exercise creates positive attitudes and motivation needed for team success.

TEAM MEETINGS

Team meetings need to be arranged for considering the objectives of the team. These objectives can be discussed in the meeting and the team leader will help to find out the solution of problems face by team.

CONCLUSION

Belbin analysis of team building can enable team leaders and managers to build an effective team for achieving organizational goals. In this article Belbin technique was used to analyze the characteristics of the members of Vice Chancellor's team.

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