

A STUDY ON CONDUCT OF TEAMS IN AN IT AND A BPO COMPANY

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Abstract:

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. And a leader is a person who guides and has the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. With this in mind the role of a leader is indispensable in the team. This article deals with the conduct of leaders and team members in the aspect of People and Task Management Skills.

Keywords: Leadership, People and Task Management Skills, IT and BPO

I. INTRODUCTION

A team comprises a group of people linked in a common purpose. Teams are especially appropriate for conducting tasks that are high in complexity and have many interdependent subtasks. Teams normally have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his or her strengths and minimize his or her weaknesses. High impact leaders practice defining goals, create blue prints for action, build trust and involve right people [3]. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Understanding, mutual agreement and identification with respect to the primary task, open communications, mutual trust, mutual support, management of human differences, selective use of the team, appropriate member skills and leadership are very much essential for an effective team (Douglas McGregor, 1967). At the most basic level, a team's success or failure at collaborating reflects the philosophy of top executives in the organization. Teams do well when executives invest in supporting social relationships, demonstrate collaborative behavior themselves, and create an atmosphere in which employees experience interactions with leaders and colleagues as something valuable and generously offered, a gift[2].

Moreover leaders who are selected and trained has to end up in an environment that enables them to use the attributes for which they were hired and the skills and knowledge they gained in training [5]. Team leaders exert strong influence on team processes and outcomes [8].

II. CONDUCT OF LEADERS IN IT/BPO COMPANIES

In Information technology (IT), India has built up valuable brand equity in the global markets. In IT-enabled services (ITES), India has emerged as the most preferred destination for business process outsourcing (BPO), a key driver of growth for the software industry and the services sector. It has rapidly grown in India and it is obligatory to study about the dynamics of human resource management practices and systems^[1]. India's most prized resource in today's knowledge economy is its readily available technical work force. India has the second largest English-speaking scientific professionals in the world, second only to the U.S.

When IT/BPO Companies are concerned the leadership that is usually seen is the *assigned* leadership. The Leader in such companies is assigned the position of a Leader and should not only act as a coordinator among team members but also be familiar with the process, and its stakeholders. The Leader's role includes serving as the primary communication link between the sponsor and the team, coordinating team logistics, planning and evaluating team meetings with the team facilitator, keeping official records of team activities, providing access to any information the team needs regarding process improvement and bridging to each next step in the structured problem solving process.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was done in two organizations (one IT Company and one BPO Company) with three questionnaires one each for Human Resource Head, Leader and Team Member. The questionnaires for Leader and team member had similar questions studying various aspects of Conduct of Team Leads and check whether they have scope for improvement to render effective management of Teams in their respective organizations. Situational Theory of Kenneth

Blanchard and Managerial Grid given by Blake & Moulton were used in the study. Content Validity was checked before doing pilot study and the results were put to reliability and normality tests. Six point scale was used categorized as Usually, Often, Sometimes, Occasionally, Rarely and Never. Tools used in the study include Mean and ANOVA. The attributes taken for the study can be classified in broad as People Management and Task Management Skills. The skills taken under People Management Skills are Active Listening, Communication, Team Relationships, Problem solving and Counseling, Participative Decision Making and Interface Management. Work Allocation, Team Development, Objective setting and Quality Standards were taken for study under Task Management Skills.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Table showing the mean scores of Leaders on People and Task Management Skills studied

	Organization 1 (IT)			Organization 2 (BPO)		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Active Listening	5.361	0.37731	A	5.38	0.62099	A
Communication	5.417	0.375	A	4.891	0.73788	I
Team Relationships	5.444	0.28027	A	5.317	0.46598	A
Problem Solving and Counseling	5.611	0.31026	A	5.493	0.41353	A
Participative Decision Making	5.306	0.52705	A	5.109	0.59747	A
Interface Management	5.156	0.16667	A	5.348	0.60368	A
Work Allocation	5.528	0.38415	A	5.522	0.45172	A
Team Development	5	1	I	4.348	1.43364	I
Objective Setting	5.476	0.29369	A	5.579	0.2997	A
Quality Standards	5.481	0.55692	A	5.334	0.53306	A
People Management Skills	8.073	0.28566		7.884	0.65173	
Task Management Skills	8.057	0.55392		7.793	0.63638	

A: Accepted; I: To be Improved

The mean and the lowest score (range) has to be 4.5 and above to be 'acceptable' and less than that is considered in the 'to be improved' criteria.

Table 2: ANOVA table showing the responses of Leaders and Members on various skills under People and Task Management Skills

		Organization 1			Organization 2				
		Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result (H ₀)	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result (H ₀)
Active Listening	BG	0	0	0.8	A	0.2	0	0.7	A
	WG	0.2				0.4			
	Total								
Communication	BG	0	0	0.9	A	0.7	1	0.3	A
	WG	0.2				0.5			
	Total								
Team Relationships	BG	0	0	0.9	A	0.1	1	0.6	A
	WG	0.1				0.2			
	Total								
Problem Solving and Counseling	BG	0	0	0.7	A	0.2	1	0.4	A
	WG	0.1				0.2			
	Total								
Participative Decision Making	BG	0.7	3	0.1	A	0.5	2	0.2	A
	WG	0.2				0.3			
	Total								
Interface Management	BG	0	0	0.5	A	0.5	1	0.3	A
	WG	0				0.3			
	Total								
Work Allocation	BG	0	0	0.9	A	0.3	1	0.3	A
	WG	0.2				0.2			
	Total								
Team Development	BG	1.8	2	0.2	A	4.9	3	0.1	A
	WG	0.9				1.6			
	Total								
Objective Setting	BG	0.3	4	0.1	A	0.1	1	0.3	A
	WG	0.1				0.1			
	Total								
Quality Standards	BG	0.5	2	0.2	A	0.2	1	0.5	A
	WG	0.3				0.3			
	Total								
People Management Skills	BG	0.1	1	0.4	A	0.6	1	0.3	A
	WG	0.1				0.4			
	Total								
Task Management Skills	BG	0.3	1	0.4	A	0.7	2	0.1	A
	WG	0.3				0.4			
	Total								

A: Accepted; I: To be Improved
 BG: Between Groups, WG: Within Groups

Null hypothesis H₀: There is no significant difference between the responses given by Leaders and team members on the variables taken.

Significance level is taken to be 5% and if the significance value is less than 0.05 then the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Table showing the Findings of the Study

	<i>Organization 1 (IT)</i>	<i>Organization 2 (BPO)</i>
Active Listening	Good	Good
Communication	Good	Good but sometimes TL tries to manipulate
Team Relationships	Mutual support in team need to be improved	Recognition and rewarding should be given importance
Problem Solving and Counseling	Good	Good
Participative Decision Making	Good	Consensus to be used as a way to address key issues always
Interface Management	Understanding each other in the team to be improved on	Good
Work Allocation	Good	Good
Team Development	No formal training is given	No formal training is given
Objective Setting	Good	Good
Quality Standards	Good	Good
People Management Skills Task Management Skills	Team style of Leadership (Managerial Grid by Blake and Moulton)	Team style of Leadership (Managerial Grid by Blake and Moulton)

IV. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study, the Conduct of Leaders in both the companies show a good balance of people related and task related skills. Following suggestions were given so that they can still excel in whatever they do.

- Training may be provided to enhance the competencies of the Leaders as well as team members which will enable the organization to scale greater heights.
- Team members can be involved in the decision making further more to increase the commitment they have in the implementation of the decisions taken as they will own it as their own.
- The personal relationships between team members through ways like going on team outing can be encouraged as this will lead to a coordinated team.
- The Leaders can be encouraged to give attention to the views of team members and make themselves available to the team members when they share their problems.

V. CONCLUSION

As Leaders are an indispensable part in the organization and it has been proved in researches that leaders' behavior have an influence on the performance of the organization which is dependent on the functioning of the teams. The employee outcomes, job satisfaction, productivity and organizational commitment are found to be statistically correlated to the managers' use of leadership behaviors^[5]. Jeremy Miller puts out the major characteristics which leads to success in a team and they include hiring great people, set clear expectations, finding each person's talents, recognizing efforts being truthful, etc^[6]. For a team to function better the Leader has to have a good balance of people related and task related skills^[2] which help him to take the team members along in achieving the objectives of the organization. By having an idea about the conduct of the Leaders the organization can frame its recruitment and training policies so that it can achieve what it was formed for. This also takes care of the future course of action of the organization.

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