



## Building Quality Teamwork to Achieve Excellence in Business Organizations



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### Abstract

Business organizations are continuously and rapidly expanding. Gone are the days when only individual's talent and abilities that were counted upon. Business organizations today have found out that the key factor of achieving more and better results at work is when individuals of diverse abilities are formed into a team. This ability to work as part of a team is one of the most imperative skills today. Business organizations are looking for individuals who can not only furnish their own ideas but also who would like to create and develop projects and plans with equally talented people. This paper emphasizes the need and importance of working in a team based organizational setting and also focuses on the five stages of development of a team in the organization.

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### 1. Introduction

Today business organizations around the world have acknowledged that the key to successfully accomplish projects is through the development of teams. Incorporating teamwork into an organization, achieving goals becomes easier and faster. Studying on the difference of need between teamwork today in business organizations and in the past, it will be clear that today's teamwork is more dynamic, diverse and efficient. In the past teamwork only came to the role if there were any specific projects to be handled. With the growing importance of communication and technology, teamwork has gripped business organizations all over the world. A team is not a group. While the group is merely a gathering of people, a team is much more than a group. It is a group of talented individuals with a different approach to showcasing their abilities all assembling under a common roof and with a common goal. Teamwork serves and provides an opportunity for both personal and professional growth.

Lake, Baerg, and Paslawski describe teamwork as "the combined action of a group of people. The paradox of teamwork is that it relies on the individual skills of those sharing responsibility (Lake, Baerg and Paslawski, 2015, p.11). Not only this, a team runs with the collaborative efforts, energy, and enthusiasm of every individual performing hard work. However, this theory was argued many times by the authors and may believe that the need to achieve goals has to be commonly purposed or else for people who are work alcoholic teamwork may not be fruitful. Also, if more time is spent on knowing each other in a team the drive to work lessons and ultimately the

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concept of working in the team becomes unfocused and distracted. Hence, it is imperative that everyone in a team must understand the significance of collaboration in order to sustain it through hard times.

Starting a team and identifying the right team members is a very complicated task. Studies reveal that a team must embody team members who are supposed to be replete with minimum criteria of skills. Katzenbach and Smith describe “a team cannot get started without some minimum complement of skills, especially technical and functional ones. And no team can achieve its purpose without developing all the skill levels required” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1992, p.52).

One of the essential factors which bind the team together is learning and interpersonal skills assist to a great extent the essence of learning in a team. Edmondson clarifies teamwork is an essential activity and with bountifulness of benefits. She writes interpersonal skills give authenticity to many other required skills. Edmondson describes “teaming is a way of working that brings people together to generate new ideas, find answers, and solve problems. But people have to learn to team; it does not come naturally in most organizations. Teaming is worth learning, because it is essential for improvement, problem-solving, and innovating in a functioning enterprise. The complex interdependencies involved in learning and innovating require the interpersonal skills necessary to negotiate disagreements, overcome technical jargon, and revisit ideas or problems until solutions emerge- all activities supported by teaming” (Edmondson, 2012, p. 69).

Setting goals of a team are one of the requisites a team aims to work for. Without a goal, a team is merely a group. Hence it is the responsibility of each member of a team to take eagerness towards setting a goal first. Mackall in his book *Team Work skills* agrees that “goals and objectives are a part of everyday life. When you become a member of a work team, you will need to know how to participate in setting goals. Those goals and objectives will determine everything your team does” (Mackall, 2004, p.94).

A team is composed of various individuals with varying opinions, ideas, talent, abilities, cultural background and many more. Hence, it is required that each individual in a team must accept each other and recognize each other's abilities and work upon mutually. In the words of West “(...) we need to be cautious about offering one-size-fits-all prescriptions for effective teamwork” (West, 2012, p.12).

With so many views of different authors on teamwork, one concept is clear that a team requires equally enthusiastic members with an abundance of skills so that they can carry out loads of work in an easy and much better way. This paper emphasizes on benefits of teamwork and stages in making up a good team. The paper also focuses on team-based accomplishments which have become the need of the hour in order to deliver maximum performance through a positive and constructive approach.

## 2. Research Methods

In order to get a brief exploration regarding teamwork in the business organization, the documentation research was conducted to get a relevant discussion. This is a qualitative method that the explanation is used a paraphrase to get a good analysis.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Benefits of teamwork in business organizations

An efficient team is an asset to an organization. An effective team has the ability to take more complex tasks and smoothes the progress of communication by providing better space for open discussion and cooperation among team members. This further maximizes the productivity of not only the team but the organization as a whole. The positive part is the strengths and attributes of each team member are utilized that acts as a support mechanism for a team. “Teamwork at the workplace has also shown to increase innovation and creativity by allowing team members to bring unique and distinct perspectives to the table. When leveraged, effective teamwork drives company growth and boosts performance and success by tapping into each individual's unique strengths and attributes” (<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-teamwork-work-11196.html>). Following are the most important benefits teamwork can offer to an individual in particular and organization in whole.

#### 1) Team Work raises Creativity and Learning

When people work together in a team they come up with different ideas which are way better than what a solo member can provide with. It is here that the unique thoughts of each team member get combined and a creative idea originates. Open discussions provide ample space to learn. The shared knowledge from each others' experience, skill, talent, and ability offers a learning example for the rest of one's career where both individual and team's creativity and learning grow mutually. Dinsmore and Cabanis- Brewin agree that “the team approach

stimulates innovation and encourages people to try new approaches to problems” ( Dinsmore and Cabanis-Brewin, 2014, p.38).

2) Team Work builds Trust

Teamwork strengthens relationships. Each member relies on the other and builds trust. Hence, even though there are minor disagreements, it is a trust which encourages them to again work together and solve problems. A strong bond is shared which overcomes even the minor conflicts. Trust among team members provides a feeling of security and creates cohesion among each other. Each member recognizes the distinct abilities each of them possess and this helps them to move ahead with their relationships. Cooke is of the view that “Distrust can erode quality, slow decisions, and fragment cooperation. Trust that exists in a team is affected by the team’s leadership; (...) promote positive feelings of predictability and logic within the team” (Cooke, 2005, p.171).

3) Team Work resolves Conflicts

It is unsurprising that when different minds work together, there arise clashes in opinions. Also, team members belong to varied lifestyles, habits, working styles etc which may not go well with other team members, which further lead to ego clashes and finally conflicts. Not discussing conflicts can even be a bigger matter as conflicts are generally the signs of negative feelings and opportunities to blame each other. However, team members must understand that “conflicts and teamwork go together and that working cooperatively does not mean avoiding conflicts, but discussing them open-mindedly to aid their joint work” (Tjosvold, 2015, p.126).

4) Team Work promotes Ownership

Ownership arouses a sense of owning something. It can be the contributions to a project, can be efforts to complete a task or even handling obstacles and creating significant jobs which make the team members feel fulfilled and satisfied. Ownership gives a feeling of connection to a particular team and its members hence making relationships strong and contributions effective. It further promotes loyalty towards the organization and a gut feeling of staying with it for a longer time period. Speck describes “ownership is an important factor in achieving satisfactory outcomes in that each team member needs to own a degree of responsibility for the overall life and work of the team” (Speck, 2006, p. 70).

5) Team Work offers healthy risk-taking

Brainstorming in a team results in revolutionary ideas to move ahead with a plan or project. No member of the team would want to delve into a project alone as it has bigger risks. But as is the fact that one may not receive the entire credit for a successful project, discussing the project and working together offers responsibility for all. A team is ever ready to take the health risk as sometimes even the riskiest risk turns out to result in the best of outcomes. Taking risks is almost like an adventure and in a team, each member gets to learn even if the risk fails. Teamwork “lessens the possibilities of risk-aversion, hesitation, and indecision by encouraging taking the risk, exhibit judgment and making something happen. That is when truly effective leadership begins to emerge when team members become leaders themselves” (Larson and LaFasto, 1989, p. 129).

Teamwork promotes effective work approaches not only by the individual skills set but also team skill set as a whole. Today’s workplace is a collaborative based workplace. Teamwork offers the best positive ways to develop one’s own skill and learn from other skills too. There is no clear evidence to state that success is sure because each individual in the team is well organized. However, studies reveal that members of a team performing on a task together can come up with better results than when working alone. However, when teamwork has plenty of benefits the question that now arises is how is a team formed or developed. It becomes essential and imperative to understand the stages of a team development. Described below are the four stages a team is developed.

### 3.2 The Four stages of Team development

The origin of the four stages of team development goes to fifty-three years back when Bruce Wayne Tuckman in one of his theories *Tuckman stages of group development* prescribed for the four stages of team development.

1. Forming

This is the first stage of a team development. In this stage team members are yet to know other members of the team. Most of the team members are pleasant, positive and polite. Most of them are excited to meet other team members and also anxious to know the job description they are going to take over. This stage can be more or less understood with the orientation program day when new entrants with high hopes meet their classmates to begin a new journey. The members may take interests on other member’s background, skills and experience and may discuss the project goals and individual roles. Hence, this stage is just the beginning of team development where the focus is still on people and know each other.

## 2. Storming

At this stage, there are chances when many teams fail. There are conflicts likely to arise as the team members are not yet comfortable with each other's working style. They might also get frustrated as they are unable to create any connection with other's way of taking up tasks. Differing working styles is the main cause often leading to this stage of storming. In such a stage team members are gradually finding imperfections in once flawless person. Strong clashes of opinions, egos, and personalities become rare and disagreements tend to reflect in every other meeting. Team leaders need to manage this stage and make the team members understand that certain things are common and the need to come out of it constructively is essential. Hence recognizing conflicts and resolving them pacifies a lot of unseen consequences.

## 3. Norming

This stage gradually takes things under control. This is when every conflict in the storming stage is getting resolved and differences are determined. The members learn to respect each other and recognize another skill set, working style, cultural differences, and encourage each other's strengths. The team leader is appreciated for the act of normalizing situations. Now that every odd has been mastered, members join each other for small get-togethers and socialize more often with each other more. Reliance, positive feedback, dependence are small acts of letting each other know and feel regarding the commitment towards goal. A constructive progress is likely to be seen by the members.

## 4. Performing

During this stage, hard works pay off and leading towards goals becomes easy with the cooperation of the team members. At this stage, the performance won't be disruptive because of the positive behavior of each and every team member. Members are found motivated and confident and also by now relationships among the members have now become stronger than ever before. Everyone at this stage wants to work dedicatedly taking the cooperation of their other team members. Overall, the team members are proud of their performance. However, there are other people too who haven't yet come out from storming stage and hence not being productive hence fail to achieve the even individual goal.

## 5. Adjourning

This is the fifth stage of team development which was extended by Tuckman only in 1977 when he discovered that once a goal is completed and a task ends the team scatters. This is adjourning stage where the matter is adjourned or has come to an end. This is sometimes also known as mourning stage as team members who have known each other so closely and shared a good experience have now come to disband. The emotional and the professional bonding have now come to rest.

Understanding Tuckman's development process can increase your chances of reaching project goal(s) (<https://toggl.com/stages-of-team-development>).

### 3.3 Team-Based Organisational Setting

A newer and an innovative type of structure is formed in most of the organizations around the globe. It is known as team-based organisational structure and the difference between team-based organisational structure and the traditional structured organisational setting is that while in Traditional structured organisational setting only leaders and top management officials are given the priority to make decisions and deal with team and its members, team-based organisational setting makes it mandatory for all the members to take decision on the growth and future of an organisation. The decisions making process is also open to team members where each one of them is given priority in moving ahead with their decisions. This organizational setting makes each member feel important and gives them a sense of belonging to the entire organization and not simply the department they belong to. In the book, *Building Team-Based working* West and Markiewicz reveal that "creating team-based organizations means radically altering the structure, the support system, and the culture. Instead of the focus being on the management of individual performance, as it is in most organizations, the focus is determinedly on the functioning of teams and how to ensure their effectiveness" (West and Markiewicz, 2008, p. 7).

With an advantage over team-based organizational setting, it also comprises of certain disadvantage like "team-based organizations are decentralized rather than hierarchical. This lack of centralization is another disadvantage of team-based organizations because decentralization can lead to coordination and control problems for management" (<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-disadvantages-team-based-organizations-25370.html>)

#### 4. Conclusion

The paper discussed teamwork and its benefits to the organization. It also discussed on the five stages of team development and pointed out the importance of working in a team. The paper also pointed out one of the newer forms of organizational setting that is team-based organizational setting with its merits and demerits. Today teamwork has been of growing recognition and needs in every organization big or small, also the structure fosters better problem-solving methods, decision making and accomplishing tasks faster and in an efficient manner. Teamwork reduces stress on individual and also on large teams as a whole in an organization. Sharing responsibilities and achieving a common goal is what a teamwork does for an organization to achieve success.

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