

## **TOPIC: TEAM PERFORMANCE & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For a team to be effective its composition must suite the type of task that needs to be carried out.

The task will determine the skills required of the team members.

All teams need the maximum participation of all the members.

The focus must remain on the task and not be distracted by the team members' personalities.

Teams do not function automatically. Good leaders build teams according to their needs and take into account the stages that teams normally go through before they start performing.

### **STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Forming**

Individuals gather information and impressions about each other and the scope of the task and how to approach it.

People focus on being busy with routines, such as team organisation e.g. who does what and when to meet each other.

#### **Storming**

Teams go through a period of conflict after formation.

Different ideas from team members will compete for consideration.

Team members open up to each other and confront each other's ideas and perspectives.

Arguments occur and upset the team members.

Many teams fail during this stage as they are not focused on their task.

This phase can become destructive for the team and will negatively impact on team performance, if allowed to get out of control.

This stage is important for the growth of the team.

Some team members tolerate each other to survive this stage.

#### **Norming**

Team members come to an agreement and reach consensus.

Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted.

Processes, the working style and respect develop amongst members.

Team members have the ambition to work for the success of the team.

Conflict may occur, but commitment and unity are strong.

#### **Performing**

Team members are aware of strategies and aims of the team.

They have direction without interference from the leader.

Processes and structures are set.

Leaders delegate and oversee the processes and procedures.

All members are now competent and able to handle the decision-making process without supervision.

Differences among members are appreciated and used to enhance the team's performance.

#### **Adjourning**

The focus is on the completion of the task.

Breaking up the team may be traumatic as team members may find it difficult to perform as individuals once again.

All tasks need to be completed before the team finally dissolves.

### **Characteristics of successful teams**

Successful teams share a common goal as team members are part of the process of setting goals for the group.

Share a set of team values and implement group decisions.

Teams value the contributions of individual members and reach consensus on differences.

There is a climate of respect/trust and honesty.

Team members enjoy open communication and deal with items of conflict immediately.

Teams are accountable and members know the time frame for achieving their goals.

Teams pay attention to the needs of the individual team members.

Successful teams have sound intra-team relations.

Creates an environment where team members are given opportunities to develop so that team members grow and learn from the experience of working in a team.

Regular reviews of team processes and progress may solve problems sooner.

Balance the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and expertise to achieve the objectives.

### **Meaning of team dynamics**

**Team dynamics** can be defined as the unseen natural forces that influence how a team responds, behaves or performs.

These dynamics will have a major influence on a team's success or failure.

### **Importance of team dynamic theories in improving team performance**

Team dynamic theories explain how effective teams work.

Businesses are able to allocate tasks according to the roles of team members.

Team members can maximise performance as tasks are allocated according to their abilities, skills, attributes or personalities.

Team members with similar strengths may compete for team tasks that best suit their abilities.

Theories assist team leaders to understand the personality types of team members so that tasks are assigned more effectively.

Conflict may be minimised when team members perform different roles.

### **Examples of team dynamic theories**

#### **Belbin role theory**

The success of a team had more to do with the behaviour of the team members than to do with intellect or skills.

They identified **types of behaviour** which formed **distinct team roles**.

#### **The Jungian theory**

Jung recognised personality types who followed certain behaviour patterns.

Jung believed that a person's functions always on two levels, the conscious and the unconscious.

Jungian theory has been successfully applied in the building of effective teams.

### **MTR – i approach (Management Team Roles Indicator)**

The MTR – i approach defines **team roles** in terms of the **contributions each member brings to the team.**

The three factors that are measured include:

- what the person is actually doing
- what colleagues think each other is doing
- the position description for each team member

### **Magerison – McCann Profiles**

This approach focuses on **individual development** and **maximising personal potential** so that **individuals will contribute effectively** to the team.

It defines a set of management styles or preferences, emphasising the need to integrate all of these styles to create an effective team.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### **Meaning of conflict**

Clash of opinions or ideas or view points in the workplace.

Disagreement between two or more parties in the workplace.

Examples that can cause conflict: A lack of trust or miscommunication or personality clashes or different values.

### **Causes of conflict in the workplace**

Differences in backgrounds or cultures or values or beliefs or language

Limited business resources

Different goals or objectives for the group or individuals

Personality differences between groups or individuals

Different opinions

Unfair workload

Ill-managed stress

Unrealistic expectations

Poor organisation or leadership or administrative procedures and systems

Confusion about scheduling or deadlines

Ignoring rules and procedures

Misconduct or Unacceptable behaviour

Intense competition or Competitiveness

Poor communication

Unclear responsibilities

Distracted by personal objectives

Constant changes in the workplace

Unfair treatment of workers or Favouritism by management or Discrimination

Lack of trust amongst workers

**(NOTE: You must be able to identify causes of conflict from given scenarios)**

### **Explanation of causes of conflict in the workplace**

Lack of proper communication between management and workers

Ignoring rules and procedures may result in disagreements and conflict.

Management and workers may have different personalities or backgrounds.

Different levels of knowledge, skills and experience of managers and workers.

Little or no co-operation between internal and external stakeholders

Lack of recognition for good work, e.g. a manager may not show appreciation for extra hours worked to meet deadlines.

Lack of employee development may increase frustration levels as workers may repeat errors due to a lack of knowledge or skills.

Unfair disciplinary procedures, e.g. favouritism or nepotism

Little or no support from management with regards to supplying the necessary resources and providing guidelines.

Leadership styles used, e.g. autocratic managers may not consider worker inputs.

Unrealistic deadlines or heavy workloads lead to stress resulting in conflict.

Lack of agreement on mutual matters, e.g. remuneration and working hours

Inter-team rivalry may cause workers to lose focus on team targets.

Lack of commitment which may lead to an inability to meet pre-set targets.

Constant changes may cause instability

Lack of clarity regarding employees' roles and responsibilities.

### **Handling conflict in the workplace / Steps in resolving conflict**

Acknowledge that there is conflict in the workplace.

Identify the cause of the conflict.

Make intentions for intervention clear so that parties involved may feel at ease.

Arrange a meeting between the conflicting parties and management.

Blame shifting should be avoided and joint team solutions must be found.

Suggest strategies to solve the conflict.

Parties must agree on the best solution to solve the conflict.

Direct the conflicting parties towards focusing on the solutions.

Select the appropriate solution to the conflict and implement it.

**TOPIC: TEAM PERFORMANCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT - ACTIVITY**

1. Identify the stage of team development applicable in **EACH** of the following statements
  - 1.1 Team members question each other's ideas and opinions.
  - 1.2 The team has direction without interference from the leader.
  - 1.3 Team members are comfortable and learn more about each other.
  - 1.4 Team members come to an agreement and reach consensus. (8)
2. Discuss EACH stage of team development identified in QUESTION 1. (8)
3. Explain the characteristics of successful teams (8)
- 4 Elaborate on the importance of team dynamic theories in improving team performance. (6)
- 5 Describe the meaning of conflict. (8)
- 6 Read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow.

**TREVOR TYRES LTD (TT)**

Trevor Tyres Ltd employs workers from diverse backgrounds. Some workers find it difficult to tolerate others' beliefs and values. Many workers fight over the use of the business's limited resources and some ignore business rules. Management refuses to address the workers' concerns, despite a formal complaint being lodged by some workers.

- 6.1 Quote **FOUR** causes of conflict in the scenario above. (4)
- 6.2 Explain to TT other causes of conflict in the workplace. (8)
- 6.3 Advise the management of Trevor Tyres on how to handle conflict in the workplace. (8)
7. Discuss how the following theories could assist a team leader to maximise team performance
  - 7.1 Belbin role theory
  - 7.2 Jungian theory
  - 7.3 MTR – I approach
  - 7.4 Magerison – McCann profiles (8)
8. Name the **FOUR** team dynamic theories commonly used by management. (4)
9. Elaborate on the meaning of team dynamics. (4)