Course Learning Outcomes for Unit IV

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

6. Explain the dynamics of teamwork, to include motivation, conflict resolution, and leadership.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 11: Motivation, Leadership, and Teams

Chapter 12: Conflict and Negotiation

Click [here](#) to access the Chapter 11 PowerPoint Presentation. (Click [here](#) to access the PDF version of the presentation.)

Click [here](#) to access the Chapter 12 PowerPoint Presentation. (Click [here](#) to access the PDF version of the presentation.)

Unit Lesson

This unit focuses on three critical aspects of successful teamwork: motivation, leadership, and conflict resolution. A team is defined as “a group of people linked to a common purpose” (Anderson & Bolt, 2016, p. 161). A team’s purpose is enhanced through synergy. Synergy is defined as “two or more individuals working together and producing more than the sum of their individual efforts” (Anderson & Bolt, 2016, p. 161). Teams are a critical component of organizational success, and the most successful organizations are those that not only recognize the power of cohesiveness from teams but also embrace and institute the accountability of teams.

Although there are several types of teams, we will focus on three: formal (internal cross-functional), informal (external commonality), and virtual (electronic communication). Formal teams include members who have been assigned to the team in a very formal manner. The company or organization identified a need and formed the team to resolve the need. On the other hand, informal teams contain members who join together to form a team and do so without formal requirements from an organization. Often, informal teams consist of volunteers or those who enjoy participating in extracurricular activities. Virtual teams consist of members who reside in various geographic locations while typically communicating from long distances. Formulating a virtual team can help companies resolve certain needs. For instance, think about recruiting talent for a company. If the company’s office is located in an area that does not draw the attention of employment candidates, it can be very difficult to recruit the desired workers who possess a needed skill. However, by adopting the idea of a virtual team, the company can exponentially increase the pool of skilled candidates. Regardless of the type of team, a positive internal relationship is a necessity. All teams go through stages of development, which include motivational factors and leadership characteristics. Each stage of development allows the team and its members to progressively strive toward achieving the common goal of success.

As a leader or a member of any team, it is important to note the five stages a typical team will experience. First, teams go through a forming stage, which is the beginning formation. All rules, goals, and plans are defined and communicated in this preliminary stage where trust has not yet been incorporated. The second stage is known as storming. The storming stage can be uncomfortable for some of the members as they try to work through conflicts. It the team is unable to negotiate an agreement, the conflict can prevent the team from proceeding. Once the team surpasses issues and resolves their indifferences, the team enters the norming stage. Typically, the norming stage is where the team members have found a way to cooperate while contributing to the team’s effectiveness. During the performing stage, there are only minor disagreements with most members working interdependently and fostering creativity to support the goal of the team. The final
stage is adjourning, which is the stage that places an emphasis on the challenge to continue a positive relationship moving forward after the team has dissolved.

Motivation is an internal need that has several factors. Each person is motivated in one way or another due to his or her different needs. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is widely used as one of the more prominent explanations of what motivates one to perform. It is common that individuals throughout their life will automatically go through stages. Maslow defines five specific stages that we experience as professionals

- At the lowest level, Maslow asserts that we strive for physiological needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- The second stage is safety, whether it is job security, safe environment, and/or benefits.
- The third stage of the pyramid is social needs, which includes a sense of belonging and being part of group.
- The next level is esteem, which is acceptance and feeling valued.
- Then, the last step is self-actualization where individuals serve as guides, mentors, leaders, as well as possess a sense of achievement.

Each level of the hierarchy serves as a guide for managers and leaders, and it helps them understand that not everyone is motivated by the same wants and needs.

One of the most popular motivational theorists published the McClelland Theory of Needs, which states that individuals are motivated by achievement (continuous improvement), power (influence), and affiliation (interpersonal relationships). McClelland believes that individuals may be motivated by all three (achievement, power, and affiliation), yet they tend to favor one over the others.

Effective leaders recognize the importance of proactively addressing the five stages of team development, motivation, and each behavioral theory that enhances one’s understanding of human capitalism. However, there is an additional workplace situation that needs to be addressed—conflict. People bring all sorts of different personalities and cultures to a workplace. There is a reality we all face in that any work environment may have differences among its diverse group of employees. Disagreements and conflict are inevitable, which is why it is important for leaders to fulfill the expectation and responsibility of resolving them. It is not quite that simple though, is it? Leaders must take situations to the next level, and that level involves resolving the conflict while concluding with the most effective work environment for everyone. Anderson and Bolt (2016) share the following advice for dealing with conflict in the workplace:

- Only you can control how you respond to a situation.
- Do not allow feelings to dictate actions. Remain calm and unemotional.
- Attempt to resolve a conflict immediately; work with the other party.
- Accept responsibility for your actions and apologize if necessary.
- Retaliation (getting even) is not the answer.
- Do not make the conflict a public issue. Keep the conflict confidential. (p. 173)

When conflict arises, it is important for leaders (and even employees) to establish the mindset and goal to achieve a positive outcome. Striving for a positive outcome begins with having the right attitude. Entering the situation with an open mind is also a great way to keep things positive. Having the right attitude and keeping an open mind also positively contributes to communicating through an open dialog. An open dialog provides all parties with an opportunity to negotiate a resolution while fostering an environment that is free of harassment.

No one should have to be in an environment where they are being harassed, discriminated, bullied, pitted, or humanly violated. Although it is everyone’s responsibility to ingrain an environment that is free from such damaging issues, it is the leader’s duty, role, and responsibility to be the agent in making sure organizations are free from not only harassment but also discrimination and hostility. When such issues do arise, it is wise to know your rights, but in fairness, a leader may not be aware of such issues unless someone communicates that such issues exist in the workplace. When a hostile work environment has been identified, the human resources department will typically conduct an immediate investigation. Before and during the investigation, human resources should proceed appropriately by maintaining confidentiality for those involved. Human resources will also regularly communicate with the victim by providing updates as the process progresses. Plus, human resources will follow up periodically to assure the environment is safe and issue free. If an individual feels his or her rights have been violated and has exhausted assistance from leaders as well as
from human resources, then there are external organizations that can provide assistance with such matters: Department of Fair Employment and Housing, Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Department of Justice.

Learning Activities (Non-Graded): A Worksheet to Practice Critical Thinking

As you work through the material for this unit, consider completing a worksheet that contains valuable activities for practicing critical thinking toward teamwork, motivation, leadership, and conflict resolution. Click here to access the worksheet. This is a non-graded activity, so there is no need to submit it. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Reference


Suggested Reading

The following article provides extensive information on McClelland’s theory of needs. As you read the article, think about how the theory relates to members of a team, maybe your team, and what motivates them: