Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

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

1. Summarize the determinants of high-performance teams.
   1.1 Explain the importance of establishing ground rules and respecting culture among team members.
   1.2 Explain the different factors that negatively affect cross-cultural teams.
   1.3 Describe the common problems associated with managing virtual teams.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 12: Creating Effective Cross-Cultural Teams

Chapter 13: High-Performing Virtual Teams

Unit Lesson

In this unit, we will discuss how teams are formed and managed. Today, more teams are created consisting of members with different cultural backgrounds. Being that members of a cross-cultural team may lack specific information about each other, it is very common for members to form stereotypical expectations of each other based on prior experiences of working with people from select countries or cultures of origin.

Culture is evident in different aspects. There are “ethnic cultures, regional cultures, organizational cultures, and even team and family cultures” (Dyer, Dyer, & Dyer, 2013, p. 220). The gestures, behaviors, and customs of one culture in a particular region can be viewed quite differently than that of another. For example, simply greeting someone in Japan is the act of a bow, whereas in the United States, a greeting of hello and a handshake would appear normal and acceptable.

Knowing and understanding the diverse backgrounds, values, and ideologies of others is thought to be helpful in regards to team performance. This is why a wise leader will know how to motivate members to spend one-on-one time with each other to better learn the competencies of each individual. Moreover, early in their development, cross-cultural teams will need to regularly assess how they are performing and make any needed course corrections (Dyer et al., 2013).

In regards to cross-cultural teams, there are three primary ways that expectations tend to be violated. This is generally witnessed through communication behaviors, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution behavior and processes. It is very important that team leaders establish team expectations and ground rules at the time the team is formed. Team members must realize there will be disagreements at times and, whether they prefer to tackle the problems directly or handle them in a non-confrontational manner, an established means of delivery must be carefully decided and managed by the team leader. Therefore, an effective team leader will pay close attention to the context, composition, competencies, and change mechanisms of the group (Dyer et al., 2013).

Thanks to technological advances, teams today can work from various cultures via the means of virtual correspondence. A decade ago, this was not a common practice. Virtual teams are known to differ from traditional teams in that there is “(1) greater diversity in work norms and expectations, (2) greater reliance on technology as a vehicle for communication, and (3) greater demands on the team leader” (Dyer et al, 2013, p. 236).
Naturally, miscommunication can occur when individuals are not meeting face to face. Therefore, team leaders must know when and how to communicate via various mechanisms when working with a diverse, virtual group. For example, audio conferences are much better for brainstorming, defining problems, and stating opinions or voicing ideas than the simple use of an email, web page, or bulletin board (Dyer et al., 2013).

It is also vital that leaders recognize that extra time must be devoted to managing the virtual team. Meetings must be well planned, and sensitivity should be given to the members’ comments and suggestions for a timely gathering. Being that virtual teams are becoming a necessity for organizations to perform more competitively, teams must be cognizant of significant problems they might encounter, such as a lack of trust and commitment, conflicting expectations, poor decision making, and a lack of training or ineffective team leadership (Dyer et al., 2013).

Click the link below to view an interactive tutorial from MyCourseTools on organizational culture.

http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-enterprise/asset.php?isbn=1256689785&id=12100

Click the link below to view an interactive tutorial from MyCourseTools on listening and nonverbal communication skills.

http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-enterprise/asset.php?isbn=1256689785&id=11550

Reference


Suggested Reading

Virtual teams are becoming an integral part of many organizations. As the use of virtual teams continues to increase, so will the demand for leaders that are capable of managing virtual teams. This article will give more insight into virtual teams and some of the tools that leaders can use to manage these teams effectively.

Please use the Business Source Complete database in the CSU Online Library to read the following article that outlines some methods for managing virtual teams.