



Team Progress Report

Course Title: Communication and Team Building in Engineering Management

Course Number: ETM522/622

Instructor: Dr. Fatima Albar

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Team: 1

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Executive Summary

This paper is the summary of our team's activities throughout entire course. The team started as a group of individual contributors from different cultures, backgrounds, area of studies, and communication skills. Throughout the course, everyone learned how to work together and trust each other by providing constant feedbacks and understanding each other strengths and weaknesses. At the end, this workgroup has evolved and become the performance team.

The team's performance transformation is documented in this paper using Bruce Tuckman's process: Storming, Forming, Norming, and Performing. This process details how our team to face up to challenges, to tackle issues, to plan work, to find solutions, and to deliver class final results.

Introduction

With good team building, you can bond employees to accomplish a common goal and produce greater and efficient work. Without good team skills, you limit yourself and the staff to individual productivity, which will slow your work and the outcome. And slowing your work will push you away from the goals that you need to accomplish. The team members are required to share expectations to accomplish the objectives of the team, trust each other, support one another and value their opinion at work environments and outside the work environment.

For our team, we all came from different backgrounds and have different personalities, but we all agree to achieve one goal from the first day we met. And the goal was to be successful and get the best grad we can in this class. This team process report illustrates our challenges, difficulties and successes through the last nine weeks of our (Communication and Team Building) class.

Teamwork

Team members

At first, we have four members as other teams in the class including Sejal Shah, Yen Tran, Minh Lu, and Ali Al Suliman. However, Sejal Shah decided to drop this class and we could not find anyone to join us later. Then, we only have three members left. This was a weakness of our team compare to other teams in class.

Ali Al Suliman is working to get his master in Electrical Engineering. He has three years experience in the oil industry. He worked in the oil refinery in both Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. He is

planning to graduate and get his degree by Spring 2015. He wants to start his career in the power industry.

Minh Lu is a part time ETM student. He is working as a process engineer at Intel Corp. Minh has 7 years-experience in managing process gas and chemical systems for silicon manufacturing factory. During working at Intel, Minh works with many multi-cultural and virtual teams as an individual contributing team member and a project manager. He loves hiking activities in Portland.

Yen Tran is a full time ETM student. She is from Vietnam and is working for OHSU as a Student Worker in Business Intelligent department. It has been 4 years for her in Portland. She has ten years of working experience in Information Technology field. She had worked for several companies and had diversity teamwork experience before she joined ETM. This is her last term in the program.

Products

Deliverables

At the first meeting after the first class, team members went through carefully the syllabus to list out all deliverables and due dates so that team could make details plan for task assignments. The common method was used is all members will contribute to all the deliverable so that all members could had experienced on all topics and subjects designed for the course which benefit us in real working environments. These are deliverables and how team did to deliver them.

Class Owner – Presentations

Team had to take two class owner sessions. We planned and had agreement on points for working together. These were: 1) Spend one week before the presentation day to prepare all the materials, 2) Every member contributes in all 2 sections, 3) Team would meet on Sunday to practice presentation for the next coming Wednesday class. By this, for every section, team had one member would prepare a text book chapter, one member would find a game for activity section, and one would prepare exercise or practice in the Team HandBook [1]. Also, team had one member volunteered to compile all materials in a presentation file. Team had experienced two times of class presentations with effective teamwork efforts

Selected Readings

Each team members had picked up favored selected reading listed in the syllabus and sent the write up paper to all team members to review one day before the due date. Hence, other member had had time to review and contribute their comments or ideas to the paper before it was submitted to the instructor. Also, by this way, team members had a chance to know what topic of the selected reading would be discussed in the next class so that each member could join in class discussion.

Team Research Report

As other deliverable, all team members had together found the interesting topic about Decision Making in Virtual Team for this report. We did divide tasks so that each member would do research for one research question and its solution. We gathered interesting information on this topic, shared as well as debated based on each individual member experience. In the condition, we collected and selected essential information to put into the report due to the limitation report pages. Finally, we all are happy with the final output report which contains useful analysis information of all team members.

Team progress Report and Presentation

This report is not only a journal of what team had did during the term but also an insight picture to the reader on our team activities to archive the knowledge delivered by the course. Also, it is way for team members to look back what had happened and how all members had overcome difficulties or challenges in teamwork. This is really a useful and interesting experience for team members. Further, a presentation in the class is the way to share these team experiences to other classmates.

Communication and Working Tools

In other to work effectively, team decided to choose these popular tools for collaboration in teamwork during the term

Desire to Learn (D2L)

We used this tool to download all necessary documents posted by the instructor.

Dropbox

We mainly used this tool for sharing documents such as write up papers, presentation files, and reports.

Microsoft Project

We used this tool to plan and manage task assignments. This tool is useful in helping us tracking all tasks and be on time for the deadlines

Processes

Meetings

We hold almost meetings every Sunday afternoon from 3:00 to 4:00 which is the best time that available for all team members. To be efficient, except for the first meeting when we first planned what we were going to do during the term, we agreed that we all had to prepare all the tasks assigned before the meeting so that we could discuss issues and find out the solutions for members during the meeting. Moreover, we had meeting minutes to take notes what team had done and task assignments or

activities planned for the next week. By this way, team had had clear vision and missions to perform and had obtained good results which are good quality deliverables during the term.

Individual Readings

Team members spent time reading the class materials (textbook, articles) and doing extensive researches on Internet, journals, or research papers in order to prepare and write up papers. In addition, thanks to team member's diversity working experiences, team members had collected interesting individual shared ideas and arguments which enrich the write-up papers in a specific way of insight output thinking.

Classes

Activities in class were valuable. Except for two nights led by the instructor, others nights led by teams. Hence, we had been enjoyed with discussion through class owner sessions by diversity groups with diversity background foundations. Besides, game activities brought by teams had warm up class and made discussions attractive and fantastic.

Stages of Group Development

We cannot expect any new team to perform well after it is just formed. In order to improve the team performance, team members usually go through phases. In the Team Handbook [1], Bruce Tuckman described these phases as stages of group developments. The following sections describe how our team went through these stages.

Forming

Same as other ETM classes, first day of this ETM 522 course was reserved for student introduction and forming project team. Yen and Minh have known each other from previous classes, so both have been decided to be in the same team for this course. Ali was invited by Minh to join the team. Originally, David, another student, decided to join the team since David was in the same team with Yen and Minh in ETM 520. However, due to professor requirement that each team had to include one new to ETM student, David had to be in different team. Sejal Shah was new to ETM department, and she was selected by the professor to join our team.

By the middle of the first class, our team had total four members. We started introduce each other and exchanged contact information. Yen took the initiative of writing and sending contact information such as phone, full name, and email address to every team member. Minh was responsible to create a share folder in Dropbox. Our team decided to be team number one, so we could take class ownership in second day of class. We also agreed on meeting at PSU library the very next Sunday to work on our first class ownership.

At this time, except Yen and Minh, Ali and Sejal were both new to ETM department and how ETM team project requirements. We decided to have everyone read all first class ownership materials, so we could have a more meaningful discussion on Sunday.

Storming

Our team first storming experience was Sejal decided to drop the class. She sent out the email to all team members about her decision just before our first meeting in PSU library. Everyone was shocked since our team now only had three members, and the workload of the class could be too much for us to handle. However, we recovered very quickly by redistributed our first class ownership workload. Since the team was small, we easily made decision as a team. Moreover, the workload was heavy, so all of us were very focus.

Yen showed us some team building games on YouTube, so we decided for her to take care of class activity. Minh was the only person in the group had the Team Handbook, so he was assigned to work on the reading in that book. Ali was responsible for the selective reading 1. At this stage, Yen and Minh have worked together in the past, so they have been building the trust. However, both Yen and Minh still had doubts on Ali's performance. We also had certain concerns about the fairness in dividing workload. Moreover, this class was designed to improve communication skills which all of us were not good, so we were very anxious. We decided to meet before class to finalize our class ownership materials and practice our presentation skills.

In order to improve team's trust, Minh and Ali went out for coffee after meeting to get to know each other better. We considered building trust within a team was the key to bring the team to the high performance team level. So getting to know each other personally was very important to all of us.

Norming

After the first class ownership, the trust within our team improved significantly. We also knew each other strengths and weaknesses. For example, Yen was very good in organizing meeting, dividing workload, and paying attention in details. Minh was very punctual to meetings, good in brainstorming ideas, and have better presentation skill. Ali had lots of work experience and always thought outside of the box. We still managed to meet weekly at library on Sunday or before class to discuss about group project and writing assignments. The meeting was getting shorter since we understood each other better and volunteered to the take on responsibility that fitted our strengths. For example, for our class project, the topic was how to improve decision making process in virtual multicultural team. Minh focused on using his work experience at Intel to discuss about virtual team challenges and offered solutions. Ali worked on high performance team requirements especially in virtual team, and Yen was responsible for literature research.

Our differences and doubts were gone away at this phase. We started working well with each other. Our second class ownership was better prepared and well planned. We also brought in one of the best team building game for the class.

Performing

Our team performing stage was setback due to Ali's health issue. It was a difficult time for Ali to take care of well-being, so he missed many group meetings. The team workload was still heavy, but only divided between Yen and Minh. Fortunately, Yen and Minh worked well together in many past team projects, so communication and commitment were never the issues. Both Yen and Minh spent extra time per week for class assignments, so quality of our work was not decrease.

At this stage, it was truly that people joining or leaving would not impact to team performance. It was true that workload was heavier for Yen and Minh, but we still finished all our writing assignments on time and in good quality. We still managed to finish our class final presentation and team final report.

Lessons Learned

Over the last nine weeks, we as a team have been learning a lot about each other personal lifes. We have being bounding and sharing information about school, daily routines, experiences and challenges. We developed a great team bounding outside school, which helped us in some ways to improve our communication skills. That bounding set us a step ahead in our communication and trust for one other.

When we started working together we had a strategy as a team. We agreed to divide the work to individuals and we started working as (work group), but through the term we learned that we could do better if we worked more as a team and share more information, and review each other work. We developed and built our team to work as a one strong unite that communicate, trust and deliver the best of the team which eventually lead us to enhance our outcome and accomplish our goal faster in more professional and efficient way.

Conclusion

By the end of this course we developed more skills in building teams, we know the important of leadership, what type of skills a leadership should have, how to become more effective team and so many strategy that can improve the outcome of the team. We advanced our team from working as individuals to working as an efficient team. We applied the strategies and technics that we learned in the last nine weeks from Dr. Albar and our classmates to step up and improve our team.

References

[1] P. R. Scholtes, B. L. Joiner y B. J. Streibel, The Team Handbook, Waunakee, WI: Oriel, 2003.