

12.9: Summary

key terms

knowledge economy

The information society, using knowledge to generate tangible and intangible values

working group

Group of experts working together to achieve specific goals; performance is made up of the individual results of all members

emotional intelligence

The capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and others' emotions

ground rules

Basic rules or principles of conduct that govern a situation or endeavor

collaboration

The action of working with someone to produce or create something

Forming

The first stage of team development—the positive and polite stage

Storming

The second stage of team development—when people are pushing against the boundaries

Norming

The third stage of team development—when team resolves its differences and begins making progress

Performing

The fourth stage of team development—when hard work leads to the achievement of the team's goal

paradox

A self-contradictory statement or situation

boundaries

Lines that make the limits of an area; team boundaries separate the team from its external stakeholders

mining

To delve in to extract something of value; a technique for generating discussion instead of burying it

real-time permission

A technique for recognizing when conflict is uncomfortable, and giving permission to continue

adaptation

Technique of working with or around differences

structural intervention

Technique of reorganizing to reduce friction on a team

managerial intervention

Technique of making decisions by management and without team involvement

exit

Technique of last resort—removal of a team member

cultural intelligence

A skill that enables individuals to function effectively in cross-cultural environments

cognitive complexity

The ability to view situations from more than one cultural framework

head, body, and heart

Techniques for becoming more adept in cross-cultural skills—learning about cultures (head), physical manifestations of culture (body), and emotional commitment to new culture (heart)

12.1 Teamwork in the Workplace

1. What is a team, and what makes teams effective?

A team is defined as “people organized to function cooperatively as a group.” Some of the characteristics of a team are that it has a common commitment and purpose, specific performance goals, complementary skills, commitment to how the work gets done, and mutual accountability.

Some practices that make a team effective are having a sense of urgency and direction, setting clear rules of behavior, spending lots of time together, and utilizing feedback, recognition, and reward.

12.2 Team Development Over Time

2. How do teams develop over time?

Teams go through different stages of team development, coined in 1977 as Tuckman’s Stages of Group Development by educational psychologist Bruce Tuckman. Tuckman’s model includes these four stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. A fifth stage, Adjourning, was added later to explain the disbanding and closure of a team at the end of a project.

Forming begins with team members being happy and polite as they get to know each other and understand the work they’ll do together. Storming starts once the work is underway, the team gets to know each other, and conflicts and project stress begin seeping in. During Norming, the team starts to set rules of the road and define how they want to work together. Performing means that the team is underway, having some successes, and gaining traction. This is not a linear process. Teams can regress to earlier stages if there are changes in team members or work orders that cause disruption and loss of momentum and clarity.

12.3 Things to Consider When Managing Teams

3. What are some key considerations in managing teams?

Managing a team is often more complex than people would admit. Although a team and the team leader may be focused on the task or project work, it is actually the people dynamics and how the team works together that make a real difference to the goals and outcomes. Managers must remember that most of their time will be spent managing the people dynamics—not the tasks.

Managing teams also means a certain amount of paradox. A team has individual and collective goals that must be managed effectively. A manager must foster team supportiveness and the ability to engage in conflict and confrontation. A team manager also needs to help the team with its boundaries and act as a buffer, a stakeholder manager, or a strategist when the situation calls for each. Exercising influence with key stakeholder groups external to the project group is one of the most critical team management functions.

12.4 Opportunities and Challenges to Team Building

4. What are the benefits of conflict for a team?

Conflict during team interactions can feel like it derails progress, but it is one of the most important experiences a team can have together. A team that can productively work through conflict will end up stronger, building more trust and being more open to sharing opinions. Team members will feel safe buying in and committing to decision-making as a team.

One of the other key benefits of conflict is that it encourages a greater diversity of ideas and perspectives and helps people better understand opposing points of view. If a team doesn’t work through conflict well and feels uncomfortable sharing and debating

ideas, it loses the opportunity to vet ideas and potential solutions effectively. The result is that the decision or solution will be limited, as team members haven't fully shared their concerns and perspectives.

12.5 Team Diversity

5. How does team diversity enhance team decision-making and problem-solving?

Decision-making and problem-solving are more dynamic and successful in a diverse team environment. Much like the benefits of conflict, diversity can bring forward opposing points of view and different perspectives and information that might not have been considered if the team were more homogeneous. Diverse teams are thus made “smarter” by bringing together an array of information, sources, and experiences for decision-making.

Other research on diversity indicates that diverse teams excel at decision-making and problem-solving because they focus more on facts. Studies indicate that diverse team members may actually sway the team's behavior to focus more on proven data—possibly because of the prospect of having to explain and back up one's perspectives if a conflict should erupt on the team. In a more homogenous team, there is more risk of “groupthink” and the lack of challenging of ideas.

12.6 Multicultural Teams

6. What are some challenges and best practices for managing and working with multicultural teams?

With the increase in globalization over the years, teams have seen the addition of multicultural individuals who bring their own diverse backgrounds and perspectives to their teams. There are very positive aspects that result from the added diversity, as discussed in the previous questions. There are also challenges we need to be aware of when managing these teams.

Challenges can arise from communication styles and accents but can also appear in the form of decision-making norms and attitudes toward hierarchy. Some team manager interventions are best practices for addressing these challenges. There are also some best practices for building the cultural intelligence that will make the team more adept at understanding and dealing with differences among cultures.

? Chapter Review Questions

1. What are the key differences between a team and a working group?
2. At what stage of team development does the team finally start to see results?
3. What can cause a team to digress to an earlier stage of team development?
4. What can a team leader do to manage the team's boundaries?
5. How does managing conflict help a team learn and grow?
6. What are some strategies to make conflict more productive?
7. Why are diverse teams better at decision-making and problem-solving?
8. Why do diverse teams utilize data more often than homogeneous teams?
9. What are some of the challenges that multicultural teams face?
10. What are the key sources of cultural intelligence?

? Management Skills Application Exercises

1. Do you agree with Katzenbach and Smith's key practices that make teams effective? Why or why not? Which of these practices have you personally experienced? Are there any additional practices that you would add?
2. Have you ever been part of a team that made it through all four stages of team development? In which stage did the team remain the longest? In which stage did the team remain the shortest amount of time? What did you learn?
3. Why do you think managing a team's boundaries is so important? How can external stakeholders impact the function and performance of the team? Why is emotional intelligence such an important skill when managing a team?
4. In your experience, have you ever been in a situation where conflict became a negative thing for a team? How was the conflict handled? How can a team manager ensure that conflict is handled constructively?
5. What is the difference between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence? How can the cultural intelligence of a team improve performance? Have you ever been on a multicultural team with high cultural intelligence? How about a team low in cultural intelligence? What were the impacts?

? Managerial Decision Exercises

1. You are a manager of a team that is taking a long time to move through the Storming stage. Two team members seem unproductive when dealing with conflict and are holding the team back. What would you do to help the team move through conflict management and begin Norming and Performing?
2. One of your direct reports on your team is very focused on his own personal development. He is a strong employee individually but hasn't had as much experience working in a team environment on a project. He wants to do well but isn't exactly sure how to work within this context. How would you instruct him?
3. You are leading a team responsible for a very important strategic initiative at your company. You have launched the project, and your team is very motivated and excited to move forward. You have the sense, however, that your sponsor and some other stakeholders are not fully engaged. What do you do to engage them?
4. You are the project manager of a cross-functional team project that was just approved. You have been given several good team members from different functions, but many of them think similarly and are unlikely to question each other on team decisions. You have the choice of keeping a homogeneous team that will probably have few team issues or building a diverse team that may well engage in conflict and take much longer to come to decisions. What choice would you make? What other information would you want to know to make the decision?
5. You are the director of a multicultural team with employees across the globe. Your team rarely has the opportunity to meet in person, but you have been given the budget to bring everyone together for a week-long global team meeting and team building. How would you structure the time together? What are some of the activities you would suggest to build stronger relationships among team members?

Critical Thinking Case

Diverse Teams Hold Court

Diverse teams have been proven to be better at problem-solving and decision-making for a number of reasons. First, they bring many different perspectives to the table. Second, they rely more on facts and use those facts to substantiate their positions. Even more interesting is that, according to the *Scientific American* article "How Diversity Makes Us Smarter," simply "being around people who are different from us makes more creative, diligent, and harder-working."

One case in point is the example of jury decision-making, where fact-finding and logical decision-making are of utmost importance. A 2006 study of jury decision-making, led by social psychologist Samuel Sommers of Tufts University, showed that racially diverse groups exchanged a wider range of information during deliberation of a case than all-white groups did. The researcher also conducted mock jury trials with a group of real jurors to show the impact of diversity on jury decision-making.

Interestingly enough, it was the mere presence of diversity on the jury that made jurors consider the facts more, and they had fewer errors recalling the relevant information. The groups even became more willing to discuss the role of race case, when they hadn't before with an all-white jury. This wasn't the case because the diverse jury members brought new information to the group—it happened because, according to the author, the mere presence of diversity made people more open-minded and diligent. Given what we discussed on the benefits of diversity, it makes sense. People are more likely to be prepared, to be diligent, and to think logically about something if they know that they will be pushed or tested on it. And who else would push you or test you on something if not someone who is different from you in perspective, experience, or thinking? "Diversity jolts us into cognitive action in ways that homogeneity simply does not."

So, the next time you are called for jury duty, or to serve on a board committee, or to make an important decision as part of a team, remember that one way to generate a great discussion and come up with a strong solution is to pull together a diverse team.

? Critical Thinking Questions

1. If you don't have a diverse group of people on your team, how can you ensure that you will have robust discussions and decision-making? What techniques can you use to generate conversations from different perspectives?
2. Evaluate your own team at work. Is it a diverse team? How would you rate the quality of decisions generated from that group?

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