

3.5.20: What is a Team-Focused Message?

Learning Objectives

Discuss the purpose and use cases of team-focused messages in a business context

Before we can understand the purpose and use of team-building communication, we should start with a discussion of the importance of collaborative teams in today's workplace.

There are multiple benefits of collaborative teams versus individuals working independently. First, we notice an increase in creativity due to the sharing of different ideas, experiences and expertise. Every employee brings a certain body of skills and knowledge to the group. Shared knowledge and complementary skills are strong tools to be used to handle complex projects and assignments. The more the team talks about a project, the more ideas are generated. Having the perspective of several colleagues trumps the individual having only one set of ideas.

Secondly, we see an increase in productivity from collaborative and empowered teams. In the technology industry for example, high-performing teams are the norm in the workplace. The team works with the business owner to decide exactly what work is committed to be completed in a set amount of time. The team then works together to break down the work into manageable tasks. During that work cycle, the team talks every day about their progress and work may be shifted between team members based on availability and expertise. As the team remains together over several work cycles, there is a measurable increase in the amount of work the team can accomplish.

Other benefits of collaborative teams are:^[1]

1. Teams promote a wider sense of ownership.
2. Teams encourage healthy risk-taking.
3. Teams contribute to employee satisfaction and retention.

Given the benefits of collaborative teams in the workplace, the key is how organizations can create the proper environment to foster team creation, collaboration and growth. The right conditions have to exist to encourage trust, camaraderie, and the sharing of experience and expertise. Team-focused communication is a key component in successful teams.

Team-focused communication messages can take a variety of forms including IM, text, chat, email, video, audio, and document sharing. Team-focused messages can be short or long, casual or formal, but they must always be professional. Since teams are usually geographically distributed, virtual and/or remote, companies must provide the tools and platforms to promote and facilitate team communication. While this whole course has emphasized the importance of editing and proofreading, you can generally be more casual about these matters with group chats.

Practice Questions

Starbucks recently adopted a team communication platform from Facebook called Workplace in order to foster organic, peer-to-peer collaboration. After only several months, Starbucks report that more than 80% of the organization's store managers use the platform weekly. You can see from the case study how important team-focused communication can be in the workplace.

"In early 2017, when one store manager commented on a popular off-the-menu beverage, other managers chimed in and soon 40 other managers said this secret beverage was increasing in demand. That night, the category marketing team at Starbucks HQ saw the comment thread and, based on the drink's popularity, decided to make it an official menu item. What usually takes several months was possible in less than 24 hours, thanks to the collaboration through Workplace."^[2]

We're changing how Starbucks employees collaborate. Over 80% of US store managers use Workplace on a weekly basis.
<https://www.facebook.com/workplace>

Posted by [Workplace from Facebook](#) on Wednesday, April 19, 2017

1. The Lean Startup, Eric Ries, 2011 www.sandler.com/blog/6-benefits-of-teamwork-in-the-workplace]
2. [<https://www.facebook.com/workplace/c...ies/starbucks>]

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