

TEAM DIVERSITY OF HABITS & BEHAVIORS

INTRODUCTION

Organizations comprise two types of teams: those with similar roles (call centers, sales teams, development teams, etc.), and those with different roles (executive teams, operational teams, strategic teams). One type has commonality of skills and roles, the other has diversity, but both require peak performance of the team and individuals. Therefore, what should the spread of habits and behaviors look like for each type of team, and how can you tell from the diversity of behaviors what the predicted performance might be?

KEY CONCEPTS

Since habits and behaviors are an assessment of “what we do” instead of “what we’re like” (our personality), we can think of some practical examples to imagine the impact of these behaviors on the performance of a team.

APPLICATIONS

Common Role Teams

Imagine a team of sales people. Ignoring the VP or team leader, each of these individuals has the same role, goals (quota achievement), portfolio of products to sell, etc. It makes sense that each employee in the team (that is successful) approaches prospecting and managing the sales cycle in the same manner to generate sales and happy customers. However, change any one variable and the required habits might change also.

For example, if our main product line is business office printers, then our successful sales people will probably show low preferences for habits such as resilience and problem solving. After all, their company will have a mountain of cost data and competitive advantages, and their main challenge will be more of a ‘numbers game’: finding the right prospects that have an expiring contract and are willing to look at the facts.

If the company now introduces a large-format technical printer designed for professional graphics companies, then the sales cycle will be very different. The sales team will have to understand a much more complex business requirement and deal with budgets 10 or 20 times the size. Now habits such as conflict handling and building positive people relationships will probably be key.

Therefore, the prediction of performance for this team will be determined by whether our employees share common habits and behaviors (or lack of). In other words, a team without diversity of role requires employees that have no diversity in their habits either.

As a side note, it is common to observe teams of successful employees that have similar habits but diverse personalities and still perform at their peak, but the reverse is seldom true.



Introduction

- Teams have either common or different roles
- Do Habits have to match, or be diverse in each case?
- Do different behaviors impact performance?

Key Concepts

- Habits & Personality are measured differently

Applications

- “Common role teams” require consistent behaviors for predictable success
- “Diverse role teams” often require a balance of behaviors to keep the overall dynamic in check

Conclusion

- The commonality, or diversity of behavior has a profound impact on different types of team
- It is possible to accurately measure the spread of behavioral diversity and predict performance

Diverse Role Teams

Imagine a typical executive team: CEO, CFO, Marketing, VP of Sales, Human Resources, etc. Although peak performance is expected from each individual, you really couldn't imagine a greater diversity of roles and responsibilities; some are highly technical, some based on facts and figures, and others on human capital.

Although there may be some commonality, each individual must approach their daily tasks with a unique set of behaviors in order to perform and be successful. The VP of Sales may require a strong habit of building positive people relationships, the CFO will work more with figures than people and so requires strong discipline and frustration handling habits, etc. It is never safe to assume exactly what the successful habits required for each role will be, but thankfully, it is easy to measure the habits of those employees already in place. A key understanding beyond each individual though, is the overall "balance" of the team. Imagine an executive team that was entirely made up of individuals with low preferences for habits like "change" and "innovation". This team would never drive the company into new business areas or creative ways of running the organization. Alternatively, an executive team that was entirely obsessed with change and innovation may take the company down so many constantly differing paths that no single business initiative would ever be executed properly.

Balance is the key! An effective executive team must have a balance of different behaviors and habits across the individuals in the team such that the overall team dynamic is kept in check from wandering from one extreme to the other. Therefore, we can predict performance of a diverse team of roles by looking at the balance and identifying whether the bias is shifted too much in any one direction.

CONCLUSION

So what does your team look like? Common roles or diverse? Similar habits or wildly differing? Try taking a quick inventory of the behaviors of the people in your team and seeing if the resulting behaviors match the performance of the team in your eyes.

If you would like to try a more scientific approach, read more about our thoughts on team building and let us know how we might be able to help!



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