Effective Team Management

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this essay is to reflect on our individual experience in working as a part of a team/group in order to complete Assessment 1, whilst discussing how teams are managed efficiently and effectively. The first section of this essay identifies effective management techniques during the stages of a team's development, with the second section focusing on the roles different team members play in order to operate effectively. The final section highlights the challenges and my group had working on Assessment 1 and how they were effectively managed. Each of these three sections discusses relevant management theories and concepts, as well as specific reflections on Assessment 1 being incorporated within each answer.

Some major findings surfaced through the essay. The first one being the importance of adapting individual characteristics to the best-suited role to ensure success and accepting that not all roles need to be separated - they can be shared and exhibited through each person. Another major finding is understanding each person's needs, minimises conflict, and helps to overcome arising challenges in an effective way. Thus, this essay highlights the most important concepts and theories in managing teams to meet their desired goals and standards and can be exhibited through reflection on our own group task in Assessment 1.

2.0 Effective Management Techniques in a team’s development

During a team’s development, team members are able to develop trust, commitment, accountability, progression, conflict strategies, and results through Bruce Tuckman’s 5 stage model of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, proposed in 1965 (Largent 2016). The first stage of forming includes establishing relationships with leaders and members, as well as creating rules and figuring out how one adjusts to the group. Each member in our group for Assessment 1, got along straight away, and got to know each other before we started the assessment - each of our personalities clicked which we are thankful for. This enabled us to establish positive relationships. The second stage of storming consists of conflict and distress between members as the group is made conscious of the tasks that need to be completed, as well as trying to establish their positions. This conflict needs to be dealt with in the most effective and efficient way possible to minimise further repercussions (Bonebright 2010). No conflict arose within our group - each person agreed on a section they wanted to complete, thankfully having no overlap, which made delegating the tasks easy and efficient.

The third stage is norming, involves establishing roles and standards, whilst uncovering significant ways in which members work in unity (Largent 2016). They are now able to work together, rather than in opposition, whilst obtaining assistance, trust, enthusiasm, and a positively functioning group - completing this stage in a timely manner (Bonebright 2010). As no conflict came to the surface, we worked in unity from the beginning, functioning in the most supportive way possible, generating trust and support. The fourth stage of performing shifts the focus to the task needing to be completed, having the group being in their most productive and functional stage (Bonebright 2010). The majority of differences have been dealt with, enabling the focus to be on fulfilling the task needing to be completed. In a group chat that was created

when we first formed as a group, we discussed the tasks that needed to be done and got straight to it, to ensure there was time, later on, to proofread and adapt any changes needed.

The final stage which came into play in 1977, is adjourning (Bonebright 2010). It involves a sense of closure towards the accomplishments of the group, once all the goals have been achieved (or realised they won't be). Positive recognition and closure enable members to feel fulfilled and satisfied with their efforts made. If there is an absence of closure and recognition, individuals may feel negative feelings towards the group, as well as a lack in individual performance, resulting in low self-esteem (Bonebright 2010). Through rewarding one another and acknowledging our accomplishments as a union, positive effects were generated and have enabled us to still communicate regularly throughout the week to catch up and help each other with university. Even though this model enables guidance, understanding, and development for all parties, there are also limitations. One of them being when a group moves from one stage to the next. The model also does not discuss what happens if there is a failure to complete a task, and whether the model applies to all contexts and settings, or if it varies depending on them (Largent 2016).

3.0 Roles different team members play in order to operate effectively

As each individual has their own set of characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses, conforming them to a team based on these traits is crucial in order for the team to operate successfully and achieve their desired results (Sperry & Sperry 2018). One type of team role is 'Task Roles', which refers to the distribution of work and positions assigned to each member (Stempfle et al. 2001). Some of these positions include a Leader, Information Gatherers (provide the information for conclusions), Opinion Gatherers (supply ideas and suggestions), The Devil's Advocate (argues a differing view), and the Energiser (motivational individual) (Paynton & Hahn n.d.). Within our group, the only evident position was a leader, which consisted of two people to take initial control, although all the other positions were shared within each individual. We each collected information for our own sections, supplied ideas, motivated one another, and objected if they needed to. This was done to make the workload equal between each individual.

Another type of team role includes 'Maintenance Roles', which refer to the behaviour and relationships of members. This role includes encouragers (praises members for ideas), harmonisers (mediators), standard settlers (ensure decisions meet quality level), and compromisers (meeting 'halfway' in conflicts) (Benne & Sheats 1948). Once again in our group, no specific person took on one role - we all took on them all equally. Throughout the whole assessment, encouraging each member to complete their section by a certain date was our priority. To ensure the quality was up to each of our standards, we all joined a zoom call to proofread each others work and make changes where needed, as well as encouraging members' work through appraisal. As each member got along really well, there was no need for harmonisers. Towards the end of the assessment when completing each section, we realised there was a discrepancy in the format of each section, so we needed to compromise to make one we all agreed on, and change our sections to suit this.

Cooperation, trust, and cohesiveness are factors that make an effective operating team, and determine whether they will be successful or not (Schalk & Cur Eu 2010). Through Assessment 1, there was equal cooperation from each member, creating less stress and conflict. Each

person knew their exact task and got it done to the best of their ability, whilst also making recommendations and appraisals when looking over at other members' sections. In order for this to happen successfully, a level of trust needed to be built and was made evident as everyone was comfortable with this. Cohesiveness in regards to the satisfaction of the final product and the time left to proofread and ensure it was up to great standards had been surfaced and was completed through zoom calls that everyone was a part of.

4.0 Assessment 1 Challenges ? Management

When put in a scenario that involves group work, the chances of challenges arising are extremely high. Although how the group responds to these challenges, portrays how effective they are as a unit.

Through completing Assessment 1, there were three minor challenges that we came across as a group, although overcame them in the most effective and efficient way possible. The first challenge made apparent two days before the submission date when we were compiling each of our sections together, was the structure. We noticed a common discrepancy in that the structure of each of our paragraphs was different. We came to the conclusion of all joining a zoom call to discuss this challenge. We drafted a format in which each of us should change our sections to follow, in order to be consistent and for it to flow easily for the reader.

Another challenge that was brought to our attention after discussing when our sections were going to be due to revise and compile together, was ensuring everyone had their section completed two days prior to the due date. When the time came, one of the participants in the group told us they were unable to do so, and that it will be completed the day before. Being understanding towards everyone's own situations was at the top of our priorities, even though it put a minor strain on the rest of the group in moving forward. Although to overcome this, we still stuck to our original plan and ensured that everything was compiled and in a format so that the individual could add in their section and the assessment would be complete.

A mutual agreement that was made, not necessarily being a challenge although needed major attention, was the final format of the report. To ensure everyone was competent and satisfied with the final product, we had a second zoom call the night before the assessment was due, to go over the final touches, the reference list and to read each other's paragraphs and suggest any recommendations they could add or take away, to make it the best paragraph possible. This enabled individual acceptance and importance, finishing the assessment on a positive note.

5.0 Conclusion

Conclusively, this essay identifies concepts and theories in managing team development, the roles of different members and how to effectively manage challenges. Within each of these three sections, the experience in working within a team for Assessment 1 is identified and reflected on. Overall, being an extremely pleasant experience.