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TEAM BUILDING

In the world of multi-national corporations and huge corporate set-ups of today, it is impossible for you to work in isolation. You cannot achieve much if you work alone, synchronizing your goals to that of your organisations is the only key to success and this is possible if we work in complete synergy with our fellow co-workers. You can achieve success only if you work together as functional and progressive teams. In the previous lesson you have learnt about personality development. This lesson focuses on how you can function as a team ensuring the team members are aware of their roles, responsibilities and goals which are in sync with that of the organisation to ensure individual as well as corporate growth.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

- define a team and team work;
- classify teams at work;
- identify the role of a team leader;
- do SWOT analysis.

6.1 IMPORTANCE OF A TEAM AND TEAMWORK

You are already aware of the word "team" in our everyday lives (school, college, sports). Teams are created when individuals with a common taste, preference, liking and attitude come and work together for a common goal. Teams play a very important role in an organization and also in our personal lives. Though a common interest

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and ability is not always possible as we are all different human beings, however as long as you are willing to accept the diversity amongst each other, the team functions well. Achievement of higher goals and success is accelerated with the formation of effective teams. The teams can work together by channelizing the task and activities of each team member towards one common goal.

There are a number of benefits of working in teams for both you and your organisation. Not only it is a great opportunity for professional development, it is also a means of making your work easier. Additionally, you can learn from each member of the team. Every employee is dependent on his fellow employees to work together and contribute efficiently to the organization. It has been observed that the outcomes are far better when employees work in a team rather than individually.

Team work is essential for better productivity and a better bonding among employees. Some of the key benefits are -

1. **Increased efficiency -** In a team, you are working towards a common goal or a set of objectives. The whole process becomes more efficient. For example, if there is a problem faced along the way, there are more 'minds to brainstorm' to solve the issue. Similarly, when you have multiple team members on board, it allows you to get the work done faster with shared responsibilities. From a management perspective, encouraging teamwork in the workplace will allow your company or department to take on additional work, and in turn generate extra revenue without having to hire more staff.

2. **Idea generation** - One of the greatest benefits of working in a team is the stimulation and ideas that can result from team discussions. When you share ideas with each other, there is more scope for creativity rather working on a project individually. In an effective team environment, staff members feel confident in suggesting their ideas. In a team brainstorming environment, the notion of suggesting creative and unique ideas is welcomed. Teams also bring people together from different backgrounds and by sharing different levels of knowledge and experience, which can help in creating optimal solutions.

3. **Share the Workload -** When working in a team towards a common goal, the workload is shared among all team members. Teamwork also allows for helping another team member when you have finished your workload. It is important to remember that you are all working towards the same goal – if you finish your work before others you should offer your assistance in order to complete the project.

4. **Task Orientation -** Tasks are accomplished at a faster pace when it is done by a team rather than an individual. An individual will definitely take more time to perform if he/she is single-handedly responsible for everything. When employees work together, they start helping each other and responsibilities are shared and thus, it reduces the work load and work pressure.

5. **Work never suffers – Work never takes a backseat in a team.** Suppose, you are taking care of an important client and you are the only one coordinating with them. In case, you had to take a long leave without anyone else being

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equipped to handle the task. In your absence, the organization will lose the client. If you work in a team, others can take charge when you are not there. The absence of any individual does not impact the deadlines in the organisation.

6. **Healthy Competition** - There is always healthy competition among the team members. Competition is always good for the employee as well as the organization as every individual feels motivated to perform better than his/her other team member. This helps in a way contributing to his/her team and the organization.

7. **Building Relationships** - Team work helps to improve the relations among the employees. Individuals work in close coordination with each other and thus come to know each other better. Team work also reduces the chances of unnecessary conflicts among the employees and every individual tries his/her level best to support his/her team member. The level of bonding increases as a result of team work.

8. **Mutual gain** - Team members can also gain from each other. Every individual is different and has some qualities. You can always benefit from your team members which would help you in the long run. Everyone aspires for recognition and praise. You feel motivated to work hard in a team and to live up to the expectations of the other members. Each member is a critic of the other and can correct the other whenever the other person is wrong. You always have someone to fall back on at the time of crisis.

Team and team work must always be encouraged at the work place. It strengthens the bond among the employees and the targets can be met at a faster pace. Workload is shared and individuals feel motivated to perform better than their team members.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.1

I. Fill in the blanks with words from the box given below:

> increased efficiency, mutual gain, motivated, healthy competition, workload, accomplished

a. When team members gain from each other, it is called _____.

b. When employees feel _____ to perform better than his colleague, it is called _____.

c. When working in a team towards a common goal, the _____is shared among all team members.

d. Task is _____at a faster pace when it is done by a team rather than an individual.

e. When there are more 'minds to brainstorm', it refers to _____ _____.

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6.2 TYPES OF TEAMS

Teams can be formed anywhere and anytime whenever the task is a little difficult and complicated. Let us understand the various types of teams in detail.

1. **Permanent teams-** These teams perform on a permanent basis and are not dissolved once the task is accomplished. Let us understand the concept with an example.

   Rohit, Ram, Tina and Ana had a strong inclination towards branding as well as promotions and hence were a part of the branding team within a leading organization. They were primarily responsible for promoting their brand and designing marketing strategies to generate maximum revenue for their organization. They worked extremely hard and always managed to achieve their targets well in advance, but their team was always in place and never dissolved. Such teams are called permanent teams.

   You will find that work or no work, the human resources team, operation team, administration team etc., in any organisation always function effectively throughout the year and hence are permanent teams.

2. **Temporary teams -** Unlike permanent teams, you will see that temporary teams lose their importance, once the task is accomplished. Such teams are usually formed for a shorter duration either to assist the permanent team or work when the members of the permanent team are busy in some other project.

   In case, there are short term time-bound projects, where the volume of work is high within tight deadlines, a temporary team is hired to deal with the workload. This may be done, if there is a shortage of manpower or skilled personnel.

3. **Committee -** Committees are generally formed to work on a particular assignment either permanently or on a temporary basis. You will find individuals with common interests, more or less from the same background and attitudes come together on a common platform to form a committee and work on any matter.

   For example; Committees are formed to raise funds for a common goal, conduct any sort of investigation, publishing a book and all other major tasks involved to successfully organize any event or project. The committee members work together and design strategies to successfully accomplish the task.

4. **Organization/Work Force -** Such groups are formed in organizations where team members work together under the expert guidance of leader. You will find that a leader or a supervisor is generally appointed from among the members itself and he/she along with his team work hard to achieve a common goal. The leader must stand by his team throughout and extract the best out of each team member. The leader must not underestimate any of his team members and take his/her team along to avoid conflicts.

5. **Cross Functional Team -** Let us understand this with the help of an example.

   Recruiting and Human Resources are two teams which are inter-related. These teams have common skill-sets and similar objectives. In case of crucial times, team members can be moved within the departments to fill in any requirements as their job roles are inter-related. Such teams are called cross functional teams. Ideally, the employees should be more or less on the same level to avoid ego hassles. Individuals from different areas come and work together for a common objective to form a cross functional team.

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6. **Virtual Teams -** You are aware of the term Virtual. The teams in this case consist of individuals who are separated by distances and connected through ICT intervention. Here individuals communicate with each other online through internet. Sam at Los Angeles can form a team with Mandeep in India and Sara at Africa. All work for a common objective and the communication is totally digital through internet by chat, Skype, and video conferencing. This is also used commonly on national level, as teams can be based in any city or state. You will notice that such teams are helpful when employees need to connect with each other and are located at different places. It reduces costs as the place and space constraints are done away with.

6.3 ROLE OF A LEADER

Leadership is a timeless practice of guiding others in pursuit of some goal, destination or desired outcome. At the most basic level, you know that the leader is someone who motivates, inspires and guides others towards the goal. The practices of effective leadership are timeless, and the context in which the leader's work varies from time to time and even situation to situation.

A leader is an individual responsible for clarifying direction through strategy and providing guidance and motivation to others. You will find that the leader guides others to work towards executing the strategy; this is not dependent on the position or designation the leader have in the organisation.

Here are the five important roles that you as a leader must play:

1. **Communicator:** The most effective leaders use all levels of communication to reach their teams. You will proactively encourage the exchange of information within the team. All communication whether verbal, written or online communicate consistency and clearly defines what the organization stands for. You as a successful leader will develop the art of selecting personal communication styles that is open, honest, fair and appropriate to the different situations and audiences. You as a leader will also develop the skill of actively listening to others, including those with opposing views. You will carefully and thoughtfully make course corrections as the need arises.

2. **Thinker**: Strategic thinking is required for an effective leader. You must understand how the different functions of the organization work together. You must also learn the strengths and weaknesses of their team and the opportunities and threats they are facing.

3. **Decision-maker**: A leader should be in a position to take appropriate decisions for their team and in turn the organisation. In taking important decisions and prior to implementation, you as a leader must consider the impact of such choices on the team and on all the team members in general. The decision maker will use his/her expertise in solving any situations. The decision maker will also provide the platform to study a range of solutions before selecting the final one, thus making sure that the selected decisions fit within mission and goals of the organisation.

4. **Team-builder**: An effective team-builder empowers team members to excel

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and provides appropriate support and timely feedback that will support employee initiative. You will motivate the team members when your team member is low in energy.

5. **Image-builder**: Consistent demonstration of fairness, integrity and professionalism builds the image of a team leader, thereby supporting professional achievement. You will adopt an ethical approach to business and personal dealings set the stage for trust, credibility and influence among peers as well as team members.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.2

I. Choose the correct option.

1. A thinker is _____.

    a.   a person who makes decisions

    b.   a person who motivates his team

    c.   a person who thinks strategically

    d.   a person who thinks

2. A decision maker is _____.

    a.   a person who motivates his team

    b.   a person who thinks strategically

    c.   a person who makes decisions

    d.   a person who is a team member

3. A communicator is _____.

    a.   a person who speaks effectively

    b.   a person who thinks strategically

    c.   a person who demonstrates fairness, integrity

    d.   a person who responds to the other

4. An effective team builder is _____.

    a.   a person who empowers team members

    b.   a person who takes appropriate decisions

    c.   a person who understands the opportunities and threats

    d.   a person who carefully and thoughtfully makes course corrections

5. An image builder is _____.

    a.   a person who empowers team members

    b.   a person who encourages exchange of information

    c.   a person who demonstrates fairness, integrity and professionalism

    d.   a person who thinks strategically

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6.4 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS(SWOT) ANALYSIS

Personality is an essential step for making yourself more appealing to employers and customers. It also helps to boost your self-image. SWOT analysis helps you to introspect your own self. Even though SWOT was originally used for business, it can help assess a person's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats too. This kind of simple analysis structure provides guidance. It looks at internal and external factors.

Self-analysis is perhaps one of the most complicated things. But, it plays a very significant role in personal progress. SWOT analysis will help you to learn more about yourself. Carrying out a personal SWOT analysis is an important step towards finding life and career direction.

Dig deep and identify what your own contributions really are. The analysis entails finding out what you are good at and what you are terrible at. SWOT is a tool for you. After you have learnt all the necessary details about yourself, you can make an effort to make positive changes which will lead to new opportunities. Basically, SWOT analysis provides a better picture of all pros and cons that you have.

The outcome will depend on how you react to the findings. For example, you can react in two ways after you list all your weaknesses. You can either understand how they can be threatening to not only your career but also your personal life, or you can work to overcome the weakness. It is always wise to think positively. Act proactively to turn the weakness into strength. Also, try to eliminate all threats. Give importance to your strengths and take advantage of the opportunities.

The elements of a personal SWOT analysis

When you know about your positive and negative factors, it can help you make changes more effectively. Typically, you just need to create a table to conduct a SWOT analysis, divided into 4 columns. For each of the SWOT element, ask yourself some questions.

A list of some example questions is given below:

Strengths

- What benefits do you have which others do not have? This could include skills, education, or connections.

- What do you do better than anyone else?

- What personal resources do you have access to?

- What do other people see as your strengths?

- Which achievements are you most proud of?

- What values do you believe in that others fail to show?

- Are you part of a network no one else is involved in? What connections do you have with powerful people?

Weaknesses

- What work do you usually avoid because of lack of confidence?

- What do people think your weaknesses are?

- Are you happy with your education and skills training?

- Do you have any negative work habits?

- Which of your personality traits hold you back?

Opportunities

- What new technology can assist you?

- Can you take advantage of the market in its present state?

- Do you have a network of strategic contacts to offer good advice or help you?

- Could you create an opportunity by offering solutions to problems?

Threats

- What hindrances do you currently face at work or in personal life?

- Is any of your co-workers, friends and siblings competing with you for projects or roles?

- Is your job changing?

- Can technological changes threaten your position?

- Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

The Advantages of Conducting a Personal SWOT

The main purpose of a SWOT is to promote identified strengths, reduce weaknesses, exploit the opportunities and have contingency plans to minimize threats.

There are many benefits and advantages of using SWOT analysis for personal development. It is good for your success and betterment. Some of the most common benefits of conducting a personal SWOT analysis have been mentioned below.

- Helps to develop strategies to attain your goals

- You can be better than your friends and colleagues

- Shows where you currently stand on the path of success

- Measures your scope of reaching desired goals

- Enhances your career, life and personality

- Helps to better understand who you really are as a person

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- Maximizes your strengths and minimises your weaknesses
- Explores and also enhances your soft and hard skills
- It helps you understand your preferences and personality traits
- Focuses on your attitudes, abilities, skills, capabilities and capacities
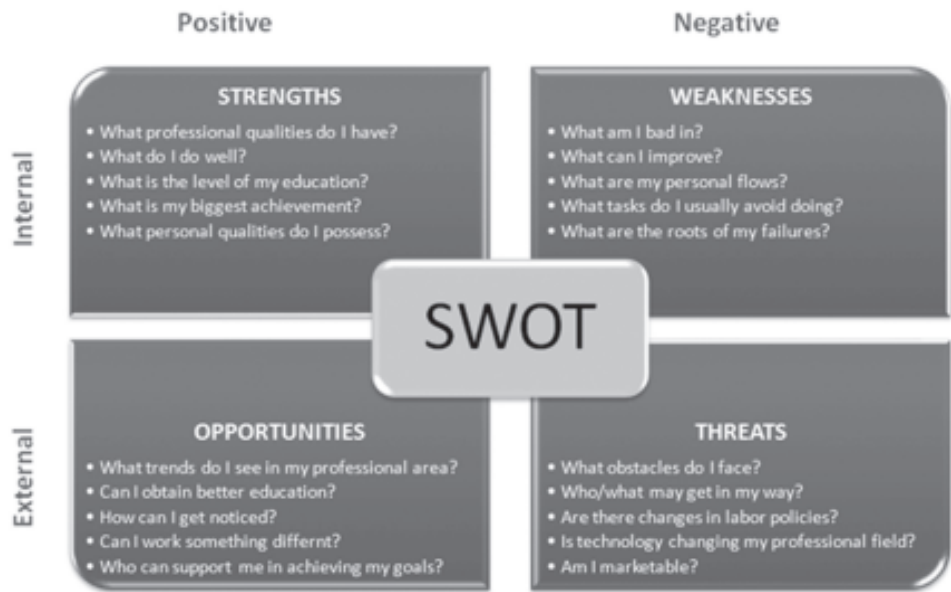
This is how a SWOT analysis looks like -

Fig. 6.1 : SWOT Analysis

6.5 TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES

Team-building exercises can be a powerful way to unite a group, develop strengths, and address weaknesses – but only if the exercises are planned and carried out strategically. In other words, there has to be a real purpose behind conducting these exercises – for example, improving the team's problem-solving or creativity skills of the team.

Benefits of Team building exercises:

These exercises help the team to break the monotony, and increase harmony. They also enable the team to be able to build trust amongst each other. Such activities must be conducted from time to time to increase the rapport among the team members.

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WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson, you have learnt the importance of team and teamwork. You are able to identify the types of teams. You are also familiar with the various roles of leader, from a thinker, to a communicator. You are now able to conduct a SWOT analysis to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What are the key ingredients of team building?

2. Explain teamwork and describe its importance.

3. Give short notes on
    a. Healthy competition
    b. Task orientation
    c. Idea generation

4. Explain the following
    a. Cross functional team
    b. Self-Managed teams
    c. Virtual teams

5. Give the advantages of conducting a SWOT analysis.

6. List the types of roles a leader should play. Explain any two.

7. Conduct a SWOT analysis for yourself.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

6.1

I. 1. mutual gain
   2. motivated, healthy competition
   3. workload
   4. accomplished
   5. increased efficiency

6.2

I. 1. c
   2. c
   3. a
   4. a
   5. c