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## Report

### **TEAMWORK & TEAMBUILDING: REACH HIGH & FAR**

**Czech Republic, Prague**

**11.7.2022 – 15.7.2022.**

I was sent to Prague in order to develop teamwork and teambuilding skills and implement these findings at my own institution.

The main questions we had to reflect on was the difference between team and group, the different teams we work in at our institutions such as a multifunctional team, management, remote or virtual team and the pros and cons of such teams.

When it comes to team members, we assessed different types of personalities within a team and tried to find this person an appropriate role within the team. There are some personality indicators/methods such as Hippocrates, Jung, MBTI and the Belbin. The latter defines team roles which is what we focused on. Shumran our facilitator, gave us the Belbin test and the definitions to the results. The results give various roles that you are suited for. The roles are:

- Shaper
- Plant
- Co-ordinator
- Monitor Evaluator
- Resource Investigator
- Implementer
- Team worker
- Completer-Finisher
- Specialist

Each role having its strengths and weaknesses. The test is quite accurate as it did defined me quite well but of course, you have to take the results with a grain of salt but it can be a good tool to use when building a team.

We were also given a task in teams where we had to come up with a solution for situations where a team member is not giving his best or is even obstructing the process of some tasks. We shared our experiences on the matter and tried to compare our findings in a group discussion.

Another discussion was about Essential Team Leadership Skills. The skills incorporated the following:

- organising
- clarifying
- reflecting
- motivating
- comforting
- controlling
- concluding
- resolving conflicts

Without these, a team can get disorganised and many other negative effects can happen. To briefly describe a few, when Clarifying it is always important to highlight what is going on, how long a task will last and seek approval from others.

When Motivating, it is crucial to be attentive, underline achievement, good ideas and give a chance for people to express themselves.

When Comforting, try to express empathy for certain situations and take a break if necessary.

When Concluding, make a proper ending and summarise. Never avoid Resolving Conflicts as this will fester and make even bigger problems in the long run.

Conducting meetings only when necessary was highlighted as something important, hearing others with a clear understanding of what needs to be done.

Summarising meetings and creating an action plan is recommended for any meeting.

Listening to your colleagues is obviously of great importance and reflective listening is one way to do it. One approach is to rephrase what you hear in order to check if everything is understood. It is also crucial to acknowledge by nodding, smiling or leaning forward.

Giving feedback is important when it is helpful and in the right moment. It shows you care as a team leader, making things clear and states a standpoint.

Giving feedback is not necessarily good or bad but is an opportunity to grow and develop your skills. When receiving feedback, it is important to listen carefully, ask for clarification and most importantly take responsibility and not look for excuses and blame others. The person in question should demonstrate willingness and not take it personally.

The most important element for teams is TRUST. It allows for teams to grow, once this is broken, it is very difficult to recover this trust. A good climate for trust is honesty, openness and consistency in your approach.

The participants of the course were put into teams, each team had to give a presentation. The point of the presentations was to create a team, lead this team, facilitate and carry out the task given, all of this was reflected through our presentations as we were groups of unknown people working together for the first time ever and managed to implement the methods shown to us by our facilitator Shumran.

After the presentations, we had time to reflect on the experience we had working in our groups. We then tried to summarize some useful steps to take when working in a team, on a project. Here are some of them:

- Brainstorming
- Brainwriting

Brainstorming is useful in order to focus on the objective, for participants to say what comes to mind and for ideas to be recorded. A team size of 5-8 would be ideal. The right environment is also important along with having a facilitator who does not necessarily have to be the team leader. No judgement or criticism should take place initially but can be relaxed later on. The best ideas need to be circled and an action plan needs to be drawn up. Strong agreement is crucial if a team is to work together and for the targets to be reached. Brainstorming is easier for extroverts than introverts but there is also another approach for more introverted people.

Brainwriting is more suitable for introverts as the process is the same as in brainstorming but by writing things down, you get a greater chance to express yourself and contribute to the group with post-it notes, paper etc.

To make final decisions, you can use a consensus within the team, it can be a consultative approach where the team leader makes the call, a delegating approach where the team leader does not need to make the final decision or an autocratic approach where it can be quicker and an expert decision is needed.

These are just some steps in order to have a good and effective team.

I believe the materials we went through during the course will definitely help me professionally and should help in creating better team-spirit at the workplace of my sending institution.