

LESSON 15

RULES FOR THE EVOLVED BUSINESS

KEY POINT THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

Does your daily work routine bring you in contact with diverse cultures?
Do you consider cultural awareness an advantage?
What kinds of companies need this kind of consciousness?
How should this be developed?

Read the following Harvard Business Review excerpt from Deepak Khalia's book 'Diversity and Team Building'. Is a multicultural work environment limiting? What kind of challenges are today's work environment facing with these circumstances? Consider the following.



Objectives Perspectives on diversity

Time 60 Minutes

Vocabulary Diversity

Key Points Thinking out of the box

Grammar positions Between Among Beneath Underneath

Review Previous Chapter

VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Vocabulary

Spared To keep from

They spared the team from criticism.

Drawn into To take along

They drew the team.

Tier A level

They want a two-tier system.

Outweigh To be more important

The benefits outweigh the problems.

Sword A weapon

They had a sword as decoration.

Brainstorm To come up with an answer

They brainstormed the situation.

Uncharted territory An unknown

They explored uncharted territory.

Imaginative With imagination

They have imaginative solutions.

Outstanding Not normal

They are outstanding. They do great work.

Workforce People working

They have a significant workforce.

Benchmark Comparing

They are benchmarking the product.

Strived To go towards (strive stove strove or strived)

They strived for great results.



VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Demise Bad results or failure

The company met its demise after the market adjustment.

Void Not present

We were void of a solution.

Assembly line A working system

The assembly line was established by Ford.

They were brainstorming to be spared of the second-tier demise.

Because of their outstanding and imaginative results, the benchmark was in their favor.

The workforce of the assembly line was void of imaginative solutions.

They strove into uncharted territory to be spared an unimaginative solution.

Their demise was a result of a void imagination.

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

A book review

The Harvard Business Review.

Excerpts from “Diversity and Team Building”

By Deepak Khalia

Creating diversity in companies is essential for management in globalizing work situations. This is easily exemplified by large multinational organizations from CEO right down to middle management and support staff with Spanish CEOs running French companies, to Germans running American conglomerates. Few sectors have been spared and even some of the most resistant organizations require the forward thinking of creating multicultural teams. This could be considered a global phenomenon where a parallel can be drawn in sports. Top tier sports clubs, hungry to win, are willing to recruit from wherever the top talent is. A basketball champion or a football star must be had at any cost. What is the price? Back to the office. These new multicultural offices are becoming essential for successful organizations although it is not all that easy to put these teams together. The work environments become a double-edged sword.

Perhaps the advantages seemingly outweigh the disadvantages but a closer look will reveal the complexity of the dynamics in multicultural teams. It goes without saying, that there are many different perspectives that can be argued in this circumstance but there is a predominant point of view.

“Diversity trumps. Hiring and promoting multicultural environments isn't optional anymore-- it's essential. (Fortune Magazine 2009)”

The Benefits of Multicultural Teams

Creativity: Perhaps one of the greatest advantages in working with multicultural teams is the dynamic between the members regarding creativity. Having teams originating from various experiences will expand significantly in the following ways:

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

Originality: Various backgrounds contribute to positive brainstorming results. Perhaps the idea that thinking out of the box is more advantageous than the status quo. Originality is a key element for a positive outcome.

Imagination: Various backgrounds also contribute to imaginative solutions. When a managerial or operational result requires the team to explore uncharted territory, answers are more imaginative with culturally varied work groups.

Ingenuity: Multicultural teams are clever regarding inventiveness and resourcefulness. This creates a knowledgeable team. It is known that the more varied the intellectual diversity of the teams the more ingenious the results, so the stronger the outcome.

Inventiveness: A stimulated and well-rounded imagination transforms into inventiveness. Inventiveness leads to solutions that are out of the ordinary. This will stimulate stronger team dynamics. The associates can no longer anticipate the solution whether they be managerial or solution orientated.

Resourcefulness: Original solutions can give competitive advantage. Work teams have a tendency to look for answer to our challenges in the same areas if they have the same backgrounds. Our perceptions are different so our resourcefulness varies.

Vision: Leadership is founded on vision. Vision is paramount to for effective results and for the most appropriate vision, global recruiting is fast becoming the norm. One could say that vision equals leadership which in turn produces outstanding results.

- Innovation

“The main argument for having a diverse workforce is the increase in innovation,” says Rosalyn Taylor O’Neale, the former CDO of MTV Networks.

One of the most effective means of realizing the impact of a word is to look at the words that are associated with it. Here are some typical synonyms that can be associated with the idea of innovation.

A list from the thesaurus:

- Innovation

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A list from the thesaurus:

Consider the following dynamics regarding innovation: modernism, perfection, progress, originality, novelty, development, uniqueness, diversity, improvement and advancement.

Assuming the word innovation can be directly associated with multiculturalism, consider the impact of these words on the performance of an organization.

Modernism: Modernism is essential for organizational growth. Imagine the proper functioning of a company without the typical elements associated with being modern. The computer is one.

Perfection: Perfection is the attainment of the ultimate goal. Even if it is not realized, it should be strived for. It is the benchmark.

Progress: Progress is best defined by the creator of IBM Thomas J. Watson:

“Once an organization loses its spirit of pioneering and rests on its early work, its progress stops.”

And it could be concluded with an ultimate demise.

Novelty: Novelty could be best defined through the famous quote by Henry Ford who said:

"If I'd asked my customers what they wanted, they'd have said a faster horse."

The question to ask at this point is how profound is the impact of multiculturalism on novelty. Remember some of the most profound engineering results are now being produced in India, Brazil and China. How can culturally diverse work teams work with these elements to create advantage?

Development: Development is a powerful idea with consequences in management as well as production. An organization void of development will soon falter. R&D, marketing, sales, and organizational strategies are all experiencing development. What is the impact of a multicultural environment in these circumstances?

Uniqueness: Uniqueness provides essential character to a group which eventually transmits into innovation further moving teams to new heights.

Diversity: Diversity is perhaps cleverly defined by Malcolm Forbes, the creator of Forbes Magazine and a former presidential candidate:

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”

Perhaps this is the key element to a multicultural approach to working with teams. It is truly the idea of powerful group solutions through innovative individuality.

Improvement: Improvement can be summed up by the Japanese miracle of the post war era defined as constant and never ending improvement and also known as Kaizen.

“When applied to the workplace, Kaizen activities continually improve all functions of a business,

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

- 1) The author considers diversity in globalized work environments as _____.
a) advised b) recommended c) essential
- 2) What does the author mean in the following excerpt of the text “A basketball champion or a football star must be had at any cost.”
a) Basketball and football stars are expensive. b) Teams will go to great lengths to get players.
c) Sports stars are often fooled by their teams.
- 3) According Rosalyn Taylor O’Neale, the former CDO of MTV Networks_____.
a) diverse workforces lead to innovation b) there are arguments against diverse workforces
c) you must have innovation in companies
- 4) "If I'd asked my customers what they wanted, they'd have said a faster horse." This Henry Ford quote means _____.
a) Ford was not really interested in his customers b) it is important innovate c) customers can be

THE CHALLENGES OF MULTICULTURAL TEAMS

There are elements that could be a threat for a multicultural team’s performance. Consider some of the barriers and challenges of multicultural teams.

“Teams whose members come from different nations and backgrounds place special demands on managers—especially when a feuding team looks to the boss for help with a conflict. (Harvard Business Review - November 2006)”

Perhaps one of the most challenging elements in multicultural teams is the merging of an international environment (people from abroad) who might be well acquainted with cosmopolitan environments, with those with less diverse cultural experience; i.e. a local situation where a more restricted international experience is more common. The conflicts can take on the form of jealousy manipulation and a general reduced productivity. These are managerial challenges. Further tests of this type can take the form of classic top down management structures conflicting with a progressive horizontal ideology. For example, a project organizer might respond to a challenge from a subordinate team member in a different fashion in two different cultures.

Further resources

A plethora of books have been published to reflect the needs of today’s organizers and multicultural team dynamics to comprehend the requirements of multiculturalism and the dynamics associated with it. Perhaps one of the most popular books of this type include Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands the Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More than 60 Countries.

Group cohesiveness

Whereby a group may function more dynamically considering result orientated management, the actual group dynamic may suffer. There are many factors that affect this aspect of the team’s performances including, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and communication issues.

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

The location of the organization can have a profound effect on the attitude of the participants. There are some environments that are more used to multicultural surroundings. Cities such as Frankfurt, Amsterdam and New York are used to cultural mixtures in organizations. Although Tokyo, being one of the largest cities in the world, has less diversity. How does this impact a mixture of cultures in a team? There is also the nature of the organization. Academics have traditionally multicultural atmospheres rendering

THE CHALLENGES OF MULTICULTURAL TEAMS

Languages

Communication problems can become an issue. Multicultural situations require a common lingua. There are 2 billion people world that will soon be working in English. Some cultures have been quick to adapt to speaking the now-accepted business language of the globe. The Netherlands, for example, has been a big promoter of multiculturalism and as a consequence Amsterdam has become a city with more head offices per capita than anywhere else.

Frequently, the default language of communication in an entire structure in Dutch businesses is English. Consider the idea that Amsterdam is an hour away from London. With a population of around a million, it has a significant economic impact on cities ten times its size within its proximity.

English people learning how to communicate

To elaborate on how a monoculture stigma can limit a team environment, a recent article in the New York Times pointed out that English companies in England are giving English lessons to their staff. Imagine this. The international community (being non-English native) is able to communicate with one another, but the communication with native English speakers is not as convincing and is therefore limited. Anglos are not being understood so British and American mono-linguistic groups are out of the communication loop. A Spaniard communicates better with his or her Italian, Korean and Chinese colleagues than with a Brit or an American.

Where does this come from?

What has brought on this monoculture in America? Imagine a unique culture from Norway to Turkey and from Moscow to Gibraltar. Now consider the zone having the same newspapers, language, cultural icons, TV shows, educational standards, business standards, communications systems, military budgets etc... This is the case in North America (excluding Mexico and Quebec). The same business culture permeates an area stretching 5,000 kilometers in all directions. Furthermore, 50 percent of all world production (Global GDP) was being produced in the USA in 1947. Essentially, they did not have any business partners. They didn't need any. This advantage is now turning into a disadvantage. Globalizing is creating a level playing field. Some would say the US is no longer the dominant business culture worldwide but we have adapted to the American system culturally, linguistically and systematically. Now it is has become the default business culture.

How does this apply to multicultural work environments?

Regarding fluency and accent and the concept that English is usually not a mother tongue, how does a typical non-native team member participate in a multicultural situation? Let's take a typical case study. Ebay is an international organization with offices around the world with their head office in Brisbane, California. Most team members including management, tech support, development and sales are required to participate in bimonthly conference calls involving native and non-native English speakers. It is to be noted that teams are expected to have mastered English enough to be able to communicate; i.e. to understand and to be understood. This is considered a given. The typical reaction from neophytes is apprehension and a formula response.

Experience

Gaining experience usually supported with training, team members become communicative and develop confidence. Accent and fluency become less important. With significant experience the team member is requested to do presentations for international teams. The tendency is that native speakers learn as much in the process so as to communicate well to non-native speakers. In other words, it is a two-way street. The conclusion at the organization is that as long as new team members have a functional level in English (which is the case for most university students graduating today) they adapt quickly.

THE CHALLENGES OF MULTICULTURAL TEAMS

Work habits

This similarity can be reflected in working habits. In France, working until 7:30 PM is considered normal even for support staff. Americans leave at 6 pm. Also, the French get five to seven weeks' holidays whereas their American counterparts begin with 2 and progress to 4 after many years seniority.

Decision making and meetings

In Korea one does not question the decisions of a boss. It is considered rude. In America decisions are a team activity. The team leader is required to take the advice of the group. In Italy, the team meets to brainstorm and the decision is entirely up to the person in charge. Five minutes late for a meeting in Germany is considered rude. In France, there is usually a fifteen minute leeway. Here is where we see how there are differing attitudes towards authority, hierarchy and time.

- 1) Conflicts and jealousy can be a consequence of _____.
a) bad managerial strategies b) mixing international and national work environments c) using horizontal management techniques
- 2) There are some cities more used to multicultural environments making _____.
a) the dynamic a welcoming opportunity to create diversity b) the situation not able to manage the challenge c) the productivity inferior
- 3) A common lingua put regions at an advantage _____.
a) so, English people are taking English lessons b) and this is why London is so large c) similar to Amsterdam
- 4) English people are studying English because _____.
a) they cannot communicate with their friends b) they use too much slang c) they are out of the business loop

GRAMMAR

Prepositions Between Among Beneath Underneath

As a preposition that describes a place, we use between two people or things and among when it is three or more.

The keys fell between the chair and the desk.
The report was among the document he had misplaced.

Between is used to discuss relationships.
The dynamic between the two was impressive.

Using between for choice.
I have to decide between two schools for my studies.

When something is shared.
Between the CEO and the CFO they have a lot of power.

Expressions

Among other things
Between ourselves
Among other things
Between you and me

GRAMMAR

Underneath can replace under

Beneath is a formal use of under

To express that something is not up to a standard you can use beneath.

Working with that company is beneath us.

1. The boisterous meeting was _____ many that year.
a) among b) beneath c) between
2. The manager considered the idea farfetched and _____ the capacity of the company.
a) between b) beneath c) among
3. They decided to embark on the project _____ the two quarterly meetings.
a) beneath b) underneath c) between
4. You really have to read the fine print _____ the final clause.
a) between b) among c) underneath
5. In the overall scheme of things, I think it is _____ us to work this way.
a) underneath b) among c) beneath
6. The incentive is not good enough and, only a few _____ them are really motivated.
a) between b) among c) beneath
7. He is a film buff and he likes to go the movie theatre _____ the department store.
a) among b) between c) underneath
8. His contribution had been immeasurable so, we felt it was _____ him to give him that mediocre project.
a) underneath b) between c) beneath
9. Numbers aside we have to read _____ the lines in the contract.
a) between b) underneath c) among