

TOPIC 7– TEAMWORK: HOW TO WORK IN A TEAM AND IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this topics, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the persuasive communication and negotiation skill
2. Discuss the importance of teamwork

INTRODUCTION

Teamwork is an essential part of workplace success. Like a basketball team working together to set up the perfect shot, every team member has a specific role to play in accomplishing tasks on the job. Although it may seem as if one player scored the basket, that basket was made possible by many people’s planning, coordination, and cooperation to get that player the ball. Employers look for people who not only know how to work well with others, but who understand that not every player on the team can or will be the one who gets the ball. When everyone in the workplace works together to accomplish goals, everyone achieves more.

7.1 Persuasive Communication and Negotiation Skill

Persuasion skills are a key ingredient to a successful negotiation. You need to be able to persuade your counterpart to understand and accept your position. Through learning key negotiation skills, you can learn the art of effective persuasion to influence your counterpart.

Persuasion is an important skill that you need to learn to negotiate successfully. You should know how to convince others to accept your views. Also, you should know how to effectively persuade others to change their views. Persuasion and other aspects of negotiation are considered as talents by some, however; they are skills that can be practised between friends or colleagues, taught by expert negotiation firms, or even learned online with tutorials.

Learning the skill of persuasion will allow you to handle any disputes during a negotiation. The skill is not just restricted to business negotiations. It can also help in resolving political disputes and even street fights.

Persuasion has been defined as employing tactics to change the beliefs, attitudes or mindset of another, and endorse your views. Knowing the art of effective persuasion by taking part in a negotiating training course will allow you to get the best outcome when dealing with customers and suppliers.

Negotiation Skill

A negotiation is a strategic discussion that resolves an issue in a way that both parties find acceptable. In a negotiation, each party tries to persuade the other to agree with his or her point of view. By negotiating, all involved parties try to avoid arguing but agree to reach some form of compromise.

It is simple to imagine situations where negotiations or persuasion are needed in a work environment. For example, a manager is negotiating and persuading when he or she delegates a task to an employee and wants the employee to take on the responsibility for the task with enthusiasm and engagement. Or a sales representative has to be more persuading than the competition in order to win over a major new customer.

Another negotiation scenario might involve retrospectively agreeing some flexibility in the promises and obligations set out in a cooperation agreement between two companies. A project manager, on the other hand, might need to give a persuading presentation about a project to an important group of stakeholders during a delicate phase of the project and be able to appear persuading when answering critical questions from the stakeholders.

Complaints about a defective product or about the performance of service staff are also situations in which it is important to be persuading and, above all, willing to cooperate in order not to damage the reputation of the product, the manufacturer, the service provider, the sales organization, or, quite simply, customer loyalty.

Whenever we work with other people, differences in opinion can very quickly lead to misunderstandings. These are negotiation situations where it is important to reach a common understanding of what is involved. Finally, different departments within a company may frequently have conflicting goals that require negotiation – typical topics can be as simple as striking a balance between production costs and a focus on quality, disagreements between marketing and sales departments, or conflicts between the personnel department and the works council.



Figure 7: Negotiation and Persuasion

7.1.1 Importance of teamwork

It doesn't mean everybody doing the same thing or everybody being able to do each other's jobs. It's more a means to a synergistic way of working, where the sum is greater than the parts.

Properly managed, teamwork maximizes strengths, bringing out the best in each team member, a key theme on this site. These specific, possibly unique individual strengths are then complimented by the strengths of others, or of the team as a unit, example:

- Promotes Problem Solving

Teamwork is important due to the problem-solving synergy gained from multiple minds working on a solution. When one person works on a specific company problem, that person only has her personal experience and knowledge from which to pull for solutions. Using teamwork, team members pool their collective ideas together to generate unique ideas for dealing with problems.

Problems in this case are not purely negative. The problem could be developing a product for a consumer to address a need that the consumer does not know that she has. Two or more people working together also build upon one another's ideas, weeding out the weak parts and making the ideas better.

- Improves Communication of Ideas

Teamwork is the backbone of effective communication within a company. When employees work as individuals or independently on projects, they may not readily share knowledge or new information. This lack of communication increases the time it takes to complete projects, tasks or the development of solutions. Teamwork promotes conversation between employees regarding the task at hand, possibly preventing employees from working in opposite directions.

For example, if one employee does not communicate that one method of addressing a problem is a dead end, and another employee is still trying to use that method, productivity is lowered. Two working together may also feel more emboldened to ask a third person for advice or input, or to point out what doesn't make sense in the project, rather than spinning their wheels on something that isn't working.

- Learning from Team Members

When employees work together as a team within a company, every employee learns from one another. This knowledge is not limited to the personal experiences of co-workers; employees from different departments may learn information from each other regarding the limitations and possibilities of those departments. For example, if a

marketing department consistently makes demands with unrealistic deadlines to another department, the marketing department may see through teamwork why its requests are unreasonable.

- **Increases Work-Flow Speed**

Cohesion is an important by product of teamwork within a company. This cohesion could be the result of increased chemistry, trust or both from working on projects as a team. Cohesive employees are less likely to be confrontational toward one another and more accepting of each others decisions. Cohesion from teamwork can greatly increase the work-flow speed of a company.

- **Feeling of Belonging**

When a team is cohesive and works well together, it gives team members a feeling that they belong to something good. Everyone wants to be on a winning team, but you can't win all the time. Belonging to the team makes the setbacks more bearable because they're shared. Team members console one another and prop each other up, reminding everyone of their successes and that together, they will be victorious again. This promotes strong working relationships.