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Assessing Performance and Importance of Organizational Work Teams at the University of California Davis

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ASSESSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL WORK TEAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS

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Abstract

In a public research intensive university work teams can be organized to accomplish many tasks. Forward thinking administrative managers and supervisors have discovered that the same skills coaches use to create winning teams in athletics also work in the business setting. While much has been written about transferring these skills to the business environment, there is very little information focused on specific managerial techniques that contribute to allowing university employees who are assigned together on a work team to attain greater levels of collaboration and job satisfaction.

This research study endeavors to evaluate two key techniques that managers can use to create a positive environment for university work force team collaboration and job satisfaction. One approach is to employ a strategic employee selection method targeting individual preferences of work team volunteers. The other approach is to select work team membership based on specifically required functional skill sets.

At the University of California Davis, these methods are used to accomplish university work tasks by both administrative and academic units. Utilizing a survey questionnaire, key informant and work team member interviews, these approaches will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of using work teams in achieving job satisfaction, university work collaboration, and project cost reduction.

Assessing Performance and Importance

Of Organizational Work Teams at

The University of California, Davis

Introduction

Workforce planning and organizational team building as a human resource strategy is not a new concept. The process that began as an informal organizational effort to make work groups more effective has evolved into a structured framework to assist human resource professionals in guiding managers to build effective work teams. In turn, these teams come together to accomplish tasks that could not be done by one individual or one unit alone. Why have work teams become more important? Work teams offer a means of employee empowerment or greater autonomy in problem solving as well as a way of attaining higher levels of efficiency in this age of downsizing while organizations look to decrease the number of managerial layers (Betty McGee, 2007).

The development of work team planning and building resulted from the need to improve efficiency and responsiveness of organizations. This efficiency and responsiveness relates to an organization's responsibility to its customers and stakeholders. "The ability to work effectively with other people is absolutely central for the public manager" (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2006). This trait is exemplified when managers develop, work with, or manage a work team to accomplish a specific organizational objective. A managers understanding of and ability to synthesize communication techniques and group dynamics will determine the level of group achievement.

Until the later half of the 20th century, hierarchical organizations were present in most private and public organizations and the structure of these organizations required a strict flow of information, standardized development of products and information, and clear structure to project management and employee status. The benefits of this type of organizational structure were diminished for several reasons. One is the increase in technology for product and information exchange, the development of an increasingly global economy, and a shift in cultures between workforces (e.g. generational differences) all affected the ability of a truly bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations ability to be successful and responsive. As with many developments, profits and the capital marketplace may be largely responsible for the evolving change in management structure.

In a public research-intensive University, work force teams can be organized to accomplish many tasks. One of these tasks is developing the university's Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Rate Proposal (also referred to as an indirect cost rate). Another is reviewing the institution's process and methodology for developing internal service center rates. Both of these functions require input from various campus entities representing both the academic and administrative support stakeholders.

Oftentimes, the staffing and resources needed to identify these costs is outsourced to outside consultants at considerable fees, however, like many other public sector organizations faced with limited funds and increased demands, alternative in-house solutions can save the institution thousands of dollars that would otherwise be spent on external consultants.

With proper planning, motivation and incentives public sector managers and supervisors can bring together employees with complimentary skill sets from diverse cross-functional units to form organizational workgroups that can develop and complete important university projects such as an organization indirect cost rate or review the campus' internal service center rate development processes. While managers must understand they will play a central role in effective team building there are certain rules for building and managing teams based on identifiable team characteristics, diversity, and artful team selection to ensure success.

The focus of this research project will be to assess performance and importance of university work teams by comparing two approaches to selecting team members and identifying the method that best ensures employee job satisfaction, successful team collaboration and project cost reduction while accomplishing university work objectives. Related sub-questions are: 1) is there an impact on the project development process by selecting work teams using skill set requirements or simply asking for work team volunteers? 2) Is campus collaboration to provide needed data for project completion more effective using university employees or external consultants? 3) What are other cost considerations that management must review in addition to money spent?

Literature Review

Searching through literature and articles revealed several potential sources to support the two approaches for work team selection. In particular were several books/articles describing how managers and supervisors can bring together employees with complimentary skill sets from diverse cross-functional units and form organizational workgroups focused on accomplishing strategic organizational-wide tasks.

A book by John Maxwell (2001) provides an overview of certain rules for building teams. His focus is on work teams formed for a specific purpose (i.e. task groups, work groups) that are created to solve specific problems and then disbanded. The key point of his book as it relates to the selection of team members is his "Law of the Niche" which says that all players have a place where they add the most value. Having the right persons doing what they do best is imperative for effective teamwork and ensuring team members' skills are blended and optimized so that there is a degree of fit between a team member and the work s/he is assigned to perform. In order to play an effective role in team building Maxwell recommends that the manager:

> **Know the team** and know where it is trying to go. There must be a clear understanding of the team's vision, purpose, culture, and history.
>
> **Know the situation** because it changes constantly. Although the team vision and purpose may be fairly constant, in an ever-changing environment, the team manager must be aware of the need for flexibility and the team's ability to adapt to these changes.

Know the players and be able to evaluate each person's experience, skills, temperament, attitude, passion, people skills, discipline, emotional strengths, and potential. By understanding team members on this level the manager can then help the team member find his proper place.

Maxwell's book offers a provocative insight into team building in general, while leaving the techniques and logic of team member selection to others.

An article by Baltazar, Ramon & Mealiea, Laird (Summer 2005) posits a strategic guide to building effective teams. It provides a model based on identifiable team characteristics to ensure success. In this article, the authors focus on a structural framework to guide managers in their team building efforts. They offer a systematic seven-step process for achieving an action framework for managers attempting to engage in team building. Within each step are specific well-ordered methodologies for identifying, predicting, and analyzing team effectiveness.

For example, in Step 1 – Identify Team Characteristics Considered Predictive of Team Success, the authors identify 17 specific characteristics significantly related to team performance (i.e., open communication; shared leadership; clear roles and assignments). They recommend that these be used as the basis for assessing team environments. In Step 2 – Measure Existing Team Climate Characteristics and Produce an Existing Team Profile, the authors recommend three traditional approaches to collecting this information: paper-and-pencil questionnaires or surveys; direct observations; and interviews. The objective here is to obtain as accurate an assessment of the existing environment as possible. In Steps 3 thru 7, however, the authors tend to focus on negative strategies such as identifying deficient team characteristics and changing deficient climate characteristics. They attempt to offer solutions in terms of which deficiencies should be addressed first. While this technique may be sound, it leaves much to be desired as compared with an approach that tends to accentuate the positive.

Another article by Sammartino, O'Flynn and Nicholas printed in the Program for the Practice of Diversity Management (2002) describes management of a diverse work team as a business model for diversity management. This article looks at the importance of diversity in building work teams and how to manage and channel this diversity into high performing work teams. The basic premise of the authors is that a diverse work group, if managed well, will outperform homogenous work teams as well as unmanaged diverse work teams. The value of diversity within a team is that the pool of different ideas is greater and that these work teams will produce better solutions because of the varied experience and backgrounds that a diverse group brings to an organization. The authors describe how diverse team members interact and how different and sometimes more difficult it can be versus the homogenous group. Differences in communication styles, the mix of mental models and value sets, and a tendency towards in-group/out-group behavior and social categorization all will have an affect on the way diverse teams develop and function. These are characteristics that managers must know and understand in order to gain the most production from their teams. Managers and supervisors must also understand the different mental models and information that diverse members bring to the team. Diverse members bring individual views of the world and value sets. A greater diversity of mental models represents more viewpoints and perspectives on a problem or task. Furthermore, a diverse team may also have access to greater informational networks through their external communication channels that can improve the quality of decision-making within the group.

The authors outline four key steps or action items for managers and supervisors. These areas can be addressed with coherent policies and practices. Each action area encompasses a series of key steps in managing diverse work teams and harnessing the "diversity dividend". One is selecting and structuring the teams; two is working with existing diverse teams; three is developing team resource needs and identity; and four is developing team performance measures.

In this article, the authors further identify the good points and opportunities in having diverse work groups and what they can bring to an organization. They posit that benefits do not spontaneously appear; they require strategies, policies and practices to produce the "diversity dividend".

A book by Blair Singer (2004) offers unique insight into the difficult art of team selection. He focuses on three main areas: 1) Team's Mission 2) Needs of the Team 3) Needs of the Individual. This third point is seldom addressed as important factor in team-building literature, mainly because it is viewed as a contradiction to the concept of oneness inherent in successful teams.

The author points out that one of the main problems is that people (especially the baby-boomer generation) were not taught to work on teams. In school, they were taught to work on their own and cooperation in the classroom was considered cheating. As a result, a person's efforts were measured against the efforts of other classmates and the winner was the individual who achieved the highest grade in the class – on his or her own merits. The author points out that another problem associated with this system was that the student's work was graded only by the teacher, without input from anyone else about how good the papers were etc. No one had a vested interest in helping anyone else improve or do better. Aside from the insightful perspective offered in the book, there are a number of structured models (the ABC's) and guidelines for team building. From Singer's perspective the pertinent questions that must be asked when organizing a team are:

1) What kind of energy does the team member bring?
2) Does the prospective member have a strong desire to win?
3) Is s/he willing to let someone else win?
4) Is s/he personally responsible?
5) What are the person's unique talents and abilities?

For the team builder/manager to effective, Singer prescribes several guiding principles. His main strategy correlates with Maxwell's book – play to people's strengths. Find out what each member is great at and get the best people to do what they do best.

An excellent article, which recently appeared in the Wall Street Journal (March

24, 2008), refutes the traditional outmoded theory that managers optimally should manage not more than ten people. Current research suggests that a manager can use improved technology such as email, intranets and Web conferencing to share information and to deal with routine issues. This would ultimately allow managers to increase their span of control while eliminating the need to micromanage team members. An opposing view cited in a recent APA article (March 2008), however, asserts that "Very small teams are likely to lack diversity of views while teams of more than 12 have difficulty getting much done." These conclusions appear oversimplified with no supporting examples or empirical evidence.

In addition to literature resources dealing with just the theoretical aspects of team development, an interesting book by Brannick, Salas and Prince (1997) shows us some practical applications in measuring team performance. The authors inform us that creating good measures of team performance is difficult but not impossible, and provide advice to researchers attempting to create their own measures. In one pertinent example, the authors describe the development of a measure of effectiveness of theater teams. They argue that a good measure of a team's effectiveness should focus on behavior that is complex, reliably observed, and under the control of the team. It is interesting to note that one of the challenges the authors face in the theater community, which is also a by-product of many nonprofit organizations, is that the absence of the profit motive complicates the assessment process. This is yet another challenge that the Public Administrator must face when applying traditional measures of effectiveness.

In a related article published in Human Resource Development International (December 2007) the authors developed a valid method for actually measuring the degree of team-related knowledge in order to determine team-related knowledge sharedness.

The cross-functional team (employees with complimentary skill sets brought together from diverse cross-functional units) is different from and requires a different approach to leadership than traditional functional teams. One of the most comprehensive yet concise bodies of literature relating to the cross-functional team can be found in Glenn M. Parker's book (1994). He focuses on the key role of team leadership and shows how the leadership requirements of a cross-functional team are different from and more difficult than those of a functional team. He outlines the unique characteristics of a successful cross-functional team leader and provides specific advice and practical answers. His main premise is that the successful leader of a cross-functional team must bring together the strangers who are working together for the first time, the colleagues who have worked together on other tasks, and the enemies who have been on opposite sides in past organizational battles.

One of the key requirements is the leader's ability to work in an environment where you are expected to have a great deal of responsibility with little or at best murky authority. The challenge for the team leader is to either clarify the team's authority or act as if s/he has been empowered. His point is that the leader cannot control or manage the people on the team – s/he has to *lead* them.

Another article relating to cross-functional teams was found in the Journal of Management in Engineering (April 2008), which conducted a study to determine if team members' job satisfaction were positively related to their individual need for cognition and task complexity. They found that team need for cognition may not be as relevant for cross-functional teams as it is for permanent work teams. They reasoned that cross-functional teams are often project-based and that members may focus more on achieving an outcome (e.g., completing a project on time) rather than on the team's need for cognition.

Team leadership naturally involves motivating others. The sources listed below provide a rich array of perspectives on how this can be accomplished:

An excellent book by McKenna and Maister (2002) provides guidance in managing a group of professionals. The authors contend that most often, the team leader will be working with highly talented people who know what to do and how to do it, but just aren't doing it. The causes may be numerous and most often the barriers have to do with feelings, attitudes, and emotions. The role of the leader, therefore, is to help the members of the team fulfill their potential by influencing these feelings, attitudes, and emotions. Although the team goal may be financial, the team leader must manage the energy, drive, enthusiasm, excitement, passion, and ambition of the team members. Anyone who has had to manage professionals knows this is no small task. The book offers a simple, no-nonsense approach to achieving this. The authors focus on trust-building initiatives and developing five key elements of trust:

1) Sharing

2) Following through on commitments

3. Letting people know if you can't do something

4) Keeping people informed after asking for advice

5) Constructive disagreement.

In a book by Gregory E. Huszczo (1996), the author further expounds on the importance of building and maintaining trust among team members. He admits that many team- building programs have gone overboard on the relationship-building aspects. In this regard, team building can have a reputation for being a touchy-feely experience that team leaders dread. His fail-safe method for building trust starts with respect. He tells us "Aretha Franklin spelled it out to us over the years, and we all need it. All we have to do is provide a little respect. Trust takes some time to build; respect is something we can provide immediately. If you genuinely want to show more respect to others, it is just a matter of will. Respect is showing honor and consideration to others. It is based on the assumption that others are valuable. Again, you do not have to like someone in order to demonstrate respect to the person..."

The author John Adair in his book (1986) challenges team leaders to take a step further into the realm of introspection. He believes that an important aspect of leadership is knowing yourself. Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses is a key step on the path of making the most of what you have to offer. He cautions the team leader against pretending to be someone you are not, and that sooner or later the mask will slip. Adair further warns "It is fatal to select people to work with you who are clones of yourself. You should deliberately choose individuals who have strengths, knowledge and experience which you do not possess in considerable measure. Humility in this sense is a leadership asset."

A very recent (Spring 2008) article published in APA by Robert M. Krug uses the process of personal engagement as a motivational tool for team building. Krug acknowledges that the process of engaging team members in all its senses is wide-ranging and not limited to conditions within the workplace. This can be a daunting task for the team leader, since a task may be judged meaningful by any external benchmark, however, a team member's perception of the role is influenced by competing tasks, both work-related and personal. By personally engaging their team members, the team leader may provide the opportunity or knowledge necessary for the member to take action.

The key concepts of creativity and innovation play a significant role in the workplace. In a Business Review article from the University of Auckland, the author Giles St. John Burch (Autumn 2006) draws the distinction that creativity is concerned with the generation of ideas, while team and organizational innovation is concerned with both the generation of ideas and the implementation of these ideas. Current studies of individual creativity have focused on personality traits, and it was found that creative people are likely to be less agreeable than non-creative people; not a good indicator for working effectively with other people, particularly in the team-working concept. The author suggests that the generation of creative ideas is a product of not only having unique ideas but also a preparedness to express these ideas, even if they are shocking or taboo.

Findings have demonstrated that within a range of occupations, a person's potential for innovation is related to more impulsive and anti-social personality, as well as arrogant, manipulative, dramatic and eccentric behaviors. Burch indicates that there does appear to be a consistent relationship between creativity and more dysfunctional behaviors or dispositions. It is suggested that while the creative person has originality and insight, which facilitates innovation, their eccentricity sets them apart from their peers and makes them difficult to work with. Thus, it raises a fundamental question of whether organizations really want creative people in the team. Can they actually hinder team-level innovation? While the article does not offer clear-cut solutions to this dilemma, it suggests that the team leader be aware of these factors when managing the team's creative people.

The diversity of knowledge and skills within a team is considered to be an important element for team creativity. But is diversity always associated with positive outcomes such as team innovation? A research study was performed in order to address these questions and the findings set forth in an article by Sacramento, Chang and West (2006). By constructing a model of team innovation, they were able to support their conclusion that diversity of knowledge and skills, among other factors, are requirements for both creativity and implementation of innovation. Again, the studies reflect the important role that team leaders play in promoting the creativity of their team members. The authors follow with recommendations summarizing key actions aimed at maximizing team creativity and fostering the implementation of ideas through collaboration with others.

Methodology

The hypothesis for this proposal is to assess the importance and performance of two employee selection techniques' contribution to increased job satisfaction, work unit collaboration, and product cost reduction. The independent variable is the selection technique and the dependant variables is job satisfaction, work unit collaboration and product cost reduction.

Using personal knowledge of the extensive information required for F&A Rate Proposal development, three different project time periods, and a cross-section of staff personnel involved in the proposal development effort, a research methodology using qualitative and quantitative (descriptive) research techniques (Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J. 2005) was devised.

The research methodology employed a survey questionnaire and selective follow-up key informant interviews. The survey questionnaire was comprised of 13 questions designed to capture responses under a Performance Rating Scale and an Importance Rating Scale. This Likert Scale approach enabled the researcher to gauge and evaluate a continuum of responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree under the performance scale and Not Important to Extremely Important under the importance scale. Respondents were allowed a middle response with a neutral or important response choice under each scale respectively. An illustration showing the framework for the survey questionnaire and two response scales approach is presented in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1

Performance Scale

4) Different work units work well together in this organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Importance Scale

4) Different work units work well together in this organization.

Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Utilizing the survey instrument to gather primary data, the survey was distributed to university and non-university personnel who worked on the project. Project/work team personnel were also asked to indicate the employee group that best described their project status during the time they worked on the project. By obtaining data associated with an employee group, responses could be sorted accordingly and the degree by which each group ranked their preferences could be gauged. The employee groups consisted of four categories depending on staff level. The employee staff categories were University Team member, Consulting Team member, University Team Executive Management member, and University Department Staff member.

Furthermore, the project years for which data was collected covered project effort performed in fiscal years 1997, 2002, and 2006. The university employed three different approaches in each of these years to address the F&A development process.

In 1997, a turn-key outsource approach to external consultants was employed. Under this approach, primary responsibilities for project planning, accomplishing work phases and tasks, establishing project priorities, setting scheduling, data gathering, and data analysis was placed on the external consultants. University staff was used primarily for facilitating data requests and only when needed. External consultants established a project long permanent work area on campus and interacted with university staff on daily basis. It reached a point where oftentimes department staff assumed the external consultants were permanent university staff since the external consultants were on-campus full-time for over a year.

The fiscal year 2002 approach used a technical outsource model to external consultants with campus executive committee oversight. Under this approach, the primary responsibilities for project completion were shared between external consultants and university staff. External consultants retained overall project work scope responsibilities and technical expertise however, they were less visible on a day-to-day basis compared to fiscal year 1997 as the university staff assumed day-to-day monitoring of project requests.

Since the external consultants were not regularly on campus, this approach required consistent communication and interaction with campus executive committee and their designees. The small university work team was assembled based on specific skill sets required since on-site consulting work was dependant on information requests being provided on a timely basis and that the data reflected appropriately, in format and content, the information requested. While the university assumed a much more active and complicated role, the responsibility for in-depth data analysis, final number crunching, and formal proposal documentation and packaging remained with the external consultants.

The fiscal year 2006 approach was opposite of the fiscal year 1997 approach. That is, the primary responsibilities for project planning, accomplishing work phases and tasks, establishing project priorities, setting scheduling, data gathering, and data analysis was placed on the university work force team under the guidance of a campus executive oversight committee. The university work force team was assembled by executive staff volunteering the efforts of members of their work units. The university also purchased or acquired a license agreement for all the software needed to generate proposal data, perform detailed data analysis, and complete a formal proposal document with all supporting schedules for submission to the Federal government.

The use of external consultants was limited to performing specific data analysis and interpretation on an as needed basis and overall project oversight and responsibility rested entirely with the university rather than or shared with the external consultants. Ultimately, under this scenario, the university assumed complete responsibility for all project work, analysis and completion which was entirely different than the two previous two F&A Rate Proposal development cycles.

Capturing data related to the different project years was important because each years approach utilized different organizational models for project completion. As a result, the data captured allowed the researcher to examine different team member perceptions and indicators related to their job satisfaction and work unit collaboration experienced under each project completion approach. In addition, a Key Informant Questionnaire was used to gather supplemental data and opinions on strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches, suggestions for change, and project cost information.

Limitations of the Research

Because the study's objective was to assess the level of job satisfaction and work unit collaboration of organizational work teams that worked on development of the Facilities and Administrative Rate Proposal at the University of California Davis, the research population was restricted to personnel who worked on the project during the specified fiscal years. Since there were only three project years of possible study data, only a fixed number of work team personnel could complete the survey. This limitation placed a high degree of reliability on the responses received since no other staff person response could be considered.

Characteristics of the Research Sample

As stated previously, work team personnel were grouped into four categories. A description of these categories is presented below.

Figure 3.2

Category	Description
University Team:	Day-to-day university staff person. Performs work scope tasks as instructed. UCD employee. Specifically assigned to F&A work team.
Consultant:	Day-to-day staff and management staff. Non-university employee.
University Executive Team:	Senior university personnel. Executive level oversight of university and consultant staff.
Department Representative:	University academic or administrative unit staff providing data or assistance to F&A work team but not specifically assigned to work team.

Data Collection

In order to identify certain key work satisfaction, motivation, collaboration, and incentive attributes, the researcher conducted a survey of approximately 40 combined university and non-university staff that had participated with or coordinated the UC Davis F&A rate development work team in either the 1997, 2002 and /or 2006 project fiscal years. Using base level SurveyMonkey.com tools, a survey was designed, distributed, data collected and analyzed. Surveys were emailed to potential respondents who were asked to indicate the project year of involvement, employee level during project year, and then rank their feelings according to both, an importance scale and performance scale, the team activities and attributes that contributed to job satisfaction and work unit collaboration as a result of their participation on the project work team. Respondents would remain anonymous.

In addition, a Key Informant Survey (KIS) questionnaire was conducted on ten work team members representing all four employee categories. This six question interview was intended to provide follow-up clarification to survey questions as well as provide additional insight into certain attributes that may have contributed or prevented job satisfaction or work unit collaboration. The interview also provided project cost information and strategies for cost reductions. The initial questions asked are listed below. In turn, these questions led to other questions and related responses.

1) How satisfied were you with the results of the project?

2) In your opinion, what were some of the strengths of the teams?

3) What were some of the weaknesses?

4) Were you satisfied with the University approach used to conduct this project

and the associated cost required to support the project?

5) Did you volunteer or were you selected to participate on this project?

6) What changes would you incorporate in order to more effectively accomplish this project in the future?

The Key Informant Survey questionnaire was performed in person or by phone by the researcher. Since the KIS questionnaire provided important detail and follow-up information, team members or participants were selected until complete responses were obtained in all ten surveys.

Summary of Research Process

Once all the data was collected from the survey and interview questionnaires, the responses were categorized by team selection approach. Within each approach, the level of importance of various team characteristics was determined. The survey questions asked and their corresponding key attribute are presented in Figure 3.3 below.

The survey questions were linked to key attributes indicating job satisfaction or work unit collaboration. However, respondents were not informed that the questions were linked to the key attributes nor was the question – key attribute link illustrated anywhere on the survey questionnaire. The relationship between question and key attribute would only be known to the researcher.

List of Survey Questions

Figure 3.3

	Question	Key Attribute
1)	My work unit works well together.	Collaboration
2)	I enjoy working with my co-workers.	Job Satisfaction
3)	My ideas and suggestions are seriously considered.	Job Satisfaction
4)	Different work units work well together in this organization.	Collaboration
5)	I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for doing a good job.	Job Satisfaction
6)	All levels of this organization communicate effectively with each other.	Collaboration
7)	There is a climate of trust within my work unit.	Collaboration
8)	I am content working with people who are different from me.	Collaboration
9)	I am involved in decisions that affect my work.	Job Satisfaction
10)	When appropriate, I can act on my own without asking for approval.	Job Satisfaction
11)	This work unit provides great customer care.	Collaboration
12)	I recommend working in this work environment.	Collaboration
13)	Overall, I am satisfied with the work environment.	Job Satisfaction

Next, responses to questions linked to each of the key attributes were summarized and the extent of those characteristics contributing to job satisfaction or work unit collaboration was measured. The degree of importance of the key attribute characteristics was also measured within the work group approach to determine how critical these attributes were to accomplishing the work objective.

For example, does the team member feel that it is more important that s/he work with another member who shares their motivation for work, or is it more important that they share the same technical skill set and understanding of the work objective(s)? And, does this translate to job satisfaction and enhanced work unit collaboration?

By assembling university members from various units such as research administration, accounting, budget, and human resources and obtaining responses to the survey questionnaire, the researcher attempted to assess how to optimize the degree of performance between team members and the specific task required for the work project in accordance with Maxwell's (2001) rules for building successful teams. This was especially key, since most team members selected did not have specific prior experience in the work project but learned "on the go" from managers and supervisors with experience in F&A rate development.

Upon survey completion, the responses were tallied, recorded, and analyzed on a simple Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Data was recorded onto worksheets where the number of responses each of the importance and performance scales and by work team approach were calculated and the results analyzed.

Finally, the Key Informant Survey Questionnaire solicited responses and opinions by employee category (i.e. team member, executive team coordinator, etc.) about job satisfaction levels, work team strengths and weaknesses, project costs, and future work team enhancements. These opinions would also provide insights about how the key attributes contribute in order of importance to completing the overall work team objective – productivity. In other words, as a university executive team coordinator, is it more beneficial to know your team players and their emotions or is it more beneficial to know the situation when measuring productivity.

Research Findings and Analysis

The research findings show that work team selection techniques used to form a Facilities and Administrative Rate Development Project Work Team at the University of California, Davis has an impact on the promotion of job satisfaction and work unit collaboration within the work team environment. Furthermore, the responses and project cost data obtained from the Key Informant Survey Questionnaire support cost saving outcomes as a result of expanded work team members and participation.

One of the notable outcomes of the work team survey questionnaire was the university work team response compared to department staff response regarding Question 4: “Different Work Units Work Well Together in This Organization”, Key Attribute - Collaboration. Figure 4.1 shows that 100 percent of the department staff responses felt that it was Important for work units to work well together while 100 percent of Work Team members felt that it was Extremely Important . One explanation

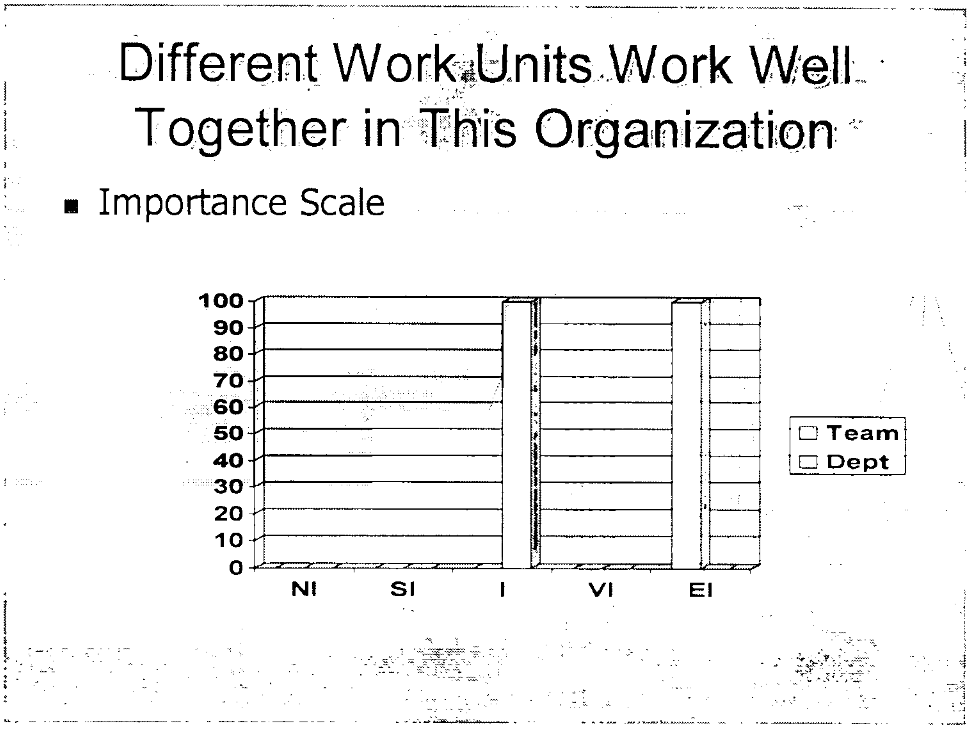

Figure 4.1

for the different scales of importance between the different groups came out of the KIS questionnaire follow-up responses. Here, work team members felt that it was important that they ***not be*** perceived as making department staff work harder by asking for them to provide and complete extensive F&A rate development information on top of the normal day-to-day work which department staff are already required to do. Therefore, work team members felt that it was Extremely Important for them to work well with department administrators whereas departments were happy with simple flexibility on target deadlines.

Another interesting survey outcome was the response to Question 13: "Overall, I am Satisfied With this Work Environment", Key Attribute – Job Satisfaction. Work team members tended to be Neutral (33%), Agree (50%), or Strongly Agree (17%) compared to Department staff who overwhelming Strongly Agree (78%) or Agree (22%) under a Performance Scale ranking (Figure 4.2).

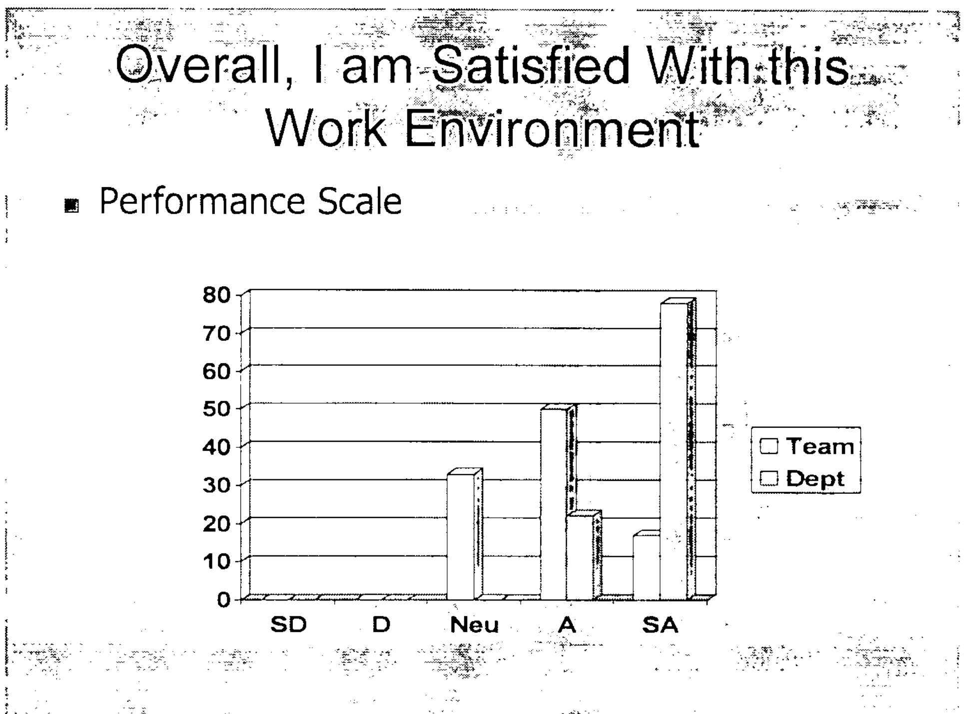

Figure 4.2

However, under the Importance Scale ranking, team and department staff responses to the same question indicated a high level of importance by team members. In fact, team member response was 100% Extremely Important to be "Satisfied With this Work Environment". Breaking down the responses showed that team members felt it was Extremely Important to be "Satisfied With this Work Environment" regardless of if they were volunteered for the work team or not. Notably, it was the FY 2006 approach in which team members were volunteered for the project work team where the overwhelmingly majority of Neutral responses occurred.

As a result, it seems probable that when a work team member is volunteered for the project work team their degree of satisfaction with the work team experience will depend on whether their skill set matches project work requirements and expectations.

The F&A Rate development project requires a significant commitment in time and effort. For an institution the size and complexity of the University of California, Davis the project can take over a year to complete. Consequently, working nights and weekends can be expected since volunteer work team members maintain the majority of their normal position responsibilities. One to two days a week is typical of a work team members charge on the F&A project. If a work team members analytical skill set does not lend itself to understanding the nature of accounting and budget, then the F&A work team experience can be taxing and unfulfilling.

A final question to examine is the trend of project cost reduction over the three project completion approaches. Figure 4.3 below shows project cost compared to F&A revenue generated in each projection completion year. In project year 1997, total project cost was approximately $600,000. By 2006, project cost had dropped to $330,000, a reduction of $270,000 dollars or a savings of 45% from 1997 costs. Clearly, in-house preparation of the F&A Rate Proposal is the most effective and cost-saving approach.

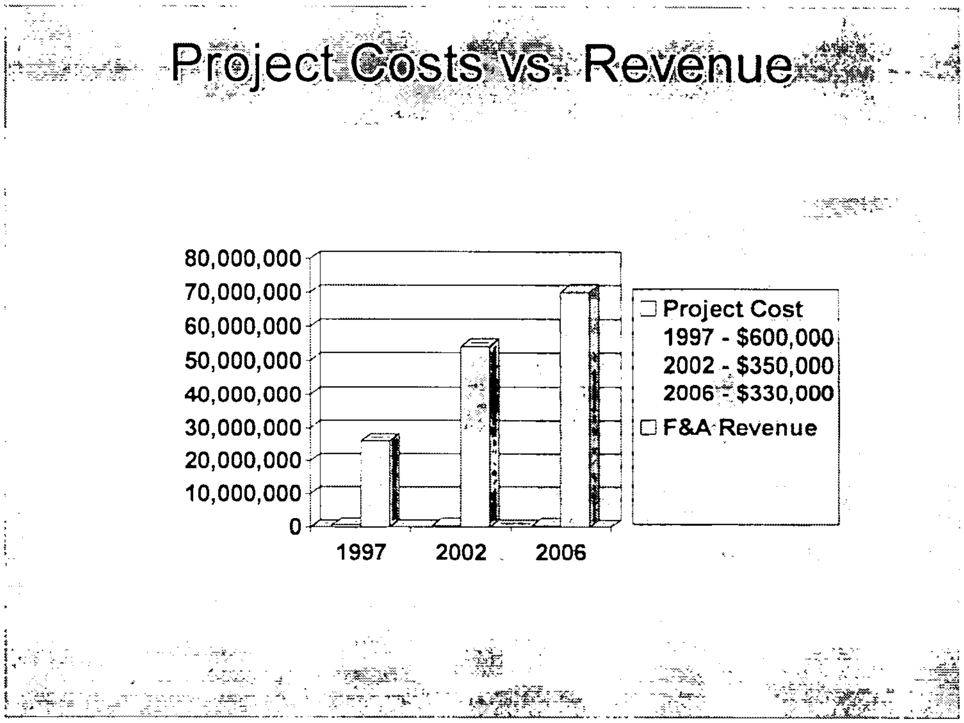

Figure 4.3

Building an effective work team whose members feel satisfied and rewarded for the work they accomplish is not an easy task. A quick review of the myriad of lists that have been published of "things to do" for team managers to be better leaders is an overwhelming reminder of just how challenging a task it can be to build and manage an effective organizational work team. Without a comprehensive strategy at hand to lay the groundwork for building success, team leaders face many challenges and may regard their leadership role as a humbling experience.

Having a blueprint for assembling and managing a work team in the public sector environment seems like a "must have" process for any high performance organization and this has been proven the case in many areas of government and business. Faced with having to do more with less, organizations have to look inward and tap existing resources to increase efficiency and also work to accomplish many tasks that were previously completed by external contractors or consultants.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Motivating, ensuring job satisfaction and cultivating work unit collaboration by employees in a work team environment is a challenging endeavor. It is even more difficult for an institution the size and complexity of the University of California Davis where limited resources are already stretched to handle its major functions of research, instruction, and public service.

The study findings have provided evidence that certain approaches to work team formation will influence worker attitudes and motivations. The benefit of identifying these factors will ensure that cross-functional work teams formed to complete large complex projects in a limited time frame will have the best environment and tools to succeed.

The policy recommendations formed to address the development of an organizational work team focused on completing the institution's Facilities and Administrative Rate Proposal are: (1) Develop skill specific criteria for F&A project work team; (2) Establish review criteria and ranking for work team skill set; (3) Expand work team participation to include more department staff; (4) Establish clear work team goals and rewards; and (5) Establish work team interview and selection committee.

The above recommendations provide a straightforward approach in establishing effective cross-functional work teams. By following these recommendations, the institution ensures that the team assembled will be committed to the project objectives while achieving team collaboration and job satisfaction.

Areas for Further Study

While this study assessed the relationship between work team selection methods work unit collaboration and job satisfaction, further research could be conducted in the area of “Need for Cognition, Task Complexity, and Job Satisfaction” (Park, Baker, & Lee, 2008). In this study the authors posit that “individuals’ job satisfaction was positively related to their individual need for cognition and also to their individual task complexity”. Additional questions concerning task complexity and satisfaction could be evaluated and added to the current survey.

Another area for further study relates to the perceived organizational support and perceived team support. Scott Bishop and S. Burroughs (2000) posit “whether perceived team support and team commitment relate to employee outcomes differently than perceived organizational support and organizational commitment”. The benefits of this research could weigh on the support that employees believe they receive from others as well as the commitment that they give. The important clarification to be examined is the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. This relationship could be examined after implementation of the policy recommendations noted above.

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