

Chapter 12

TEAMNET: New Dimension of Team Building and Management

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the TeamNet analytical tools and methodology that was created in the framework of the international EUREKA project. TeamNet presents a new approach to the evaluation of the project and working teams. New web-based information system and new methodology were developed. The system is capable of providing online analysis of the efficiency of a team and its members. Specific psychodiagnostic tools (such as the colour association method) were used for a powerful analysis of the interaction characteristics of the team to maximize the objectivity of results. Web portal for total support of the diagnostic is presented at www.hrteamnet.cz. The whole team diagnostic is realized online and the team and individual results are immediately available. The system can significantly help the project and personal managers to create high-efficiency project teams.

INTRODUCTION

The terms work team and workgroup often appear in today's discussions of organizations. Some experts claim that effective modern firms need to use small teams for an increasing variety of jobs. Work teams occupy a pivotal role in what has been described as a management transformation, paradigm shift and corporate renaissance (Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990).

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TeamNet is grounded in several research and activities in the field of creating and optimizing work teams and groups for various purposes. In our research, we have made maximum effort to apply re-searched principles on the behaviour of work and project teams in small and medium-sized enterprises, who are our key partners.

Three methods providing three independent but corresponding resource data sets are combined in our new system for a team assessment and evaluation. The adaptation of the Belbin team role theory is used to identify individual team role characteristics and a team type. The psychodiagnostic method based on the Color-Word Association Technique (CWAT) is used as the second method to identify dynamic characteristics and behaviour of the team. The third method uses sophisticated analysis of the team communication and is based on the analysis of e-mail communication between team members. Every team, formed formally or informally, has a varying workload throughout the time. Long-term email communication in the team is stored in the mailboxes of individual team members. Analysis of email data can reveal relevant and, at first sight, overlooked information. Much of the semantics is hidden in the data. This semantics can be visualized in different ways to obtain a result that can then be used to support decision making. The main goal of the chapter is to describe key parts of a team assessment and web portal system evaluation – TeamNet.

BACKGROUND: TYPOLOGY OF THE TEAM AND ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL TEAM ROLES AND PROFILES

Social Facilitation

The term social facilitation can be defined as an improved performance caused by seeing and/or hearing other people do the same activity. Therefore, imitation, competitiveness and social prestige are involved. Facilitation can be seen in less difficult or automatic tasks. In more difficult tasks, facilitation needs to be replaced by synergy.

Synergy

The effectiveness and success of individual's work depend not only on individual actions (management functions, assigned tasks, activities, success factors, company components) but also on a harmonic integration of these elements into a whole, which is called the synergic effect (holism, the principle of integrity, emergence).

Holism as a whole is more than a sum of its parts. It is an intangible and incognizable integrity agent. To divide the whole into individual parts would mean that the effect ceases to exist. Structuralism sees a set of phenomena of a certain section as logically structured integrity. The distinctive quality of a system is determined not only by the qualities of its individual parts but also by their co-existence in a particular environment which creates its emergent qualities. Emergence can only be seen in a functional unit, as a result of an action of integration ties of system individual elements. Synergy means that a whole is more than a sum of its parts, as the relations between the individual parts are also an important part of it. In this connection, it is necessary to point out that the traditional analysis based on the division of the whole into its individual parts is in conflict with this principle. The traditional analysis, based on Descartes' principle of dividing the whole into individual parts, does not allow for an effective analysis

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