

Chapter 17

Synergy as a Smart Solution: Achieving Positive/Smart Synergy in Teamwork

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ABSTRACT

Synergy (positive/smart one) is generally considered “the holy grail” of management, teamwork smart achievement. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the core question: “Whether and when is teamwork appropriate, i.e., smart?” The reasonable answer is: “In the situation when by means of teamwork can be achieved positive synergy!” Therefore at first, it should determine if positive/smart synergy is theoretically possible, and if it is, the next question is how to achieve and keep such synergistic teamwork. According to such methodological frameworks the theses are explicated as answers to the purpose question of what is needed for positive synergy achieving, such as a) synergic tasks; b) specific material, social, and informational investments, also new heuristics; c) elimination of behavioral and individual disturbances; d) solving some unknown, specific but potentially dangerous teamwork problems. Therefore, teamwork synergy is never a routine activity. It requires wise case study application and sometimes professional psycho-social treatment.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s contemporary management, when economic success and competitive advantage are sought in even the smallest factor, the synergistic effect has gone out of focus and seems to be taken for granted. Although it may seem that diverse entities (social and natural), as well as human resources, always work synergistically (harmoniously and multiplicatively), so there is no room for improvements and economically important solutions in this area, nothing could be further from the truth. Quite the opposite, numerous economic and organizational outcomes are the result of dis synergy and disharmony between entities in interaction.

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Unlike natural synergies, which are created by mixing the necessary ingredients, social synergies are a special problem, because people behave differently. Also, to achieve the synergy of individual entities and groups, the existing knowledge is not sufficient, so the problem of synergy should be investigated using the action research method (Burnes, 2004, according to Lewin 1946) to determine the causes of dysfunctionality and thus solve the problem by supplementing the existing knowledge.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the synergistic term and phenomenon, to provide an overview of existing knowledge on how to achieve synergy, and to suggest new necessary knowledge for the practical achievement of teamwork synergy i.e. methodology for organizing successful teamwork.

EXPLICATION OF THE SYNERGY PHENOMENON AND TERM

The synergistic phenomenon always occurs when various elements are cooperatively combined, and the law of synergy is a *universal law of nature* that is present everywhere (Jonek-Kowalska, 2012 according to Kordus, 1978). What is meant by the term synergy? A good explanation offers a systematic (holistic) approach. According to them, synergy represents the interaction of several individual elements in the system that produce an effect different or greater than the sum of their individual effects. The term „synergy” means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts because by combining different ingredients in a reaction, the final effect will be quantitative/qualitatively different from the sum of the ingredients that are not in the reaction (e.g. separate ingredients - no reaction/no synergy; appropriately combined ingredients - there is a wanted reaction / wanted synergies, e.g. concrete, glue, “Greek fire”, explosives, etc.). According to this point of view, various synergies are possible, e.g. technical-technological, market, chemical, physical, biological, pharmacological, financial, etc. synergies, and not only social (e.g., team, psychological, and managerial) which are the subject of this work.

Etymologically, the term synergy comes from the old Greek word “synergy”, which means the phenomenon of *joint/together works*. So in psychology, biology, philosophy, and theology, it means cooperation (<https://www.filozofija.org/rjecnik-filozofskih-pojmova/>). In the social context of teamwork, it is a common output that is the result of the joint work of two or more people, where that output is higher compared to the work that these same people would do individually/independently/unconnected.

In organizational and social conditions, synergy can be represented as social cooperation, cohesion¹ / team harmony (Goleman, 2000) which is the result of psychological synergy (psychological alignment of team members).

The ability to achieve cohesion/harmony enables a certain team/group to be particularly gifted, productive, and successful, with other qualities being equal, harmonious (close) relationships enable maximum use of the abilities of the most creative and gifted members (Goleman, 2000). Therefore to create a synergistic effect, *cooperation is necessary*, and it means the combination of different elements and the creation of connections and relationships between them (especially important if the elements of cooperation/synergy are human resources as complex resources that “think”, “create” and “behave”).

As a fruitful concept „synergy” is often used in the context of economic disciplines: general economics (recombination of resources), management and organization, business cooperation, management science, systems theory, corporate strategy, marketing (e. g. synergy of entering new markets), process management, the synergy of business cooperation, business finance (e.g., joint investments) (Jonek-Kowalska, 2012), project management, business decision-making, practically in every area of business, management, economics, technology & innovation in business.

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