

ABSTRACT

Successful organisations world-wide had proven that people have to work together in order to face the challenges of the seemingly perpetual changes in the business environment today. As a team, through synergy, co-ordinated and concerted efforts, organisations can achieve extraordinary results beyond what they can dream of.

Team conjures different images to different people. Some think of a sports team while others envision workplace teams; teams that cut across functional lines, teams on which labour and management collaborate, teams that direct their own activities without supervisions.

One of a better definitions of team states that a team is a small number of people with complimentary skills who are committed to common purpose, performance goals, and approaches for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. The important elements of this definition are complimentary skills, common purpose, and mutual accountability. Without these elements, a team may be little more than a loose collection of individuals with nothing more in common than employment by the same company and a few identical appointments on their calendars.

The concept of teamwork has never been more important in the management of organisations today than it was a decade ago. Management of many global organisations has placed greater emphasis on teamwork, undoubtedly an important ingredient to achieve organisation excellence. The rapid changes in the social, technological and informational fields have posed an unprecedented level of stress never before encountered by organisations. Organisations can no longer depend on a few peak performers to steer them towards corporate excellence. The complexity of today's business requires effective and efficient teams to compete and to achieve performance that matches expectations of stockholders.

If organisations are to survive, it must find ways of tapping the creativity and potential of people at all levels. Definitely, organisations are giving more attention on teamwork. Managers and supervisors alike realised that in order to succeed and effectively lead in their current businesses, developing their subordinates into effective teams becomes a primary objective.

Teamwork is the process which allows the organisation to empower its staff to make and implement decisions. The corporate culture within which teams operate will ultimately determine how successful or unsuccessful teams will be.

In Tenaga Nasional Berhad, teams and team building efforts are ad-hoc and limited to specific Departments and Divisions. Some initiatives were taken under the umbrella of Total Quality Management (TQM), solely for the purpose of disseminating the awareness on advantages of teams. For the moment, the initiatives are not well co-ordinated and executed.

The management of the Transmission Division of Tenaga, recognised the benefits of working as teams, especially in its daily operations. Many of the attributes and traits found in teamwork can contribute effectively towards increased quality and productivity in the Division. The top management of the Division believes in the concept of teams, that it brings people together and that people is the element that inspires and determines organisational excellence.

The Division had taken an unprecedented steps of introducing an awareness programme on teams to all its executives, aptly called the 'Team Dynamics' programme which was run from March to November 1995. In January this year, an extension of the earlier programme known as 'Integrated Team Building' programme was launched, and the programme is to focus on consolidating and strengthening existing operational teams. This time the participants would be mixed groups of executives and non-executives.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the 'Team Dynamics' programme. This study was also meant to evaluate the team performance rating as perceived by the Divisional executives as well as to determine group effectiveness and interpersonal processes, which are vital indicators of progress in the team building initiatives.

The author used exploratory survey as his research instrument whereby the sampling data was obtained from executives of the Transmission Division who had attended the 'Team Dynamics' programme. Statistical analysis technique was used to process the data and results were analysed.

The survey result indicated that the 'Team Dynamics' programme was effective in bringing awareness on aspects of teams to the Transmission executives. The results also revealed a number of interesting findings which include differences of perceptions and opinions on teams between the different levels of managers in the Division. In the result, the respondents had expressed their optimism, eagerness and support to see a successful 'teams' programme in the Division. They had also highlighted the basic ingredients necessary to ensure fruitful implementation of the initiatives. The respondents had also registered constructive criticism on issues, in particular commitment and sustenance.

The findings of the study were highlighted and the author made a number of proposals and recommendations on future 'teams' initiatives to Tenaga, as well as to the Transmission Division management.

The findings of this study should be of interest to managers dealing with organisational development within or external to Tenaga.