Dynamic & Collaborative Teams

Unit Type: Mandatory

Level: 4

Credits: 15

GLH: 75

Assessment Method: Assignment

The business environment is becoming ever more global and as a consequence, the workplace is changing. Hierarchical organisations are generally a thing of the past; structures are generally flatter and the people within them are often required to work cross-functionally and with people at other locations, rather than as part of one department based in the same office. This means that as well as being qualified, soft skills have become increasingly important as people may be required to work as part of different teams on a variety of projects. Having business awareness, being responsive and having a 'can do' attitude are essential, as is a willingness to work collaboratively with different people. Indeed, there are many benefits to team working, both commercially and personally, but working in teams doesn't equate with success; as a minimum, effective teamwork requires a balanced selection of

members, planning, ongoing participation and collaboration, tenacity and the mutual support of each other, in order for the team to achieve its desired goals and to contribute to those of the organisation.

Modern organisations present additional challenges to teamwork, including flexible and remote working, operating across time-zones and embracing different working and cultural practices. Whilst diversity is generally enriching, it can introduce dimensions to team working that require open-mindedness on the part of all concerned to find optimal solutions.

This unit introduces you to teamwork and the characteristics of effective teams. It will address team member skills and how to build effective working relationships within different types of teams and business structures, including virtual environments. As part of this, it will explore how teams need to be led, motivated, managed and monitored in order to be maximally effective. As team working is not always easy or successful, the unit also explores the difficulties that might be faced in different settings, and how to recognise and diffuse the conflict that may arise.

As a consequence of completing the unit, you will evaluate your own skillset in relation to team working in order to optimise their input to the teams you are part of, which will ultimately maximise those teams' contributions to meeting business objectives.

What You'll Learn

The table below shows the learning outcomes of this unit (what you will be able to do or what you will know), along with the assessment criteria (what you will be able to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome).

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*
1. Describe the nature of teams within modern organisations and the difficulties associated with team working within different organisational structures (Weighting 30%)	1.1 Explain what teams are and how the nature of teams has changed as the structure and nature of organisations have changed in recent years 1.2 Explain using relevant concepts and theories, how teams form and become effective; the common pitfalls, and how effective working can be established 1.3 Identify the additional challenges and potential difficulties that teams face given the nature of modern organisations including virtual environments

2. Describe the principles and benefits of effective team working and how collaborative working can be fostered (Weighting 10%)	2.1 Explain the commercial and social benefits of effective team working. 2.2 Recommend how collaborative working could be fostered to overcome the potential difficulties that teams face working in modern organisational structures, including virtual environments
3. Explain the principles of effective team management and why it is important for the work of teams to be led, organised and monitored (Weighting 30%)	3.1 Identify the advantages and limitations of different approaches to the management of teams 3.2 Recommend practical ways that teams working in modern organisations should be managed so that they work collaboratively to achieve team objectives

4. Outline the main reasons why team working can become dysfunctional and what can be done to re-establish collaborative working (Weighting 20%)	4.1 Identify the main reasons why team working breaks down and the early signs that can indicate this is happening. 4.2 Recommend practical ways that collaborative work can be re-established given the additional challenges of modern organisations
5. Analyse your own skills and team working traits in order to understand how you can contribute effectively to team working (Weighting 10%)	5.1 Analyse your own skills and team working traits in order to understand the roles you are likely to be most effective at performing in a team context 5.2 Evaluate the challenges you might face, and present to others, when working as part of a team, and what action you can take to minimise the negative impact of these factors on collaborative working

Capabilities

Alongside academic learning and development, ABE's qualifications have been designed to develop your practical skills and capabilities. These capabilities are highlighted as certain values, knowledge, skills and behaviours that will help you in your professional development.

Below is an overview of the behaviours, skills and attitudes that you will develop through this unit include:

Element of Learning	Key Capabilities Developed
Element 1 – The nature of teams	Awareness of team structures within modern organisations and the additional challenges presented by non-traditional structures. *Commercial awareness, cultural diversity and sensitivity, globalisation and differing work practices.*
Element 2 – The benefits of teamworking	Appreciation of principles and benefits of team working to the organisation and employees, and how it can be fostered given the challenges of modern day business. *Communication, interpersonal relations, use of technology*
Element 3 –	Principles of effective team management in terms of

Effective team management	leadership, organisation, motivation and monitoring achievement against objectives.
	Planning and goal-setting, open-mindedness, joint decision-making, project planning and milestones, accountability, monitoring and control
Element 4 – Challenges of teamwork	Outline the main reasons why team working can become dysfunctional and what can be done to re-establish collaborative working.
	Conflict management and resolution, problem solving, interdependence, appreciation of diversity, compromise, collaboration
Element 5 – Your teamworking skills	Appreciation of own traits and skillset in terms of team working and how to use these to maximise own contribution.
	Self-reflection, adaptability, flexibility, commitment, confidence

Localisation

It is very important when studying for your ABE qualification that you consider your local business environment and try to apply what you are learning to relevant scenarios in your local business context. Doing this will help you to put your learning into practice and use it in your professional day-to-day activities.

The structure and nature of a business has a direct impact on the nature of teams. Whilst it is important to understand the many variations of business structures and nature, particularly given the global context of business, your effectiveness as a team member is to work in a way that is appropriate to your environment and reflects local practices.

You should therefore take into account the following when preparing for your assessment:

- The structure and nature of the organisation you work within and how this is changing as a consequence of emerging business practices

- The influence of local culture and socialisation on business norms and collaborative working

- Local employment rules, regulations and legislation

- The availability of technology and internet speeds to facilitate collaborative working using technology

Indicative Content

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1. Describe the nature of teams within modern organisations and the difficulties associated with team working within different organisational structures (Weighting 30%)

1.1 Explain what teams are and how the nature of teams has changed as the structure and nature of organisations have changed in recent years

- The differences between groups and teams – size, membership, purpose, way of relating

- Characteristics of effective teams – size, complementary roles, common purpose, interdependency, collective responsibility, sense of membership and contribution, accountability

- Nature of teams within different organisational structures

  - Traditional structures – hierarchical and formal

    • command and control and compliance; formal and informal teams; permanent/departmental teams

  - Modern structures – flatter hierarchy and less formal; cross-functional/multi-disciplinary; matrix; horizontal and vertical teams

- flexible working; project/temporary teams; outsourcing; off-shoring; virtual teams due to global nature of multi-national enterprises (MNEs); embracing diversity by accommodating differing cultural and work practices; facilitative leadership; consensus decision making; mutual participation; respect for multi-disciplinary skills, experience and contribution

1.2 Explain using relevant concepts and theories, how teams form and become effective; the common pitfalls, and how effective working can be established

- Team development – different models (Tuckman and Jensen (1977), Katzenbach and Smith (1993))

- Common pitfalls e.g., silos, group think, pipelines, breakdown in communication, missed deadlines

- Establishing effective teams – team membership and selection to maximise productivity; use of full-time employees and specialists who may be contracted; flexibility and agility

- Establishing effective working – common goals; defining roles and responsibilities; clear allocation of work with timelines for completing tasks; reporting process and accountability; mechanism of support; maintaining purpose and motivation; access to and utilisation of technology to enable effective communication across locations and time zones; off-shoring; outsourcing

1.3 Identify the additional challenges and potential difficulties that teams face given the nature of modern organisations including virtual environments

- Challenges to team working of modern organisational structures – including: flexible working, remote working, virtual organisations, off-shoring and outsourcing.

2. Describe the principles and benefits of effective team working and how collaborative working can be fostered (Weighting 10%)

2.1 Explain the commercial and social benefits of effective team working

- Commercial benefits – problem solving, innovation, responsiveness and flexibility, group loyalty, commitment, reduced absenteeism and staff turnover, more effective use of resources (Likert (1967), Maslow (1970), Katzenbach and Smith (1993), Wickens (1995))

- Social benefits – sense of belonging, acceptance, recognition, self-esteem, trust, confidence (Maslow (1970); Likert (1967))

2.2 Recommend how collaborative working could be fostered to overcome the potential difficulties that teams face working in modern organisational structures, including virtual environments

- Time spent getting to know each other so that people understand the skills that everyone has to offer

- Clearly defined goals, responsibilities, timelines and accountability

- Regular communications and meetings, virtual and periodically face to face, rotating times to respect different time zones

- Use of technology to counter difficulties of differing locations and time zones e.g., shared drives to enable access to documentation; tele and video-conferencing;

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3. Explain the principles of effective team management and why it is important for the work of teams to be led, organised and monitored (Weighting 30%)

3.1 Identify the advantages and limitations of different approaches to the management of teams

- Management theories and approaches – (Taylor (1917), Weber (1947), Fayol (1949), Adair (1997))

- Autocratic versus democratic; direction versus facilitation; control versus monitoring and support (Follett (1920), Mayo (1949), Quinn (1980))

- Advantages and limitations of different management styles in relation to team working

3.2 Recommend practical ways that teams working in modern organisations should be managed so that they work collaboratively to achieve team objectives

- Clear goals and plan of activities over time; timelines and milestones; allocation of responsibilities; mutual ownership; support, development; motivation; incentives and rewards (Hackman (1990))

- Openness about difficulties; more experienced members providing support/mentorship of newer less experienced individuals

- Regular reviews meetings with accountability; effective meeting planning and preparation; update plan; include some face to face as well as virtual meetings

- Celebrate achievements, personal progress and key milestones

4. Outline the main reasons why team working can become dysfunctional and what can be done to re-establish collaborative working (Weighting 20%)

4.1 Identify the main reasons why team working breaks down and the early signs that can indicate this is happening

- Allocation of work and responsibility not clearly defined; lack of understanding of different individual's contribution to the overall task; poor standard of work; missing deadlines; lack of expertise; interpersonal friction; meetings and process can be more time consuming than working independently

- Group think; domination by one or more individuals; (Katzenbach and Smith (1993), Janis (1972), Uhl-Bien and Graen (1998))

4.2 Recommend practical ways that collaborative work can be re-established given the additional challenges of modern organisations

- Meet with individuals concerned and as a group to re-establish roles, responsibilities, deadlines and effective working.

- Balance the need to maintain team working (people) with the process to achieve the outcome (task) (Adair (1997))

- Support and acknowledgement of all contribution, particularly for new/inexperienced members

- Address difficulties and signs of conflict at an early stage

- Temporary involvement of specialists as necessary

- Plan ways to celebrate progress and maintain motivation (Hackman (1990))

5. Analyse your own skills and team working traits in order to understand how you can contribute effectively to team working (Weighting 10%)

5.1 Analyse your own skills and team working traits in order to understand the roles you are likely to be most effective at performing in a team context

- Team roles (Belbin (1993))

- Other team role models and classifications (Hackman (1990))

5.2 Evaluate the challenges you might face, and present to others, when working as part of a team, and what action you can take to minimise the negative impact of these factors on collaborative working

- 'Flip-side' of personality traits in team working

- Being aware of people's contribution over the potential issues they/you might present to others

- Working to maximise team effectiveness through a commitment to the team's objectives; being accountable; celebrating success.

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