



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Working Together!

There is a fundamental shift in the way organizations are working today. Organizations are incessantly taking a careful look at their processes and critically analyzing and constantly redesigning those processes that impede their progress or productivity. HR also must work to maximize their organization's competitive advantage by altering the work culture and HR processes to attract, develop and motivate employees.

The guiding principle for redesigning and changing processes successfully should be employee teamwork. To collate this collective effort, organizations are forming 'task forces' - teams of 3 to 12 members from various departments who possess different skills and ideas. The 'task force' is meant to exist for a specific time frame lasting from a few months to a year with a set purpose.

A task force, like any other successful team, develops through the following four stages:

Forming

This is the initial stage, where all the members meet and get to know their team members, identify their similarities, expectations and skills. They also identify a common purpose for the team. HR should ensure that the formal and informal procedures and policies for the team meetings and expectations from the members with respect to attendance, deadlines and communication system are well-defined and clearly communicated to all the team members.

Storming

In this second stage, team members brainstorm on the objective, goals and direction of the task force. HR plays an important role in defining the roles of each team member in the process. At this stage, members deal with each other's differences in opinions and come to a mutual agreement. This is a crucial stage for the team's success, and hence a facilitator is required to help them through the process and surface difficult issues.

Collaborating

The next stage consists of combining ideas and making decisions. To promote effective collaboration and enhance teamwork, HR should facilitate the process of feedback and help the team identify their individual strengths to complement the team's strengths and fill the gaps.

Performing

During this final stage, the task force decides on parameters for the success of the team in fulfilling its purpose and the methods and procedures to be used to meet their goals. These methods and procedures should aim for continuous improvement of the organizational processes.

HR's role



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Though the task force starts off with a well-defined purpose, the best leadership and the best skills as team members, it often stumbles because of a lack of HR support during the developmental phase of the team. An effective and efficient task force thrives on accelerated progress when HR takes care to periodically acknowledge the efforts of each team member and the team as a whole.