

USING SELF-MANAGED TEAMS AT SANDWICH BLITZ

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To understand the benefits of self-managed teams in today's organizations, it is important to know the differences between traditional work environments and teamwork environments in terms of how they operate. In traditional work environments, communication is more formal and therefore involves the uses of emails, newsletters and other recognized forms of communication.¹ On the other hand, an organization that is set up using the team-based approach uses a less-structured and more informal type of communication and therefore there is more flexibility than in traditional organizations.¹ In the traditional set-up, the work is planned and determined by the managers while in the team-based environments, this is performed jointly by the team members. The jobs in team-based environments require knowledge and skills while those in traditional environments are narrowly defined. Cross-training is widely practiced in team-based environments while it is considered inefficient in traditional environments.² In traditional environments, information is considered to be management property while in team-based environments there is free sharing of information. Measured risk taking is encouraged and supported in team-based organizations while it is discouraged and punished in traditional organizations. Today's businesses need teams to drive organizational success and therefore

1. Duggan, Tara. *Differences between the Traditional Organizational Structure & One That Is Team-Based?* (2017). <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/differences-between-traditional-organizational-structure-one-teambased-63840.html> (accessed 17/06/2017).

2. Tohidi, Hamid. "Teamwork productivity & effectiveness in an organization base on rewards, leadership, training, goals, wage, size, motivation, measurement and information technology." *Procedia Computer Science* 3 (2011): 1137-1146.

organizations such as Sandwich Blitz need to embrace the self-managed team approach to ensure the growth of their business.

Self-managed teams can be defined as groups of employees who are responsible and accountable for most of the processes that lead to the production and delivery of a product or service.³ Self-managed teams do manage themselves and the tasks they perform.⁴ It is the team members and not supervisors who decide the best way to do a job. For example, team members are responsible for determining the work schedules and assigning the work roles in self-managed teams unlike in the traditional environment where the supervisor is responsible for the similar issues. Despite the fact that most authority has been delegated to team members in self-managed team-based organizations, they are not in control of the policies and procedures that govern colleagues in their work unit. Team members in self-managed teams do have much responsibility and thus they are tasked with monitoring and improving their own work performance.⁴ Some of the responsibilities of the team members in self-managed teams could include selecting new team members, executing the disciplinary actions against members that have misbehaved, conducting formal evaluations of their peers, coordinating the daily work schedules, scheduling vacations and performing cross-training among other duties. In order to overcome these challenges, the members of self-managed teams undergo cross-training to acquire several skills that are related to the tasks they are expected to perform. The present setup at Sandwich Blitz is

3. MacDonald, Lynne. *What is a Self-managed Team?* (2017). <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/selfmanaged-team-18236.html> (accessed 17/06/2017).

4 . Becker, S. Wendy. "Self-Directed Work Teams." *The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management*, 1.

more traditional and thus the managers led by Dalman and Lei have seen the need of implementing the self-managed teams approach so that they can be able to devote their time and energy to grow the business.

While executing the self-managed teams' approach at Sandwich Blitz, a Food and Beverage Company, the organization will arrange its representatives into self-managing groups which will be left to work by themselves while they are partially guided by an external leader. The managers of the company, for this situation, Dalman and Lei will be the external leaders of the self-managed teams they have established and therefore they will oversee the performance of their members. These teams will have well-defined job functions while they will also monitor and manage their performance. Much of the directives will not come from the managers as the team members will be involved in the gathering and synthesizing of information before making important decisions. This would mean taking collective responsibility keeping in mind the end goal to meet the set objectives for the organization. In the self-managed teams' approach, a considerable amount of authority is delegated to the team groups and thus these groups are granted tremendous flexibility that is necessary for them to make their own decisions.⁵ The external leaders will have to embrace certain characteristics in order to ensure continued success of the self-managed teams. To empower these teams, the leaders will have to be relating, scouting and persuading.⁵ In implementing the self-managed teams approach at Sandwich Blitz and then taking the roles of external leaders, Dalman and Lei would have to delegate a

5. Druskat, Vanessa Urch, and Jane V. Wheeler. "How to lead a self-managing team." *MIT Sloan Management Review* 45, no. 4 (2004): 65-71.

considerable amount of authority and functions to the teams and in doing so, they would have more time to strategize on how to take their business to the next level.

Implementing the self-managed teams' approach at Sandwich Blitz will come with a number of benefits. First, the company will benefit from increased accountability and this will lead to reduced management costs which will reduce substantiality. Unlike in the traditional environment where employees will most likely stick to their assigned job roles, team members will be willing to perform extra tasks apart from their assigned roles and this will help get jobs completed in time.⁶ Employees will, therefore, gain a greater depth of knowledge from such experiences and thus be able to contribute innovative ideas to the business. Secondly, self-managed teams at Sandwich Blitz will ensure there is a great focus on the overall business outcomes as team members will be focused on the big picture of the business as opposed to ensuring specific projects are completed. Self-managed teams are resourceful and initiative driven and therefore if such groups are successfully implemented at Sandwich Blitz, the company will become more innovative and resourceful as the teams will be given greater scope and therefore tasked with finding solutions to bigger problems.⁷ The teams will be able to discover new strategies to achieve much with less effort and thus they will discover new ways of getting things done and also reveal the areas within the business that need much attention.⁶ Self-

6. Guest, David. *The Advantages of Self-managed Teams in Your Business* (2017). <http://davidguest.com.au/buildingbusinesses/team/the-advantages-of-self-managed-teams-in-your-business/> (accessed 17/06/2017).

7 . Yang, Seung-Bum, and Mary E. Guy. "The effectiveness of self-managed work teams in government organizations." *Journal of Business and Psychology* 26, no. 4 (2011): 531-541.

managed teams are able to solve emotional issues that could arise among them and this leads to greater happiness within the company's working environment as conflicts are solved internally. The use of self-managed teams at Sandwich Blitz will also ensure that individual roles become more flexible as one can act as a manager in one project and just a team member in another project.⁶ Finally, cross-training will enable self-managed teams within the company to have cross-skilled specialists who will be able to take on tasks that are perceived to be beyond their skills and capabilities with much greater confidence.

In conclusion, a successful implementation of the self-managed teams approach at Sandwich Blitz will eventually translate to the overall success of the organization. Self-managed teams are known to have a direct impact on quality as they also impact the performance and attitudes of team members. Significant improvement on the performance, morale, and attitudes of team members at Sandwich Blitz will lead to significant quality improvements in terms of products and services and therefore contribute to Sandwich Blitz's success.

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