

Participative Management Style as a Team Stability Factor

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The stability of a team depends primarily on such factors as employees' involvement and gratification, as well as friendly communication between colleagues. Being part of a team is an art that every person in a company should learn. A great role in this process lies on the shoulders of the team manager. The participative management style is a kind of employee involvement that serves as a guarantee of the company's success, employees' satisfaction and higher business efficiency in general.

Extensive research conducted in the early 1950s-1960s demonstrates that participative management is well-suited to organizations whose staff is noted for its creativity, intrinsic motivation for work that interests them, stronger affiliation with discipline and sensitivity to directive management.

The research from 2008 on management decision-making within selected establishments in Russia shows a correlation between education level, age, and job position titles and involvement into decision-making (Rebrov A.V., "Influence on the effectiveness of motivational structure of employees of different professions."). For example, middle-aged persons with higher education and a middle job position are involved in that process more often than the others. In my opinion, this situation is typical, but not desired because every team member is important.

A manager's success is always measured not by what he does, but by what he inspires others to do. This attitude helps employees to develop their potential and become more than what they otherwise would have been.

A manager's task is to make projects and professional activities attractive to each employee. His duty is to identify correctly each employee's profile, determine certain abilities and talents of every team member. It is widely known that if the employee carries out

a function that he does not like, the efficiency level decreases threefold and the employee quits the company sooner or later.

Participative style imposes a number of requirements on the manager, who has to be close to the team to know his employees. An individual approach to each member of the team is crucial, because a standard approach would lead to superficial management and dissatisfaction of employees. The other tricky moment is when an employee is more competent in some areas due to his higher education, broader experience or better communication skills. However, I believe that any big company is able to find a position for any talented person who is ready to contribute to corporate success.

As is well known, in general there are four main processes forming the basis of participative management style: informing the employee, training, involvement in the decision making and involvement in a rewards system. In human resources we have an elaborated policy that embraces all these four directions.

For informing the team, there could be widely used internal communication tools such as an internal magazine, Intranet site, internal social networking, team meetings, team-building sessions, newsletters, etc. We can have regular opinion polls and studies that give a more realistic picture of the way employees perceive the company and a clearer idea of what they think, thus building an effective feedback channel on the one hand and improving the way we do things on the other.

As for training, it is important to pay attention not only to regular training sessions of product awareness and raising professional skills. Approach to training is also very important. For example, a special BORD session could be organized with each employee, when the manager and executives together build an annual plan of personal professional growth that would include all necessary trainings and participation in business events if needed.

Participation in the decision-making process is vital for the insight of participative style. Only personal involvement of each employee in management's decisions makes the company more transparent and fair for the team. In our company for the next year goals are set by the end of each year. And it is not up to the managers alone to do that. It is done together with the employees. That way, everybody has an opportunity to express his point of view and suggest a possible solution. After a common decision is made, each employee can bring it to life by participating in or even managing some projects. That is a vivid example of our participative style in action.

And last but not least is the participation in a rewards system. All the employees receive a bonus at the end of every, say, five years of their work within the company. The amount of the bonus depends on the financial results of the company and are calculated on annual basis. We call it the participation in reward because everyone takes part in creation of the capital and is rewarded in pro rata for his or her participation. We believe that everybody should be rewarded for his or her contributions to common success.

Despite all benefits, participative management is not a magic cure for every company. Managers must evaluate risks before implementing this strategy. Every manager should remember that whatever decision will be taken by team, he will be responsible for it. Also participative management style can fail if the management doesn't realize that this style is

not just delegating responsibility, but a tool that helps solving problems, set goals and finding new ideas.

Furthermore there is a threat of alienating employees whose ideas were not implemented. In contrast for such risks and threats participative management gives a chance to build a democratic and complementary atmosphere in a team.

As a human resources expert I believe that qualifications, skills and inspiration are the driving values for our everyday work. That is the reason why we implement all of the principles of participative management in our relationships with the team.

There is nothing more important at a workplace than people and their attitude to their job and responsibilities. My experience proves that this management style can be a very powerful and effective tool for a team leader.

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