

Tools for Teams: Enhancing the Capabilities of Product Development Teams

David Caldwell
Santa Clara University

Product Development Teams

- Understand and Synthesize Market and Technical Data
- Develop Prototype that Meets Specifications
- Deliver the Prototype to Others Who Will Build, Sell, and Service It

Traditional View of Team Composition

- Size
- Characteristics of Individual Member
 - Task knowledge
 - Social skills
 - Motivation
- Characteristics of the Team
 - Optimal level of diversity
 - Credibility within the organization

Study of Product Development Teams

- Interviews with Team Leaders
- Questionnaires from Team Members
- Ratings of Performance by Managers and Team Members

Team Activities

- “Internal” Processes
 - Decision making processes
 - Ability to work together
- “External” Processes
 - Obtaining information
 - Building support for team decisions

Types of External Processes

- *Ambassador Activities*
 - Representing the team to outsiders, buffering the team, gaining support from management
- *Task Coordinator Activities*
 - Working with other groups on ongoing design issues
- *Scout Activities*
 - Scanning the environment for general market and technical data

Team Activities and Performance

- Internal Activities are Related to the Team's Assessment of Its Own Performance
- External Activities are Related to Management's Assessment of the Team's Performance
- The Team's Assessment of Its Own Performance and Management's Assessment of Performance are Unrelated

External Activities and Performance

- *Ambassador Activities* are strongly related to management's early assessments but only weakly related to final assessments
- *Task Coordination* is strongly related to the final assessment of the project
- *Scouting* is negatively related to management's assessments of the project

Other Conclusions

- A Large Amount of Communication with Outside Groups Does Not Guarantee Effective Boundary Management
- Having a Cross-Functional Team Does Not Guarantee Effective Boundary Management

Designing A Team To Manage External Activities

- Bringing All Necessary Contacts Into the Team Would Make It Too Large
- New Roles For Team Members Must Evolve
 - Use of Experts
 - Changing Composition Over Time
 - Using Full and Part Time Members
 - Use of Core and Peripheral Members

New Roles Create New Challenges

- “Boundedness” of the Team
- Developing Effective Internal Processes