



CASE STUDY

Developing high performing teams using Cognitive Team Roles™, understanding their socio-cognitive dynamics

Executive Summary

Using the psychometric instrument Cognitive Team Roles helped a newly formed team within the public sector to understand its strengths and weaknesses. The team identified the need to recruit an additional member of the team, ensuring that they had the thinking style preferences the other team members lacked. Cognitive Team Roles also helped them to understand how the team approached problem solving, tasks and their inter-personal relationships. It helped them to work more effectively, with increased respect, and their work became more enjoyable.

Background

A team of five people had been newly created within a local authority and although each member had known the other members for some time within the organisation they had not worked together to any significant extent. As a business development unit, the team needed to be able to work effectively together and to achieve excellence in performance quickly.

The Objectives

The team wanted to understand more about its dynamics, its strengths and potential weaknesses and to identify any specific areas where effective team working might be absent or in potential conflict. They decided to use Cognitive Team Roles as part of the process of developing team self-awareness and to assist in identifying any potential gaps that might need to be filled.

The Result

The team mapped their thinking style preferences and immediately identified some key areas:

1. The team as a whole shared low preferences for Logical, Detailed and Troubleshooter thinking (which includes a preference for risk assessment and contingency planning). This could have led to potential lack of completion or "seeing-through" of more practical or detailed tasks by the team.
2. Three of the five members had very strong preferences for Strategist and Creative roles, driving the vision of the team, but issues could arise if there was a lack of consistency between the visions, or if one or more felt that the pace was too slow or too fast for them. The other two members felt that sometimes not enough attention was being paid to the detail.
3. Within the team there were no high preferences for Intuitive thinking, indicating that the team did not tend to rely on feelings for making decisions. However the presence of individuals with moderate preferences for this type of thinking would ensure the possible benefits of "gut instinct" were not ignored.
4. Many team members had high or moderate preferences for Altruist and Collaborative thinking, indicating that members would be likely to work together to overcome conflict or differences and ensure that the psychological, physical and emotional needs of the team were met.
5. There were two Challengers in the team. This can often lead to conflict, however the presence of those team members with a high Altruist preference would ensure that the challenging did not occur at the expense of the feelings of those being challenged.

The Benefits of Using Cognitive Team Roles

The team immediately identified that no one individual had a high preference for Logical, Detailed or Troubleshooter thinking and that therefore there could be a danger that the team might not complete certain tasks or pay enough attention to the details or risk assessments that the tasks might require. They therefore recruited an additional member of the team, mapping their thinking style profile to ensure that they complemented the team appropriately as part of the recruitment process. Other potential areas for conflict were also identified and discussed so that these could be planned for and managed.

Cognitive Team Roles

This team instrument has been designed to help teams understand how they approach and manage the process through which they make and implement decisions. It identifies the ways in which different team members approach problems and tasks, the ways in which they interact as people, and their styles of behaviour. These are the 'socio-cognitive' dynamics of teamwork. Cognitive Team Roles maps all team preferences for ten cognitive roles on the Cognitive Team Roles Wheel and identifies the cognitive strengths, weaknesses, conflicts, synergies and potential gaps within the team.

For further information on this case study or Cognitive Team Roles, contact the Cognitive Fitness Consultancy on:

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