

Teams who select their own communication leader perform better than those who don't

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Teams who are able to select who coordinates communication among team members perform much better than those who have no say, according to new research from Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.

The researchers also found that individuals who communicate more during tasks and training were more likely to be chosen as the communication leader.

These are the findings from research by Jerry Guo, Assistant Professor of Strategy at Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, alongside his colleagues from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Massachusetts College of Business, and Clark University School of Management.

The researchers wanted to examine how individuals come to occupy communication network leadership positions and the effect that selection processes have on group performance. Internally, individuals in these communication network positions link otherwise unconnected team members and can potentially act as the voice for the wider team, sharing insights with other teams, organisations, and stakeholders.

In order to understand whether a team performed better if they choose their own team leader, the researchers conducted a laboratory study with over 120 participants. Researchers split all participants into groups of three, where they were given a project to complete – the creation of a new mobile app.

After a short period of discussion, the groups were asked to select someone from the team to be a conduit where members of the team could only speak directly to them, but they could speak to everyone in the team, relaying information from one team member to the other. In one half of the groups, the selected person became the central member, in the other half of groups, teams were assigned a different person.

The researchers found that teams who selected their own communication team leader made less errors in their app development, therefore performing better than the teams who had their leader assigned by the researchers. Moreover, communication ability and technical ability were key skills held by those who were selected.

“The value of good communication really cannot be understated in the business world. It is vitally important that all teams have a leader who can clearly and concisely communicate tasks, so that the team can carry these out with little to no error. The combination of speed and fidelity can be a source of competitive advantage for teams and organizations”, says Professor Guo.

“Being able to communicate effectively is an important skill. Failing to have a leader in this role who can be an effective communicator and networker runs the risk of errors and weak performance because of poor communication”.

Having a team leader who effectively connects team members together is vitally important. The researchers say that these findings clearly show that when a lead voice is needed for a team, it is important that

the group is able to have a frank discussion about which members skillsets suit the position the best.

In being able to choose the best person for the role, the team is more likely to perform at a more effective rate, which of course is more beneficial to wider team achieving their goals.

If you would like to receive the research paper, or speak to the researchers, please contact Peter Remon at BlueSky Education - peter@bluesky-pr.com +44 (0) 77 235 228 30.