

Approaches to Team Efficiency

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson discusses efficiency and flexibility within the context of a team. You will learn what efficiency is. You will look at what human resource efficiency is. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Efficiency
2. Human Resources Efficiency

1. Efficiency

Efficiency is the ability to achieve goals with minimal waste of resources. In the diagram below resources are listed on the left. Human resources are the people, the talent, the skill set. Material resources are the equipment, facilities, natural resources needed. Financial resources are the cash or the source of funding.

The results are broken out into three categories: scope is the quantity created, range of elements that are needed, quality is how well the work is going to be done, and timeline is how quickly the work can be done. The degree of efficiency can be thought of as what is needed for results.

EFFICIENT PLAN	
Resources	Results
Human resources	Scope
Material resources	Quality
Financial resources	Timeline

The degree of efficiency is thought of as the results achieved relative to the amount of resources used. Optimal efficiency can be thought of as getting the most that you possibly can out of what you have or the best results with the least resources used. You can imagine that context is extremely important when optimizing efficiency.

Just because one set of changes has the greatest impact on efficiency does not mean it is the most desirable set of changes in a given context. When improving efficiency, it's important to begin by establishing which factors are relatively fixed and are relatively flexible. The degree to which these factors are fixed or flexible is based on organizational goals and parameters.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** A company needing to produce 200 widgets by January 4 or a company having a limited budget in the form of a grant are examples of fixed factors.

Efficiency within a given set of activities ideally increases with time until a state of maximum efficiency has been achieved based on the current resources.

IN CONTEXT

Here's a simple illustration. Let's say you're moving along in a process, and you discover at some point you need to add a responsibility or a task.

The scope, which was once fixed, changes. A team member points out that the added responsibility from the widened scope will require more time. All aspects impact each other.

2. Human Resources Efficiency

Human resources efficiency is also known as workforce productivity. Overall efficiency is impacted not only by which resources are used in which ways, but also how efficient an individual resource is in and of itself. Workforce productivity can be evaluated at each level: individual, team, departmental, and organizational.

In the case of an individual resource, efficiency may be impacted by experience with related work. How has the quality of an individual's training been? What is their educational background? What is their natural aptitude in a work environment? Do they have good work habits? Individual efficiency can be improved by ensuring that people are assigned to tasks for which they are well suited, and they receive adequate training and on-boarding.



DID YOU KNOW

Feedback, whether it's positive or negative, impacts individual productivity. Effective feedback is crucial to optimizing productivity.

At the team level, additional factors come into play. This includes clarity of goals, roles, and responsibilities. Quality of communication is important. Do team members trust each other enough to raise red flags when they're seeing some obstacles? Is there a nice balance of skills, abilities, and experience? Are their perspectives well-balanced? Are they a diverse team? Do they have collective ability to handle change, remain flexible, and embrace ambiguous situations? These are all taken into account in workforce productivity.

Individual Level	Team Level
Experience with work/related work	Clarity of goals, roles, and responsibilities
Training/education	Quality of communication
Natural aptitude	Trust
Work habits	Balance of skills, abilities, and experience
Feedback guidance	



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **efficiency** is the ability to achieve goals with minimal waste of resources. **Human resource efficiency** involves individuals' experience with work, their work habits, training, and educational background.

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