Knowledge and culture gap between Technology and Business

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In any organization where there is a mix of Business and Technology groups there will more than likely have friction between the two groups regarding delivery of software, services or information. Even when successful organizations are able to deliver to clients there is still some internal strife that occurs that could become an obstacle with attempting to get ahead of the competition.

In 2013 there was a research paper, BREAKING DOWN THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE KNOWLEDGE/CULTURE GAP BETWEEN TESTING AND BUSINESS by Jeremy Berriault, using meta data from two separate studies:

Basellier (2003) focused on the knowledge that each group has for the other (Business and IT)

Willcoxen & Chatham (2004) considered the perception each has for the other (Business and IT)

When looking at the two studies on their own they are compelling. When combined they show a correlation between perception and knowledge that provides answers to why there is friction between the two groups.

The end result of the study was that there was issues of lack of trust, lack of understanding of the value each group provides and a knowledge gap that has led to it.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this paper is to be a summary of the results of the BREAKING DOWN THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE KNOWLEDGE/CULTURE GAP BETWEEN TESTING AND BUSINESS paper (using the data specific for IT and Business) and provide recommended enterprise wide changes not specific to a single discipline.

KEY FINDINGS

Determination of trust

Trust is an important aspect in a team environment to ensure that productivity is effective (Dirks & Ferrin, 2008). Business experiences provided insight into the high level of expectation for the Technology group to provide what they requested, despite knowing the challenges the teams can run into when building. When delays or errors occur with clients, Business lose confidence that the Technology group could be trusted to complete the task at hand. This lack of confidence is amplified by the little knowledge Business has regarding Technology practices in a project environment creating micro-management situations.

Technology leadership is in a unique situation of having multiple smaller teams working together to meet the needs of one team, Business, throughout the life of a project. They must be able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders to ensure success of a project and yet it is apparent they do not make the effort to resolve communication efforts. Technology rated high on effectively communicating yet at the same time indicating that both groups speak a different language. This is counterproductive to a dynamic team effort environment (Daniel & Davis, 2009; Golden Pryor, Pryor Singleton, Taneja, & Toombs, 2009). Although Technology groups may think they know how Business works a gap is apparent in Technology's ability to communicate their function. This gap creates scenarios that could harm the relationship and impact future work.

Determination of Value

Responses regarding value had one of the highest correlations between knowledge and perception of Technology from Business. Yet there was little correlation of Technology responses to the rating of value despite explicit questions. Within a project team environment, Business did not fully understand the processes and strategies a Technology group can bring. The general feeling from Business suggests there is little cost effectiveness and little knowledge of the value of Technology's output in relation to the organization (van Den Hooff & De Winter, 2011; Martin, Hatzakis, Lycett, & Macredie, 2004). Business relates there is a lack of involvement and knowledge of the strategies and vision that Technology groups provide to the organization. This affects the usefulness of continuous improvement for all stakeholders (Slack, Chambers, & Johnston, 2010).

Technology indicated they do have understanding of what they can do and are effective in their strategies. Their responses indicate they realize the value they could provide to their stakeholders (Daft & Armstrong, 2009; Kotler & Keller, 2009; Grant, 2008). More detail is needed to determine the value knowledge of a Technology team to an organization. Responses suggest there are missing components that are not identified by those individuals (Berriault, 2011; Berriault, 2012)

Knowledge Gap

Knowledge is a key component in a team environment. Each member must understand the skill sets of others and what they are accountable for, to gain team success. Business responses indicated little knowledge of Technology's effort within a project. This information effects how Business communicates

with Technology. Although Technology felt that they communicate well with Business the ratings from Business in project work suggest otherwise. Their lack of comprehension outside of project work impacts Technology's perception that Business rarely participate in activities that would ensure effective teamwork (Martin, Hatzakis, Lycett, & Macredie, 2004; Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Technology has the ability to improve the lines of communication and flow of knowledge to help Business gain a better understanding of their effort. Ensuring the message is properly received is critical to contributing to closing the gap (Sinek, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Sharing knowledge can produce products that are of high quality and low costs; however organizational barriers between the two groups create a gap that impacts the successful efficient completion of a project. Shared knowledge that is bi-directional is key to improving the relationship and breaking down those barriers. Creating a common language to more appropriately communicate between the groups will help to resolve the disconnect and help both groups to understand each other`s needs.

Regardless of the delivery methodology there must be a good fit and understanding of the value provided. Technology must broaden their skills in relationship management to encourage a more organic flow of information between the two. They must push through those perceptions and improve not only themselves but the opinion of others which will help to prevent misunderstanding from arising.

The common theme throughout the analysis is knowledge management and its effect on trust and value within the relationship. The relationship between Technology and Business groups will vary from organization to organization. Ensuring functional intertwined processes along with a strong knowledge sharing program will help resolve the disconnect between them and develop a stronger partnership for improved and efficient productivity.

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