Finding ways to contribute

Our team really didn't face any major issues at the beginning of the week in terms of our performance. Our decisions made stuck to our overall strategy, and the goal continued to be simply refining what we do best, and make sure we were prepared for the double rollover next week. What this reinforced for me was something that I discussed in my reflection last week; that our long-term strategy has clearly been a key to our success in the assessment. In particular, I mentioned how the dynamics of group discussion and cohesion through the collective understanding of an overall strategy seemed to be relative to our consistent success. I believe that the results that we experiences this week only served to further reinforce this idea even further for me, as our SHV continued to trend upwards (though not at the very top yet). One thing I have questioned in the past in the importance of my role as R&D director and how important it is to the success of the team. So as to not just repeat what I discussed in my journal last week, I have decided to reflect upon how my role has been significant or not to this long-term strategy.

At the beginning of the week we decided that we would not undertake any new design and development for new products, opting to stick to what we had for the coming rollovers. This was made with the belief that we could continue to be successful with our current products that have always brought us profit. Although this was a team decision which I fully agreed with, what this inevitably resulted in for me was no work to do in my actual 'department'. As a whole, I do not believe that the R&D director role contains many elements in comparison to the roles of the Mikes Bikes team. If at the start of the week we decide not to undertake any development, then I have no decisions to make on my own for the rest of the week. In the past this has really had me question the importance of my role to the simulation and led me to try and find other areas to help in. Marketing, Manufacturing, CEO and HR all have a direct stake in the decisions of the R&D director. Initially, at the beginning of the simulation, I thought this meant that the decisions made by me would be unquestionably important and wholly determining for the operations of the team. However, this has not been the case, as the designs that we have undertaken through the assignment have been made as a team, and not undertaken until each person has agreed that they believe that we can be successful as a team with it, and (implicitly) that they would know how they could work their role around it. This has been in line with our consistent team strategy, meaning that everyone has been on the same page for projects. This in turn has been good for the team, but meant less work for me to do in my department as the decision making process for designs has effectively involved everyone.

Upon reflection, I have realised that the problem for me has therefore not really been a problem at all. The anxiety I have had in regards to me not feeling like I can contribute much in my role is balanced out by the overall team strategy which I find myself in with my group. In weeks where I have felt that I have not had much to do in my role itself I have tried to branch out and find other ways to contribute to the team, or more recently, help out our subsidiary. This would seem to relate to what was discussed by Christensen (2010), where it is suggested that high achieving people will tend to invest more time and effort into projects if they foresee tangible results from doing so. I could have put less effort in and played down to my perceived limitations of my given role, however decided not to, and tried to add value where I could. I would attribute this to a mixture of competitiveness, a willingness to succeed, and a desire to not let my team down. Last week I discussed in detail that I believe that team discussion and strategizing are inherently important in the success of firms, much as several of the theorists in this course would confirm (Katzenbach and Smith, 1992; Baghai et al., 2009; Kelley, 2001). This is significant due to the belief I have had in our team's long-term strategy, which has only grown as our success has continued, and a reason why I have continued to try to add value even when my role itself has not had anything to contribute on its own. Christensen (2010) also notes the importance of humility and work ethic as being important to individual success. I believe that these would be inherent qualities required for successful teamwork too. This is due to the fact that work ethic is needed from all members in order for a team to work so that it is efficient enough so that everyone does at least what is asked of them, and that humility is required in order for all the members to work well together as well as *want* to work well together. Four a team strategy to be successful, it would seem that everybody has to buy into it for it to continue to be a success. Going back to what I have discussed in earlier reflections, this would also be supported by the discussion of Katzenbach and Smith (1992), who delve into the idea that a team is composed of equal parts contributing cohesively, rather than just a collection of people working together in a vacuum.

Next week we have the double rollover to look forward to, so can only imagine that it will be a busy week. Originally my anxiety that it might be a week of me having nothing to do as a part of my role seems to have died down as my realisation that I can still find ways to contribute has grown. As a result, I have continued to learn quite a lot about several of the elements in the Mikes Bikes assessment from interactions with my team members. So even though my role has had its limitations, it has also allowed me to continually learn, hopefully meaning I have avoided the doom loop (Argyris, 1982).

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