



Collaborative Management

management techniques



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About the Tutorial

Collaborative management can be broadly seen as the act of working together as a team to accomplish a common goal within a given timeframe. This is a brief introductory tutorial that explains the methodologies applied in the rapidly growing area of collaborative management.

Audience

This tutorial will be useful for students from management streams who aspire to learn the basics of Collaborative Management. Professionals, especially project managers, regardless of which sector or industry they belong to, can use this tutorial to learn how to apply the methods of collaborative management in their respective project environments.

Prerequisites

The readers of this tutorial are expected to have a basic understanding of how a project manager would deal with a complex project having multiple dimensions and accomplish it without overshooting his resources.

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1. Collaborative Management – Introduction

Collaborative management can be defined as a collection of various management techniques that enlighten a sense of unity and teamwork among managers, supervisors, and the employees within a business organization. It can be broadly seen as the act of working together as a team to accomplish a common goal within a given timeframe.

The concept behind collaborative management style is to:

- allow managers to combine their strengths with the strengths of their team
- make it possible to collectively overcome any weaknesses found among the team members
- enhance the efficiency and productivity of all the company.

Management By Objectives

Management by objectives (MBO) is a process of defining objectives to be achieved within an organization so that the management and the employees agree to the objectives, and understand their roles and duties towards the organization in order to achieve them.

The MBO process involves five steps:

1. **Review organizational objectives:** The manager gains a clear understanding of organization's overall objectives.
2. **Set worker objectives:** The manager and the workers meet to agree on worker objectives to be achieved by the end of a given time period.
3. **Monitor progress:** At regular intervals during the normal operating period, the manager and the workers check to see if the objectives are being reached.
4. **Evaluating performance:** At the end of normal operating period, the worker's performance is measured by the extent to which the worker reached the objective.
5. **Give reward:** Rewards are given to the worker on the basis of the extent to which the objectives were reached.

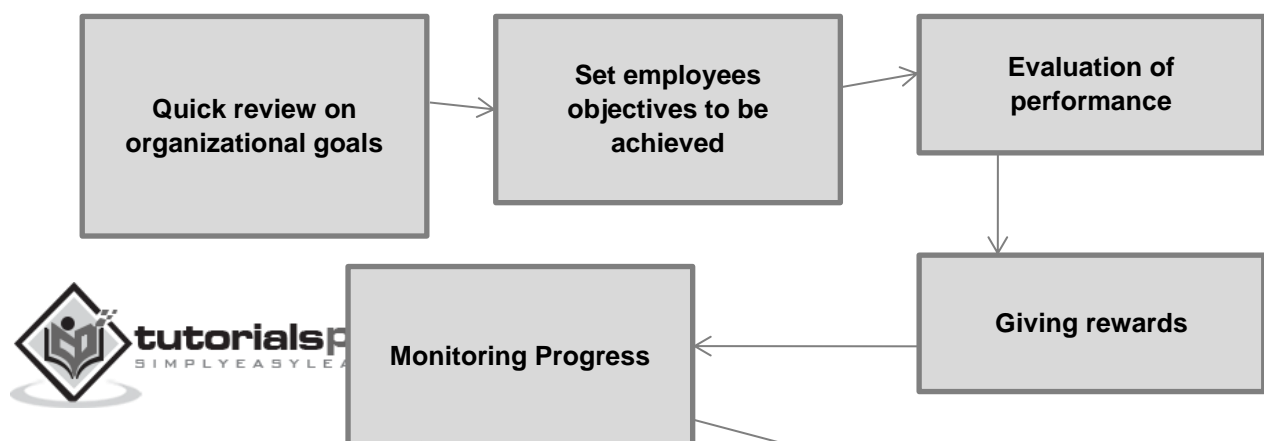


Figure: Steps of MBO

Some of the important advantages of MBO are given below:

- **Motivation** – It encourages employee job satisfaction and commitment.
- **Better communication and Coordination** – Frequent reviews, and interactions between superiors and subordinates builds harmonious relationships within the organization and solves problems.
- **Clarity of Goals** –Subordinates tend to have a higher commitment towards the objectives they set for themselves than those imposed on them by others.

Need for Collaborative Management

In her 1994 Harvard Business Review article "Collaborative Advantage", Rosabeth Moss Kanter mentioned about leaders who recognize that there are critical business relationships that cannot be controlled by formal systems but require a dense web of interpersonal connections.

Followed by a book published in that same year, Chrislip and Larson learned that collaborative management needs a different kind of leadership. It needs leaders who can safeguard the process, facilitate interaction, and patiently deal with high levels of frustration.

In 2013, Harvard Business Review authors Nick Lovegrove and Matthew Thomas explored the complex relationship between the business, the government, and various social sectors. Their research suggests that the future of collaborative leadership depends on the ability of leaders to engage and collaborate with the business, the government, and the social sectors.

Features of Collaborative Management

Some of the significant features of collaborative management are as follows:

- It is based on the principle of active participation of all team members in the planning and control process as well as in networking those using information, communication, and collaboration modules.
- Management is not regarded as an activity reserved solely for managers but as an integral part of the team work of all team members.
- It creates a high level of transparency and a shared awareness of quality among team members.

Collaborative Processes

A collaborative process scores over a traditional process in many ways:

- Collaboration is understood by participants as a perspective and a way of relating with each other as well as the organization; not merely a tactic, or a set of skills or tools.
- It gives a clear and elaborative way to achieve the goal through joint work.
- Trust among the members overcomes initial hesitance or suspicions.
- Participants work to satisfy, not just their own but the interests of all members and the organization.
- There is wide inclusion of, and openness to, all needed perspectives.
- The collaboration produces tangible, substantial, and sustainable results by moving from formational stages to joint participation and action.

Collaborative Decision Making

Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) is a joint initiative aimed at improving the flow management through increased information exchange among the superior and the subordinates.

CDM is an operating paradigm where decisions are based on a commonly shared view of the leaders and the team members, and an awareness of the consequences of the mutual decisions made.

The following diagram shows collaborative decision making:

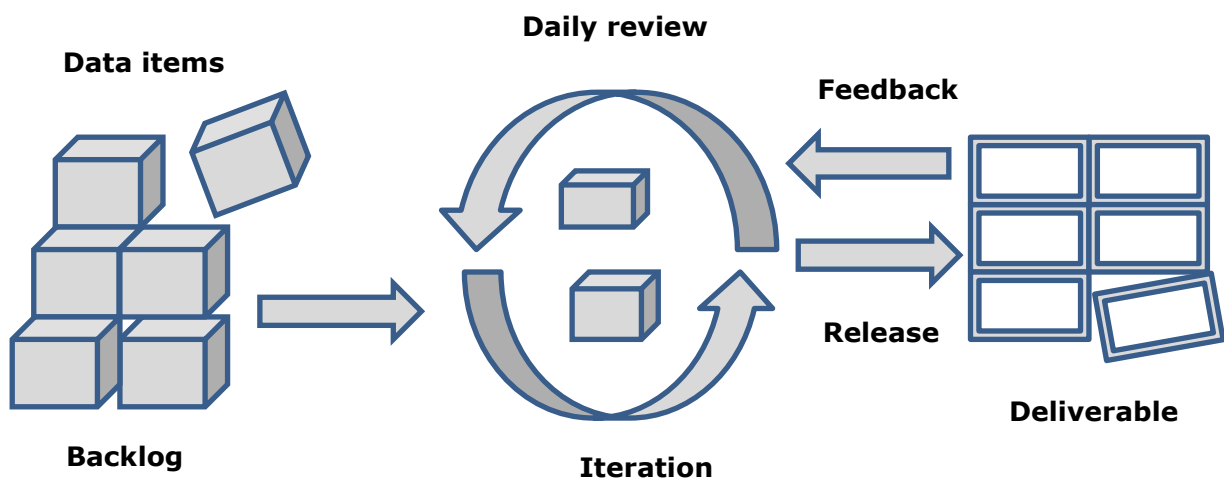


Figure: Collaborative Decision Making

There are two central assumptions to CDM:

1. Better information will lead to better decision-making. Tools and procedures need to be in place in order to respond easily to changing conditions.
2. By sharing information, values, and preferences, team members learn from each other and build a common pool of knowledge, resulting in decisions and actions that are most valuable to the system.

2. Collaborative Management – Collaboration System

A collaboration system consists of a set of tools that create a workflow of information to specific teams and their respective team members. This allows individuals to share their ideas and talents with other members so that the task can be accomplished both efficiently and effectively.

There are numerous factors that influence a collaboration system, but there are two fundamental aspects that not only need to be customized according to the goals, but also need to be taken into consideration when it comes to corporate culture. These two are:

1. **Unstructured collaboration** Chasing answers to the unknown questions, using tools to share information about the problems at stake, and increasing personal productivity.
2. **Structured collaboration** Sharing common knowledge, written rules, structured and set workflow that does not change.

We will basically focus on **structured collaboration**, as it is widely used in all sectors.

Structured Collaboration

Structured methods of collaboration encourage introspection of behavior and communication. These methods mainly aim to increase the success of the organization as the team gets engaged in collaborative problem solving.

Positive Aspects of Structured Collaboration

- It is easy to organize.
- It is excellent for hierarchal structured organizations.
- It increases proficiency.
- There is no contradiction in relation to information.
- All members on the team understand and acknowledge their position and act accordingly.

Limitations of Structured Collaboration

- It does not foster innovation.
- There is same workflow information with no variance at all.
- It can cause groupthink and conflicts.
- It is intended for repetitive industry.
- It needs to be managed and supervised all the time.

Collaboration According to Corporate Cultures

In order to create a collaborative working environment, the employees need to be motivated and rewarded at times.

- For example, a structured collaboration would not fit in the Google corporate culture because Google is very innovative, and loaded with new ideas and challenging unanswered questions. In a structured collaboration, innovation would be non-existent because of the boundary of common knowledge.
- On the other hand, a structured collaboration model would fit well under a manufacturing company like MRF because constant workflow is critical to the organization's output.

In addition to corporate culture, the structure of the firm needs to be examined and evaluated first to get a better understanding of which collaboration model would best fit in.

End of ebook preview

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