

Quiz L5M1 - Managing Teams and Individuals Perfect Exam Quick Prep

Managing Teams and Individuals

*[L5M1]
Core
Study Guide*

Level 5
Advanced Diploma in
Procurement and Supply

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CIPS Managing Teams and Individuals Sample Questions (Q14-Q19):

NEW QUESTION # 14

Describe what is meant by a group 'norm', giving examples. (10 points). In what way can group norms affect performance? (15 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Definition of Group Norms (10 marks):

A group 'norm' refers to the shared standards of behaviour, values, and expectations that develop within a group. Norms guide how members act and interact, creating predictability and cohesion. They can be formal (set by rules and policies) or informal (emerging naturally over time).

Examples include:

A procurement team having a norm of punctuality for meetings.

A social norm where colleagues share supplier insights openly.

A negative norm, such as tolerating late submission of purchase orders, which may undermine performance.

Norms act as unwritten rules that shape group behaviour and influence the culture of the organisation.

Impact of Group Norms on Performance (15 marks):

Positive norms can enhance performance. For example, a norm of collaboration and knowledge sharing improves innovation and decision-making in procurement projects.

Negative norms can reduce performance. If the team develops a culture of cutting corners in supplier evaluation, this may damage compliance and reputation.

Norms create consistency and cohesion. Members know what is expected of them, reducing conflict and ensuring smoother teamwork.

Peer pressure reinforces norms. High-performing norms, such as meeting deadlines, encourage all members to contribute fully, while low-performing norms, like tolerating absenteeism, can lower standards across the team.

Norms influence motivation and morale. Supportive norms (e.g., recognising achievements) motivate employees, whereas destructive norms (e.g., ignoring contributions) lead to alienation and disengagement.

In procurement specifically, if the norm is strong ethical conduct, the team will collectively avoid corruption risks. If the norm is to focus only on cost savings, the team may neglect sustainability or supplier relationships.

Conclusion:

Group norms are the unwritten rules that shape behaviour within teams. They can have a powerful effect on performance, either enhancing collaboration and accountability or reducing standards and morale. Managers must actively shape positive norms through leadership, communication, and role-modelling to ensure that group behaviour supports organisational goals.

NEW QUESTION # 15

Caleb is the newly appointed CEO of Star Fish Limited, a company that manufactures and installs gym equipment. The company employs 100 people and has dedicated teams for Finance, Product Development and Procurement. Some staff work from the office and some staff work remotely from home. Contrast and provide an example of a formal and informal group that may form at this organisation. What factors should Caleb be aware of that can contribute to group formations? (25 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Formal vs Informal Groups (10-12 marks):

Formal groups are those deliberately created by management to achieve organisational objectives. They have defined structures, roles, and reporting lines. In Star Fish Ltd, examples include the Procurement Team, responsible for sourcing suppliers and managing contracts. This group has clear goals, formal leadership, and measurable outputs.

By contrast, informal groups arise naturally among employees based on social interactions, common interests, or personal relationships. They are not officially sanctioned but strongly influence behaviour. At Star Fish Ltd, an example could be a fitness club of employees who exercise together during breaks or a WhatsApp group among remote workers who support each other socially. These groups provide belonging and morale but may also resist management decisions if excluded.

Factors Influencing Group Formation (12-15 marks):

Common goals and tasks - People working on shared objectives, such as the Product Development Team working on new gym equipment, naturally form groups.

Geography and work arrangements - Staff working remotely may form virtual support groups, while office-based staff bond more through daily interactions.

Shared interests and values - Employees passionate about fitness or sustainability may form informal networks within the company.

Friendship and social needs - Based on Maslow's hierarchy, people seek belonging. Friendships often develop into informal groups.

Leadership and influence - Charismatic or respected individuals may attract followers, leading to informal group formation around their personality.

Organisational culture - A collaborative culture encourages group formation for teamwork, while a competitive culture may create cliques or rival groups.

Technology and communication platforms - With remote work, online groups (Teams, Slack, WhatsApp) facilitate informal interaction and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion:

At Star Fish Ltd, formal groups like the Procurement Department are designed to deliver organisational objectives, while informal groups such as fitness clubs or virtual chat groups form naturally. Caleb must recognise that both types of groups are powerful.

Formal groups deliver results, but informal groups influence morale, motivation, and resistance to change. By understanding the factors driving group formation, Caleb can harness both to build cohesion, encourage collaboration, and support the organisation's success.

NEW QUESTION # 16

Contrast different ways in which an individual can learn new skills/knowledge (15 points). Describe a factor which may influence how individuals learn a new skill/knowledge (10 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Individuals learn in different ways, and managers must understand these methods to develop their teams effectively.

One method is formal learning, such as classroom courses, e-learning, or qualifications like CIPS. This gives structured knowledge and ensures consistency, but it may lack immediate workplace application.

A second method is on-the-job learning, where skills are developed through daily tasks, job rotation or shadowing. This is practical and tailored to the workplace but may be inconsistent without good supervision.

A third approach is experiential learning, based on Kolb's cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualisation and testing. For example, a buyer may learn negotiation skills by practising in a live supplier meeting, reflecting on performance, and then improving.

Another method is social learning, as described by Bandur

a. Individuals learn by observing and modelling others' behaviour. In procurement, junior staff may observe how senior colleagues manage supplier relationships and copy effective practices.

Finally, there is self-directed learning, where individuals take initiative through reading, research or online courses. This builds independence but requires strong personal motivation.

In contrast, formal learning is structured and standardised, while experiential and social learning are more practical and situational.

On-the-job learning blends practice with support, whereas self-directed learning provides autonomy but less guidance. Most organisations use a mix of these methods to ensure balanced development.

One important factor that influences learning is an individual's learning style. According to Honey and Mumford, some people are activists (learn best by doing), others are reflectors (learn by observing and thinking), theorists (prefer analysing concepts), or pragmatists (want to apply ideas in practice). For example, in procurement training, an activist may benefit from a role-play negotiation, while a theorist may prefer studying sourcing models before application. Managers who recognise learning styles can tailor development activities to individual preferences, making learning more effective.

In conclusion, individuals can learn through formal, on-the-job, experiential, social, or self-directed approaches, each with strengths and weaknesses. Learning effectiveness depends on personal factors such as style, and managers who understand these differences can create development opportunities that are both motivating and productive.

NEW QUESTION # 17

Describe what is meant by knowledge transfer (10 points). How can a manager ensure strong knowledge management within the organisation? (15 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Part A - Knowledge Transfer (10 points):

Knowledge transfer refers to the process of sharing skills, experience, insights and information from one person or group to another within an organisation. It ensures that valuable expertise is not lost and that best practice can be replicated. This can happen formally, such as through training, mentoring, or documented procedures, or informally, through conversations, collaboration, and shared experiences. In procurement, knowledge transfer might involve senior buyers passing negotiation tactics to junior colleagues or documenting supplier performance insights in a shared database.

Part B - Ensuring Strong Knowledge Management (15 points):

Managers play a key role in creating systems and cultures that support knowledge sharing. Some ways include:

Creating knowledge repositories - using databases, intranets, or category management playbooks where information is stored and accessible to all team members.

Encouraging mentoring and coaching - pairing experienced staff with new employees helps transfer tacit knowledge that may not be written down.

Promoting collaboration and teamwork - cross-functional project teams and regular knowledge-sharing meetings spread expertise across functions.

Using technology - collaboration platforms (e.g., SharePoint, Teams) allow procurement staff to record supplier insights, lessons learned, and contract data in real time.

Rewarding knowledge sharing - recognising and incentivising individuals who share expertise encourages a culture of openness rather than knowledge hoarding.

Embedding learning in processes - after-action reviews, lessons-learned sessions after supplier negotiations or tenders ensure experiences are captured systematically.

Leadership behaviours - managers must role-model transparency and collaboration, showing staff that sharing knowledge is valued.

Conclusion:

Knowledge transfer is about ensuring that critical experience and expertise are shared across the organisation. Managers can ensure strong knowledge management by combining systems, processes, and culture - from IT tools and databases to mentoring and recognition. In procurement, effective knowledge management helps avoid repeated mistakes, builds stronger supplier relationships, and improves decision-making across the team.

NEW QUESTION # 18

What is meant by group conformity? In what ways can 'Groupthink' affect the behaviour of a group? (25 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Group Conformity (10 marks):

Group conformity refers to the tendency of individuals to align their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours with the norms of the group to which they belong. People conform because they want acceptance, fear rejection, or assume the group's judgement is correct.

Conformity ensures cohesion and cooperation but may limit creativity. For example, in procurement, a junior buyer may adopt the team's approach to negotiations, even if they personally believe another method could achieve better results.

Groupthink and its Effects (15 marks):

'Groupthink', a term developed by Irving Janis, occurs when the desire for consensus overrides realistic appraisal of alternatives.

Members suppress doubts, ignore risks, and fail to voice disagreements to maintain harmony. This can seriously affect group behaviour in several ways:

Illusion of invulnerability - Groups may become overconfident and underestimate risks. For example, a procurement team might agree to single-source a supplier without considering supply chain risks.

Suppression of dissent - Members may withhold concerns to avoid conflict. This stifles creativity and prevents better solutions from being considered.

Pressure for uniformity - Individuals may feel obliged to agree even when they disagree. A buyer may stay silent when senior managers push for a supplier contract, even if they know the supplier has performance issues.

Biased decision-making - Groups may ignore warning signs or alternative perspectives, leading to flawed decisions. In procurement, this could mean overlooking ethical issues in a supplier relationship to maintain harmony with stakeholders.

Reduced accountability - Responsibility is shared across the group, so individuals may feel less accountable for poor decisions.

Groupthink can therefore lead to poor decision-making, increased risk, and lost opportunities. It is particularly dangerous in high-stakes environments like procurement, where mistakes in supplier selection or contract negotiation can damage cost, quality, and reputation.

Conclusion:

Group conformity means individuals adapt to group norms to gain acceptance, while groupthink is a negative consequence where consensus is prioritised over critical evaluation. For managers, recognising the risk of groupthink is vital. By encouraging open

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