Team Formation Model - Step 4. Creating a mission statement that can be utilized to create a scope statement for a time management plan

3.2.4 Mission Statements in course manual

A Mission Statement is a statement on how and what is to be accomplished by the team by clearly stating the intended direction the project and team will attain. The mission statement guides the actions of the team, designating the overall goal to give direction for decision-making. Mission Statements provide the framework or context where the team's strategies are formulated. Mission Statements allow the team to develop conceptual thinking about the technical aspects of the project and help team members to feel comfortable thinking of new ways to look at existing problems while applying their knowledge in innovative ways. The Mission Statement facilitates defining where the project may still need development and further helps the team members to communicate concepts more clearly and accurately in creating their objectives in the individual proposals. Mission Statements help the team to address organizational communication issue, allow the team to own their work tasks, and the successful completion of their projects (Module 5).

Further Reading: Mission Statement (part of Entrance Conference Booklet used during Team Formation lecture)

A mission statement describes the best possible outcome and asserts the team's ability to articulate and execute a vision. The mission statement determines the creativity, quality, and originality of a team's ideas and solutions. A powerful mission statement should stretch expectations and aspirations helping the team to jump out of their comfort zone. A mission statement can generate a mental image to stimulate an emotional response that can serve to invigorate and motivate the team. The project leader facilitates the team in the creation of the mission statement. A vision statement can be a corporate long-term goal. Your mission statement will be your team's long term goal for the project with specific references to how you will interact as a team as well as how you will plan the project. The success of a project is the ability of the team to make the transition from idea to action. New projects can become stalled during the transition from forming ideas to accomplishing them. Teams need to organize the project development process by creating a mission statement, creating goals, prioritizing tasks, and evaluating team performance through developed systems of behavior called ground rules. The mission statement consist of three elements:

One, define the project's primary goals. Goals are the foundation and the reasons for coming together to accomplish the project. This element may be augmented and expanded or change direction during a research project therefore reviewing the mission statement for accuracy is important. Discussions are focused on:

1. Delineating the purpose, values, objectives, and direction of the team by providing a clear and compelling statement of the team's direction
2. Defining flexibility and ability to continuously improve team and task process
3. Explaining the team's commitment to innovative approaches for maintaining quality task approaches to problem solving
4. Identifying what the team is doing long term
5. Discuss how you are going to achieve extraordinary goals

Two, define the project's formal organizational structure. Use ground rules, meetings, reporting activities, and other team structures to support the organizational structure. This element changes to facilitate the project's goals. Discussions are focused on:

1. Definition of your team culture
2. Authority for team to improve
3. Team's commitment to innovative approaches for maintaining quality team approaches to problem solving
4. Sources of the team's competitive strengths and advantages (use exercises)

Three define the project's daily operational structure. Use your knowledge of each other's strengths and weaknesses and time availability to create daily operational structure. This element may change to meet the project's goals within the context of resources available. Discussions are focused on:

1. Describing communication structure
2. Plan how to be flexible and to continuously improve team and task process.
3. Discuss a system to be used for innovation and quality
4. Create a system for problem-solving
5. How to implement qualifications for a quality work product

How to Use a Mission Statement in a Project Setting:

1. Mission statements are the first collaborative effort in the team
2. Periodically review the mission statement to make any necessary revisions
3. Empower the team using the mission statement and ground rules to create systems of behavior that the team can follow to prevent and solve problems
4. Commitment to a vision improves teamwork and establishes an ethical system of research

Projects have specific objectives that need to be supported by their own project culture. Projects include an assemblage of people enveloping a concept or idea and particular actions. Discovering, and even more important creating, and maintaining the character of that culture, is an important job of the project leader. If a team truly intends to complete their mission, they must deflect the temptation to depart from their statement unless, as in some cases, the project may reinvent itself as research leads in a different direction. Therefore, as stated, any mission statement created for a research project team must include the idea of flexibility, the ability to collaborate and change their mission and follow where the research leads your team. If your team stays true to a flexible strategy, and maintains a purposeful ethical persona that is articulated in the mission statement your chances for a successful conclusion to the project are enhanced. (Adapted from Nahavandi, A., 1997. The Art and Science of Leadership. London, UK: Prentice Hall International Dubrin, A.J., 1995. LEADERSHIP Research Findings, Practice, and Skills. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.)