2020

Team building challenges and opportunities after a public agency merger

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TEAM BUILDING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

AFTER A PUBLIC AGENCY MERGER

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graziadio Business School

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

by

Andrea A. Severson

July 2020

This research project, completed by

ANDREA SEVERSON

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The Graziadio Business School in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: July 2020

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Abstract

This study used a mixed-method design to gather data about team building after a public agency merger. This study found that teamwork, role clarity, and clear decision processes were the most important factors impacting goal accomplishment post-merger. Prioritizing team building before, during, and after a public agency merger can address some of the most common challenges presented by a merger or acquisition.

Keywords: team building, mergers, teamwork, role clarity, decision making

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the team building challenges and opportunities teams experience after a public agency merger. Public agency mergers impact employees as they navigate a new work environment, attempt to make sense of the organization's leadership and culture, and determine how they individually fit in. Much of this process occurs within work units or teams designated to carry out specific functions within an organization. How teams are integrated and supported within a merger influences the organization's ability to accomplish its goals.

Team Building

Current literature covers an array of approaches, methodologies, models, expected results for team building, and definitions for team building. One definition of team building characterizes team building as "…any planned intervention that enhances a team's effectiveness" (Marks & Mirvis, 2010, p. 257). Dyer, Dyer Jr., and Dyer (2007) share that "Team building should be thought of as an ongoing process, not as a single event," and that "Team building is a meta competency which great teams develop that allows them to systematically evaluate and change the way the team functions." (p. 78) Specific to post-merger team building issues, Marks and Mirvis (2010) share, "Even though success elsewhere in a company influences employees' sentiments about the combination, evidence from their own work teams matters most" (p. 247).

Individuals within teams often seek information and direction from other team members and their leaders. These interactions strongly influence the success of a merger

in how employees act upon the mission, vision, and goals of the new organization. Marks and Mirvis (2010) state that "These early team experiences have a substantial influence on enduring impressions-including overall optimism or pessimism-about the combined organization" (p. 247). Given the importance of team building after mergers, this study provides a forum to discover what challenges and opportunities teams experience during the critical time following a merger.

Public Sector Merger Distinctions

While the attributes of public agency formation may include qualities of private mergers or acquisitions, unique phenomena occur when a governing body creates legislation to combine multiple agencies into one. Public agencies and non-profits experience mergers similarly and with distinction from private sector organizations. Two key distinctions include the purpose and governance of public organizations. For example, private organizations are typically committed to shareholder return on investment and profit. Public sector organizations generally perform regulatory, executive, or judicial responsibilities set forth by local, state, or national law. Additionally, Frumkin (2003) states that "…mergers and consolidations in the public sector can be seen as successful if they increase value to the clients and citizens that the agencies serve" (p. 9). Most public agencies are funded through taxpayer dollars which are allocated through the legislature or other budget authorities.

Further distinction from private sector mergers include basic differences between public-sector and private-sector organizations. Cummings and Worley (2015) offer that "Public and private sectors differ along four key dimensions: values and structure, the multiplicity of decision makers, stakeholder diversity and access, and the extent of

intergovernmental relationships" (p. 705). Of these dimensions, intergovernmental relationships are perhaps one of the primary reasons for merging public agencies as separate public agencies provide different arrays of services to the same citizens. The merging of public agencies can be seen as a means to increase value for citizens and communities. Frumkim (2003) shares that "Increasing value can take the form of improved services through coordination, increased efficiency, lower costs to the taxpayer, and increased accountability to the public. Consolidation of various agencies can be beneficial to citizens as an increased focus on the mission may lead toward an improvement in services provided" (p. 9). Because team building is a critical success factor in post-integration, the ultimate goal of successful team building is to increase value through improved service delivery and collaboration.

Study Setting

In Washington State, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) was established through legislation passed in 2017. The Washington State Legislature House Bill 1661 opening statement reads as:

> The legislature finds that state services are not currently organized and delivered in a way that achieves the optimal outcomes for children, youth, and families. The legislature believes that, to improve service delivery and outcomes, existing services must be restructured into a comprehensive agency dedicated to the safety, development, and well-being of children that emphasizes prevention, early childhood development, and early intervention, and supporting parents to be their children's first and most important teachers (House Bill 1661, 2017, p. 3).

The founding legislation for DCYF speaks specifically to service delivery and how those services are organized. DCYF oversees several services previously offered through the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Early Learning. These include all programs from the Children's Administration previously within DSHS such as Child Protective Services' investigations and Family Assessment Response, licensed foster care, and adoption support. Also included are all Department of Early Learning services such as the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program for preschoolers, Working Connections Child Care, and Home Visiting. DCYF also administers programs offered by the Juvenile Rehabilitation division and the Office of Juvenile Justice. Those programs include juvenile rehabilitation institutions, community facilities, and parole services.

This specific merger highlights many of the challenges public organizations experience in today's environment. Cummings and Worley (2015) share that "public-sector organizations face increasingly complex challenges in responding to citizens, crafting public policy, and providing public services. Conflicting public policy at the federal, state, and local level, coupled with unfunded mandates and restricted revenue further complicate their environment" (p. 703). This complexity heightens the reasons to explore what happens after a public agency merger.

The reasons stated for combining public agencies generally comes down to improving service delivery and increasing collaboration. The benefit realization of a public agency merger relies heavily on how this collaboration is achieved after the merger. Some of this collaboration involves technical combinations of information systems, data sharing, functions, and improved resources and infrastructure. In order for

these things to work and new collaborations to develop, individuals and teams must come together in new ways as well. When new teams of people come together to serve the public, both challenges and opportunities abound.

Teams come together in various ways to accomplish the work of the organization. After a merger, shifts in the way teams work within their unit and how they collaborate with other teams can change minimally to dramatically depending on the function or tasks of a team within the organization. Even though the technical merger may be complete, employees must then figure out how to make it work. After a merger, team composition may change, reporting structures may change, individual job roles may change, and moreover, the fundamental way an organization delivers service may shift.

Study Significance

The merger of DCYF was complete on July 1, 2019 after two phases of combining a smaller agency and parts of a larger agency. This exploration of team building within DCYF after the completed merger illuminates information that can assist and guide the agency and others toward meaningful interventions to improve team building and honor the experience of employees as they work toward a future state together. This future state hopes for optimal value added for citizens and communities served by a public agency. In this case, to deliver on the mission for the Washington State DCYF to "Protect children and strengthen families so they flourish."

Organization of the Study

This chapter outlined the background and purpose of the study, provided a description of the study setting, and identified the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature relevant to team building and mergers. Chapter 3 outlines the research

methods used in the study. Chapter 4 reports the study results. Chapter 5 provides a

discussion of the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study examined team building challenges and opportunities after a public agency merger. This chapter provides a review of literature relevant to team building and mergers and acquisitions. The main sections of this chapter explore the background and importance of team building, leadership as an important contextual factor, potential factors influencing team building, post-merger integration challenges and opportunities, unique challenges in public organizations, and merger and acquisition impacts on teams.

Background and Importance of Team Building

According to Daft (2016), "Organizations are social entities that are goal-directed, are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and are linked to the external environment" (p. 13). Within these organizations, teams of people work together to achieve goals contributing to the overall success of the organization. Dyer et al. (2007) concluded that "Poor team performance is a major concern in today's economy because most of the work performed today is done in a team environment, be it in research teams, product-development teams, production teams, sales and marketing teams, cross-functional problem-solving teams, or top management teams" (p. 4). As teams conquer more complex problems together, another layer of complexity is added when organizations experience a merger or acquisition. Graebner (2014) shared that failing to achieve the anticipated benefits from a merger or acquisition is due to the difficulties during the post-acquisition process. While many technical challenges arise as organizations merge together, how new groups of people interact plays a critical role in the success of the newly formed organization (Podarski & Sherwood, 2015, p. 51). In this thesis, the term "team building" is used as the process in which people come together to

form teams. The team building process generally involves some sort of intervention or plan to increase team performance and collaboration. Team building after a merger or acquisition offers both challenges and opportunities to the acquiring organization and the acquired organization. Much of the research in this area is largely based on private company mergers and acquisitions. However, the activities of building teams in private and public sectors remain similar.

Teams are made up of individual people with individual concerns, fears, and hopes during a merger or acquisition. Podgorski and Sherwood (2015) pose that lack of attention to people concerns before and after mergers and acquisitions cause large roadblocks to the success of the new organization moving forward. "Failures in people integration strategies result in a failure to retain and motivate key people from the acquiring and target organizations, affecting the organization's ability to achieve its financial and strategic objectives" (Podgorski & Sherwood, 2015, p. 44). As individual people come together, so do the teams of which they are a part. The way in which these teams come together can vary, but the importance of the teams learning to work together quickly increases the chance of a successful integration.

In order for these teams to form successfully and work well together, research suggests that the organization should consider factors contributing to high-performing teams. Dyer et al., (2007) proposed that "determinants of high-performing teams involve the following factors: the context for the team, the composition of the team, the competencies of the team, and the change management skills of the team" (p. 5). Given these factors, organizations benefit from intentional efforts around team building as a strategy for overall organizational success. When looking at the team building process,

Dyer et al. (2007) stated that the goal of any team-building program is to "help the team engage in a continual process of self-examination to gain awareness of those conditions that keep it from functioning effectively" (p. 91). The process of continual self-examination implies participation of individuals in the team building process which supports people integration.

Leadership as an Important Contextual Factor

As Dyer et al. (2007) proposed, the context for the team is an important determinant for team building success. One contextual aspect involves leadership. Heldel and Antonsen (2014) studied the role of contextual factors for leadership in a high-risk organization. They found team leaders agreed with plant operators that "Leaders would perform better by balancing their behavior with the kind of supportive behavior of showing empathy but reported that they neither had the time nor the opportunity to do this" (Heldel & Antonsen, 2014, p. 387). Research also suggests that leaders need enough time to fulfill the behaviors seen as beneficial to team members. Often the technical side of these transitions is prioritized over the needs of the employees for empathetic and supportive leaders. Heldel and Antonsen (2014) report that:

> The overarching focus on efficiency had an obvious effect on the team leaders, in that they too would cut down on leadership issues that they did not perceive as important…time constraints thus led to team leaders not taking the time to be supportive of their team members and felt it more important to focus on the concrete tasks at hand (p. 389).

Leadership plays a key role during the team building process. Leaders influence, coach, and communicate about change and transition in post-integration. However, if little

importance is placed on team building, the impacts can be far reaching. McCollum (1995) stated that the role of leadership "is to help manage the anxiety of a group formation and to strive toward the creation of a well-defined (but not impermeable) group boundary" (p. 45). These boundaries help define teams and address the many concerns individuals have when forming new groups and teams. McCollum (1995) also indicated,

> This means the leader must understand the rational and unconscious fears new members carry and attempt to address those worries. Clarifying goals and setting procedures in advance will help members feel more certain about what group membership will mean; new members will have questions about how the group's tasks will be accomplished (p. 46)

This combines the technical needs with leadership to fulfill the needs of team members to be supported during the team building process.

One leadership concept that has been researched and proposed is that of servant leadership. Searle and Barbuto Jr. (2011) look at servant leadership, hope, and organizational virtuousness to influence micro and macro behaviors and performance impact. This research highlights how servant leadership and positive psychology improve outcomes for teams and that the role of leadership is a prerequisite for increased performance in teams through applying these principles. Building on prior studies, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) validated measures of servant leadership in five dimensions: altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship. These are not only servant leadership qualities; they also contribute to contextual factors in team building.

Leaders and teams contribute various skills to team building. Lvina, Maher, and Harris (2017) discussed "how politically skilled an individual is relative to how politically skilled the other members of the team are can affect how individuals view their team and the members of that team, thus influencing their perceptions of team trust and team efficacy" (p. 97). Lvina et el. (2017) also stated that "Because politically skilled people are fundamentally adept at extracting cues from their environment and using information to affect their circumstances in the workplace, we argue that politically skilled individuals possess both personal and individual social efficacy" (p. 98). These qualities along with leadership and contextual factors combine adding to the complexity and relevance of team building after an organization merger.

Potential Factors Influencing Team Building

Once an organization has merged with another, many factors have potential influence on team building. Some of these factors are micro-level factors which can be characterized as individual experiences and other factors are macro-level which influence the organization's experience with team building. Rouzies and Colman (2012) found that individuals tend to self-identify with their team by aligning with the behaviors and interests within their group or team. To address the tendency of individuals to self-reference and align behaviors with the interest of the group, the integration team at their subject organization utilized a method to help teams align their interests. Their research indicated that one method deployed by the acquirer included workshops held to refine the definition of synergies expected as a result of the merger. One participant shared that "The process was mostly so that we could get to know one another, see how people worked, both with systems and people" (Rouzie & Colman, 2012, p. 152) These

workshops provided an opportunity for people from both the pre-acquisition unit and the acquirer group to gain a better understanding of one another. The target company employees also indicated their appreciation for fairness, being able to share their own perspectives, views, and opinions, and being able to offer feedback freely. Conclusions from the research show that interactions between people from each of the organizations can increase likelihood of identifying with one another (Rouzies & Colman, 2012). These social interactions may then be a part of the team building process as teams attempt to create synergies and find common goals. This also aligns with the "4 Cs" of high-performing teams proposed by Dyer et al. (2007) which include context, team composition, team competencies, and change management skills of the team (p. 5).

Post-merger Integration Challenges and Opportunities

Team building contributes to the individual and organizational experience during the post-integration phase. The nature of this process involves organizational change and challenges and opportunities during change. Dorling (2017) shared:

> Many scholars have stressed that the failure rates of change efforts are due to employee resistance, and they focus extensively on resistance management. They have proposed strategies and implementation processes to reduce the resistance. The post-merger phase is of great importance within a transaction, resulting in entity reorganization that is characterized by the rearrangement of almost all of the involved processes (p. 937).

These statements show how transformational these changes are within organizations. Managing resistance and acknowledging the amount of organizational change required for successful post-merger integrations requires efforts of leaders and employees alike.

Cummings and Worley (2015) discuss the process of organizational change and transition and stated how an organization will struggle moving forward unless the transition process is carefully managed. Managing transitions successfully requires engagement at all levels within an organization in order to achieve the ideal future state.

During times of organizational change and transition, factors such as organizational culture and sharing negative emotions about change can influence the success of the merger. Different organizational cultures within the combining firms can impact a number of post-integration outcomes with potential for negative outcomes even if the organizational cultures are similar (Schweiger & Goulet, 2005). While the existing organizational cultures within originating organizations can impact post-merger outcomes, so can the inability to discuss negative emotions after a merger. Vuori, Vuori, and Huy (2017) conducted a study of a post-acquisition integration process specific to the expression of negative emotions. Vuori et al. (2017) shared that:

> Members of the two firms in our research experienced various negative emotions triggered by persistent task disagreements, but consistently masked these emotions from the partner firm. As a consequence, members of each firm mistakenly perceived that their colleagues from the partner firm were satisfied with the progress of the integration. This false perception inhibited correction actions that could have addressed the negative emotions or the task disagreements that elicited them. In the absence of corrective actions, the negative emotions, initially short-lived, accumulated into a long-lasting, dispositional negative sentiments toward the partner; these sentiments motivated unilateral actions that further escalated the situation and contributed to integration failure (p. 10).

Some of the challenges explored here may also be seen as opportunities given proper planning and preparation including risk mitigation after a merger.

Unique Challenges in Public Organizations

Much of the available literature involves research from private organizations. Public organizations, such as governmental agencies, may experience many of the same people-oriented challenges but also have some unique challenges given the nature of their business, including various political, administrative, and policy challenges. O'Neill Jr. and Nalbandian (2018) state that, "We understand that without effective bridges between political and administrative arenas, little is accomplished, and trust in public servants, both political and professional, erodes and the value of government itself can be questioned" (p. 311). These statements demonstrate how working between many arenas in public policy and administration require additional skills sets which may not be required in the private industry. While nonprofits are slightly different from public governmental agencies, they still share similar challenges to public entities. Tierney (2006) shared that nonprofits often feel the need to stretch every dollar as far as possible and have difficulty retaining top leadership talent they need to transform monetary investments into social impact. This acknowledges both the challenge of finding skilled and experienced leadership in the nonprofit sector and a shared goal of public governmental agencies to convert public funds into services, programs, and support for the communities that public agencies serve.

Public governmental agencies also aspire to perform their duties as public servants efficiently and effectively to deliver the most value for the stakeholders and communities they serve. These stakeholders include children, youth, families, businesses,

educational institutions, infrastructure, financial institutions, the elderly, and a long list of other public members interacting with public service. In light of the growing need to do more with less and more efficiently, public agencies experience mergers to combine resources to serve a shared population. The experiment in public agency mergers has been deployed within many state, federal, and local governments. When this happens, the factors contributing to effective organizations inevitably involve how individuals and teams come together to serve the greater good.

Merger and Acquisition Impacts on Teams

Mergers impact team performance and team building as factors like a new manager, new co-workers, new processes and practices, and new power dynamics shift the ways people interact with their work and each other (Marks & Mirvis, 2002). Lack of a strong vision, deficiencies in communication, and the absence of operational connection (Jetter & Sperry, 2007) can also impact team performance after a merger or acquisition. Mergers and Acquisitions disrupt many of the dynamics and team norms that are generally established over time through interactions between team members and leaders. The level of impact that a combination can have on teams and team performance varies based on the level of disruption to operations and how much change individual contributors experience. Some common themes discovered by Podarski and Sherwood (2015) when investigating weaknesses in one company's merger included lack of vision and strategy, unidentified human resources integration teams, missing plan for how to integrate from a people perspective, little or confusing communication, no clear pulse on the merging organizational cultures, increased turnover due to uncertainty of job roles in the new entity, high performing talent was not identified, plummeting employee morale,

and struggles with work performance. Addressing these underlying factors adds to the demands to maintain productivity and service delivery within the changing work environment during mergers and acquisitions.

In contrast, teams may also be positively impacted through planned focus on the psychological aspects that influence how individuals experience a merger and acquisition experience. Dorling (2017) showed that effectively tending to post-integration psychological factors is an effective means of managing resistance within teams. "Optimism initiates a positive orientation towards change, self-efficacy inspires confidence with a reduction in fear of change, hope contrives ways and the means to deal with change, and resilience intensifies one's ability adjust to change and overcome it" (Dorling, 2017, p. 942). These positive factors may be carried out by addressing the common aspects of mergers and acquisition by focusing only on concrete tasks and objectives without integrating the human elements of change and transformation.

Summary

The existing research demonstrates multiple factors contributing to the success or failure of mergers and acquisitions. This includes thoughtful people integration, organizational context and culture, leadership roles and qualities, and the management of organizational change and transition. The ways in which individuals experience mergers and acquisitions were also found to be dependent on the level of preparation and resources specifically dedicated for integration work before, during, and after combination. The key component within all these factors involves teams and how they come together to achieve the goals of the organization. A well-managed merger anticipates and addresses the individual and team dynamic elements alongside the

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technical aspects needed for a successful merger or acquisition. In particular, this paper will explore the team building challenges and opportunities after public agency integration.

 This chapter provided a summary of relevant literature for mergers and acquisitions and team building. The next chapter outlines the research methods used to gather participant data and the data analysis plan.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study examined team building challenges and opportunities after a public agency merger. This chapter details the research approach, sampling approach and participant selection, data collection, and data analysis.

Action Research Approach

Action Research provides the opportunity to explore a topic through inquiry about an issue or problem specific to an organization or groups to discover ways to potentially improve their work (Stringer, 2014, p. 1). In many cases, this approach includes mixed methods with a quantitative assessment and a qualitative portion. The quantitative portion of this study established useful data across teams using the same assessment. The importance of the qualitative data portion is to gain deeper insights into the research topic of team building in participants own words. This study involved an initial exploration of team member experiences with team building after a public agency merger. The first phase of the agency's merger began on July 1, 2018 and was finalized July 1, 2019. The data collection concluded less than a year after the completed merger. The first two administrations to merge included children's administration and early education. The merger was considered fully executed when juvenile justice merged with DCYF in 2019. Some post-integration data relevant to employee experience was available but nothing specific to team building as an aspect of the merger. This study provided an opportunity to hear from leaders and employees specific to this topic.

Sampling Approach and Participant Selection

The study involved work teams characterized as groups of people working together in a program or work area. DCYF's Strategic Leadership Team had the option to

recommend teams within their areas of responsibility to participate and provided written permission for their teams to participate. A total of 37 participants engaged in the research across the six teams. Individual team members opted-in for the electronic survey and were provided consent forms electronically as required by the IRB. The participating teams represented each of the originating agencies in the areas of child welfare, early education, juvenile rehabilitation (either in the form of direct service or centralized), and supporting functions.

Participation Requirements

Participants must have been current WA State Employees of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families when they participated in the electronic survey. Participants were team members of various program or work areas sharing common tasks or goals. Participant's individual identifying information was not collected. Electronic surveys occurred during work hours as appropriate leadership approval was secured. Washington State Institutional Review Board (WSIRB) reviewed and approved the research protocols due state employee participation in addition to the research protocols approved by the Pepperdine Institutional Review Boards (PIRB). An addendum was submitted to both IRB's as the face-to-face focus groups originally intended had to be moved to electronic data collection due to COVID-19 stay at home orders in Washington State preventing in-person gatherings.

Data Collection

Quantitative data. Team Context and Composition assessments were collected via a web survey tool. The assessment was taken from Dyer et al. (2007, pp. 41-43) and can be found in Appendix A. This 13-question assessment provided insights into whether

the organization's context and the team composition supports or hinders team

performance. Results from the team assessment provided insights into how the team feels

about their teamwork in their own team, the organizational context in which the team

functions, and data points on resources and leadership. The assessment was facilitated by

utilizing and online survey platform and a 5-point Likert scale for each question. A

survey terms reference sheet was provided electronically to participants via a link within

the survey in the event participants had questions about terms used in the assessment.

Qualitative data. As part of the assessment, participants also individually

answered the following open-ended questions:

1. What are some of the team building challenges you have experienced after the

   agency merger?

2. What are some of the team building opportunities you have experienced after the

   agency merger?

Participants provided their individual answers and reflections within the electronic survey

with unlimited word count for their response.

Data Analysis

Each team was coded with a letter that has no connection to their division or

program names to protect their team identities. Results from the Team Context and

Composition assessments were calculated to find the average score per question across

each team, the average score per question across all teams, the average team score, and

the total average score for all teams. The scoring scale for the assessments is designated

by Dyer et al. (2007) to indicate the following: Overall average scores higher than 3.75

would indicate that the organization's context and team composition generally support

team performance. Scores between 2.5 – 3.75 indicate that there is moderate support for team performance. Scores between 1.0 – 2.5 indicate that there are some serious problems related to context and composition that are hindering team performance as seen in Appendix B. (Dyer et al., 2007, p. 43) Responses to the qualitative section were coded using key words and these were sorted by prevalence and grouped into themes.

Analysis identified any similarities between the results from the quantitative results on the Team Context and Composition Assessment and the qualitative responses. This chapter provided information about the research methods, participants, data collection and analysis. In the next chapter, the researcher shares the results from the data collection. The next chapter examines the results from the data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the team building challenges and opportunities after a public agency merger. This chapter presents the results and analysis of the survey responses. The data is presented in three parts to include participating teams, team context and composition assessment results, and themes from the qualitative portion of the survey. The chapter ends with a summary.

Participating Teams

A total of six teams participated in the study with 37 total participants. Participating teams varied in function and also in the extent that each team was impacted by the agency merger. The participating teams included members from each of the originating agencies. Three of the participating teams experienced very little change to their team structure meaning they their pre-merger team members and leadership remained largely intact after the merger. One of the participating teams included very few staff from the originating agencies including leadership, or they joined the team from a prior, unrelated functional team. Two of the teams were formed with individuals from each of the originating agencies and reported to new leadership. Teams received an electronic survey link specific to their team so results could be compared across teams.

Team Context and Composition Assessment

Table 1 shows the results of Team Context and Composition Assessment scores across teams by question. Overall, the total team score across all teams averaged 3.55 which qualifies as a medium score indicating there is a moderate support for team performance within the organization.

Table 1

Team Context and Composition Assessment Scores Across Teams by Question

Assessment Question	Mean	SD
1. Is teamwork needed for your team to accomplish its goals (that is, is reciprocal interdependence important for the team to succeed?)	4.73	1.03
2. Is the team's role in the organization clear (that is, is it clear whether the team is a decision team or task team or plays some other role)?	4.16	1.04
3. Does the team have the authority needed to accomplish its goals?	3.57	1.07
4. Does the team have the resources needed to accomplish its goals?	3.11	1.13
5. Does the organization's culture (its rules and values) encourage teamwork?	3.70	1.01
6. Does the organization's structure (organization chart, roles, job descriptions, and so on) support teamwork?	3.35	0.98
7. Do the organization's systems (compensation, appraisal, information, and so on) support teamwork?	2.92	1.12
8. Does your organization have a well-thought-out method for assigning people to be in a team?	2.92	1.17
9. How effective is the leadership in the team?	3.49	0.87
10. Does the team have the necessary technical skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve its goals?	3.85	1.23
11. Do team members have the interpersonal skills needed to work effectively as a team?	3.76	1.06
12. Is the team the appropriate size to accomplish its goals?	2.92	1.27
13. Are team members motivated to help the team achieve its goals?	3.95	1.03
Average	3.55	1.04

N = 37

A single-factor ANOVA showed that team scores were significantly different between groups. $F(5,31) = 4.77$, $p = .002$. Team B scored in the low range (1.0-2.5) in eight of the 13 team assessment questions. Team D had two of 13 questions scoring in the low range, and Team E scored in the low range for one question. The average team scores

were within the assessment scoring range (2.50-3.75) indicating a moderate level of support for team performance given organizational context and team composition (Table 2). The remaining average team scores per question were in the moderate to high range on all questions (Table 3). More analysis would be needed to determine why lower scores seemed most present for Team B and not as prevalent as other teams.

Table 2

Team Context and Composition Scores by Team

Team	Mean	SD	N
A	3.51	0.51	7
B	2.77	0.86	6
C	3.91	0.70	9
D	3.56	0.75	6
E	3.72	0.76	3
F	3.51	0.55	6

N = 37

Table 3

Team Scores by Question Number

Assessment Question	Team A N=7		Team B N=6		Team C N=9		Team D N=6		Team E N=3		Team F N=6	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Is teamwork needed for your team to accomplish its goals (that is, is reciprocal interdependence important for the team to succeed?)	4.86	0.38	5.00	0.00	4.44	1.01	4.50	0.84	5.00	0.00	4.83	0.41
2. Is the team's role in the organization clear (that is, is it clear whether the team is a decision team or task team or plays some other role)?	4.29	1.11	3.67	1.51	4.89	0.33	4.00	1.10	4.00	1.00	3.67	0.82
3. Does the team have the authority needed to accomplish its goals?	4.00	1.15	3.00	1.10	3.33	0.50	3.83	0.98	4.33	1.15	3.33	1.21
4. Does the team have the resources it needs to accomplish its goals?	3.29	0.95	2.33	1.21	3.89	0.33	2.50	1.38	3.33	0.58	3.00	1.10
5. Does the organization's culture (its rules and values) encourage teamwork?	4.00	1.00	2.33	1.03	4.67	0.71	3.33	0.52	4.00	1.73	3.50	0.55
6. Does the organization's structure (organization chart, roles, job descriptions, and so on) support teamwork?	3.86	0.69	2.00	1.26	3.56	0.73	3.67	0.82	3.00	1.00	3.67	0.52
7. Do the organization's systems (compensation, appraisal, information, and so on) support teamwork?	3.71	1.11	2.17	0.75	3.11	1.17	3.00	0.63	2.33	0.58	2.67	0.52
8. Does your organization have a well-thought-out method for assigning people to be in a team?	3.14	1.35	2.33	1.03	3.22	0.83	3.00	1.10	2.67	2.08	2.83	0.98
9. How effective is the leadership in the team?	4.14	1.07	2.17	0.75	3.56	1.01	3.83	1.33	3.67	1.15	3.50	1.05

Assessment Question	Team A N=7		Team B N=6		Team C N=9		Team D N=6		Team E N=3		Team F N=6	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
10. Does the team have the necessary technical skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve its goals?	3.71	1.11	3.67	1.21	3.67	0.50	4.17	0.41	4.00	1.73	4.00	0.63
11. Do team members have the interpersonal skills needed to work effectively as a team?	3.43	0.79	2.67	1.63	4.78	0.44	4.33	0.82	3.33	1.53	3.33	1.21
12. Is the team the appropriate size to accomplish its goals?	3.00	0.58	2.17	0.98	3.00	0.50	2.00	1.26	4.33	1.15	3.67	0.82
13. Are team members motivated to help the team achieve its goals?	4.00	1.15	2.50	1.52	4.78	0.44	4.17	0.75	4.33	1.15	3.67	1.51
Total Score	3.80	0.51	2.77	0.86	3.91	0.70	3.56	0.75	3.72	0.76	3.51	0.55

Qualitative Data

The qualitative portion of the data collection was comprised of two open-ended questions:

1. What team building challenges have you experienced after the agency merger?

2. What team building opportunities have you experienced after the agency merger?

Responses were grouped by common themes and sorted for prevalence among all responses.

Team Building Challenges

The qualitative data showed unclear roles and decision making as the most prevalent challenge participants experienced after the agency merger (N = 20). One team member shared, "No one knows who the person is to make the final decision." Others shared how there were misconceptions of staff and leadership roles which made decision making difficult and how a team was "mainly trying to find our place in the organization and realizing why we are doing what we are doing."

The next theme of limited resources and supporting infrastructure (N = 11) included examples of how the agency had not been given the proper resources to support a merger of this size and the basic forms and letterhead were not ready to use when the merger occurred. Participants stated, "Internal operations were not ready for such a jump in the number of employees we took on for example HR, Contracts, Fiscal and Communications" and "very early on, day one, not having the appropriate letterhead and forms." These resources were characterized as essential to completing daily tasks. Not having these resources available or updated prior to the merger caused extra work and confusion among staff and clients.

Differences in attitudes and culture of the agencies of origin (N=11) posed another challenge as some felt one or more of the agencies of origin displayed a punitive culture and were not open to change. For example, one participant shared, "the fears of being swallowed up by [one of the originating agency's] culture and ways of doing work have come true" and another referenced "culture shock" as a team building challenge. Comments such as "not being open to change" or "having different skill sets" presented as challenges also. One team member shared that "Overall, there is an attitude of negativity, assuming the worst in others and a punitive approach to decision making and moving work forward. It makes it hard to want to partner, speak up or want to participate in that sort of atmosphere."

Another top theme included lack of or unsupportive leadership (N = 9) with one participant commenting that, "Poor leadership limited some of the opportunities our work group had after the merger." Another shared that "The executive level of our agency lacked [subject matter] expertise for a very long time and this hurt our organizational trust." Within other responses, participants commented how their portion of the agency was "viewed as broken and labeled that way by our leadership during many public settings" and how they felt "micromanaged by upper management rather than supporting mid-management and supervisors." Another stated that the lack of support in both practice and funding added to the lack of clarity in their role within the agency.

Teams also experienced inconsistent organizational structures (N = 8) where working titles, pay, and reporting structures varied greatly across different programs or divisions. A participant shared that "many sections have dramatically higher number of direct reports, but those sections are compensated at the same or lower rates" and another

stated that the organization structures were unclear and inconsistent across different programs. Some noted how the inconsistencies within the organizational structures caused perceived pay inequities with working titles in one area not getting paid equally to the same working title in another area.

The remaining themes included challenges with current technology or lack of training for new systems and technology (N = 9). One participant shared "learning that our current systems that came with the merger were inadequate for handling the volume of requests and researching other available software programs on the market" as a challenge. Lack of subject matter expertise of leaders or others within the agency (N = 7) posed a challenge to team building captured in the comment "Executive leadership making under-informed decisions that affects programs is frustrating and leaves programs scrambling." The next most prominent theme (N = 6) was stated by one participant as "… ineffective pre-merger staff engagement and external consultants." Others stated that "The consultant firm hired to support organization development was not effective" and "Consultant work, staff feedback and information prior to the merger did not shine through into the new agency decision making by leadership." Another theme from the challenges included not enough or confusing communication (N = 5). One participant simply stated, "Communication. Consistency. Knowledge in upper management regarding program areas" as a challenge which speaks to both communication and leadership. Another communication concern centered around how teams and individuals shared and received information stating, "information does not flow like it used to…"

Team Building Opportunities

The opportunities teams experienced after a public agency merger were largely centered around cross-divisional and local team building and opportunity to develop new relationships (N = 19). A participant stated that, "Unity in our team grew with new circumstances. The situation provided an opportunity for the staff to band together to work more closely and provide support and grace to one another in the uncertainty." Opportunities for cross-division team building included external events or trainings where multiple programs or divisions were represented so staff and leaders could meet one another.

Access to training on new systems, updated contact lists, and team collaboration tools such as SharePoint provided opportunities for team building as well (N = 12). After the merger, many teams were learning new systems and finding ways to combine their previous ways of collaborating and managing information. Several members from one team mentioned that building a SharePoint site together helped organize their team's work and appreciated a shared location for important documents.

Some teams performed continuous improvement exercises to create new, more efficient processes within their work units (N = 11). Lean process improvement tools were used within one team to help identify opportunities to improve work processes which also helped with team building. One tool referenced here was an "A3" which is a Lean tool that identifies a problem, current state, future state, gaps, and helps create plans to address the gaps and gain clarity. Team members stated they had "opportunities to learn A3 training to improve our processes and practice team building." Working as a team to solve a shared problem helped increase communication and collaboration within

the team. Another mentioned "We had lean training and team building, weekly training with our unit to discuss and collaborate on things that happened during the week."

Another key theme included the value of having an organizational change management office that helped build internal change management capacity and supported team building (N = 8). One participant shared that "Having an internal office that focuses on organizational health, structures, process, etc. is huge. Our office is human-centered, brings great facilitation and structure to meetings, and is helping to develop organizational capacity across a number of needed skills/tools." Another expressed that "I really appreciate the creation of our Office of Change Management and wish they had more influence on the larger agency to change the dominate-culture structure we have." The organizational change management office established a training for all employees entitled, "Navigating Change" which provided resources and tools to help individuals speak about and acknowledge their individual change process. The office also established an informal network of change-ready individuals willing to help share information within their work units about the transition and provide insights from work units back to leadership to help identify key staff needs during and after the combination. One remarked on this as a team building opportunity after the merger: "I attended classes on navigating change, joined the change champion network, and started building relationships outside of my office."

Other themes included the importance of team meetings and regular information sharing, strong local leadership and local team building, and hosting focus groups to coordinate on policy changes and explain why policies were in place. A local focus on team building provided the opportunity for "cultivating a close-knit group" as one

participant stated. Some teams were newly formed with different members and leaders

who had not previously worked together. One of the team members on such team

expressed, "For my work group, we got a fresh start and so there were a lot of positives to

start as a newly formed work unit, to build from the ground up." Another team member

from the same group stated, "We had opportunities to develop our own body of work as a

team." Other participants whose team composition did not change remarked, "a day of a

teambuilding sharing thoughts as a team, bi-weekly meetings as team" as an opportunity

they experienced. Table 4 highlights the qualitative response themes for team building

challenges and Table 5 shows the qualitative responses themes for team building

opportunities.

Table 4

Qualitative Response Themes for Team Building Challenges

What team building challenges have you experience after the agency merger?	
Theme	**N**
Unclear roles and decision making	20
Lack of resources and infrastructure	11
Attitudes and organizational culture differences in agencies of origin	11
Lack of leadership/trust in leadership/upper management not supportive	9
Disconnection due to team structure changes/inconsistent structures	8
Learning curve of new systems/lack of training on new systems	9
Lack of knowledge and subject matter expertise in new teams	7
Lack of pre-merger team building/ineffective external consultant	6
Lack of communication/confusing messages	5

N = 37

Table 5

Qualitative Responses and Themes for Team Building Opportunities

What team building opportunities have you experienced after the agency merger?

Theme	N
Cross-division and local team building and new relationships	19
Resources and tools for training on new systems and team collaboration tools	12
Process efficiency and creating new processes	11
Organizational Change Management	8
Team meetings/sharing information with teams	7
Strong local leadership and team building	4
Focus groups on policy/explain why policies are in place	3

N = 37

Summary

The organization as a whole scored in the medium to high range on the team context and composition assessment. Areas scoring lowest involved organizational systems to support teamwork, having a well-thought-out method to assign people to teams, and the rightsizing of team. The themes discovered in the qualitative section of the survey reinforced needs for clear roles and decision making, needs for adequate and relevant resources, and the need for lateral integration of teams. There appeared to be more negative aspects shared by participants compared to positive comments in the qualitative section. The next chapter provides a discussion of these results.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This action research study examined the challenges and opportunities teams experience after a public agency merger. This chapter includes a discussion and conclusion of the study results, recommendations, study limitations, and suggestions for future study.

Conclusions

The organization scored moderately, between 2.50 - 3.75, in the area of organizational systems (e.g., compensation, appraisal, information) that support teamwork (2.92). One participant shared, "Changing systems (e.g., hiring practices, allowable resources-virtual platforms, fiscal and contracting practices) has been bumpy and new information is not shared timely". Combined with a moderate score related to the organization having a well-thought-out method to assigning people to teams (2.92), organizational context played a role in team building after the agency merger.

Organizational structure was unclear causing confusion of roles and decision making as shown in the qualitative data as the top challenge (N = 20). Common themes around technical and human resources surfaced in both the quantitative and qualitative sections as moderate or challenging. One participant stated that there had been "some work to develop the teams" which aligns with the moderate level of support for teamwork shown in the survey results.

The other primary research questions asked about team building opportunities. The top scoring question from the quantitative portion indicated teamwork was needed for teams to accomplish their goals (4.73). The most prominent theme of cross-divisional and local team building and building new relationships seemed to support this result.

Participants appeared to have a desire to build stronger teams overall but did not provide clear narratives or assessment scores to indicate this desire was leveraged after the merger. Many participants commented on team building work having occurred within local teams led by direct supervisors or leaders. A participant stated, "We had the opportunity to develop our own body of work." Local teams seemed to have developed their own ways to work better together while the organizational commitment to team building remained unclear or not prioritized before or after the merger. It did seem that local teams were also innovative in creating their own processes through specialized training and weekly team meetings to stay connected and discuss as a team the challenges they faced.

One of the participants shared that, "Despite messaging that silos were being avoided in the creation of the agency, the agency has actually become more disconnected." This statement spoke to the organization communicating support for team building across the agencies of origin and the unachieved improvement because these intentional team building efforts were rarely mentioned in the data. However, an exception to this is team building activities associated with an internal organizational change management office noted by a participant: "Retreats facilitated by the organizational change management office also felt as though we were gaining traction." Another participant shared that another opportunity remained to have "increased volume of conversation and dialogue focusing on this topic [team building]."

Many of the challenges and opportunities shared by participants were stated negatively. When asked for participant input on the opportunities, themes referenced what the organization still lacked rather than building on things that had gone well related

to team building. The localized team building efforts were referenced as the only consistent team building effort and often led by their direct managers or supervisors. This finding aligns with prior research as many mergers neglect to plan for and execute plans specific to the people integration part of mergers and acquisitions as a focus for leadership.

The results of this study can perhaps be linked most accurately to this statement from Podarski and Sherwood (2015): "While many technical challenges arise as organizations merge together, how new groups of people interact play a critical role in the success of the newly formed organization" (p. 51). Marks and Mirvis (2010) stated that "Team building provides structure and clarity to the team's work early in its development and attends to the group dynamics and personal needs of members as the group matures" (p. 257). While it is difficult to discern team building as a single factor influencing the future success of DCYF as an organization, it is clear from the study results that participants seek more opportunities to build new relationships across various programs and divisions in order to serve the children, youth, and families of Washington state.

Heldel and Antonsen (2014) found that not spending time on team building and focusing primarily on concrete tasks reduces team effectiveness. When mergers occur, whether in private or public sectors, organizations struggle with finding new ways of doing things and "people may have trouble gaining access to the informal social and communication networks on the other side and will likely encounter untold problems in simply getting the job done through normal channels" (Marks & Mirvis, 2002, pp. 24-25). Several study participants remarked on the lost time, rework, and confusion within

their teams due to unclear role and decision making and lack of leadership support. Few resources were dedicated specifically to help manage the people side of the transition, which led to ongoing confusion and reinforcement of silos within the new agency rather than the successful integration of the various functions merged into DCYF. One participant shared that, "Despite messaging that silos were being avoided in the creation of the agency, the agency is has actually become more disconnected."

Future challenges for the organization can be met with intentional efforts and resources dedicated to team building and pursuing the opportunities that are still apparent after the final phase of the agency merger was completed. The prominent resource on mergers and acquisitions strongly supports the practice of intentional work in the areas of strategy, organization, people, culture, and transition management (Marks & Mirvis, 2010).

Limitations

The limitations of this study included clarity of which team participants were evaluating, elapsed time since merger, small sample size, organizational contextual data, and the ability to apply these findings to other public agencies.

There was a potential issue of clarity methodologically around which team the participants were evaluating. Some participants may have been focused on their local team while others may have evaluated other leaders or team building in the agency as a whole. More clarity to this topic was provided in the qualitative results but this remained a limitation for the quantitative section.

The other limitation of the study was the time that passed since the final phase of the merger had been completed. A factor contributing to this included the shifting of in-

person focus groups for data collection to an electronic data collection method given the COVID-19 pandemic and stay at home orders issued for public health reasons. Additional participants may have obliged to participate if the focus groups were held at team meetings as originally planned.

The sample of teams and number of responses also posed a limitation to gain multiple perspectives from differing teams across the organization. While the teams represented the three agencies of origin, a limited number of teams participated in the survey compared to the total number of teams within the organization.

Additional contextual data was not utilized to gauge the depth or quality of the pre-merger team building activities. While some participants mentioned the lack of leadership and team building prior to the merger, no clear data such as readiness assessments or pre-merger activities were provided. Standard team performance indicators or shared performance data such as quality and timeliness of service delivery were not tracked at an organizational level or team level throughout the merger process. While there was no disruption in services provided, no data was available to gauge the impacts of the merger specifically on team performance, especially for newly formed teams or the merging of centralized functions.

There is also a limitation around applying these initial findings to other public agency mergers in local, state, or federal public entities. Public agencies and organizations vary widely in their purpose and the communities or populations they serve. While some of the principles of team building may remain the same, a more comprehensive approach may be needed to approach different sizes of mergers and

differing levels of complexity including relationships with contractors or other external or interagency partnerships common the public sector.

Recommendations

The research question in this study focused on team building after a public agency merger. The primary recommendations based on the findings are to develop and implement a formal team building program focused on cross-agency relationship building and knowledge sharing, leverage a change management model, allocate resources to support the human element of the transition, and prepare leaders to manage the changes the organization will experience.

While the study showed there were some local and regionalized team building efforts, the application of a single, organization-wide team building program was not evident. Research shows that intentional people integration strategies, such as team building, can help improve the overall outcomes of mergers and acquisitions (Podgorski & Sherwood, 2015). The team building program should be administered over time and team performance metrics could be developed in order to measure progress over time. Dyer et al. (2007) suggest the following recommendations for a formal team building program:

1. Provide clear top management support for team development.

2. Create organizational rewards to support teamwork.

3. Make time available for team development.

4. Regularly assess whether the organization's culture, structure, and systems support teamwork.

5. Develop a systematic process for making team assignments. (pp. 40-46)

These basic steps could be further developed based on the findings from the Team

Context and Composition Assessment results included in this study. Teams can also

perform this assessment first as a baseline then reassess after six months to track their

progress over time creating one way to measure improvement. Study participants shared

a strong sense that working in teams is essential to accomplishing their goals. Prioritizing

and dedicating time for an effective team building program supports this finding.

Various change management models and frameworks exist. Leveraging a change

management model to move through continue integration would assist in realizing more

of the initial benefits envisioned for the creation of DCYF. No one, clear model prevailed

in the literature. However, the model should include components of planning for change,

managing the change, communicating to and engaging the organization, and measuring

the success of the change (Podarski & Sherwood, 2015). Team building can be embedded

into each of these components as a strategy for integration of the people within the

merged organizations. Organizations often underestimate the level of individual change

that needs to happen for a successful integration. While the technical aspects of the

merger may have been clear and well executed, the human element to a merger and

acquisition are often far less concrete and measurable. Leveraging a change management

model may also include determining ways to measure and track the effectiveness of team

building, change management efforts, and the outcomes teams experience as a result of

implementing intentional change management practices.

Another key recommendation involves preparing leaders for managing change.

Themes from the research and participant data indicated the level of leadership change

competency as a core antecedent to other team building and post-integration activities.

The literature supports various approaches to prepare and develop leaders for change that are differentiated from the technical management processes often associated with organizational achievement. Empathy, resilience, political savviness, openness, adaptability, effective communication, and a focus on the people side of change encompass some of the desired change leadership attributes shared in the participant data and research.

These recommendations could be implemented using existing resources within the agency such as the Organizational Change Management Office and by engaging highly change competent leaders and employees interested in working with teams across the organization. Another potential option would be to partner with other state agencies to facilitate team building events. The organization could also utilize the annual employee engagement survey to create a question specific to team building that could then be measured year over year for improvement. This same employee engagement survey could be used to combine results from questions most related to team building and employee satisfaction to create a team building index.

Based on the findings in this study, a strong desire exists to continue supporting team building and create and sustain systems within the organization to support teamwork in an effort to improve agency outcomes. These recommendations provide options for moving forward with improving the areas highlighted as challenges and potential opportunities.

Suggestions for Future Study

This topic can be further explored by conducting additional post-merger assessments within the agency to gauge the levels of team cohesiveness, psychological

safety and trust on teams, clarity of roles and purpose, and lateral integration of teams. These results could be then compared to individual and team performance in achieving the organization's outcome goals, project outcomes, and employee satisfaction levels.

Another aspect for future study may be to do a retrospective study to determine which of the pre-combination activities were most successful and inventory a list of activities that were not completed but that staff may have hoped would have occurred. This could help develop strategies to address areas of unachieved improvement and strengthen activities that were successful. In addition to this, a future study may also include conducting an overarching lessons learned assessment to identify areas of opportunity for team building that could be explored in relationship to other team or organizational structure changes in order to increase post-combination team performance.

Team building proves to be a constant pursuit as new people are continually hired, leadership changes over time, and the personal and professional development of all individuals is ever-changing. Even teams that remain unchanged in membership evolve over time based on changing environmental factors.

Summary

There are many challenges and opportunities after a public agency merger where each agency of origin embodies a unique culture with different organizational goals serving a diverse population. However, much like the merging of the organizations, the services provided to children, youth, and families also benefit from coordination across the organization and with community partners. The study captures where the organization can improve team building efforts and areas where DCYF can leverage strengths. The possibility for continued team building activities focused on lateral integration and cross-

divisional team building would hope to also positively impact the coordination of

services and care provided to families through these efforts.

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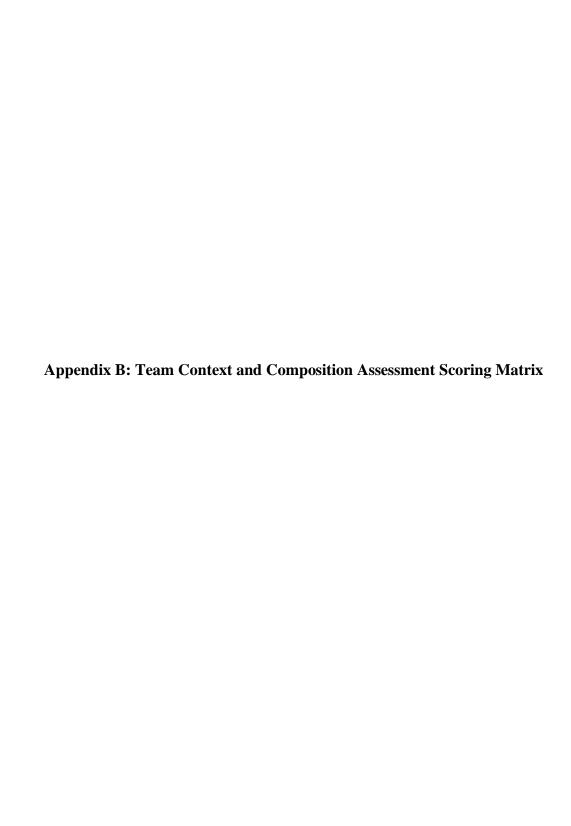Rouzies, A., & Colman, H. L. (2012). Identification Processes in Post-Acquisition

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Appendix A: Team Context and Composition Assessment

Instructions: Using your observations of the organization and your immediate work team, answer the following questions (on a scale of 1-5).

1. Is teamwork needed for your team to accomplish its goals (that is, is reciprocal interdependence important for the team to succeed?)

1	2	3	4	5
No, not really.		It is somewhat Important.		Teamwork is critical to success.

2. Is the team's role in the organization clear (that is, is it clear whether the team is a decision team or task team or plays some other role)?

1	2	3	4	5
No, the role is unclear.		The role is somewhat clear.		Yes, the role is very clear.

3. Does the team have the authority needed to accomplish its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No, the team has little authority.		It has some authority, but not all that is needed.		Yes, team has the authority it needs.

4. Does the team have the resources it needs to accomplish its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No, more resources are needed.		Some resources are available.		Yes, the resources needed are available.

5. Does the organization's culture (its rules and values) encourage teamwork?

1	2	3	4	5
No, teamwork is not encouraged.		Teamwork is somewhat encouraged		Teamwork is encouraged as part of the organization's culture.

6. Does the organization's structure (organization chart, roles, job descriptions, and so on) support teamwork?

1	2	3	4	5
No, the structure hinders teamwork.		The structure somewhat supports teamwork.		Yes, the structure supports teamwork.

7. Do the organization's systems (compensation, appraisal, information, and so on) support teamwork?

1	2	3	4	5
No, the systems undermine teamwork.		The systems somewhat support teamwork.		Yes, the systems support teamwork.

8. Does your organization have a well-thought-out method for assigning people to be in a team?

1	2	3	4	5
No, team assignments are rather haphazard.		There is some thought that goes into team assignments.		Yes, careful thought is taken before making team assignments.

9. How effective is the leadership in the team?

1	2	3	4	5
The leadership is not effective.		The leadership is somewhat effective.		The leadership is very effective.

10. Does the team have the necessary technical skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No, it needs more skills, knowledge, and experience.		It has some of the skills, knowledge, and experience it needs.		Yes, it has all the skills, knowledge, and experience it needs.

11. Do team members have the interpersonal skills needed to work effectively as a team?

1	2	3	4	5
No, they don't have the interpersonal skills needed.		They have some of the interpersonal skills needed.		Yes, they have the interpersonal skills needed to work well as a team.

12. Is the team the appropriate size to accomplish its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No, it is either too large or too small.		The team might need to add or subtract a team member or two.		Yes, the team is the right size for the task.

13. Are team members motivated to help the team achieve its goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No, there is little motivation.		There is some motivation on the part of		Yes, team members are highly motivated to achieve team goals.

Appendix B: Team Context and Composition Assessment Scoring Matrix

Scoring instructions: Each person should add up their score and divide by 13. A score of 3.75 or higher would indicate that the organization's context and team composition generally support team performance. Scores between 2.5 and 3.75 indicate that there is moderate support for team performance. Score between 1.0 and 2.5 indicate that are some serious problem related to context and composition that are hindering team performance. Also, if responses to even one or two items are very low (1 or 2) this suggests that action may need to be taken soon to improve the context of team composition. However, if the response to item 1 (the need for teamwork) is low (either a 1 or 2), which typically means that the interdependence of team members is largely modular or sequential, the mean score may not need to be as high as in a team in which teamwork is essential to achieve its goals (in other words, when there is a need for reciprocal interdependence).

Adapted from "Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance" by Dyer, Dyer, and Dyer. 4th ed.