

Case Study: Improving Team Function at Amdahl Corporation

Experiments have demonstrated that under time pressure, compatible groups perform even better than they do without pressure, while incompatible groups become more ineffective. The project team in charge of launching a main server system is a perfect example.

Two key people in that work team were often at odds with each other. Meetings became long and tiresome. Petty differences were magnified. Hidden agendas competed with project productivity. The organizational goal, the successful and timely launch of the server system, was suffering.

Management sent these two managers to a variety of seminars and workshops so they could work out their differences. But none seemed to make much of an impact except The Human Element. Because The Human Element approach goes beyond behavior and explores the attitudes that underlie behavior, profound changes can occur in the way participants look at themselves and others.

Results

In this case, the project team went on to launch the system right in keeping with its scheduled release, **80% faster** than comparable competing projects at IBM.

The Development Project manager reported that attending The Human Element workshop with several members of the development team contributed significantly to the success of this project, specifically in the area of clear communication. "A decision that might have taken three to five 1-hour meetings to resolve before the seminar can now be resolved in one three to five-minute meeting. Our work group developed their plans in **one third the time** it used to take, and made a better plan." The launch was so successful that IBM has **appointed a 320-person task force** to "catch up."

