

Experiences in Product Development Projects: Team Members' Perspectives

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Abstract

Increasingly companies are relying on cross-functional teams (CFTs) in order to develop important new products and new technologies. Some of the research which has been conducted has noted the difficulties many companies face in achieving high, sustained CFT performance. In fact, in many organizations there is a large gap between actual performance and desired team performance. Interestingly, there has been limited research on the actual experiences of team members in carrying out their CFT assignments. Most of the research which has been conducted on CFTs has focused on understanding various dimensions of the role of the team leader--not how team members experience their assignments. Our study reports the results of a study involving field interviews with over 70 team members in various high technology companies. Specifically, we examine how team members perceive & experience various leadership & teamwork issues. We also examine team member experiences in different phases of the product development cycle. Several recommendations are given to assist in effectively managing cross-functional teams. Suggestions for future research are advanced.

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