Homans theory of group formation

George Homans argues that the interaction between the group and the environment in which it operates shapes both the behavior of the group and the final outcome.

THE FIVE FACTORS IDENTIFIED ARE:

- Physical restraints that are imposed on the team which affect the performance of the task.
- Cultural-persona/ beliefs and values that make up the shared understanding of the group.
- Technological facilities and resources that are available to the team to help them achieve their task.
- Organization's policies and procedures that govern working practices and personal development of team members.
- Socio-economic factors which flow from the impact that the wider political, economic, social and technological developments have on the team.

Homan argues that, influenced by the environment, the group goes through a series of behavioral stages. In the beginning they act in a manner expected by the group leader (required or given behaviors) followed by a stage of doing things over and above what is expected (emergent behaviors) resulting ultimately in increased productivity and personal development.

HOW TO USE IT

Recognize that you and your team do not operate in isolation. You are both affected by your organization's culture and wider societal influences.

Use SWOT and PEST/PESTLE tools to identify the variables that might impact on your project and in conjunction with the team decide how you will deal with all eventualities identified.

Remove any physical restraints imposed on your team as this will affect its performance. If accommodation is cramped, over-crowded and separated geographically from the site of the action your team will naturally assume that the organization thinks that their work is unimportant.

Instill in the team a common set of values and beliefs about how the team will operate, deal with the task in hand and recognize what a successful outcome will look like.

Train every member of your team to maximize the use of the tools available to them. Too often individuals are unaware of what resources are available or how to fully exploit them.

Teams working outside the normal organization structure can be hamstrung by the bureaucracy that governs everyday organizational life. Agree with management to what extent you can opt out of normal controls.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Am I too focused on what is going on within the organization?

Do I need to discuss the wider implications of the project with someone outside the team?
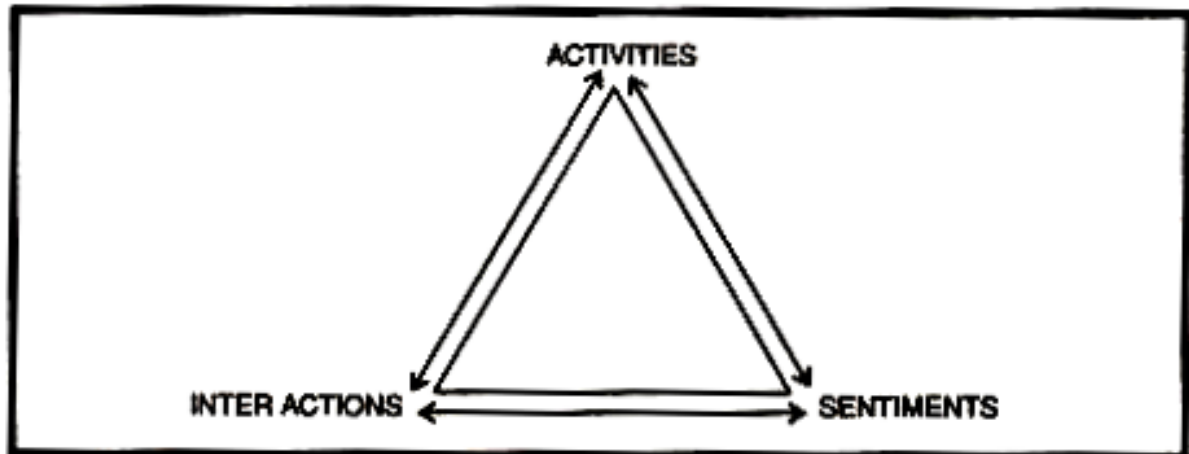
(The Inter-Dependence of Activities, Interaction and Sentiments)