

Explanation Action Learning

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ABSTRACT:

With an emphasis on learning via doing and reflecting, action learning is a dynamic and cutting-edge approach to both individual and organisational development. This theory emphasises the transformational potential of confronting real-life difficulties collectively and is based on the concepts of experiential learning and group dynamics. It puts people at the centre of their own learning process. An overview of Action Learning, a significant idea in management theory, is given in this abstract. Action Learning, which was created by Reg Revans in the 1940s, is based on the idea that real learning happens when people actively solve real-world issues and then reflect on their experiences. Small groups of people, referred to as "action learning sets," work together throughout the process of action learning to solve complicated issues that are faced by their organisations or communities. These sets are intended to be varied, inviting players to provide a range of viewpoints and levels of competence. In this research, we investigate the fundamental elements of Action Learning, such as the contribution of questioning, active listening, and helpful criticism in fostering creativity and critical thinking. A collaborative learning environment is fostered by encouraging participants in action learning sets to test presumptions, exchange ideas, and consider alternate solutions. Action Learning also develops leadership skills and interpersonal competencies in addition to problem-solving ability. Participants strengthen their capacity for clear communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork, which promotes individual development and enhances organisational performance.

KEYWORDS:

Action, Management, Organisational, Participants, Process.

I. INTRODUCTION

Action Learning has become a dynamic and significant method for learning, problem-solving, and individual growth in the field of management theory, where businesses seek for continual innovation and creative solutions. By exposing participants to real-world problems and fostering cooperative reflection, this ground-breaking technique, founded on the ideas of experiential learning and group dynamics, offers the potential to alter both people and organisations. Action Learning, which Reg Revans created in the 1940s, challenges established educational paradigms by focusing on active interaction rather than passive teaching. Action learning is fundamentally based on the idea that real learning comes through doing and reflecting. Participants are engaged in actual issues, which helps them sharpen their critical thinking abilities, encourage creativity, and learn useful knowledge that they can immediately use to their professional life[1], [2].

The foundational tenet of action learning is the conviction that people learn best when they are actively engaged in solving problems. To address the complex problems that their organisations or communities are facing, small groups, referred to as "action learning sets," work together. These groups are purposefully heterogeneous to encourage individuals to use their unique views, experiences, and knowledge to investigate novel solutions. Action learning takes place over the course of many iteration cycles. Participants put their ideas into practise by carrying out the projects and solutions they have developed. After that, they have reflective conversations in which they consider the results, achievements, and failures of their acts. These thoughts act as a springboard for adjusting tactics, fostering a cycle of learning that results in continual development[3], [4].

The value of action learning rests not just in its capacity for problem-solving but also in its capacity to develop interpersonal and leadership skills. A collaborative and cohesive learning atmosphere is fostered when people work together in action learning sets, where they build effective communication, active listening, and conflict resolution skills. We will examine the key elements of action learning throughout this study, such as the skill of questioning, the importance of active listening, and the benefit of constructive criticism. We will examine actual instances of Action Learning in distinct organisational settings, showcasing its adaptability to varied problems and encouraging innovation and adaptation [5], [6].

The effects of action learning go beyond the scope of the person and the organisation. Action Learning may spark transformational changes inside organisations by encouraging a culture of ongoing learning, knowledge sharing, and group problem-solving. The capacity to learn, adapt, and innovate is becoming more important for an organization's success as the business environment changes quickly. This article on action learning, which is a key idea in the Encyclopaedia of Management Theory, tries to illuminate its revolutionary potential. Action Learning allows people to use their experiences, difficulties, and insights to foster personal development and organisational performance by putting them at the centre of their learning journey. We want to further our grasp of Action Learning's applicability and influence in establishing a culture of continuous innovation and improvement in the ever-evolving field of management as we dig further into its complexities [7], [8].

II. DISCUSSION

In several organisations and educational contexts, action learning has become a well-liked way to problem-solving and learning. Reg Revans created the approach in the 1940s, and it places a strong emphasis on learning through experience and reflection. It is based on the notion that solving real difficulties and issues from the business or community may help people and teams learn and grow in productive ways. The ideas of critical reflection and experience learning serve as the foundation for the idea of action learning. Participants take real steps to solve an issue, evaluate the results, and then reflect on their experiences and what they learned from the process. This is known as an action-reflection cycle. This ongoing cycle of doing, reflecting, and learning encourages personal development, improves problem-solving abilities, and develops teamwork [9], [10].

An Action Learning programme often comprises a small group of people who join together to create a "learning set" or "action learning group." A experienced coach or facilitator oversees the process and makes sure that participants remain focused on drawing lessons from their experiences. Action learning is a method of learning that helps organisation members become more competent in both subject knowledge and process skills while tackling actual, challenging management problems in teams. One of the most popular treatments for organisational and leadership development is action learning. Action learning has gained appeal due to its connection to actual organisational problems faced by teams in organisations and its connected, measurable consequences. The foundations of action learning, the significance of action learning research and practise, and a list of further readings to deepen your understanding of action learning are all covered in this page.

Fundamentals

Although he had been using action learning since the 1940s, Reginald Revans, the man credited with creating it, used the phrase "action learning" for the first time in a published work in 1972. The absence of a consensus definition for action learning is a major barrier to study. Because he felt that defining it would limit its significance, Revans instead characterised action learning in terms of what it is not (such as a case study, consultancy, or task force). Action learning has therefore been given many different meanings and variations, including business-driven action learning, critical action learning, work-based learning, self-managed action learning, and virtual action learning. Action learning initiatives have been analysed using a variety of frameworks, but many of them include two recurring themes: team learning and actual, workplace problems. Action learning is founded on the pedagogical tenet that learning

occurs most effectively when individuals work on real-world issues that arise in their own professional environments. By taking the time to reflect with peers learning teams, participants in action learning settings learn while they work by offering team members the chance to provide insights into one other's workplace issues. Additionally, participants gain the most from group reflection on actual issues that arise in their own organisations as "comrades in adversity," in Revans's phrase.

We have identified five key components of action learning that, when smoothly integrated, would support participants' learning and provide high-quality solutions as intended. These components are based on our cumulative expertise in action learning practise and study. First, Team learning is the foundation of action learning. Participant and team involvement is essential to action learning. Five to six people make up a team since this number should provide varied viewpoints and discourage freeloaders. To achieve diversity in action learning, considerations for participant occupations, educational backgrounds, experience, cultures and nations, and genders should be made. Second, in order to maximise learning, action learning is centred on a project. A project should offer value to the organisation and be challenging for participants to complete since adult learners learn best when they are tackling real-world issues. Individual projects and team projects are the two categories of projects used in action learning. In an individual project, individuals provide perceptive comments, suggestions, and knowledge to help other participants solve an issue and improve their learning. In a team project, members collaborate on a single project to resolve difficulties at work for the competitive benefit of the organisation.

Third, through engaging in the action learning process, individuals improve both their content knowledge (information and know-how) and process skills (a variety of approaches and tools). Through benchmarks of best practises created by rivals and industries as well as by internal specialists, participants gain both explicit and tacit knowledge that are essential to solve challenges in order to discover customers' demands. Through cooperation, participants also learn how to employ a variety of tools and approaches for communication, decision-making, problem-solving, managing conflict, and leadership abilities. As a result, action learning is widely used by businesses worldwide to develop potential and groom future leaders.

In order to provide transformational learning and practical answers via problem solving, action learning promotes inquiry, reflection, and feedback. Participants ask questions and think about what they should know, how to strengthen cooperation, how to handle issues more effectively, and how to make the most of the learning opportunities. Through peer and outside feedback, participants also assure the quality of the learning and the process. Regarding the connection between questioning and knowledge in action learning, Revans emphasised that if programmed knowledge (P) is linked with questioning (Q), learning (L) is maximised. His action learning equation, " $L = P + Q$," prioritises questioning insight above information gain. In order to learn, you must ask the appropriate questions.

What are we attempting to do? is a question that might help folks get started along this road. What prevents us from carrying it out? How can we handle it? Fifth, learning coaches internal or external are utilised to assist people who are unfamiliar with questioning, feedback, reflection, and problem-solving techniques. Through the use of effective communication, group decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict-management tools and strategies, learning coaches supervise the calibre of team processes and learning. To avoid interfering with the learning team's subject expertise, practitioners should restrict a learning coach's function to that of a process facilitator.

The task of balancing action and learning throughout the action learning process is a crucial concern in action learning. In his well-known comment, "There is no action without learning and there is no learning without action," Revans, in 1998, emphasised the necessity for conceptual and practical balance between action and learning. The fundamental benefit of action learning, which sets it apart from other action techniques, is a practical emphasis on problem-based learning. People often acquire skills related to how to better learn from their experiences via a balanced process of action and learning. Therefore, an imbalanced approach to action learning is ineffective since learning without action does not promote change and action without learning is unlikely to provide successful longer-term effects.

In actuality, action learning programmes often favour action over learning or are learning-oriented rather than striking a balance between the two. Activity learning's "action" (i.e., results and solutions) should be the method by which learning is accomplished, not the end result. Action learning that is focused on learning has recently received more attention. This second conclusion is consistent with other research showing that action learning practises are more often seen as beneficial when undertaken for individual learning and growth rather than necessary for organisational learning and development. Action learning practitioners may not think about how action learning initiatives may be applied to their particular work and organisational settings if they are unaware of organization-level growth and transformation.

Despite the fact that there is no universally accepted definition of action learning, all action learning practitioners must acknowledge a few fundamental ideas. Constrained cultural and contextual environments need ongoing revision and modification of action learning. For instance, in some cultures where a learning coach is warmly welcomed in the action learning process, it may be essential to hire one, a practise Revans fiercely opposed. One of Revans' essential tenets about the function of a learning coach is fundamentally broken by the active employment of a learning coach. Revans made it apparent that a learning coach is only required in the beginning stages of action learning, and that person must ultimately leave the action learning team to prevent getting in the way.

But learning coaches those chosen from the talent pool can improve their facilitative leadership by addressing organisational difficulties in addition to providing participants with guidance. A crucial component of action learning's effectiveness is choosing knowledgeable learning coaches. Consequently, we are faced with a difficult problem that must find a compromise between maintaining Revans' gold standards and tailoring action learning to suit the needs of cultural settings.

Importance

In addition to being a crucial factor for action learning, the balancing problem stands out as a useful lens for analysing the action learning literature. Through review of action learning processes, participant experiences, and the way action learning is conceptualised in the literature, balanced action learning methods may be examined. Action learning promotes improved communication, a positive work environment, collaboration, a shared vision, and organisational growth for both individuals and organisations. Balanced action learning, when implemented effectively in organisational settings, may be a potent method for management development. The effects of action learning on the development of management practise may be summed up as follows: First, action learning overcomes the basic shortcomings of current experiential learning techniques (such as business simulation and role acting) that divide the location of learning from the location of application from the viewpoint of learning transfer. Because participants work through actual workplace issues while learning, action learning offers a realistic, useful alternative that may also be more economical for the organization's training budget.

Second, action learning is a fantastic technique for creating a learning organisation by using the knowledge and expertise of organisational members. Action learning offers practical methods for implementing a learning organisation or knowledge management in complex and dynamic management contexts, which will ultimately result in a competitive advantage for the organisation and its members. Third, managers' preexisting perceptions of learning and the participants who are striving to address the issue are profoundly altered by action learning. Organisational members (managers and workers) handle issues at work on their own and develop their competences via the learning process rather than relying on management consultants to do so. Action learning participants would gradually reduce their reliance on outside advisors.

For managers and human resources (HR), both of whom are involved stakeholders in action learning, there are two consequences. Instead of imparting topic knowledge, expertise, and information, HR today serves as a learning coach or facilitator who directs and motivates students to recognise challenges, use problem-solving techniques, and develop their competencies and abilities. Participants will develop their problem-solving and leadership skills in ways that (a) enable them to learn the

problem-solving process independently and without depending on outside consultants, (b) enable them to implement the solutions they have proposed as well as just propose them, (c) enable them to develop their competencies through questions and reflection, and (d) enable them to improve their leadership skills by working in effective teams. Wider assessment of existing methodologies and their effects is necessary since current practice-based action learning approaches only address the face validity of action learning theory. Future studies that achieve the correct balance between the processes and results of action learning includemost likely to act as a catalyst for its acceptance and spread. In order to understand how cultural variations affect action learning practises,must take into account both the upkeep of Revans' ideals and the adaptation of action learning in various situations.

III. CONCLUSION

The Encyclopaedia of Management Theory's discussion on action learning shows that it is a potent and transforming method for learning, problem-solving, and organisational growth. This cutting-edge approach to teaching and learning challenges conventional educational paradigms by putting the learner at the centre of their own learning process. It is based on the ideas of experiential learning, group dynamics, and collaboration. We have learned a lot about the fundamental elements of action learning throughout this investigation, such as the functions of action, reflection, questioning, and active listening. A continuous learning journey that supports personal development and improves problem-solving skills is created through the iterative process of taking on real-world issues, reflecting on results, and adjusting techniques. With their deliberate variety, Action Learning sets provide a vibrant atmosphere for the discovery of many viewpoints and the exchange of information. This collaborative environment fosters interpersonal skills, such as effective communication and conflict resolution, which are essential for success in the contemporary corporate environment. It also fosters creativity and critical thinking.

Action Learning has shown to be a flexible strategy to solve a variety of difficulties, from enhancing operational efficiency to promoting creativity and managing change, as shown through actual implementations in different organisational settings. Organisations may foster a culture of continuous improvement and flexibility, two qualities that are crucial for succeeding in a world that is changing quickly, by allowing participants to learn from their actions and experiences. The effects of action learning go well beyond personal growth and have a profound impact on organisational success. Businesses may realise their full potential and position themselves as dynamic and resilient organisations by adopting Action Learning as a driver for learning, collaboration, and innovation. In conclusion, the examination of Action Learning in the Encyclopaedia of Management Theory highlights its relevance as a paradigmatic shift in the management discipline. Action Learning holds the key to unlocking untapped potential, boosting organisational success, and establishing a culture of continuous improvement by enabling people and organisations to actively participate in problem-solving and reflective learning. We may anticipate a future in which organisations and people prosper thanks to the power of learning, cooperation, and collective progress if we continue to embrace this dynamic approach.

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