

(2) TEAM REPORT – AN ACTUAL EXAMPLE

(1) PRE VOYAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to setting sail the facilitator was aware of the teams' **Achievement Profile** and the spread of contribution preferences amongst the team members. These were as follows -

The **Driving** contribution was marginally more prevalent than either the **Assessing** and **Planning** contributions, both of which were also very much to the fore. However, the total absence of any preferences for either **Enabling** or **Implementing** would very likely to prove to be stumbling blocks for this team.

Within the **Driving** category itself the preference for '**focusing and deciding**' stood head and shoulders above the rest. Under **Assessing** there appeared to be no one willing to put up their hand for '**analysing methods**', despite this being an otherwise well represented contribution. Under **Planning** the thrust came mainly from the clear preference for '**considering options**', with a somewhat lonely team member keen to '**test for difficulties**'. Two lone voices also stood out under **Enabling** – these being in favour of '**involving others**' and '**negotiating support**'. Surely their voices would be drowned out by the debates likely to rage between the majority that would want to make decisions in an autocratic rather than a participative fashion? **Implementing**, it has already been stated, is very poorly represented. The biggest concern here lies in the lack of any team member who might be inclined to want (or even see the need) to '**co-ordinate effort**'.

Thus taking the team profile only into account, it must be said that while this team may be able to learn from its mistakes ('**evaluating and learning**' is strongly represented), it could well make many! Arguments could too readily result from an absence of detailed planning compounded by poor communication, an absence of co-ordination and too little meaningful involvement of all team members.

(2) THE VOYAGE ITSELF

- ❑ The problem of the cracked valve was well poorly communicated from the outset.
- ❑ Its impact on the ETA was debated but ultimately a unilateral decision was made.
- ❑ The Dover Port Authority remained in the dark throughout.
- ❑ RAM/NUC signals were not used at any stage.
- ❑ **Monitoring** was done consistently – two team members had this as clear preferences.
- ❑ The overheating of the bearings gave rise to another pointless and indecisive debate.
- ❑ The Master was informed but his suggestions ignored.
- ❑ The team showed commendable equanimity on learning the engine room was flooded.
- ❑ They continued to 'keep their cool' when it came to establishing the facts.
- ❑ The failure of the pump gave the team a further opportunity to participate.
- ❑ They started off well, but then began to falter as inflexible **Drivers** pushed ahead.
- ❑ The sick passengers became forgotten victims in the rush to get to Dover on time.
- ❑ The Cowes week caused major confusion and one, if not two, yachts were sunk.
- ❑ The helicopter evacuation option was raised but went unheard.
- ❑ Communication with Dover was never a strong point – with too many 'chiefs'.

- ❑ The debriefing session highlighted the predicted lack of participation.
- ❑ Role changes ahead of the voyage to Dover were wise and well considered.
- ❑ The shipping lane collision led to a fully participative debate.
- ❑ The net entanglement with the prop benefited from careful fact-finding.
- ❑ The Captain asked for contributions and informed decisions were taken.
- ❑ The best learning point was the clear need for greater respect through listening.
- ❑ The engine overheating was well handled although too much time was lost here.
- ❑ The Pirate attack caused much merriment; fortunately for the team it wasn't real!
- ❑ The debriefing session illustrated just how much this team had improved since Dover.

(3) POST VOYAGE EVALUATION & LEARNING

The profile of this team was very much more apparent voyage in the first voyage than it was in the second. The difference was that in the Singapore trip the team had moved from 'unconscious incompetence' to 'conscious incompetence'. They now knew what they didn't know before! In the first debriefing session they soon spotted why the comparatively calm waters of the English Channel had occasioned so much angst and argument on The Bridge.

Many of the pre-voyage predictions came to pass. Too many 'chiefs' insisted not merely on having their 'say', but more contentiously insisting that their position and consequent decision was by far the wiser of the available options. Opposing views were simply overridden, and a deaf ear was turned to any suggestion made by one of the 'lone voices'. On more than one occasion it was possible to observe the confusion between 'authority' and 'wisdom'.

The turnaround in the Malacca Straits occurred because the team was sensible enough to identify what had worked and what had not during the crossing to Dover. The video replay highlighted the moments where a calmer, a more thoughtful and a more considered approach might have won the day. Slowing down the speed of decision-making would have allowed space for considering different views based on firmer facts.

In the debriefing sessions the quieter team members were able to point to the times when their frustrations were at their highest. Invariably these were those moments when 'driving' held the wheel and 'enabling' was forced into a back seat. Characteristically these observations were paralleled in the workplace, and team members were able to offer up some very realistic examples of 'what you see (on The Bridge) is what you get (at the workplace)'.

The beauty of the structure that is designed so as to afford the team two 'bites at the cherry', means that experiential learning points can be taken to heart, with a conscious effort being made not to repeat the unhelpful behaviours observed during 'Voyage 1'. The change around in allocated roles also made a positive and welcome impact. Appointing 'he who shouts loudest' as the 'lookout' effectively removed him (and the team) from harm's way.

Like most teams this one does not have a 'balanced' let alone ideal team profile. But when it comes to effective team performance however, that does not matter in the slightest. We are always able to manage 'the gaps' provided that there is a 'common approach' combined with a creative team discipline. In this way this team proved to itself how it could become a team of equals able to effectively share the burden of leadership.