



According to new research led by Christian Resick, PhD, an associate professor of management in Drexel University's LeBow College of Business, these [teams](#) need to master the art of "information elaboration" discussions. Only through openly exchanging relevant information and ideas, seeking clarification on perspectives offered by others, and discussing and integrating this information and feedback, will specialized cross-functional teams be able to capitalize on their diverse knowledge resources and achieve success, particularly when their projects are dynamic or face disruptive challenges. Together with co-authors Toshio Murase and Leslie A. DeChurch of the Georgia Institute of Technology and Banner Health's Kenneth R. Randall, Resick published a paper entitled, "Information Elaboration and Team Performance: Examining the Psychological Origins and Environmental Contingencies," in the July 2014 issue of *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

## **Getting the right people on the team:**

The authors found that an often overlooked consideration in staffing cross-functional teams is ensuring that teams are composed of members who have the "can do" ability and "will do" motivation to engage in information elaboration discussions. When team members are able to quickly get on the same page, they are better able to determine what information is relevant and discuss this information in a rich and detailed manner. Another key element to assembling a successful team is to include members who are motivated to share in the leadership of the team and willing to collaborate in decision-making. The researchers found that trusting teammates plays a big role. People who have a high level of "self-reliance beliefs" tend to mistrust others, which can derail the team, according to Resick.

## **Performing in turbulent environments:**

The researchers also found that the more "turbulent" or unpredictable an environment is, the more likely a team is to succeed when they have information elaboration discussions as part of their process. The opposite is true for teams that work on more routine problems in less disruptive settings. In these cases detailed communication is of minimal value and sometimes drains resources.

"Specialized cross-functional teams working in dynamic, fast-paced environments will perform better when they are staffed with members who not only have the right technical skillsets, but also have the ability and motivation to exchange information in a rich and detailed manner," said Resick. "In less disruptive environments, teams should focus more on the formation of routines and the adoption of accepted practices to gain decision-making efficiencies."

**More information:** [www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S0749597814000259](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S0749597814000259)

Provided by Drexel University

Citation: Enhanced communication key to successful teamwork in dynamic environments (2014, August 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-key-successful-teamwork-dynamic-environments.html>

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