

# **What the Best Teams Do: Understanding Multidisciplinary Teams in Innovation & Entertainment**

## **Goal of the Project**

How do the engineer and designer work together?

How do the designer and developer collaborate and communicate?

How does an organization successfully utilize both the left and right brain?

These are the questions that can help identify some best practices for multidisciplinary teams. Understanding how teams with varying disciplines work together can benefit multiple organizations as well as the educational venues that support students as they move into the innovation and entertainment fields. The purpose of this research project is to identify key best practices for the functionality of multidisciplinary teams such as organizational structure, project management, the creative process, communication, and employee education.

## **Process for Project**

1. Identify key companies for case studies
2. Connect with company leadership
3. Identify 2-3 key leaders in each organization to interview for focused interviews
4. Conduct 30 video interviews with each – approximately one-half day  
(see questions below)
5. Administer DISC assessment to interviewees to understand personality types  
(and possibly other employees if asked)
6. Transcribe and code video responses to find common threads between each organization
7. Use collected data to develop deliverables

## **Deliverables**

1. Curricular materials for the university classroom (including video segments)
2. Manuscript(s) for academic publications and/or books
3. Academic presentations at conferences or meetings

## **Disclaimer**

1. All video footage will be provided to the supporting company
2. The company will have the right to refuse use of a video clip for inclusion in the deliverables
3. All individuals being interviewed must review a study information sheet as provided by IUPUI

## Interview Questions Pool

### Upper Administration

- *Introduction*
  - What is your name and current role?
  - How many years have you been working at your current position?
  - What is your understanding of the purpose of your organization?
- *Organizational structure*
  - What is your current organizational structure?
  - Aside from the formal organizational structure, tell me about the informal networking/matrix structure of your organization? Who speaks with whom?
  - Do you allow individuals to speak with others outside of their formal leadership role?
  - What changes have you made to your structure over time and why?
  - What has worked and what has not worked?
  - What is the process for managing individual client projects?

### Project Lead

- *Project Management -*
  - Is there a structured project management plan for all projects?
  - How do you handle task management and project milestones?
  - How do you manage individual projects with multiple disciplines, teams and individuals involved?
  - What are the roles of team members and leaders?
  - How do you decide who takes the lead on a project? Is it always the same person? Is this based on personality or is it based on role or knowledge/skills?
- *Creative Process*
  - Tell me about the creative process and how it evolves.
  - What are some ways the projects influence the creative process?
  - Do you take individual ideas from all employees when brainstorming a project or do you consider only certain levels of employee input?
  - What is the process you go through to take develop initial ideas and then bring those ideas to reality?
  - How do you inspire creative thought when developing a project in the early stages?
  - Are there opportunities for employees to learn from each other from their specific areas/roles?
  - At what point in time (if at all) do you have individuals from multiple disciplines (functions) engaged in a project?

## **Team Member**

- *Team Communication*
  - Do personality (behavioral style) profiles play a role?
  - Who provides visionary direction?
  - Who has veto power?
  - Who provides quality control?
  - Describe a **SUCCESSFUL** collaborative experience that you have with members of another discipline.
  - Describe an **UNSUCCESSFUL** collaborative experience that you have with members of another discipline.
  - How often do you experience conflict within a team? How is this conflict resolved?
  - Is conflict mostly along discipline/industry lines?

## **HR/Training & Development Questions**

- How are employees vetted for employment?
- Are personalities/behavioral styles evaluated?
- Do management/leadership look at growth mindset or self-awareness of the employee?
- Does the management of the organization provide education and evaluate on group think (avoiding only one way to solve a problem)?