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Creating a High Performance Work Environment

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High Performance is a, comprehensive system that aligns People, Strategy, and Processes to achieve company's goal through continual improvement in performance and ultimately leading to both employee and customer satisfaction. It is a situation, which every team should strive to reach. The study was undertaken to assess the present performance of the HR staff of HCL Technologies Limited, BPO Services, N5, & to provide practical recommendations and suggestions that would help in transforming the present HR team into High Performance Team. The process involved preparation of questionnaire and floating them among the HR staff in order to assess their performance on the parameters of innovation, people participation, personal responsibility, trust etc. which are essential elements in creating High Performance Team. To conclude, the present HR team has individuals who perform, i.e. the individual members have the ability, normal motivation level, organization support in performing their functions. But it lacked certain characteristics which are essential to be a good performing team, like- positive synergy, communicate openly & honestly, sublimate personal goals for the good of the team, perform collectively to attain objectives.

Keywords: creativity, high performance team, innovation, trust, vision,

INTRODUCTION

HCL BPO is a division of HCL Technologies Ltd. HCL has four BPO divisions or centers in Noida , namely N1, N2, N4 and N5. HCL BPO is in the core business of customer service. The client at HCL BPO center is the British Telecom Group (BT). BT Group is one of Europe's leading providers of telecommunication services. The name of the Human Resource team at the N5 center, where the project was undertaken is "Kohinoor." It consists of ten employees headed by a Senior Manager and Vice President, HR.

The objective of the project was to firstly assess the present performance of the Human Resource Team. This objective was accomplished using a Questionnaire, with certain parameters or elements of High Performance. The second Objective was to suggest feasible, cost-effective and implementable measures which would help in the transformation of the present Human Resource team into a high performance team. For the said purpose, certain feasible solutions after every question have been suggested. To create a high performance team no major expensive infrastructural change is required, what is required is behavioral changes.

Transforming a Team into a High Performance Team consists of three key words; transforming, team, & high performance.

• Transforming

The literal and dictionary meaning of the word, "Transform" is to change completely.

• Team

A work team is one that generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. Their individual efforts result in a level of performance that is greater than the sum of those individual inputs.

Characteristics of a Team -

- They perform collectively to attain common objective.
- There is positive synergy
- Team members are mutually and individually accountable.
- Individual skills complement team skills.

The extensive use of teams creates the potential for an organization to generate greater outputs with no increase in inputs.

To perform well as team members, individuals must be able to -

- Communicate openly and honestly
- Confront differences and resolve conflicts
- Sublimate personal goals for the good of the team

• Performance

Performance is what is expected to be delivered; it could be stated in terms of results or efforts, task and quality with specification of conditions under which it is to be delivered.

High Performance Team

High Performance is a, comprehensive system that aligns People, Strategy, and Processes to achieve company's goal through continual improvement in performance and ultimately leading to both employee and customer satisfaction. The relationship between people and the organizations they work for is changing. Corporations no longer can offer the job security and career paths they used to. A new relationship needs to be developed that rewards performance and skills in ways that contribute to organizational effectiveness. Common to the several variants of a definition for "high performance work organization" is the notion of extra-ordinary outcomes of work being achieved through extra-ordinary contributions by people. This notion is consistent with the slogan: "excellence is voluntary". This type of work organization differs from a more traditional emphasis on technological advantage, and the expectation by both labour and management that the standard for employees is compliance with work directives (as distinct from personal commitment).

Creating a High Performance Work Environment program, which is conducive for creating a High Performance Team, helps managers develop the methods and skills needed to drive performance while maintaining a highly effective work culture. It will help you increase performance across the organization and support the achievement of business

objectives, while building the leadership capabilities to meet future business needs. This program provides you with a systemic view of the organization, best practices for creating a productive climate, and the tools and leadership practices to implement these ideas. Creating a High Performance Work Environment features seasoned faculty who have vast “real world” experience. You'll be prepared to assess the needs of your work environment on several dimensions: capabilities, competencies, teamwork, empowerment, systems thinking, and leadership.

Pre-requisites for a High Performance Team:

- The team members must have or are provided, both adequate training and the resources to do their work.
- Leaders Involvement and Commitment: This is the most important key. Without strong commitment and active involvement from the leader, process improvement will become just another program, a flavor of the month.
- Size: Not more than 10 or up to 10.
- Specific individual goals, as it helps in the attainment of goals. It facilitates clear communication and helps maintain the focus on getting results.
- Agreement on a common approach for achieving goals, as defining and agreeing on a common approach ensures that the team is unified on the means for achieving those ends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

White (2012) the recipe confirmed that the effective team improves the intellectual and creative thinking skills, as well as the sociability, of the individual. The recipe enables radical improvement in individual, team and organizational performance. The recipe is unique and is the only methodology to enable a high-performing team to be built rapidly, delivering to any organization a quantum leap in individual and team performance.

Courtney et al (2007) The Dynamic Organic Transformational (D.O.T.) Team Model is a

comprehensive and holistic approach for knowledge-workers to achieve high performance. This model is grounded in theory and by applying the five dimensions (purpose, people, partnerships, process, and performance) this model enables optimum *fit* with a high-performance team's organization and environments – allowing knowledge-worker members to effectively respond to dynamic changes and enhance its team and organizational performance.

Wing (2005) Conditions for success across a wide range of organizational principles, actions and philosophies are articulated and highlight the systems orientation of high performance. Organizations who wish for accelerated growth, resilience and change will be introduced to a series of techniques which, when applied, create understanding required for swift action in high velocity, global markets. The viewpoint is grounded in actual experience and the understanding of a leader who led through team leaders for superior outcomes. A model of leadership activities, actions, principles and philosophies required to gain this superior performance is shared.

Dechant et al (2000) presents the results of a seminal study on team learning conducted by the authors, which produced a model of team learning. It also relates highlights from two dissertation studies that affirm the model and provide additional insight into the nature of team learning in corporate settings.

Beech & Crane (1999) the study took a multi-method approach to examine the development from teams to high performance teams, which focused on “soft” processual inputs, but which had to have both qualitative and quantitative outcomes. The analysis revealed three factors which were crucial to development: transparency, check ability and a climate of community.

Kur (1996) presents the faces model, a new model of team development which describes teams using five common patterns, called “faces”. The model assumes that teams wear one face, and then move to wearing another in a somewhat random order, unless members proactively drive their teams to wear a face or engage in a pattern which they believe is more desirable than the others. It describes the “performance” face in detail, since it is the most desirable pattern for most teams in organizations.

Also describes approaches for moving typical teams from each of the other faces to the performance face. Takes issue with many popular development models which describe most groups as moving through a specific sequence of patterns.

Margerison & McCann (1987) well-balanced teams will always out-perform other teams which might have brilliant individuals, but as a team are lacking in one of the major team activities. Work carried out with managers to improve team performance is described. The principles involved and the way in which managers can develop effective team operations are described, including linking, exploring, controlling, organizing and advising.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives:

- To assess the present performance of the HR Team.
- To suggest measures to transform it into a high performance team.

1. Defined the objectives of the study.
2. Data collection: The data used to examine the performance of the employees includes both primary and secondary data. For Primary data, a questionnaire was administered personally to all the Human Resource staff. For Secondary data various articles, books and websites were consulted the names of which are duly mentioned in the literature review and reference section.
3. Area of study & sample size: It is a purposive as well as a full contact study. The target Population for conducting the Project was, the HR Staff of HCL BPO, N5. The HR staff consisted of 10 employees each handling different areas of HR. Thus the sample size used to conduct the study was 10. This includes 5 Executives, 2 Senior Executives and 3 Assistant Managers.
4. Selection of tool: For interpreting the means garnered by the Questionnaire, Likert Scale was used. Developed by Rensis Likert, a Likert scale is widely used rating scale that requires respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement

with each of a series of statements about the factors undertaken.

The questions are based on certain parameters such as innovation, vision, trust etc, which are essential elements of a High Performance team. The responses of the employees were analyzed using various Statistical tools in Excel and SPSS, such as Bar charts and mean.

5. Lastly, measures were suggested to further improve the performance of the team, both from the Managers' and Employees' perspective.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

Following are the bar graphs as per the responses of the respondents with a few suggestions from them:

Q1. Does your department encourage innovation and creativity?

Insert Figure 1 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 2.9 i.e. Employees feel, very often innovation and creativity is encouraged.

Innovation & creativity can be further encouraged by -

- By encouraging employees to share ideas, that may benefit the department/ organization.
- This can be done at meetings, where greater value should be placed on those who have not only come up with ideas but also shared them with others.
- This will encourage sharing & make workers earnestly campaign for their implementation by getting more voices to lend support & improve on the idea.
- A distinction should be made between those who came up with the ideas & those who adopt ideas from others. The latter should also be given recognition & acknowledgement because of their willingness to adopt ideas indicates their interest & earnestness to contribute.
- A dedicated team can be created which collects ideas from employees and sets up the process to implement them.

Q2. There is autonomy to plan, organize and carry out your job.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 3.1 i.e. Employees Agree that there is autonomy to plan, organize and carry out job.

Q3. How often you take accountability for the good and bad deeds that you perform at work.

Insert Figure 3 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 3.4 i.e. Employees Often take accountability for deeds they do.

To further encourage employee’s ownership & accountability -

1. The leader/manager can set an example by accepting responsibility for a mistake when it occurs. This encourages team members to come out in the open whenever things go wrong, which in turn prevents blame game.
2. The Morning Meeting Model
 - Under this the manager meets the staff every morning every day at the same time. The purpose of the meeting is to solve problems collectively.
 - When everyone in the meeting owns up the decisions made, turf wars, back biting disappears.
 - Nobody enjoys a special clout as everybody gets an equal chance to present their case.
3. Practice Employee Involvement: It is a participative process that uses the entire capacity of employees and designed to encourage increased commitment to the organization’s success. Participative management encourages empowerment and employee ownership.

- Establish a process in which even the SPOC’s share a significant degree of decision making power with their immediate superiors.

Q4. How often is your participation sought in the decision making process.

Insert Figure 4 Here

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Q4. How often is your participation sought in the decision making process.

Insert Figure 5 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 2.7 i.e. Employees Agree opportunities are provided to fully employ their strengths.

Providing opportunities to the employees -

1. Reinforcement Theory believes that reinforcement conditions behavior. Any consequence, behavior, when immediately following a response, increases the probability that the behavior will be repeated. Therefore reinforce positive behavior, such a helping a colleague, being patient,

hardworking, and going out of the way to help through appreciation, personally or in front of the staff.

2. Understand the individual strengths that each person can bring to a team, select members with their strengths in mind, and allocate work assignments that fit with members' preferred styles.

3.

Q6. At work, your colleagues are-

Insert Figure 6 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 2.9 i.e. Employees often feels colleagues are supportive at work.

To increase bonding among employees -

1. A movie-day once a month will do more good than harm, as it not only eases out burnouts and fatigue, but also offers them the chance to bond over entertainment.
2. The annual closing, New Year, and other festive occasions can become an excuse for some fun and frolic and bonding as well.
3. Birthday parties of employees can be celebrated together, by bringing in cakes and sweets. The employees whose birthday is being celebrated can be given some gift. This will help in creating good employee relations.
4. Plan Trips every quarter.

Q7. At work, commitments made by colleagues are kept.

Insert Figure 7 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 2.7 i.e. Employees often feel sometimes commitments made by colleagues are kept at work.

Trust can be built by -

1. **Honesty**- By encouraging honest behavior.
2. **Openness** - Promote open communication, by practicing an "Open door" policy that permits all employees to share their concerns with management. Regularly survey employees to obtain their input and respond to survey's findings.

3. **Loyalty**- Leader's must show through their actions that they are willing to protect and defend their subordinates when they make mistakes or during times of crisis.

4. **Reasonable** efforts to ensure a degree of job security will promote trust.

5. **Fairness** - Being fair means making unbiased decisions and not taking advantage of people just because they are in a weaker bargaining position. But, being perceived as fair also requires managing others' perceptions. In order to be perceived as fair, the leader should make standards clear and take the time to explain decision-making processes to the people affected by them.

Q8. Good and Quality work is truly acknowledged by the top management.

Insert Figure 8 Here

Interpretations - The Mean is 3 i.e. Employees Often feel Good and Quality work is truly acknowledged by the top management.

Recognition

1. Value lunch (or breakfast or even dinner) to recognize specific behavior by employees that support your organizations stated values.
2. Thank you meeting, at which everyone in work unit thanks everyone else for something specific. Hold these at regular interval of time and remind people to keep track of small favor that they can mention when called for to speak.
3. Set up a thank you call from president of the company.
4. Write a letter to employee family, expressing your appreciation for extra hours the employee has given to job, and explaining specifically what he has done and what it means to you and the company.

Q9. Good and Quality work is fairly awarded by the top management.

Insert Figure 9 Here

Interpretations: The mean is 2.8 i.e. Employee Agree Good and Quality work is fairly awarded by the top management

Fairness in Recognition can be practiced -

- By following the laid down procedures of awarding rewards.
- By giving credit where it is due.
- By not practicing favoritism.
- Group and organization wide incentives reinforce and encourage employees to sublimate personal goals for the best interests of their department or the organization.
- Rewards should encourage cooperative effort rather than competitive efforts.
- Reward should follow good performance. There should not be large time gap between both.

Q10. Your individual contribution helps in achieving the HR Department's objective.

Insert Figure 10 Here

Interpretations - The average score is 3.4 i.e. Employees often could make an alignment between individual and department goals.

Steps to achieve HR department's objectives -

1. Establish a common purpose: Common purpose or vision should be clear. This common purpose provides direction, momentum, and commitment for the team members.
2. Develop specific individual goals: Specific individual goals help lead team members to achieve higher performance. Specific goals facilitate clear communication and helps maintain the focus on getting desired results.
3. Common Approach: Goals are the ends a team strives to achieve. Defining and agreeing on a common approach, i.e., consulting team members ensures that the team is unified on the means for achieving those ends.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Studies have revealed that 75% of the employees working in mediocre paying jobs find happiness in perks that need not necessarily be in the form of money.
 - Employees can be motivated by providing them with free low cost memberships at health clubs, family clubs or coupons, discounts for free electronic goods, sponsoring dinner, lunch etc.
 - A practice of announcing the Best Performer of the Week or fortnight and reward them suitably. This will keep the employees satisfied and egg them on to achieve more.
2. Employees on their own can-
 - Take responsibility for their own learning and skill enhancement, rather than wait for their bosses to identify and sponsor their training needs
 - Employees should be open to new ideas. Pick up clues on how to be more creative, innovative, and proactive from their colleagues who are highly successful.
 - Go beyond the call of the duty and help your boss solve burning issues. Solving the right problems create opportunities to get recognized.
 - Look for new ways of accomplishing things. Expand your horizon, take on new responsibilities and delegate some routine jobs to others in order to sustain your interest in the job.

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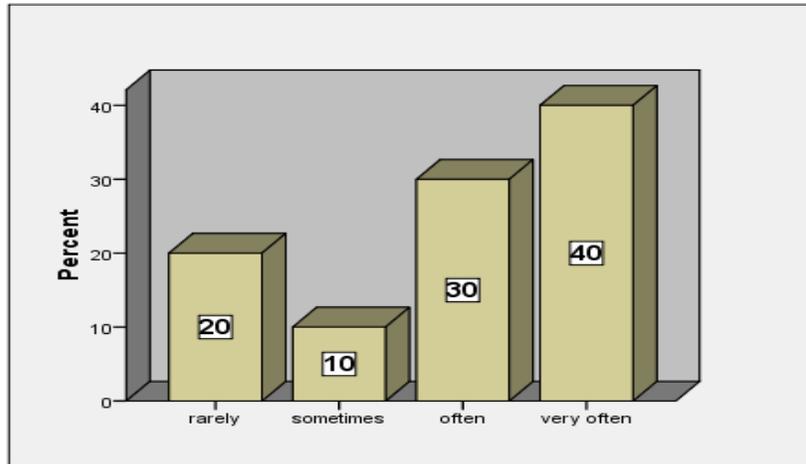


Figure 1: showing responses of Q1

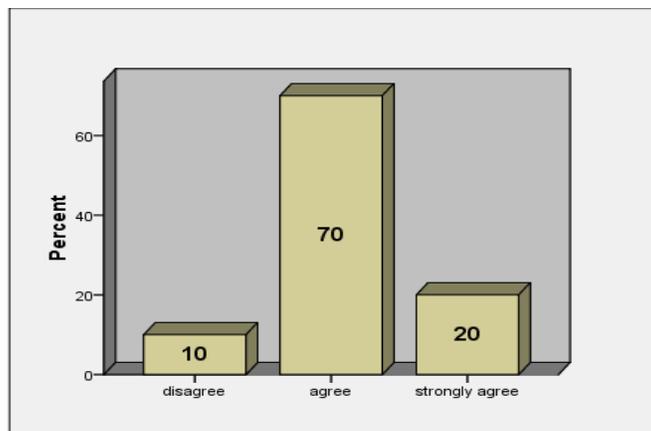


Figure 2: showing responses of Q2

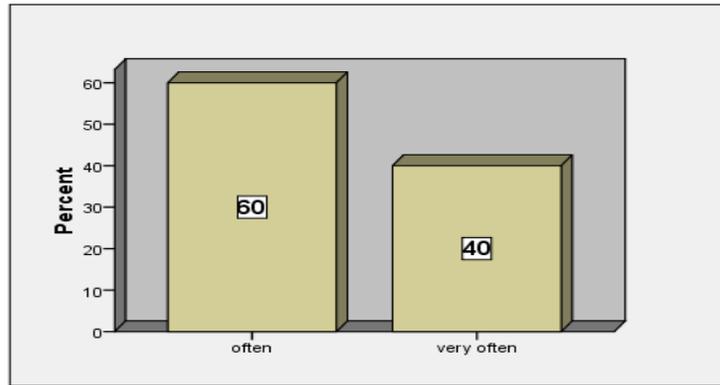


Figure 3: showing responses of Q3

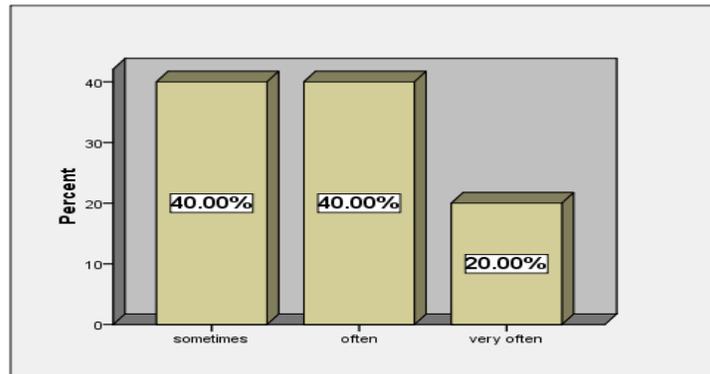


Figure 4: showing responses of Q4

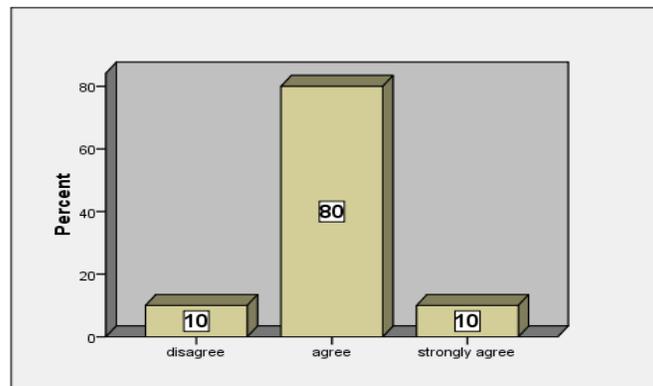


Figure 5: showing responses of Q5

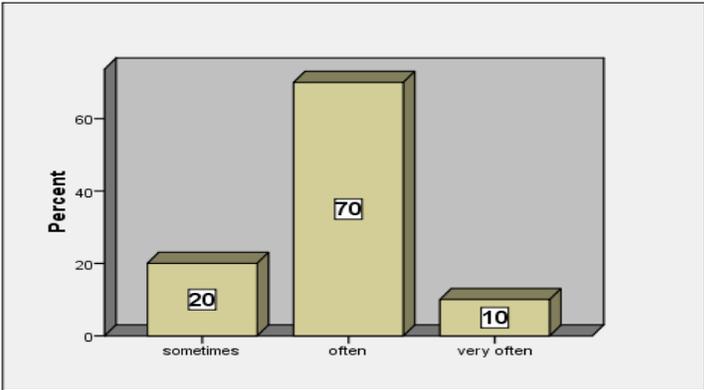


Figure 6: showing responses of Q6

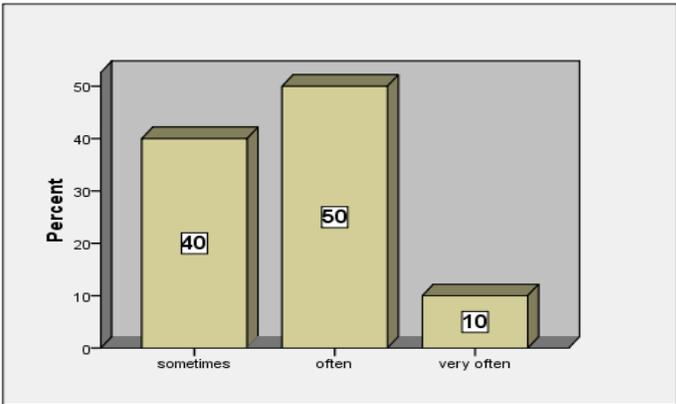


Figure 7: showing responses of Q7

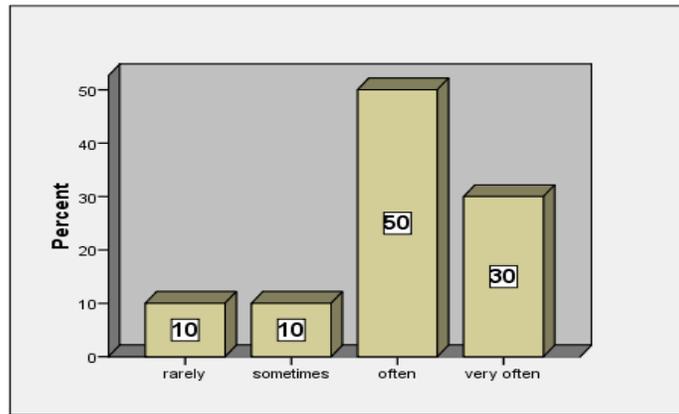


Figure 8: showing responses of Q8

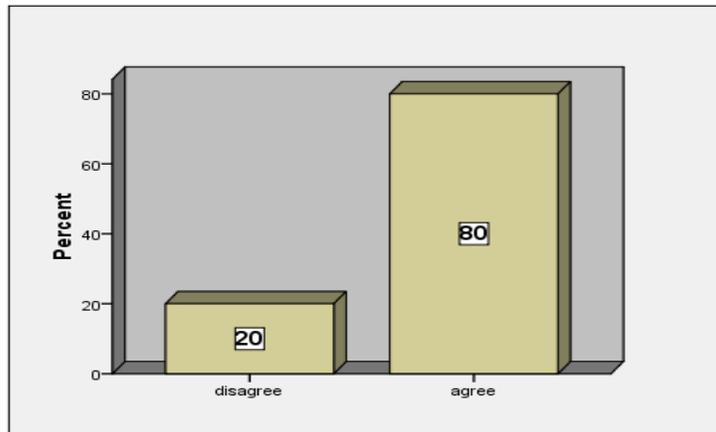


Figure 9: showing responses of Q9

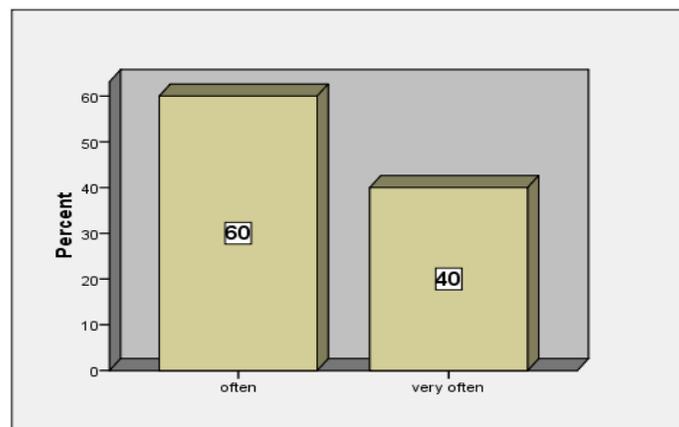


Figure 10: showing responses of Q10