CHAPTER 6 – Group and Team Performance

OBJECTIVES

The major purpose of this chapter on group process and effectiveness is to introduce the student to ways to think about interacting groups so that they will become more effective members and leaders of them. Every student has had some experience with both social and task groups that they can call on as they study this topic.

Our first objective in this chapter is to focus on how central these groups are to our lives. We also attempt to impress on the students that they will likely spend large proportions of their work hours in small group settings, because modern management appears to be making increasing use of teams or other small groups to solve problems, make decisions, and execute tasks.

The next objective is to help student understand the many types of groups they may be involved with and how groups vary by purpose and organization.

Another objective is to introduce students to a basic model of group effectiveness that includes influences from the environment within which the group operates. Environmental influences can have a critical impact on group effectiveness and the different types of influences are considered.

At this point the chapter changes its focus to give more emphasis to internal group dynamics by covering such topics as cooperation and competition. Here, one objective is to introduce students to group development and the process by which groups become (or fail to become) mature. Another objective is to introduce the role of norms in influencing group member behavior.

Attention is also given to the group as an entity in a larger social context, especially the organization setting. Here, groups as representatives of organizational constituencies are covered, and intergroup relations are given more attention. Intergroup relations themes can be connected to topics in Chapter 8 on organizations structure, Chapter 10 on conflict and Chapter 11 on decision making.

A final addition to this book is a discussion of virtual teams. This is an increasingly important topic and this chapter considers both the advantages and disadvantages of virtual teams as well as issues in improving the performance of these teams.

KEY POINTS
This chapter focuses on the major topics, including (1) the definition of a group and team, (2) the reasons individuals join groups, (3) types of groups: reference, formal, and informal, (4) model of group effectiveness, (5) stages in group development, (6) group norms and control, (7) internal group outcomes such cohesiveness, cooperation, and competition (8) social influences, and (9) Issues unique to virtual teams.

The section on group formation should show the student how numerous and diverse are the forces that create groups. It is also critical to understand that individual behavior is often best explained as a product of group forces, rather than as independently sourced action. It is difficult and uncommon for groups to reach full maturity, wherein key interpersonal relations problems have been resolved and acceptance and effective interaction predominate. All groups, whether they mature fully or not, can be assessed in terms of various effectiveness measures including productivity, satisfaction, attendance and retention, learning and growth, and other specific indices.

The discussion of group effectiveness introduced in this chapter distinguishes between environmental influences on group effectiveness and internal group influences. It is important to point out to the students that managers are responsible in two ways for the effectiveness of groups in their organizations. First, they must consider the effect of environment. Managers often doom groups to failure if they don't provide and environment where groups have a strong chance of begin successful. The opening story in the Chapter highlights the role of managers in creating an environment where teams can be successful. Second, as members of groups, must understand the dynamic nature of group behavior.

The section on norms and controls continues the theme of influence in groups, and attempts to explain how critical norms are to group behavior and effectiveness. The pervasiveness and power of norms should be emphasized, including attention to whether or not work group norms are consistent with organizational goals.

Whenever people work together, they always have the basic options to be helpful, cooperative, or competitive. These choices can have a significant impact on individual, group, and organizational effectiveness. In general, it is usually functional for employees to exhibit helpful and cooperative attitudes and behavior. It therefore behooves the manager to learn the many personal, task, and structural forces that inhibit and encourage helping and cooperation. One must realize too that helping and cooperation are not natural events that occur readily. Rather, there are many forces that inhibit them or foster harmful competition. Therefore, they must be actively managed to sustain them. While cooperation and helping are generally useful at work, it does not follow that competition is always or even usually dysfunctional. It depends on the condition under which it arises and its effects. Again, understanding these can lead to improved management of competition. When certain task characteristics exist, and when competitive attitudes are not destructive to other parties, competition can be a facilitating force in an organization.

One of the most critical phenomena in groups is cohesion. It is recognized as a powerful condition that has strong effects on member behavior and group effectiveness. Managers can take many steps to affect cohesion, using their understanding of the factors that encourage it. Cohesive groups can be among the most productive, satisfied, and adaptive groups in an organization. The key is to have cohesive groups that are aligned with organizational goals.

Cohesion benefits are matched by their costs, particularly when cohesion is based on goals that are antagonistic to organizational goals. Cohesive enemies are difficult to deal with, as most managers know. It is suggested that managers avoid actions that foster cohesion as a response by the group to organizational threat or mistreatment.

In continuing the theme of influence from the previous chapter, special attention is given to conformity behavior in which people behave differently than when alone. Conformity is not necessarily bad, but rather can only be judged in term of its outcomes. Social Influences are in general seen as common and widespread events, not to be taken for granted. Furthermore, influence is often subtle and hard to discern, such as in group thin social facilitation and the risky shift phenomenon. Influence is also not always sourced in high-status people or positions; it can be successfully applied by lower-status and minority individuals. Other factors of influence are considered in Chapter 11 when we consider Group Decision Making.

We also introduce the management of virtual teams. Virtual teams are becoming increasingly common in organizations and so managers must be aware of both the advantages and disadvantages as well as aspects that can influence the effectiveness of these types of groups.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

<u>The Basics about Groups and Teams</u>
Groups and Teams: Definitions
Why Groups Form
Personal Characteristics
Interests and Goals
Potential to Influence
Opportunity for Interaction
Types of Groups
Formal Groups
Informal Groups
Virtual Teams

<u>Group Development</u>
Forming
Storming
Norming
Performing

<u>Group and Team Effectiveness</u>
Task Design
Reward Structure
Training
Group Size and Composition

<u>Group Processes</u>
Development of Norms
Group Cohesion
Fair Reward Allocation

<u>Group Dynamics</u>
Cooperation and competition

<u>Social Influences on Behavior</u>

<u>Virtual Teams</u>
Advantages and disadvantages
Improving performance

<u>Summary</u>

KEY CONCEPTS
Autonomy
Cohesion
Competition
Cooperation
Forming
Formal groups
Functional groups
Group
Group effectiveness
Group processes
Groupthink
Helping behaviors
Heterogeneous group
Homogenous group
Informal groups
Interdependence
Norming
Norms
Performing
Organizational citizenship
Rate buster
Roles
Social facilitation
Social groups
Social loafing
Status
Storming
Task complexity
Task design
Task groups
Teams
Team building
Virtual team

EXERCISES

A. CONVEYOR ASSEMBLY EXERCISE
This exercise is aimed at helping students see how group or team organization might benefit a company's manufacturing process. The company now assembles conveyors without the use of teams. Once a conveyor is designed for a specific customer's application, the resulting blueprints are used to machine special parts and select standard parts prior to assembly. Once the parts are ready, assembly begins as supervisors assign workers individually to various assembly tasks.

Symptoms of problems in the plant can very often be traced back to this individual assignment process wherein workers are given no real responsibility except to take orders on a moment to moment basis. Their preferences and ideas are underutilized, and they are they are treated either as dependent, irresponsible, or in an indifferent manner. Using teams of 5 workers each to assemble conveyors with their own set of blueprints would allow each team to take full responsibility for the assembly process. Teams can assign members to tasks, and perhaps even inspect the work or get involved in installation and repair at customer sites. This would alleviate assigning tasks as punishments and rewards as supervisors did. Peer pressure could well effect absenteeism. Given responsibility for a whole conveyor, quality could well increase especially if standards and inspection procedures were agreed upon with management.

Among the discussion topics are how to form teams, whether to have team leaders, how much responsibility to give to teams, and so on. Special problems lie in relationships and roles of supervisors and others outside the assembly area, if assembly teams are utilized.

To conduct this exercise, hand out the Conveyor Assembly Problem sheet, the Conveyor Factory Layout and the Discussion Questions. Have students work in groups to answer the questions and present their answers to the total class.

<div align="center">CONVEYOR ASSEMBLY PROBLEM</div>

This company manufactures custom designed conveyors. It has been in business for many years and is reasonably successful. Conveyors are machines that move materials on belts, rollers or through tubes.

CONVEYOR MANUFACTURING PROCESS
Each conveyor is tailored to fit a specific customer's needs. A design is developed to meet the customer specifications so the conveyor does the exact job required. The design is then translated into a set of blueprints, which is used in manufacturing. The Machine Shop and Parts Department use job orders made from the blueprints to produce/provide parts and materials needed to assemble a conveyor. Job parts/materials are placed on shelves and in bins available to assembly workers. Assembly workers perform the necessary tasks in the assembly process: interpret blueprints, weld, do basic wiring and assembly tasks. There are about 20 fabricators.

One head superior and two assistant supervisors receive the blueprints from the design group and, when materials are ready, assign workers to varying tasks from the beginning to the end of the assembly process. Assignments are made at the discretion of the supervisors as they attempt to meet deadlines for delivery to a customer. Several conveyors are usually under assembly at any one time, and workers may be assigned to any work area for any task deemed necessary. The supervisors decide on starting times for each conveyor and control its assembly from beginning to end.

The completed conveyor is tested by the supervisor and an engineer if needed. Finished products are secured to custom pallets for movement by overhead conveyor onto a truck bed for transport. Customer engineering personnel handle the on-site installation and service.

FACTS ABOUT THE WORK SITUATION
The average tenure of workers is over nine years, and ranges from four to eighteen years. Pay is good and turnover is low. Absences are considered high. Fabricators use up all of their paid sick leave, and some even take days without pay, keeping just within the allowable limit of unexcused absences.

The work pace appears none to fast, yet no standard times exist for tasks. Estimates on the direct labor hours for any given job are used in estimating costs and for pricing. These estimates have been good enough to earn a reasonable profit on most every job.
Work is sometimes sloppy. Fabricators often fail to take simple initiatives to improve work quality. They do not notify supervisors when they complete one task and are available for another. To the contrary, they may position themselves so they are less visible to supervisors whenever they become idle. Some assignments are given out on terms of favoritism, or used as rewards or punishments. Some employees have complained about this.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for Conveyor Assembly Problem
1.   How would you like to be a fabricator in this plant? What aspects of work or your supervisor might you like or dislike?
2.   How do you explain some of the quality and attendance problems the company is now experiencing?
3.   How would you improve the manufacturing process? Could groups or teams be effectively utilized? If so, explain how and why they would be an improvement.

B. STATUS EXERCISE
Status is a topic which typically provokes interesting and involved discussion. A simple exercise is to have students make two lists: one for the positive effects of status, and one for the negative effects. The effects can be effects on the high status person, on the lower status person, on their relationship, or on the effectiveness of a team or organization.

The effects can be readily discussed in light of some modern organizational conditions and practices that bear on the question of status. Examples of these might be:
1. Pay differentials, especially top executive pay levels.
2. Status reduction practices increasingly coming into use in organizations:
      a. dress code practices
      b. use of bullpen or open office space shared by all types and levels of employees
      c. reduction in number and authority of supervisors, middle managers, staff/technical experts.
      d. employee empowerment (delegation, teams, etc.)
      e. employee performance bonuses, ownership.
3. Status creating conditions that tend to prevail against the test of time, such as:
      a. education
      b. experience
      c. market forces that create pay differentials
      d. rewards given to employees
      e. significance of responsibility - importance of one's position, amount of resources controlled.

Status differentials are not likely to disappear in organizations, but students can still discuss ways to minimize its harmful effects and enhance its facilitating effects.

C. TEAM DIAGNOSIS EXERCISE
This exercise is aimed at sharpening students' diagnostic skills and increasing their options for improving a group's effectiveness. Students can be given the diagnostic portion of the exercise to do as individuals before or in class, in preparation for a group discussion. Or they can be placed in groups at the outset for the diagnostic and prescriptive questions below.

The exercise simply requires students to select a group of which they have been or are a member. As an alternative, the students may select a team or group which has been in the news such as a sports team, project teams within the class, UN inspection teams, student government, etc. Then the following questions can be asked and discussed:

1. Diagnose the group you have selected on as many of the following dimensions as possible:
      a. Goals
      b. Cohesion
      c. Role clarity, role conflict
      d. Norms

      e. Leadership

2. Diagnose the group's effectiveness, using these measures:
      a. Productivity
      b. Satisfaction and Attitudes
      c. Attendance
      d. Retention-attraction
      e. Learning and adaptability
      f. Physical and mental well-being

3. What actions would you take, if any, to improve this group's effectiveness? Justify and explain your recommendations.

D. WORK GROUP NORMS EXERCISE

Most every student has had work experiences where they can recall the norms and expectations that fellow workers had for each other. Of particular concern, of course, are those norms that effect group cohesion and productivity. Students working alone or in groups merely need to identify particular norms and show how these governed particular behaviors. Questions such as the following can be assigned:

1. Cite several key norms that operated in the group you selected.
2. What particular expectations did the norms seem to impose?
3. How were the norms communicated?
4. How were they enforced?

Once norms are identified and their manifestations explored, several other questions can be discussed. Among these are:
1. How did the group norms interact with your personal values to effect your behavior?
2. Did the norms contribute to or tend to run counter to management's expectations?
3. As you answer these questions, analyze the forces that made you want to comply with or deviate from the norms.

A variation in this exercise is to have some people diagnose a very effective group, while others diagnose an ineffective group, using the questions above. Then discuss the comparisons.

E. MONEY AUCTION GAME EXERCISE

This exercise is designed to demonstrate how easily a competitive mentality can dominate over a cooperative one. One person in the game acts as an auctioneer, auctioning nickels, one at a time, to pairs of bidders. Real or imagined nickels can be used. The game can be played using groups of three as described in the handouts that follow, using as many triads as desired. An alternative is for the instructor to auction the nickels to one pair of bidders as the remainder of the class observes. The auctioneer can change one or more of the bidders in the pair after one pair has made a reasonable number of bids (e.g. five or more).

For either alternative, the first bidder for each nickel will alternate from nickel to nickel. Each nickel is sold to the highest bidder. Bids are made in one cent units. NO TALKING EXCEPT BIDS is allowed.

The competitive mentality manifests itself as bidders continue to raise their bid, typically to 4 or 5 cents, to win the nickel. One auctioneer once reported that an executive bid $1.35 to win a single nickel! Many people are surprised that the cooperative strategy is not very apparent. Under ideal cooperation, the first bidder bids one cent and the second bidder always passes. In this fashion, bidders can buy nickels at one cent each, for maximum mutual gain.

Sometimes one bidder catches on to the cooperative idea and attempts to "train" the other bidder by never bidding more than one cent, and always passing after the other bidder's bid. Sometimes the second bidder learns to cooperate, but more often that not, the second bidder treats the first bidder as a patsy and proudly collects the nickels purchased for one or two cents each.

Once the exercise has run for a reasonable length of time, discussions about competitive vs. cooperative situations and persons can take place, with an emphasis on implications for organizational behavior and effectiveness.

Processing Instructions
The first step in this exercise is dividing the students into groups of three. If there are one or two individuals remaining after the trios are formed they should join a trio as an observer.

Each trio is made up of ONE AUCTIONEER and TWO BIDDERS. The game will continue for three rounds. This gives each member of the trio a chance to be the auctioneer. DURING THE GAME NO TALKING IS ALLOWED EXCEPT FOR STATING BIDS.

In the game itself the auctioneer should be considered the dispenser of funds. It is not his money. He or she will offer for auction to the two bidders SEVEN IMAGINARY NICKELS, one at a time. Each nickel will be sold to the highest bidder. There is nothing special about these nickels (e.g., they are not rare coins). The opportunity for the first bid will alternate between the two bidders during the seven trials. Bidder 1 will bid first on the first trial, Bidder 2 bids first on the second, etc. Bids must be made in one cent units.

Players should record the process of the auction on the Money Auction Record Form.

THE MONEY AUCTION RECORD FORM
Indicate how much the winner of each trial paid for each nickel. Subtract the winning bid from 5 cents to figure the profit for that round.

ROUND ONE

Auctioneer_____   Bidder 1_____ Bidder 2 _____

Nickel 1   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 2   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 3   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 4   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 5   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 6   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 7   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

                                    Total earnings _____   Total earnings_____

ROUND TWO
Auctioneer_____   Bidder 1_____ Bidder 2 _____

Nickel 1   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 2   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 3   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 4   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 5   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 6   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 7   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

                                    Total earnings _____   Total earnings_____

ROUND THREE

Auctioneer_____   Bidder 1_____   Bidder 2 _____

Nickel 1   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 2   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 3   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 4   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 5   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 6   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

Nickel 7   .05 - ___ = _____   .05 - ___ = _____

                    Total earnings _____   Total earnings_____

F. Effective Work Team Checklists

If you have students working in groups on course assignments, you may wish to have them complete such a checklist such as the one below to describe and evaluate their group experience. They can also use such checklists following a class case analysis or other exercise in which they worked as a team.

In utilizing such a checklist, make provisions for tabulating the individual member responses and for feeding the data back to the group. Issues such as anonymity, tabulation, and feedback can be made a matter of discussion, allowing each group to proceed in their own way and share their experiences with other groups.

The group checklist results can be exploited further by having each group develop ways to improve their effectiveness based on the feedback, and to continue to assess their development from time to time. Pro's and con's of using this technique can also be discussed.

Exercise:
Work Team Effectiveness

This checklist can help you analyze the effectiveness of a team. Consider a group or team that you are now a part of or one you were a part of recently. Read the 20 statements provided below and mark your level of agreement that the statement describes conditions found within the group or team you are considering. Use this scale:

1 Strongly disagree
2 Disagree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Agree
5 Strongly agree

Agreement
Level

1. The atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable. _____
2. Team discussion is frequent and relevant to the task at hand. _____
3. Team members have a clear understanding of team goals. _____
4. Team members listen to each other's suggestions and ideas. _____
5. Disagreements are tolerated and an attempt is made to resolve them. _____
6. There is general agreement on most courses of action taken. _____
7. The team welcomes frank criticism from inside and outside sources. _____
8. When the team takes action, clear assignments are made and accepted. _____
9. The relationship among team members is relaxed. _____
10. There is a high degree of trust among team members. _____
11. The team members strive hard to help the group achieve its goal. _____

12. Suggestions and criticisms are offered and received with a helpful spirit.　_____
13. Team members cooperate rather than compete.　_____
14. Team goals are set high.　_____
15. The leaders and members hold a high opinion of the team's capabilities.　_____
16. Creativity is stimulated within the team.　_____
17. Team members freely communicate on topics relevant to the task.　_____
18. Team members feel confident in making decisions.　_____
19. People are kept busy but not overloaded.　_____

Total　_____

Now, total the number of points. The greater the total point value, the higher the likelihood that the team you considered is performing effectively and team members are highly satisfied.

Source: Adapted from Dubrin (1982)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Think of one group you like or want to be in, and another you dislike or would not join. What are the reasons you are attracted to one and repelled by the other?

This question is designed to tap factors in group formation. In comparing an attractive and aversive group, the students should examine their own personal characteristics and relate these to group characteristics such as membership, goals, and norms. Key similarities and differences should emerge that explain the attraction and aversion they feel. The desire to join a group is conditioned by other factors that may be more temporary, such as need for the group as a protective device against outside threat or as a source of power in numbers to gain a desired end.

2. What holds an informal work group together? What are some key norms that might operate in an informal group? How do relationships with management affect such groups?

Informal work groups are held together by voluntary association of employees with common needs and values, frequently based on factors off and on the job. They may also be a product of external threats or fears engendered by the organization. These groups can gain power in numbers and influence members quite effectively. Key norms might revolve around things like dress and social behaviors, but they may also involve expectations about productivity or control or how to relate to others in the organization, such as superiors or other groups. Managers can foster adverse relationships with informal groups by posing a threat to them. They can also sense the behavior of informal groups as a barometer of satisfaction or attitudes. If possible, fostering adoption of goals consistent with organizational aims is an effective tactic.

3. Give an example from your own experience that shows how a large group suffers the effects of increasing size.

As size increases, the following factors tend to change: There are fewer opportunities for individuals to participate, decreases in satisfaction and total group cohesion, increased formalization, and subgrouping or cliquing. Size should also be examined in light of the task of the group. For example, does presence of more people tend to make accomplishing this particular task easier or more difficult? Checks can be made to see if the quality or quantity of performance is controlled by the best or the weakest member(s). There is also the possibility that evidence of responsibility diffusion will emerge, such as goldbricking, irresponsible behavior, or risk taking.

4. What are the major stages of development in small groups? What is necessary for a group to achieve maturity?

The major stages of development in small groups are orientation, conflict, cohesion, and effective structure in mature groups. Some refer to this sequence as "forming, storming, norming, and performing." Groups that get through cohesion or norming may face some interpersonal tensions associated with intimacy and openness. In dealing with these difficulties, they may go through phases of delusion that all is not well, disillusions about future prospects, and if issues are resolved, a phase of acceptance is achieved. Not all groups, though, reach full maturity. But maturity is necessary if the group is to be able to cooperate openly and have the skills needed to resolve all kinds of difficulties that might arise, and to remain cohesive and successful.

5. What are the major factors that contribute to cohesion in groups?

Factors that contribute to cohesiveness include (1) attractiveness of the group, (2) opportunities to interact, (3) common goals, (4) group maturity, (5) difficulty of entry into the group, (6) status congruence, (7) equity in group rewards, (8) group and personal success, (9) stable membership, (10) external threat or common enemy, and (11) small sized group.

6. Suppose as a manager you had a group of workers reporting to you whose cohesiveness was moderate to low. How would you increase cohesion to improve productivity and satisfaction?

There are a number of ways to increase cohesion. In military training situations, this is often done by a training instructor who behaves as a "common enemy" or who acts in a manner that the trainees have to pull together to succeed. In other situations such as an industrial setting, common goals are a common enemy (e.g., a competing firm) can pull a work group together. For a given group, it is not likely that membership can be manipulated to affect cohesion, but occasionally the need or opportunity to do this may arise. A problem member may be transferred out of the group, and replaced with a member chosen by the group. But stable membership will eventually be needed for full cohesion. Other techniques include the manager relating to   the total group and reducing one-to-one interactions, ironing out status incongruencies, and equitable allocation of rewards. It helps as well to assign the group a

challenging task that calls for cooperation and that has a reasonable chance for the group to succeed. If the group is large, cohesion will be more difficult to accomplish, but it is possible. Another way to increase cohesion is to take steps to help the group to develop and mature, which creates in the group interpersonal support and a feeling it can succeed.

7. For the same group described in the previous question, what might a manager do that would increase the group's cohesion but lower their productivity?

Cohesive groups that set low productivity norms are often the result of dissatisfaction with management. Cohesion becomes a way to protect the group and cope with threat. Power is gained in numbers and in a uniform resistance. Cohesive groups are less vulnerable to a "divide and conquer" strategy. Cohesion that is anti-management can arise out of arbitrary treatment, unfair actions, excessive demands, ignored requests and appeals, undelivered promises, punitive actions, and the like.

What is the best way to manage a cohesive and highly productive group? What can a manager do to change a cohesive but unproductive group?

The best way to manage a cohesive and highly productive group is to continue to foster those elements that encourage cohesion, and to prevent the erosion of high productivity norms. Care should be taken not to alienate such a group or otherwise risk having the cohesion focused on less productive norms. Do no just leave well enough alone, but do not tamper carelessly with success.

To change a cohesive, unproductive group, a manager may wish to manipulate any of the factors cited in the previous question that contribute to cohesion. It is also possible to help the group mature toward cohesion by helping them through the storming phase.

ETHICAL, DIVERSITY, AND GLOBAL ISSUES

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Diversity Issues:
Diversity Task Groups

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One type of task group being used increasingly by organizations is a task group focusing on issues such as diversity. These groups are often called **task forces** or **councils**. These single purpose groups allow managers to achieve important goals and are especially relevant when those goals are to change beliefs and attitudes of organizational members such as those related to diversity. Groups or teams appointed to achieve these types of changes can only be successful when membership includes representatives from all levels of the organization. These are especially interesting groups to consider because they often have a significant challenge in overcoming resistance throughout the organization. Here are some suggestions for having effective diversity task groups.

- Members should be appointed by the CEO
- The organization should provide clear and realistic mission statements and adequate support and resources. Members should be trained in diversity issues, definitions and company programs.
- White males should be included and placed on an equal footing with all participants.
- Team-building activities should be used to help members develop improved group processes.
- Supervisors of team members should be advised in advance of the team appointment and made aware of the commitment of team participants

As you will see in this chapter and the next, many of these issues are relevant to the effectiveness of all teams. They are especially critical for teams working on issues such as diversity where strong organizational support and member acceptance are critical to success.
Source: Adapted from Baytos (1995)

A Question of Ethics:
Is Group Effectiveness an Issue of Trust

One factor critical to team success is trust. Team members must have a basic trust of many issues within a team environment? The existence of an environment where team members can trust each other and trust organizational leaders is most likely in organization with a culture that emphasizes ethical behavior.
Here are some key questions about trust that team members must confront:

Do I trust the commitment of management to the goals and objectives of the team? This may be strongly influenced by the history of success of similar teams within the organizational.

Do I trust that ideas and suggestions developed by the team will actually be implemented and accepted?

Do I trust that, as a team member, my work on team activities is valued by my supervisor and that he or she will consider work on the team as an important part of my performance evaluation? This is a key issue for many members of formal groups or teams that are tasked with responsibilities that are not part of their routine work activities.

Do I trust that my team members are truly open to a wide variety of ideas and input for all members?

Do I trust the abilities and skills of other team members?

Trust is a critical component of team effectiveness. As was discussed in the text, groups will never reach full-maturity and effectiveness without establishing a high level of trust among members.

Global Focus:
Measuring Team Effectiveness Internationally

Team effectiveness can be measured in several ways and the many positive organizational benefits of implementing teams can be found in the United Kingdom. One example of how job satisfaction can be a direct measure of team effectiveness comes from Nationwide Building Society. In the 1990s Nationwide began to abandon traditional management hierarchies and opted for flatter structures relying on self-managed teams in their customer service area. Up to that time, employees who worked in customer service had typically showed moderate levels of job satisfaction on the organization's annual survey. In 1997, however, customer service was at the top.   In addition, the use of teams is credited with increasing productivity by half and reducing absenteeism by 75 per cent. In the same period, overtime was down to zero.

Other UK companies have improved organizational effectiveness through the use of teams. Michelin Tyres and Baxi Heating are two examples of UK companies who use teams effectively in the manufacturing setting. In this setting members are able to use their own knowledge of work processes to improve productivity and product quality.

Source: Scott and Harrison (1997)

CASE: THE SAME OLD STUFF

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**Case:
The Same Old Stuff**

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Just three weeks ago, the Dixon company had reorganized its thirty factory workers into teams of five. Dixon manufactured various-sized storage units and handcarts for industrial use. The work was often done to customer order because the storage units and carts were designed by engineers to meet special customer needs for size and strength.

Before using work teams, two supervisors kept track of all orders and the blueprints that the engineers and designers developed for special jobs. The supervisors would assign individual workers to different tasks, depending on what was needed. The thirty workers were all capable of just about any task needed to build and assemble the parts that went into storage units and carts. However, from moment to moment, they never knew which task they would be assigned.

Before teams were formed, morale in the plant was low. Absenteeism and lateness were increasing. The quality of work was not too bad, but a number of errors were found each week that could easily have been prevented. Most of the workers were skilled and experienced, and had been with Dixon for at least three years. The pay was good, and so were benefits, but still Dixon was not perceived as a great place to work.

There were several reasons why morale, attendance, and quality were suffering. These were uncovered by an outside consultant, who eventually recommended that the work teams should be formed. The consultant said that workers did not like not knowing their assignments until the last minute. The workers felt that supervisors gave more pleasant tasks as rewards, and unpleasant ones as punishments. Most often, they never completed a job they had started. They were also upset because some of their fellow workers knew how to hide from the supervisors at the right time. Others were treated with favoritism. Another problem was that every worker knew he could build any storage unit or handcart if he had the blueprint and was left alone to do the work.

The work teams were immediately popular. Teams were formed taking into consideration the workers' own choices of fellow team members. They were given the job orders, blueprints, and deadlines, and set free to work. Team members were allowed to work out their own method of assigning tasks within the group. Management said that teams were not to be used as an excuse to reduce productivity, or else the old method could be reinstituted. Productivity did not diminish, and absenteeism and lateness began to decrease. Fewer quality errors were found.

One day, the consultant returned to see how things were going. Two of six teams were quick to complain, "We're back to the same old stuff!" The consultant soon found out why they were upset. In both cases, the supervisor had entered the team area and reassigned one or more of the team members to a different task. The supervisors had a good reason, they claimed. The

customer called and requested that the order be rushed, and they were only trying to meet the new deadline.

However, the workers saw things differently. They wondered if the supervisors really supported the team concept.

1. Did the supervisors do the right thing when the customer's deadline moved up? Explain.
2. What happened in the teams when they were set up? What norms were likely to develop, for example?
3. How would you explain the improvements in absenteeism, lateness, and productivity?

Case Discussion: The Same Old Stuff
1. Did the supervisor do the right thing when the customer's deadline was moved up? Explain.

The supervisor certainly has the right and the obligation to correct matters when a deadline changes. Such changes obviously contribute a great deal to customer satisfaction. So once the new deadline was established in conjunction with sales, this had to be communicated to the production workers. But the supervisor went beyond just communicating a deadline change, and proceeded to reassign individual workers to new tasks in order to meet the deadline. The group accepted the deadline change, but not the specific task reassignments.

2. What happened when the teams were set up? What norms likely developed, for example?

The immediate popularity of the teams when they were set up is probably due to several factors. One was the involvement of workers in selecting the composition of the teams. Another was the new opportunity to decide with the team in making task assignments. This rid the workers of whole series of dissatisfactions such as not knowing what they would be asked to do next, and the use of assignments as rewards and punishments. It could symbolize treating the workers as responsible adults and giving them the responsibility and autonomy to respond accordingly. The workers were all similarly capable of performing essential tasks, and they needed little direction in doing so. With control over assignments, teams could share both desirable and undesirable tasks in a fair and equitable way. Team members could now perhaps escape undesirable tasks if one member of the group liked that task. Team members could also now learn new tasks or help each other out without worrying about how the supervisor might react. They also could have the opportunity to enjoy the completion of a whole unit of production.

3. How would you explain improvements in absenteeism, lateness, and productivity?

Prior to the use of teams, attendance was solely a matter between the worker and supervisor. But with teams, being absent or late means that a worker is now subject to peer reactions and pressures. A supervisor often could not challenge weak or questionable excuses, but peers are not likely to accept them. Peer pressure for valid excuses increased out of a sense of fairness to team members who did not want to be at work while a team member was off playing. There also

may have been a subtle but noticeable onset of competition between teams, to the extent that teams felt they did not want to be the worst team in the plant. Another explanation is simply increased pride in the work, resulting from new responsibilities, autonomy, and the opportunity to complete a whole production unit.