ASSIGMENTS:

1 Write a main Discussion question

Dye, 2017, Chapter 13

Case 13.1

Case Discussion Assignments (25%): Active learning is essential. Students will participate via *Blackboard* in all posted discussion topics. **For each case scenario, students are required to post at least 3 times each week, once by Tuesday of each week stating their initial views and at least 2 more times, by Friday of the week, with a thoughtful reflection commentary after reading the views of classmates. NOTE: Cite the textbook or any references to support your discussions (minimum 2 references APA format)**. Weekly lessons, assigned readings, and your own literature searching each week will be the source of the discussion topics. *Blackboard* participation will be graded for quality of contribution to the topic and professionalism of the response. The professor will not comment on each posting, but may comment to provide direction to the discussion as postings accumulate.

Posting Instructions

- Click the above title **Discussion**.
- Click the **Create Thread** button.
- Include a Subject that reflects the topic of your question.
- Enter your question in the **Message** box.
- Click the **Submit** button.

Case 13.1

Malcolm Holcomb is the new CEO at a medical center. The agenda for his first meeting with the senior management team includes the following questions:

- What has been the primary purpose of the senior management meetings in the past? What was discussed? What was accomplished?
- What do you want to be the primary purpose of these meetings moving forward? What should we discuss? What should we accomplish?
- What meeting format do you prefer? Do you think that format will enable us to better meet our goals?
- Do each of you have a clear understanding of your roles? Do each of you help one another? How much cooperation and sharing should we expect from this team?

Case 13.1 Questions

1. You are one of Malcolm's vice presidents. How would you answer these questions?
2. Should Malcolm discuss these questions privately with each senior management member *before* raising them in the full group meeting (and therefore getting more open feedback than in an open meeting)? If so, how should he proceed after these private meetings?

2 After finishing the main discussion question, you have to give 2 short responses to two of my classmate's discussions

a. First classmate discussion

Maryam Moughal 3 days ago

Week 7: Discussion

As one of Malcolm's Vise Presidents, I would answer the following questions as follows, the primary purpose of senior management meetings in the past was to evaluate the companies organization, operations, identify changes that need to be implemented, and controlling the operations of changes that need to be implemented (Management meetings, n.d.). Through this the outcome is that the employees become more transparent with one another, allowing the company to improve in the aspects they were lacking. The primary purpose of these meetings should be addressing issues that aren't brought to light that halt day-to-day working efficiency. Along with prioritizing opinions and views of the senior management team with what they believe needs improvement or recognizing what works for the team and what doesn't. What should be accomplished are fellow employee's actions matching up to their words. As Dye had said in the chapter leaders and words carry greater weight than the followers (Dye, 2017). I would prefer a sit-down table meeting format, I believe this will limit distractions and allow everyone the chance to speak, say what's on their mind, and effectively listen to the senior management team view. I would answer the last question by stating everyone knows their roles and works well together. Cooperation and sharing are essential for the senior management team to effectively communicate how situations are running on a daily. I believe Malcolm should ask these questions prior to the meeting to each individual because it allows them to get a chance to bring up any concerns or their opinion on the questions above. However, the last question should be asked during the meeting to get the whole team's feedback on how well they work together.
References
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- Example of one short response for this discussion

RE: Week 7: Discussion

Hi Maryam!

I love your post this week! I find it very intriguing that you think that a group-based meeting would be more effective. I personally feel as though, when in a group setting, there are many more distractions, such as other people, in the room with you throughout the entirety of the meeting. In addition to this, if a question is asked, then the way that other employees answer may sway the way that the lingering employees respond. For example, if the majority of people vote for pink and you're the last employee to vote, then you may be more apt to vote for pink because that is what the majority had voted for, even though you were originally going to vote for blue. The peer pressure that would surround the employees in a group setting could potentially be very negative and sway the results of the questions. Meanwhile, in a one-on-one interview, an employee may be more comfortable telling their truth and their thoughts behind their answers. This creates a better relationship with their CEO, creating trust, a vital key to the interpersonal communications between CEOs and subordinates.

Thanks,

b. Second classmate discussion

Anahit Falak 2 days ago

week 7

Malcolm asking these types of questions it allows him to understand each person's roles, assignments, and they're generally what has and has not worked in the company in the past. It would also allow him to see the current dynamics at play and who works well with whom. He also demonstrated that he wants them to work with him on setting up realistic goals for the company and them so that they can enjoy coming to work

Being Malcolm's VPs I would be happy that he is taking a clear-cut approach to being our boss. According to McLeod 2020 when dealing with upper management one shoe gets to the point and ensures that they know you know what you are talking about. I think that is how malcom is going about resolving this.

I do believe that Malcolm should meet privately with his staff prior to the meeting as he can get more information about the company and what changes he can make. One thing that Dye 2017 states are, '"The more complex the system, the less efficient its operation(p.8)"'. When he does do this it allows for a better understanding of the company and allows for fewer errors and complexations in the field for him and the company.

references

Lea McLeod, M. A. (2020, June 19). *6 rules for communicating with executives*. The Muse. Retrieved October 12, 2021, from https://www.themuse.com/advice/6-rules-for-communicating-with-executives.

Dye, C. F. (2017). *Leadership in healthcare: Essential values and skills*. Health Administration Press.

3. Essay questions

Essay Questions-Week 7

Answer the following Essay Questions: Format by repeating the question, followed by a clear and concise answer (2-3 paragraphs per question/answer), and be sure to cite and reference textbooks or other readings to justify your answers.

1. How can a college student be a team leader? Provide examples

2. How can teamwork experience in college be transferrable to working in healthcare teamwork? Provide examples

3. Discuss the importance of teamwork experience as college student and as future healthcare professionals.

Essay Questions Homework (25%): Students will submit essay answers to assigned questions via BlackBoard. **NOTE: Cite the textbook or any reference to support your essay answers (minimum 2 references per answer in APA format)**. UPLOAD a Microsoft Word document OR save your document as a PDF and upload.

Book Pages

CHAPTER 13

Cooperation and Sharing

The reliance on teams is due partially to increasingly complex tasks, more globalization, and the flattening of organizational structure.

—Peter G. Northouse (2016)

THE PROFESSOR OPENS his class with a question: "As you know, I do a lot of executive team building and executive coaching with senior leaders across the country. What do you think is the greatest challenge in getting senior executives to work together in a collaborative and cooperative way?"

His students volunteer the following responses:

- Most of them don't have the time to be part of a good team.
- A lot of their work takes place outside the team with other teams and groups of people. They really aren't together that much.
- Executives do not fit well into teams. They are pretty arrogant, probably don't play well in the sandbox together, and have to follow what the CEO says. I just don't see them as team players.
- At that level, there's more interest in who gets the credit for the job.
- They're not really all equals. Probably the chief financial officer or the chief nursing officer or someone like that is really viewed at a higher level than the others. Without equality, you can't get a team to work.

The professor replies, "Those are all good thoughts! The real challenge, from what I have experienced, has been participation—that is, active participation. If all the team members participate, then I can help them build an atmosphere of sharing. That's when the team becomes focused on shared goals and mutual trust."

TOO MANY MEETINGS today have a hypnotizing show-and-tell style: One by one, meeting attendees tell the others about their project and show (with PowerPoints and handouts) how the project is progressing. Questions and

answers are volleyed, but often very little attention is given to identifying the problems that could arise, or have arisen, from the undertaking. No one asks about the details of or the reasons for the project, and few volunteer their help. And there is always the "sneak peek" at e-mails or texts. At the end of these meetings, people file out no more involved with others' projects. Consequently, when successes or failures happen, they become an individual's accomplishment or failure, rather than a team's celebration or setback.

Although the healthcare field prides itself on emphasizing individual authority and accountability (especially in a physician clinical environment), it should also support and encourage team dynamics. Building teams means encouraging efficiencies.

Teams are predestined for failure when they lack the fundamental values of teamwork: cooperation and sharing. Both elements require team members' willingness and the team leader's encouragement and support. Simply put, cooperation and sharing demand that team members sacrifice some of their individuality for the benefit of the entire team.

THE CONCEPT IN PRACTICE

Strengthen your team with the following strategies.

Build the Right Team from the Start

Most CEOs who come into an organization rebuild all or at least part of their executive team. They do this for two reasons: (1) to establish their mark on the organization and (2) to assemble a team of people who espouse similar values. Most executives who are tapped to become part of the new team are excited about the opportunity. Often, this excitement translates to wanting to share and cooperate.

When recruiting, leaders must consider people who believe in the concept of teams. They should evaluate prospective members with the following guidelines:

1. Ask prospects to recount an actual situation in which they worked with a team and by doing so developed a solution that was much better than their own. Listen carefully for the candidate's behavior and their inclination—or disinclination—toward teamwork.

2. Ask prospects to recount an actual situation in which they had problems working with teams. Ask them how they handled their frustration.
3. Ask prospects to describe a situation in which team efforts do not work very well.
4. Ask prospects to name the values that drive effective team interaction (see chapter 17).
5. Administer a validated personality assessment, such as the Hogan Personality Inventory, to assess the prospect's personality and leadership style and how she would support effective team interaction.
6. When speaking to references, ask specific questions about team behavior. Ask references to describe how the prospect gets along with fellow team members. Ask for examples of how the prospect argues or debates issues during team sessions. A good idea is to ask the extent to which the prospect plays politics among fellow team members.

Team effort enhances…

Coordination, reducing bureaucracy. Assigning specific functions to people helps eliminate overlapping responsibilities, duplication of duties, and red tape.

Involvement and support. Because everyone works together toward a common goal, the focus shifts from receiving personal glory and recognition to supporting the team's objectives and valuing the contributions of others. "That's not my job" is replaced by "It's everybody's job."

General oversight, reducing problems that fall through the cracks. Everyone is involved in making sure that nothing is overlooked or undermined.

The joy of celebrations. One of the reasons sports bind people together is that everyone enjoys watching the exhilaration of team victories. An accomplishment is always grander when more people share and enjoy it because it represents the combination of each person's hard work, sacrifice, and dedication.

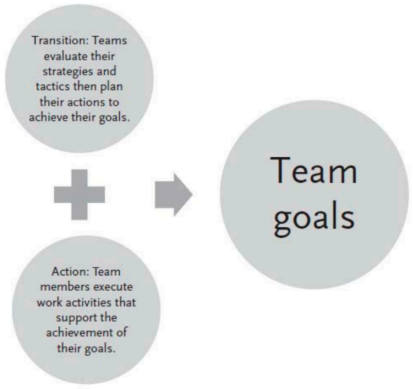
Creativity. When more people are involved, various perspectives and new ideas are generated and better results are achieved.

Understand Team Processes

Tuckman's (1965) well-known concept of forming, storming, norming, and

performing is an easy-to-remember phrase describing how teams form and function. A more current view suggests that teams actually process their activities through two major steps—transition and action. Exhibit 13.1 shows these two activities and how they drive a team toward its goals. The two steps are tied to team goals. Knowing how these major functions work and the challenges they bring can be the key to achieving team success. Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam (2010, 7) write, "As teams work across the transition and action phases they encounter numerous challenges that arise from the team, organization, and environmental contexts in which the team is operating. These challenges can threaten team viability and make it difficult for them to accomplish their goals, in part because the challenges make it difficult for teams to regulate their goal-directed behavior." The next several suggestions help prevent these problems.

Exhibit 13.1 How Teams Accomplish Their Goals



Discuss Team's Value and Values

All team members should learn their individual roles and expectations, evaluate their personal worth to the team, and participate in establishing the values that drive team interactions and behaviors. Doing so improves relationships and cooperation. Because team members are often so busy with their own daily activities, they may fail to invest the necessary time to fully grow and develop as a unit. The team atmosphere should encourage spirited but respectful debate, because better decisions emerge through this exchange.

Under an autocratic CEO, open discussion is unlikely to occur. Teams under such a leader are formed merely to fulfill an organizational convention. Members cannot, nor do they know how to, partake in actual decision making. As a result, members are not aware of their roles and importance. Of course, the underlying problem in this scenario is the leader; however, such a team can be salvaged by a new leader, who can ingrain the values of teamwork with constant dialogue and team exercises.

> The best teams invest a tremendous amount of time and effort exploring, shaping, and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually. In fact, real teams never stop this "purposing" activity because of its value in clarifying implications for members.
>
> **—Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith (1993)**

Demonstrate the Value of "Teaming"

Team leaders must involve all members in setting achievable short-term goals. Achievement of these goals demonstrates the team's value and contribution to improving the organization. An effective leader can demonstrate the value of teaming by bringing tough issues to the group and asking every member to suggest solutions and alternatives. Too often, leaders prefer to handle especially difficult problems themselves or to delegate them to a small subset of the senior management team. Exhibit 13.2 lists strategies for increasing team member participation.

Exhibit 13.2 How to Increase Team Member Participation

Establish a clear connection between the team's purpose and activities and the organization's mission and vision. Members need to know not only what they are doing but also how their individual tasks tie in with the bigger goals.

Forge personal relationships with members. Genuine camaraderie is built on members' familiarity with each other's personal interests and pursuits.

Allow and encourage informal discussions (e.g., dialogue about children, movies, personal interests) before or after team meetings. Occasionally, food may be brought in or the group could conduct the meeting over an off-site lunch.

Reward and recognize hard work and accomplishments. A portion of the organization's incentive program should be allotted for team bonuses. If this policy is not an option, the team leader should plan and provide some other form of celebration.

Make team decisions within the confines of team meetings. Members must be present during deliberations and when a final decision is made; merely announcing the decision to the team will harm team morale and discourage future involvement of its members.

Treat all members equally. No one member should be a favorite, regardless of how frequently that person volunteers and how much that person contributes to the team function.

Determine the Purpose of the Team

Unfortunately, many teams do not know why they exist. When asked, most teams respond with, "We share information" or "We discuss strategy," while some say (perhaps mistakenly), "We run the organization."

Ideally, the team, as a unit, should determine its purpose; however, the leader could establish it as well. This purpose provides a framework for what the team must accomplish, so it must be clear and must be understood by every team member. Clarity of purpose prevents the team from taking on activities and goals (or prospective members) that are vague or inappropriate.

Engage in Team-Building Exercises

Any exercise that confirms the collective strength of the team, assesses the dynamics of the team, and aids in the interaction among members is

beneficial. Common team exercises range from simple personality assessment tools (e.g., Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, DiSc) to more sophisticated assessments (e.g., Hogan Personality Inventory; Hogan Development Survey; Hogan Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory) to extensive physical activities (e.g., Outward Bound).

These exercises offer practical knowledge and skills in a fun and relaxed environment. A note of caution is in order: The person who plans these activities must be an expert on the group's methods, team-building techniques, and objectives. Having a neutral third party to lead the team through these exercises is usually preferable—otherwise, the program could become an expensive time waster for all involved, or worse, could cause irreparable harm in team dynamics.

Confront Relationship and Conduct Issues

Conflicts between team members should be expected. Sometimes such clashes require the leader to intervene, such as when they create disruptions in team functioning. Other times, however, the team itself will police behaviors, discuss ways to stem the conflict, and dole out appropriate punishment if necessary.

Developing a team code of conduct is a valuable team-building exercise. Not only is this activity cooperative, but it also delineates the rules that protect members and monitor their behavior and interactions. Many senior management teams work together on a team code of conduct during their retreats. Exhibit 13.3 is an example of team conduct expectations; this code has been adopted by many healthcare organizations and is currently used by a midwestern health system. Another example, albeit focused on physician practices and developed by the American Medical Association, can be found at www.stepsforward.org/modules/conducting-effective-team-meetings.

Exhibit 13.3 Example of a Senior Management Team Code of Conduct

- Each of us has a right to his own opinion and has the right to state it. Each of us expects that others will carefully and respectfully listen to our opinion and seriously consider it before rejecting it.
- Although our CEO has the authority to make unilateral decisions, she will engage all of us in giving input in as many issues as possible. We respect her right to "some days count the votes and some days weigh the votes."
- We recognize that some decisions are better made with subsets of our team. However, except in unusual situations, we agree that these decisions will not be finalized until the entire team is notified and has the chance to provide final input.
- Each of us has the right to campaign for our issues outside of team meetings and meet individually with other team members to petition for support. However, we agree to tell the team that this campaigning has been done.
- Mystery, intrigue, and politics are fatal diseases. We will strive for openness, honesty, and tact.

Several years ago, I led a senior management team retreat. Before the retreat, I met individually with team members to ask them the following questions:

- What are the primary reasons for the existence of this senior management team?
- What are the primary reasons for the meetings of this senior management team?
- Does the content of the meetings support the primary reason for the existence of the team?

The responses were varied, but most members indicated that their reason for being was to "collectively lead the organization."

During the retreat, it was revealed that team meetings were show-and-tell sessions, not the mutual interaction that members envisioned. This revelation led to an in-depth discussion about the need to (1) shape and follow a clear purpose and (2) restructure meeting patterns. The team decided to meet every other week solely to discuss strategy and to meet weekly to discuss day-to-day operations.

This team, save for a few members who left to pursue other opportunities, remains

intact today. The members report being closer and managing conflicts more effectively.

Match Words with Actions

A team leader's words and actions carry greater weight than those of members. As such, the leader has to ensure that her behaviors are consistent with her messages, and both must be consistent with the organization's mission, vision, and values. Any discrepancies team members observe could, at best, become fodder for gossip and, at worst, weaken the trust and respect the leader worked hard to establish. It could decimate the participative way of the team, with members perceiving that the leader only preaches about cooperation and sharing but does not really practice these team concepts.

Even in informal interactions, the leader must be watchful of his body language and casual banter to ensure that he remains appropriate, professional, and a role model for others on his team.

A classic example of how *not* to be a leader is Nathan Jessup, the fictitious well-decorated lieutenant colonel played by actor Jack Nicholson in the 1992 movie *A Few Good Men.* Here is how Colonel Jessup defends his leadership: "I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to a man who rises and sleeps under the blanket of the very freedom I provide, then questions the manner in which I provide it! I'd rather you just said thank you and went on your way." Although Colonel Jessup has achieved much, he is not someone a team will choose as, or be proud to call, its leader.

> The organizational team-based structure is an important way for organizations to remain competitive by responding quickly and adapting to constant, rapid changes.
>
> **—Peter G. Northouse (2016)**

Challenge the Current Boundaries

The hierarchy in every organization creates boundaries, including the following (Band 1994):

- Boundaries of authority—who is in charge of what?
- Boundaries of task—who does what?

- Boundaries of politics—what is our payoff?
- Boundaries of identity—who are we as a group?

Although boundaries are necessary, they can impede decision making and workflow. The leader must allow team members to challenge these boundaries when necessary by setting "must" (critical) and "should" (recommended) guidelines. For example, the team *must* first gain approval from department directors before implementing a process, but the team *should* include all levels of employees in decision making. In this way, the team knows which boundaries are off-limits and which are flexible. To promote cooperation, one leader tells his team: "I expect all of you to work together as though you had authority over the entire organization. Leave your claims of functional turf at the door."

This balance is often difficult. Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (2015, 502–3) describe organizations with a hierarchical culture as ones that have "formalized rules and procedures; they tend to be highly structured places to work. Following standard operating procedures, or SOPs, is the rule of the day. The emphasis is on ensuring continuing efficiency, smooth functioning, and dependable operations."

CONCLUSION

Decision making, problem-solving, brainstorming, planning, and implementation are activities that are most effective when executed by a team, not by one person alone. Cooperation and sharing are team traits that do not happen without an open dialogue among team members and without support from the team leader.

Self-Evaluation Questions

- ❑ Has my team ever discussed its purpose?
- ❑ Do my team members truly believe in the value of teams?
- ❑ Do they believe in the value of team deliberations?
- ❑ Does my team regularly participate in team-building activities?

Cases

Case 13.1

Malcolm Holcomb is the new CEO at a medical center. The agenda for his first meeting with the senior management team includes the following questions:

- What has been the primary purpose of the senior management meetings in the past? What was discussed? What was accomplished?
- What do you want to be the primary purpose of these meetings moving forward? What should we discuss? What should we accomplish?
- What meeting format do you prefer? Do you think that format will enable us to better meet our goals?
- Do each of you have a clear understanding of your roles? Do each of you help one another? How much cooperation and sharing should we expect from this team?

Case 13.1 Questions

1. You are one of Malcolm's vice presidents. How would you answer these questions?
2. Should Malcolm discuss these questions privately with each senior management member *before* raising them in the full group meeting (and therefore getting more open feedback than in an open meeting)? If so, how should he proceed after these private meetings?

Case 13.2

Cynthia Jonas is the CEO of a large suburban community hospital. Her senior leadership team is made up of 17 people, 5 of whom report directly to Cynthia; the rest report to the chief operations officer. Every Tuesday, the entire 17-member team meets for two hours, and often the meetings run longer by about another hour.

During the meeting, Cynthia gives a summary of all the meetings she attended in the previous week. Then, she turns to the chief medical officer (CMO) to discuss physician issues and to the chief financial officer (CFO) to discuss the budget. During these conversations, no one else but Cynthia poses questions and comments to the CMO and the CFO. The rest of the group stays silent or prepares their own reports.

By the time Cynthia ends her conversation with the CMO and CFO, only 15 to 30 minutes are left. The team members then go around the table to give their respective department or project updates. Most team members use this time to tout their accomplishments, but no one pauses for congratulations or recognitions, as time is running out. During these updates, Cynthia is on her laptop, checking e-mail or answering correspondence. Occasionally, she asks for clarification or offers advice.

Recently, Cynthia hired Luann Crosby, an executive coach. Luann sat through one of these meetings. Afterward, Luann pulled Cynthia aside.

LUANN. You know there was a problem with that meeting, right?

CYNTHIA. What do you mean? They're a little long, but no one complains about them.

Case 13.2 Questions

1. You are Luann. Give Cynthia an extensive diagnosis of the meeting. Include as many details in your diagnosis as possible.
2. Give Cynthia specific recommendations on improving the meeting.
3. How will you get Cynthia to buy into your suggestion? How will you coach her to gain buy-in from her team?

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SUGGESTED READINGS

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CHAPTER 14

Cohesiveness and Collaboration

Team-based organizations have faster response capability because of their flatter organizational structures, which rely on teams and new technology to enable communication across time and space.

—Peter G. Northouse (2016)

AT A FOCUS group during a leadership conference, Rakesh Jaya, facilitator and organizational development researcher, asked participants from different organizations to explain the structure and results of their own senior management meetings.

JAMES SMITH, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER. All of our meetings are preplanned and highly structured. We don't meet unless there's a clear reason for it. We follow the agenda strictly and honor the time allotment for each agenda item. A detailed follow-up list is prepared at the conclusion of every meeting. Everyone is required to come well prepared for his or her reports and to participate in all the discussions.

MELANIE RODRIGUEZ, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER. Our team meets every two weeks, and the meetings last for four to six hours. Long ago, the team collectively decided that we wouldn't use an agenda because it's too limiting. Our meetings are open-ended, so we have the freedom to explore and deliberate on an issue fully. We arrive at many of our decisions this way, and we think this is a creative approach to thinking about and resolving our problems. We realize that this structure is not for everyone, so only the senior-level members of our team are invited to the meetings. But we do provide a summary of our discussions to the rest of the team, and they are encouraged to speak to their vice presidents if they have any concerns or comments.

AMY BRODERICK, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER. I work for a large system, and our team is composed of 25 members. Every week, the chief executives from our nine

hospitals meet for two hours to discuss strategic issues. Each of these meetings is focused on one issue and is led by a sponsor. This way, all team members have an opportunity to run a meeting and be well informed about at least one strategy. Then, every month, the entire 25-person team meets to exchange reports about business unit outcomes, ongoing and upcoming strategic initiatives, and some operations-related issues. If needed, we invite staff outside of the team to provide input and share information.

STEVE MICHAEL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING. We built subgroups into our team to increase our efficiency and effectiveness. The subgroups meet every week, and they report their discussions and decisions to the full team when we all meet twice each month. Our CEO trusts our judgment and skills, so she gives us much autonomy but expects us to be accountable for our outcomes. Before the start of our monthly meeting, we open with a breakfast and the CEO says with a huge smile on her face, "Tell me something I don't know," then people start talking about their children's wedding or a movie they just saw. There's always an opportunity for us to get to know each other in a more personal way. We all know and respect each other, and I think that because of that we offer help to those who are struggling with their operations or projects.

MANY LEADERSHIP TEAMS in healthcare strive to capture the entrepreneurial spirit of successful businesses. This spirit makes a team cohesive, as it cheers team members on through conception, development, rollout, and marketing of new products or services. Unfortunately, this spirit is temporary and can be undermined by old-fashioned jealousy and selfish tendencies.

When a business expands its operation, new members are added to the existing team. Although a logical move, this addition could be destructive to the cohesiveness of the team, as current and new members feel tension or quarrel over whose ideas are better, who has the power to make decisions, who is responsible for which tasks, or what improvements need to be pursued (or not pursued). As the rift grows, member support for the common goal diminishes. Although cohesiveness increases team productivity, morale, and camaraderie, it does not prevent schism brought on by territorial battles and other issues. Exhibit 14.1 lists the downsides to cohesiveness.

Exhibit 14.1 Disadvantages of Team Cohesiveness

Low performance norms and poor performers. Performance norms are the standards expected from all team members. They dictate the quality and quantity of work—how vigorous, effective, and productive the work is; what goals should be achieved; and what contributions should be tendered. In a cohesive environment, these norms (primarily unwritten) are low. Highly competent members pick up the slack (perhaps even gladly) for members who have subpar abilities. As a result, those who need skills improvement remain undeveloped and dependent on the high achievers. In a contentious environment, however, low performance norms become a source of conflict. The best performers resent the fact that they have to cover for the poor performers. Worse, many competent members are too polite to deliver constructive criticism.

Proliferation of groupthink. Groupthink is, simply, unanimous thinking. When the team is cohesive, its members tend to lose their individual perspectives. As a result, new and creative thoughts are blocked off, objections are stifled, and concurrence becomes the standard. Instead of pursuing the goals of the organization as a whole, keeping the solidarity of the team becomes the team's main purpose.

Low tolerance for change. Founding team members are loyal to the initial team purpose, composition, rules, norms, and goals they helped establish. They believe that these components strengthen team cohesiveness, which is given high value. As such, they are uncomfortable with change, even when they recognize that evolution could improve team functions. New members are often viewed as disruptive outsiders and detrimental to the cohesiveness of the team.

Team goals take precedence over organizational goals. A highly cohesive team is fanatical about the welfare of its members. Some leadership teams have reduced clinical and support staff but maintained administrators. Some have paid executive bonuses despite financially tight years, a practice that has gained significant public disapproval.

Collaboration, on the other hand, pulls together divided parties to work toward a mutually accepted goal. It transcends traditional compromise in that no exchange of services is necessary to achieve the preferred outcomes of both parties; it demands only equal input and dedication to the cause. Most important, collaboration often results in conflict resolution.

Conflicting parties typically respond in one of the following ways:

- Avoid the other party and thus the conflict
- Give in to the demands of the other party
- Compete, with the goal to win
- Compromise or strike a deal
- Collaborate, with a goal to achieve

Consider the last three approaches. Competition is never an appropriate response because it amplifies the damage and makes it irreversible. Historically, compromise was often recommended, but it leaves both

parties only partially satisfied and distorts the quid pro quo practice of "saving" favors (see chapter 15) to be redeemed in a later conflict. If neither party anticipates future dealings with one another, then a compromise is usually a better approach than collaboration. Conversely, if the parties continue their relationship and expect further dispute, then collaboration is the only responsible solution. The latter situation is the case with senior leadership teams.

Cohesiveness begets collaboration, and collaboration begets cohesiveness. Although one can exist without the other, one cannot be as effective without the other.

> Team members (in shared leadership) step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then step back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues.
>
> **—Peter G. Northouse (2016)**

THE CONCEPT IN PRACTICE

Despite its disadvantages, cohesiveness is an important component of collaboration. The following methods can help in forming a cohesive and collaborative team.

Minimize Selfish Behavior

In teams, selfishness is a contagious disease that can easily spread to all members. The team leader, as the role model, must demonstrate that she works on behalf of others' interests, not just her own. If not, team members will suspect the leader's motives and cohesiveness will decline. The leader is also responsible for confronting members who contribute only to advance their own pursuits, not the team's. Appropriate team behavior must be established and put in writing—possibly during a retreat (see discussion about team code of conduct in chapter 13).

What Is Groupthink?

- *An illusion of invulnerability*, which leads to unwarranted optimism and excessive risk-taking by the group
- *Unquestioned assumption of the group's morality* and, therefore, an absence of reflection on the ethical consequences of group action
- *Collective rationalization* to discount negative information or warnings
- *Stereotypes of the opposition* as evil, weak, or stupid
- *Self-censorship* by group members, preventing them from expressing ideas that deviate from the group consensus because of doubts about the ideas' validity or importance
- *An illusion of unanimity* such that greater consensus is perceived than what really exists
- *Direct pressure on dissenting members*, which reinforces the norm that disagreement represents disloyalty to the group
- *Mind guards* who protect the group from adverse information

Source: Adapted from Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (2015).

Assess the Size of the Team

Mergers and acquisitions, new service lines, and corporate partnerships extend the reach of an organization's leadership team and expand its size. As new members and responsibilities are added, the team loses its camaraderie and cohesiveness. A team that has more than 11 or 12 members often experiences a split, whereby the members form their own factions because they cannot find a commonality among the entire group. In a large team, the members also do not receive enough individual attention.

The generally accepted principle is that the team should have between 6 and 11 members. However, there is no ideal size. Here are several important considerations for setting the team size:

- If the task is repetitive, the team may have many members.
- If the task is complex, a large team can slow down the decision-making process.
- If a lot of collaboration is required, teams larger than 11 or 12 members can create problems.

If reducing the team size is not an option, the leader could manage

perception about the size through the following approaches:

- Divide operations executives and strategy executives into two teams.
- Hold less frequent meetings with the entire team, but convene subgroups more often.
- Do not replace a team member when turnover occurs.

Get to Know One Another

Team leaders should socialize with members at every opportunity presented, including before or after meetings, organizational events, and informal celebrations. These interactions not only create a personal bond between the leader and members but also communicate that the leader is interested in the person behind the executive.

Consider the following bonding practices by several successful leaders:

- Every fourth Friday, one CEO takes her senior management team to an off-site location for a full-day retreat. The first half (from breakfast until lunch) of the retreat is dedicated to business and operations. The second half is reserved for non-work-related matters, such as getting-to-know-you exercises.
- After its monthly meeting with the board, one leadership team spends the day at an off-site location to enjoy each other's company and catch up. The different venue serves to refocus the team and inspire creativity.
- One CEO holds a weekly no-agenda lunch session with his team, allowing team members to interact with one another in an informal setting.

Minimize the Influence of Cliques

Unfortunately, cliques are not confined to junior high school; they are prevalent in the workplace as well. The larger the organization, the larger the teams; the larger the team, the greater the possibility of cliques forming. Cliques are detrimental to any team because they represent cohesiveness without collaboration. That is, such groups are powerful because of their solidarity and focus on a common goal, but members of cliques fail or even refuse to partner with others to achieve that objective.

Thus, they alienate others and disrupt the normal function of a team.

The leader can address the challenges of cliques in the team in several ways:

1. *Occasionally acknowledge the clique's existence during team meetings*. For example, one CEO announces (only half-jokingly), “I already know that the operations people have come to a conclusion on this matter a long time ago. Now I want to know what they talked about before this meeting!” By publicly recognizing the clique, the leader is making it clear that side negotiations will not be tolerated.
2. *Confront the clique privately*. Generally, a clique engenders negativity among team members because it has its own agenda. Divide and conquer could be one of the approaches a clique can use to sway the opinion of team members who are undecided about a certain decision or plan. By confronting the clique, the leader is directly appealing to its sense of propriety while strongly emphasizing the need to work together, not sabotage, team efforts. This confrontation must be done calmly so as not to widen the rift between the team and the clique.
3. *Assign clique members to a task force related to their area of expertise.* The goal of this strategy is to capitalize on the clique's strengths to benefit the team. Many members of a clique are experts in their fields, and they withhold this knowledge from the team to further their own agendas. If the leader delegates them to a task force specific to their areas—for example, a clinical quality-improvement task force—clique members are more likely to apply their skills and abilities and teach other team members.
4. *Have an open discussion with the entire team about the damage a clique, or any subgroup, can inflict on cohesiveness and collaboration.* Such a discussion (which is a good topic for a retreat) is sensitive and should be done with an expert facilitator.

Discuss and Evaluate the Team's Purpose

Over time, the team's composition changes. As old members leave and new members take their place, the team's reason for being evolves as well. The team must regularly (annually, perhaps) redefine its purpose, reassess its goals, and reestablish its expectations. This discussion must involve all team members, because nothing inspires commitment more than 100 percent participation from those who embody the principles and

implement the changes.

Treat All Members Fairly and Equally

An imbalance of power produces divisiveness, which is counter to the ideas of cohesiveness and collaboration. The fact that some members fill higher positions or have more organizational and community clout than do the rest of the team should not affect the way the leader regards all team members.

For example, if two members (say, the chief operations officer and the chief nursing officer) commit the same indecent behavior (say, sexual harassment), the leader cannot excuse one but censure the other. Not only will this action spark a protest among the team, but it will also run counter to the service mission of both the team and the organization. The same can be said for personal relationships. The leader cannot pick and choose which member he will befriend or get to know better. Doing so will send a message that the leader plays favorites and will cause team members to distance themselves.

> Group cohesion is the glue that keeps a group together. It is the sum of the forces that attract members to a group, provide resistance to leaving it, and motivate them to be active in it.
>
> **—Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnett, and Gordon J. Curphy (2015)**

Designate a Team Role for Each Member

A team role is a specific character or function that each member consciously or unconsciously inhabits at any team gathering (e.g., meeting, retreat). Roles include cheerleader, devil's advocate, team conscience, team historian, and meeting planner. A member's personality or professional background lends itself to role assignment. For example, a member who has worked for the organization for 30 years could be named the historian.

Although seemingly simple, the practice of role designation reinforces members' sense of belonging to the group and clarifies their contributions.

Reassess the Compensation Policy

The organization's compensation structure indirectly affects team cohesiveness. That is, if the pay policy is designed primarily to recognize and reward individual performance, the message is that team participation and outcomes are not as valued. As a result, team members may reserve their best work for their own individual projects (the accomplishment of which will yield a bonus or raise) or develop hidden agendas that could conflict with the team's. Although compensation is beyond the purview of this book, money is an important consideration for the leader.

Rally the Team

As detailed in chapter 1, today's executives are faced with multidimensional and interrelated challenges. The most difficult times are always the most opportune times for the leader to pull the team together, especially if the team has experienced infighting and division.

Rallying the team should go beyond vocal cheerleading to boost morale, however. It should be backed up by practices that ease conflict and promote unity. For example, at the end of every meeting, the leader exclaims, "We're a great team! Let's get those quality numbers up!" However, at the next meeting, the leader publicly berates one group for the poor outcomes it achieved while exalting another group for its remarkable performance. Worse, he does not offer guidance or advice to those who are struggling. This leader's mixed message facilitates unhealthy competition, retards collaboration, and discourages improvement. At the end of the day, team members will hear, "We're a great team!," but not believe it.

CONCLUSION

Without cohesiveness and collaboration, a team is merely a collection of people who sit around a conference table when they are told to do so. Such a team produces nothing without difficulty and waste, which in turn cascade to the rest of the organization. More important, this kind of team does not advance the mission and vision of the organization or meet the needs of the community it supposedly serves.

Self-Evaluation Questions

- ❑ Why does my team meet? What do we accomplish when we meet?

- ❑ Would outside observers describe my team as cohesive?
- ❑ Has my team studied collaboration? Have we had training in conflict resolution?
- ❑ Consider the symptoms of groupthink listed earlier in this chapter. What symptoms does my team exhibit?

Case and Exercise

Case 14.1

St. Nicholas Health System is an integrated health delivery organization comprising St. Nicholas Medical Center, Suburban Western Health Center, Suburban East Health Center, St. Nicholas Employed Physician Practice, St. Nicholas HMO, and St. Nicholas Home Care and Durable Medical Equipment Corporation. The health system operates in a highly competitive city of 2.5 million residents.

Headed by CEO Serena Parris, the leadership group has 25 members, including the executive vice president and chief operations officer (EVP/COO), several system senior vice presidents, assorted system vice presidents, and the site administrators from each business unit. The senior team meets weekly to discuss tactical and strategic operations as well as ongoing projects (if time allows, which is rare).

The site administrators do not feel they are part of the executive team, given that they report to the COO and not to the CEO, and that most of the discussions relate to the system rather than the individual business units. In fact, at St. Nicholas, much of the work is accomplished through interactions between the vice presidents or executive directors and administrators or middle managers. Because Serena is a hands-off leader, she has given her EVP/COO freedom to make ongoing operations decisions. The EVP/COO gives the site administrators much autonomy to run their own facilities.

Serena depends heavily on only three executives on the team—the EVP/COO, the senior vice president of medical affairs, and the chief financial officer. The rest of the 25-member team is aware that Serena has frequent daily communications with these three executives.

Case 14.1 Questions

1. What are the strengths of this team? Its weaknesses?
2. Do the site administrators belong to this group? Explain your answer.
3. What message does Serena send to her team by relying so much on three team members over everyone else?
4. If you were a consultant, what advice would you offer Serena to strengthen the team?

Exercise 14.1

Some leadership experts argue that members of the senior management team

independently work on their own issues and come together only occasionally to coordinate organizational activities and set organizational strategy.

Consider the following thoughts regarding the work of senior leaders and their teams:

1. The job of a typical healthcare vice president has an individual focus. That is, she spends most of her time on activities that have nothing to do with the work of the senior management team of which she is a member.
2. Working challenges faced at the middle management and frontline supervisory levels are usually short-term in nature (there is an immediacy to the nature of the issue), and the problems that must be solved are usually clearer. Issues at the senior management level are much grayer, involving strategy and longer-term decisions.
3. Compared with the problems faced by middle management, the challenges encountered by the senior management team require strategic (not operational), long-term responses. Similarly, the purpose of a senior management team (e.g., achieve a 4 percent margin) is more abstract than the purpose of any other organizational team.
4. Senior-level leaders have two, often overlapping, performance goals—a corporate goal and an individual goal.
5. At the senior leadership level, complementary skills are less important than position. In true team situations, the extra performance capability that a real team provides comes mostly from its complementary skills—that is, executives with clinical backgrounds are knowledgeable about patient care operations, while leaders with financial backgrounds are adept at business concepts.
6. Establishing and maintaining team standards of behavior are difficult for a senior management team because this group meets less frequently than do other teams.
7. Members of senior management teams are not “mutually accountable” to each other; rather, they are individually accountable to the CEO. Mutual accountability is hard to establish because one executive has too many responsibilities.

Exercise 14.1 Questions

1. If these points are correct, how should senior executives enhance their working effectiveness? Can executives create real teams?
2. If you were starting an organization from scratch, how would you assemble the leadership team?

REFERENCES