

quickly, people feel isolated and unsupported.²⁰ Even with these potential problems, virtual teams proved their performance potential.²¹ They're fast becoming a way of organizational life.

SELF-MANAGING TEAMS ARE A FORM OF JOB ENRICHMENT FOR GROUPS.

Members of a **self-managing team** have the authority to make decisions about how they share and complete their work.

In a growing number of organizations, traditional work units of supervisors and subordinates are being replaced with **self-managing teams**. Sometimes called *autonomous work groups*, these are teams whose members have been given collective authority to make many decisions about how they work, ones previously made by higher-level managers.²² The expected advantages include better performance, decreased costs, and higher morale.

As shown in **Figure 13.1**, the “self-management” responsibilities of self-managing teams include planning and scheduling work, training members in various tasks, distributing tasks, meeting performance goals, ensuring high quality, and solving day-to-day operating problems. In some settings the team’s authority may even extend to “hiring” and “firing” its members when necessary. A key feature is multitasking, in which team members help each other develop the skills needed to perform several different jobs. A quick check of a true self-managing team returns “Yes” answers to questions like these: Members collectively accountable for results? Members decide how to distribute tasks and schedule work? Members train and support one another in job skills? Members assess one another’s performance?

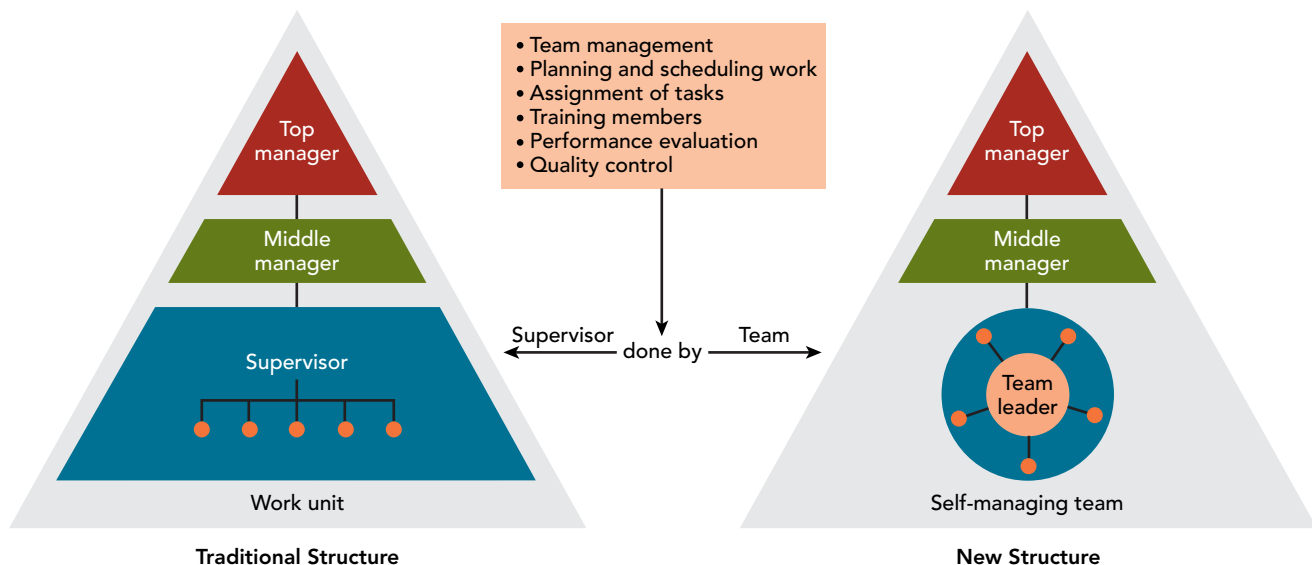


FIGURE 13.1 What Are the Management Implications of Self-Managing Teams?

Members of self-managing teams make decisions together on team membership, task plans and job assignments, training and performance evaluations, and quality control. Because they essentially manage themselves in these ways, they no longer need a traditional supervisor or department head. Instead, the team leader performs this role with the support of team members. The team leader and team as a whole report to the next higher level of management and are held accountable for performance results.