

Teams and Teamwork

13

Two Heads Really Can Be Better Than One

Management Live

When Teams Stand Up, Decisions Speed Up



Cultura Creative/Alamy

Did you ever wonder how to move decisions along faster in team meetings? One solution is simple: Take away the seats. At the software firm Atomic Object, seats are out and speed is in—the typical meeting lasts less than 5 minutes. At the team meeting that begins each workday, every one shows up on time, stands up, and is expected to stay on task. Don't plan

on playing Angry Birds or chatting. Even tables are frowned upon. A vice president declares: "They make it too easy to lean or rest laptops." Stand-up meetings are popular in the tech industry, where some call them "agile meetings."

YOUR THOUGHTS?

Might stand up meetings play a role in your workplace? Many people are starting to work at stand-up desks—why not hold meetings the same way? What are the limits? And, are there other ways to speed up meetings and add "agility" to team vocabularies?

WHAT'S INSIDE

ETHICS CHECK

Social loafing may be closer than you think

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Unproductive meetings are major time wasters

HOT TOPIC

Can disharmony build a better team?

QUICK CASE

Removing the headphones to show team spirit

YOUR CHAPTER 13 TAKEAWAYS

1. Understand the importance of teams and teamwork.
2. Identify the building blocks of successful teamwork.
3. Understand how managers create and lead high-performance teams.

Takeaway 13.1

Why Is It Important to Understand Teams and Teamwork?

ANSWERS TO COME

- Teams offer synergy and other benefits.
- Teams can suffer from performance problems.
- Organizations are networks of formal teams and informal groups.
- Organizations use committees, task forces, and cross-functional teams.
- Virtual teams use technology to bridge distances.
- Self-managing teams are a form of job enrichment for groups.

WE ARE ALL PART OF TEAMS EVERY DAY, AND IT'S TIME TO RECOGNIZE A BASIC FACT: Teams are hard work, but they are mostly worth it. The beauty of teams is accomplishing something far greater than what's possible for an individual alone. But even though two heads can be better than one, the key word is "can." Have you ever heard someone say, "Too many cooks spoil the broth" or "A camel is an elephant put together by a committee"? There are good reasons why such sayings are well used. So, let's start this discussion realistically.

On one level there seems little to debate. Groups and teams have a lot to offer organizations. But at another level you have to sometimes wonder if the extra effort is really worth it. There's no doubt that teams can sometimes be more pain than gain. There's a lot to learn about them, their roles in organizations, and how we participate in and help lead them for real performance gains.¹

A **team** is a collection of people who regularly interact to pursue common goals.

Teamwork is the process of people actively working together to accomplish common goals.

Synergy is the creation of a whole greater than the sum of its individual parts.

TEAMS OFFER SYNERGY AND OTHER BENEFITS.

A **team** is a small group of people with complementary skills who work together to accomplish shared goals while holding each other mutually accountable for performance results.² Teams are essential to organizations of all types and sizes. Many tasks are well beyond the capabilities of individuals alone.³ And in this sense, **teamwork**, people actually working together to accomplish a shared goal, is a major performance asset.⁴

The term **synergy** means the creation of a whole that exceeds the sum of its parts. When teams perform well, it's because of synergy that pools many diverse talents and efforts to create extraordinary results. *Check synergy and team success in the NBA.* Scholars find that both good and bad basketball teams win more the longer the players have been together. Why? A "teamwork effect" creates wins because players know one another's moves and playing tendencies. *Check synergy and team success in the hospital operating room.* Scholars notice the same heart surgeons have lower death rates for similar procedures performed in hospitals where the surgeons did more operations. Why? A teamwork effect—the doctors had more time working together with the surgery teams—anesthesiologists, nurses, and other surgical technicians. They say it's not only the surgeon's skills that count; the skills of the team and the time spent working together count, too.⁵

Don't forget—teams are not only good for performance, they're also good for their members.⁶ Just as in life overall, being part of a work team or informal group can strongly influence our attitudes and behaviors. The personal relationships can help with job performance—making contacts, sharing ideas, responding to favors, and bypassing roadblocks. And being part of a team often helps satisfy important needs that are unfulfilled in the regular work setting or life overall. Teams provide members with social relationships, security, a sense of belonging, and emotional support.

Why Teams Are Good for Organizations

- More resources for problem solving
- Improved creativity and innovation
- Improved quality of decision making
- Greater commitment to tasks
- Increased motivation of members
- Better control and work discipline
- More individual need satisfaction

TEAMS CAN SUFFER FROM PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS.

We all know that working in teams isn't always easy or productive. Problems not only happen; they are common.⁷ Teams often suffer from personality conflicts and work style differences that disrupt relationships and accomplishments. Group members sometimes battle over goals or competing visions. Sometimes they withdraw from active participation because of uncertainty over tasks and relationships. Ambiguous agendas or ill-defined problems can cause teamwork fatigue. Motivation can fall when teams work too long on the wrong things and end up having little to show for it. And, not everyone is always ready to jump in and do a great job on a team. These and other difficulties can easily turn the great potential of teams into frustration and failure.

One of the most troublesome team problems is **social loafing**—the presence of one or more “free-riders” who slack off and allow other team members to do most of the work.⁸ For whatever reason, perhaps the absence of spotlight on personal performance, individuals sometimes work less hard, not harder, when they are part of a group.

What can a team leader do when someone is free-riding? The possibilities include a variety of actions to make individual contributions more visible—rewarding individuals for their contributions, making task assignments more interesting, and keeping group size small so that free-riders are more noticeable. This makes the loafers more susceptible to pressures from peers and to critical leader evaluations. And if you've ever considered free-riding as a team member, think again. You may get away with it in the short term, but your reputation will suffer, and sooner or later it will be “payback” time.

How to Handle Social Loafing

- Reward individuals for contributions.
- Make individuals visible by keeping team size small.
- Encourage peer pressure to perform.
- Make task assignments more interesting.

Social loafing is the tendency of some people to avoid responsibility by free-riding in groups.

“I’LL BE ACTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS, BUT I CAN’T BE A LEADER OR VOLUNTEER FOR ANY EXTRA WORK.”

ETHICS CHECK

Social Loafing May Be Closer Than You Think



Quiet Noise Creative/Getty Images

Psychology study: A German researcher asks people to pull on a rope as hard as they can. First, individuals pull alone. Second, they pull as part of a group. Results show people

pull harder when working alone than when working as part of a team. Such social loafing is the tendency to reduce effort when working in groups.

Faculty office: A student wants to speak with the instructor about his team's performance on the last group project. There were four members, but two did almost all the work. The two loafers largely disappeared, showing up only at the last minute to be part of the formal presentation. His point is that the team was disadvantaged because the two free-riders caused a loss of performance capacity.

Telephone call from the boss: “John, I really need you to serve on this committee. Will you do it? Let me know tomorrow.” In thinking about this, I ponder: I'm overloaded, but I don't want to turn down the boss. I'll accept but let the committee members know about my situation. I'll be active in discussions and try to offer viewpoints and perspectives that are helpful. However, I'll let them know up front that I can't be a leader or volunteer for any extra work.

YOUR DECISION?

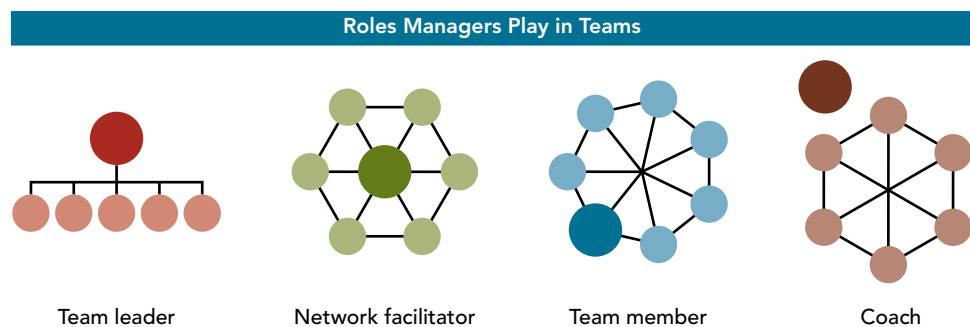
Whether you call it social loafing, free-riding, or just plain old slacking off, the issue is the same. What right do some people have to sit back in team situations and let other people do all or most of the work? Is this ethical? Does everyone in a group have an ethical obligation to do his or her fair share of the work? Does the fact that John is going to be honest with the other committee members make any difference? Won't he still be a loafer who gets credit with the boss for serving on the committee? Would it be more ethical for him to decline the boss's request?

ORGANIZATIONS ARE NETWORKS OF FORMAL TEAMS AND INFORMAL GROUPS.

A **formal team** is officially recognized and supported by the organization.

A **formal team** is officially designated for a specific organizational purpose. You'll find such teams described by different labels on organization charts—examples are *departments* (e.g., market research department), *work units* (e.g., audit unit), *teams* (e.g., customer service team), or *divisions* (e.g., office products division).

Formal teams are headed by supervisors, managers, department heads, team leaders, and the like. It is common, in fact, to describe organizations as interlocking networks of teams in which managers and leaders play “linking pin” roles.⁹ This means that they serve both as head of one work team and as a regular member in the next-higher-level one. It's also important to recognize, as shown here, that managers play more than one role in groups and teams. In addition to serving as the supervisor or team leader, they also act as network facilitators, team members, and coaches.



An **informal group** is unofficial and emerges from relationships and shared interests among members.

The informal structure of an organization also consists of **informal groups**. They emerge from natural or spontaneous relationships and offer members opportunities for social satisfactions as well as contacts for getting work done. Some are *interest groups*, whose members pursue a common cause, such as a women's career network. Some are *friendship groups* that develop for a wide variety of personal reasons, including shared hobbies and other nonwork interests. Others are *support groups* in which members basically help one another out in work and personal affairs.

WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD SAY MOST MEETINGS ARE “INEFFECTIVE.”

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Unproductive Meetings Are Major Time Wasters



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A survey of some 38,000 workers around the world links low productivity with bad meetings, poor communication, and unclear goals.

- 69% of meetings attended are considered ineffective.

- 32% of workers complain about team communication.
- 31% complain about unclear objectives and priorities.

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE?

Do these data match your experiences with team meetings? Given the common complaints about meetings, what can a team leader do to improve them? Think about the recent meetings you have attended. In what ways were the best meetings different from the worst ones? Did your behavior play a significant role in both these cases?

ORGANIZATIONS USE COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, AND CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS.

Among the formal teams and groups in organizations, a **committee** brings together people outside their daily job assignments to work in a small team for a specific purpose.¹⁰ A designated head or chairperson typically leads the committee and is held accountable for the task agenda. Organizations, for example, often have committees dealing with issues like diversity, quality, and compensation.¹¹

Project teams or **task forces** put people together to work on common problems, but on a temporary rather than a continuing basis. Project teams, for example, might be formed to develop a new product or service, redesign workflows, or provide specialized consulting for a client.¹² A task force might be formed to address employee retention problems or come up with ideas for improving work schedules.¹³

The **cross-functional team** brings together members from different functional units.¹⁴ They are supposed to work together on specific problems or tasks, sharing information and exploring new ideas. They are expected to help knock down the “functional chimneys” or “walls” that otherwise separate departments and people in the organization. Some organizations also use **employee involvement teams**. These groups of workers meet on a regular basis with the goal of using their expertise and experience for continuous improvement. The **quality circle**, for example, is a team that meets regularly to discuss and plan specific ways to improve work quality.¹⁵

VIRTUAL TEAMS USE TECHNOLOGY TO BRIDGE DISTANCES.

SCENE: U.S.-based IT manager needs to meet with team members in Brazil, the Philippines, and Poland. Rather than pay for everyone to fly to a common location, he checks world time zones, sends an e-mail to schedule, and then joins other team members online at the scheduled time using AppleFaceTime or Skype.

The constant emergence of new technologies is making virtual collaboration both easier and more common. At home it may be Twitter, LinkedIn, or Instagram; at the office it's likely to be a wide variety of online meeting resources. Members of **virtual teams**, also called **distributed teams**, work together and solve problems through computer-mediated rather than face-to-face interactions.¹⁶ They operate like other teams with respect to what gets done. It's the way things get done in virtual teams that is different.

As you probably realize already from working in college study teams, virtual teamwork has many advantages. It allows teamwork by people who may be located at great distances from one another, offering cost and time efficiencies. It makes it easy to widely share lots of information, keep records of team activities, and maintain databases. And, virtual teamwork can help reduce interpersonal problems that might otherwise occur when team members are dealing face-to-face with controversial issues.¹⁷

Are there any downsides to virtual teams? Yes, for sure, and often they're the same as in other groups.¹⁸ Social loafing can still occur, goals may be unclear, meeting requests may be too frequent. Members of virtual teams can also have difficulties establishing good working relationships. The lack of face-to-face interaction limits the role of emotions and nonverbal cues in the communication and may depersonalize member relations.¹⁹ “Human beings are social animals for whom building relationships matters a great deal,” says one scholar. “Strip away the social side of teamwork and, very

A **committee** is designated to work on a special task on a continuing basis.

A **project team** or **task force** is convened for a specific purpose and disbands after completing its task.

A **cross-functional team** operates with members who come from different functional units of an organization.

An **employee involvement team** meets on a regular basis to help achieve continuous improvement.

A **quality circle** is a team of employees who meet periodically to discuss ways of improving work quality.

Members of a **virtual team** or **distributed team** work together and solve problems through computer-based interactions.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

Steps to Successful Virtual Teams

- Select team members with positive attitudes and capable of self-starting.
- Select members high in initiative and with proven records of hard work.
- Begin with social messaging that allows members to exchange information about one another to personalize the process.
- Assign clear goals and roles so that members can focus while working alone and also know what others are doing.
- Gather regular feedback from members about how they think the team is doing and how it might do better.
- Provide regular feedback to team members about team accomplishments.
- Make sure the team has the best virtual meeting technology.

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?

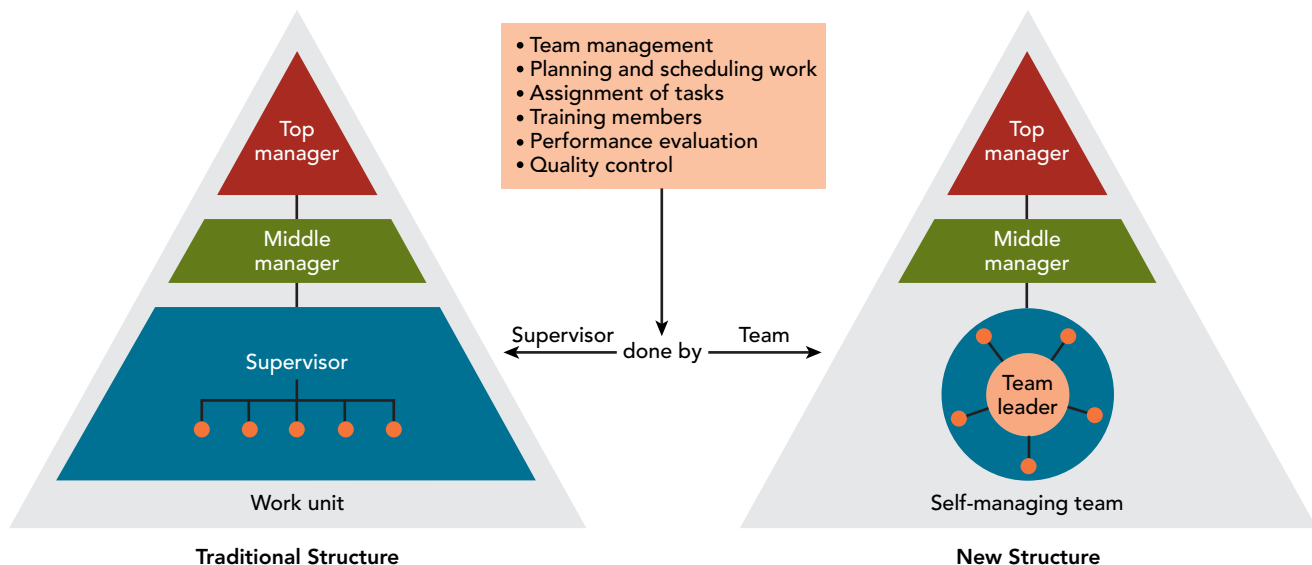


FIGURE 13.1 What Are the Management Implications of Self-Managing Teams?

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.

STUDYGUIDE

Takeaway 13.1

Why Is It Important to Understand Teams and Teamwork?

Terms to Define

Committee	Formal team	Self-managing team	Team
Cross-functional team	Informal group	Social loafing	Teamwork
Distributed team	Project team	Synergy	Virtual team
Employee involvement team	Quality circle	Task force	

Rapid Review

- A team consists of people with complementary skills working together for shared goals and holding one another accountable for performance.
- Teams benefit organizations by providing for synergy that allows the accomplishment of tasks that are beyond individual capabilities alone.
- Social loafing and other problems can limit the performance of teams.
- Organizations use a variety of formal teams in the form of committees, task forces, project teams, cross-functional teams, and virtual teams.
- Self-managing teams allow team members to perform many tasks previously done by supervisors.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do committees and task forces work better when they are given short deadlines?
2. Are there some things that should be done only by face-to-face teams, not virtual ones?
3. Why do people in teams often tolerate social loafers?

Be Sure You Can

- **define** “team” and “teamwork”
- **describe** the roles managers play in teams
- **explain** synergy and the benefits of teams
- **discuss** social loafing and other potential problems of teams
- **differentiate** formal and informal groups
- **explain** how committees, task forces, and cross-functional teams operate
- **describe** potential problems faced by virtual teams
- **list** the characteristics of self-managing teams

Career Situation: What Would You Do?

It's time for the initial meeting of the task force that you have been assigned to lead. This is a big opportunity for you because it's the first time your boss has given you this level of responsibility. There are seven members of the team, all of whom are your peers and co-workers—no direct reports. The task is to develop a proposal for increased use of flexible work schedules and telecommuting in the organization. What will your agenda be for the first meeting, and what opening statement will you make?

Takeaway 13.2

What Are the Building Blocks of Successful Teamwork?

ANSWERS TO COME

- Teams need the right members to be effective.
- Teams need the right setting and size to be effective.
- Teams need the right processes to be effective.
- Teams move through different stages of development.
- Team performance is influenced by norms.
- Team performance is influenced by cohesiveness.
- Team performance is influenced by task and maintenance activities.
- Team performance is influenced by communication networks.

AFTER TALKING ABOUT THE TYPES OF TEAMS IN ORGANIZATIONS, IT'S TIME TO focus on the teamwork that can make them successful.²³ Look at **Figure 13.2**. It diagrams a team as an open system that, like the organization itself, transforms a variety of inputs into outputs.²⁴ It also shows that an **effective team** should be accomplishing three output goals—task performance, member satisfaction, and team viability.²⁵

The first outcome of an effective team is high *task performance*. When you are on a team, ask: Did we accomplish our tasks and meet expectations? The second outcome of an effective team is *member satisfaction*. Ask: Are we individually and collectively pleased with our participation in the process? The third outcome of an effective team is *viability for future action*. Ask: Can this team be successful again in the future?²⁶

An **effective team** achieves high levels of task performance, membership satisfaction, and future viability.

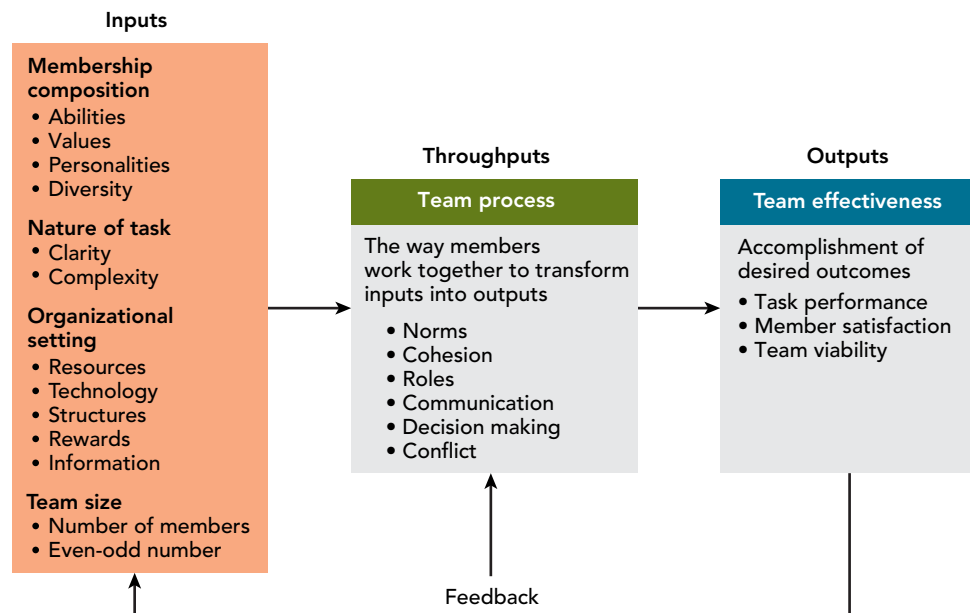


FIGURE 13.2 What Are the Foundations of Team Effectiveness?

An effective team achieves high levels of task performance and member satisfaction and remains viable for the future. The foundations of effectiveness begin with inputs—things such as membership composition, nature of the task, resources and support in the organizational setting, and team size. The foundations of effectiveness further rest with team process—how well the members utilize their talents and other inputs to create the desired outputs. Key process factors on any team include the stages of development, norms and cohesion, task and maintenance activities, communication, and decision making.

You might hear an effective team described as one that has “the right players in the right seats on the same bus, headed in the same direction.”²⁷ The open-systems model in Figure 13.2 shows this thinking. A team’s effectiveness is influenced by *inputs*—getting the right players and putting them in the right seats, and by *process*—making sure everyone knows they’re on the same bus and headed in the same direction. A team with either input or process deficiencies, or both, is going to underperform. But when the inputs and processes are both right for the tasks at hand, the full benefits of team synergy are likely to be achieved.

TEAMS NEED THE RIGHT MEMBERS TO BE EFFECTIVE.

The foundations for team effectiveness are set when a team is formed. The better the inputs, the more likely are good teamwork and performance success.²⁸ And when it comes to inputs for team success, the starting point is the selection of members.

Member Talents

Ability counts in team membership. You want talent available to accomplish the tasks at hand. In an ideal world, team members, talents, and interests fit well with the job to be done. If you were in charge of a new team, wouldn’t you want to start this way?

The talents needed to accomplish relatively simple tasks are easy to identify. It’s harder to identify those needed for more complex tasks. And because complex tasks require more information exchange and intense interaction among team members, they put more pressure on teamwork.

Think complexity the next time you fly. And check out the ground crews. You should notice similarities between them and teams handling pit stops for NASCAR racers. In fact, members of some ramp crews have been through “Pit Crew U,” run by Pit Instruction & Training in Mooresville, North Carolina. Real racing crews at this facility have trained ramp workers to work under pressure while meeting the goals of timeliness, safety, and job preparedness. The goal is better teamwork to reduce aircraft delays and poor service.²⁹

“Must Have” Team Contributions

- Using talents
- Encouraging and motivating others
- Listening to different points of view
- Sharing information and ideas
- Resolving conflict
- Building consensus
- Fulfilling commitments
- Avoiding disruptive behavior

Member Diversity

Team diversity also counts in team membership. It represents the mix of skills, experiences, backgrounds, and personalities among team members. The presence or absence of diversity can affect both relationships among members and team performance. And when diversity is present, just how well it is managed can make the difference between a team that struggles between failure or modest success and one that achieves something truly great.

It is easier to manage relationships among members of **homogeneous teams**—those whose members share similar characteristics. But this sense of harmony can come at a price. Researchers warn about risks when team members are too similar in background, training, and experience. Such teams may underperform, especially on complex or creative tasks, even though the members may feel very comfortable with one another.³⁰

It is harder to manage relationships among members of more **heterogeneous teams**—those whose members are quite dissimilar to one another.³¹ But, the potential complications of membership diversity also come with special performance opportunities. When heterogeneous teams are well managed, the variety of ideas, perspectives, and experiences within them can be helpful for problem solving. Highly creative teams, for example, are often ones that mix experienced people with those who haven’t worked together before.³² The experienced members have the connections, whereas the newcomers add fresh thinking.

What are your experiences with diversity in team membership? Do you get along better in teams whose members are pretty much all alike? Have you encountered problems on teams whose members are quite different from one another?

Team diversity is the mix of skills, experiences, backgrounds, and personalities of team members.

Input Foundations for Team Effectiveness

- *Membership composition*—talent and skills, diversity of experiences, backgrounds, personalities
- *Nature of task*—clear and defined versus open-ended and complex
- *Organizational setting*—information, resources, technology, space
- *Team size*—smaller versus larger, odd/even count

Homogeneous teams have members with similar personal characteristics.

Heterogeneous teams have members with diverse personal characteristics.

TEAMS NEED THE RIGHT SETTING AND SIZE TO BE EFFECTIVE.

As you might expect, the *organizational setting* influences team outputs. A key issue here is how well the organization supports the team in terms of information, material resources, technology, organization structures, available rewards, and even physical space. Teams are much more likely to perform well when they are given the right support than when they lack it.

Team size also makes a difference. The number of potential interactions increases exponentially as teams increase in size. This affects how members communicate, work together, handle disagreements, and reach agreements. So, just how big should a team be? The general answer is five to seven members for creative tasks. The more members, the harder it is to engage in the interactions needed for good problem solving. And, when voting is required, teams should have odd numbers of members to prevent ties.

TEAMS NEED THE RIGHT PROCESSES TO BE EFFECTIVE.

Although having the right team inputs—membership composition, task, setting, and size—is important, it's no guarantee of team success. **Team process** counts, too. Think of it as the way the members of any team actually work together as they transform inputs into outputs. This **team effectiveness equation** is well worth remembering:

$$\text{Team Effectiveness} = \text{Quality of Inputs} + (\text{Process Gains} - \text{Process Losses}).$$

The process aspects of any team, also called *group dynamics*, include how members get to know one another, develop expectations and loyalty, communicate, handle conflicts, and make decisions. And, the simple fact is that group dynamics aren't always pretty. Haven't you been on teams where people seemed to spend more time dealing with personality conflicts than with the task? How often have you read or heard about high-talent college sports teams where a lack of the right "chemistry" among players meant subpar team performance?

A positive team process takes full advantage of group inputs to raise team effectiveness. These are process gains in the team effectiveness equation. On the flip side, it's all too common for team problems to create process losses that reduce effectiveness.

Team process is the way team members work together to accomplish tasks.

"YOU SHOULD TAKE OFF THE HEADPHONES IN THE OFFICE. THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE DO THINGS HERE."

QUICK CASE

Removing the Headphones to Show Team Spirit



Westend61/Getty Images

Sean has just started a new job on your team where everyone works in an open plan office. He's just out of college, acts happy, and is really getting into his new responsibilities. A music lover, he has been wearing headphones during

the day while working on the computer at his workstation. But yesterday an older colleague came over and offered him this unsolicited advice. "You should take off the headphones in the office," she said. "It's not the way we do things here. People are starting to say that you aren't a team player."

Now Sean has come to you as his team leader. He wants to know if he's in the wrong or in the right. "And by the way," he says, "I like music and it helps me to work better." There's no company policy against headphones in the office, but the "advice" he's getting suggests he's taken individuality a step too far in this team setting.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Headphones are as common in some offices as they are on the streets. But, when someone puts the headphones on the message being broadcast, intended or not, may be: Don't disturb! What do you say to Sean, and why? What do you say to the teammates and team as a whole, and why? Is this an opportunity to build new norms with the team, or is it a case of "headphones on, team spirit off"?

Scholar and consultant Daniel Goleman says process failures show a lack of **team IQ** or “the ability of teams to perform well.”³³ He points out that “champion” teams excel because their members know how to use their talents in cooperation with others and are able to handle occasional disharmony and interpersonal conflicts. In other words, great teams combine talent with emotional intelligence and positive team processes to create a winning performance combination.

Team IQ is the ability of a team to perform well by using talent and emotional intelligence.

TEAMS MOVE THROUGH DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT.

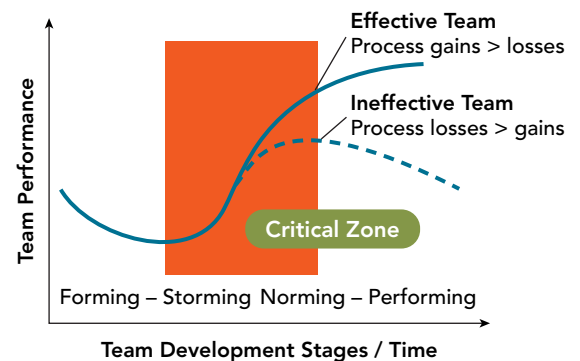
Teams tend to change as they age. Things are often very different for a newly formed team than for one whose members have been together for a long time. It turns out that one of the factors determining the success or failure of a team is how well problems and opportunities are handled over different phases of its life cycle. Scholars like to talk about this issue in terms of the five stages of team development listed here.³⁴

1. *Forming*—a stage of initial orientation and interpersonal testing
2. *Storming*—a stage of conflict over tasks and working as a team
3. *Norming*—a stage of consolidation around task and operating agendas
4. *Performing*—a stage of teamwork and focused task performance
5. *Adjourning*—a stage of task completion and disengagement

Diversity and Team Development

An effective team meets and masters key process challenges as it moves through each of the prior stages, maximizing process gains and minimizing process losses. Try using the nearby figure to understand how membership diversity can challenge team development.

Here’s what we know. Team diversity can expand the talents, ideas, perspectives, and experiences useful in problem solving.³⁵ But, relationships and processes can get more complicated as diversity grows. It’s important to not let process losses overwhelm the opportunity for performance gains. When teams do well at managing diversity, especially through the “critical zone” of storming and norming, the chances for real success are greatly increased.



Team Development Challenges

The *forming stage of team development* is one of initial task orientation and interpersonal testing. New members are likely to ask: What can or does the team offer me? What will they ask me to contribute? Can my efforts serve team needs while also meeting my needs? Members begin to identify with one another and the team itself. They focus on getting acquainted, establishing interpersonal relationships, and discovering what is considered acceptable behavior. Difficulties in the forming stage tend to be greater in more culturally and demographically diverse teams.

The *storming stage of team development* is a period of high emotionality. Tension often emerges between members over tasks and interpersonal concerns. There may be periods of conflict, outright hostility, and even infighting as some individuals try to impose their preferences on others. But this is also the stage where members start to clarify task agendas and understand one another. Attention begins to shift toward mastering obstacles, and members start looking for ways to meet team goals while also satisfying individual needs. The storming stage is part of the critical zone where process failures cause lasting problems but process successes set the foundations for future effectiveness.

Cooperation is an important issue in the *norming stage of team development*. Members begin to better coordinate their efforts and share rules of conduct. The team feels a sense of leadership, with each member starting to play a useful role. Most interpersonal hostilities give way to a balancing of forces as norming builds initial integration. Norming is also part of the critical zone of team development. When it is well managed, team members are likely

to develop initial feelings of closeness and a sense of shared expectations. This helps protect the team from disintegration while members continue their efforts to work well together.

Teams in the *performing stage of team development* are mature, organized, and well functioning. This is a stage of total integration in which team members are able to creatively deal with complex tasks and interpersonal conflicts. The team has a clear and stable structure, members are motivated by team goals, and the process scores high on the criteria of team maturity shown in **Figure 13.3**.³⁶

The *adjourning stage of team development* is the final stage for temporary committees, task forces, and project teams. Here, team members prepare to achieve closure and disband, ideally with a sense that they have accomplished important goals.

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY NORMS.

Have you ever felt pressure from other group members when you do something wrong—come late to a meeting, fail to complete an assigned task, or act out of character? What you are experiencing is related to group **norms**, the behaviors expected of team members.³⁷ A norm is a rule or standard that guides behavior. And when a norm is violated, team members are usually pressured to conform. In the extreme, violating a norm can result in expulsion from the group or social ostracism.

Any number of norms can be operating in a group at any given time. During the forming and storming stages of development, norms often focus on expected attendance and levels of commitment. By the time the team reaches the performing stage, norms have formed around adaptability, change, and desired levels of achievement. And without a doubt, one of the most important norms for any team is the **performance norm**. It defines the level of work effort and performance that team members are expected to contribute.

It shouldn't surprise you that teams with positive performance norms, such as "Reciprocity is important—we all help one another to get things done," are more successful than those with negative ones, such as "Take care of yourself and don't expect someone to help you." But how do you build teams with the right norms? Actually, there are a number of things leaders can do.³⁸

- Act as a positive role model.
- Reinforce the desired behaviors with rewards.

A **norm** is a behavior, rule, or standard expected to be followed by team members.

The **performance norm** defines the effort and performance contributions expected of team members.

	Very poor			Very good	
1. Trust among members	1	2	3	4	5
2. Feedback mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
3. Open communications	1	2	3	4	5
4. Approach to decisions	1	2	3	4	5
5. Leadership sharing	1	2	3	4	5
6. Acceptance of goals	1	2	3	4	5
7. Valuing diversity	1	2	3	4	5
8. Member cohesiveness	1	2	3	4	5
9. Support for each other	1	2	3	4	5
10. Performance norms	1	2	3	4	5

FIGURE 13.3 What Are the Criteria for Assessing the Process Maturity of a Team?

Teams vary greatly in the degree of maturity they achieve and demonstrate in day-to-day behavior. These criteria are helpful for assessing the development and maturity of a team as it moves through various phases—from forming to storming to norming to performing. We would expect that teams would start to show strong positives on these criteria as members gain experience with one another in the norming stage of team development. We would expect teams to have consistently strong positive scores in the performing stage.

- Control results by performance reviews and regular feedback.
- Train and orient new members to adopt desired behaviors.
- Recruit and select new members who exhibit the desired behaviors.
- Hold regular meetings to discuss progress and ways of improving.
- Use team decision-making methods to reach agreement.

One norm of special interest is the extent to which team members display virtuousness and share a commitment to moral behavior. Scholar Kim Cameron, for example, discusses **team virtuousness** in respect to these five norms or standards of moral behavior.³⁹ *Optimism*—Team members are expected to strive for success even when experiencing setbacks. *Forgiveness*—Team members are expected to forgive one another's mistakes and avoid assigning blame. *Trust*—Team members are expected to be courteous with one another and interact in respectful, trusting ways. *Compassion*—Team members are expected to help and support one another, and to show kindness in difficult times. *Integrity*—Team members are expected to be honest in what they do and say while working together.

Team virtuousness indicates the extent to which members adopt norms that encourage shared commitments to moral behavior.

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY COHESIVENESS.

Whether the team members will accept and conform to norms is largely determined by **cohesiveness**, the degree to which members are attracted to and motivated to remain part of a team.⁴⁰ Members of a highly cohesive team value their membership. They try to conform to norms and behave in ways that meet the expectations of other members, and they get satisfaction from doing so. In this way, at least, a highly cohesive team is good for its members. But does the same hold true for team performance?

Figure 13.4 shows that teams perform best when the performance norm is positive and cohesiveness is high. In this best-case scenario, cohesion results in conformity to the positive norm which, in turn, ultimately benefits team performance. When the performance norm is negative in a cohesive team, however, high conformity to the norm creates a worst-case scenario. In this situation, members join together in restricting their efforts and performance contributions.

What are the implications of this relationship between norms and cohesiveness? Basically it boils down to this: Each of us should be aware of what can be done to build both positive norms and high cohesiveness in our teams. In respect to cohesiveness, this means such things as keeping team size as small as possible, working to gain agreements on team goals, increasing interaction among members, rewarding team outcomes rather than individual performance, introducing competition with other teams, and putting together team members who are very similar to one another.

Cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to and motivated to remain part of a team.

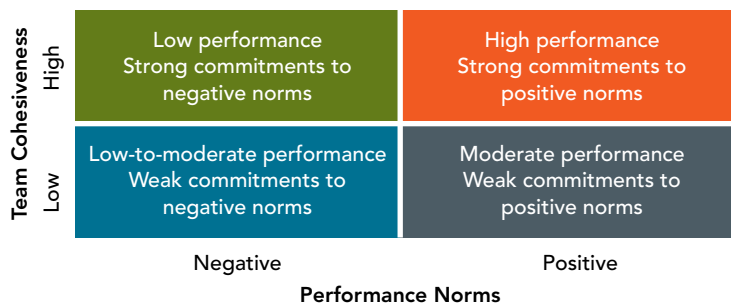


FIGURE 13.4 How Do Norms and Cohesiveness Influence Team Performance?

Group norms are expected behaviors for team members; cohesiveness is the strength of attraction members feel toward the team. When cohesiveness is high, conformity to norms is high. Positive performance norms in a highly cohesive group create a desirable situation, with high-performance outcomes likely. However, negative performance norms in a highly cohesive group can be troublesome; conformity by members to the negative norms creates low-performance outcomes.

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY TASK AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES.

A **task activity** is an action taken by a team member that directly contributes to the group's performance purpose.

A **maintenance activity** is an action taken by a team member that supports the emotional life of the group.

Distributed leadership is when any and all members contribute helpful task and maintenance activities to the team.

Disruptive behaviors are self-serving and cause problems for team effectiveness.

Research on the group process identifies two types of activities that are essential if team members are to work well together over time.⁴¹ **Task activities** contribute directly to the team's performance purpose; **maintenance activities** support the emotional life of the team as an ongoing social system. Although you might expect that these are things that team leaders or managers should be doing, this is only partially correct. In fact, all team members should share the responsibilities for task and maintenance leadership.

The concept of **distributed leadership** in teams makes every member continually responsible for both recognizing when task or maintenance activities are needed and taking actions to provide them. Leading through task activities involves making an effort to define and solve problems and advance work toward performance results. Without task activities, such as initiating agendas and sharing information, teams have difficulty accomplishing their objectives. Leading through maintenance activities, such as encouraging others and reducing tensions, helps strengthen and perpetuate the team as a social system.

Figure 13.5 shows that task and maintenance activities stand in distinct contrast to dysfunctional or **disruptive behaviors**. These include obvious self-serving behaviors that you often see and perhaps even engage in yourself—things such as aggressiveness, excessive joking, and nonparticipation. Think about this the next time one of your groups is drifting toward ineffectiveness. Think also what you and other members can do to correct things by fulfilling distributed leadership responsibilities.

TEAM PERFORMANCE IS INFLUENCED BY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS.

A **decentralized communication network** allows all members to communicate directly with one another.

Teams use the different communication networks shown in **Figure 13.6** as they work and interact together.⁴² In a **decentralized communication network**, all members communicate directly with one another. Sometimes called the *all-channel* or *star* structure, this arrangement works well for tasks that require lots of creativity, information processing, and problem solving. Use of a decentralized communication network creates an *interacting team* in which all members actively work together and share information. Member satisfaction on successful interacting teams is usually high.

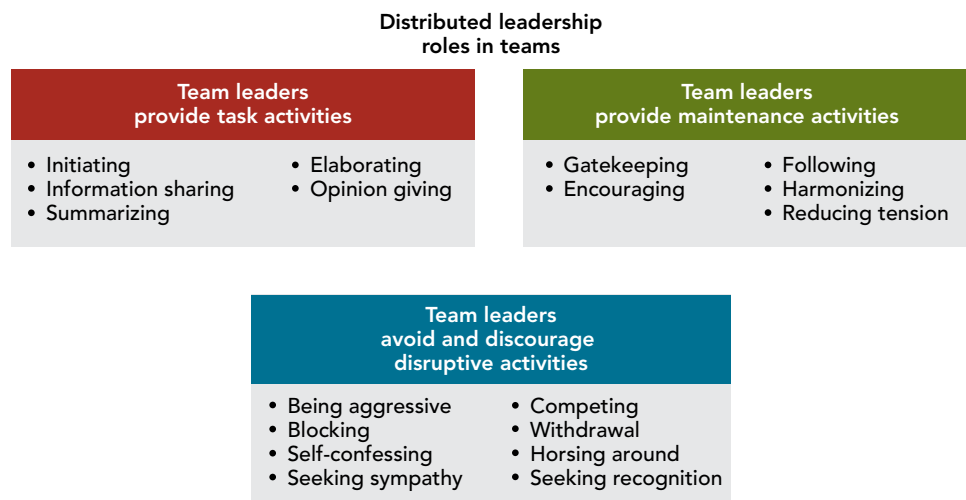


FIGURE 13.5 What are the distributed leadership roles in teams?

Teams function with a combination of task and maintenance activities that both appointed leaders and all members are responsible for providing. Task activities directly move the task forward while maintenance activities support the emotional health and social cohesion of the team as a whole. An additional and important distributed leadership responsibility in teams is the avoidance of personal displays of disruptive behaviors and also the discouragement of disruptive behaviors by others.

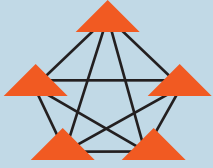
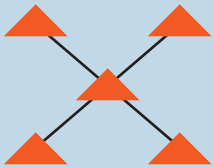
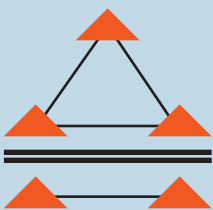
PATTERN	DIAGRAM	CHARACTERISTICS
Decentralized communication network Interacting Team		High interdependency around a common task Best at complex tasks
Centralized communication network Coacting Team		Independent individual efforts on behalf of common task Best at simple tasks
Restricted communication network Counteracting Team		Subgroups in disagreement with one another Slow task accomplishment

FIGURE 13.6 What Communication Networks Are Used in Teams?

Members of teams communicate and interact together in different ways. A decentralized structure is where all members communicate with one another. It works best when tasks are complex and the need for information sharing is high. When tasks are simple and easily broken down into small parts, a centralized structure works well. It coordinates members' communications through one central point. A restricted communication network sometimes forms when subgroups break off to do separate work or due to member alienation. Any lack of communication between the subgroups can create performance problems.

When tasks are more routine and less demanding, team members can often divide up the work and then simply coordinate the final results. This is best done with a **centralized communication network**, sometimes called the *wheel* or *chain* structure. It has a central “hub” through which one member, often the team leader, collects information from and distributes information to all others. This creates a *coacting team* whose members work independently and pass completed tasks to the hub. There, they are put together into a finished product. The hub member often experiences the most satisfaction on successful coacting teams.

When teams break into subgroups, either on purpose or because members are experiencing issue-specific disagreements, this may create a **restricted communication network**. Left unmanaged, this *counteracting team* environment can deteriorate to the point where subgroups fail to adequately communicate with one another and even engage in outwardly antagonistic relations. Although these situations create problems, there are times when counteracting teams might be intentionally set up to encourage conflict, increase creativity, and help double-check the quality of specific decisions or chosen courses of action.

The best teams use all three communication networks—decentralized, centralized, and restricted. But they use them in the right ways and at the right times. When the task is simple and routine, you should organize as a coacting team using a centralized network. When things are getting complicated and unclear, go with an interacting team and the decentralized network. And when there isn't enough critical discussion or you're worried that too much harmony is limiting team creativity, it may be time to form a counteracting team where subgroups in a restricted network engage in a bit of conflict.

In a **centralized communication network**, communication flows only between individual members and a hub or center point.

Subgroups in a **restricted communication network** contest one another's positions and restrict interactions with one another.

STUDYGUIDE

Takeaway 13.2

What Are the Building Blocks of Successful Teamwork?

Terms to Define

Centralized communication network	Disruptive behaviors	Norm	Team diversity
Cohesiveness	Distributed leadership	Performance norm	Team effectiveness equation
Decentralized communication network	Effective team	Restricted communication network	Team IQ
	Heterogeneous teams	Task activity	Team process
	Homogeneous teams		Team virtuousness
	Maintenance activity		

Rapid Review

- An effective team achieves high levels of task performance, member satisfaction, and team viability.
- Important team input factors include the membership characteristics, nature of the task, organizational setting, and group size.
- A team matures through various stages of development, including forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.
- Norms are the standards or rules of conduct that influence the behavior of team members; cohesion is the attractiveness of the team to its members.
- In highly cohesive teams, members tend to conform to norms; the best situation is a team with positive performance norms and high cohesiveness.
- Distributed leadership occurs when team members step in to provide helpful task and maintenance activities and discourage disruptive activities.
- Effective teams make use of alternative communication networks and interaction patterns to best complete tasks.

Questions for Discussion

1. What happens if a team can't get past the storming stage?
2. What can a manager do to build positive performance norms on a work team?
3. Why would a manager ever want to reduce the cohesion of a work group?

Be Sure You Can

- **list** the outputs of an effective team
- **identify** inputs that influence team effectiveness
- **discuss** how diversity influences team effectiveness
- **list** five stages of group development
- **explain** how norms and cohesion influence team performance
- **list** ways to build positive norms and change team cohesiveness
- **illustrate** task, maintenance, and disruptive activities in teams
- **describe** how groups use decentralized and centralized communication networks

Career Situation: What Would You Do?

For quite some time you've been watching the performance of your work team slowly deteriorate. Although everyone seems to like one another, the "numbers" in terms of measured daily accomplishments have now fallen to an unacceptable level. It's time to act. What will you look at to identify likely problem issues? What steps might you take to get this team back on track and improve its overall effectiveness?

Takeaway 13.3

How Can Managers Create and Lead High-Performance Teams?

ANSWERS TO COME

- Team building can improve teamwork and performance.
- Teams benefit when they use the right decision methods.
- Teams suffer when groupthink leads to bad decisions.
- Teams benefit when conflicts are well managed.

THERE'S QUITE A BIT OF AGREEMENT ABOUT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-performance teams.⁴³ They have clear and elevating goals. They are results oriented, and their members are hard working. They have high standards of excellence in a collaborative team culture. They get solid external support and recognition for their accomplishments. And they have strong and principled leaders. It's a great list, isn't it? But how do we get and stay there?

Although we know that high-performance teams generally share the characteristics just noted, not all teams reach this level of excellence. Just as in the world of sports, there are many things that can go wrong and cause problems for teams in the workplace.

TEAM BUILDING CAN IMPROVE TEAMWORK AND PERFORMANCE.

One of the ways to grow capacity for long-term team effectiveness is a practice known as **team building**. This is a set of planned activities used to analyze the functioning of a team and then make changes to improve teamwork and performance.⁴⁴ Most systematic approaches to team building begin with awareness that a problem may exist or may develop within the team. The next step is for team members to work together to gather data and fully understand the problem. Action plans are then made, implemented, and evaluated by team members. As difficulties or new problems are discovered, the team-building process recycles.

There are many methods for gathering data on team functioning, including structured and unstructured interviews, questionnaires, team meetings, and reality experiences. Regardless of the method used, the basic principle of team building remains the same—a careful and collaborative assessment of data on team inputs, processes, and results. It works best when all members participate in data gathering and analysis and then collectively decide on actions to be taken.

Team building can be done with or without the help of outside consultants. It can also be done in the workplace or in off-site locations. It is increasingly popular, for example, to engage in outdoor activities—obstacle courses or special events like geocaching—to create enthusiasm for a team building experience. As one outdoor team-building expert points out, these outdoor team activities “focus on building trust, increasing productivity and emphasizing the importance of being a team player, as well as improving communication and listening skills while learning about group dynamics.”⁴⁵ It's quite a statement, but the power of team building cannot be denied.

TEAMS BENEFIT WHEN THEY USE THE RIGHT DECISION METHODS.

The best teams don't limit themselves to just one **decision-making** method. Edgar Schein, a respected scholar and consultant, describes six ways teams make decisions.⁴⁶ He and other scholars note that teams ideally choose and use methods that best fit the problems at hand.⁴⁷ But mistakes are often made.

In *decision by lack of response*, one idea after another is suggested without any discussion taking place. When the team finally accepts an idea, all alternatives have been bypassed and

Team building involves gathering and analyzing data, and making changes to improve teamwork and performance.

Decision making is the process of making choices among alternative courses of action.

IF SUPERSTARS BRING A BIT OF CONFLICT TO THE SITUATION, THE RESULT MAY WELL BE ADDED CREATIVITY AND A PERFORMANCE BOOST

HOT TOPIC

Can Disharmony Build a Better Team?



Jonathan Daniel/Allsport/Getty Images

"There is no 'I' in team!" they say. But basketball superstar Michael Jordan once said: "There is an 'I' in win." What's his point? Jordan is suggesting that someone as expert as him at a task shouldn't always be subordinated to the team. Rather, it's the team's job to support his talents so that they shine to their brightest.

Sports metaphors abound in the workplace. We talk about "heavy hitters" and ask teammates to "step up to the plate." But, the real world of teamwork is dominated by the quest for

cooperation, perhaps at the cost of needed friction. And that, according to Cambridge scholar Mark de Rond, is a potential

performance problem. "When teams work well," du Rond says, "it is because, not in spite, of individual differences."

Those in favor of du Rond's views are likely to argue that even if superstars bring a bit of conflict to the situation, the result may well be added creativity and a performance boost. Instead of trying to make everyone happy, perhaps it's time for managers and team leaders to accept that disharmony can be functional. A bit of team tension may be a price worth paying for high performance. Those worried about du Rond's views might say there's a fine line between a superstar's real performance contribution and collateral damage or negative impact caused by personality and temperament clashes. And, that line is a hard one to spot and to manage.

HOW ABOUT IT?

Given what we know about teams and your personal experiences with them, should we be finding ways to accommodate the superstar on a team . . . or avoid them?

discarded by simple lack of response rather than by critical evaluation. In *decision by authority rule*, the leader, manager, committee head, or some other authority figure makes a decision for the team. Although this is time-efficient, the quality of the decision depends on whether the authority figure has the necessary information. Its implementation depends on how well other team members accept the top-down approach. In *decision by minority rule*, two or three people dominate by "railroading" the team into a decision. How often have you heard: "Does anyone object? Okay, let's go ahead with it."

Keys to Successful Consensus Decisions

- Don't argue blindly; consider others' reactions to your points.
- Don't change your mind just to reach quick agreement.
- Avoid conflict reduction by voting, coin tossing, bargaining.
- Keep everyone involved in the decision process.
- Allow disagreements to surface so that things can be deliberated.
- Don't focus on winning versus losing; seek acceptable alternatives.
- Discuss assumptions, listen carefully, and encourage inputs by all.

Consensus is reached when all parties believe they have had their say and been listened to, and they agree to support the group's final decision.

One of the most common ways teams make decisions, especially when early signs of disagreement arise, is *decision by majority rule*. Although consistent with democratic methods, it is often used without awareness of potential downsides. When votes are taken, some people will be "winners" and others will be "losers." In all likelihood, you've been on the losing side at times. How did it feel? If you're like me, it may have made you feel left out, unenthusiastic about supporting the majority decision, and even hoping for a future chance to win.

Teams are often encouraged to try for *decision by consensus*. This is where full discussion leads to most members favoring one alternative, with the other members agreeing to support it. Even those opposed to the decision know that the

others listened to their concerns. Consensus doesn't require unanimity, but it does require that team members be able to argue, debate, and engage in reasonable conflict, while still listening to and getting along with one another.⁴⁸

A *decision by unanimity* means all team members agree on the course of action to take. This is the ideal state of affairs, but it is also very difficult to reach. One of the reasons that teams sometimes turn to authority decisions, majority voting, or even minority decisions is the difficulty of managing team processes to achieve consensus or unanimity.

TEAMS SUFFER WHEN GROUPTHINK LEADS TO BAD DECISIONS.

How often have you held back from stating your views in a meeting, agreed to someone else's position when it really seemed wrong, or gone along with a boss's suggestions even though you disagreed?⁴⁹ If and when you do these things, you are likely trapped by **groupthink**, the tendency for members of highly cohesive groups to lose their critical evaluative capabilities.⁵⁰ It occurs when teams strive so hard to reach agreement and avoid disagreement that they end up making bad decisions.⁵¹

Psychologist Irving Janis says that teams suffering groupthink often fit the description shown in **Table 13.1**.⁵² They engage in things like rationalizing disconfirming data, stereotyping competitors as weak, and assuming the team is too good for criticism. They do this because members are trying to hold the group together and maintain harmony at all costs. They avoid doing anything that might detract from feelings of goodwill, such as expressing disagreement or pointing out that the team is moving too fast and needs to deliberate more. Each of these tendencies raises the risk of making bad decisions.

When you are leading or are part of team heading toward groupthink, don't assume there's no way out. Janis notes, for example, that leaders can absent themselves from meetings and allow group members to discuss and debate without them. With the leader absent, members may talk more openly and engage in more frank discussions.

Janis has other advice on how to get a team that is moving toward groupthink back on track.⁵³ You can assign one member to act as a critical evaluator or "devil's advocate" during each meeting. Subgroups can be assigned to work on issues and then share their findings with the team as a whole. Outsiders can be brought in to observe and participate in team meetings and offer their thoughts on both team processes and tentative decisions. And, the team can hold a "second chance" meeting after an initial decision is made to review, change, and even cancel it. Actions like these encourage helpful conflict and reduce pressures toward premature agreement. With good leadership, there's no reason to let groupthink take a team down the wrong pathway.

TEAMS BENEFIT WHEN CONFLICTS ARE WELL MANAGED.

The ability to deal with conflicts in interpersonal relationships and on a team is critical. When constructive, conflict adds to creativity and reduces tendencies toward groupthink. But when destructive, it breaks down team processes and hurts performance.

At its core, **conflict** involves disagreements among people. And in our experiences, it appears in two quite different forms.⁵⁴ **Substantive conflict** involves disagreements

Groupthink is a tendency for highly cohesive teams to lose their evaluative capabilities.

Conflict is a disagreement over issues of substance or clashing emotions.

Substantive conflict involves disagreements over things like goals, tasks, and resources.

TABLE 13.1 Symptoms of Groupthink

Illusions of invulnerability—Members assume that the team is too good for criticism or is beyond attack.

Rationalizing unpleasant and disconfirming data—Members refuse to accept contradictory data or to thoroughly consider alternatives.

Belief in inherent group morality—Members act as though the group is inherently right and above reproach.

Stereotyping competitors as weak, evil, and stupid—Members refuse to look realistically at other groups.

Applying direct pressure to deviants to conform to group wishes—Members refuse to tolerate anyone who suggests the team may be wrong.

Self-censorship by members—Members refuse to communicate personal concerns to the whole team.

Illusions of unanimity—Members accept consensus prematurely, without testing its completeness.

Mind guarding—Members protect the team from hearing disturbing ideas or outside viewpoints.

Emotional conflict results from feelings of anger and distrust, as well as personality clashes.

Avoidance pretends that a conflict doesn't really exist.

Accommodation, or smoothing, plays down differences and highlights similarities.

Competition, or authoritative command, uses force and domination to win a conflict.

Compromise occurs when each party gives up something of value to the other.

Collaboration, or problem solving, works through differences so everyone wins.

Conflict resolution is the removal of substantive or emotional causes of a conflict.

over such things as goals and tasks, the allocation of resources, the distribution of rewards, policies and procedures, and job assignments. **Emotional conflict** results from feelings of anger, distrust, dislike, fear, and resentment as well as relationship problems. You know this form of conflict as a clash of personalities or emotions—when you don't want to agree with another person just because you don't like them or are angry about something they have done.

With all this potential for conflict in and around teams, how do you and others deal with it? Most people respond to conflict through different combinations of cooperative and assertive behaviors.⁵⁵ **Figure 13.7** shows how they display five conflict management styles—avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration.⁵⁶

In **avoidance**, everyone withdraws and pretends that conflict doesn't really exist, hoping that it will simply go away. In **accommodation**, peaceful coexistence is the goal. Differences are played down and areas of agreement are highlighted. Both avoidance and accommodation are forms of *lose-lose conflict*. No one achieves what they want and the underlying conflict remains unresolved, often to recur in the future.

In **competition**, one party wins through superior skill or outright domination. It occurs as authoritative command by team leaders and as railroading or minority domination by team members. In **compromise**, trade-offs are made, with each party giving up and gaining something of value. Both competition and compromise are forms of *win-lose conflict*. Each party strives to gain at the other's expense. But whenever one party loses something, seeds for future conflict remain in place.

In **collaboration** both parties try to address the problem and resolve their differences. As you would expect, it is often time-consuming and stressful. But it's also the most effective style in terms of real conflict resolution. Collaboration turns a difficult situation into a *win-win conflict* that creates positive conditions for future teamwork.

From experience, you should recognize that this approach depends on the willingness of everyone to dig in, confront the issues, and openly and honestly discuss them.

It's important to point out that each of the five conflict management styles can be useful.⁵⁷ Most of us probably use each style at least some of the time. But the question is, are we using them at the right times?

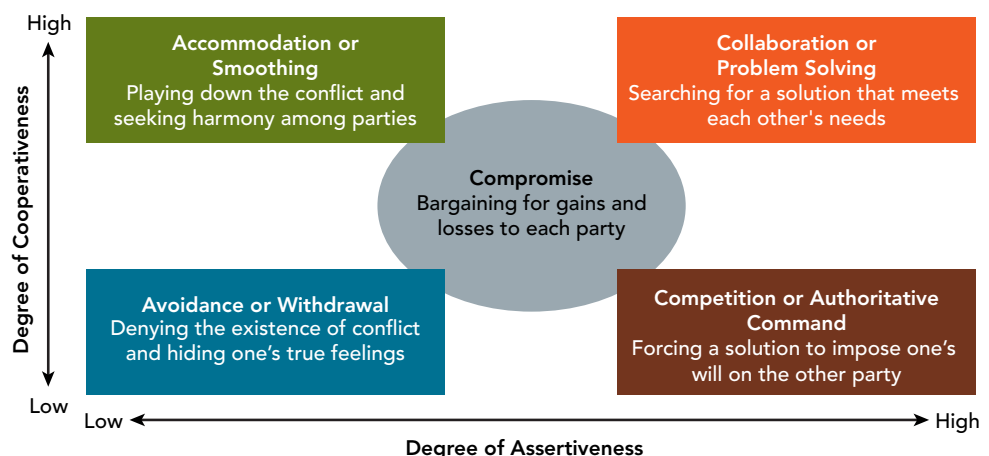
Some suggestions for making good choices about when to use various conflict management strategies are shown in the box. It's worth remembering that unresolved or suppressed conflicts often sow the seeds for future conflicts. Only true **conflict resolution**, characteristic of the collaborative style, eliminates the underlying causes of a conflict in ways that are constructive for future relationships and teamwork.

When to Use Alternative Conflict Management Strategies

- *Collaboration or problem solving*—use for true conflict resolution when time and cost permit.
- *Avoidance or withdrawal*—use when more important issues are pressing or when "cooling off" time is needed.
- *Competition or authoritative command*—use for quick decisions or when unpopular actions must be taken.
- *Accommodation or smoothing*—use when issues are more important to others or to build "credits" for future use.
- *Compromise*—use to temporarily settle complex issues or gain quick solutions when time is limited.

FIGURE 13.7
What Are the Five Common Styles of Conflict Management?

A combination of cooperative and aggressive behaviors results in five conflict management styles. Competition occurs when aggression dominates and accommodation occurs when cooperation dominates. Avoidance occurs with both low aggression and cooperation and compromise occurs with moderate amounts of both. True collaboration or problem solving is more likely when both cooperation and aggression are high.



STUDYGUIDE

Takeaway 13.3

How Can Managers Create and Lead High-Performance Teams?

Terms to Define

Accommodation	Compromise	Decision making	Substantive conflict
Avoidance	Conflict	Emotional conflict	Team building
Collaboration	Conflict resolution	Groupthink	
Competition	Consensus		

Rapid Review

- Team building is a collaborative approach to improving group process and performance.
- Teams can make decisions by lack of response, authority rule, minority rule, majority rule, consensus, and unanimity.
- Groupthink is the tendency of members of highly cohesive teams to lose their critical evaluative capabilities and make poor decisions.
- Conflict occurs as disagreements between people over substantive or emotional issues.
- Tendencies toward cooperativeness and assertiveness create the interpersonal conflict management styles of avoidance, accommodation, compromise, competition, and collaboration.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does consensus differ from unanimity in group decision making?
2. Is groupthink found only in highly cohesive teams, or could it exist in precohesive ones?
3. When is it better to avoid conflict rather than directly engage in it?

Be Sure You Can

- **describe** how team building might help one of your groups
- **list** and discuss the different ways groups make decisions
- **define** the term “groupthink” and identify its symptoms
- **list** at least four ways teams can avoid groupthink
- **differentiate** substantive and emotional conflict
- **explain** the conflict management styles of avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration

Career Situation: What Would You Do?

The members of the executive compensation committee that you are chairing show a high level of cohesiveness. It's obvious that they enjoy being part of the committee and are proud to be on the organization's board of directors. But the committee is about to approve extraordinarily high pay bonuses for the CEO and five other senior executives. This is occurring at a time when executive pay is getting lots of criticism from the press, unions, and the public at large. What can you do to make sure groupthink doesn't cause this committee to make a bad decision?