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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 11.1** In which types of teams have you worked? Were these teams consistent with the taxonomy of team types discussed in this chapter, or were they a combination of types?
- 11.2** Think about your student teams. Which aspects of both models of team development apply the most and least to teams in this context? Do you think these teams function best in an additive, disjunctive, or conjunctive manner? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each structure?
- 11.3** Think about a highly successful team with which you are familiar. What types of task, goal, and outcome interdependence does this team have? Describe how changes in task, goal, and outcome interdependence might have a negative impact on this team.
- 11.4** What type of roles do you normally take on in a team setting? Are there task or social roles that you simply don't perform well? If so, why do you think this is?
- 11.5** How would you describe your student team in terms of its diversity? In what ways would there be advantages and disadvantages to increasing its diversity? How might you be able to manage some of the disadvantages so that your team is able to capitalize on the potential advantages?

CASE: WHOLE FOODS

Teams are taken very seriously at Whole Foods. Not only are company employees referred to as “team members,” but teams are given a great deal of freedom to make important decisions. For example, teams help decide what items to order and sell, and how to price and promote them. Although it might not seem all that unusual for a company to give teams the liberty to make decisions so they can carry out their core functional responsibilities, Whole Foods goes much further in providing autonomy to their teams. Perhaps there is no better example of this than how new team members are hired at the company.

In most organizations, individuals seeking employment fill out an application form or submit a résumé. Those with qualifications that are judged to match a job description are interviewed by human resource personnel or a manager to make sure the applicant fits with the job and organization. At Whole Foods, the process is quite different and much more involved. Applicants not only fill out an application and have one-on-one interviews with managers, but they also have interviews with panels composed of recruiters, managers, and select team members. But that's not all. An applicant who makes it through this process is placed on a team for a 30-day trial period, after which the team votes for whether or not to accept the applicant on their team. Applicants who don't get a two-thirds vote are out of that team. They may be placed on a new team, where the trial process begins anew, or they leave the company.

This hiring process typically takes about 60 days and is applied at all levels of the organization, “from cashiers on checkout teams to financial analysts in the home office.” Whole Foods believes

that hiring decisions should be made by the team members, in part, because they're the ones who are most directly affected by the choices that are made. A new hire who ends up hurting a team's performance will reduce bonuses paid to team members, whereas the opposite would be true of a hire that ends up promoting a team's performance. Whole Foods also believes that the team members themselves are the best judges of who might fit within their team. Finally, involving team members in the hiring process promotes a sense of ownership for the decision, and following from this, team members may be more inclined to help a new hire who is struggling to catch on.

- 11.1** What label would best describe the type of team that Whole Foods uses in its stores? Explain.
- 11.2** Describe the advantages and disadvantages of Whole Foods' hiring process with respect to managing team composition.
- 11.3** What steps could Whole Foods take to mitigate potential disadvantages of their hiring process?

Sources: D. Burkus, "Why Whole Foods Builds Its Entire Business on Teams," *Forbes*, June 8, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidburkus/2016/06/08/why-whole-foods-build-their-entire-business-on-teams/#1553674b3fa1>; C. Fishman, "Whole Foods Is All Teams," *Fastcompany*, April 30, 1996, <https://www.fastcompany.com/26671/whole-foods-all-teams>; Whole Foods, "Whole Foods Market History," <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/company-info/whole-foods-market-history> (accessed 3, 31, 2017).

EXERCISE: PAPER PLANE CORPORATION

The purpose of this exercise is to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of sequential versus pooled interdependence on a team production project. This exercise uses groups, so your instructor will either assign you to a group or ask you to create your own group. The exercise has the following steps.

- 11.1** Your professor will supply you with the materials you need to create your final product (as many paper airplanes as you can fold to quality standards in three 5-minute rounds). Instructions for folding the paper airplanes and judging their quality are provided below. Before you start work on your airplanes, do the following:
 - a. As a group, select a team manager (who will supervise operations and get additional resources as needed) and a team inspector (who will judge the quality of the work on airplanes).
 - b. Familiarize yourself with how to make a paper airplane by folding one according to the instructions.
 - c. Be sure you are in a space where all of the team members can work comfortably.
 - d. To the extent possible, move away from other groups.
 - e. Familiarize yourself with the information about the Paper Plane Corporation.
- 11.2** Your group is the complete workforce for the Paper Plane Corporation. Established in 1943, Paper Plane has led the market in paper plane production. Presently under new management, the company is contracting to make aircraft for the U.S. Air Force. You must determine the most efficient method for producing these aircraft. You must make your contract with the Air Force under the following conditions:
 - a. The Air Force will pay \$200,000 per airplane.
 - b. The aircraft must pass a strict inspection by a quality control manager.
 - c. A penalty of \$250,000 per airplane will be subtracted for each failure to meet the production requirements.
 - d. Labor and other overhead will be computed at \$3,000,000.
 - e. Cost of materials will be \$30,000 per bid plane. If you bid for 10 but make only 8, you must pay the cost of materials for those you failed to make or those that did not pass inspection.