

Instructor's Manual to Accompany **Organizational Behavior 7/e** by Steven L. McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow



Chapter 8: Team Dynamics

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Team Dynamics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the benefits and limitations of teams, and explain why employees join informal groups.
2. Outline the team effectiveness model and discuss how task characteristics, team size, and team composition influence team effectiveness.
3. Discuss how the four team processes – team development, norms, cohesion, and trust – influence team effectiveness.
4. Discuss the characteristics and factors required for the success of self-directed teams and virtual teams.
5. Identify four constraints on team decision making and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of four structures aimed at improving team decision making.



CHAPTER GLOSSARY

brainstorming -- A freewheeling, face-to-face meeting where team members aren't allowed to criticize but are encouraged to speak freely, generate as many ideas as possible, and build on the ideas of others.

brainwriting -- A variation of brainstorming whereby participants write (rather than speak about) and share their ideas.

Brooks's law -- The principle that adding more people to a late software project only makes it later.

electronic brainstorming -- A form of brainwriting that relies on networked computers for submitting and sharing creative ideas.

evaluation apprehension -- A decision-making problem that occurs when individuals are reluctant to mention ideas that seem silly because they believe (often correctly) that other team members are silently evaluating them

nominal group technique -- A variation of brainwriting consisting of three stages: Participants (1) silently and independently document their ideas, (2) collectively describe these ideas to the other team members without critique, and then (3) silently and independently evaluate the ideas presented.

norms -- The informal rules and shared expectations that groups establish to regulate the behavior of their members.

process losses -- Resources (including time and energy) expended toward team development and maintenance rather than the task.

production blocking -- A time constraint in team decision making due to the procedural requirement that only one person may speak at a time.

role -- A set of behaviors that people are expected to perform because they hold certain positions in a team and organization.

self-directed teams (SDTs) -- Cross-functional work groups that are organized around work processes, complete an entire piece of work requiring several interdependent tasks, and have substantial autonomy over the execution of those tasks.

social loafing -- The problem that occurs when people exert less effort (and usually perform at a lower level) when working in teams than when working alone.

task interdependence -- The extent to which team members must share materials, information, or expertise to perform their jobs.

team building -- A process that consists of formal activities intended to improve the development and functioning of a work team.

team cohesion -- The degree of attraction people feel toward the team and their motivation to remain members.

team efficacy -- The collective belief among team members of the team's capability to successfully complete a task.

teams -- Groups of two or more people who interact and influence one another, are mutually accountable for achieving common goals associated with organizational objectives, and perceive themselves as a social entity within an organization.

virtual teams -- Teams whose members operate across space, time, and organizational boundaries and are linked through information technologies to achieve organizational tasks.

CHAPTER SUMMARY BY LEARNING OBJECTIVE

8-1 Discuss the benefits and limitations of teams, and explain why employees join informal groups.

Teams are groups of two or more people who interact and influence one another, are mutually accountable for achieving common goals associated with organizational objectives, and perceive themselves as a social entity within an organization. All teams are groups, because they consist of people with a unifying relationship; not all groups are teams, because some groups do not exist to serve organizational objectives.

People join informal groups (and are motivated to be on formal teams) for four reasons: (1) They have an innate drive to bond, (2) group membership is an inherent ingredient in a person's self-concept, (3) some personal goals are accomplished better in groups, and (4) individuals are comforted in stressful situations by the mere presence of other people. Teams have become popular because they tend to make better decisions, support the knowledge management process, and provide superior customer service. Teams are not always as effective as individuals working alone. Process losses and social loafing drag down team performance.

8-2 Outline the team effectiveness model and discuss how task characteristics, team size, and team composition influence team effectiveness.

Team effectiveness includes the team's ability to achieve its objectives, fulfill the needs of its members, and maintain its survival. The model of team effectiveness considers the team and organizational environment, team design, and team processes. Three team design elements are task characteristics, team size, and team composition. Teams tend to be better suited for situations in which the work is complex yet tasks are well-structured and have high task interdependence. Teams should be large enough to perform the work yet small enough for efficient coordination and meaningful involvement. Effective teams are composed of people with the competencies and motivation to perform tasks in a team environment. Team member diversity has advantages and disadvantages for team performance.

8-3 Discuss how the four team processes—team development, norms, cohesion, and trust—influence team effectiveness.

Teams develop through the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and eventually adjourning. Within these stages are two distinct team development processes: developing team identity and developing team mental models and coordinating routines. Team development can be accelerated through team building—any formal activity intended to improve the development and functioning of a work team. Teams develop norms to regulate and guide member behavior. These norms may be influenced by initial experiences, critical events, and the values and experiences that team members bring to the group.

Team cohesion—the degree of attraction people feel toward the team and their motivation to remain members—increases with member similarity, smaller team size, higher degree of interaction, somewhat difficult entry, team success, and external challenges. Cohesion increases team performance when the team has high interdependence and its norms are congruent with organizational goals. Trust refers to positive expectations one person has toward another person in situations involving risk. People trust others on the basis of three foundations: calculus, knowledge, and identification.

8-4 Discuss the characteristics and factors required for the success of self-directed teams and virtual teams.

Self-directed teams (SDTs) complete an entire piece of work requiring several interdependent tasks, and they have substantial autonomy over the execution of their tasks. Members of virtual teams operate across space, time, and organizational boundaries and are linked through information technologies to achieve organizational tasks. Virtual teams are more effective when the team members have certain competencies, the team has the freedom to choose the preferred communication channels, and the members meet face-to-face fairly early in the team development process.

8-5 Identify four constraints on team decision making and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of four structures aimed at improving team decision making.

Team decisions are impeded by time constraints, evaluation apprehension, conformity to peer pressure, and overconfidence. Four structures potentially improve decision making in team settings: brainstorming, brainwriting, electronic brainstorming, and nominal group technique.

LECTURE OUTLINE (WITH POWERPOINT® SLIDES)



Team Dynamics

Team Dynamics

Slide 1



Teamwork at HFT Investment Management Co

HFT Investment Management Co. Ltd. believes in the “value derived from teamwork.” The Shanghai-based investment fund company makes all investment decisions in teams.

Teamwork at HFT Investment Management Co.

Slide 2



What are Teams?

Groups of two or more people who interact and influence each other, are mutually accountable for achieving common goals associated with organizational objectives, and perceive themselves as a social entity within an organization

What are Teams?

Slide 3

1. Groups of two or more people
2. Exist to fulfill a purpose
3. Interdependent – interact and collaborate
4. Mutually accountable for achieving common goals – influence each other
5. Perceive themselves to be a team

Many Types of Teams



- Permanence
 - How long that type of team usually exists.
- Skill differentiation
 - Degree of skill/knowledge diversity in the team
- Authority differentiation
 - Degree that decision-making responsibility is distributed throughout the team or centralized

Many Types of Teams
Slide 4

Many Types of Teams

1. Permanence

- How long that type of team usually exists
- e.g. departmental teams have high permanence, task forces usually have low permanence

2. Skill differentiation

- Degree to which individuals bring diverse skills and knowledge to the team
- e.g. fairly low differentiation in communities of practice (common interests and backgrounds), whereas self-directed teams tend to have fairly high skill differentiation

3. Authority differentiation

- Degree that decision-making responsibility is distributed throughout the team (low differentiation) or is vested in one/few team members
- Low differentiation in self-directed teams, whereas usually fairly high in departmental teams (dept manager)

Informal Groups

- Groups that exist primarily for the benefit of their members
- Reasons why informal groups exist:
 - Innate drive to bond
 - Social identity – we define ourselves by group memberships
 - Goal accomplishment
 - Emotional support

Informal Groups
Slide 5

Informal Groups

- All teams are groups
- Groups include people assembled together, whether or not they have any interdependence or organizationally-focused objective
- Exist primarily for the benefit of their members

Reasons why informal groups exist:

- Innate drive to bond
- Social identity – we define ourselves by our group affiliations
- Goal accomplishment – achieve things individuals working alone could not accomplish
- Emotional support – comforted by presence of others

Team Advantages/Challenges

- Advantages
 1. Make better decisions, products/services
 2. Better information sharing
 3. Increase employee motivation/engagement
- Challenges
 1. Process losses – resources needed for team maintenance
 2. Social loafing – members potentially exert less effort in teams than alone

Team Advantages/ Challenges

Slide 6

Team Advantages/Challenges

Advantages

1. Make better decisions and develop better products/services
2. Can quickly share information and coordinate tasks
3. Increase employee motivation/engagement – fulfills drive to bond; accountable to team members who monitor performance; performance improves when co-workers become benchmarks of performance comparison

Challenges

1. Process losses
 - resources expended toward team development and maintenance rather than the task
 - Disagreements, misunderstandings, divergent viewpoints, or coordination problems
 - Brooks' Law – adding people to a late software project makes it later
2. Social loafing
 - problem that occurs when people exert less effort when working in groups than when working alone
 - higher when individual performance is hidden or difficult to distinguish from others
 - less prevalent when the task is interesting
 - less prevalent when members value team membership

Team Effectiveness Model



Team Effectiveness Model

Slide 7

Team Effectiveness Model

Team effectiveness defined -- extent that the group:

- Fulfills organizational (or other system) purpose
- Fulfills needs of individual members
- Is able to survive (i.e. maintain member commitment)

Elements of team effectiveness model

- Organizational and Team Environment
- Team design
- Team processes
- Team outcomes (effectiveness)

PSA Peugeot Citroën's
Team Space

PSA Peugeot Citroën set up an "obeya room" (shown here) to speed up team decision making. Plastered with charts and notes on key issues, the space encourages face-to-face interaction to quickly resolve issues.



PSA Peugeot Citroën's
Team Space

Slide 8

PSA Peugeot Citroën's Team Space

PSA Peugeot Citroën, Europe's second largest automaker, set up an "obeya room" (shown here) to speed up team decision making. The room, which is plastered with charts and notes on key issues, creates a unique team environment that encourages face-to-face interaction to quickly resolve those issues.

Organization/Team Environment

- Reward systems
- Communication systems
- Organizational structure
- Organizational leadership
- Physical space



Organization/Team
Environment

Slide 9

Organizational and Team Environment

- Reward systems – at least partly rewarded for team performance
- Communication systems – need right amount of information and feedback
- Organizational structure – teams flourish when organized around work processes because this increases interaction and interdependence
- Organizational leadership – provide support and strategic direction
- Physical space – physical layout makes a difference

Environment also generates drivers for change within teams -- e.g., external competition

Best Tasks for Teams

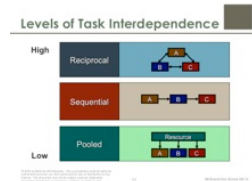
1. Complex tasks divisible into specialized roles
2. Well-structured tasks – easier to coordinate
3. Higher task interdependence
 - Team members must share materials, information, or expertise to perform their jobs
 - Teams usually better for high interdependence because (a) requires better communication/coordination and (b) motivates team membership.
 - But teams less effective if task goals differ (e.g. serving different clients) – use other coordinating mechanisms

Best Tasks for Teams

Slide 10

Best Task Characteristics for Teams

1. Complex tasks divisible into specialized roles
 - ➔ requires skills/knowledge beyond one person, and possible to allocate parts of work to people with those different skill sets
2. Well-structured tasks -- easier to coordinate work among people
3. Higher task interdependence
 - Extent to which team members must share materials, information, or expertise to perform their jobs
 - Three levels -- pooled, sequential, reciprocal (see next slide)
 - Teams usually better for high interdependence because (a) provides better communication/coordination and (b) stronger motivation for team membership
 - But if task goals differ (e.g. serving different clients), a team structure may create more conflict than other coordinating mechanisms among people with high task interdependence



Levels of Task Interdependence
Slide 11

Levels of Task Interdependence

Pooled interdependence (lowest level)

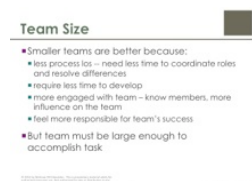
- Sharing a common resource (equipment, budget, etc)

Sequential interdependence

- Output of one person becomes the direct input for another person
e.g. assembly line

Reciprocal interdependence (highest level)

- Work output is exchanged back and forth among individuals –
interwoven relationship (e.g. medical team)



Team Size
Slide 12

Team Size

Smaller teams are better because:

- Less process loss (better coordination and resolving conflicts)
- More engaged in the team -- more influence, feel more responsible
- Faster team development -- know each other faster/better, more trust

But...team must be large enough to accomplish task



Team Player Selection at Menlo Innovations
Slide 13

Team Player Selection at Menlo Innovations

Ann Arbor, Michigan software company Menlo Innovations identifies job applicants with the best team skills through a group selection process in which applicants are paired with each other to complete software tasks.

Team Composition

- Effective team members must be willing and able to work on the team
- Effective team members possess specific competencies (5 C's in diagram)



Team Composition
Slide 14

Team Composition

Effective team members must be willing and able to perform their work in a team environment

Competencies of effective team members (5 Cs):

- Cooperating – willing and able to work together i.e. sharing resources and being flexible to accommodate others
- Coordinating – actively manage the team's work i.e. keep the team on track and align work with others
- Communicating – transmit information freely (vs. hoarding), efficiently, and respectfully; listen actively to co-workers
- Comforting – help co-workers maintain a positive and healthy psychological state i.e. show empathy, provide psychological comfort, and build co-worker feelings of confidence and self-worth
- Conflict resolving – have skills and motivation to resolve dysfunctional disagreements i.e. effective diagnostic skills and use various conflict-handling skills effectively

Team Composition: Diversity

- Team members have diverse knowledge, skills, perspectives, values, etc.
- Advantages**
 - view problems/alternatives from different perspectives
 - broader knowledge base
 - better representation of team's constituents
- Disadvantages**
 - take longer to become a high-performing team
 - susceptible to "faultlines" – less motivation to coordinate

Team Composition:
Diversity
Slide 15

Team Composition: Team Diversity

Extent to which team composition includes people with diverse knowledge, skills, values, mental models, perspectives

Advantages of team diversity

- View problems/alternatives from different perspectives
- Broader pool of technical competencies
- Provide a better representation of constituents e.g. other departments

Disadvantages of team diversity

- Take longer to develop
- Susceptible to "fault lines"
 - ➔ split team into subgroups by surface or deep level features
 - ➔ reduces motivation to communicate and coordinate across faultlines

Stages of Team Development

- Forming
 - team about each other; evaluate membership
- Storming
 - conflict; members proactive, compete for roles
- Norming
 - consensus established; consensus around team objectives and team mental model
- Performing
 - efficient coordination; highly cooperative; high trust; commitment to team objectives; identify with the team
- Adjourning
 - disbanding; shift from task to relationship focus

Stages of Team
Development
Slide 16

Stages of Team Development

1. Forming

- Period of testing and orientation
- Members defer to the existing authority
- Expectations learned, and how members fit into the team

2. Storming

- More conflict as members compete for roles
- Members try to establish norms

3. Norming

- Cohesion develops
- Roles established, consensus forms around group objectives
- Similar mental models/expectations about how to accomplish goals

4. Performing

- Team becomes more task-oriented
- Efficient work coordination, conflict resolution
- Highly cooperative, high trust, committed to goals, identify with the team

5. Adjourning

- Team is about to disband
- Members shift from task to relationship focus

Team Development: Forming Identities and Mental Models

1. Developing team identity
 - Viewing team as "us" rather than "them"
 - Team becomes part of the person's social identity
2. Developing team mental models and coordinating routines
 - Forming habitual routines with team members
 - Forming shared/complementary mental models

Team Development:
forming Identities and
Mental Models

Slide 17

Team Development: Forming Identities and Mental Models

Two central processes in team development:

1. Developing team identity

- Transition where members view team as "us" rather than "them"
- Team becomes part of the person's social identity

2. Developing team mental models and coordinating routines

- Forming habitual routines with team members
- Forming shared/complementary mental models -- shared images of team goals and processes

Team Roles

Team development includes forming, assigning, reinforcing roles

A role is a set of behaviors people are expected to perform because of the positions they hold in a team and organization

- Some roles are formally assigned e.g. team leaders are usually expected to initiate discussion
- Informal roles which are negotiated through the team development process and are related to personal characteristics e.g. supporting others; initiating new ideas

Team Building

Formal activities intended to improve the team's development and functioning

- Types of team building
 1. Clarify team's performance goals
 2. Improve team's problem-solving skills
 3. Improve role definitions
 4. Improve relations



Team Building

Slide 18

Team Building

Formal activities intended to improve the development and functioning of a work team

- More common for existing teams that have regressed to earlier stages of team development due to turnover or loss of focus

Types of Team Building:

- Clarifying team's goals and build motivation to achieve goals
- Improve the team's problem-solving skills
- Improve role definitions – helps team develop shared mental models
- Improve relationships – team members learn more about each other, build trust, and manage conflict within the team

Team building activities can be effective, but they:

- need to target specific team problems
 - need to be a continuous process, not a one-shot inoculation
 - need to occur on-the-job, not just away from the workplace
-

Team Norms

- Informal rules and shared expectations team establishes to regulate member behaviors
- Norms develop through:
 - Initial team experience
 - Critical events in team's history
 - Experience/values members bring to the team
- Preventing/Changing Dysfunctional Team Norms
 - State desired norms when forming teams
 - Select members with preferred values
 - Discuss counter-productive norms
 - Introduce team-based rewards that counter dysfunctional norms
 - Disband teams with dysfunctional norms

Team Norms

Slide 19

Team Norms

Informal rules and shared expectations to regulate member behaviors

- Apply only to behavior, not private thoughts or feelings

Norms develop through:

1. Initial team experiences
2. Critical events in team's history
3. Experiences/values members bring to the team

Preventing/Changing Dysfunctional Team Norms

- State/establish desired norms when forming teams
- Select members with preferred values
- Discuss/coach counter-productive norms, develop productive norms
- Introduce team-based rewards that counter dysfunctional norms
- Disband teams with dysfunctional norms

Team Cohesion

- Team cohesion
- The degree of attraction people feel toward the team and their motivation to remain members
- Team cohesion is stronger/occurs faster with:
 - Higher member similarity
 - Smaller team size
 - Regular/frequent member interaction
 - Somewhat difficult team entry (membership)
 - Higher team success
 - More external competition/challenges

Team Cohesion

Slide 20

Team Cohesion

The degree of attraction people feel toward the team and their motivation to remain members

Factors that strengthen or speed up team cohesion:

1. Member similarity
 - More/faster cohesion when members are similar to each other
 - Generally takes longer/more difficult for diverse teams to become cohesive, but this depends on the form of diversity
2. Team size
 - Smaller teams usually more cohesive – easier for a few people to agree on goals and coordinate work activities
3. Member interaction
 - Regular interaction increases cohesiveness
 - More interaction through higher task interdependence
4. Somewhat difficult entry
 - Cohesion increased when entry to team is restricted—the more elite the team, the more prestige it confers
 - Caution: severe initiation can weaken cohesion
5. Team success
 - Successful teams fulfill member needs and goals
 - Success increases social identity with the team
 - Note: cohesion also affects team success (see below), but less than success affects cohesion
6. External competition and challenges
 - External competition/challenges increase cohesion
 - Cohesion can dissipate if external threats are severe/overwhelming

Team Cohesion and Performance

- High cohesion teams usually perform better because:
 - Motivated to maintain membership and achieve team objectives
 - Share information more frequently
 - Higher coworker satisfaction
 - Better social support (minimizes stress)
 - Resolve conflict more swiftly and effectively

Contingencies of cohesion and performance

1. Task interdependence
 - Cohesion motivates cooperation; less important with low interdependence
2. Team norms consistent with organizational objectives
 - Cohesion motivates conformity to team norms
 - Cohesion motivates LOWER performance if norms oppose company objectives

Team Cohesiveness and Performance

Slide 21

Team Cohesion and Performance

High cohesion teams usually perform better because:

- Motivated to maintain membership and achieve team objectives
- Share information more frequently
- Higher coworker satisfaction
- Better social support (minimizes stress)
- Resolve conflict more swiftly and effectively

Contingencies of cohesion and performance

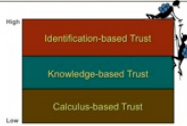
1. Task interdependence

- Cohesion has less effect on team performance when members have low task interdependence
- Cohesion motivates cooperation, so less important when people have minimal interdependence

2. Team norms consistent with organizational objectives

- Cohesion motivates conformity to team norms
- If team norms are aligned with firms goals, then cohesion motivates higher team performance
- If team norms oppose firms goals, then cohesion motivates lower team performance

Three Levels of Trust



Three Levels of Trust
Slide 22

Trust in Teams

Positive expectations one person has toward another person or group in situations involving risk

Swift trust

- New team members tend to have a moderate or high level—not a low level of trust in their new co-workers
- Swift trust is fragile in new relationships because it is based on assumptions rather than experience i.e. easily broken

Three Levels of Trust

Calculus-based trust

- Logical calculation that other team members will act appropriately because of sanctions i.e. based on deterrence
- Lowest potential trust and is easily broken – not enough to sustain a team's relationship

Knowledge-based trust

- Based on the predictability of another team member's behavior and/or confidence in the person's competence
- More stable because it develops over time

Identification-based trust

- Based on mutual understanding and emotional bonds
- Potentially the strongest of the three types of trust
- Transgressions quickly forgiven because the individual's self-concept is based partly on team membership

Self-Directed Teams

- Self-directed teams defined
 - Cross-functional groups
 - organized around work processes
 - complete an entire piece of work requiring several interdependent tasks
 - have substantial autonomy over task decisions
- Success factors:
 1. Responsible for entire work process
 2. High interdependence within the team
 3. Low interdependence with other teams
 4. Autonomy to organize and coordinate work
 5. Work site/technology support team communication/coordination

Self-Directed Teams

Slide 23

Self-Directed Teams

Self-directed teams defined

- Cross-functional groups
- Organized around work processes
- Complete an entire piece of work requiring several interdependent tasks,
- Have substantial autonomy over task decisions

Self-Directed Team Success Factors

- Responsible for an entire work process e.g. making an entire product or providing a service
- High interdependence within the team
- Low interdependence with other teams
- Sufficient autonomy to organize and coordinate work
- Work site and technology support team communication/coordination

Virtual Teams

- Members operate across space, time, and organizational boundaries – linked through information technologies
- Virtual Team Success Factors:
 1. Virtual team member characteristics
 2. Toolkit of communication channels and freedom to choose channels that work best for them
 3. Fairly high task structure
 4. Opportunities to meet face-to-face

Virtual Teams

Slide 24

Virtual Teams

Teams whose members operate across space, time, and organizational boundaries and are linked through information technologies to achieve organizational tasks

Increasingly possible because of (a) information technologies, (b) knowledge-based work

Increasingly necessary because of:

- Organizational learning – encourage employees to share and use knowledge where geography limits direct collaboration
- Globalization – employees are spread around the planet rather than in one building or city

Virtual Team Success Factors

- Virtual team member characteristics e.g. good communication technology skills; strong self-leadership; and higher emotional intelligence
- Toolkit of communication technologies/channels and freedom to choose channels that work best for them
- Fairly high task structure e.g. clear operational objectives
- Opportunities to meet face-to-face especially early in the team development process

Team Decision Making
Constraints

- Time constraints
- Time to organize/coordinate
- Production blocking
- Evaluation apprehension
- Reluctance to mention ideas that seem silly because of belief of evaluation by other team members
- Peer pressure to conform
- Suppressing opinions that oppose team norms
- Overconfidence (inflated team efficacy)
- Team efficacy usually beneficial (improves performance)
- Inflated team efficacy
 - Outcomes: false sense of invulnerability, less vigilant decisions, less task conflict
 - Caused by: collective self-enhancement, high cohesion, external threats

Team Decision Making
Constraints
Slide 25

Team Decision Making Constraints

Time constraints

- Teams take longer than individuals to make decisions
- Time to organize/coordinate/maintain relationships
- Production blocking – procedural requirement that only one person may speak at a time

Evaluation apprehension

- Reluctance to mention ideas that seem silly because of belief (often true) that other team members are silently evaluating them
- Based on desire for a favorable self-presentation -- creative ideas often sound bizarre
- Most common when higher status person attends meeting, or members formally evaluate each other

Peer Pressure to conform

- Suppressing opinions that oppose team norms
- Members might punish the violator or try to persuade him or her that the opinion is incorrect
- Conformity is subtle – we question our ideas when team members disagree

Overconfidence (inflated team efficacy)

- High team efficacy is usually beneficial -- set more challenging goals, more motivated to achieve goals
- Inflated team efficacy has negative outcomes
 - false sense of invulnerability
 - less vigilant making decisions
 - less task-oriented conflict (active discussion, respectful disagreement)
- Inflated team efficacy caused by:
 - collective self-enhancement effect
 - high team cohesion -- mutual reinforcement
 - external threats/competition -- further motivates self-enhancement

General Guidelines for Team Decisions

- Team norms should encourage critical thinking
- Sufficient team diversity
- Checks/balances to avoid dominant participants
- Maintain optimal team size
- Introduce effective team structures

General Guidelines for Team Decisions

Slide 26

General Guidelines for Team Decisions

1. Team norms should encourage critical thinking
2. Sufficient team diversity
3. checks/balances to avoid dominant participants
4. Maintain optimal team size
5. Introduce effective team structures

Brainstorming

- Participants think up as many ideas as possible
- Four brainstorming rules
 - Speak freely
 - Don't criticize
 - Provide as many ideas as possible
 - Build on others' ideas
- Dismissed by lab research, but supported in field research and by leading creative firms
- Brainstorming limitations
 - Production blocking
 - Conformity effect (fixation)

Brainstorming

Slide 27

Team Structures to Encourage Creativity

Brainstorming

Team structure in which participants try to think up as many ideas as possible

Four brainstorming rules:

1. Speak freely – describe even the craziest ideas
2. Don't criticize others or their ideas
3. Provide as many ideas as possible – quality increases with quantity
4. Build on others' ideas

Brainstorming lab research is likely flawed (wrong participants and outcome measures), whereas positive results in field studies and in many successful creative firms

But brainstorming has known limitations:

1. Production blocking -- ideas forgotten while listening to others
2. Conformity effect (fixation) -- first ideas frame/limit thinking of later ideas

Other Team Structures for Creative Decision Making

- Brainwriting – brainstorming without conversation
 - Individuals write down/distribute their ideas to others, who develop further
 - Less production blocking than brainstorming
- Electronic Brainwriting – variation of brainwriting
 - Based on computer technology
 - Document/distribute ideas anonymously to other participants
 - Anonymously vote on ideas, followed by decision
 - Strengths: less production blocking, evaluation apprehension, conformity
 - Limitations: considered too structured and technology-bound
- Nominal Group Technique – variation of brainwriting
 - 1. Problem is described, then participants privately write down/solutions
 - 2. Participants describe their solutions – no criticism or debate
 - 3. Participants privately rank order or vote on solutions
 - Problems of production blocking and evaluation apprehension

Other Team Structures for Creative Decision Making
Slide 28

Other Team Structures for Creative Decision Making

Brainwriting

Brainstorming without conversation (in a face-to-face setting)

- Individuals write down and distribute their ideas to others, who develop further ideas
- Less production blocking than brainstorming

Electronic Brainstorming

Brainwriting using computer technology (participants often in same room, but may be dispersed)

- Computer documents and distributes ideas anonymously to other participants
- Anonymously vote electronically on the ideas presented
- Face-to-face discussion usually follows
- Strengths: less production blocking, evaluation apprehension, and conformity problems than brainstorming or brainwriting
- Limitations: considered too structured and technology-bound

Nominal Group Technique

Variation of face-to-face brainwriting, but includes a verbal stage for description of ideas. Process includes:

1. Individuals silently write and independently document their ideas (possible solutions)
2. Participants collectively describe these ideas to the other team members (usually round-robin format) – no criticism or debate, however clarification of ideas is encouraged
3. Participants silently and independently evaluate the ideas presented

Effectiveness of Nominal Group Technique

- High task orientation, low potential for conflict
- Production blocking and evaluation apprehension still occur



Team Dynamics

Team Dynamics
Slide 29



SOLUTIONS TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- 1. Informal groups exist in almost every form of social organization. What types of informal groups exist in your classroom? Why are students motivated to belong to these informal groups?**

Students should identify several types of informal groups in the classroom, depending on the characteristics of this class. Perhaps a few students share a ride to class or, at least, talk to each other on public transit systems. Other students go together for lunch or other meals. A few students might have gone through high school together and meet occasionally. Some students participate in sports activities after school or are part of college student groups. If students have difficulty thinking of informal groups, the instructor might begin with the question: "How many people in this room knew at least one other person before this class first met?" From there, the instructor might ask whether these people meet outside class in any way.

The second part of this question relates to the reasons why informal groups exist. These include: (1) to fulfill relatedness needs, (2) social identity, (3) to achieve nonwork goals, and (4) to receive social support that relieves stress. For example, some students gather for a snack during class break or after class simply because they enjoy each other's company. For social identity, some people like to belong to groups that are popular or respected, such as college sports teams. Some informal groups fulfill nonwork goals, such as providing transportation to get to class. Lastly, some people are part of informal groups during stressful times. The instructor might note how students hang around together both immediately before and after a difficult final examination.

- 2. The late management guru Peter Drucker once said: "The now-fashionable team in which everybody works with everybody on everything from the beginning rapidly is becoming a disappointment." Discuss three problems associated with teams.**

The textbook describes the following challenges with teams:

Teams aren't always necessary. Companies tend to use teams as a solution to every problem that may exist. Yet some tasks are more effectively completed by individuals rather than teams.

Process losses. Teams have costs beyond employees working alone. In particular, they require resources for team development and maintenance. Thus, we need to determine the cost-benefits of teams rather than assume they incur similar costs as individuals.

Social loafing. Teams bring the problem of social loafing. Individuals tend to put forth less effort in certain team settings than when working individually.

- 3. You have been put in charge of a cross-functional task force that will develop enhanced Internet banking services for retail customers. The team includes representatives from marketing, information services, customer service, and accounting, all of whom will move to the same location at headquarters for three months. Describe the behaviors you might observe during each stage of the team's development.**

Forming. The group would generally be polite (not pushy) and would defer to existing authority, such as the person who set up this group. Members would ask questions to help them make sense of their new environment.

Storming. Team members assert themselves more clearly as they negotiate for roles and responsibilities. There will be disagreements as people vie for roles and try to influence team norms.

Norming. Team members have the first real sense of cohesion as roles are established and a consensus forms around group objectives. They interact more efficiently and begin the process of understanding and accepting each other.

Performing. Team members focus more fully on task performance. They coordinate their work smoothly, and demonstrate a high level of trust.

Adjourning. Team members shift towards a more relationship orientation in their relationships as the team's existence comes to an end.

4. **You have just been transferred from the Kansas office to the Denver office of your company, a national sales organization of electrical products for developers and contractors. In Kansas, team members regularly called customers after a sale to ask whether the products arrived on time and whether they are satisfied. But when you moved to the Denver office, no one seemed to make these follow-up calls. A recently hired coworker explained that other coworkers discouraged her from making those calls. Later, another coworker suggested that your follow-up calls were making everyone else look lazy. Give three possible reasons why the norms in Denver might be different from those in the Kansas office, even though the customers, products, sales commissions, and other characteristics of the workplace are almost identical.**

Both team norms and peer pressure to conform to those norms are operating in this incident. Team norms are informal rules and expectations that groups establish to regulate the behavior of their members. In the Denver office, employees have a norm of not bothering with follow-up sales calls, whereas the Kansas office has a norm that encourages follow-up sales calls.

Your experience (and the experience of the recently hired employee) were attempts at conformity because both of you violated the norm at the Denver office. Employees suggested that you change your behavior. They made comments about the inappropriateness of making follow-up calls, implying that it was an act against other employees (it made them look lazy.)

Students can describe any three of the following reasons why norms in Kansas might be different from those in the Denver office.

- Team leaders or senior management in the Kansas office might have explicitly stated the importance of follow-up calls, whereas this might not be happening in the Denver office.
 - The Kansas office might have had a critical event that encouraged more follow-up calls, such as a lost customer or comments from an important customer on the value of follow-up calls. The Denver office might not have had these critical events.
 - The primacy effect might have shaped this norm at the two offices. For example, when the Kansas office was first started, the manager might have declared the importance of follow-up calls.
 - This norm may have developed from the beliefs and values that members brought to the team. When the Denver office was first formed, for instance, the employees brought to that office might have had weak customer service values.
5. **A software engineer in the United States needs to coordinate with four team members in geographically dispersed areas of the world. What team challenges might the team experience, and how will they affect the team design elements?**

A team is effective when it benefits the organization, its members, and its own survival. Particularly of challenge is the ability to maintain commitment of the team members during turbulent times. In the specific situation here, team members face an additional challenge of different time zones. The leader has to carefully design the team itself, including task characteristics, team size, team composition and team roles. In the specific situation, task interdependence is highest, it is the reciprocal interdependence where work output is exchanged back and forth between individuals who are operating from different time zones. Team size should be large enough to provide required competencies but small enough to maintain efficient coordination. Team composition must be such that besides providing technical skills, team members are also able and willing to work in a team environment.

- 6. You have been assigned to a class project with five other students, none of whom you have met before, and some of whom come from different countries. To what extent would team cohesion improve your team's performance on this project? What actions would you recommend to build team cohesion among student team members in this situation?**

Team cohesion can potentially have a significantly positive effect on the team's performance. Indeed, instructors are usually aware of this advantage. Some are reluctant to let students form their own teams because those who have worked together in the past have a cohesiveness advantage over those who form a team with strangers.

Members of cohesive teams spend more time together, share information more frequently, and are more satisfied with each other. They are generally more sensitive to each other's needs and develop better interpersonal relationships, thereby reducing dysfunctional conflict. When conflict does arise, members of high cohesion teams seem to resolve these differences swiftly and effectively. They also provide each other with better social support in stressful situations. Also note that cohesive teams necessarily have a higher level of team development. Consequently, they work together more efficiently (less process loss) and require less communication to coordinate work activities.

Aside from these benefits, cohesive teams only perform better when their goals and values are aligned with the task. Some highly cohesive student teams perform poorly because they rely on team norms that do not support hard work to achieve a top grade. Instead, they put their energy more into having a good time during the project.

In addition to the above, we know from cross cultural studies that some class members will contribute frequently, whereas others will not. Their reticence is not a lack of trust, nor interest in the project. Perhaps their language skills are not proficient, and their willingness to engage in team cohesion exercises may not be part of their culture. If some culture is not expected to say "no", then it may be hard to assess their real interest. The first time the group gets together may be an excellent time to discuss what group norms should exist, and how the group should work together going forward.

- 7. Suppose you are put in charge of a virtual team whose members are located in different cities around the world. What tactics could you use to build and maintain team trust and performance, as well as minimize the decline in trust and performance that often occurs in teams?**

A common misconception is that team members build trust from a low level when they first join a team. According to recent studies, the opposite is actually more likely to occur. People typically join a virtual or conventional team with a high level—not a low level—of trust in their new team-mates.

Declining trust is particularly challenging in virtual teams. Research identifies clear communication among team members is an important condition for sustaining trust. Virtual teams will need several communication channels available in order to off-set lack of face to face communication. In addition, team processes including virtual team development will require some face to face interaction, particularly when the team forms.

The way work is organized is often the culprit in ineffective virtual team performance. As mentioned in the chapter, the work that is pooled, or sequential or even reciprocal is still predicated on "co-located" work. As we noted earlier, co-located work is much easier and in many cases preferred than globally-distributed work. Nevertheless, when work is globally distributed, handoffs can be "sticky" and thus everything we understand about co-located work is called into question when we have globally distributed work. Stickiness can be caused by everything mentioned thus far, but exacerbated in the international environment.

- 8. You are responsible for convening a major event in which senior officials from several state governments will try to come to an agreement on environmental issues. It is well known that some officials take positions to make themselves appear superior, whereas others are highly motivated to solve the environmental problems that cross adjacent states. What team decision-making problems are likely to be apparent in this government forum, and what actions can you take to minimize these problems?**

By reviewing the various problems with team decision making, students can identify a few problems in this situation. Here are the main issues that will likely be identified:

- a) Evaluation apprehension -- with posturing and politicking, some officials may be reluctant to present ideas that initially seem silly or unintelligent.
- b) Pressure to conform -- The emotionally-charged nature of this topic, as well as the strong positions held by some participants, may lead to pressure by some delegates to have others conform to the dominant views in the forum.
- c) Time constraints -- As in any meeting, only one person can typically speak at one time, causing others to either forget their ideas while listening, or ignore what others are saying while they think through their own ideas.
- d) Inflated team efficacy -- This is unlikely to be a problem in this situation. There is no evidence that this is a highly cohesive group (just the opposite!), so they won't reinforce each other's overconfidence. Also, there aren't any apparent external threats sufficient to make this group feel bound together and distort their superiority (the differentiation effect discussed in Chapter 3).

9. The chief marketing officer of Sawgrass Widgets wants marketing and sales staff to identify new uses for its products. Which of the four team structures for creative decision making would you recommend? Describe and justify this process to Sawgrass's chief marketing officer.

Benefits. Brainstorming is the most popular structure for encouraging creative ideas. Brainstorming encourages divergent thinking while minimizing evaluation apprehension and other team dynamics problems. In addition brainstorming can bring benefits beyond the number of ideas produced. Brainstorming participants interact and participate directly, thereby increasing decision acceptance and team cohesiveness. Brainstorming rules tend to keep the team focused on the task. There is also evidence that effective brainstorming sessions provide valuable nonverbal communication that spreads enthusiasm. Team members share feelings of optimism and excitement which may encourage a more creative climate. By involving clients in brainstorming sessions, these positive emotions may produce higher customer satisfaction than if people are working alone.

Potential limitations. Organizational behavior researchers warn that brainstorming has potential limitations: Brainstorming does not completely remove evaluation apprehension; employees still know that others are silently evaluating the quality of their ideas. Production blocking and related time constraints prevent all ideas from being presented. In addition research also indicates that in some situations, individuals working alone produce more potential solutions to a problem than if they work together brainstorming.



CASE STUDY: ARBRECORP LTÉE

Case Synopsis

- NOTE: This is the “Treetop Forest Products” case, renamed because its popularity has resulted in case notes (even videos!) distributed across the internet.

ArbreCorp Ltée is a sawmill operation in Quebec, Canada, that is owned by a major forest products company, but operates independently of headquarters. The mill is divided into six operating departments: boom, sawmill, planer, packaging, shipping, and maintenance. It won packaging quality awards over the past few years, but product quality has recently fallen and customers have switched to other producers. The planing and sawmilling departments have significantly increased productivity over the past couple of years, whereas the packaging department has decreasing productivity. This has resulted in a backlog of finished product, adding to Treetop’s inventory costs and the risk of damaged stock. The company pays packaging employees overtime to complete the work on Saturdays. The packaging department extends its lunch and coffee breaks, and usually leaves work early. The packaging department is located in a separate building from the others and has no supervisor.

Note: This is a true case of a sawmill operation. Unfortunately, we don’t have information about the eventual outcome of this situation.

Suggested Answers to Discussion Questions

1. What symptom(s) in this case suggest that something has gone wrong?

The main symptom -- negative outcome -- in this case is that productivity of the packaging department is below the level that employees should be performing. Students should identify evidence of this performance “gap”, including (a) engineering estimates that output should be higher and (b) performance in this department was relatively higher in the past. In addition, students should identify specific evidence of non-productive behavior, including new staff reducing output after a short time and department staff taking long breaks and leaving work early.

2. What are the main causes of these symptoms?

The main problem in this case is that the packaging department’s norms appear to conflict with organizational goals. There is subtle or indirect evidence that employees in this department are encouraged or supported for taking extra time off and that those who work harder are discouraged from doing so. Students should use the team cohesion-performance concept to explain how high cohesion and counterproductive norms result in lower team performance.

As part of this analysis, students need to provide information suggesting that this team has high cohesion. Students should note that the organizational environment, task characteristics, and team size support high team cohesion. The team is relatively small, and they work together in a separate building away from others. This cohesion motivates employees to support the team's dominant norms. The problem, as mentioned, is that these norms are counterproductive.

Note that many students argue that the main problem is “lack of supervision”. They cite that fact that this department does not have a supervisor regularly overseeing the team. There are a few problems with this argument. First, there is probably no theory (certainly not in this book) stating that the most effective teams are closely supervised. On the contrary, the highest-performing teams (self-directed teams) have no direct supervision at all. Second, this department performed relatively well in the past (they even won awards for their packaging quality), even though there was minimal supervision at that time. Third, direct supervision is a potential solution, not the theoretical foundation of a problem analysis. But, as noted below, direct supervision is a high cost solution.

NOTE: This analysis can also be studied from the perspective of motivation. Students can use expectancy theory to explain why the packaging department is completing work late rather than on time.

3. What actions should executives take to correct these problems?

Many students fall into the trap of recommending that the case will be solved through closer supervision. This may be true to some extent, but it creates other problems. Direct supervision is costly, and employees increasingly dislike situations where they are closely monitored. Direct supervision may be required in the short term to align behavior (e.g. working required hours), but there are better long term alternatives. Supervision is only one of three forms of "control" over employees, so students should also explore the other two (systems/structures and culture/values).

The main problem is dysfunctional team norms, and the textbook identifies a few ways to change team norms. Some would be more feasible than others in this case. For example, this is an existing team, so it is too late to introduce performance-oriented norms as soon as the team is created. However, it is possible to formally announce the problem -- both extra time off and delayed production -- to the entire team. Asking them to help solve the problem might help to change the norm, but it might not if the norm is deeply entrenched.

Another strategy is to select new team members who will bring desirable norms to the group. Unfortunately, this has already been tried -- the positive norm employee changed to be like the others. Unless many new employees enter this group at the same time, the strategy may not work.

Although the textbook is skeptical about the effectiveness of team-based rewards in changing norms, it might work here. Currently, packaging employees are really rewarded for supporting their norm -- taking time off and getting lots of overtime for catching up on the backlog. They are essentially rewarded for working slowly during regular work hours. At the same time, they apparently receive no reward for efficiency or quality. A team reward for winning the quality award and for completing the work on time might alter the norms here. Similarly, if feasible, the overtime to catch up on packaging backlog work might be given to employees from other departments who possess enough skill to complete packaging work.

Disbanding the group and forming a new team is an option, but possibly expensive and disruptive. It takes time for new employees to learn the work practices and the strong action may adversely affect employee relations with others.

There are many possible solutions here, including the above-mentioned reward system. One structural change would be to move the packaging work closer to the other employees. Line of sight relations with other employees might create a peer pressure situation whereby packaging employees are discouraged from working slowly and taking time off.

Goal setting and feedback systems could be introduced that might change the behavior of packaging employees without more direct supervision. If they see trends in production and quality, perhaps their values will become more aligned with these goals.

As mentioned, some students might recommend more supervision of the packaging employees. This might work, but it could be costly because the company will need to pay for one more supervisor. Moreover, direct supervision merely introduces the use of punishment rather than resolving the underlying root causes of the behavior.



TEAM EXERCISE: TEAM TOWER POWER

Purpose

This exercise is designed to help students understand team roles, team development, and other issues in the development and maintenance of effective teams.

Materials

The instructor will provide enough Lego pieces or similar materials for each team to complete the assigned task. All teams should have identical (or very similar) amount and type of pieces. The instructor will need a measuring tape and stopwatch. Students may use writing materials during the design stage (Stage 2 below). The instructor will distribute a “Team Objectives Sheet” and “Tower Specifications Effectiveness Sheet” to all teams. (provided on the following pages of this instructor’s manual).

Instructions

Step 1: The instructor will divide the class into teams. Depending on class size and space available, teams may have between 4 to 7 members, but all should be approximately equal size.

Step 2: Each team is given 20 minutes to design a tower that uses only the materials provided, is freestanding, and provides an optimal return on investment. Team members may wish to draw their tower on paper or flip chart to assist the tower’s design. Teams are free to practice building their tower during this stage. Preferably, teams are assigned to their own rooms so the design can be created privately. During this stage, each team will complete the Team Objectives Sheet distributed by the instructor. This sheet requires the Tower Specifications Effectiveness Sheet, also distributed by the instructor.

Step 3: Each team will show the instructor that it has completed its Team Objectives Sheet. Then, with all teams in the same room, the instructor will announce the start of the construction phase. The time elapsed for construction will be closely monitored and the instructor will occasionally call out time elapsed (particularly if no clock in the room).

Step 4: Each team will advise the instructor as soon as it has completed its tower. The team will write down the time elapsed that the instructor has determined. It may be asked to assist the instructor by counting the number of blocks used and height of the tower. This information is also written on the Team Objectives Sheet. Then, the team calculates its profit.

Step 5: After presenting the results, the class will discuss the team dynamics elements that contribute to team effectiveness. Team members will discuss their strategy, division of labor (team roles), expertise within the team, and other elements of team dynamics.

Comments for Instructors

This is a fun, competitive, activity that suits a variety of organizational behavior topics (e.g. goal setting, organizational structure). It is presented here in the team dynamics chapter because some interesting team work is involved. One observation is how the work is divided up. One person tends to keep track of time; someone else tends to take over much of the design. In some teams, there is a clear leader to guide the group. In others, the team breaks into subgroups with a lack of coordination. It is also interesting to compare teams where students know each other well with teams consisting of strangers. The latter tend to require more time to organize themselves during the planning stage.

When conducting this exercise, please remember that the specifications for height and number of pieces assume the use of Lego blocks. You should change these specifications if larger materials (e.g. straws) are used. Before beginning Stage 3, watch out for teams that have materials “pre-assembled”. Be sure that all blocks are separated before the teams construct their towers. I usually have students spread the blocks out on the floor, and I scramble them around just before construction begins. These towers must be free-standing, so they cannot touch walls or be held up by team members. If time permits, you may want to give teams a second run of the construction stage. Generally, teams are

faster during the second run. This might be discussed in terms of team development (e.g. clearer assumptions and division of roles.)

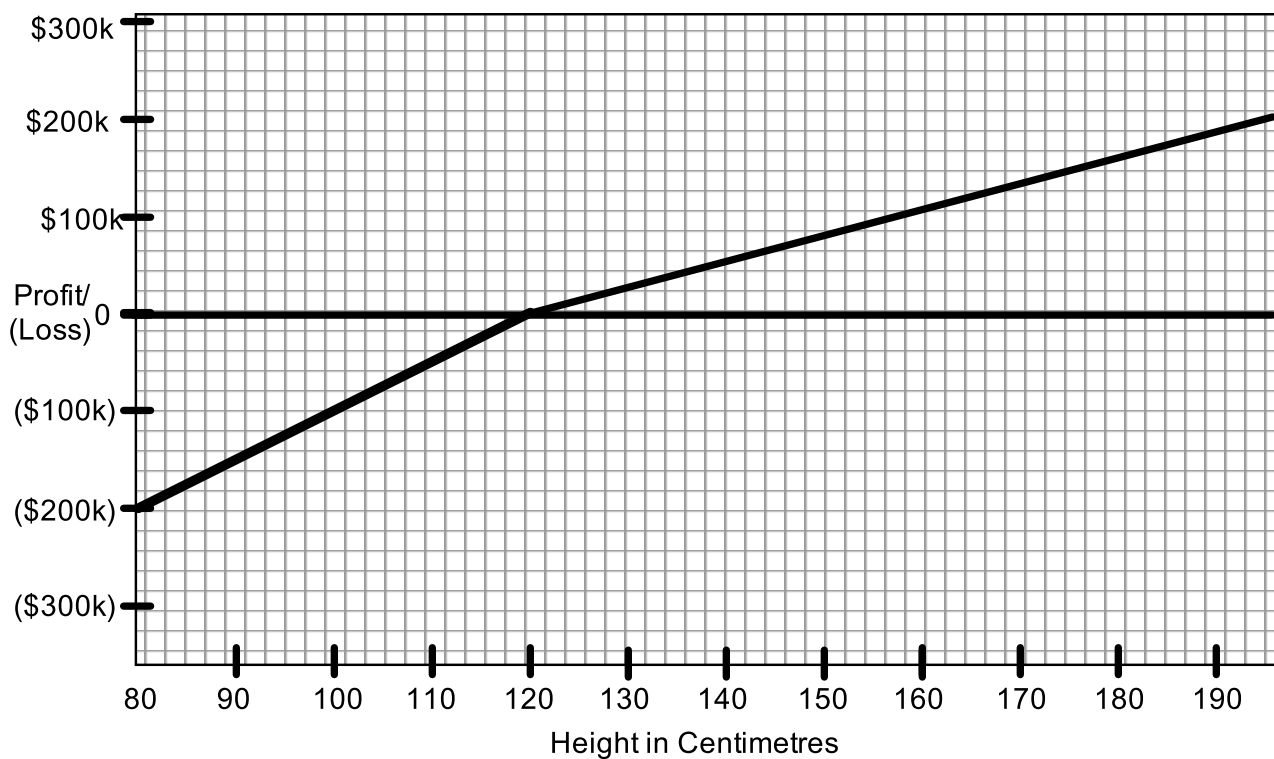
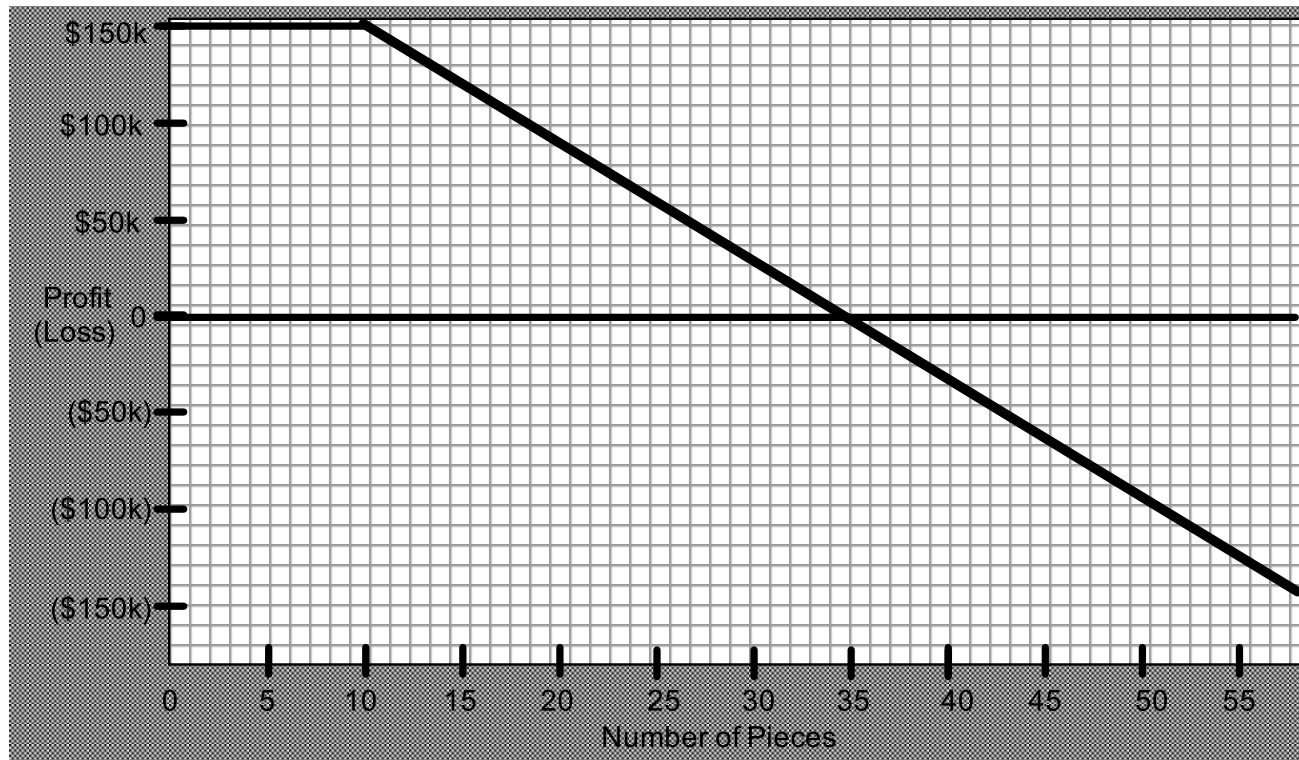
TEAM OBJECTIVES SHEET

(STUDENT HANDOUT)

| | Team Goal | Actual Result | Profit/(Loss) |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Material Requirements (Number of pieces used) | | | |
| Engineering Proficiency (Height in centimeters) | | | |
| Labor Efficiency (Time in seconds) | | | |

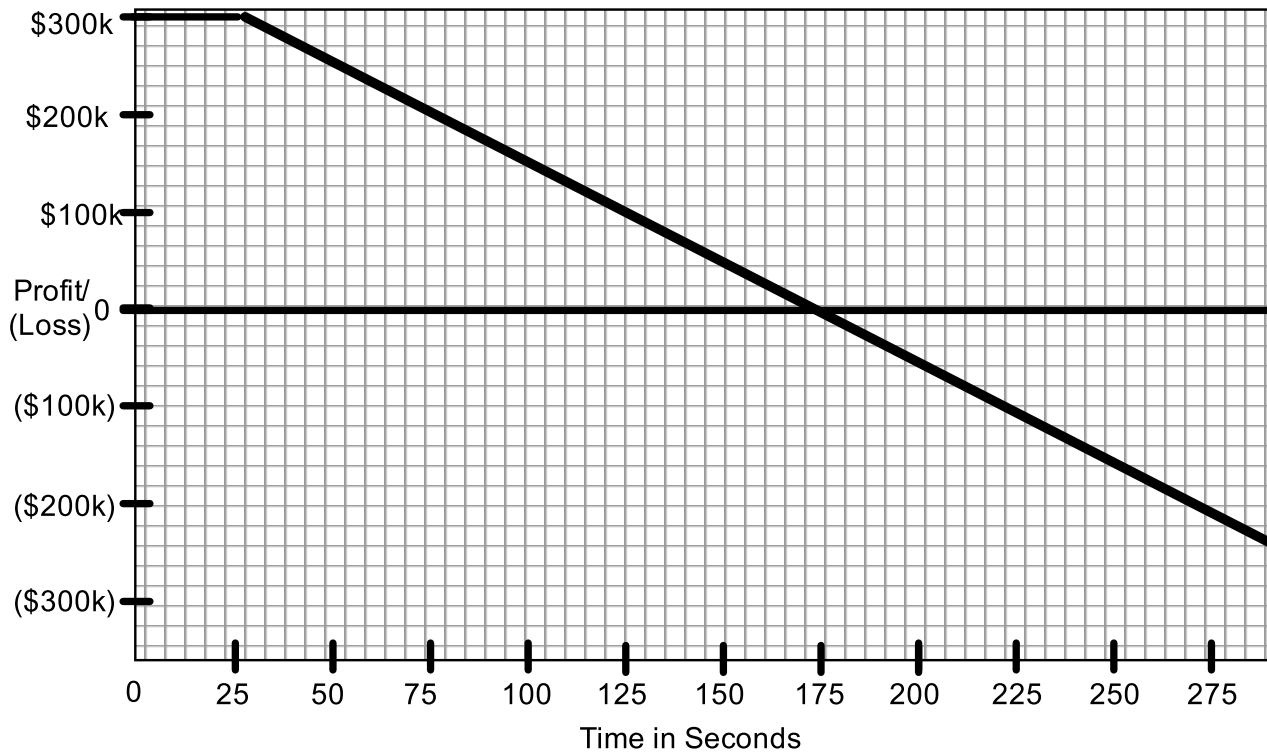
TOWER SPECIFICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS SHEET (PAGE 1)

(Student Handout)



TOWER SPECIFICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS SHEET (PAGE 2)

(Student Handout)





TEAM EXERCISE: HUMAN CHECKERS

Purpose

This exercise is designed to help students understand the importance and application of team dynamics and decision making.

Materials

None, but the instructor has more information about the team's task. [Note: This exercise sometimes works better with two lines of tape on the floor to keep student teams in a straight line.]

Task Description (read to students)

Each team will develop and execute a strategy in which the four (4) team members on either side of an open space will move to the other side in the same final order (see exhibit on this page). [NOTE: The activity can be done well with six -- three people in each direction -- but is more typically completed with four in each direction.] Team members A, B, C, and D begin on the left side and must move to the right side in the same order. Team members W, X, Y, and Z will begin on the right side of the open space and must move to the left side in the same order (see Exhibit below).

Spaces

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Start | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | | (W) | (X) | (Y) | (Z) |
| End | (W) | (X) | (Y) | (Z) | | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |

Instructions (provided in textbook)

Step 1: Form teams with eight students. (NOTE: Larger or smaller teams may be formed, but all teams must be the same size and have the same number of people on each side.) If possible, each team should have a private location where team members can plan and practice the required task without being observed or heard by other teams.

Step 2: All teams will receive special instructions in class about the team's assigned task. All teams have the same task and will have the same amount of time to plan and practice the task. At the end of this planning and practice, each team will be timed while completing the task in class. The team that completes the task in the least time wins.

Step 3: No special materials are required or allowed for this exercise. Although the task is not described here, students should learn the following rules for planning and implementing the task:

Rule #1: You cannot use any written form of communication or any props to assist in the planning or implementation of this task.

Rule #2: You may speak to other students in your team at any time during the planning and implementation of this task.

Rule #3: When performing the task, you must move only in the direction of your assigned destination. In other words, you can only move forward, not backwards.

Rule #4: When performing the task, you can move forward to the next space, but only if it is vacant (see Exhibit 1 in textbook).

Rule #5: When performing the task, you can move forward two spaces, if that space is vacant. In other words, you can move around a student who is one space in front of you to the next space if that space is vacant (see Exhibit 2 in textbook).

Step 4: When all teams have completed their task, the class will discuss the implications of this exercise for organizational behavior.

Comments for Instructors

This exercise is also called “Traffic Jam”. Halfway through the planning stage, it may be useful to advise students that the task can be completed in less than 20 seconds. This makes some teams rethink their strategy. The exercise offers plenty of fun and challenge.

However, be prepared to use up an entire 45 minute class for this exercise with some time for debriefing. It usually takes teams up to 30 minutes to figure out the solution and to improve their efficiency in the task. Then, time is required for each team to demonstrate and compete.

Discussion Questions

1. Identify team dynamics and decision making concepts that the team applied to complete this task.

Human checkers is an exciting exercise that relates to several topics in team dynamics and decision making. It relates to teams because the planning and practice stage involves team development and performance. Also, it is interesting to observe teams where students have not worked together previously (low team development) compared with teams of students that have worked together on other projects or activities (higher team development). Creativity and decision making are relevant because the team must figure out how to get everyone to the opposite side within the constraints indicated. Some students might note that they are not as good at either figuring out the method or synchronizing as well as other people in the team. Team competencies also play a role, such as managing conflict when team members disagree over the best way to solve the challenge.

2. What personal theories of people and work teams were applied to complete this task?

This is a subjective question in which students reveal their personal theories. It is useful to identify the types of theories that emerge, that is, which topics (leadership, individual performance, etc.) are mentioned most often.

3. What other organizational behavior issues occurred, and what actions were (or should have been) taken to solve them?

Several OB problems potentially emerge. Team dynamics are most often mentioned. Conflict sometimes occurs. Leadership may be an issue where one person dominates the process too much.

Human Checkers Solution

There are likely several solutions to this exercise, but the solution below is the most common. Keep in mind that although the solution is sequential, students speed up this process by completing two or more of these steps at the same time. For example, moves M4, M5, and M6 can be done at the same time -- B, C, and D move in the same direction when they move out of their previous space

| Move | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Instruction |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| Start | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | | (W) | (X) | (Y) | (Z) | |
| M1 | (A) | (B) | (C) | | (D) | (W) | (X) | (Y) | (Z) | D 4 moves to 5 |
| M2 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (W) | (D) | | (X) | (Y) | (Z) | W 6 moves to 4 |
| M3 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (W) | (D) | (X) | | (Y) | (Z) | X 7 moves to 6 |
| M4 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (W) | | (X) | (D) | (Y) | (Z) | D 5 moves to 7 |
| M5 | (A) | (B) | | (W) | (C) | (X) | (D) | (Y) | (Z) | C 3 moves to 5 |
| M6 | (A) | | (B) | (W) | (C) | (X) | (D) | (Y) | (Z) | B 2 moves to 3 |
| M7 | (A) | (W) | (B) | | (C) | (X) | (D) | (Y) | (Z) | W 4 moves to 2 |
| M8 | (A) | (W) | (B) | (X) | (C) | | (D) | (Y) | (Z) | X 6 moves to 4 |
| M9 | (A) | (W) | (B) | (X) | (C) | (Y) | (D) | | (Z) | Y 8 moves to 6 |
| M10 | (A) | (W) | (B) | (X) | (C) | (Y) | (D) | (Z) | | Z 9 moves to 8 |
| M11 | (A) | (W) | (B) | (X) | (C) | (Y) | | (Z) | (D) | D 7 moves to 9 |
| M12 | (A) | (W) | (B) | (X) | | (Y) | (C) | (Z) | (D) | C 5 moves to 7 |
| M13 | (A) | (W) | | (X) | (B) | (Y) | (C) | (Z) | (D) | B 3 moves to 5 |

| Move | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Instruction |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| M14 | | W | A | X | B | Y | C | Z | D | A 1 moves to 3 |
| M15 | W | | A | X | B | Y | C | Z | D | W 2 moves to 1 |
| M16 | W | X | A | | B | Y | C | Z | D | X 4 moves to 2 |
| M17 | W | X | A | Y | B | | C | Z | D | Y 6 moves to 4 |
| M18 | W | X | A | Y | B | Z | C | | D | Z 8 moves to 6 |
| M19 | W | X | A | Y | B | Z | | C | D | C 7 moves to 8 |
| M20 | W | X | A | Y | | Z | B | C | D | B 5 moves to 7 |
| M21 | W | X | | Y | A | Z | B | C | D | A 3 moves to 5 |
| M22 | W | X | Y | | A | Z | B | C | D | Y 4 moves to 3 |
| M23 | W | X | Y | Z | A | | B | C | D | Z 6 moves to 4 |
| M24 | W | X | Y | Z | | A | B | C | D | A 5 moves to 6 |



TEAM EXERCISE: MIST RIDGE

Purpose

This exercise is designed to help students understand the dynamics and benefits of team decision making over individual decision making.

Instructions

Students are asked to rank the 15 items shown in the chart following the exercise according to their importance (most valuable for remaining comfortable in case of problems when hiking Mist Ridge trail in Kananaskis Provincial Park). In the "Individual Ranking" column, students indicate the most important item with "1," going through to "15" for the least important. They should keep in mind the reasons why each item is or is not important. The instructor will then form small teams (typically five members) and each team will rank order the items in the second column. Team rankings should be based on consensus, not simply averaging the individual rankings.

When the teams have completed their rankings, the instructor will provide the expert's ranking, which is provided on the next page of this instructor's manual. Students enter the expert's ranking in the third column. Next, each student will compute the absolute difference (i.e., ignore minus signs) between the individual ranking and the expert's ranking, record this information in column four, and sum the absolute scores. In column five, they record the absolute difference between the team's ranking and the expert's ranking, and sum these absolute scores. These calculations are followed by a class discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of individual versus team decision making.

Comments to Instructors (Prepared by Richard Field and Nicola Sutton)

The Mist Ridge exercise is set in southwestern Alberta, Canada. It looks very much like a lot of other survival exercises (Lost on the Moon, Lost at Sea, Subarctic Survival, etc.), but it is not. In fact, the key to this exercise is that it is an everyday, normal kind of decision. You and a few friends are going out for a hike (a long one), and you have to decide what to take with you. In reality, most if not all people would opt for light loads and an enjoyable day. There is really no danger here. Even if it snows, it is August 23rd, and the snow won't stay around for long. It's not going to drop down to -30 degrees at the end of August. Animals are likely not much of a threat. The biggest one is surprising a mother bear and getting between her and her cubs. Look out! Most hikers advise making a lot of noise while walking so the animals know you are coming and can get out of the way.

The beauty of this exercise is that your students will have done exercises of the survival type and will automatically assume that this one is of the genre. They will quickly fall into "survival mode" and make decisions to carry a tent, sleeping bags, etc. that they would never do in real life. You will find that your student groups fall easily into two bunches: The groups in survival mode and the realists. I would also expect some argument at the end of the exercise when you give them the expert answers because they just can't accept that this is not a survival situation. All this gives you a good chance to discuss the assumptions that groups make and the process errors that they get into.

You will find some groups that do better than the individuals in them. This is because in a task where more information helps, adding group members should improve the decision that is made. However, I have found that even in Alberta there are very few students that have hiked in the mountains. Therefore, I have had many groups doing this exercise with little to no expert knowledge in the group. In this case adding group members does not help the group to make better decisions because all you are adding is people, not information. This is another good point that you can make about groups. Sometimes adding more members just doesn't help.

Mist Ridge Exercise: Expert Rankings

According to six members of Skyline Hikers of the Canadian Rockies, the correct ranking of the 15 items is as follows.

| Item | Expert Ranking | Reasoning |
|---|----------------|---|
| Canteen with water | 3 | This may be carried full or empty and filled at any time with water. Water is required to protect against dehydration as you will sweat even if the ambient temperature is cool. There is no water on the ridge. Dehydration is dangerous as it increases your chances of sunstroke and hypothermia. |
| Matches | 13 | You are not supposed to light a fire in a National Park. Matches will be of little use to you on the ridge, in any case, as there is no wood. However, in an emergency, matches may be of more use to you than the remaining two items. |
| Compass | 7 | The trail may live up to its name and become covered in mist, meaning that a compass will be required to help you get back out again |
| Hat | 6 | To protect you from the sun or for heat retention should you remain out over night. |
| Repair kit (short length of cord, string, duct tape, and shoelaces) | 8 | To fix a broken pack, belt, or shoelace, this kit may be useful. It also contains materials that could be used for making splints, etc. in case of an emergency |
| First aid kit (blister protection and aspirin) | 5 | In case someone is injured or blisters become a problem, this will be required in order to walk back out. |
| Five sleeping bags | 14 | These are bulky and unnecessary because you are dressed warmly and have rain gear that may be used for protection from the elements if the need arises. The plan is to have a day hike, and sleeping bags will slow you down too much |
| Sunglasses | 12 | You already have a hat so these are mostly a duplication. |
| Flashlight | 11 | May be of some use on the way back should you be out longer than you expect. In the valley the light will fade quickly and you may need a light to keep on the trail. |
| Topographic map and Kananaskis Country Trail guide book | 1 | The Guide Book tells you not only how to get to the trail but also gives you explicit directions on how to follow it. It also provides you with a detailed description of what to expect on your trail hike. The topographic map is an excellent supplement to the Guide Book to help you keep on the unmarked trail. |
| Food | 4 | It is a long day and a strenuous hike. For psychological reasons and to keep your group together, you will want to be able to stop along the way and enjoy a meal before continuing. |
| 5-person tent with waterproof fly | 15 | This is heavy, and again will only slow you down. Again, you have with you rain gear which can double as a wind break if you need it overnight. If you must stay out overnight, you will just have to huddle together until first light when you can walk out to your car. |
| Sunscreen | 10 | Not as important because you already have a hat with you to protect you from the sun |
| Rain gear | 2 | This will protect you from rain, snow, and wind, all of which are likely on a trail such as this at this time of year. It may also be used as a wind break on the ridge and as a stretcher in case of an emergency |
| Insect repellent | 9 | Probably only required in the stretch of trail that is down in the valley amongst the trees. |



SELF-ASSESSMENT: WHAT TEAM ROLES DO YOU PREFER?

Purpose

This self-assessment is designed to help students to identify their preferred roles in meetings and similar team activities.

Instructions

Students are asked to read each of the statements and circle the response that they believe best reflects their position regarding each statement. Then use the scoring key (the scoring key is available online, or students can have this scored automatically online), they calculate their results for each team role. This exercise is completed alone so students assess themselves honestly without concerns of social comparison. However, class discussion will focus on the roles that people assume in team settings. This scale only assesses a few team roles.

Feedback for the Team Roles Preferences Scale

NOTE: This instrument calculates preferences on five team roles: encourager, gatekeeper, harmonizer, initiator, and summarizer. These are among the most important roles in teams, but keep in mind that teams have several other roles that are not measured by this scale.

All of the team roles identified in this instrument use the following scoring interpretation.

| Score | Interpretation |
|---------|---------------------|
| 12 to 5 | High preference |
| 8 to 11 | Moderate preference |
| 3 to 7 | Low preference |

Encourager

People who score high on this dimension have a strong tendency to praise and support the ideas of other team members, thereby showing warmth and solidarity to the group. The average score in a sample of MBA students is 10.25.

Gatekeeper

People who score high on this dimension have a strong tendency to encourage all team members to participate in the discussion. The average score in a sample of MBA students is 10.0.

Harmonizer

People who score high on this dimension have a strong tendency to mediate intragroup conflicts and reduce tension. The average score in a sample of MBA students is 9.85.

Initiator

People who score high on this dimension have a strong tendency to identify goals for the meeting, including ways to work on those goals. The average score in a sample of MBA students is 9.79.

Summarizer

People who score high on this dimension have a strong tendency to keep track of what was said in the meeting (i.e., act as the team's memory). The average score in a sample of MBA students is 8.44.