CHAPTER 5

Groups and Teamwork

ROADMAP

Questions for Consideration

- What are the stages of group development?
- What makes groups and teams work (or not work)?
- How do we build better groups and teams?

How do you get teenagers to devote their spare time to learning more about science and technology?[1] Make it a competition! Put them on a team, and give them support and encouragement from teachers, engineering mentors, and corporate sponsors.

Take the experience of students at Glenforest Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario. In 2002 they participated in the ninth annual Canada FIRST Robotic Competition. They had eight weeks to design and build a remotely operated robot that would compete with other robots built by secondary school teams across the country.

To get to the competition, the Glenforest students had to acquire not only science and technology knowledge, but also teamwork skills. Team co-captain Beatrice Sze, 18, knew that she had to help keep the stress level of teammates down, while encouraging them to do their best. She didn't so much lead as inspire. For example, when a team member came to her with questions about what to do next, she would say encouragingly, "Use your brain. You can figure this out. You know how to do this."

The students also had to be resourceful. One team member's parents provided the family basement for a team gathering place. That enabled the students to get extra parts from the family's snowblower and dehumidifier. Sometimes they worked so late into the evening that they had sleepovers on the basement floor, huddled in sleeping bags.

Not everything goes as planned. In 2001 the team's robot could not meet the challenge of firing balls at pie plates, though it moved well. The team improved its resources in 2002 by getting a mentor—a computer and electrical engineer with Bell Mobility—who tried to guide the students in the right direction, without telling them what to do.

Team members weren't just involved in building the robot. They also had to raise money to be part of the contest. Since the Glenforest students owed their school from the previous year's contest, their fund-raising goal was a total of $16 000!

The challenges the Glenforest students faced are often found in the workplace. The students had a deadline, as well as financial and physical constraints to getting their robot built. Effective teamwork made it possible for them to meet that challenge.

Glenforest Secondary School
www.peel.edu.on.ca/glenforest/

Bell Mobility
www.bell.ca

Glenforest Secondary School's robotics team illustrates some of the conditions needed to make a team excel. Monica Sze gently leads, without telling. The team faces resource difficulties, and figures out ways to solve problems. Team members are dedicated to their task, sleeping over if they've worked too late. They are also surrounded by outside resources to help provide support: Teachers, mentors, and family members all lend a hand.

For teams to excel, several factors have to come together: the composition of the group; the type of task; group process; organizational resources; and leadership. In this chapter we examine what it takes to build high-performance teams.

Teams vs. Groups: What's the Difference?

There is some debate whether groups and teams are really separate concepts, or whether the terms can be used interchangeably. We think a subtle difference in terms is appropriate. A **group** is two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have a stable relationship, a common goal, and perceive themselves to be a group. Groups do not necessarily engage in collective work that requires interdependent effort. **Teams** are groups that work closely together toward a common objective, and are accountable to one another. Thus while not all groups are teams, all teams would also be considered groups. What we discuss in the chapter applies equally well to both.

group
Two or more interdependent and interacting individuals, with a stable relationship and a common goal, who perceive themselves to be a group.

team
Groups that work closely together toward a common objective, and are accountable to one another.

We begin by discussing the use of teams in the workplace, and then we consider the process by which individuals become effective group and team members.

Why Have Teams Become So Popular?

Pick up almost any business periodical today and you'll read how teams have become an essential part of the way business is being done in companies such as Zellers, Xerox, Sears Canada, General Electric, AT&T, Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, Apple Computer, DaimlerChrysler AG, 3M Co., Australian Airlines, London Life, and Johnson & Johnson. A Conference Board of Canada report found that more than 80 percent of its 109 respondents used teams in the workplace.[2] This is similar to the United States, where 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies have half or more of their employees on teams.[3]

total quality management (TQM)
A philosophy of management that's driven by the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through the continuous improvement of all organizational processes.

One of the biggest pushes for teams in organizations comes from **total quality management (TQM)**. This is a philosophy of management that's driven by the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through the continuous improvement of all organizational processes. We discuss TQM in greater detail in Chapter 14. The extensive use of teams creates the *potential* for an organization to generate greater outputs with no increase in inputs. Notice, however, we said "potential." There is nothing inherently magical in the creation of teams that ensures the achievement of greater output. As we will show later in this chapter, successful, high-performing teams have certain common characteristics. If management hopes to increase organizational performance through the use of teams, it must ensure that its teams possess these characteristics.

Zellers
www.hbc.com/zellers/

General Electric Canada Inc.
www.ge.com/canada/

Johnson & Johnson Canada Inc.
www.jnjcanada.com

London Life Insurance Company
www.londonlife.com

The Quaker Oats Company of Canada Limited
www.quakeroats.ca

Do teams work? The evidence suggests that teams typically outperform individuals when the tasks being done require multiple skills, judgment, and experience.[4] As organizations have restructured to compete more effectively and efficiently, they have turned to teams as a way to better utilize employee talents. Management has found that teams are more flexible and responsive to changing events than traditional departments or other forms of permanent groupings. Teams can quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and disband.

Peterborough, Ontario-based Quaker Oats Company of Canada Limited is quite pleased with the way teamwork was introduced in its facilities in the mid-'90s. Plant manager Scott Baker noted that "In terms of productivity gains, every single year, our productivity has been improving in the facility."[5] The teams make their own schedules and order supplies. This has cut management costs by two-thirds. Still, Baker notes that teamwork is a challenge, with a need for continual learning.

Teams are not necessarily appropriate in every situation, however. Read this chapter's *Point/CounterPoint* for a debate on the positives and negatives of teams.

Types of Teams

Teams can be classified based on their objective. The four most common forms of teams you're likely to find in an organization are:

- problem-solving (or process-improvement);
- self-managed (or self-directed);
- cross-functional;
- virtual.

The types of relationships that members within each team have to one another are shown in Exhibit 5-1.

Problem-Solving Teams

If we look back 20 years or so, teams were just beginning to grow in popularity, and most teams took a similar form. These were typically composed of 5 to 12 hourly employees from the same department who met for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment.[6] We call these **problem-solving**, or **process-improvement**, **teams**.

In problem-solving teams, members share ideas or offer suggestions on how to improve work processes and methods. Rarely, however, are these teams given the authority to unilaterally implement any of their suggested actions. Montreal-based Clairol Canada Inc. is an exception. When a Clairol employee identifies a problem, he or she has the authority to call together an ad hoc group to investigate, and then define and implement solutions. Clairol presents GOC (Group Operating Committee) Awards to teams for their efforts.

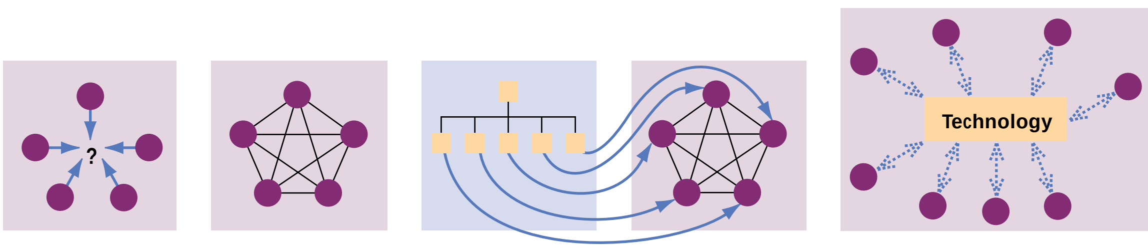
The 1998–1999 Workplace Employee Survey (WES) found that the use of teamwork varies by organizational size. For companies with 500 or more employees, 50 percent had problem-solving teams, whereas only 25 percent of companies with 20 to 99 employees had problem-solving teams.[7]

problem-solving (process-improvement) teams Groups of 5 to 12 employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment.

Clairol Canada Inc.
www.clairol.ca

Exhibit 5-1

Four Types of Teams



Problem-solving **Self-managed** **Cross-functional** **Virtual**

Quality Circles

One of the most widely practised applications of problem-solving teams is the quality circle, which became quite popular in North America and Europe during the 1980s.[8] The quality circle is often mentioned as one of the techniques that Japanese firms use to make high quality products at low costs. However, quality circles originated in the United States and were exported to Japan in the 1950s.[9]

quality circle
A work group of employees who meet regularly to discuss their quality problems, investigate causes, recommend solutions, and take corrective actions.

A **quality circle** is a work group of 8 to 10 employees and managers who share an area of responsibility. They meet regularly—typically once a week, on company time and on company premises—to discuss their quality problems, investigate causes of the problems, recommend solutions, and take corrective actions. They assume responsibility for solving quality problems, and generate and evaluate their own feedback. But management typically retains control over the final decision regarding implementation of recommended solutions.

Of course, management cannot presume that employees inherently have the ability to analyze and solve quality problems. Therefore, part of the quality circle concept includes teaching participating employees group communication skills, various quality strategies, and measurement and problem analysis techniques. Exhibit 5-2 describes a typical quality circle process.

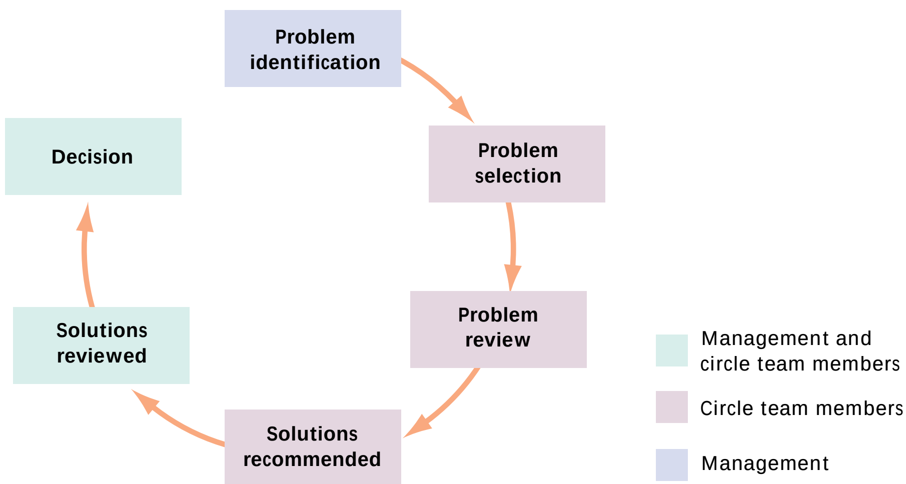
Quality Circles and Productivity Do quality circles improve employee productivity and satisfaction? A review of the evidence is mixed. Quality circles tend to show little or no effect on employee satisfaction; many studies report positive results from quality circles on productivity, but these results are by no means guaranteed.[10] The failure of many quality circle programs to produce measurable benefits has also led to the discontinuation of a large number of them.

Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)
www.caw.ca

The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union has not been entirely pleased with quality circles, as workers have been asked to assume more responsibility for work when the circles are introduced. Ken Lewenza, president of a Windsor-area CAW local, explains: "A key change has been to transfer responsibility for monitoring and resolving quality problems at the minivan and truck plants from management employees to teams of unionized workers."[11] But he adds that the union "is resisting company efforts to estab-

Exhibit 5-2

How a Typical Quality Circle Operates



lish Japanese-style cells of assembly workers because of concerns that the concept could lead to job losses through increased efficiency."

Quality circles were the management fad of the 1980s but have "become a flop," suggests J.L. Cotton.[12] He points out that in places that used them, little time was spent in quality circles, which were often viewed as a simple device that could be added on to the organization with few changes required outside the program itself.

However, failure does not have to be inevitable for quality circles. A case in point involves Montreal-based CAE Electronics Ltd., which showed that a company can overcome some of the failures associated with quality circles.[13] CAE's success with quality circles indicates that they can work even where they have previously failed if management introduces the proper supports. White Rock, BC-based Toyota CAPTIN, a wheel-manufacturing plant, has also used quality circles for many years with good results.

CAE Electronics Ltd.
www.cae.ca/en/

Canadian Autoparts Toyota Inc. (CAPTIN)
www.toyota.ca

Self-Managed Work Teams

Problem-solving teams were on the right track, but they didn't go far enough in involving employees in work-related decisions and processes. This led to experiments with truly autonomous teams that could not only solve problems but also implement solutions and assume responsibility for outcomes.

Self-managed, or **self-directed**, **work teams** are typically made up of 10 to 15 employees. They perform highly related or interdependent jobs and take on many of the responsibilities of their former managers.[14] Typically, this includes planning and scheduling of work, assigning tasks to members, collectively controlling the pace of work, making operating decisions, and taking action on problems. Fully self-managed work teams even select their own members and have the members evaluate each other's performance. As a result, managerial positions take on decreased importance and may even be eliminated.

self-managed work (self-directed) work teams
A group of 10 to 15 employees who take on responsibilities of their former managers.

A recent Statistics Canada study found that men were more likely than women to be part of self-directed work teams (36 percent versus 29 percent).[15] This may be explained by a Conference Board of Canada study that found self-directed work teams are used more typically in a variety of manufacturing industries (such as the auto

Many employees are asked to work in teams in order to accomplish their tasks. In a self-managed work team, such as the one from Xerox shown here, members make decisions about how to manage and schedule production, and also monitor the quality of their output.

industry, chemicals, equipment repair) and service environments (such as hotels, banks, and airlines).[16] For example, Toyota Canada's Toronto parts distribution centre reorganized its workforce into work teams in 1995. Workers have a team-focused mission statement, and employees are divided into six work teams, each with its own leader. Teams rotate through shift and work assignment schedules, making their own adjustments as necessary. Another organization using self-managed teams is the Honeywell Ltd. plant in Scarborough, Ontario, where unionized workers have been known to shut down the production line—not for more money, but to correct a production line defect![17] *OB in the Workplace* shows how a self-managed team at BC-based Langley Memorial Hospital saves money.

OB IN THE WORKPLACE

Self-Managed Teams Save Money

Can teams really help cut costs? At Langley Memorial Hospital, in Langley, BC (www.city.langley.bc.ca/commun/hospital.htm), employees in the materiel services department work as a self-managed team.[18] Three buyers and 18 other full- and part-time staff are responsible for managing inventory, adjusting the workload, and improving customer services. The team is given less outside supervision, and encouraged to participate in decision making and implementing ideas. The team's performance is measured by inventory level, inventory turnover rates, in-house service levels, and loss time.

Staff compare data with previous periods "to look at trends, incremental changes, and performance indicators that compare how well [they] are doing compared with targeted benchmarks."

Langley Memorial has started using teams in a number of departments, as it moves from a "top down" approach to a team approach. The number of department managers has been reduced by 75 percent. The hospital's self-managed teams have significantly cut management costs for the hospital.

It should be noted that some organizations have been disappointed with the results from self-managed teams. The introduction of these teams is sometimes viewed negatively by workers who fear that increasing use of teams will lead to layoffs. Their concerns may be well founded. At Honeywell's Scarborough plant, one-third of the 75 salaried positions were eliminated between 1991 and 1994 as a result of the shift to self-managed teams. The plant now runs with 40 percent fewer workers—and no drop in production.

Additionally, the overall research on the effectiveness of self-managed work teams has not been uniformly positive.[19] For example, individuals on these teams tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. However, counter to conventional wisdom, employees on self-managed work teams seem to have higher absenteeism and turnover rates than do employees working in traditional work structures. The specific reasons for these findings are unclear, which implies a need for more research. Finally, care needs to be taken when introducing self-managed teams globally. For instance, evidence suggests that these types of teams have not fared well in Mexico largely due to that culture's low tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty and employees' strong respect for hierarchical authority.[20]

cross-functional (project) teams
Employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task.

Cross-Functional Teams

The Boeing Company used the latest application of the team concept when it developed its 777 jet. This application is called **cross-functional**, or **project**, **teams**. These teams are made up of employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task.[21] For instance, if a business school wanted to design a new integrated curriculum in business for undergraduates, it might bring together a group of faculty members, each of whom represents one discipline (for example, finance, accounting, marketing, organizational behaviour) to work together to design the new program. Each individual would be expected to contribute knowledge of his or her field, which could be packaged together in a more integrated fashion.

Many organizations have used groups formed from members of different departments for years. Such groups include **task forces (**temporary cross-functional teams) and **committees** (groups composed of members from across departmental lines). But the popularity of cross-discipline work teams exploded in the late 1980s. All the major automobile manufacturers—including Toyota, Honda, Nissan, BMW, GM, Ford, and DaimlerChrysler AG—have turned to this form of team to coordinate complex projects. The 1998 Chrysler Intrepid and its elegant cousin, the Concorde, both produced at Chrysler's Bramalea, Ontario, assembly plant, were developed in record time through the teamwork of staff from design, engineering, manufacturing, marketing, and finance. Markham, Ontario-based AMP of Canada Ltd., manufacturer of electrical connectors and interconnection systems, puts together teams who may or may not be employees to bring a project to completion.

task force
A temporary cross-functional team.

committee
Groups composed of members from across departmental lines.

In summary, cross-functional teams are an effective means for allowing people from diverse areas within an organization (or even between organizations) to exchange information, develop new ideas and solve problems, and coordinate complex projects. Of course, cross-functional teams are no picnic to manage.[22] Their early stages of development are often time-consuming as members learn to work with diversity and complexity. It takes time to build trust and teamwork, especially among people from different backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives. In *HR Implications* on page 211, we look at measures organizations can take to turn individuals into team players.

Skunkworks

Skunkworks are cross-functional teams that develop spontaneously to create new products or work on complex problems. Such teams are typically found in the high-tech sector, and are generally sheltered from other organizational members. This gives the team the ability to work on new ideas in isolation, without being watched over by the organization members, during creative stages. Skunkworks are thus able to ignore the structure and bureaucratic rules of the organization while they work.

The first skunkworks team appeared in the 1940s, at Lockheed Aerospace Corporation.[23] The team was to create a jet fighter as fast as possible, and avoid bureaucratic delays. In just 43 days, the team of 23 engineers and a group of support personnel put together the first American fighter to fly at more than 800 kilometres an hour.

Lockheed Martin Canada
www.lockheedmartin.com/canada/

Not all skunkworks projects are as successful. Many companies, including IBM and Xerox, have had mixed results in using them. Still, they do offer a way for companies to explore alternative team use when speed is an important factor.

Virtual Teams

Problem-solving, self-managed, and cross-functional teams do their work face to face. **Virtual teams** use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal.[24] They allow people to collaborate online—using communication links such as wide-area networks, video conferencing, and e-mail—whether they're only a room away or continents apart. With greater availability of technology and increasing globalization, virtual teams become not only possible, but necessary. To the extent that work is knowledge-based rather than production-oriented,

virtual teams
Teams that use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal.

Sheila Goldgrab coaches virtual teams from the comfort of her home in Toronto. She can do that coaching via teleconference, video conference, or e-mail. She gets hired as a consultant to help virtual teams work together more smoothly. As one recipient of her coaching said, "Sheila was the rudder of the planning group. While we were going at high speed in different directions, she ensured there was a link among the group that kept us focused on the task at hand."

Nortel Networks Corporation
www.nortelnetworks.com

HOK Canada (also Urbana Architects)
www.hok.com

virtual teams are also more possible. For instance, when Nortel Networks decided to build a new Broadband Networks Research and Development campus in Montreal, the company turned to Toronto-based Urbana Architects. Urbana has an alliance with HOK Inc., a global design firm with more than 2 000 professionals in 26 offices around the world. This allowed Urbana's architects to work with HOK Canada's design professionals to acquire the land, design the building, and oversee construction through the work of small, specialized teams, many connected virtually through e-mail and video conferencing.[25]

Virtual teams can do all the things that other teams do—share information, make decisions, complete tasks. They can include members from the same organization or link an organization's members with employees from other organizations (suppliers and joint partners, for example). They can convene for a few days to solve a problem or a few months to complete a project, or exist permanently.[26] Often they can be more efficient at tasks as well, because of the ease of sharing information through e-mail and voice mail. Virtual teams also make it possible for people who face geographical and time zone restrictions to work together.

Virtual teams can suffer from the absence of paraverbal and nonverbal cues and their limited social contact. In face-to-face conversation, people use paraverbal (tone of voice, inflection, voice volume) and nonverbal (eye movement, facial expression, hand gestures, and other body language) cues to provide increased meaning. Virtual teams often suffer from less social rapport and less direct interaction among members. They aren't able to duplicate the normal give-and-take of face-to-face discussion. An additional concern about virtual teams is whether members are able to build the same kind of trust that face-to-face teams build. *Focus on Research* explores the trust issue.

FOCUS ON **RESEARCH**

If I Can't See You, Can I Trust You?

Can teams build trust if they've never met each other face to face? A recent study examining how virtual teams work on projects indicates that virtual teams can develop close interaction and trust.[27] These qualities simply evolve differently than in face-to-face groups.

In face-to-face groups, trust comes from direct interaction, over time. In virtual teams, trust is either established at the outset or it generally doesn't develop. The researchers found that initial electronic messages set the tone for how interactions occurred throughout the project.

In one team, for instance, when the appointed leader sent an introductory message that had a distrustful tone, the team suffered low morale and poor performance throughout the project. The researchers suggest that virtual teams should start with an electronic "courtship," where members provide some personal information. Then the teams should assign clear roles to members, helping members to identify with each other.

Finally, the researchers emphasized the importance of a positive outlook. They noted that teams that had the best attitude (eagerness, enthusiasm, and intense action orientation in messages) did considerably better than teams that had one or more pessimists among them.

The *Case Incident* on page 217 provides further exploration of how virtual teams work.

From Individual to Team Member

In order for either a group or a team to function, individuals have to achieve some balance between their own needs and the needs of the group. When individuals come together to form groups and teams, they bring with them their personalities and all their previous experiences. They also bring their tendencies to act in different ways at different times, depending on the effects that different situations and different people have on them.

One way to think of these differences is in terms of possible pressures that individual group members put on each other through roles, norms, and status expectations. As we consider the process of how individuals learn to work in groups and teams, we will use the terms interchangeably. Many of the processes that each go through are the same, with the major difference being that teams within the workplace are often set up on a nonpermanent basis, in order to accomplish projects.

Roles

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Using the same metaphor, all group members are actors, each playing a **role**. By this term, we mean a set of expected behaviour patterns associated with occupying a given position in a social unit. The understanding of role behaviour would be dramatically simplified if each of us chose one role and "played it out" regularly and consistently. Unfortunately, we are required to play a number of diverse roles, both on and off our jobs.

role
A set of expected behaviour patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit.

As we will see, one of the tasks in understanding behaviour is grasping the role that a person is currently playing. For example, Ira Schwartz is a plant manager with a large electrical equipment manufacturer in Saskatchewan. He has a number of roles that he fulfills on that job—for instance, employee, member of middle management, electrical engineer, and primary company spokesperson in the community. Off the job, Schwartz finds himself in still more roles: husband, father, Jewish, tennis player, food bank volunteer, and coach of his son's softball team. Many of these roles are compatible; some create conflicts. For instance, how does his religious involvement influence his managerial decisions regarding meeting with clients during Sabbath? A recent offer of promotion requires Schwartz to relocate, yet his family very much want to stay in Saskatoon. Can the role demands of his job be reconciled with the demands of his roles as husband and father?

The issue should be clear: Like Ira Schwartz, we all are required to play a number of roles, and our behaviour varies with the role we are playing. Schwartz's behaviour when he attends synagogue on Friday evening is different from his behaviour on the tennis court the day before. Different teams impose different role requirements on individuals.

Role Identity

role identity
Certain attitudes and behaviours consistent with a role.

There are certain attitudes and actual behaviours consistent with a role, and they create the **role identity**. People have the ability to shift roles rapidly when they recognize that the situation and its demands clearly require major changes. For instance, when union stewards were promoted to supervisory positions, it was found that their attitudes changed from pro-union to pro-management within a few months of their promotions. When these promotions had to be rescinded later because of economic difficulties in the firm, it was found that the demoted supervisors had once again adopted their pro-union attitudes.[28] Similarly, Stanford University psychologist Phillip Zimbardo's classic study of a simulated prison found that when students were asked to play the role of either prison guards or prisoners, it did not take them long to adopt the demeanour of these roles. The experiment had to be stopped after six days (the intention had been to run it for two weeks) because the "prison guards" were acting harshly toward the "prisoners," and the prisoners didn't even complain.

Role Perception

role perception
An individual's view of how he or she is supposed to act in a given situation.

Our view of how we are supposed to act in a given situation is a **role perception**. We engage in certain types of behaviour, based on our interpretation of how we are supposed to behave.

Where do we get these perceptions? From stimuli all around us—friends, books, movies, television! Many current law enforcement officers learned their roles from watching *Law and Order* and *NYPD Blue*, while many of tomorrow's lawyers will be influenced by reading the best-sellers of John Grisham and Scott Turow. The primary reason that apprenticeship programs exist in many trades and professions is to allow beginners to watch an "expert," so that they can learn to act as they are supposed to.

Role Expectations

role expectations
How others believe a person should act in a given situation.

Role expectations are defined as how others believe you should act in a given situation. We expect a Supreme Court judge to behave with propriety and dignity, but think a hockey coach will be aggressive, dynamic, and inspirational. We might be surprised to learn that the neighbourhood priest moonlights during the week as a bartender because our role expectations of priests and bartenders tend to be considerably different. When role expectations are concentrated into generalized categories, we have role stereotypes.

Psychological Contract

psychological contract
An unwritten agreement that sets out what management expects from the employee, and vice versa.

In the workplace, it can be helpful to look at the topic of role expectations through the perspective of the **psychological contract.** This is an unwritten agreement that exists between employees and their employer. As Professor Sandra Robinson of the University of British Columbia and her colleagues note, this psychological contract sets out mutual expectations—what management expects from workers, and vice versa.[29]

In effect, this contract defines the behavioural expectations that go with every role. Management is expected to treat employees justly, provide acceptable working conditions, clearly communicate what is a fair day's work, and give feedback on how well employees are doing. Employees are expected to respond by demonstrating a good attitude, following directions, and showing loyalty to the organization.

What happens when role expectations as implied in the psychological contract are not met? If management is negligent in holding up its part of the bargain, we can expect negative repercussions on employee performance and satisfaction. When employees fail to live up to expectations, the result is usually some form of disciplinary action, up to and including firing.

The psychological contract should be recognized as a "powerful determiner of behaviour in organizations."[30] It points out the importance of accurately communicating role expectations. In Chapter 9, we discuss how organizations socialize employees in order to get them to play out their roles in the way management desires.

Role Conflict

When an individual is confronted by divergent role expectations, the result is role conflict. **Role conflict** exists when an individual finds that complying with one role requirement may make it more difficult to comply with another.[31] At the extreme, it can include situations in which two or more role expectations are mutually contradictory!

role conflict
A situation in which an individual is confronted by divergent role expectations.

Our previous discussion of the many roles Ira Schwartz had to deal with included several role conflicts. For instance, the expectations placed on Schwartz as a husband and father conflict with those placed on him as a manager with his firm. As you will remember, his family role emphasizes stability and concern for the desire of his wife and children to remain in Saskatoon. His career role, on the other hand, centres on a company that expects its employees to be responsive to its needs and requirements. Although it might be in Schwartz's financial and career interests to accept a relocation, the conflict comes down to choosing between family and career role expectations.

All of us have faced and will continue to face role conflicts. The critical issue, from our standpoint, is how conflicts imposed by divergent expectations within the organization impact behaviour. Certainly, they increase internal tension and frustration. There are a number of behavioural responses individuals may engage in. They may, for example, give a formalized bureaucratic response. The conflict is then resolved by relying on the rules, regulations, and procedures that govern organizational activities.

For example, a worker faced with the conflicting requirements imposed by the corporate controller's office and his own plant manager decides in favour of his immediate boss—the plant manager. Other behavioural responses may include withdrawal, stalling, negotiation, or, as we found in our discussion of dissonance in Chapter 3, redefining the facts or the situation to make them appear congruent.

Norms

Have you ever noticed that golfers don't speak while their partners are putting on the green, or that employees don't criticize their bosses in public? Why? The answer is "norms!"

Norms are acceptable standards of behaviour that are shared by the group's members. All groups have established norms that tell members what they ought and ought not to do under certain circumstances. When agreed to and accepted by the group, norms act as a means of influencing the behaviour of group members with a minimum of external controls. Norms differ among groups, communities, and societies, but all of these entities have norms.[32]

norms
Acceptable standards of behaviour within a group that are shared by the group's members.

Formalized norms are written up in organizational manuals that set out rules and procedures for employees to follow. But by far, most norms in organizations are informal. You don't need someone to tell you that throwing paper airplanes or engaging in prolonged gossip sessions at the water cooler is an unacceptable behaviour when the "big boss from Toronto" is touring the office. Similarly, we all know that when we're in an employment interview discussing what we didn't like about our previous job, there are certain things we shouldn't talk about (difficulty in getting along with co-workers or

Informality reigns at PeopleSoft, where "having fun" is an official corporate goal. Casual dress and playful behaviour are the norm at PeopleSoft, which sells enterprise resource planning software. It's not unusual to see employees such as Mark Hoernemann (centre) wearing a silly hat, shooting co-workers with a Nerf gun, or playing on a mini golf course that runs through the office. Industry analysts attribute PeopleSoft's financial success as much to the strength of the firm's fun-loving environment as to the high quality of its software.

our manager). There are other things it's appropriate to talk about (inadequate opportunities for advancement, or unimportant and meaningless work). Evidence suggests that even high school students recognize that certain answers are more socially desirable than others in such interviews.[33]

Norms for both groups and organizations cover a wide variety of circumstances. Some of the most common norms have to do with issues such as:

- performance (how hard to work, what kind of quality, levels of tardiness);
- appearance (personal dress, when to look busy, when to "goof off," how to show loyalty);
- social arrangement (how team members interact);
- allocation of resources (pay, assignments, allocation of tools and equipment).

The "How" and "Why" of Norms

How do norms develop? Why are they enforced? A review of the research allows us to answer these questions.[34]

Norms typically develop gradually as group members learn what behaviours are necessary for the team to function effectively. Of course, critical events in the group might short-circuit the process and quickly prompt new norms. Most norms develop in one or more of the following four ways:

- *Explicit statements made by a group member.* Often instructions from the group's supervisor or a powerful member establish norms. The team leader might specifically say that no personal phone calls are allowed during working hours or that coffee breaks must be no longer than 10 minutes.
- *Critical events in the group's history.* These set important precedents. A bystander is injured while standing too close to a machine and, from that point on, members of the work group regularly monitor each other to ensure that no one other than the operator gets within two metres of any machine.

- *Primacy.* The first behaviour pattern that emerges in a group frequently sets team expectations. Groups of students who are friends often stake out seats near each other on the first day of class and become upset if an outsider takes "their" seats in a later class.
- *Carry-over behaviours from past situations.* Group members bring expectations with them from other groups to which they have belonged. Thus work groups typically prefer to add new members who are similar to current ones in background and experience. This is likely to increase the probability that the expectations they bring are consistent with those already held by the group.

Groups don't establish or enforce norms for every conceivable situation, however. The norms that the groups will enforce tend to be those that are important to them.[35] What makes a norm important?

- *It facilitates the group's survival.* Groups don't like to fail, so they seek to enforce any norm that increases their chances for success. This means that they'll try to protect themselves from interference from other groups or individuals.
- *It increases the predictability of group members' behaviours.* Norms that increase predictability enable group members to anticipate each other's actions and to prepare appropriate responses.
- *It reduces embarrassing interpersonal problems for group members.* Norms are important if they ensure the satisfaction of their members and prevent as much interpersonal discomfort as possible.
- *It allows members to express the central values of the group and clarify what is distinctive about the group's identity.* Norms that encourage expression of the group's values and distinctive identity help to solidify and maintain the group.

Conformity

As a group member, you desire acceptance by the group. Because of your desire for acceptance, you are susceptible to conforming to the group's norms. Considerable evidence shows that the group can place strong pressures on individual members to change their attitudes and behaviours to conform to the group's standard.[36]

Do individuals conform to the pressures of all the groups to which they belong? Obviously not, because people belong to many groups and their norms vary. In some cases, groups may even have contradictory norms.

So what do people do? They identify the important groups and teams to which they belong or hope to belong, and conform to them. The important groups have been referred to as **reference groups**. Reference groups are those in which the person:

reference groups
Important groups to which individuals belong or hope to belong and with whose norms individuals are likely to conform.

- is aware of the others in the group;
- defines himself or herself as a member, or would like to be a member; and
- feels that the group members are significant to him or her.[37]

Looking at the impact of reference groups shows us, then, that all groups do not impose equal conformity pressures on their members.

The impact that group pressures for **conformity** can have on an individual member's judgment and attitudes was demonstrated in the now classic studies of noted social psychologist Solomon Asch.[38] Asch found that subjects gave answers that they knew were wrong, but that were consistent with the replies of other group members, about 35 percent of the time. The results suggest that certain group norms pressure us toward conformity. We desire to be one of the group and avoid being visibly different.

conformity
Adjusting your behaviour to align with the norms of the group.

Recent research by University of British Columbia Professor Sandra Robinson and a colleague indicates that conformity may explain why some work groups are more prone to antisocial behaviour than others.[39] Individuals working with others who exhibited antisocial behaviour at work were more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour themselves. Of course, not all conformity leads to negative behaviour. Other research has indicated that work groups can have more positive influences, leading to more prosocial behaviour in the workplace.[40]

Overall, research continues to indicate that conformity to norms is a powerful force in groups and teams. The *Ethical Dilemma Exercise* on page 217 asks you to consider whether team pressures might have made an Enron-like scandal less (or more) possible.

Deviant Workplace Behaviour

Ted Vowinkel is frustrated by a co-worker who constantly spreads malicious and unsubstantiated rumours about him. Debra Hundley is tired of a member of her work team who, when confronted with a problem, takes out his frustration by yelling and screaming at her and other work team members. Rhonda Lieberman recently quit her job as a dental hygienist after being constantly sexually harassed by her employer.

What do these three episodes have in common? They represent employees being exposed to acts of **deviant workplace behaviour**. This term covers a full range of antisocial actions by organizational members that intentionally violate established norms and that result in negative consequences for the organization, its members, or both. Professor Sandra Robinson, of the Faculty of Commerce at the University of British Columbia, and a colleague identified a typology of deviant workplace behaviours, shown in Exhibit 5-3.

deviant workplace behaviour Antisocial actions by organizational members that intentionally violate established norms and that result in negative consequences for the organization, its members, or both.

Few organizations will admit to creating or condoning conditions that encourage and maintain deviant norms. Yet they exist. Employees report, for example, an increase

Exhibit 5-3

Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviour

Category	Examples
Production	Leaving early
	Intentionally working slowly
	Wasting resources
Property	Sabotage
	Lying about hours worked
	Stealing from the organization
Political	Showing favouritism
	Gossiping and spreading rumours
	Blaming co-workers
Personal aggression	Sexual harassment
	Verbal abuse
	Stealing from co-workers

Source: Adapted from S.L. Robinson and R.J. Bennett, "A Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviours: A Multidimensional Scaling Study," *Academy of Management Journal,* April 1995, p. 565.

in rudeness and disregard toward others by bosses and co-workers in recent years. Nearly half of employees who have suffered this incivility report that it has led them to think about changing jobs, with 12 percent actually quitting because of it.[41]

As with norms in general, individual employees' antisocial actions are shaped by the group context within which they work. Evidence demonstrates that the antisocial behaviour exhibited by a work group is a significant predictor of an individual's antisocial behaviour at work.[42] In other words, deviant workplace behaviour is likely to flourish where it's supported by group norms. What this means for managers is that when deviant workplace norms surface, employee cooperation, commitment, and motivation are likely to suffer. This, in turn, can lead to reduced employee productivity and job satisfaction, and increased turnover.

Status

Status is a socially defined position or rank given to groups or group members by others. It permeates all of society. We live in a class-structured society. Despite all attempts to make it more egalitarian, we have made little progress toward a classless society. Even the smallest group will develop roles, rights, and rituals to differentiate its members.

status
A socially defined position or rank given to groups or group members by others.

Status is an important factor in understanding human behaviour because it is a significant motivator. Status has major behavioural consequences when individuals perceive a disparity between what they believe their status to be and what others perceive it to be.

Status and Norms

Status has been shown to have some interesting effects on the power of norms and pressures to conform. For instance, high-status members of groups and teams are often given more freedom to deviate from norms than are other group members.[43] High-status people are also better able to resist conformity pressures than their lower-status peers. An individual who is highly valued by a group, but who doesn't much need or care about the social rewards the group provides, is particularly able to pay minimal attention to conformity norms.[44]

These findings explain why many star athletes, famous actors, top-performing salespeople, and outstanding academics seem oblivious to appearance or social norms that constrain their peers. As high-status individuals, they're given a wider range of discretion. But this is true only as long as the high-status person's activities aren't severely detrimental to group goal achievement.[45]

Status Equity

It is important for group members to believe that the status hierarchy is equitable. When inequity is perceived, it creates disequilibrium that results in various types of corrective behaviour.[46]

The concept of equity presented in Chapter 4 applies to status. People expect rewards to be proportionate to costs incurred. If Isaac and Anne are the two finalists for the head-nurse position in a hospital, and it is clear that Isaac has more seniority and better preparation for assuming the promotion, Anne will view the selection of Isaac to be equitable. However, if Anne is chosen because she is the daughter-in-law of the hospital director, Isaac will believe that an injustice has been committed.

The trappings that go with formal positions are also important elements in maintaining equity. When we believe there is an inequity between the perceived ranking of an individual and the status rewards that the organization gives the person, we are experiencing status incongruence.

For instance, pay incongruence has long been a problem in the insurance industry, where top sales agents often earn two to five times more than senior corporate executives. The result is that insurance companies find it difficult to entice successful agents into

Everyone who works at Toronto-based Willow Manufacturing, even president Dennis Wild, wears the same style uniform. That's one way the company conveys that everyone at Willow is part of the team, and equally important.

management positions. Other examples are when a lower-ranking individual has a more desirable office location than someone higher up, or when a company provides paid country club memberships for division managers but not for vice-presidents. Basically, employees expect an individual to receive things that match his or her status.

Groups generally agree within themselves on status criteria, and hence, there is usually high concurrence in group rankings of individuals. However, individuals can find themselves in conflict when they move between teams whose status criteria are different, or when they join teams whose members have heterogeneous backgrounds. For instance, business executives may use personal income or the growth rate of their companies as determinants of status. Government bureaucrats may use the size of their budgets. Professional employees and entrepreneurs may use the degree of autonomy that comes with their job assignment. Blue-collar workers may use years of seniority.

In teams composed of heterogeneous individuals, or when heterogeneous teams are forced to be interdependent, status differences may initiate conflict as the team tries to reconcile and align the differing hierarchies. As we'll see in the next chapter, this can be a particular problem when management creates teams composed of employees from across varied functions within the organization.

Status and Culture

Before we leave the topic of status, we should briefly address the issue of cross-cultural transferability. Do cultural differences affect status? The answer is a resounding "yes!"[47]

The importance of status does vary between cultures. The French, for example, are highly status conscious. Additionally, countries differ on the criteria that create status. For instance, status for Latin Americans and Asians tends to be derived from family position and formal roles held in organizations. In contrast, while status is still important in Canada, Australia, and the United States, it tends to be less "in your face." It also tends to be bestowed more through accomplishments than titles and family trees.

The message here is that you should make sure you understand who and what holds status when you interact with people from a different culture. A North American manager who doesn't understand that office size is no measure of a Japanese executive's position, or who fails to grasp the importance that the British place on family genealogy and social class, may unintentionally offend his or her Japanese or British counterpart. In so doing, the manager will lessen his or her interpersonal effectiveness.

Stages of Group and Team Development

When people get together for the first time with the purpose of achieving some objective, they must realize that acting as a team is not something simple, easy, or genetically programmed. Working in a group or team is often difficult, particularly in the initial stages, when people don't necessarily know each other. As time passes, groups and teams go through various stages of development, although the stages are not necessarily exactly the same for each group or team. In this section, we review the better-known five-stage model of group development, and then the more recently discovered punctuated-equilibrium model. These models can be applied equally to groups and teams.

The Five-Stage Model

From the mid-1960s, it was believed that groups passed through a standard sequence of five stages.[48] As shown in Exhibit 5-4, these five stages have been labelled *forming*, *storming*, *norming*, *performing*, and *adjourning*. Although we now know that not all groups pass through these stages in a linear fashion, the model can still help in addressing your anxieties about working in groups and teams.

- *Stage I: Forming*. Think about the first time you met with a new team. Do you remember how some people seemed silent and others felt confused about the task you were to accomplish? Those feelings arise during the first stage of group development, know as **forming**. Forming is characterized by a great deal of uncertainty about the team's purpose, structure, and leadership. Members are "testing the waters" to determine what types of behaviour are acceptable. This stage is complete when members have begun to think of themselves as part of a team.

forming
The first stage in group development, characterized by much uncertainty.

- *Stage II: Storming*. Do you remember how some people in your team just didn't seem to get along, and sometimes power struggles even emerged? These reactions are typical of the **storming** stage, which is one of intragroup conflict. Members accept the existence of the team, but resist the constraints that the team imposes on individuality. Furthermore, there is conflict over who will control the team. When this stage is complete, a relatively clear hierarchy of leadership will emerge within the team.

storming
The second stage in group development, characterized by intragroup conflict.

Some teams never really emerge from the storming stage, or they move back and forth through storming and the other stages. A team that remains forever planted in the storming stage may have less ability to complete the task because of all the interpersonal problems.

- *Stage III: Norming*. Many teams resolve the interpersonal conflict and reach the third stage, in which close relationships develop and the team demonstrates cohesiveness. There is now a strong sense of team identity and camaraderie. This **norming** stage is complete when the team structure solidifies, and the team has assimilated a common set of expectations of what defines correct member behaviour.

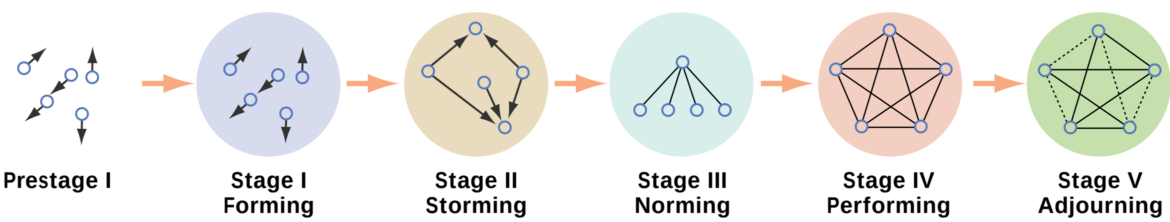
norming
The third stage in group development, characterized by close relationships and cohesiveness.

- *Stage IV: Performing*. Next, and you may have noticed this in some of your own team interactions, some teams just seem to come together well and start to do their work. This fourth stage, when significant task progress is being made, is called **performing**. The structure at this point is fully functional and accepted. Team energy has moved from getting to know and understand each other to

performing
The fourth stage in group development, when the group is fully functional.

Exhibit 5-4

Stages of Group Development



performing the task at hand. In our opening vignette, when Glenforest Secondary raced its robot in the annual competition, it was performing.

- *Stage V: Adjourning.* For permanent work groups and teams, performing is the last stage in their development. However, for temporary committees, teams, task forces, and similar groups that have a limited task to perform, there is an **adjourning** stage. In this stage, the group prepares for its disbandment. High task performance is no longer the group's top priority. Instead, attention is directed toward wrapping up activities. Group members' responses vary at this stage. Some members are upbeat, basking in the group's accomplishments. Others may be depressed over the loss of camaraderie and friendships gained during the work group's life.

adjourning
The final stage in group development for temporary groups, characterized by concern with wrapping up activities rather than task performance.

Putting the Five-Stage Model into Perspective

Many interpreters of the five-stage model have assumed that a group becomes more effective as it progresses through the first four stages. This assumption may be generally true, but what makes a group effective is more complex than this model acknowledges. Under some conditions, high levels of conflict are conducive to high group performance, as long as the conflict is directed toward the task and not toward group members. So we might expect to find situations where groups in Stage II outperform those in Stages III or IV. Similarly, groups do not always proceed clearly from one stage to the next. Sometimes, in fact, several stages go on simultaneously, as when groups are storming and performing at the same time. Teams even occasionally regress to previous stages. Therefore, even the strongest proponents of this model do not assume that all groups follow the five-stage process precisely, or that Stage IV is always the most preferable.

Another problem with the five-stage model is that it ignores organizational context.[49] For instance, a study of a cockpit crew in an airliner found that, within 10 minutes, three strangers assigned to fly together for the first time had become a high-performing team. How could a team come together so quickly? The answer lies in the strong organizational context surrounding the tasks of the cockpit crew. This context provided the rules, task definitions, information, and resources needed for the team to perform. They didn't need to develop plans, assign roles, determine and allocate resources, resolve conflicts, and set norms the way the five-stage model predicts.

Within the workplace, some group behaviour takes place within a strong organizational context, and it would appear that the five-stage development model has limited applicability for those groups. However, there are a variety of situations in the workplace where groups are assigned to tasks and the individuals do not know each other. They must therefore work out interpersonal differences at the same time that they work through the assigned tasks.

The Punctuated-Equilibrium Model

Studies of more than a dozen field and laboratory task force groups confirmed that not all groups develop in a universal sequence of stages.[50]

In particular, temporary groups with deadlines have their own unique sequencing of action (or inaction):

Ever wonder what causes flurries of activity in groups?

- The first meeting sets the group's direction.
- The first phase of group activity is one of inertia.
- A transition takes place at the end of the first phase, which occurs exactly when the group has used up half its allotted time.
- The transition initiates major changes.

- A second phase of inertia follows the transition.
- The group's last meeting is characterized by markedly accelerated activity.

This pattern is called the punctuated-equilibrium model, developed by Professor Connie Gersick of the University of California at Los Angeles, and is shown in Exhibit 5-5.[51] It is important for you to understand these shifts in group behaviour, if for no other reason than when you're in a group that is not working well or one that has got off to a slow start, you can start to think of ways to help the group move to a more productive phase.

Phase 1

As both a team member and possibly a team leader, it is important that you recognize that the first meeting sets the team's direction. A framework of behavioural patterns and assumptions through which the team will approach its project emerges in this first meeting. These lasting patterns can appear as early as the first few seconds of the team's life.

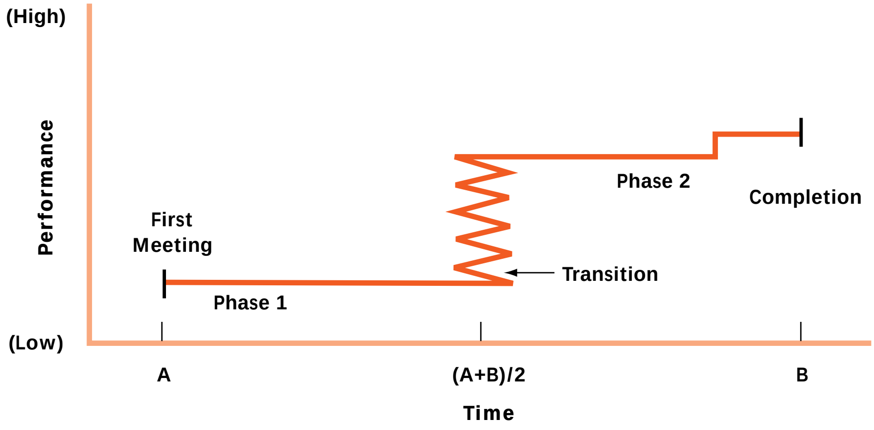
Once set, the team's direction becomes "written in stone" and is unlikely to be re-examined throughout the first half of the team's life. This is a period of inertia—that is, the team tends to stand still or become locked into a fixed course of action. Even if it gains new insights that challenge initial patterns and assumptions, the team is incapable of acting on these new insights in Phase 1. You may recognize that in some teams, during the early period of trying to get things accomplished, no one really did his or her assigned tasks. You may also recognize this phase as one where everyone carries out the tasks, but not in a very coordinated fashion. Thus, the team is performing at a relatively low state. This does not necessarily mean that it is doing nothing at all, however.

Phase 2

At some point, the team moves out of the inertia stage and recognizes that work needs to get completed. One of the more interesting discoveries made in these studies was that each team experienced its transition at the same point in its calendar—precisely halfway between its first meeting and its official deadline. The similarity occurred despite the fact that some teams spent as little as an hour on their project while others spent six months. It was as if the teams universally experienced a mid-life crisis at this point. The midpoint appears to work like an alarm clock, heightening members' awareness that their

Exhibit 5-5

The Punctuated-Equilibrium Model



time is limited and that they need to "get moving." When you work on your next team project, you might want to examine when your team starts to "get moving."

This transition ends Phase 1 and is characterized by a concentrated burst of changes, dropping of old patterns, and adoption of new perspectives. The transition sets a revised direction for Phase 2, which is a new equilibrium or period of inertia. In this phase, the team executes plans created during the transition period. The team's last meeting is characterized by a final burst of activity to finish its work.

We can use this model to describe typical experiences of student teams created for doing group term projects. At the first meeting, a basic timetable is established. Members size up one another. They agree they have nine weeks to do their project. The instructor's requirements are discussed and debated. From that point, the group meets regularly to carry out its activities. About four or five weeks into the project, however, problems are confronted. Criticism begins to be taken seriously. Discussion becomes more open. The group reassesses where it has been and aggressively moves to make necessary changes. If the right changes are made, the next four or five weeks find the group developing a first-rate project. The group's last meeting, which will probably occur just before the project is due, lasts longer than the others. In it, all final issues are discussed and details resolved.

In summary, the punctuated-equilibrium model characterizes teams as exhibiting long periods of inertia, interspersed with brief revolutionary changes triggered primarily by their members' awareness of time and deadlines. To use the terminology of the five-stage team development model, the team begins by combining the forming and norming stages, then goes through a period of low performing, followed by storming, then a period of high performing, and, finally, adjourning. (Keep in mind that this model is more appropriate for understanding temporary task teams that are working under a time-constrained deadline.)

Creating Effective Teams

There is no shortage of efforts that try to identify factors related to team effectiveness.[52] However, recent studies have taken what was once a "veritable laundry list of characteristics"[53] and organized them into a relatively focused model.[54] Exhibit 5-6 summarizes what we currently know about what makes teams effective, assuming a situation demands a team. Keep in mind two caveats before we proceed. First, teams differ in form and structure. Since the model we present attempts to generalize across all varieties of teams, you need to be careful not to rigidly apply the model's predictions to all teams.[55] The model should be used as a guide, not as an inflexible prescription. Second, the model assumes that it's already been determined that teamwork is preferable to individual work. Creating "effective" teams when individuals can do the job better is equivalent to solving the wrong problem perfectly.

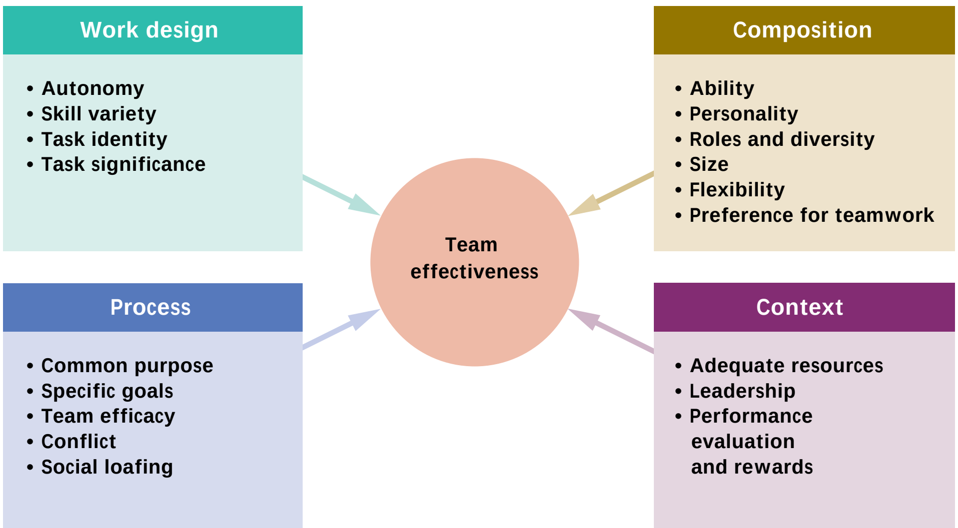
The key components making up effective teams can be discussed in four general categories:

- work design;
- the team's composition;
- resources and other contextual influences that make teams effective;
- process variables (those things that go on in the team that influence how effective the team is)

When measuring effectiveness, we might consider objective measures of the team's productivity, managers' ratings of the team's performance, and aggregate measures of member satisfaction.

Exhibit 5-6

A Model of Team Effectiveness



Work Design

Effective teams need to work together and take collective responsibility to complete significant tasks. They must be more than a "team-in-name-only."[56] The work design category includes variables such as freedom and autonomy, the opportunity to utilize different skills and talents, the ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product, and the participation in a task or project that has a substantial impact on others. The evidence indicates that these characteristics enhance member motivation and increase team effectiveness.[57] These work design characteristics motivate teams because they increase members' sense of responsibility and ownership over the work, and because they make the work more interesting to perform.[58]

Composition

Why do some groups seem to get along other better than others?

Managers need to understand the individual strengths that each person can bring to a team, select members with their strengths in mind, and allocate work assignments that fit with members' preferred styles. By matching individual preferences with team role demands, managers increase the likelihood that the team members will work well together.

Some of the considerations necessary to create effective teams are outlined next. For an applied look at the process of team building, see the *Working With Others Exercise* on page 216, which asks you to build a paper tower with teammates and then analyze how the team performed. The *Case Incident in the News* on page 218 looks at other ways of engaging in team building.

Abilities

To perform effectively, a team requires three different types of skills.

- First, it needs people with *technical expertise*.
- Second, it needs people with the *problem-solving* and *decision-making skills* to be able to identify problems, generate alternatives, evaluate those alternatives, and make competent choices.

- Third, teams need people with good listening, feedback, conflict resolution, and other *interpersonal skills*.[59] This chapter's *From Concepts to Skills* discusses the importance of building trust as part of team-building activities.

No team can achieve its performance potential without developing all three types of skills. The right mix is crucial. Too much of one at the expense of others will result in lower team performance. But teams don't need to have all the complementary skills in place at the beginning. It's not uncommon for one or more members to take responsibility to learn the skills in which the group is deficient, thereby allowing the team to reach its full potential.

Personality

Teams have different needs, and people should be selected for the team on the basis of their personalities and preferences, as well as the team's needs for diversity and filling of roles. We demonstrated in Chapter 2 that personality has a significant influence on individual employee behaviour. This can also be extended to team behaviour. Many of the dimensions identified in the Big Five Personality Model have been shown to be relevant to team effectiveness. Specifically, teams that rate higher in mean levels of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability tend to receive higher managerial ratings for team performance.[60]

Very interestingly, the evidence indicates that the variance in personality characteristics may be more important than the mean.[61] So, for example, although higher mean levels of conscientiousness on a team are desirable, mixing both conscientious and not-so-conscientious members tends to lower performance. Including just one person who is low on agreeableness, conscientiousness, or extroversion can result in strained internal processes and decreased overall performance.[62]

Roles

Earlier in the chapter we discussed how individuals fill roles within groups. Within almost any group, two sets of role relationships need to be considered: task-oriented roles and maintenance roles. **Task-oriented roles** are performed by group members to ensure that the tasks of the group are accomplished. These roles include initiators, information seekers, information providers, elaborators, summarizers, and consensus makers. **Maintenance roles** are carried out to ensure that group members maintain good relations. These roles include harmonizers, compromisers, gatekeepers, and encouragers. In the opening vignette we saw that Beatrice Sze was an encourager—helping team members achieve their best.

task-oriented roles
Roles performed by group members to ensure that the tasks of the group are accomplished.

maintenance roles
Roles performed by group members to maintain good relations within the group.

Effective teams maintain some balance between task orientation and maintenance of relations. Exhibit 5-7 identifies a number of task-oriented and maintenance behaviours in the key roles that you might find in a team.

On many teams, there are individuals who will be flexible enough to play multiple roles and/or complete each other's tasks. This is an obvious plus to a team because it greatly improves its adaptability and makes it less reliant on any single member.[63] Selecting members who themselves value flexibility, and then cross-training them to be able to do each other's jobs, should lead to higher team performance over time.

Occasionally within teams, you will see people take on **individual roles** that are not productive for keeping the team on task. When this happens, the individual is demonstrating more concern for himself or herself than the team as a whole.

individual roles
Roles performed by group members that are not productive for keeping the group on task.

Size

Does the size of a team affect the team's overall behaviour? The answer to this question is a definite "yes," but how behaviour is affected depends on the dependent variables you consider.[64]

The evidence indicates, for instance, that smaller teams are faster at completing tasks than larger ones. However, if the team is engaged in problem-solving, large teams consistently get better marks than their smaller counterparts.

Translating these results into specific numbers is a bit more hazardous, but we can offer some parameters. Large teams—with a dozen or more members—are good for gaining diverse input. So if the goal of the team is fact-finding, larger groups should be more effective. On the other hand, smaller groups are better at doing something productive with that input. Teams of approximately seven members, therefore, tend to be more effective for taking action.

Watching a veteran employee on the housekeeping staff helped Lisa Jackson (left) learn her role as a housekeeper at a Marriott hotel. In addition to teaching on-the-job skills such as the proper way to make a bed, Jackson's apprenticeship training included observing how employees should react in stressful situations.

Member Flexibility

Teams made up of flexible individuals have members who can complete each other's tasks. This is an obvious plus to a team because it greatly improves its adaptability and makes it less reliant on any single member.[65] So selecting members who themselves value flexibility, then cross-training them to be able to do each other's jobs, should lead to higher team performance over time.

Not every employee is a team player. Given the option, many employees will "select themselves out" of team participation. When people who would prefer to work alone are required to team up, there is a direct threat to the team's morale.[66] This suggests that, when selecting team members, individual preferences should be considered, as well as abilities, personalities, and skills. High-performing teams are likely to be composed of people who prefer working as part of a team.

Context

The three contextual factors that appear to be most significantly related to team performance are the presence of adequate resources, effective leadership, and a performance evaluation and reward system that reflects team contributions.

Resources

All work teams rely on resources outside the team to sustain them. A scarcity of resources directly reduces the ability of a team to perform its job effectively. As one set of researchers concluded, after looking at 13 factors potentially related to team performance, "perhaps one of the most important characteristics of an effective work group is the support the group receives from the organization."[67] This includes such support as technology, adequate staffing, administrative assistance, encouragement, and timely information.

Teams must receive the necessary support from management and the larger organization if they are going to succeed in achieving their goals. You may recall from the opening vignette that one of the reasons for the Glenforest team's failure in 2001 was that it didn't have the kind of coaching it needed to build a great robot. For the 2002 competition, the team found a mentor, and also created a workshop at one of the team member's homes.

Exhibit 5-7

Roles Required for Effective Team Functioning

	Function	Description	Example
Roles that build task accomplishment	*Initiating*	Stating the goal or problem, making proposals about how to work on it, setting time limits.	"Let's set up an agenda for discussing each of the problems we have to consider."
	Seeking Information and Opinions	Asking group members for specific factual information related to the task or problem, or for their opinions about it.	"What do you think would be the best approach to this, Jack?"
	Providing Information and Opinions	Sharing information or opinions related to the task or problems.	"I worked on a similar problem last year and found…."
	Clarifying	Helping one another understand ideas and suggestions that come up in the group.	"What you mean, Sue, is that we could…?"
	Elaborating	Building on one another's ideas and suggestions.	"Building on Don's idea, I think we could…."
	Summarizing	Reviewing the points covered by the group and the different ideas stated so that decisions can be based on full information.	Appointing a recorder to take notes on a blackboard.
	Consensus Testing	Periodic testing about whether the group is nearing a decision or needs to continue discussion.	"Is the group ready to decide about this?"
Roles that build and maintain a team	*Harmonizing*	Mediating conflict among other members, reconciling disagreements, relieving tensions.	"Don, I don't think you and Sue really see the question that differently."
	Compromising	Admitting error at times of group conflict.	"Well, I'd be willing to change if you provided some help on…."
	Gatekeeping	Making sure all members have a chance to express their ideas and feelings and preventing members from being interrupted.	"Sue, we haven't heard from you on this issue."
	Encouraging	Helping a group member make his or her point. Establishing a climate of acceptance in the group.	"I think what you started to say is important, Jack. Please continue."

Source: "Team Processes," in D. Ancona, T. Kochan, M. Scully, J. Van Maanen, D.E. Westney, *Managing for the Future* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 1996), p. 9.

Leadership and Structure

Team members must agree on who is to do what, and ensure that all members contribute equally in sharing the workload. The team also needs to determine how schedules will be set, what skills need to be developed, how the team will resolve conflicts, and how the team will make and modify decisions. Agreeing on the specifics of work and how they fit together to integrate individual skills requires team leadership and structure. This, incidentally, can be provided directly by management or by the team members themselves. In the case of the Glenforest students in the opening vignette, the team was led by two student co-captains. The adult advisers did not try to tell the students what to do.

A leader, of course, isn't always needed. For instance, the evidence indicates that self-managed work teams often perform better than teams with formally appointed leaders.[68] Leaders can also obstruct high performance when they interfere with self-managing teams.[69] On self-managed teams, team members absorb many of the duties typically assumed by managers.

On traditionally managed teams, we find that two factors seem to be important in influencing team performance—the leader's expectations and his or her mood. Leaders who expect good things from their team are more likely to get them! For instance, military platoons under leaders who held high expectations performed significantly better in training than control platoons.[70] Additionally, studies have found that leaders who exhibit positive moods get better team performance and lower turnover.[71]

Performance Evaluation and Rewards

Should individuals be paid for their "team-work" or their individual performance?

How do you get team members to be both individually and jointly accountable? The traditional individually oriented evaluation must be modified to reflect team performance.[72] At Imperial Oil, team members provide feedback to each other in three critical areas: team results, team functioning/effectiveness, and personal effectiveness. Exhibit 5-8 illustrates the behaviours expected of team members at Imperial Oil.

Imperial Oil
www.imperialoil.ca

This type of appraisal reminds members of their responsibilities to their team. Teams should not rely solely on the formal performance appraisal process, however. To manage the team process more effectively, the team might encourage presentations of work in progress to get feedback from members and/or outsiders on quality and completeness of work. Sitting down together informally and reviewing both individual and team behaviour helps keep the team on track.

Reward Systems That Acknowledge Team Effort A Conference Board of Canada study of teams in the workplace found that the most commonly used incentive to acknowledge teamwork was recognition, including "small financial rewards, plaques, ceremonies, publicity in company newspapers, and celebrations of success at company gatherings," used by well over half of the companies surveyed.73 Other forms of team reward include team cash bonus plans (used by 25 percent of the surveyed companies) and gainsharing (used by 17 percent of the companies).74

Companies across Canada are using team rewards. For example, Canadian Tire offers team incentives to employees of its gas bars. "Secret" retail shoppers visit the outlets on a regular basis, and score them on such factors as cleanliness, manner in which the transaction was processed, and the type of products offered, using a 100-point scoring system. Scores above a particular threshold provide additional compensation that is shared by the team. Xerox Canada has its XTRA program, which rewards districts for achieving profit and customer satisfaction targets. Everyone in the district shares equally in the bonuses.

Do these team rewards make a difference to team performance? The evidence addressing this question is mixed. Certainly, there is a belief that if you want team commitment and cooperation, it does not make sense to focus on individual behaviour. And there is evidence that small team rewards, where there are clear links between the team's performance and the reward, do motivate team members.[75]

Exhibit 5-8

Team Behaviour at Imperial Oil

Individuals are asked to assess team members in three major areas. Behaviours related to these areas are indicated.

Team Results	Team Functioning	Personal Effectiveness
Effort	Sustaining morale and team spirit	Giving personal support
Achieving individual role requirements	Recognizing others' contributions and opinions	Giving recognition
Collaborating with others toward achieving common goals	Listening	Giving clear and useful feedback
Smoothing relationships with customers/suppliers	Solving problems without taking total ownership	Enthusiasm
Adhering to standards	Resolving conflict but maintaining everyone's dignity	Understanding of priorities
Realizing tactical plans	Helping the team carry out strategic long-term thinking and planning	Skill expansion
	Living up to company principles, values, and ethics	Understanding of roles and behaviours
	Building trust by meeting commitments and keeping agreements	Growth and development
		Mentoring
		Understanding interpersonal relationships
		Pointing out opportunities and risks regarding career development

Source: Extracted from P. Booth, *Challenge and Change: Embracing the Team Concept*, Report 123–94, Conference Board of Canada, 1994.

However, others argue that the conditions of goal-setting theory and expectancy theory (described in Chapter 4) are not satisfied when there are team incentives. Specifically, team incentives can make it harder for individuals to see that goals are achievable, and individuals may be less likely to see the link between performance and outcomes. Team incentives can lead to feelings of inequity as well if some members of the team do not carry their weight. A field study of 150 teams found that when teams worked on tasks, it was the degree of interdependence of the tasks that related to cooperation, helping, job satisfaction, and the quality of the team process. The type of reward system (individual or team) had no effect on these factors. Team rewards may also lead to competition *between* teams, and decrease the flow of information across teams.[76]

At the moment, more research on this issue needs to be conducted, particularly because studies on team incentives and performance conducted in the field have been less conclusive than those conducted in the laboratory.[77]

One additional consideration when deciding whether and how to reward team members is effect of pay dispersion on team performance. Research by Nancy Langton shows that when there is a large discrepancy in wages among group members, collaboration is lowered.[78] A study of baseball player salaries also found that teams where players were paid more similarly often outperformed teams with highly paid "stars" and lowly paid "scrubs."[79]

Process

The final category related to team effectiveness is process variables. These include member commitment to a common purpose; establishment of specific team goals; team efficacy; a managed level of conflict; and a system of accountability.

A Common Purpose

Effective teams have a common and meaningful purpose that provides direction, momentum, and commitment for members.[80] This purpose is a vision. It's broader than specific goals.

The New Brunswick government's former Department of Economic Development and Tourism illustrates how a common purpose can empower employees. The department's vision statement, which included the mandates "Help create jobs for our fellow New Brunswickers" and "Do things well or not at all," inspired some of its employees to develop strategies to attract telemarketing firms to New Brunswick. When the provincial government agreed to provide the employees with only half of the anticipated $100 000 needed to implement their strategy, the employees didn't give up. Instead, they successfully approached NB Tel for the other $50 000. Less than a year later, telemarketing and call centres became the fastest-growing sector in New Brunswick.[81] By 2002, New Brunswick's call centre industry employed 16 000, more than the province's forestry industry, which historically was the largest employer.[82]

NB Tel
www.nbtel.nb.ca

Members of successful teams put a tremendous amount of time and effort into discussing, shaping, and agreeing upon a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually. This common purpose, when accepted by the team, becomes the equivalent of what celestial navigation is to a ship captain—it provides direction and guidance under any and all conditions.

cohesiveness
Degree to which team members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay on the team.

Specific Goals

Successful teams translate their common purpose into specific, measurable, and realistic performance goals. Just as we demonstrated in Chapter 4 how goals lead individuals to higher performance, goals also energize teams. These specific goals facilitate clear communication. They also help teams maintain their focus on achieving results.

Consistent with the research on individual goals, team goals should be challenging. Difficult goals have been found to raise team performance on those criteria for which they're set. So, for instance, goals for quantity tend to raise quantity, goals for speed tend to raise speed, goals for accuracy raise accuracy, and so on.[83]

Teams should also be encouraged to develop milestones—tangible steps toward completion of the project. This allows teams to focus on their goal and evaluate progress toward the goal. The milestones should be sufficiently important and readily accomplished so that teams can celebrate some of their accomplishments along the way.

Team Efficacy

Effective teams have confidence in themselves. They believe they can succeed. We call this *team efficacy*.[84]

Success breeds success. Teams that have been successful raise their beliefs about future success which, in turn, motivates them to work harder. One of the factors that helps teams build their efficacy is **cohesiveness**—the degree to which members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay on the team.[85] Though teams differ in their cohesiveness, it is important because it has been found to be related to the team's productivity.[86]

A recent study of 23 National Basketball Association teams found that "shared experience"—tenure on the team and time on court—tended to improve turnover and boost win-loss performance significantly. Why do you think teams that stay together longer tend to play better?

Exhibit 5-9

Relationship Between Team Cohesiveness, Performance Norms, and Productivity

Performance Norms	Cohesiveness: High	Cohesiveness: Low
High	High productivity	Moderate productivity
Low	Low productivity	Moderate to low productivity

Studies consistently show that the relationship of cohesiveness and productivity depends on the performance-related norms established by the group. If performance-related norms are high (for example, high output, quality work, cooperation with individuals outside the group), a cohesive group will be more productive than a less cohesive group. If cohesiveness is high and performance norms are low, productivity will be low. If cohesiveness is low and performance norms are high, productivity increases—but less than in the high cohesiveness–high norms situation. Where cohesiveness and performance-related norms are both low, productivity will tend to fall into the low-to-moderate range. These conclusions are summarized in Exhibit 5-9.

What, if anything, can management do to increase team efficacy? Two possible options are helping the team to achieve small successes and skill training. Small successes build team confidence. As a team develops an increasingly stronger performance record, it also increases the collective belief that future efforts will lead to success. In addition, managers should consider providing training to improve members' technical and interpersonal skills. The greater the abilities of team members, the greater the likelihood that the team will develop confidence and the capability to deliver on that confidence.

Conflict Levels

Conflict on a team isn't necessarily bad. Though relationship conflicts—those based on interpersonal incompatibilities, tension, and animosity toward others—are almost always dysfunctional, teams that are completely void of conflict are likely to become apathetic and stagnant. We'll elaborate this in Chapter 8.

Some types of conflict can actually improve team effectiveness.[87] On teams performing nonroutine activities, disagreements among members about task content (called task conflicts) are often beneficial because they lessen the likelihood of groupthink. Task conflicts stimulate discussion, promote critical assessment of problems and options, and can lead to better team decisions. So effective teams will be characterized by an appropriate level of conflict.

Social Loafing and Accountability

social loafing
The tendency for individuals to expend less effort when working collectively than when working individually.

One of the most important findings related to the size of a team has been labelled **social loafing**. Social loafing is the tendency for individuals to expend less effort when working collectively than when working individually.[88] It directly challenges the logic that the productivity of the team as a whole should at least equal the sum of the productivity of each individual in that team. The *Focus on Research* explains how social loafing occurs.

FOCUS ON **RESEARCH**

Teams Are Not Always the Sum of Their Parts

Do individuals exert less effort when they're on teams? A common stereotype is that team spirit spurs individual effort and enhances the team's overall productivity.

In the late 1920s, German psychologist Max Ringelmann compared the results of individual and team performance on a rope-pulling task.[89] He expected that the team's effort would be equal to the sum of the efforts of individuals within the team. That is, three people pulling together should exert three times as much pull on the rope as one person, and eight people should exert eight times as much pull. Ringelmann's results, however, did not confirm his expectations. One person pulling on a rope alone exerted an average of 63 kilograms of force. In groups of three, per-person force dropped to 53 kilograms. And in groups of eight, it fell to only 31 kilograms per person.

Replications of Ringelmann's research with similar tasks have generally supported his findings.[90] Increases in team size are inversely related to individual performance. More may be better in the sense that the total productivity of a group of four is greater than that of one or two people, but the individual productivity of each group member declines.

Ever notice that some group members don't seem to pull their weight?

What causes this social loafing effect? It may be due to a belief that others in the team are not carrying their fair share. If you view others as lazy or inept, you can re-establish equity by reducing your effort. Another explanation is the dispersion of responsibility. Because the results of the team cannot be attributed to any single person, the relationship between an individual's input and the team's output is clouded. In such situations, individuals may be tempted to become "free riders" and coast on the team's efforts. In other words, there will be a reduction in efficiency when individuals believe that their contribution cannot be measured.

Successful teams make members individually and jointly accountable for the team's purpose, goals, and approach.[91] They clearly define what they are individually responsible for and what they are jointly responsible for.

Teams and Workforce Diversity

Managing diversity on teams is a balancing act (see Exhibit 5-10). Diversity typically provides fresh perspectives on issues, but it makes it more difficult to unify the team and reach agreements.

The strongest case for diversity on work teams is when these teams are engaged in problem-solving and decision-making tasks.[92] Heterogeneous teams bring multiple perspectives to the discussion, thus increasing the likelihood that these teams will identify creative or unique solutions.[93] Additionally, the lack of a common perspective usu-

Exhibit 5-10

Advantages and Disadvantages of Diversity

Advantages	Disadvantages
Multiple perspectives	Ambiguity
Greater openness to new ideas	Complexity
Multiple interpretations	Confusion
Increased creativity	Miscommunication
Increased flexibility	Difficulty in reaching a single agreement
Increased problem-solving skills	Difficulty in agreeing on specific actions

Source: Adapted from *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 4th ed., by N.J. Adler. Copyright © 2002 (p. 109). By permission of South-Western College publishing, a division of International Thomsen Publishing, Inc., Cincinnati, OH 45227.

ally means diverse teams spend more time discussing issues, which decreases the possibility that a weak alternative will be chosen.

However, diverse teams have more difficulty working together and solving problems, and they are more likely to delay holding initial meetings, be less satisfied with their team experience, and rate team effectiveness and efficiency lower.[94] These factors decrease with time as the members come to know each other. Expect the value-added component of diverse teams to increase as members become more familiar with each other and the team becomes more cohesive. Diverse teams will also do better if they create shared cooperative norms early on in the team history.[95]

But what about diversity created by racial or national differences? The evidence is mixed.[96] Culturally heterogeneous teams have more difficulty in learning to work with each other and solving problems, in part because of cultural norms. Culturally diverse teams also report less cohesiveness and less satisfaction with the group process.

The good news is that these difficulties seem to dissipate over time. Cultural diversity seems to be an asset on tasks that call for a variety of viewpoints. Newly formed culturally diverse groups may underperform newly formed culturally homogeneous teams, but the evidence on this is mixed.[97] At worst, the differences seem to disappear after about three months. It may take diverse groups a while to learn how to work through disagreements and different approaches to solving problems.

Diversity among team members may not always be a problem, as shown in *Focus on Diversity*, which features research done by Professor Barbara Kelsey of Ryerson University.

FOCUS ON **DIVERSITY**

Questioning the Impact of Diversity

Do diverse teams really have more difficulty learning how to work together? Professor Barbara Kelsey of Ryerson University studied groups of Caucasian and Chinese men living in Canada to see how being a token ethnic member in a group (the only Chinese or the only Caucasian) would affect participation and influence levels in groups.[98] Some groups worked face to face, others by computer only.

What Kelsey found for the face-to-face groups was that Caucasian males, whether tokens or dominants in their groups, had higher participation levels on average than Chinese males. However, in face-to-face groups dominated by Chinese males, the Chinese males also had relatively high participation rates. Only the token Chinese males were low on participation or influence on their groups.

In the computer-only groups, the ethnicity of group members could be determined in some groups, while for others it could not. In those groups where the ethnicity of team members was unknown, there were no differences in participation rates of Chinese and Caucasian men.

Kelsey's research suggests that participation and influence may be less a cultural issue, and more related to how individuals respond to visible differences when interacting with diverse team members.

Ever wonder whether having a team built just from people who are friends is desirable?

In a study examining the effectiveness of teams of strangers and teams of friends on bargaining, researchers found that teams of strangers gained greater profit than teams of friends, when teams reported to a supervisor.[99] However, teams of friends were more cohesive than teams of strangers. One potentially negative finding of this research is that teams of friends were more concerned about maintaining their relationship than were teams of strangers. In the workplace, the importance of maintaining relationships could lead to lower productivity.

Honeywell Ltd. in Scarborough, Ontario, which has a large number of employees for whom English is a second language, uses a "Learning for Life" program to help employees cope in a diverse workforce. Employees take courses at the workplace during and after hours to learn about empowerment, conflict resolution, and working in teams. Honeywell's training program looks for practical solutions to address conflicts arising from differences in race, age, gender, religion, values, and cultural norms. The company also tries to help employees understand that conflict resolution varies by culture.[100]

Honeywell Ltd.
www.honeywell.ca

Beware! Teams Aren't Always the Answer

When the Glenforest Secondary students got together to build a robot, it made sense for them to form a team. No student had all the knowledge and skills required to complete the task, as we saw in the opening vignette. However, not every task requires a team.

Teamwork takes more time and often more resources than individual work. Teams, for instance, have increased communication demands, conflicts to be managed, and meetings to be run. So the benefits of using teams have to exceed the costs. That's not always the case. In the excitement to enjoy the benefits of teams, some managers have introduced them into situations where the work is better done by individuals. So before you rush to implement teams, you should carefully assess whether the work requires or will benefit from a collective effort.

How do you know if the work of your group would be better done in teams? It's been suggested that three tests be applied to see if a team fits the situation:[101]

- *Can the work be done better by more than one person?* Simple tasks that don't require diverse input are probably better left to individuals.
- *Does the work create a common purpose or set of goals for the people in the group that is more than the aggregate of individual goals?* For instance, many new car–dealer service departments have introduced teams that link customer service personnel, mechanics, parts specialists, and sales representatives. Such teams can better manage collective responsibility for ensuring that customer needs are properly met.
- *Are the members of the group interdependent?* Teams make sense where there is interdependence between tasks—where the success of the whole depends on the success of each one, and the success of each one depends on the success of the others. Soccer, for instance, is an obvious team sport because of the interdependence of the players. Swim teams, by contrast, are not really teams, but groups of individuals whose total performance is merely the sum of the individual performances.

Others studies have outlined the conditions under which organizations would find teams more useful: "when work processes cut across functional lines; when speed is important (and complex relationships are involved); when the organization mirrors a complex, differentiated and rapidly changing market environment; when innovation and learning have priority; when the tasks that have to be done require online integration of highly interdependent performers."[102]

Summary and Implications

For the Workplace

Few trends have influenced employee jobs as much as the movement to introduce teams into the workplace. The shift from working alone to working on teams requires employees to cooperate with others, share information, confront differences, and sublimate personal interests for the greater good of the team.

Effective teams have been found to have common characteristics. The work that members do should provide freedom and autonomy, the opportunity to use different skills and talents, the ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product, and the belief that the task will have a substantial impact on others. Teams require individuals with technical expertise, as well as problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills; and high scores on the personality characteristics of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Effective teams are neither too large nor too small—typically they range in size from 5 to 12 people. They have members who fill role demands, are flexible, and who prefer to be part of a team. They also have adequate resources, effective leadership, and a performance evaluation and reward system that reflects team contributions. Finally, effective teams have members committed to a common purpose and specific team goals as well as members who believe in the team's capabilities, and tolerate a manageable level of conflict and a minimal degree of social loafing.

Because individualistic organizations and societies attract and reward individual accomplishment, it is more difficult to create team players in these environments. To make the conversion, management should try to select individuals with the interpersonal skills to be effective team players, provide training to develop teamwork skills, and reward individuals for cooperative efforts.

For You as an Individual

You will be asked to work on teams and groups both during your undergraduate years and later in life. A team experience is often a more intense experience than working in a group, because team experiences require more interdependent work. This chapter gave a number of ideas about how to get teams to perform better. Many of those examples related ways that the team itself had to pull together, develop trust, and build cohesion. You might want to use some of those suggestions as you are working to build a team. You might also want to refer to some of those suggestions when a team on which you are working seems to be suffering difficulties.

ROADMAP REMINDER

We arrived at our discussion of teams through the path of motivation. Much of our discussion of motivation was at the individual level, but the fact of the matter is that working in an organization is generally not a loner experience. In general, within organizations are many shared activities that need to be done. In this chapter we've explored the functioning of teams, and how to build a better team. We've indicated that teams and groups are not synonymous; a team is meant to be a much higher-performing entity than a group. In the next chapter, we move to the topic of communication. Now that we have discussed how to motivate individuals and have them work together, we want to consider how to improve communication among individuals in the workplace. The chapter on communication also opens Part 3, The Uneasy Sides of Interaction.

OB *AT WORK*

For Review

1. Contrast self-managed and cross-functional teams.
2. How do norms develop in a team?
3. What are the characteristics of important norms?
4. Explain the implications of the Asch experiments.
5. How can a team minimize social loafing?
6. Describe the five-stage group development model.
7. What are the effects of team size on performance?
8. What is the difference between task-oriented roles and maintenance roles?
9. Contrast the pros and cons of having diverse teams.

For Critical Thinking

1. Identify five roles you play. What behaviours do they require? Are any of these roles in conflict? If so, in what way? How do you resolve these conflicts?
2. How could you use the punctuated-equilibrium model to better understand team behaviour?
3. Have you experienced social loafing as a team member? What did you do to prevent this problem?
4. Would you prefer to work alone or as part of a team? Why? How do you think your answer compares with that of others in your class?
5. What effect, if any, do you think workforce diversity has on a team's performance and satisfaction?

For Self-Assessment

After you've read this chapter, take the following Self-Assessments on your enclosed CD-ROM.

30. How Good Am I at Building and Leading a Team?

OB *AT WORK*

POINT

Sports Teams Are Good Models for Workplace Teams

Studies from football, soccer, basketball, hockey, and baseball have found a number of elements that successful sports teams have that can be extrapolated to successful work teams:[103]

Successful teams integrate cooperation and competition. Effective team coaches get athletes to help one another but also push one another to perform at their best. Sports teams with the best win-loss record had coaches who promoted a strong spirit of cooperation and a high level of healthy competition among their players.

Successful teams score early wins. Early successes build teammates' faith in themselves and their capacity as a team. For instance, research on hockey teams of relatively equal ability found that 72 percent of the time the team that was ahead at the end of the first period went on to win the game. So managers should give teams early tasks that are simple as well as "easy wins."

Successful teams avoid losing streaks. Losing can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. A couple of failures can lead to a downward spiral if a team becomes demoralized and believes it is helpless to end its losing streak. Managers need to instill confidence in team members that they can turn things around when they encounter setbacks.

Practice makes perfect. Successful sports teams execute on game day but learn from their mistakes in practice. A wise manager carves out time and space in which work teams can experiment and learn.

Successful teams use halftime breaks. The best coaches in basketball and football use halftime during a game to reassess what is working and what isn't. Managers of work teams should similarly build in assessments at around the halfway point in a team project to evaluate how the team can improve.

Winning teams have a stable membership. Studies of professional basketball teams have found that the more stable a team's membership, the more likely the team is to win. The more time teammates have together, the more able they are to anticipate one another's moves and the clearer they are about one another's roles.

Successful teams debrief after failures and successes. The best sports teams study the game video. Similarly, work teams need to take time to routinely reflect on both their successes and failures and to learn from them.

COUNTERPOINT

Sports Teams Are Not the Model for All Teams

There are flaws in using sports as a model for developing effective work teams. Here are just four caveats:[104]

All sport teams aren't alike. In baseball, for instance, there is little interaction among teammates. Rarely are more than two or three players directly involved in a play. The performance of the team is largely the sum of the performance of the individual players. In contrast, basketball has much more interdependence among players. Geographic distribution is dense. Usually all players are involved in every play, team members have to be able to switch from offence to defence at a moment's notice, and there is continuous movement by all, not just the player with the ball. The performance of the team is more than the sum of its individual players. So when using sports teams as a model for work teams, you have to make sure you're making the correct comparison.

Work teams are more varied and complex. In an athletic league, teams vary little in their context, their individual design, and the design of the task. But in work teams these variables can differ greatly. As a result, coaching plays a much more significant part in a sports team's performance than a work team's. Performance of work teams is more a function of getting the teams' structural and design variables right. So, in contrast to sports, managers of work teams should focus more on getting the team set up for success than on coaching.

A lot of employees can't relate to sports metaphors. Not everyone on work teams is conversant with sports. Women are still breaking down barriers for equal treatment in many sports, for example, so individuals may well have very different personal sports experience to draw from. Team members from different cultures also may not know the sports terms you're using. Most Americans, for instance, know little about the rules of Australian football.

Work team outcomes aren't easily defined in terms of wins and losses. Sports teams typically measure success in terms of wins and losses. Such measures of success are rarely as clear for work teams. Managers who try to define success in wins and losses might imply that the workplace is ethically no more complex than the playing field, which is rarely true.

HR IMPLICATIONS

Turning Individuals into Team Players

In this chapter we've made a strong case for the value and growing popularity of teams. But many people are not inherently team players. Instead, they're loners or people who want to be recognized for their individual achievements. There are also many organizations that have historically nurtured individual accomplishments. These companies have created competitive work environments where only the strong survive. If these organizations now introduce a team-based structure, what do they do about the selfish "I-got-to-look-out-for-me" employees that they've created? Finally, as we discussed in Chapter 3, countries differ in terms of how they rate on individualism and collectivism. Teams fit well with countries that score high on collectivism.[105]

But what if an organization wants to introduce teams into a work population that is composed largely of individuals born and raised in a highly individualistic society, such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, or Australia? James Mitchell, president of Steelcase Canada Ltd., sums up the difficulties of introducing teams to the workplace: "People talk about teams, but very few operate in a pure team sense. They tend to think that if they get cross-functional groups together—a person out of marketing, one out of sales, one out of product development, another out of engineering—somehow they've got a team-based organization. But they haven't. They have a committee."[106]

The Challenge

The previous points are meant to highlight two substantial barriers to using work teams: individual resistance and management resistance.

When an employee is assigned to a team, his or her success is no longer defined in terms of individual performance. To perform well as team members, individuals must be able to communicate openly and honestly, to confront differences and resolve conflicts, and to sublimate personal goals for the good of the team. For many employees, this is a difficult, if not impossible, task. The challenge of creating team players will be greatest where (1) the national culture is highly individualistic and (2) the teams are being introduced into an established organization that has historically valued individual achievement. This describes, for instance, what faced managers at AT&T, Ford, Motorola, and other large Canadian- and US-based companies. These firms prospered by hiring and rewarding corporate stars, and they bred a competitive climate that encouraged individual achievement and recognition. Employees in these types of firms can be jolted by this sudden shift to the importance of team play.[107] A veteran employee of a large company, who had done well working alone, described the experience of joining a team: "I'm learning my lesson. I just had my first negative performance appraisal in 20 years."[108]

On the other hand, the challenge for management is less demanding when teams are introduced where employees have strong collectivist values—such as in Japan or Mexico—or in new organizations that use teams as their initial form for structuring work. For example, when Toyota opened plants in Canada, the working environment was designed around teams from the inception.

As part of her training to become an astronaut, Julie Payette worked with other NASA astronauts to become a team player. Members of shuttle crews have to work harmoniously with other crew members to achieve the mission's goals. By stressing that the mission's success depends on teamwork, NASA teaches astronauts how to compromise and make decisions that benefit the entire team.

OB *AT WORK*

Employees were hired with the knowledge that they would be working in teams. The ability to be a good team player was a basic hiring qualification that all new employees had to meet.

While it might seem easy enough to blame individual resistance as the cause of team failure, in many organizations there is no genuine infrastructure created to build teams. When organizations focus their rewards at the individual level, employees have no incentive to operate within a team structure. In some situations, managers are quite reluctant to give up their power and, in fact, share power with the other team members. This also makes it difficult for a real team to develop. As we mentioned in our extensive discussion of incentive programs in Chapter 4, organizations must align their incentives with their goals. If team behaviour is important to the organization, the incentive system must reflect this objective.

Below we discuss some individual and organizational factors that can be carried out through the human resources function of the organization to improve team performance.

Shaping Team Players

The following summarizes the primary options managers have for trying to turn individuals into team players.

Selection Some people already possess the interpersonal skills to be effective team players. When hiring team members, managers naturally look for people with the technical skills required to fill the job. But managers also need to ensure that candidates can fulfill their team roles, as well as the technical requirements.[109]

Many job candidates don't have team skills. This is especially true for those socialized around individual contributions. When faced with such candidates, managers have three options. The candidates can undergo training to "make them into team players." If this isn't possible or doesn't work, the other two options are to transfer the individual to another unit within the organization, without teams (if this possibility exists); or not to hire the candidate. In established organizations that decide to redesign jobs around teams, it should be expected that some employees will resist being team players and may be untrainable. Unfortunately, such people typically become casualties of the team approach.

Training On a more optimistic note, a large proportion of people raised on the importance of individual accomplishment can be trained to become team players. To develop team-related skills, Markham, Ontario-based AMP of Canada Ltd. put all 40 of its management people through a one-year team and project management training program of about 500 hours. They were taught how to manage commitments to each other, make specific promises and requests, and manage projects together. Subsequently, the remaining 260 people in the company underwent an intensive six-week team and project management training program called People in Action.[110]

In other companies, training specialists conduct exercises that allow employees to experience the satisfaction that teamwork can provide. They typically offer workshops to help employees improve their problem-solving, communication, negotiation, conflict-management, and coaching skills. Employees also learn the five-stage group development model described in this chapter. At Verizon Communications, for example, trainers focus on how a team goes through various stages before it finally gels. Employees are also reminded of the importance of patience—because teams take longer to make decisions than if employees were acting alone.[111]

Performance evaluation Performance evaluation concepts have been almost exclusively developed with only individual employees in mind. This reflects the historical belief that individuals are the core building block around which organizations are built. But as we've described throughout this book, more and more organizations are restructuring themselves around teams. In those organizations using teams, how should they evaluate performance? Four suggestions have been offered for designing a system that supports and improves the performance of teams:[112]

1. **Tie the team's results to the organization's goals.** It's important to find measurements that apply to important goals that the team is supposed to accomplish.
2. **Begin with the team's customers and the work process that the team follows to satisfy customers' needs.** The final product the customer receives can be evaluated in terms of the customer's requirements. The transactions between teams can be evaluated based on delivery and quality. The process steps can be evaluated based on waste and cycle time.
3. **Measure both team and individual performance.** Define the roles of each team member in

terms of accomplishments that support the team's work process. Then assess each member's contribution and the team's overall performance.

4. **Train the team to create its own measures.** Having the team define its objectives and those of each member ensures everyone understands his or her role on the team and helps the team develop into a more cohesive unit.

Rewards The reward system should be reworked to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive ones. For instance, Hallmark Cards, Inc. added an annual bonus, based on achievement of team goals, to its basic individual-incentive system. Imperial Oil adjusted its system to reward both individual goals and team behaviours.

If companies value teamwork, then promotions, pay raises, and other forms of recognition should be given to individuals for how effectively they work as a collaborative team member. This doesn't mean individual contribution is ignored; rather, it is balanced with selfless contributions to the team. Examples of behaviours that should be rewarded include training new colleagues, sharing information with teammates, helping to resolve team conflicts, and mastering new skills that the team needs but in which it is deficient.

However, Canadian organizations that use teams have been slow to link team performance to rewards in a clear way. The Conference Board of Canada reported that only 10 percent of respondents assessed contribution to team performance as part of the regular performance appraisal. Of the 45 companies that evaluated contributions to team performance as part of an employee's performance appraisal, only 19 included peer review as part of the appraisal system, with 10 more reporting that they were considering implementing it.[113]

Although explicit links between team performance and extrinsic rewards are important, don't forget the intrinsic rewards that employees can receive from teamwork. Teams provide camaraderie. It's exciting and satisfying to be an integral part of a successful team. The opportunity to engage in personal development and to help teammates grow can also be a very satisfying and rewarding experience for employees. For instance, at Steelcase Canada, teams are invited to conferences to present their successes to delegates and top company management. Teams are encouraged to celebrate when they reach their goals, and they design the celebration themselves.

OB *AT WORK*

From **Concepts** to **Skills**

Conducting a Team Meeting

Team meetings have a reputation for inefficiency. For instance, noted Canadian-born economist John Kenneth Galbraith has said, "Meetings are indispensable when you don't want to do anything."

When you're responsible for conducting a meeting, what can you do to make it more efficient and effective? Follow these 12 steps:[114]

1. *Prepare a meeting agenda*. An agenda defines what you hope to accomplish at the meeting. It should state the meeting's purpose; who will be in attendance; what, if any, preparation is required of each participant; a detailed list of items to be covered; the specific time and location of the meeting; and a specific finishing time.
2. *Distribute the agenda in advance*. Participants should have the agenda sufficiently in advance so they can adequately prepare for the meeting.
3. *Consult with participants before the meeting*. An unprepared participant can't contribute to his or her full potential. It is your responsibility to ensure that members are prepared, so check with them ahead of time.
4. *Get participants to go over the agenda*. The first thing to do at the meeting is to have participants review the agenda, make any changes, then approve the final agenda.
5. *Establish specific time parameters*. Meetings should begin on time and have a specific time for completion. It is your responsibility to specify these time parameters and to hold to them.
6. *Maintain focused discussion*. It is your responsibility to give direction to the discussion; to keep it focused on the issues; and to minimize interruptions, disruptions, and irrelevant comments.
7. *Encourage and support participation of all members*. To maximize the effectiveness of problem-oriented meetings, each participant must be encouraged to contribute. Quiet or reserved personalities need to be drawn out so their ideas can be heard.
8. *Maintain a balanced style*. The effective group leader pushes when necessary and is passive when need be.
9. *Encourage the clash of ideas*. You need to encourage different points of view, critical thinking, and constructive disagreement.
10. *Discourage the clash of personalities*. An effective meeting is characterized by the critical assessment of ideas, not attacks on people. When running a meeting, you must quickly intercede to stop personal attacks or other forms of verbal insult.
11. *Be an effective listener*. You need to listen with intensity, empathy, and objectivity, and do whatever is necessary to get the full intended meaning from each participant's comments.
12. *Bring proper closure*. You should close a meeting by summarizing the group's accomplishments; clarifying what actions, if any, need to follow the meeting; and allocating follow-up assignments. If any decisions are made, you also need to determine who will be responsible for communicating and implementing them.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE

Are You Attracted to the Group?

Most of us have written a term paper. Some of these papers have been individual assignments. That is, the instructor expected each student to hand in a separate paper and your grade was based solely on your own effort and contribution. But sometimes instructors assign group term papers, where students must work together on the project and share in the grade.

Think back to a recent experience in doing a group term paper. Now envision yourself at about the halfway point in the completion of that group assignment. Using your mindset at this halfway point, answer the following 20 questions. This questionnaire measures your feelings about that group.

	Agree								**Disagree**
1. I want to remain a member of this group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. I like my group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. I look forward to coming to the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. I don't care what happens in this group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. I feel involved in what is happening in my group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. If I could drop out of the group now, I would.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. I dread coming to this group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. I wish it were possible for the group to end now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. I am dissatisfied with the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. If it were possible to move to another group at this time, I would.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. I feel included in the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. In spite of individual differences, a feeling of unity exists in my group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. Compared with other groups, I feel my group is better than most.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. I do not feel a part of the group's activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15. I feel it would make a difference to the group if I were not here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16. If I were told my group would not meet today, I would feel bad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17. I feel distant from the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18. It makes a difference to me how this group turns out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19. I feel my absence would not matter to the group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20. I would not feel bad if I had to miss a meeting of this group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Source: This questionnaire is reproduced from N.J. Evans and P.A. Jarvis, "The Group Attitude Scale: A Measure of Attraction to Group," *Small Group Behavior*, May 1986, pp. 203–216. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

Scoring Key

Add up your scores for items 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 19, and 20. Obtain a corrected score by subtracting the score for each of the remaining questions from 10. For example, if you marked 3 for item 1, you would obtain a corrected score of 7 (10 – 3). Add the corrected scores together with the total obtained on the 10 items scored directly. The higher your score, the more positive are your feelings about the group.

BREAKOUT **GROUP** EXERCISES

Form small groups to discuss the following topics, as assigned by your instructor.

1. One of the members of your team continually arrives late for meetings and does not turn drafts of assignments in on time. In general this group member is engaging in social loafing. What can the members of your group do to reduce social loafing?
2. Consider a team with which you've worked. Was there more emphasis on task-oriented or maintenance-oriented roles? What impact did this have on the group's performance?
3. Identify 4 or 5 norms that a team could put into place near the beginning of its life that might help the team function better over time.

WORKING WITH **OTHERS** EXERCISE

The Paper Tower Exercise

Step 1 Each group will receive 20 index cards, 12 paper clips, and 2 marking pens. Groups have 10 minutes to plan a paper tower that will be judged on the basis of 3 criteria: height, stability, and beauty. No physical work (building) is allowed during this planning period.

Step 2 Each group has 15 minutes for the actual construction of the paper tower.

Step 3 Each tower will be identified by a number assigned by your instructor. Each student is to individually examine all the paper towers. Your group is then to come to a consensus as to which tower is the winner (5 minutes). A spokesperson from your group should report its decision and the criteria the group used in reaching it.

Step 4 In your small groups, discuss the following questions (your instructor may choose to have you discuss only a subset of these questions):

a. What percentage of the plan did each member of your group contribute on average?

b. Did your group have a leader? Why or why not?

c. How did the group generally respond to the ideas that were expressed during the planning period?

d. To what extent did your group follow the 5-step group development model?

e. List specific behaviours exhibited during the planning and building sessions that you felt were helpful to the group. Explain why you found them to be helpful.

f. List specific behaviours exhibited during the planning and building sessions that you felt were dysfunctional to the group. Explain why you found them dysfunctional.

Source: This exercise is based on The Paper Tower Exercise: Experiencing Leadership and Group Dynamics by Phillip L. Hunsaker and Johanna S. Hunsaker, unpublished manuscript. A brief description is included in "Exchange," *The Organizational Behavior Teaching Journal,* 4, no. 2, 1979, p. 49. Reprinted by permission of the authors. The materials list was suggested by Professor Sally Maitlis, Faculty of Commerce, University of British Columbia.

ETHICAL **DILEMMA** EXERCISE

Can Teams Prevent Corruption?

Enron's performance review committee rated every employee in the company on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 symbolizing excellent performance. An employee who received a 5 was usually gone within 6 months. Former CEO Jeff Skilling's division replaced 15 percent of its workforce every year. He found this a point of personal pride: "Jeff viewed this like turning over the inventory in a grocery store." Because employees worried about their jobs, teamwork simply didn't exist in the company. Though company protocol sometimes demanded that Enron higher-ups help with a project, they did not always do this. Instead, they constantly searched for the most lucrative projects available.

1. Why would Enron's performance rating system make it more difficult for individuals to work as team members?
2. Would a more team-like environment have prevented the Enron scandal from occurring?
3. How could teams be set up to prevent a company from experiencing an Enron-type scandal?

Source: Based on M. Swartz, *Texas Monthly*, November 2001.

CASE INCIDENT

A Virtual Team at T.A. Stearns

T.A. Stearns is a national tax accounting firm whose main business is tax preparation services for individuals. Stearns' superior reputation is based on the high quality of its advice and the excellence of its service. Key to the achievement of its reputation are the state-of-the-art computer databases and analysis tools that its people use when counselling clients. These programs were developed by highly trained individuals.

The programs are highly technical, both in terms of the tax laws they cover and the code in which they are written. Perfecting them requires high levels of programming skill as well as the ability to understand the law. New laws and interpretations of existing laws have to be integrated quickly and flawlessly into the existing regulations and analysis tools.

The creation of these programs is carried out in a virtual environment by four programmers in the greater Vancouver area. The four work at home and are connected to each other and to the company by e-mail, telephone, and conference software. Formal on-site meetings among all of the programmers take place only a few times a year, although the workers sometimes meet informally at other times. The four members of the team are Tom Andrews, Cy Crane, Marge Dector, and Megan Harris.

These four people exchange e-mail messages many times every day. In fact, it's not unusual for them to step away from guests or family to log on and check in with the others. Often their e-mails are amusing as well as work-related. Sometimes, for instance, when they were facing a deadline and one of Marge's kids was home sick, they helped each other with the work. Tom has occasionally invited the others to visit his farm; and Marge and Cy have got their families together several times for dinner. About once a month the whole team gets together for lunch.

All four of these Stearns employees are on salary, which, consistent with company custom, is negotiated separately and secretly with management. Although each is required to check in regularly during every workday, they were told when they were hired they could work wherever they wanted. Clearly, flexibility is one of the pluses of these jobs. When the four get together, they often joke about the managers and workers who are tied to the office, referring to them as "face timers" and to themselves as "free agents."

When the programmers are asked to make a major program change, they often develop programming tools called macros to help them do their work more efficiently. These macros greatly enhance the speed at which a change can be written into the programs. Cy, in particular, really enjoys hacking around with macros. On one recent project, for instance, he became obsessed with the prospect of creating a shortcut that could save him a huge amount of time. One week after turning in his code and his release notes to the company, Cy bragged to Tom that he'd created a new macro that had saved him eight hours of work that week.

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Tom was skeptical of the shortcut, but after trying it out, he found that it actually saved him many hours too.

Stearns has a suggestion program that rewards employees for innovations that save the company money. The program gives an employee 5 percent of the savings generated by his or her innovation over three months. The company also has a profit-sharing plan. Tom and Cy felt that the small amount of money that would be generated by a company reward would not offset the free time that they gained using their new macro. They wanted the time for leisure or consulting work. They also feared their group might suffer if management learned about the innovation. It would allow three people to do the work of four, which could lead to one of them being let go. So they didn't share their innovative macro with management.

Although Tom and Cy wouldn't share the innovation with management, they were concerned that they were entering their busy season and knew everyone in the team would be stressed by the heavy workload. They decided to distribute the macro to the other members of their team and swore them to secrecy.

Over lunch one day, the team set itself a level of production that it felt would not arouse management's suspicion. Several months passed and the four used some of their extra time to push the quality of their work even higher. But they also now had more time to pursue their own personal interests.

Dave Regan, the in-house manager of the work group, picked up on the innovation several weeks after it was first implemented. He had wondered why production time had gone down a bit, while quality had shot up, and he got his first inkling of an answer when he saw an e-mail from Marge to Cy thanking him for saving her so much time with his "brilliant mind." Not wanting to embarrass his employees, the manager hinted to Tom that he wanted to know what was happening, but he got nowhere. He did not tell his own manager about his suspicions, reasoning that since both quality and productivity were up he did not really need to pursue the matter further.

Dave has just learned that Cy has boasted about his trick to a member of another virtual work group in the company. Suddenly, the situation seems to have got out of control. Dave decided to take Cy to lunch. During the meal, Dave asked Cy to explain what was happening. Cy told him about the innovation, but he insisted the group's actions had been justified to protect itself.

Dave knew that his own boss would soon hear of the situation and that he would be looking for answers—from him.

Questions

1. Is this group a team?
2. What role have norms played in how this team acted?
3. Has anyone in this case acted unethically?
4. What should Dave do now?

Source: Adapted from "The Virtual Environment Work Team," a case prepared by R. Andre, professor, Northeastern University. With permission.

CASE INCIDENT IN THE **NEWS**

How to Build Boats and Boost Morale

Raft-building, rock-climbing and even walking over hot coals have all been used as part of a commonplace management tool in the private and public sector: away-days. But what is the best way to achieve the team-building, creativity and other goals of such out-of-office events?

"The first step is to decide what you want to achieve and then consider if an away-day is the means to do it," says Martyn Sloman, learning, training and development adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

"No combination of assault courses, making paper aeroplanes or listening to talks from the finest management gurus will enable staff to overcome fundamental flaws in an organisation such as deep-rooted incompetence among senior managers," he warns. Nor, of course, will it immunise a company against global downturns.

Their organisers may assume an away-day will be an automatic morale-builder but, Mr Sloman says, there are few things more demoralising than attending an away-day that six months later has clearly failed to achieve stated objectives.

Managers should also avoid the temptation of believing that taking their team for a day at a plush conference centre with bar bills paid will make up for their own leadership deficiencies.

"As an independent consultant, I once organised an away-day for a district office of an organisation aimed at team-building," Mr

Sloman says. "It was a great success—with the manager saying his staff were re-energised and achieving their best results.

"But when I arranged an identical day at the request of the manager of another district office in the same department, productivity and motivation fell," he adds. "It emerged that this manager had never won the confidence or respect of his team—and that the away-day merely united staff in contempt for him."

Ensuring the support of those attending away-days is vital. "Everyone taking part must buy into the aims of the get-together—and not feel intimidated or annoyed by anything they are asked to do," Mr Sloman says.

Moreover, organisers should pause to think before arranging any intense physical activities to encourage bonding or leadership skills.

"Workplaces are diverse in terms of age, strength and fitness and no member of a group should feel at a disadvantage because they can't run quickly, climb or lift a length of timber to build a raft," he says.

"Let staff know the broad content of the programme in plenty of time—and be prepared to modify it." He adds: "Reluctant participants are unlikely to learn anything."

But using some surprise activities can help maintain interest. Mr Sloman's favourite method is getting people to write down a little-known fact about themselves—and then inviting the group to match these to the individuals.

"It's very effective in bringing people together," he says. "My 'unusual fact' is having appeared on a film-set in Chicago in 1968—and, no, not many people manage to match it up with me."

But is the corporate away-day here to stay? Stephen Bevan, director of consultancy at the Industrial Society, believes that technological change is making such events all the more useful. "Communicating by e-mail and telephone from busy offices means that considering issues face-to-face with colleagues in places free from constant interruptions can offer real advantages," he says.

"Strategic planning, exchanges of best practice between different departments and the creativity required for 'blue-sky' thinking can all be generated via carefully structured away-days."

An important part of that structure, he says, should be the use of outsiders. "Facilitators from outside the organisation can be very effective in bringing together different parts of an organisation—such as trade union representatives and management."

Mr Bevan also advises soliciting feedback from participants to guide future get-togethers and assess how far the objectives set are achieved in future months.

"Combining fun with a change of scene can also be effective," he says. "But away-days for senior managers should not be a cloak for a junket during which no serious thinking is done. Word gets out and will fuel deep resentment among more junior staff—harming morale and productivity."

Away-days are gaining popularity in the public sector. Surrey County Council uses them to improve staff performance and the way its services are delivered.

"Every away-day is carefully planned to achieve a range of aims and progress towards these is monitored," says Claire Holloway, head of service development and customer and staff relations. "We need to know they are effective and value-for-money.

"Locations are chosen with care to offer the facilities required while not requiring long journeys or costing large sums. We recently used rooms on a small island in the Thames near our headquarters in Kingston. It was 10 minutes away—yet a complete change of scene and ideal for creative strategic thinking."

Staff at every level take part in away-days with recent issues explored ranging from exchanging best-practice between departments to managing change. One technique used successfully is to 'road test' proposed changes by having staff play the part of people with typical needs and then examining how new structures might meet these.

Questions

1. What team-building activities are identified in this article?
2. Using the discussion on building effective teams, consider how these team-building activities increase team effectiveness.

Source: D. White, "Team-Building Events Are More Likely to Succeed if They Include Outsiders and Unexpected Activities," *FT.Com,* March 31, 2002, http://news.ft.com/cgibin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+FTBlobServer?blobtable=Image&blobcol=urlpicture&blobkey=id&blobwhere=FT3T7CBLEDC&blobheader=image/gif, accessed March 31, 2002.