

9

GROUP PROCESSES AND TEAMS

WHY TEAMS MATTER: THE “ORANGE REVOLUTION”

The Orange Revolution: How One Great Team Can Transform an Entire Organization explains why teams matter and how one high-performing team creates energy that spreads throughout the organization; they use the color orange because it is often associated with high levels of positive energy. The authors based their book on a study of 350,000 employees working in teams at Zappos.com, Pepsi, New York’s Madison Square Garden, American Express, and Nokia. They found that working in successful teams enhanced employee engagement. As discussed in Chapter 4, employee engagement is an important work attitude that relates to numerous positive work outcomes including higher job performance. The theme of the orange revolution is that successful teams feel engaged at work when people feel invested in their team. This engagement relates strongly to what leaders do, which they characterize as the “Basic 4 + Recognition.” The basic four include setting goals, having good communication, developing trust, and being accountable. Recognition is the “plus” factor, which is having leaders who appreciate the strengths of others.

Beginning in the 1960s, organizations experimented with teams in the workplace, and there was an explosion in interest in team-based organizations in the 1980s. Some employees were skeptical and viewed teamwork as a “fad” that would go away. However, it is now clear that teamwork is here to stay, and most organizations employ teams to make significant decisions and develop new ideas. After the downsizings of the 1980s and 1990s, leaders needed a way to get more done with fewer people. Teams turned out to be one answer to this challenge. Teams allow for more creative solutions and build commitment to the implementation of innovative ideas. Whether it is orange or some other color, teamwork revolutionized the world of work. It is thus essential for a leader to understand team basics and how to lead teams effectively.

This chapter reviews the essential research on small groups from social psychology and discusses current approaches to **work teams**. The emphasis will be on leading teams, since this is a core competence, given that most organizations now use work teams to maximize organizational performance. As we will learn in this chapter, teams are also one of the best forums for learning, since employees share their skills and expertise with one another. Teams are now often charged with making important decisions, and a variety of techniques for team decision making will be discussed.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- 9.1:** Explain the difference between a working group and a team.
- 9.2:** Illustrate the relationship between team purpose and performance by using a team charter.
- 9.3:** Compare and contrast two models of team development.
- 9.4:** Describe the three main aspects of team effectiveness.
- 9.5:** Demonstrate how to assess the cohesion of your team.
- 9.6:** Explain how team norms influence team behaviors.
- 9.7:** Explain why team-shared mental models are important.
- 9.8:** Compare the leader options for participative decision making using the normative model.
- 9.9:** List and explain five team decision-making methods.

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WHAT IS A TEAM?

Learning Objective 9.1: Explain the difference between a working group and a team.

Numerous definitions of teams appear in the literature; however, the one offered in *The Wisdom of Teams* captures the essence of most definitions: “A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”²

This definition reflects evidence-based research that has shown that teams are more effective when the number of people on the team is relatively small (e.g., 4 to 6 members for a project team). Also, research has shown that commitment to a common goal and performance strategies enhances performance. Finally, team members must accept team goals and make a commitment to being accountable for them.

A question often asked is whether all work should be done by teams. The answer to the question is no. In many cases, teams become dysfunctional when there is actually no need for the task to be performed by a team at all. The team may flounder as it searches for a meaningful goal that everyone on the team can commit to. Teams should not be used when an individual can perform the task as well as a team (e.g., the leader could delegate the ordering of supplies to one person rather than having a team discussion about it). Also, if a performance goal can be met by adding up individual contributions (known as an **additive task**) then members of the work unit can work independently and their efforts can be combined later. The right time to use teams is when a performance goal requires **collective effect** and a work project that reflects the contributions of everyone on the team. To accomplish a team goal, different skill sets, perspectives, or experiences are often needed.³ There is a useful distinction between a work group and a team, and this will be discussed next.



Critical Thinking Question: In addition to the type of task, provide some other situations in which teams should not be used.

Work Group Versus Team

Some of the literature on groups and teams is confusing because the terms *group* and *team* are used interchangeably. To clarify this, the distinction between the group and team has been articulated.⁴ A work group interacts primarily to share information with other members (e.g., members of a work group attend a monthly staff meeting and share what they are working on). They are not responsible for a collective work product, or their individual contributions can be added up to create something. An example of a work group is the service department of an automobile dealership, which consists of a service manager and 12 service advisers who report to the manager. Each service adviser meets with their own customers independently, and the contributions are summed for an overall customer rating of the dealership's service department. If conflicts arise in work groups, the group typically looks to the leader to resolve them.

A work team, in contrast to a work group, depends on one another, and they must interact to create something that no one person on the team could create. There is

synergy on the team that means that the team can produce something beyond the sum of individual member contributions. An example of a work team is a task force assembled to brainstorm ideas for improving patient safety in a hospital. The team depends highly on the participation of all members for success since each member contributes a unique perspective that influences the quality of the suggestions for patient safety. If conflicts emerge within a work team, the members manage it internally since there is often no designated leader. This is a **self-managed work team (SMWT)**, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Some work groups can become teams, and a strong purpose or performance challenge sets a work group on the path to becoming a real team.

TEAM PURPOSE

Learning Objective 9.2: Illustrate the relationship between team purpose and performance by using a team charter.

Setting goals for teams is just as important as it is for individuals. As discussed in Chapter 7, goal setting increases to motivation and performance. It's important to keep in mind that team goals should also be SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time based). Effective teams have a sense of shared purpose, and it is one of the components of the definition of a team. Specific team goals predict specific team performance (e.g., setting challenging goals for quantity results in higher team output).⁵ Also, feedback on performance affects the allocation of resources when individuals strive to accomplish both individual and team goals. Resource allocation is an example of a team regulatory process, which will increase team performance. Also, feedback on team performance is essential for teams to make the correct allocation of resources for future team performance. Team members who receive no team-level feedback can't effectively set team goals and, as a result, set completely unrealistic goals.⁶

Team purpose is typically discussed in the early stages of a team's development. Teams follow predictable patterns over their life cycles, and team development will be discussed in the following section.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Learning Objective 9.3: Compare and contrast two models of team development.

Teams don't emerge just by putting individuals together. Teams go through a process of development over time, and success is not guaranteed. Research on teams recognizes the role of time in the development of the team. Next, two important models of team development are discussed: the five-stage model and the **team performance curve**.

Five-Stage Model

A classic model of team development is the five-stage model, which includes five stages: **forming, storming, norming, performing,** and **adjourning**.^{7,8} During the forming stage,

team members may experience stress due to the uncertainty of not knowing the other team members and understanding their role on the team. Initial interactions may be tentative as team members “test” one another to determine what the expectations will be. The team leader should clarify the team purpose and set up ground rules through a **team charter** (discussed later in this chapter and in Toolkit Activity 9.1 at the end of this chapter). As the team interacts on project work, conflicts emerge regarding the goals and contributions of team members, and the group enters the storming stage. There may be challenges to the leader of the group (either a formally assigned leader or an informal one). The team leader should openly address conflict and maintain a focus on the team purpose and ground rules established in the charter. At the end of this stage, the leadership question is typically resolved, and it is clear who will lead the group. Also, a status hierarchy, or pecking order, may be established. If the storming phase does not destroy the team and result in abandonment of the process by all members, the team moves to the next stage of development, which is called norming. In this stage, the members of the team form a cohesive unit and close relationships among team members develop. The group establishes further “unwritten rules,” or norms, for what is acceptable behavior (beyond that specified in the team charter). For example, if the team allows members to show up late for meetings without sanctions, then lateness may be considered acceptable by team members, and they show up late frequently. During the norming phase, the leader should remind the followers of the ground rules and address deviations constructively. Once norms are established, the team should be performing by producing collective work products. The group shifts from relationship development and norm articulation to the work itself and goal attainment. For a work group or a task force that is permanent, the performing stage is the last stage. In this phase, the team leaders should celebrate success along the way to achieving the team goal. However, in some cases, teams are temporary and have a specific goal to accomplish. When this is the case, the team finalizes their work in the adjourning stage and disbands. The team leader should arrange a celebration activity such as a party or dinner to reward the members for achieving the team purpose.

While the model proposes that teams move through the phases smoothly, in actuality the team may regress to a previous stage or runs the risk of adjourning at any stage. For example, the level of conflict during the storming stage may result in team members deciding it’s just easier to work alone. Even after the norming stage, the group is at risk of adjournment if the performance norms are repeatedly violated and the team determines that members aren’t really committed.

In many student project teams—and also at work—teams are temporary and have a clear deadline. Teams don’t follow the typical stages of development in such teams. In fact, there is a transition between an early phase of inactivity followed by a second phase of significant acceleration toward task completion. This process is called **punctuated equilibrium**.⁹ There is an initial meeting in which the group’s goals are discussed. Following this meeting, not much gets done until about halfway to the deadline. This midpoint transition occurs regardless of the total time allowed for the project. In other words, it doesn’t matter whether the total time for the project is 1 hour or 6 months. At about halfway toward the completion of a project, team members begin to revisit goals and discuss how to get the group moving toward finishing the task. Following this midpoint discussion, there is a burst of new activity as team members scramble to reach their goals in time.

You may be able to relate to this by recalling times when you and your team pulled an “all-nighter”—a meeting that lasts hours and is intense right before your team project is due for a

class. It is important to recognize that this doesn't apply to all types of teams; the punctuated equilibrium effect appears to be most prevalent in temporary teams with a fixed deadline.¹⁰ The takeaway message from this research is clear: Try not to procrastinate when a team project is assigned. The team leader should keep the momentum going by setting early benchmarks to avoid having to rush at the end of the project.

Not all team development follows an upward pattern of productivity. A second model of team development addresses the potential performance losses that may occur during the initial storming or procrastination phases. This model is known as the team performance curve.

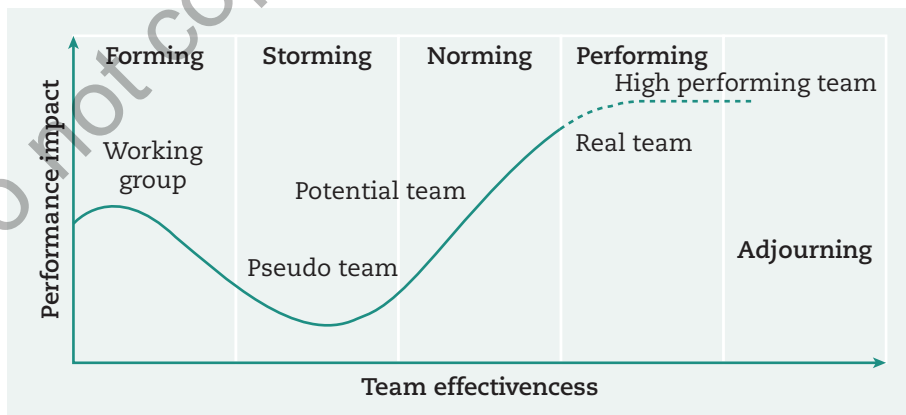


Critical Thinking Question: How else can you keep a team from procrastinating on the start of a project? Describe what you would do specifically.

Team Performance Curve

Like the punctuated equilibrium model, the team performance curve recognizes that team performance over the course of the life of the team is not always linear and performance does not always increase over time.¹¹ Figure 9.1 combines the five-stage model with the team performance curve and shows there may be a performance decrease as the team goes through the storming phase. A working group is a collection of people without a common sense of purpose. As the figure shows, this produces a certain level of performance, and some tasks are appropriate for a working group because they are additive. The team leader may attempt to transform his or her group into a team by introducing a common goal—particularly a challenging one. As team members organize to attain the goal, storming occurs and the team

Figure 9.1 The Stages of Group Development



Sources: Adapted from: Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. New York: Harper Business; Tuckman, B. (1965) Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384–399; Tuckman, B., & Jensen, M. (1977) Stages of Small Group Development. *Group and Organizational Studies*, 2, 419–427.

performance may actually *decline* for a period of time. Some working groups remain at this point as a pseudo team because they are not on the path toward becoming a high-performance team. If the team gets past the storming and establishes productive norms, they reach a point where they can be considered a potential team. At this stage, the team has the potential to become a real team, which exhibits the characteristics of the team definition (i.e., they are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable). A small number of teams become high-performance teams, which have all of the characteristics of real teams plus team members are deeply committed to the growth and development of the other team members. For example, a team member would teach another member how to use new presentation software. Thus, in high-performance teams, team interests become more important than individual interests, and high-performance teams are rare. Given high-performance teams are rare yet essential for organizations, the next sections will discuss team effectiveness and how it is defined and measured.



Critical Thinking Question: How can the use of a team charter help a team get through the storming phase? How does it help establish team norms and lead to high performance?

TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

Learning Objective 9.4: Describe the three main aspects of team effectiveness.

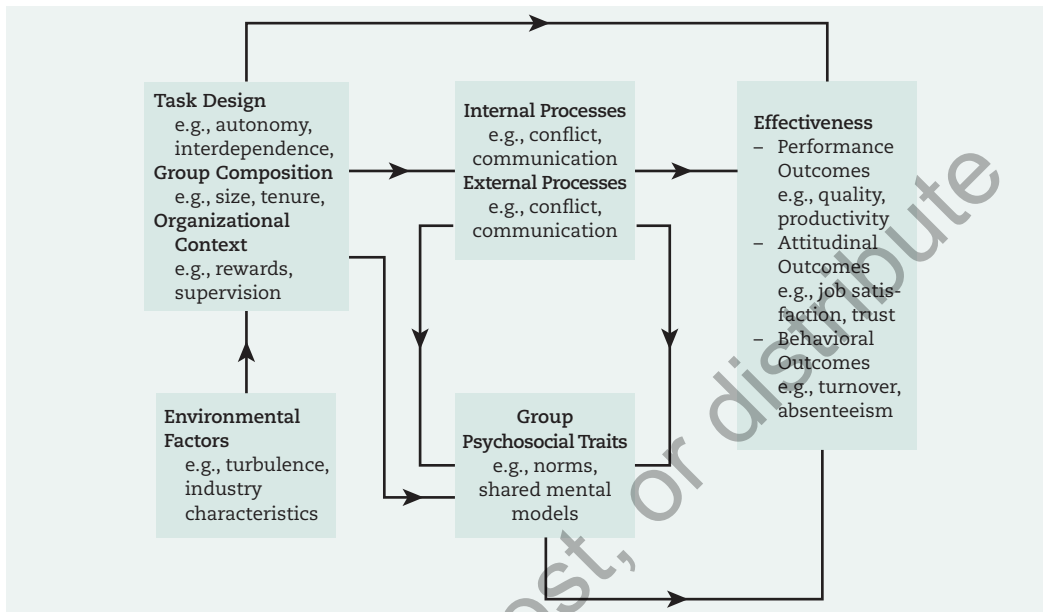
The question of how to know if a team is effective is an important one. Team effectiveness has a number of dimensions. The input-process-output model defines the different aspects of team effectiveness.¹² First, input refers to the individual characteristics of team members (e.g., skills and abilities) and the resources they have at their disposal. Inputs may also refer to knowledge and personality. For example, a study of 51 teams found both general mental ability (IQ) and personality (particularly conscientiousness, agreeableness, extroversion, and emotional stability) increased team performance.¹³

Process is the second aspect of team effectiveness and refers to how the team interacts. Examples of process include team development and patterns of participation. Also, trust, cross-training, and coordination relate to team effectiveness.^{14,15} Third, the most obvious measure of team effectiveness is team output—the collective work product generated from the team (team performance). Output has three components: (1) performance as rated by those outside of the team, (2) how well team member individual needs are met, and (3) the willingness of team members to stay on the team.¹⁶

Team effectiveness reflects three broad categories: performance, behaviors, and attitudes as shown in Figure 9.2.¹⁷ The figure indicates important inputs to team processes such as the organization environment and design of the task. On the output side, performance is the team's productivity, quality, or innovation as examples (i.e., the collective work product). Behaviors are what people do such as being absent from team meetings.

An important team process that has received much research attention is team conflict, which will be covered in Chapter 10. Attitudes are team members' reports on their

Figure 9.2 Model of Team Effectiveness



Source: Cohen, S. G., & Bailey, D. E. 1997. What makes teams work: Group effectiveness research from the shop floor to the executive suite. *Journal of Management*, 23, 239–290.

Team Effectiveness

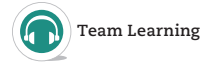
experience in the team such as team satisfaction. These attitudes and behaviors matter because organizational behavior (OB) research has demonstrated that team behaviors relate to team outcomes such as job performance and satisfaction. For example, motivating and confidence building are teamwork processes that develop and maintain members' motivation and confidence that the team will accomplish its goals.¹⁸ A review of the research on team effectiveness concluded that team performance is the most commonly studied outcome; however, more recent studies have included **team affect** (the team atmosphere) and **team viability** (a collective sense of belonging similar to team cohesion).¹⁹ **Cohesion** is one of the most important team processes and is the “team spirit” experienced in high-performing teams. Cohesion will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to team affect and viability, team learning and creativity are also indicators of team effectiveness. Learning and creativity have been shown to enhance team satisfaction and performance. These team effectiveness outcomes are emerging as important aspects of teamwork and will be covered in the following sections.

Team Learning

Individual development of team members is an important metric for teams and defines a high-performance team. Team learning is now considered essential and has received a considerable amount of research. Viewing teams as a forum for learning began with the

publication of the influential book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*.²⁰ Author Peter Senge views teamwork as one of the key experiences that leads to employee learning:



When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stands out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit. (p. 13)

Team learning is an ongoing process through which teams acquire, combine, and apply knowledge.²¹ For example, asking questions, seeking feedback, improvising, discussing errors, challenging underlying assumptions, and reflecting on specific results or unexpected outcomes increases a team member's knowledge.²² Team learning originates in individual intuitions, is amplified through interpretation, and emerges at the team level as collective thoughts and actions. Moreover, team learning significantly affects team performance.²³



Critical Thinking Question: Describe a situation in which you learned something from interacting with others on a team (this can be related to task, process, or your individual development).

In addition to learning, research has also shown that teams enhance creativity and innovation. Creativity as a result of teamwork is recognized as essential to make high-quality decisions that relate to organizational effectiveness.²⁴ The next section will discuss research on team creativity.

Team Creativity

In Chapter 6, you learned that individual creativity is a key aspect of the decision-making process. Research has shown that creativity in teams matters as well. Due to synergy, team creativity is not just the additive sum of individual team member creativity. Team creativity involves both processes and outcomes of developing new ideas for innovation. Team creativity is a collective phenomenon that encompasses what team members do behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally as they define problems, generate ideas, and attempt new ways of doing their work.²⁵ Communication of new ideas and sharing information with diverse others leads to higher creativity.²⁶ Also, shared team goals result in higher creativity. In a study of project teams, more creative teams recognized that there was a need to be creative to be successful, and they valued participation by all team members. Interestingly, more creative teams also spent more time socializing with each other, both inside and outside of work.²⁷

Diversity may enhance team creativity, and this is considered one of the benefits of having a diverse workforce. Diversity in teams can increase flexibility, creativity, and problem solving.²⁸ A meta-analysis of team diversity and team performance found



having members with diverse skill sets and backgrounds does appear to enhance team creativity and innovation.²⁹ Specifically, differences in functional expertise, education, and organizational tenure were most related to team performance. A second meta-analysis of 108 studies in 10,632 teams found cultural diversity leads to process losses through task conflict.³⁰ Diversity presents a challenge to the team leader in that there is a greater need to manage conflict. But it appears to be worth the effort since process gains are realized through increased creativity and satisfaction in diverse teams. Effective team leaders credit diversity for being a key reason for team creative outputs that directly impacts organizational success.³¹



Critical Thinking Questions: How can a team leader ensure that diversity does not result in conflict that negatively affects performance? Describe specifically what a team leader can do to manage diverse viewpoint during a team discussion.

COHESION

Learning Objective 9.5: Demonstrate how to assess the cohesion of your team.

Cohesion is defined as “the resultant of all the forces acting on the members to remain part of the group.”³² These forces depend on the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the prestige of the group, the group members, and/or the group’s activities. The mutual attraction of the member to the group is the most important determinant of cohesion.³³ When cohesion is strong, the group is motivated to perform and is better able to coordinate activities for success. In cohesive teams, there is a sense of “we-ness” since team members tend to use *we* rather than *I* to describe the team and its activities.³⁴ Meta-analytic studies have found that team cohesion and team performance are positively and significantly related.^{35,36} For example, one review reports the average cohesive team performed 18% higher than the average noncohesive team.³⁷

You may be working in a team for a project for your OB course (or another course). The extent to which your team is cohesive can be assessed by asking the following questions:³⁸

- How well do members of your group get along with each other?
- How well do members of your group stick together (i.e., remain close to each other)?
- Would you socialize with the members of your group outside of class?
- How well do members of your group help each other on the project?
- Would you want to remain a member of this group for future projects or in future courses?



Critical Thinking Questions: Explain why cohesion in teams may not always be a good thing. Discuss the downside of a team being too cohesive.

Coaching for Cohesion

A review of the relationship between cohesiveness and team performance concluded that in 83% of the studies, team cohesiveness was significantly and positively related to team performance.³⁹ Research on sports psychology has examined the relationship between coaching style and team cohesion. When coaches exhibit training, being democratic, supporting, and giving feedback, team cohesion is higher.⁴⁰ An in-depth interview study of male and female athletes in college sports plus a case study of a Division I college football team was conducted to determine the effects of coaching styles on team cohesion.⁴¹ This study found that using abusive language, treating the relationship as a superior or subordinate one, being unfair, lacking communication, and ridiculing players all related to lower team cohesion. Motivational coaching (being inspirational, having a personal relationship with athletes, showing support, and having dedication) was related to higher team cohesion. The case study of the football team indicated that players felt that bragging about the abilities

of their teammates, talking about the quality of their opponent, giving motivational speeches, and conducting a team prayer increased feelings of team cohesion. Interestingly, teasing and sarcasm by the coach was acceptable to the team members and they saw this as part of the game, and it made them feel closer to both their teammates and the coach. While teasing may be “out of bounds” for a manager, this research on coaching shows that being inspirational and developing personal relationships will enhance your team’s cohesion.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent can these findings for sports teams be applied to teams at work? What are the limitations of using sports examples?
2. In these studies, training, being democratic, showing support, and giving feedback were important in developing team cohesion. Which do you think is most important and why?

Sources: Jowett, S., & Chaundy, V. (2004). An investigation into the impact of coach leadership and coach-athlete relationship on group cohesion. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice*, 8(4), 302–331; Widmeyer, W. N., Carron, A. V., & Brawley, L. R. (1993). Group cohesion in sport and exercise. *Handbook of Research on Sport Psychology*, 672–692; Turman, P. D. (2003). Coaches and cohesion: The impact of coaching techniques on team cohesion in the small group sport setting. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 26(1), 86–104.

TEAM NORMS

Learning Objective 9.6: Explain how team norms influence team behaviors.

In addition to cohesion, **team norms** also have a powerful effect on team member attitudes and behaviors. Norms are defined as informal and interpersonal rules that team members are expected to follow.⁴² These standards may be explicit and formally stated by the leader or members of the team. But norms may also be implicit. They are not written down, and communication of the norms to team members depends on the ability of the leader (or team members) to effectively convey the expected behaviors. Norms have a powerful influence on team behavior, and they are often difficult to change. For example, at golf courses, it is expected that you wear a collared shirt. While this isn’t written down anywhere and golf courses do not post dress codes, you will notice that most people wear a collared shirt on the



course. This is an example of an implicit norm. If you show up at a golf course in a T-shirt, members may look at you as not understanding the norms of playing on the course (if you didn't know this, remember that you learned it here)! Implicit norms are tricky in that they are difficult to detect, and it is easy to misinterpret them. One way to make norms explicit is by developing a team charter.

The Team Charter

One of the best ways that a leader can make norms explicit and clearly communicate them to team members is by engaging the team to develop a team charter, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. In creating a team charter, not only is the team purpose clarified but the expectations for behavior are set forth (e.g., required attendance at meetings). Norms provide an important regulatory function in teams. Once they are developed through a charter and agreed upon, misunderstandings should be fewer and a team member violating a norm (e.g., missing meetings) can be reminded of the group's commitment to attendance. Some groups even apply sanctions to the violation of norms such as fines or social ostracism. However, sanctioning systems are ineffective if they are not applied consistently. In other words, it is important to keep in mind principles of organizational justice as described in Chapter 7 if sanctions are applied.

The influences of having a team charter and performance strategies of 32 teams of MBA students was studied using a business strategy simulation.⁴³ Taking the time to develop a high-quality team charter and performance strategies paid off in terms of more effective team performance over time. Teams that had quality charters and strategies outperformed teams with poor quality charters and strategies. Charters are an important tool the leader can use to get their team off to a good start by developing a sense of purpose and performance strategies. Toolkit Activity 9.1 contains specific guidelines for developing a team charter.

Team Metrics

In addition to the team charter, it is also important to have measures (or metrics) to assess how a team is performing over time and to provide feedback to team members. There are three types of metrics for teamwork:

1. **Task metrics.** These are the “what” of teamwork. They relate to the actual work the team is performing. For example, task metrics might be goals for quantity and/or quality and deadlines for the project completion. It is important to set 30-day targets as mini-goals toward task completion so team members have a sense of forward momentum.
2. **Process metrics.** These are the “how” of teamwork. These metrics are assessment of how the teamwork is operating. For example, process metrics might be assessments of team communication or who is participating. Teams often focus on task goals to the exclusion of process goals, but they are important because the process affects task performance.
3. **Individual development metrics.** These metrics relate to how much individuals are developing new skills and learning through teamwork. For example, individual development metrics might be how well one team member is developing leadership abilities from working with the

team. Individual development is important to track, since the hallmark of a high-performance team is when team members genuinely care about the development of their teammates.⁴⁴



Critical Thinking Question: Provide additional examples of task, process, and individual development metrics. Provide an example of an organization-level metric related to teamwork.

Strong team norms give rise to shared understandings within teams, known as **team mental models (TMMs)**. These models and why they are important for team process and performance will be discussed next.

TEAM MENTAL MODELS

Learning Objective 9.7: Explain why team-shared mental models are important.

TMMs “are team members’ shared, organized understanding and mental representation of knowledge about key elements of the team’s relevant environment” (p. 897).⁴⁵ TMMs are related to effective team processes and performance⁴⁶ because they serve a number of functions, including (1) allowing team members to interpret information similarly, (2) sharing expectations concerning the future, and (3) developing similar reasoning as to why something happens.⁴⁷ Teams with highly developed TMMs are fundamentally “on the same page” with respect to sharing a common view of what is occurring in the team. This makes decision making more efficient and enhances team performance.⁴⁸ A summary of how TMMs affect performance and other team outcomes is shown in Figure 9.3. The shared similarity of TMMs translates demographic factors, skills, and training into shared norms, effective team processes, and higher performance. A meta-analysis of 65 studies of TMMs and performance found that teams with shared mental models interacted more frequently, were more motivated, had higher job satisfaction, and were rated as more productive by others.⁴⁹

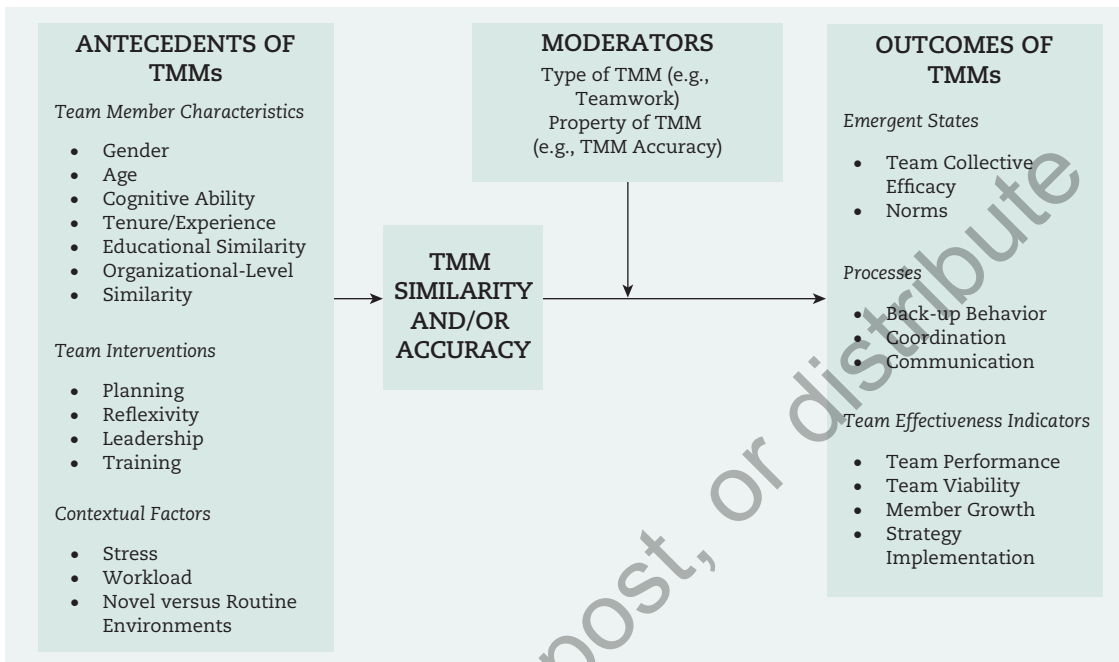
TMMs affect team processes, including how decisions are made and who makes them. Shared understandings emerge in TMMs determine how much participation by members is allowed, for example. The next sections discuss participation and team decision-making options available to team leaders.

PARTICIPATION IN TEAM DECISIONS

Learning Objective 9.8: Compare the leader options for participative decision making using the normative model.

Leadership research has long recognized that leaders have options in making decisions ranging from making the decision themselves or **delegating** the decision to a team.⁵⁰ Table 9.1 shows the **normative decision-making model**, which shows that team decisions fall on a continuum

Figure 9.3 Team Mental Models and Outcomes



Source: Mohammed, S., Ferzandi, L., & Hamilton, K. (2010). Metaphor no more: A 15-year review of the team mental model construct. *Journal of Management*, 36(4), 876–910. p. 892.

ranging from leaders making the decision themselves to delegating the decision to the team.⁵¹ Between these two points, there are **consultative** modes of decision making. The manager can consult followers one-on-one or as a group. They also have the option of serving as the **facilitator** of a group decision. Involving the right people in group decision making has been shown to result in higher quality decisions and more support for decision implementation.^{52,53} However, key elements of the situation are important to consider when applying the normative decision-making model of participation. These factors include the following:⁵⁴

1. How significant is the decision?
2. How likely is it that your team members will disagree?
3. Do you (or your team) have the knowledge necessary to make the decision?
4. Do you need commitment from your team?
5. How likely is it that you will have commitment from your team?
6. Is there a time constraint?
7. Is team interaction difficult or impossible?
8. Do your team members function effectively as a team?
9. Is development of your team members important?
10. Do members of your team agree with your goals (and those of the organization)?

Table 9.1 The Normative Decision-Making Model

Decide	Consult (Individually)	Consult (Group)	Facilitate	Delegate
You make the decision alone and either announce or “sell” it to the group. You may use your expertise in collecting information—from the group or others—that you deem relevant to the problem.	You present the problem to group members individually, get their suggestions, and then make the decision.	You present the problem to group members in a meeting, get their suggestions, and then make the decision.	You present the problem to the group in a meeting. You act as facilitator, defining the problem to be solved and the boundaries within which the decision must be made. Your objective is to get concurrence on a decision. Above all, you take care to ensure that your ideas are not given any greater weight than those of others simply because of your position.	You permit the group to make the decision within prescribed limits. The group undertakes the identification and diagnosis of the problem, developing alternative procedures for solving it and deciding on one or more alternative solutions. While you play no direct role in the group’s deliberations unless explicitly asked, your role is an important one behind the scenes, providing needed resources and encouragement.

Source: Vroom, V. H. (2003). Educating managers for decision making and leadership. *Management Decision*, 41(10), 968–978.

Employees value being able to participate in group decisions, and research has shown involving them in decisions increases their satisfaction and the chances of success.^{55,56} Results from a study of over 400 decisions that had been made by managers in medium to large organizations found that over half of the decisions failed (they were either never implemented or fell apart within 2 years).⁵⁷ While some decisions failed due to technical issues such as the problem being defined wrong, the best predictors of success were the involvement and participation of key stakeholders. Specifically, decisions that used participation to foster implementation succeeded more than 80% of the time.



Involving followers in decisions is one important aspect of team decision making. OB research has also investigated the effectiveness of decision-making processes. These techniques are essential for a leader to learn since decision quality may be affected by how the decision is made by the team. The next sections will discuss **brainstorming**, **consensus**, multivoting, **nominal group technique (NGT)**, and stepladder.

TEAM DECISION-MAKING METHODS

Learning Objective 9.9: Explain five team decision-making methods.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is one of the most common forms of team decision making.⁵⁸ Brainstorming should be used when the team needs to produce a creative solution. It enhances the creative

process because **idea generation** is separated from **idea evaluation**. Members are trained not to critique ideas but just to write them down as the group generates solutions to a problem. Ideas are typically written on flip chart paper or a whiteboard so that everyone can see them. The team meets in a separate session to evaluate the ideas generated and decide on a course of action. IDEO is a successful product design company, and their rules for brainstorming are shown in the boxed insert.

Consensus

Consensus decision making is another technique that is commonly used in organizations. In many cases, consensus is preferable to voting (although voting is more common). Voting creates winners and losers and may result in a lack of commitment to implement the decision. In a consensus decision-making process, everyone can say they have been heard and will support the final decision. The following steps are suggested for reaching consensus:⁵⁹

IDEO's Rules for Brainstorming

1. **Defer judgment.** Creative spaces don't judge. They let the ideas flow so that people can build on each other and foster great ideas. You never know where a good idea is going to come from. The key is to make everyone feel like they can say the idea on their mind and allow others to build on it.
2. **Encourage wild ideas.** Wild ideas can often give rise to creative leaps. In thinking about ideas that are wacky or out there, we tend to think about what we really want without the constraints of technology or materials. We can then take those magical possibilities and perhaps invent new technologies to deliver them.
3. **Build on the ideas of others.** Being positive and building on the ideas of others take some skill. In conversation, we try to use *and* instead of *but*...
4. **Stay focused on the topic.** We try to keep the discussion on target; otherwise, you can diverge beyond the scope of what we're trying to design for.
5. **Have one conversation at a time.** There are lots of conversations happening at once, which is great! Always think about the topic and how the ideas could apply.
6. **Be visual.** In live brainstorms, we use colored markers to write on Post-it notes that are put on a wall. Nothing gets an idea across faster than drawing it. It doesn't matter how terrible of a sketcher you are! It's all about the idea behind your sketch. You could also try your hand at sketching it out or mocking it up on the computer. We love visual ideas as the images make them memorable. Does someone else's idea excite you? Maybe make them an image to go with their idea.
7. **Go for quantity.** Aim for as many new ideas as possible. In a good session, up to 100 ideas are generated in 60 minutes. Crank the ideas out quickly.

Discussion Questions:

1. Provide an example of how a team leader can train team members to defer judgment.
2. What do you think a team leader should do after brainstorming? In other words, how should the final decision be made?

Source: OpenIDEO. (2011). 7 tips on better brainstorming. <http://www.openideo.com/blog/seven-tips-on-better-brainstorming>.

1. **Introduction.** It typically takes fewer than 5 minutes and covers the following:

- Why are we talking about this? Why does it matter?
- History of the issue (including results of any previous meetings on it).
- Goal for this item at this particular meeting (a report, decision, to gather input, etc.).

At the end of the initial presentation, others who have factual knowledge of the issue are sometimes invited to add in further bits about the issue—as long as it doesn't go on for too long.

2. **Clarifying questions.** These are simple questions just to make sure everyone in the room fully understands what has been presented or proposed.
3. **Discussion.** This is the exploratory phase, where people are invited to ask further questions, show the full diversity of perspectives, raise challenges and concerns, and so on. Agreements and disagreements on general direction are noted and the reasons for them examined—not just what the positions are but why and any underlying value conflicts they represent.
4. **Establish basic direction.** What is the sense of the meeting, in terms of basic direction on this issue? Here we seek general or philosophical agreement—an agreement in principle.
5. **Synthesize or modify proposal (as needed).** Integrate what's been shared, and make it as specific as needed, recognizing that some details will always be left to implementation. Again, notice agreements and disagreements (this time on the specifics of the proposal), and work with the underlying reasons, then generate ideas for addressing and resolving concerns, emerging with a proposal that has substantial group support. Periodically the facilitator may ask, "Are there any remaining unresolved concerns?"
6. **Call for consensus.** The facilitator clearly restates the proposal and then asks people to indicate where they are.
7. **Record.** The note taker reads back the decision to the group. In addition, they record any implementation information needed (tasks, who's responsible, timelines, etc.).

At the point that the facilitator calls for consensus (Step 6), participants typically have the following options:

Agreement: "I support this proposal and am willing to abide by and help implement it."

Stand Aside: "I have major concerns with the proposal and agree to stand aside and let the group proceed with it." The choice to stand aside may be based on (but is not limited to) any of the following:

- Disagreement with the proposal or the process used to reach the decision
- Personal values or principles
- Personal impact or need—for example, "I can't afford this" or "I'd have to leave the group."

If someone stands aside, their name and reason are traditionally recorded in the minutes. That person is relieved of lead implementation responsibilities yet is still bound to follow the decision.

Blocking: “I believe this proposal would be majorly detrimental to our group, because either it goes against our fundamental principles or it would lead to a disastrous outcome.” Note that none of the following are appropriate reasons to block:

- To get your way or because you prefer a different proposal, or no proposal
- Because you’d have to leave the group if the proposal passed
- Tradition: Because things have always been done a certain way
- Because the proposed action doesn’t fit your personal needs (or finances)
- To fulfill your personal moral values or how you want to live

In order to function and prevent tyranny of the minority, consensus-based groups rely on having a robust response to inappropriate blocks. The form of this response varies but usually includes both procedural and cultural elements.

Abstain: “I choose not to participate in the making of this decision.” It is typically used because a participant feels uninformed or not ready to participate.

Some groups include other options, such as consent with reservations: “I support the basic thrust of this proposal and have one or more minor unresolved concerns.”

Consensus is one of the most commonly used and effective decision-making processes in organizations. The previously given guidelines should be followed in situations in which the support of all members of a team is needed for effective implementation of the decision.



Critical Thinking Question: Explain why following the consensus guidelines will result in more support for the implementation of a decision rather than simply voting on it.

Multivoting

In practice, it is often required that votes be taken. Given that voting has a number of disadvantages including dissatisfaction with decisions and lack of commitment, the leader should know that multivoting is another decision-making option. The steps for multivoting follow.⁶⁰ As with other team decision-making techniques, you need a flip chart or whiteboard, marking pens, plus 5 to 10 slips of paper for each individual, and a pen or pencil for each individual.

1. **Display the list of options.** Combine duplicate items. Organize large numbers of ideas, and eliminate duplication and overlap. List reduction may also be useful.
2. **Number (or letter) all items.**

3. **Decide how many items must be on the final reduced list.** Decide also how many choices each member will vote for. Usually, five choices are allowed. The longer the original list, the more votes will be allowed—up to 10.
4. **Working individually, each member selects the five items (or whatever number of choices is allowed) he or she thinks most important.** Then each member ranks the choices in order of priority, with the first choice ranking highest. For example, if each member has five votes, the top choice would be ranked five, the next choice four, and so on. Each choice is written on a separate paper, with the ranking underlined in the lower right corner.
5. **Tally votes.** Collect the papers, shuffle them, and then record the votes on a flip chart or whiteboard. The easiest way to record votes is for the note-taker to write all the individual rankings next to each choice. For each item, the rankings are totaled next to the individual rankings.
6. **If a decision is clear, stop here. Otherwise, continue with a brief discussion of the vote.** The purpose of the discussion is to look at dramatic voting differences, such as an item that received both 5 and 1 ratings, and avoid errors from incorrect information or understandings about the item. The discussion should not pressure anyone to change his or her vote. Also, if a team member or members feel strongly that an option should be considered, the team can put it back in the voting process.
7. **Repeat the voting process in Steps 4 and 5.** If greater decision-making accuracy is required, this voting may be done by weighting the relative importance of each choice on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most important. As can be seen from this process, multivoting allows for multiple rounds and discussion as the list gets reduced. It allows team members to have more of a voice in the final decision through a series of votes rather than just one.



Critical Thinking Questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of multivoting? Would you consider using this technique? Why or why not?

Nominal Group Technique

The NGT is a more structured process that may be effective if there are status differences in the team or if the team has one or more dominating participants. The group meets face-to-face, but the discussion is more restricted than in brainstorming or consensus decision making. This process reduces status differentials since participants write their ideas on index cards, and they are collected by a facilitator. This process is particularly effective when the team has a dominating participant who shuts down the team discussion with criticism. Research has indicated that NGT works better than brainstorming.⁶¹ NGT is often used by senior management teams as a preparation tool for productive strategy meetings. The steps for the NGT follow:⁶²

1. Each team member independently writes their ideas on the problem on 3x5 cards or slips of paper.
2. Each member presents one idea to the team. The cards are collected by the facilitator who can either read them or redistribute them randomly to the team members who then read the ideas on the card. This way, no one is identified with a particular idea.
3. The discussion continues until all ideas are heard and recorded.
4. The team discusses the ideas and asks questions to clarify them.
5. Each team member then silently ranks the ideas independently. The idea with the highest total ranking is the final decision.

Stepladder

The stepladder technique is a newer technique and may also be an effective way to combat the challenge of dominating participants in the team. It has five basic steps:

1. **Present the task.** Before getting together as a group, present the task or problem to all members. Give everyone sufficient time to think about what needs to be done and to form their own opinions on how to best accomplish the task or solve the problem.
2. **Two-member discussion.** Form a core group of two members. Have them discuss the problem.
3. **Add one member.** Add a third group member to the core group. The third member presents ideas to the first two members *before* hearing the ideas that have already been discussed. After all three members have laid out their solutions and ideas, they discuss their options together.
4. **Repeat, adding one member at a time.** Repeat the same process by adding a fourth member and so on to the group. Allow time for discussion after each additional member has presented his or her ideas.
5. **Final decision.** Reach a final decision only after all members have been brought in and presented their ideas.⁶³

An experiment was conducted to see if the stepladder technique resulted in higher-quality decisions compared to consensus decision making.⁶⁴ Stepladder groups produced significantly higher-quality decisions than did conventional groups in which all members worked on the problem at the same time. Stepladder group decisions surpassed the quality of their best individual members' decisions 56% of the time. In contrast, conventional group decisions surpassed the quality of their best members' decisions only 13% of the time. The stepladder technique is suggested as a way to prevent teams from making decision errors such as **groupthink**. Groupthink and other team challenges will be discussed in the following sections.

TEAM CHALLENGES

Despite the best efforts to form an effective team by using a charter and establishing norms that result in cohesion, teams still encounter challenges. In fact, cohesion may work against the team and result in what is known as groupthink. Groupthink and other challenges to established teams are discussed in the following sections.

Groupthink



Groupthink is a team decision-making challenge that arises due to a high degree of cohesiveness and group norms that result in conformity.⁶⁵ Groupthink is defined as the conformity-seeking tendency of the group, which results in compromised decision making. Due to group pressure, the team does not survey all alternatives and expressions of views that go against the majority of team member are suppressed. Team members apply direct pressure on dissenters and urge them to go along with the majority. The symptoms of groupthink are as follows:

1. **Group rationalization.** The team members generate explanations that support their preferred course of action.
2. **Direct pressure.** Those who speak out against the group decision are pressured into conformity.
3. **Suppression.** Members with differing views don't share them with the group for fear of ostracism and/or ridicule.
4. **Illusion of unanimity.** The team members believe that they are in agreement. But in fact, they are not. Dissenting views have been suppressed. Not speaking is interpreted as support for the team decision.

Groupthink occurs most often in highly cohesive groups and when the group is confident about their course of action early in the process.⁶⁶ The initial research on groupthink involved case studies of public policy decision such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba and the attack on Pearl Harbor.⁶⁷ Experimental research has partially supported Janis' theory.⁶⁸ For example, an experiment tested groupthink and found partial support for the theory in that direct pressure from leaders increased the symptoms of groupthink.⁶⁹ Teams with directive leaders proposed and discussed fewer alternatives than groups with leaders who encouraged member participation. These teams were also willing to comply with the leaders' proposed solutions when the leaders stated their preferences early in the group discussion. The *Challenger* space shuttle disaster case has been interpreted using groupthink.⁷⁰ In this scenario, the decision by NASA to launch the space shuttle when temperatures were too low for O-rings to function properly resulted in the death of six astronauts and a civilian teacher. The analysis concludes that directive leadership and time pressure contributed to the impaired decision-making process of NASA engineers.

To minimize groupthink, the leader can avoid being too directive and encourage everyone to participate fully in team discussions. They could also employ the NGT or stepladder technique instead of consensus decision making to provide more structure and avoid conformity. The leader can assign a member of the team to play the devil's advocate, which is a role that challenges team assumptions and decisions throughout the process.



Critical Thinking Questions: Why is directive leadership the strongest antecedent to groupthink? What else can leaders do to prevent putting undue pressure on a group to conform to their decision preferences?

Most students recognize groupthink symptoms since they have probably occurred in student project teams. Think about a time when you felt like disagreeing with your team but stayed silent because the team was cohesive or you didn't want to create conflict. You



may have been a victim of groupthink. A second group challenge that is common in student project teams is **social loafing**. You will recognize this one if you have ever been in a team where you (or a subgroup of team members) did all the work but others got the credit but didn't contribute.

Social Loafing

Social loafing is defined as the reduction in motivation and effort when individuals work collectively compared with when they work individually or coactively (i.e., they work with others but do not combine inputs into a group product).⁷¹ Social loafing occurs more often in larger teams where individuals can hide in the team.⁷² When there is skill redundancy, some team members may feel that their contributions are not valued. If others are slacking, then team members may stop contributing. Team members may not see the goal as valuable or agree with it, so they don't contribute. There are individual differences as well: Research has shown men are more likely to social loaf than women, and those from individualistic cultures are more likely to loaf.⁷³ Leaders can prevent social loafing by doing the following:

1. Keep teams small (four to six members)
2. Set meaningful team goals
3. Set clear roles for team members
3. Eliminate redundancy
4. Select members with high motivation and affinity for teamwork
5. Provide feedback and coaching to members who social loaf

Virtual Teams

Today, more work is being conducted through the Internet, in virtual teams. Virtual teams are defined as "functioning teams that rely on technology-mediated communication while crossing several different boundaries."⁷⁴ Such teams rely on technology to communicate, and this has significantly changed how teamwork is conducted. It has been suggested that virtual teams have more challenges in developing the needed TMMs needed to be effective.⁷⁵ In many cases, virtual team members are geographically dispersed and may even be working in different countries and time zones. A comparison of computer-mediated teams to face-to-face teams in a longitudinal study found the relationship between technology and performance depended on experience with the technology.⁷⁶ The results also suggested the newness of the medium to team members and not the newness of the group led to poorer task performance for computer groups. A review of studies on computer-mediated groups reported computer-based groups generated more ideas but had more limited interactions and took longer to complete their work compared with teams that met face-to-face.⁷⁷ Virtual teams may have less social support and direct interaction among team members, which is needed to build trust.⁷⁸ A meta-analysis of more than 5,000 teams found virtual teams share less information.⁷⁹ Also, virtual work and the use of e-mail in combination may change the distribution of information within an organization, and change knowledge flows.⁸⁰

A study of student teams was conducted in which the leaders of virtual teams were compared with those in face-to-face teams.⁸¹ Researchers found that leader behaviors focusing on the task and monitoring of performance significantly impacted the performance of virtual teams. Leaders can enhance the effectiveness of virtual teams

by establishing trust, carefully monitoring e-mail, attending to team progress, and by sharing the team's work with others.⁸² Advanced information technology (IT) will have a significant impact on leadership in organizations in the future, and leaders must be aware of the impact for leading virtual teams.⁸³ Additional guidelines for leading virtual teams are shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2 Practices of Effective Virtual Team Leaders

Leadership Practices of Virtual Team Leaders	How Do Virtual Team Leaders Do It?
1 Establish and Maintain Trust Through the Use of Communication Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing the norms on how information is communicated • Revisiting and adjusting the communication norms as the team evolves ("virtual get-togethers") • Making progress explicit through use of team virtual workspace • Equal "suffering" when setting up meetings across different time zones
2 Ensure Diversity in the Team Is Understood, Appreciated, and Leveraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent team expertise directory and skills matrix in the virtual workspace • Virtual sub-teaming to pair diverse members and rotate sub-team members • Allowing diverse opinions to be expressed through use of asynchronous electronic means (e.g., electronic discussion threads)
3 Manage Virtual Work-Cycle and Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All idea divergence between meetings (asynchronous idea generation) and idea convergence and conflict resolution during virtual meetings (synchronous idea convergence) • Use the start of virtual meeting (each time) for social relationship building • During meeting—ensure through "check-ins" that everyone is engaged and heard from • End of meeting—ensure that the minutes and future work plan is posted to team repository
4 Monitor Team Progress Through the Use of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely scrutinize asynchronous (electronic threaded discussion and document postings in the knowledge repository) and synchronous (virtual meeting participation and instant messaging) communication patterns • Make progress explicit through balanced scorecard measurements posted in the team's virtual workspace
5 Enhance External Visibility of the Team and Its Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent report-outs to a virtual steering committee (comprised of local bosses of team members)
6 Ensure Individuals Benefit From Participating in Virtual Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual reward ceremonies • Individual recognition at the start of each virtual meeting • Making each team member's "real location" boss aware of the member's contribution



Critical Thinking Question: Provide an example of a type of work that cannot be done by a virtual team. Why do you think this would be the case?

One of the advantages of virtual teams is that team members can be geographically dispersed. Members can contribute to teamwork from anywhere in a country or the world. In many cases, virtual teams are comprised of members from different cultures. Cultural differences affect teams (you will learn more about the effects of cultural values in Chapter 12). The challenge of multicultural team participation is addressed next.

Multicultural Teams

Not all team processes translate cross-culturally. One study surveyed members of 461 SMWTs in four countries: the United States, Finland, Belgium, and the Philippines.⁸⁴ Resistance to SMWTs was affected by cultural values of collectivism and power distance. Collectiveness is group orientation and power distance is respect for authority. Also, the degree of determinism (i.e., the belief that “people should not try to change the paths their lives are destined to take”) affected reactions to the implementation of SMWTs. Employees in the Philippines were significantly more likely to reject self-management compared to employees in the United States. Caution should be exercised when implementing SMWTs and other forms of participation in countries with high power distance. Individuals in high power distance cultures respect authority and expect the leader to have all the answers. They may be confused by a leader who asks for their input and make the attribution that the leader is not competent to make the decision alone. Similar reactions to the offer of participation might be found in Russia and Mexico.^{85,86} Participation in countries with high power distance may not be appropriate, and managers should check cultural assumptions before offering participation to multicultural teams.

Throughout this chapter, a clear theme is that the leader can set up groups for success by directing the group toward a meaningful goal, selecting the right decision-making tools, and preventing groupthink. In the concluding section of this chapter, the importance of team leadership is discussed further.

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS: EMPOWERING THE TEAM

Research has shown that team leaders engage in certain behaviors that enhance team performance. A team leader who creates the right climate for a team increases empowerment.⁸⁷ **Leadership climate** is effective when a team leader gives their team many responsibilities, asks the team for advice when making decisions, is not too controlling, allows the team to set its own goals, stays out of the way when the team works on its performance problems, tells the team to expect a lot from itself, and trusts

the team. A study of 62 teams in a Fortune 500 company found leadership climate is related to team performance through team empowerment.⁸⁸ More empowered teams are more productive and proactive than less empowered teams and have higher levels of customer service, job satisfaction, and commitment. Empowerment is also related to lower employee cynicism and “time theft” (spending time on non-work-related activities during working hours).⁸⁹ A meta-analysis of relationships between leader behaviors and team performance found task-focused behaviors are moderately related to perceived team effectiveness and team productivity. However, person-focused behaviors are more related to perceived team effectiveness, team productivity, and team learning than task-focused behaviors. Examining specific leader behaviors, empowerment behaviors accounted for nearly 30% of the variance in team learning.⁹⁰ Empowerment seems to be a critical aspect of the development of highly effective teams. Team members need to feel that they have the power to make significant decisions about their work.

In some cases, empowerment takes the form of the team being self-managed. SMWTs are teams that are empowered to lead themselves without a formal assigned leader. In a SMWT, decisions regarding the specific ways that tasks are performed are left up to the members of the team.⁹¹ These teams are now common at the workplace, and they have been related to higher job satisfaction and commitment.⁹² SMWTs are in place in 79% of Fortune 1000 companies and in 81% of manufacturing companies.⁹³ The role of the leader in a SMWT is to relate (build trust), scout (seek information and diagnose problems), persuade (gain external support and influence the team), and empower (delegate and coach). The research evidence on SMWTs reports mixed results, however. While members report that they are more satisfied, team performance may be more difficult to attain without a leader. For example, SMWT members don't manage conflict well, and this may result in an erosion of trust.⁹⁴ A study of SMWTs that compared them to traditional teams found that claims of the effectiveness of self-management may have been inflated; SMWTs did not perform better than traditional teams.⁹⁵ In sum, it appears that leadership matters for team performance. However, it is important that the leader create the right leadership climate for the team and empower the team to act.



Critical Thinking Questions: Explain why the existence of SMWTs that also have a team leader poses a paradox for the leader. If a team is self-managed, what is the leader's role?

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TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 9.1

The Team Charter

Getting Started: Developing Ground Rules

Anyone who plays sports has to learn the rules. Anyone who learns to play an instrument has to learn the techniques. The rules of "how we do things here" (the etiquette of the situation, the appropriate behaviors) are the ground rules.

Teams often begin making assumptions about ground rules. Members believe that everyone knows how it should be and how everyone should behave. When someone else's behavior fails to conform to one's own expectations, people tend to be surprised. Even more importantly, because the rules are not clear and because there has been no discussion as to how problems will be managed, unnecessary conflict follows. This assignment serves the following objectives:

- Gives you the opportunity to get to know your team members
- Provides a short but *important* task so that the team can learn to function quickly without a large portion of your grade resting on the initial outcome
- Enables the team to develop and understand the rules of conduct expected of each team member

Your team will be required to submit a team charter. The following points that must be included in your charter are listed next, with some examples of the kinds of questions that might be addressed. However, use these as starting points; be sure to address any other important issues that come up in your discussions.

Attendance

How often should we meet?
How long should our meetings be?
When is it okay to miss a meeting?

Lateness

Since team meetings should start on time, how do we deal with lateness?
What does “on time” mean?

Interruptions

How do we deal with interruptions?
What is allowed? Phone calls? Messages?

Food, Coffee, or Smoking Breaks

Do we have food or coffee?
Who cleans up?
How many breaks should we have?
How much socializing is permissible?

Participation

What do we mean by participation?
How do we encourage participation?
Are there group norms that we can establish to encourage participation?

Goals

What are the team's goals and objectives?
What is the team's mission?
How will the team keep members motivated?
How will the team reward itself (and individual members) for a job well done?

Norms

What behaviors are permissible?
How do we deal with inappropriate humor?
How do we deal with people who dominate, resist, are too quiet, are too noisy, etc.?
How will we monitor our progress?
What important roles need to be assumed by team members during the semester? How will these roles be assigned?

Decision Making

How do we make decisions?
What decisions must be agreed to by all?
What does consensus mean?

Conflict

How will the team encourage positive (creative) conflict and discourage negative (dysfunctional) conflict?
How can the team encourage and manage differences of opinion and different perspectives?

Sanction Issues (What Will the Team Do With Deviates?)

How will the team deal with members who violate the agreed-upon norms of the team? For example, how will social loafing or inadequate participation be dealt with?

Firing Team Members

What are the specific rules or criteria for firing a team member? (You must give two written notices to the person and a copy to the professor prior to dismissal.)

Team Member Strengths and Weaknesses

Each team member should be identified (name, phone number, e-mail) along with an assessment of his or her strengths and his or her areas for improvement.

Other

Are there other issues that have a positive or negative impact on the team?

The Next Step: A Name and a Logo

After your team has prepared its team charter, create a name for your team and design a logo. The name and logo should be meaningful to the team, reflecting an attribute that the team members believe is important (humor is allowed and encouraged, but both the team logo and name should be meaningful). The name is limited to one or two words. Write a brief explanation of your name and logo choice. Give a copy to your instructor (along with your team charter). Your team charter should also include the following:

- A cover page with the following printed on it: the team name; team logo; team member names; and course name, number, and section
- A page with team member names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses
- Team charter rules and expectations
- A brief explanation of your team name and logo choice

Source: Adapted from: Cox, P. L., & Bobrowski, P. E. (2000). The team charter assignment: Improving the effectiveness of classroom teams. *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*, 1(1), 92-103.

TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 9.2

The Marshmallow Challenge (Team Exercise)

The Marshmallow Challenge has been tested worldwide consultant Tom Wujec. Wujec has run the challenge with different categories of teams such as CEO teams, teams of architects, teams of engineers, teams of business students, and teams of kindergarten children.

First, form teams of four people. You need a measuring tape and watch. Run the challenge with your group, and then watch the debriefing video provided at the web link below.

The goals and rules of the Marshmallow Challenge follow.

1. **Build the tallest freestanding structure:** The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the tabletop surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling, or chandelier.

2. **The entire marshmallow must be on top:** The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.
3. **Use as much or as little of the kit:** The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag that the materials are in as part of their structure.
4. **Break up the spaghetti, string, or tape:** Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.
5. **Observe the time limit:** You have 18 minutes to build your structure.

Source: www.marshmallowchallenge.com

TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 9.3

How to Run an Effective Meeting (Checklist)

Before the meeting:

- Set goals for the meeting, and prepare an agenda.
- Prioritize issues to be discussed, including carryover issues from previous meetings.
- Consult with team members to finalize the agenda.
- Research information necessary for making important decisions (or delegate this).
- Arrange logistics: date, time, place, catering. Select a comfortable and convenient meeting place.
- Send out announcements and reminders for the meeting, including the meeting agenda.
- Arrange for AV equipment, flip charts, markers, and other supplies.
- Arrive early to set up, and check for adequate lighting, ventilation, heating, or air-conditioning.
- Arrange seating, and post directional signs if needed.
- Prepare name tags or tent cards if needed.

During the meeting:

- Greet people as they arrive individually.
- Announce the nearest restrooms.
- Have the agenda at each person's place or projected on screen.
- Set a welcoming tone: introductions (you may want to include an icebreaker exercise if time permits).
- Review minutes from the previous meeting if appropriate.
- Provide background information, and review the meeting goals.
- Be courteous, respectful, and inclusive during the discussions.
- Start and finish the meeting on time.

Bring closure:

- Make decisions.
- Prepare action plans and follow up.
- Summarize main points and what was accomplished during the meeting.
- Schedule the next meeting (if needed).

After the meeting:

- E-mail participants, and thank them for their contributions.
- Distribute minutes of the meeting and action plans.
- Include a reminder about the next meeting.

CASE STUDY 9.1

Texting All Teams: Amazon Enters the Cell Phone Market

Cell phones are nothing new. But imagine if you got to help develop the new phone from Amazon. Would it slide open to have double touch screens so you can do two things at once? Would it allow you to video call several of your friends at once? Would you be able to use your phone as a USB drive and let it attach to computers or projectors for presentations? Or would you design it to fit the business niche, with advanced teleconferencing abilities so that you could deliver a presentation and run a meeting all through your phone from anywhere?

Lab126 is Amazon's private Skunk Works that employs over 1,600 people. The lab spent the past 5 years developing Amazon's new smartphone called the Fire Phone. It includes sensors that allow phone users to operate the phone and play games without having to touch the screen. The phone also has infrared cameras that allow images to move with the user and show images in 3-D.

Development of the Fire Phone began in 2009 and was hindered by technical and organizational challenges. Employees were tasked with the mission of creating a phone that would be different and better for Amazon's most engaged customers. To do so, teams were created and put in charge of finding the right cameras, how to stabilize the 3-D effect, how to use camera tracking for scrolling and interacting with the menus, how to enhance the integration with the Amazon App Store and Prime, and how to make customers aware of the new features. Leadership on the project changed several times, with CEO Jeff Bezos even stepping in to lead the project. The teams themselves had to deal with conflicts among one another, balancing the desires of management, the drive to make something cool, and the budgetary and technological requirements.

Discussion Questions

1. In designing the Fire Phone, Amazon employees were tasked with being very creative. What do you think the different feature teams did to come up with creative ideas for the phone? How do you think Amazon evaluated the team's success?
2. With such a creative team, it's likely you'll come up with a number of ideas. How would the team decide what would be the best features to include? What factors do you think will be the biggest in making the decision? When should you call in a leader or supervisor?
3. How could leadership changes hinder the team's relationships and effectiveness? Which do you think would have the most impact: the leader's attitude, the leader's personality, or the leader's style?
4. You've come up with what you think is a great idea for the phone, and your teammates, who you have developed a very good relationship with, like it as well. How can you be sure that it is a good idea and not a by-product of the groupthink effect?

Source: Developed from Stone, B. (2014, June 17). Inside the secretive R & D lab behind the Amazon Fire Phone. *Businessweek*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-06-17/inside-the-secretive-r-and-d-lab-behind-the-amazon-phone#r=nav-f-story>; Pierce, D. (2014, June 18). The Amazon smartphone is here: Meet the Fire Phone: A \$199 phone with 3D cameras and all the Amazon services in the world. Retrieved from <http://www.theverge.com/2014/6/18/5819516/meet-the-fire-phone>

SELF-ASSESSMENT 9.1

Teamwork Orientation

This self-assessment exercise identifies your propensity toward working in teams. The goal is for you to learn about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test. You don't have to share your results with others unless you wish to do so.

Instructions: Circle the response that best describes your behavior.

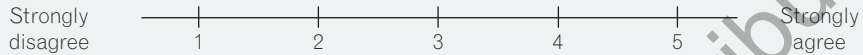
As an example, the answer to a statement could look like this:

I enjoy communicating in teams.



This response indicates that you neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

1. The basic idea of the team concept is good.



2. Teams are essential for effective organizational functioning.



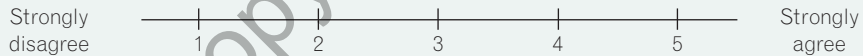
3. I feel positive about working in a team.



4. Teams are good for organizations.



5. The team concept helps organizations.



Scoring: Add your responses to determine your total for team orientation. Higher scores suggest a higher propensity for teamwork. In general, scores from 5 to 12 indicate a lower interest in being on a team and scores above 13 indicate a higher interest in being on a team.

Source: Adapted from Scandura, T. A. (1995). *Management practices survey*. University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.