Teams and Teamwork

How do teams contribute to organizations?

- Team
  - A small group of people with complementary skills, who work together to achieve a shared purpose and hold themselves mutually accountable for its accomplishment
- Teamwork
  - The process of people actively working together to achieve common goals

How do teams contribute to organizations?

- Team and teamwork roles for managers
  - Supervisor—serving as the appointed head
  - Network facilitator—serving as a peer leader
  - Participant—serving as a helpful contributing member of the team
  - External coach—serving a mentor or sponsor for team members

What can go wrong in teams?

- Social loafing
  - "Free riders" who slack off because responsibility is diffused and others are present to do the work.
- Common problems:
  - Personality conflicts
  - Differences in work styles
  - Task ambiguity
  - Poor readiness to work

Synergy

- The creation of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts
- A team uses its membership resources to the fullest and thereby achieves through collective action far more than could be achieved otherwise.

Usefulness of teams

- More resources for problem solving
- Improved creativity and innovation
- Improved quality of decision making
- Greater commitments to tasks
- Higher motivation through collective action
- Better control and work discipline
- More individual need satisfaction

Formal Teams

- Teams that are officially recognized and supported by the organization for specific purposes
- May appear on the organization chart
- A functional team is a formally designated work team with a manager or team leader

Informal Groups

- Not recognized on organization charts
- Not officially created to serve an organizational purpose
- Emerge as part of the informal structure and from natural or spontaneous relationships among people

Committees and Task Forces

- Committees
  - Usually operate with an ongoing purpose.
  - Membership may change over time.
- Task forces
  - Usually operate on a more temporary basis
  - Official tasks are very specific and time defined
  - Often disbands after task is completed

Guidelines for managing projects and task forces

- Select appropriate task force members.
- Clearly define the purpose of the task force.
- Carefully select a task force leader.
- Periodically review progress.

Cross-functional teams

- Members come from different functional units and parts of an organization.
- Teams are created to knock down "walls" separating departments.
- Team works on a specific problem or task with the needs of the whole organization in mind.

Employee Involvement Teams

- Groups of workers who meet on a regular basis outside of their formal assignments
- Have the goal of applying their expertise and attention to important workplace matters, targeted toward continuous improvement
- Quality circles represent a common form of employee involvement teams

Virtual Teams

- Teams of people who work together and solve problems through largely computer-mediated rather than face-to-face interactions
- Sometimes called …
  - Computer-mediated groups
  - Electronic group networks

Virtual Teams

Potential problems:
  - Difficulty in establishing good working relationships
  - Depersonalization of working relationships

Potential advantages:
  - Savings in time and travel expenses
  - Minimization or elimination of interpersonal difficulties
  - Ease of expansion

Virtual Teams

- Guidelines for managing virtual teams:
  - Virtual teams should begin with social messaging.
  - Team members should be assigned clear roles
  - Team members must have positive attitudes that support team goals

Self-managing Work Teams

- Teams of workers whose jobs have been redesigned to create a high degree of task interdependence and who have been given authority to make many decisions about how to do the required work
- Also known as autonomous work groups

Self-managing Work Teams

- Typical self-management responsibilities:
  - Planning and scheduling work
  - Training members in various tasks
  - Sharing tasks
  - Meeting performance goals
  - Ensuring high quality
  - Solving day-to-day operating problems
  - In some cases, hiring and firing team members

Self-managing Work Teams

- In self-managing work teams, members …
  - Are held collectively accountable for performance results.
  - Have discretion in distributing tasks in the team.
  - Have discretion in scheduling work for the team.
  - Are able to perform more than one team job.
  - Evaluate one another's performance.
  - Are responsible for the total quality of team products.

Effective Teams

- Achieve and maintain high levels of task performance
- Achieve and maintain high levels of member satisfaction
- Retain viability for the future

How do teams work?

- Resource input factors that influence group process in the pursuit of team effectiveness …
  - Organizational setting
  - Nature of the task
  - Team size
  - Membership characteristics

How do teams work?

- Team effectiveness may be summarized as

Team Effectiveness =

Quality of Inputs + (Process Gains - Process Losses)

System View of Team Effectiveness

Team Inputs $\longrightarrow$ Group Process $\longrightarrow$ Team Effectiveness

Nature of Task

Organizational Setting

Team Size

Member Characteristics
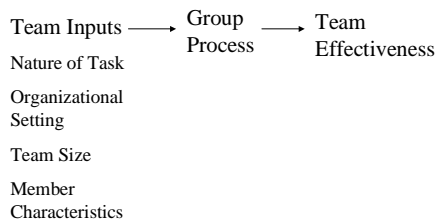
Stages of Team Development

- Forming—initial orientation and interpersonal testing
- Storming—conflict over tasks and ways of operating as a team
- Norming—consolidation around task and operating agendas
- Performing—teamwork and focused task performance
- Adjourning—task accomplishment and eventual disengagement

How do teams work?

- Norms
  - Behavior expected of team members
  - Rules or standards that guide behavior
  - May result in team sanctions
- Performance norms
  - Level of work effort and performance that team members are expected to contribute to the team task

Guidelines for Building Positive Norms

- Act as a positive role model.
- Reinforce the desired behaviors with rewards.
- Control results by performance reviews and regular feedback.
- Orient and train new members to adopt desired behaviors.

Guidelines for Building Positive Norms

- Recruit and select new members who exhibit desired behaviors.
- Hold regular meetings to discuss progress and ways of improving.
- Use team decision-making methods to reach agreement.

How do teams work?

- Cohesiveness …
  - The degree to which members are attracted to and motivated to remain part of a team
  - Can be beneficial if paired with positive performance norms

Effects of Team Cohesiveness & Norms

- Positive norms + high cohesiveness $\Rightarrow$ high productivity and strong commitments to supportive norms
- Positive norms + low cohesiveness $\Rightarrow$ moderate productivity and weak commitments to supportive norms

Effects of Team Cohesiveness & Norms

- Negative norms + high cohesiveness $\Rightarrow$ low productivity and strong commitments to harmful norms
- Negative norms + low cohesiveness $\Rightarrow$ low to moderate productivity and weak commitments to harmful norms

Guidelines for Increasing Team Cohesion

- Induce agreement on team goals.
- Increase membership homogeneity.
- Increase interaction among members.
- Decrease team size.
- Introduce competition with other teams.
- Reward team rather than individual results.
- Provide physical isolation from other teams.

How do teams work?

- Task activities
  - Actions by team members that contribute directly to team's performance purpose.
  - Includes:
    - Initiating
    - Information sharing
    - Summarizing
    - Elaborating
    - Opinion giving

How do teams work?

- Maintenance activities
  - Support emotional life of a team as an ongoing social system.
  - Includes:
    - Gatekeeping
    - Encouraging
    - Following
   - Harmonizing
    - Reducing tension

How do teams work?

- Distributed leadership roles …
  - Make every member responsible for recognizing when task and/or maintenance activities are needed and stepping in to provide them.
  - Leading through task activities focuses on solving problems and accomplishing tasks.
  - Leading through maintenance activities helps strengthen and perpetuate the team as a social entity.

How do teams work?

- Dysfunctional activities that detract from team effectiveness:
  - Being aggressive
  - Blocking
  - Self-confessing
  - Seeking sympathy
  - Competing
  - Withdrawal
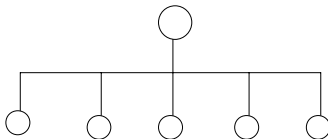 - Horsing around
  - Seeking recognition

Communication Networks

Decentralized – all members communicate directly with one another
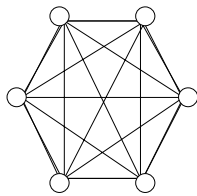
Communication Networks

Centralized - Activities are coordinated and results pooled by central point of control.

Communication Networks

- Decentralized
  - All members communicate directly with one another.
- Centralized
  - Activities are coordinated and results pooled by central point of control.
- Restricted
  - Polarized subgroups contest one another.

Team Decision Making

- Methods of team decision making
  - Lack of response
  - Authority rule
  - Minority rule
  - Majority rule
  - Consensus
  - Unanimity

Team Decision Making

- Assets of team decision making
  - Greater amounts of information, knowledge, and expertise
  - Expands number of action alternatives considered
  - Increases understanding and acceptance
  - Increases commitment to follow through

Team Decision Making

- Potential disadvantages of team decision making
  - Social pressure to conform
  - Individual or minority group domination
  - Time requirements

Team Decision Making

- Symptoms of groupthink
  - Illusions of group invulnerability
  - Rationalizing unpleasant and disconfirming data
  - Belief in inherent group morality
  - Negative stereotypes of competitors
  - Pressure to conform
  - Self-censorship
  - Illusions of unanimity
  - Mind guarding

Team Decision Making

- Methods for dealing with groupthink
  - Have each group member be a critical evaluator.
  - Don't appear to favor one course of action.
  - Create subteams to work on the same problems.
  - Have team members discuss issues with outsiders.
  - Have outside experts observe and provide feedback on team activities.
  - Assign a member to the devil's advocate role.
  - Hold a second-chance meeting.

Team Decision Making

- Creativity in team decision making—guidelines for brainstorming
  - All criticism is ruled out.
  - Freewheeling is welcomed.
  - Quantity is important.
  - Building on one another's ideas is encouraged.

Team Decision Making

- Creativity in team decision making—steps in the nominal group technique
  - Participants work alone, identifying possible solutions.
  - Ideas are shared in a round-robin fashion without any criticism or discussion.
  - Ideas are discussed and clarified in a round-robin sequence.
  - Members individually and silently follow a written voting procedure.
  - The last two steps are repeated as needed.

High Performance Team Leadership

- Team building …
  - A sequence of planned activities used to gather and analyze data on the functioning of a team and to implement constructive changes to increase its operating effectiveness.

Team Building

- Steps in a cyclical team-building process:
  - Step 1—problem awareness.
  - Step 2—data gathering.
  - Step 3—data analysis and diagnosis.
  - Step 4—action planning.
  - Step 5—action implementation.
  - Step 6—evaluation.

High Performance Team Leadership

- Characteristics of high-performing teams:
  - A clear and elevating goal
  - Competent and committed members who work hard
  - A task-driven, results-oriented structure
  - A collaborative climate
  - High standards of excellence
  - External support and recognition
  - Strong and principled leadership

High Performance Team Leadership

- Effective team leaders act to …
  - Establish clear vision
  - Create change
  - Unleash talent

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