

Robbins & Judge
Organizational Behavior
14th Edition

Chapter 10:
Understanding Work Teams



Why Have Teams Become So Popular?

- ▶ Great way to use employee talents
- ▶ Teams are more flexible and responsive to changes in the environment
- ▶ Can quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and disband
- ▶ Facilitate employee involvement
- ▶ Increases employee participation in decision making
- ▶ Democratize an organization and increase motivation

Note: teams are not ALWAYS effective

Differences between Groups and Teams

▶ Work Group

- A group that interacts primarily to share information and to make decisions to help each group member perform within his or her area of responsibility
- No joint effort required

▶ Work Team

- Generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. The individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs

Groups versus Teams

Work Group

- Strong, clearly focused leader
- Individual accountability
- The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission
- Individual work products
- Runs efficient meetings
- Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (such as financial performance of the business)
- Discusses, decides, and delegates together

Team

- Shared leadership roles
- Individual and mutual accountability
- Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers
- Collective work products
- Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings
- Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products
- Discusses, decides, and does real work together

Types of Teams

▶ Problem-solving Teams

- Groups of 5 to 12 employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment

▶ Self-Managed Work Teams

- Groups of 10 to 15 people who take on the responsibilities of their former supervisors

More Types of Teams

▶ Cross-Functional Teams

- Employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task
 - Very common
 - Task forces
 - Committees

A Final Type of Team

▶ Virtual Teams

- Teams that use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal
 - **Characteristics**
- Limited socializing
- The ability to overcome time and space constraints
 - **To be effective, needs:**
- Trust among members
- Close monitoring
- To be publicized

▶ Team Effectiveness Model

Exhibit 10–3

Characteristics of Effective Teams



Key Components of Effective Teams

- ▶ Context
- ▶ Composition
- ▶ Work Design
- ▶ Process Variables



Creating Effective Teams: Context

- ▶ **Adequate Resources**
 - Need the tools to complete the job
- ▶ **Effective Leadership and Structure**
 - Agreeing to the specifics of work and how the team fits together to integrate individual skills
 - Even “self-managed” teams need leaders
 - Leadership especially important in multi-team systems
- ▶ **Climate of Trust**
 - Members must trust each other and the leader
- ▶ **Performance and Rewards Systems that Reflect Team Contributions**
 - Cannot just be based on individual effort

Creating Effective Teams: Composition

▶ Abilities of Members

- *Need technical expertise,*
- *problem-solving,*
- *decision-making, and*
- *good interpersonal skills*

▶ Personality of Members

- Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness all relate to team performance

▶ Allocating Roles and Diversity

- Many necessary roles that must be filled
- Diversity can often lead to lower performance

▶ Size of Team

- The smaller the better: 5–9 is optimal

▶ Member's Preference for Teamwork

- Do the members want to be on teams?

Creating Effective Teams: Work Design

- ▶ **Freedom and Autonomy**
 - Ability to work independently
- ▶ **Skill Variety**
 - Ability to use different skills and talents
- ▶ **Task Identity**
 - Ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product
- ▶ **Task Significance**
 - Working on a task or project that has a substantial impact on others



Creating Effective Teams: **Process**

- ▶ **Commitment to a Common Purpose**
 - Create a common purpose that provides direction
 - Have *reflexivity*: willing to adjust plan if necessary
- ▶ **Establishment of Specific Team Goals**
 - Must be specific, measurable, realistic, and challenging
- ▶ **Team Efficacy**
 - Team believes in its ability to succeed
- ▶ **Mental Models**
 - Have an accurate and common mental map of how the work gets done
- ▶ **A Managed Level of Conflict**
 - Task conflicts are helpful; interpersonal conflicts are not
- ▶ **Minimized Social Loafing**
 - Team holds itself accountable both individually and as a team

Turning Individuals into Team Players

▶ Selection

- Make team skills one of the interpersonal skills in the hiring process.

▶ Training

- Individualistic people can learn

▶ Rewards

- Rework the reward system to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive (individual) ones
- Continue to recognize individual contributions while still emphasizing the importance of teamwork

Beware! Teams Aren't Always the Answer

Teams take more time and resources than does individual work.

▶ Three tests to see if a team fits the situation:

1. Is the work **complex** and is there a need for different perspectives: will it be better with the insights of more than one person?
2. Does the work create a **common purpose** or set of goals for the group that is larger than the aggregate of the goals for individuals?
3. Are members of the group involved in **interdependent tasks**?

