



TEAM MANAGEMENT

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Explain the difference between groups and teams and understand when each is more appropriate
- ✓ Identify the characteristics of a good team
- ✓ Evaluate the five stages involved in team development
- ✓ Explain and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of teams

Team Management

The words such as group and team can be used interchangeably. Modern managers sometimes use the word teams to the point that it has become a cliché; they talk about teams while sceptics perceive no real teamwork.

Thus, making a distinction between groups and teams can be useful. A working group is a collection of people who work in the same area or have been drawn together to undertake a task but do not necessarily come together as a unit and achieve significant performance improvements.

A real team is formed of people with complementary skills who trust one another and are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Organizations have been using groups for a long time, but today's workplaces are different. Teams are used in many different ways than in the past. Ideally, people are far more involved in team building. Most employees are well trained to do team work. Hence, cooperation is higher, and the culture of learning has improved today.

The figures below show the comparison of the traditional work environment to the modern team environment adapted from the book "Leading Teams" by J. Zenger and Associates.

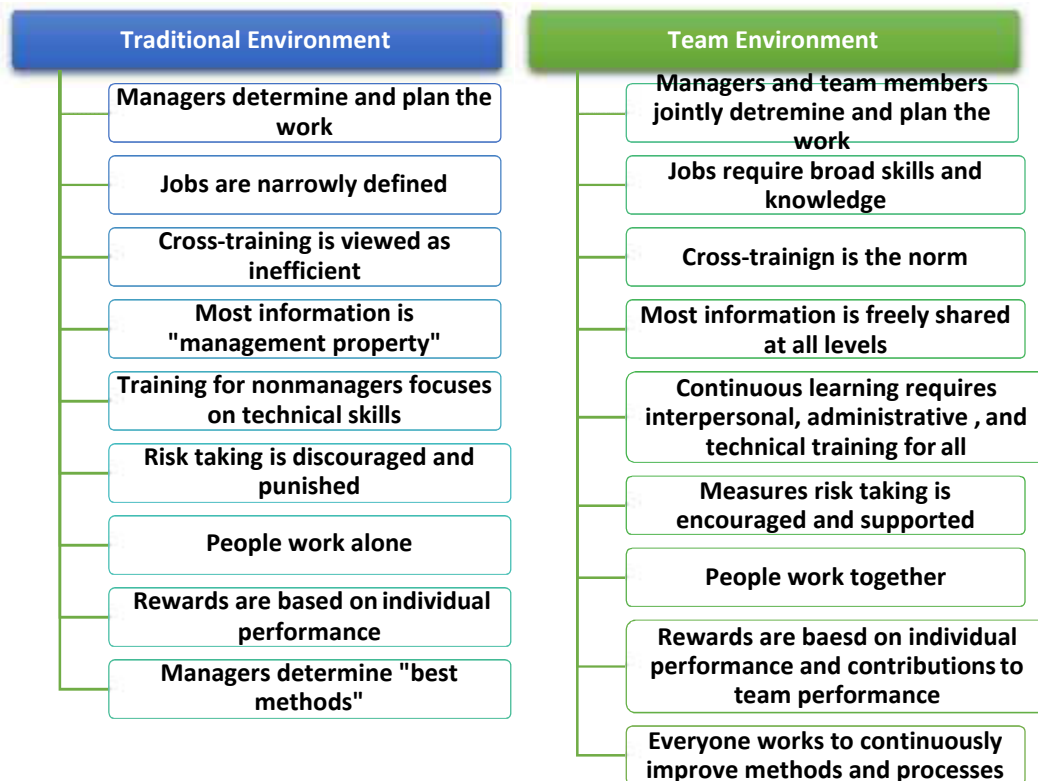


Fig: 1.1

Types of Teams

Every organization may have hundreds of groups and teams when the business operates on large scale activities. Nevertheless, they can be classified into just few primary types as follows:

Work Teams

Work teams make or do things such as manufacturing, assembling, selling, or providing service.

Project and Development teams

Project and development teams are also known as “ad hoc teams” that work on long term projects but disband once the work is completed.

Parallel Teams

Parallel teams operate separately from the regular work structure and exist temporarily.

Management Teams

Management teams coordinate and provide direction to the subunits under their jurisdiction and integrate work among subunits.

Transnational Teams

Transnational teams are composed of multinational members whose activities cover multiple countries.

Virtual Teams

Virtual teams are physically dispersed and communicate electronically more than face-to-face.

Self-Managed Teams

Self-managed teams are composed of autonomous work groups with workers who are trained to do all or most of the jobs in a unit. This type of team has an immediate supervisor and make decisions previously made by Frontline supervisors.

Quality Circles

Quality circles are voluntary groups of people drawn from various production teams who make suggestions about the quality.

Traditional Work Groups

As discussed in the figure on the next page, traditional work groups, autonomously speaking, have no managerial responsibilities.

Semiautonomous Work Groups

Semiautonomous work groups make decisions about managing and carrying out major production activities but get outside support for quality control and maintenance.

Autonomous Work Groups







Autonomous work groups control decisions about and execution of complete range of tasks.

Self-designing Teams

Self-designing teams have the responsibilities of autonomous work groups. In addition to that are tasks of control over hiring, firing, and deciding what tasks members perform.

Benefits of Managing Teams

Teams are the building blocks of the business organization structure. In most corporations, teams function as small entrepreneurial businesses within corporations. Moreover, a well-managed team produces the following desired results:

- Increases the firm's productivity
-  Improves the quality of products and services
-  Reduces the costs of production
-  Speeds up operations
-  Drives innovation and change
-  Develops new products faster
-  Works efficiently with suppliers
-  Provides a learning mechanism for each team member
-  Satisfies important personal needs of each member such as sense of belonging and esteem
-  Creates a positive working culture, specialization, and efficiency
-  Boosts social corporate responsibility among the workforce
-  Provides immediate feedback to one another
-  Helps identify opportunities for growth and development
-  Supplements the functional expertise of one another

- ❓ Develops strong problem solving capabilities
- ❓ Creates flexibility especially when transferring skills to new positions

Effective Teams

Effective teams are necessarily able to produce desirable results. With that, certain criteria must be satisfied to prove that a team is effectively managed such as:

❓ Productivity

The productive output of the team meets or exceeds the standards of quantity and quality; the team's output is acceptable to the customers, inside or outside the organization, who receive the team's goods or services.

❓ Utility

Team members realize the satisfaction of their personal needs. When a manager gives the teams the freedom to innovate and stretch their skills, team members are likely to become enthusiastic and realize great pride and satisfaction in their work.

❓ Dedication

Team members remain committed to working together again unless the group does burn out and disintegrate after an exhausting project. More often than not, the members are happier whenever they are involved than not. Therefore, effective teams remain workable and have good prospects for repeated success in the future.

To further develop the above-mentioned qualities of an effective team, managers may conduct team-building activities and other works with a supplementary coach. Team building events usually involve activities that focus on relationship dynamics among team members.

Furthermore, coaching a team should be different from coaching individual team members because it must be focused on how the group as a whole operates and how it can improve interactions so that it will accomplish its goals.

When A Group Of Individuals Come Together To Perform A Similar Activity Or Accomplish A Common Goal, And Work In Coordination With Each Other, They Are Called A Team.

In a business organization, a team is a group of individuals with a variety of qualifications, who come together to manage a department, or work together to accomplish a particular goal for the organisation. The teams can be made on a temporary or permanent basis.

It is necessary to hire an individual who would overlook the activities of the team as a whole as well as the performance of the individuals within the team. This is known as team management.

In order to function properly, any team requires a certain level of trust and respect amongst its members. A good team creates an environment at work that is fun to enter and one that every employee embraces.

It motivates all the members of the team to contribute to the goal at hand and the cheerful relationship between the members creates a feeling of family.

On the other hand, if a team constantly has its members at cross ends, fighting and struggling to gain superiority over the other, then the atmosphere will be that of ill will. There would be distrust amongst the members.

They would be constantly competing and trying to top the other, sacrificing the quality of the work due to their petty issues. It is the job of a team manager to resolve these issues and to create a harmonious working environment.

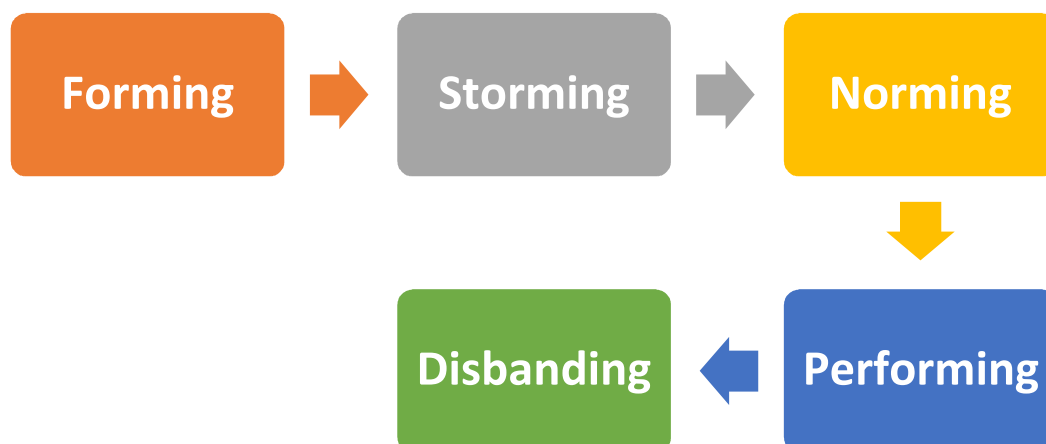
A good environment within the team can help the members of the team achieve more goals. In the process, one can learn more and create friendships through the organization which would increase their morale. As they make friends, they would feel comfortable among the other members of the team to be themselves and thus enjoy their work.

As a part of a team, if any mistakes occur, they would feel safer and through the accomplishments they earn the profits and share them together.

As a member of a team, each member also gets a chance to project their skills as a leader when it comes to handling certain jobs or fulfilling some particular objectives.

This creates a team spirit that is welcoming and reduces stress between the members of the team. The temporary teams that are created to fulfil a certain purpose for a limited period of time are developed through five stages as stated in 'The Team Development Model' by Bruce Tuckman.

This model has five stages of development in the coming together of the team. They are:



Forming

This is the first stage. In this stage, the members of the team are only acquainted with the team leader and in most cases only prefer speaking to him and not to the other members.

In this stage the relationship is filled with distrust and uncertainty as the members are not properly acquainted with the others. As per Bruce Tuckman, a team can get stuck in this stage and create problems in the future stages of development.

It is the job of the team leader to create a comfortable environment between the members so they can learn to trust each other and work to produce the results.

Storming

Storming means two things – the storming of ideas or the storming of the members of the team due to their tempers. This is a simple way to put it. Such things do not actually occur in the overly friendly settings of the business organization.

Storming is the second stage of the development model. In this stage the team members begin to wonder if they can actually work together to produce results.

It is natural that some of the team members would disagree with the others and there would be conflicts in the ideas and suggested approaches.

stage is marked, therefore, with conflicts and debates. In this stage the team tries to sort out their differences with the leadership of the team manager.

Norming

Norming is the third stage in this model by Bruce Tucker. In this stage, the team starts to put aside their differences from the storming stage and then creates norms for working and codes of conduct and procedure.

It starts planning for ways to implement the decisions and creates programmes and makes plans and strategies to achieve their objective.

They start to view the team as a team, and put aside their own personal gains and interests to attain the goal at hand.

Performing

If all the above stages are executed properly, it makes way for this fourth stage which is the performance stage. As per Bruce Tucker, the members of the team are now more comfortable in their interactions with each other. They have formed the strategies, now they must employ them to achieve their ends.

In this atmosphere, it is easier for the team to perform together, make decisions, take risks, and work to eliminate any problems or barriers along the way. They aim to finally deliver on the objective and work in a positive and harmonious environment.

Disbanding

The team is created for a temporary period, therefore after it has accomplished its goal and achieved success, it can be disbanded, or split up.

Even if the team works together to create a major landmark, it would still be disbanded. The members might again be put through this process in a new team for the accomplishment of a new objective. It becomes the job of the team leader to safely navigate his team through these stages. The success of the team leader depends upon the success of his team.

If the team manages to accomplish its goal without too many hesitations, it is a clear indication of the skill of the team leader and the quality of management. A team is firstly formed by analyzing the personalities of each team member as per the requirements. A team leader or project manager first decides the number of members required and then the skills that the members must possess and chooses the available employees for a group of members who he thinks can cohabit well together.

In this sense he sees the individuals as a part of a team and not as a single employee. This team is then analyzed by the team leader. He studies their personalities and understands their character (either through an interview process or by observation) and when he is satisfied that they can work well together he brings them together and introduces them as a team.

If he requires, he can even have his employees undergo the activities of 'team building' which is another method of developing the team.

In this method, the proposed members of the team are brought together, then spend a few days in a workshop getting to know each other to make their future project better.

Through this workshop they would get an earlier feel of their team's dynamic. Team building is not just limited to business organizations, but can also be used in school teams and teams that enter challenges for various talents.

In team building workshops, the team undergoes activities and exercises that are aimed at improving the relationship among the members of the team, and to train them for their future roles in the team, and smooth any of the rough edges.

Team management is becoming more and more important in business organisations now because they have started working with employees of different cultures and backgrounds, and sometimes the teams are divided by borders of the countries and can only communicate through technology.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Introducing Management: A Development Guide 6 April 2006 (BY Kate Williams)*
- ✓ *Effective Leadership: Revised Edition 2009: John Adair*