



# Chapter 7

## Groups and Teamwork

# What Is a Group?

- A *group* consists of two or more people interacting interdependently to achieve a common goal.
- Interaction is the most basic aspect of a group.
- Interdependence means that group members rely to some degree on each other to accomplish goals.

# Group vs. Team

- Often the terms are interchangeable and refer to a number of people working towards a common goal.
- In groups, individual members may work independently with the assumption that the work is somehow coordinated by others. Groups do shape formal and official organizational structures.
- Both groups and teams have semi autonomous properties and shape everyday life and organizational character.

# Group vs. Team

- Members of teams actively coordinate their work with others and define responsibilities and goals in relation to one another. They also hold one another accountable.
- Teams are more powerful, because of their interconnectedness.
- Team membership tends to lead to better individual outcomes, such as empowerment, job satisfaction, citizenship behaviour and task involvement, as well as a sense of belonging.

# Why is Membership Important?

- Group membership is important because:
  - Groups exert influence on us.
  - Groups provide a context in which we are able to exert influence on *others*.

# Formal Work Groups

- *Formal work groups* are groups that are established by organizations to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals.
- The most common formal group consists of a **manager and the employees** who report to the manager.
- The **hierarchy** of most organizations is a series of formal, **interlocked work groups**. Sometimes these are referred to as formal departments.

# Formal Work Groups

- Other types of formal work groups include task forces, project teams, and committees.
- **Task forces** and project teams are temporary groups that meet to achieve particular goals or to solve particular problems.
- **Committees** are usually permanent groups that handle recurrent assignments outside the usual work group structures.

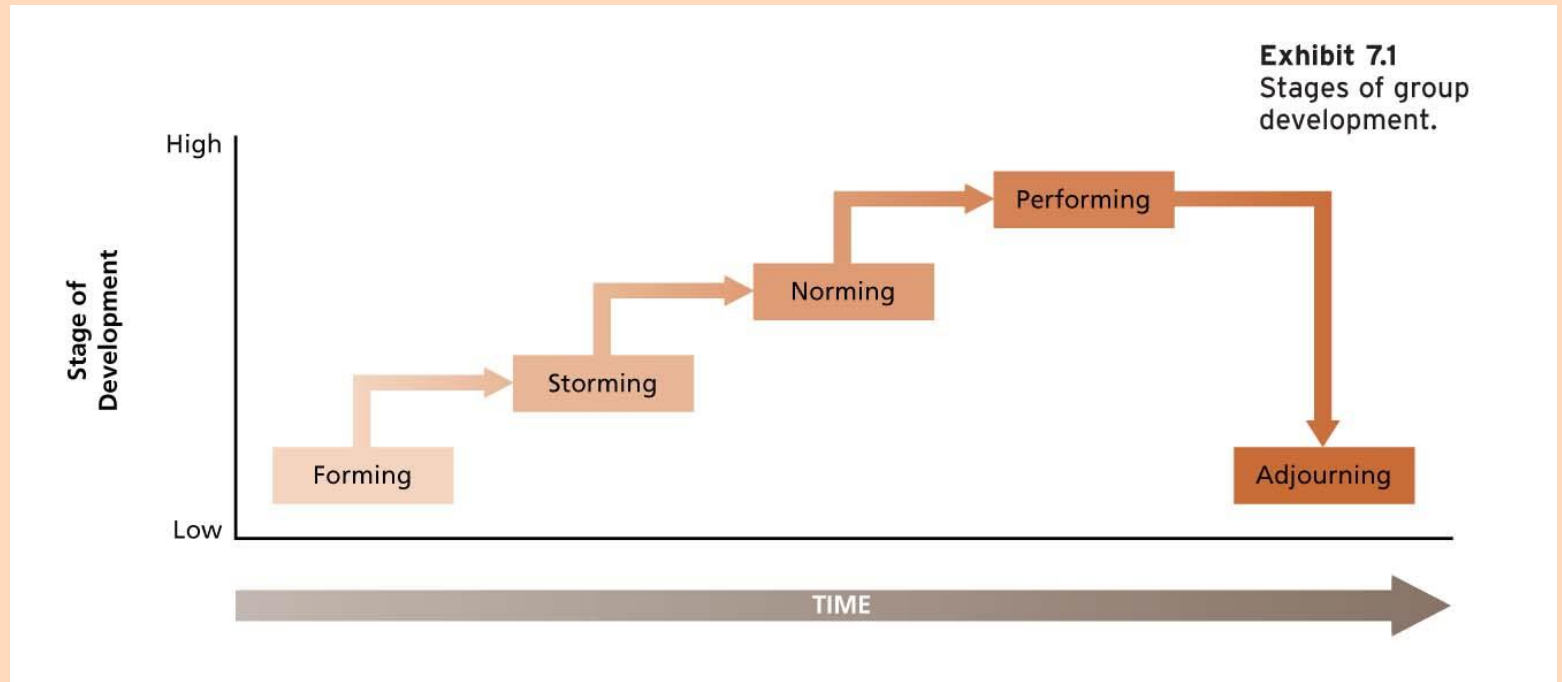
# Informal Groups

- *Informal groups* are groups that emerge naturally in response to the common interests of organizational members.
- They are seldom sanctioned by the organization.
- Informal groups can either help or hurt an organization, depending on their norms for behaviour.

***Question: can you think of an example of an informal working group?***



# Stages of Group Development



# Forming

- Group members try to orient themselves by “testing the waters.”
- The situation is often ambiguous, and members are aware of their dependency on each other.

# Storming

- Conflict often emerges at this stage.
- Confrontation and criticism occur as members determine whether they will go along with the way the group is developing.
- Sorting out roles and responsibilities is often at issue.

# Norming

- Members resolve the issues that provoked the storming, and they develop social consensus.
- Compromise is often necessary.
- Norms are agreed on and the group becomes more cohesive.
- Information and opinions flow freely.

# Performing

- The group devotes its energies toward task accomplishment.
- Achievement, creativity, and mutual assistance are prominent themes at this stage.

# Adjourning

- Rites and rituals that affirm the group's previous successful development are common (such as ceremonies and parties).
- Members often exhibit emotional support for each other.

# Group Structure and Its Consequences

- *Group structure* refers to the characteristics of the stable social organization of a group - the way a group is “put together.”
- The most basic structural characteristics along which groups vary are size and member diversity.
- Other structural characteristics are group norms, roles, status, and cohesiveness.

# Group Size

- The smallest possible group consists of two people, such as a manager and a particular employee.
- In practice, most work groups, including task forces and committees, usually have between 3 and 20 members.



# Group Size and Satisfaction

- Members of larger groups consistently report less satisfaction with group membership than those in smaller groups.
- The chance to work on and develop friendships decrease as size increases.
- Larger groups might prompt conflict and dissension.

***Question: Can you think of an example where this has occurred?***

# Group Size and Satisfaction

- As size increases, the time available for verbal participation by each member decreases.
- Many people are inhibited about participating in larger groups.
- In large groups, individual members identify less easily with the success and accomplishments of the group.

# Group Size and Performance

- *Do large groups perform tasks better than small groups?*
- The relationship between group size and performance depends on the task the group needs to accomplish and on how we define good performance.

***Question: Can you think of an example where a large group is useful? Can you think of an example of where a small group is useful?***

# Group Size and Performance

- Three types of group tasks:
  - Additive tasks
  - Disjunctive tasks
  - Conjunctive tasks

# Additive Tasks

- Tasks in which group performance is dependent on the sum of the performance of individual group members (e.g., building a house).
- For additive tasks, the potential performance of the group increases with group size.

# Disjunctive Tasks

- Tasks in which group performance is dependent on the performance of the best group member (e.g., research team).
- The potential performance of groups doing disjunctive tasks increases with group size.
- The probability that the group includes a superior performer is greater.

# Conjunctive Tasks

- Tasks in which group performance is limited by the performance of the poorest group member (e.g, assembly line).
- Both the potential and actual performance of conjunctive tasks will decrease as group size increases.
- As size increases, the probability of including a weak link in the group goes up.

# Process Losses

- As groups performing tasks get bigger, they tend to suffer from process losses.
- *Process losses* are performance difficulties that stem from the problems of motivating and coordinating larger groups.
- Problems of communication and decision making increase with size.

Actual performance =

Potential performance - Process losses



# Diversity of Group Membership

- Group diversity has a strong impact on interaction patterns.
- Diverse groups have a more difficult time communicating effectively and becoming cohesive.
- Diverse groups might take longer to do their forming, storming, and norming.
- Once they do develop, more or less diverse groups are equally cohesive and productive.

***Question: what advantages do diverse groups have?***

# Diversity of Group Membership

- Diverse groups sometimes perform better on certain tasks such as those that require creativity and innovation.
- In general, any negative effects of “surface diversity” in age, gender, or race seem to wear off over time.
- “Deep diversity” in attitudes toward work or how to accomplish a goal can badly damage cohesiveness.

# Group Norms

- Social *norms* are collective expectations that members of social units have regarding the behaviour of each other.
- They are codes of conduct that specify the standards against which we evaluate the appropriateness of behaviour.
- Most normative influence is unconscious; we are only aware of it in special circumstances such as when we enter new social situations.

***Question: Why do norms develop?***

# Norm Development

- Norms provide regularity and predictability to behaviour.
- This consistency provides psychological security and permits us to carry out our daily business with minimal disruption.

***Question: What do norms develop to address?***

# Norm Development

- Norms develop to **regulate behaviours** that are at least marginally important to their supporters.
- Managers are likely to adopt norms regarding the performance and attendance of employees.
- Less deviation is accepted from norms that concern more important behaviours.

***Question: How do norms develop?***

# Norm Development

- Shared attitudes among members of a group form the basis for norms.
- Norms are *collectively* held expectations, depending on two or more people for their existence.

***Question: Why do we comply with norms?***

# Norm Development

- The norm corresponds to privately held attitudes.
- They often save time and prevent social confusion.
- Groups have a range of rewards and punishments available to induce conformity to norms.

# Some Typical Norms

- Some types of norms that exist in most organizations and affect the behaviour of members include:
  - Dress norms, reward allocation, responsibilities, reciprocity, performance
- Team leaders should define goals clearly, set rules for communication standards and responses, and provide feedback to keep team members informed of progress against goals.

***Question: Can you think of others?***



# Activity - Group Norms

- Form groups of 4 to 6.
- Draft 3-5 codes that you all feel are necessary to work effectively together.
- Can you agree upon some values and norms?
- Do these values translate across culture, age and experience?
- Share your findings with the class.

# Roles

- Positions in a group that have a set of expected behaviours attached to them.
- Roles represent “packages” of norms that apply to particular group members.
- There are two basic kinds of roles in organizations:
  - Assigned roles
  - Emergent roles

# Assigned Roles

- Formally prescribed by an organization as a means of dividing labour and responsibility to facilitate task achievement.
- Assigned roles indicate “who does what” and “who can tell others what to do.”

# Emergent Roles

- Roles that develop naturally to meet the social-emotional needs of group members or to assist in formal job accomplishment.

# Role Ambiguity

- *Role ambiguity* exists when the goals of one's job or the methods of performing it are unclear.
- There are a variety of elements that can lead to role ambiguity.
- Some roles are inherently ambiguous because of their function in the organization such as middle management roles.

***Question: Have you had an experience where your role has not been well defined? What did this cause?***

# Role Ambiguity

- The most frequent outcomes are job stress, dissatisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, lowered performance, and intentions to quit.
- Managers can reduce role ambiguity by providing clear performance expectations and performance feedback.

# Role Conflict

- *Role conflict* exists when an individual is faced with incompatible role expectations.
- There are four types of role conflict:
  - Intrasender role conflict
  - Intersender role conflict
  - Interrole conflict
  - Person-role conflict

# Role Conflict

- **Intrasender Role Conflict:**
  - A single role sender provides incompatible role expectations to a role occupant, provoking role ambiguity
- **Intersender Role Conflict:**
  - Two or more senders create incompatible expectations e.g. between organization and clients
- **Interrole Conflict:**
  - Several roles held by one person with competing expectations
- **Person-Role Conflict:**
  - Role calls for behaviour which is incompatible with a person's personality or skills



# Role Conflict: Consequences

- The most consistent consequences of role conflict are job dissatisfaction, stress reactions, lowered organizational commitment, and turnover intentions.
- Managers can help prevent role conflict by:
  - Avoiding self-contradictory messages
  - Conferring with other role senders
  - Being sensitive to multiple role demands
  - Fitting the right person to the right role

# Status

- *Status* is the rank, social position, or prestige accorded to group members.
- It represents the group's *evaluation* of a member.
- *What* is evaluated depends on the status system in question.
- All organizations have both formal and informal status systems.

***Question: what could contribute to a high informal status?***

# Group Cohesiveness

- Group cohesiveness is a critical property of groups.
- It refers to the degree to which a group is especially attractive to its members.
- Members want to stay in the group and they describe the group in favourable terms.
- Cohesiveness is a relative, rather than absolute, property of groups.

# Factors Influencing Cohesiveness

- *What makes some groups more cohesive than others?*
- Important factors include:
  - Threat and competition
  - Success
  - Member diversity
  - Group size
  - Toughness of initiation

# Threat and Competition

- External threat to the survival of the group increases cohesiveness.
- Honest competition with another group can also promote cohesiveness.
- The group becomes more cohesive because it improves communication and coordination so they can better cope with the situation at hand.

# Success

- Groups become more cohesive when they successfully accomplish some important goal.
- Cohesiveness will decrease after failure.

# Member Diversity

- Groups that are diverse in terms of gender, age, and race can have a harder time becoming cohesive than more homogeneous groups.
- If the group is in agreement about how to accomplish a task, its success will often outweigh surface dissimilarity in determining cohesiveness.

# Size

- Larger groups have a more difficult time becoming and staying cohesive.
- Large groups have a more difficult time agreeing on goals and more problems communicating and coordinating efforts to achieve their goals.



# Toughness of Initiation

- Groups that are tough to get into tend to be more attractive than those that are easy to join.

# Consequences of Cohesiveness

- More *active participation* in groups, higher degree of communication, lower turnover and absenteeism.
- More *conformity* and higher motivation to engage in activities which keep the group cohesive. Group pressure is applied to deviants in group.

# More Success

- Cohesiveness contributes to group success.
- Cohesive groups are good at achieving their goals.
- Group cohesiveness is related to performance.
- There is a reciprocal relationship between success and cohesiveness.
- Higher degree of participation, effectiveness, efficiency, communication, conformity, productivity, commitment and agreement.
- More interdependence = more success

# Social Loafing

- The tendency to withhold physical or intellectual effort when performing a group task.
- Social loafing is a motivation problem.
  - In the *free rider effect*, people lower their effort to get a free ride at the expense of their fellow group members.
  - In the *sucker effect*, people lower their effort because of the feeling that others are free riding. Trying to restore equity.

# Counteracting Social Loafing

1. Make individual performance more visible
2. Make sure that the work is interesting to increase intrinsic motivation
3. Increase feelings of indispensability
4. Increase performance feedback
5. Reward group performance

***Question: what are your drivers for performance?***

# Collective Efficacy

- When it comes to teams, *collective efficacy* is important to ensure high performance.
- Collective efficacy consists of *shared* beliefs that a team can successfully perform a given task.

# Designing Effective Work Teams

- According to J. Richard Hackman, a work group is effective when:
  - Its physical or intellectual output is acceptable to management and to other parts of the organization that use this output.
  - Group members' needs are satisfied rather than frustrated by the group.
  - The group experience enables members to *continue* to work together.

# Group Effectiveness

- Group effectiveness occurs when:
  - High effort is directed toward the group's task.
  - When great knowledge and skill are directed toward the task.
  - When the group adopts sensible strategies for accomplishing its goals.



# Self-Managed Work Teams

- Work groups that have the opportunity to do challenging work under reduced supervision.
- The groups regulate much of their own members' behaviour.
- Critical success factors of self-managed teams include:
  - The nature of the task.
  - The composition of the group.
  - Various support mechanisms.

# Tasks for Self-Managed Teams

- Tasks assigned to self-managed work teams should be complex and challenging.
- They should require high interdependence among team members for accomplishment.
- The tasks should have the qualities of enriched jobs (e.g., task significance).
- Group members adopt roles that will make the group effective, not ones that are simply related to a narrow specialty.

# Cross-Functional Teams

- Work groups that bring people with different functional specialties together to better invent, design, or deliver a product or service.
- Members have to be experts in their own area but able to cooperate with others.
- Cross-functional teams are best known for their success in product development.
- The general goals of using cross-functional teams include some combination of innovation, speed, and quality that come from early coordination among the various specialties.

# Principles for Effectiveness

- Research has discovered a number of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of cross-functional teams:
  - Composition
  - **Superordinate goals\***
  - Physical proximity
  - Autonomy
  - Rules and procedures
  - Leadership

# Superordinate Goals

- Attractive outcomes that can only be achieved by collaboration.
- They override detailed functional objectives that might be in conflict.
- More than just duties or outputs, but rather real outcomes and accomplishments.

# Shared Mental Models

- *Shared mental models* mean that team members share identical information about how they should interact and what their task is.
- They enhance coordination and contribute greatly to effective team performance.
- They are a particular challenge to instill in cross-functional teams due to the divergent backgrounds of team members.

# Virtual Teams

- Globalization and high-tech communication tools have led to the emergence of a new type of team.
- *Virtual teams* are work groups that use technology to communicate and collaborate across time, space, and organizational boundaries.
- Virtual teams are often cross-functional and the technology they use can be either asynchronous or synchronous.

# Pros/Cons of Virtual Teams

- Advantages:
  - Around-the-clock work
  - Reduced travel time and cost
  - Larger talent pool
- Disadvantages:
  - Trust
  - Miscommunication
  - Isolation
  - High costs
  - Management issues



# Activity - The JA Team

- **Group Size:** 10 members who work in two groups - programs and fundraising. The fundraising team is co-located in an office. A portion of the program team is co-located in an office, where the remaining work remotely. Program members are highly independent and self-managed, whereas the fundraising team is fully integrated and interdependent.
- **Member Diversity:** Ages range from 23 to 55 (3 generations). The team includes immigrants, individuals that are married, single, gay and straight. The team is all female.
- **Initiation:** Full time work in the charitable sector is highly desirable and hard to get. Sector members are generally overqualified, over educated and underpaid.
- **Threat and Competition:** Each year the group must raise \$1M, recruit 900 volunteers, and delivery 750 programs to 18,000 students. The demand for services is high. The team is often under pressure.
- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages to this team's make up?
- Share your findings with the class.