



Group and Intergroup Relations

Exhibit 9.1 (Credit: Neil McIntosh/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Introduction

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. How do you manage group and intergroup processes effectively?
2. How do group norms, roles, and status systems affect employee behavior and performance?
3. How do managers develop group cohesiveness, which facilitates organizational goal attainment?
4. What are barriers to intergroup cooperation, and how do you take action to minimize such impediments and understand how to get the most out of the collective actions of groups in organizations in order to enhance industrial competitiveness?

EXPLORING MANAGERIAL CAREERS

EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc.

In the modern workplace, it is more common that an employee is not assigned to just one team in their role. More currently, individuals are being tasked with multiple roles that allow them to work within many teams on many projects. Research done estimates that 81 to 95 percent of employees around the world serve on multiple teams simultaneously. In some cases, this alone can have a negative effect on the way that employees are able to focus on the impact on their stress levels. Leadership plays a big role in combating the negative effects of multiple team memberships, or MTM.

EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. employees the MTM structure on a daily basis, with its employees working on up to six different projects concurrently. The environmental consulting company

based in Baltimore, MD, has to collaborate often and work in a team-based environment to balance stakeholder management and profits.

Juggling six different projects at one given time can be stressful to any employee, but structuring the work within different teams gives employees a sense of autonomy so that they know specifically what piece of the project to focus on and contribute their skills to the overall group. Leaders naturally form within groups and take ownership of different tasks, which also is very helpful to both the overall success of the team and individual satisfaction of the employee. Research done with this group and others has shown that when leaders showcase empowering qualities to their employees, subsequently the employees are more proactive. Despite the fact that these individuals worked on many teams under a variety of leaders, the individuals often carried over the empowerment qualities of one leader to their other team even when the other leader was less empowering.

Being a part of many teams can help employees with job satisfaction and give them exposure to many leadership types within your organization. It is important to understand the basic dynamics such as those showcased within EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. to best approach tasks and, in this case, multiple team memberships is a highly positive strategy to help bring the best outcome to its business.

Based on our earlier analysis of individual behavior, we are now in a position to consider what happens when individuals are placed in work units to perform their tasks. We do this in the next four chapters. The nature of groups and intergroup relations is discussed in this chapter. The topics of job design and organization design as well as effectiveness and productivity may be discussed later in this course. Taken together, these topics provide a solid understanding of organizational *structure*—that is, how people and work units are put together for purposes of task accomplishment.

9.1 Work Groups: Basic Considerations

1. How do you manage group and intergroup processes effectively?

Available research on group dynamics demonstrates rather conclusively that individual behavior is highly influenced by coworkers in a work group. For instance, we see many examples of individuals who, when working in groups, intentionally set limits on their own incomes so they earn no more than the other group members. We see other situations where individuals choose to remain in an undesirable job because of their friends in the plant, even though preferable jobs are available elsewhere. In summarizing much research on the topic, Hackman and Morris concluded the following:

There is substantial agreement among researchers and observers of small task groups that something important happens in group interaction which can affect performance outcomes. There is little agreement about just what that “something” is—whether it is more likely to enhance or depress group effectiveness, and how it can be monitored, analyzed, and altered.¹

In order to gain a clearer understanding of this “something,” we must first consider in detail what we mean by a **group**, how groups are formed, and how various groups differ.

What Is a Group?

The literature of group dynamics is a very rich field of study and includes many definitions of work groups. For

example, we might conceive of a group in terms of *perceptions*; that is, if individuals see themselves as a group, then a group exists. Or, we can view a group in *structural* terms. For instance, McDavid and Harari define a group as “an organized system of two or more individuals who are interrelated so that the system performs some function, has a standard set of role relationships among its members, and has a set of **norms** that regulate the function of the group and each of its members.”² Groups can also be defined in *motivational* terms as “a collection of individuals whose existence as a collection is rewarding to the individuals.”³ Finally, a group can be viewed with regard to *interpersonal interactions*—the degree to which members communicate and interact with one another over time.⁴

By integrating these various approaches to defining groups, we may conclude for our purpose here that a *group* is a collection of individuals who share a common set of norms, generally have differentiated roles among themselves, and interact with one another toward the joint pursuit of common goals. (The definitions of roles and norms is provided later in this chapter.) This definition assumes a dynamic perspective and leads us to focus on two major aspects of groups: group structure and group processes. Group structure is the topic of this chapter, and group processes will be discussed in later chapters.

Types of Groups

There are two primary types of groups: formal and informal. Moreover, within these two types, groups can be further differentiated on the basis of their relative degree of permanence. The resulting four types are shown in [Table 9.1](#).

Types of Groups		
	Relatively Permanent	Relatively Temporary
Formal	Command group	Task group
Informal	Friendship group	Interest group

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Formal Groups. **Formal groups** are work units that are prescribed by the organization. Examples of formal groups include sections of departments (such as the accounts receivable section of the accounting department), committees, or special project task forces. These groups are set up by management on either a temporary or permanent basis to accomplish prescribed tasks. When the group is permanent, it is usually called a **command group** or *functional group*. An example would be the sales department in a company. When the group is less permanent, it is usually referred to as a **task group**. An example here would be a corporate-sponsored task force on improving affirmative action efforts. In both cases, the groups are formal in that they are both officially established by the company to carry out some aspect of the business.

Informal Groups. In addition to formal groups, all organizations have a myriad of **informal groups**. These groups evolve naturally out of individual and collective self-interest among the members of an organization and are not the result of deliberate organizational design. People join informal groups because of common interests, social needs, or simply friendship. Informal groups typically develop their own norms and roles and establish unwritten rules for their members. Studies in social psychology have clearly documented the important role of these informal groups in facilitating (or inhibiting) performance and organizational

effectiveness. Again, on the basis of their relative degree of permanence, informal groups can be divided into **friendship groups** (people you like to be around) and **interest groups** (e.g., a network of working women or minority managers). Friendship groups tend to be long-lasting, whereas interest groups often dissolve as people's interests change.

One of the more interesting aspects of group processes in organizations is the interaction between informal and formal groups. Both groups establish norms and roles and goals and objectives, and both demand loyalty from their members. When an individual is a member of many groups—both formal and informal—a wide array of potentially conflicting situations emerges that has an impact upon behavior in organizations. We will focus on this interplay throughout the next few chapters.

Reasons for Joining Groups

People join groups for many reasons. Often, joining a group serves several purposes at once. In general, at least six reasons can be identified for joining groups:

1. *Security.* Most people have a basic need for protection from external threats, real or imagined. These threats include the possibility of being fired or intimidated by the boss, the possibility of being embarrassed in a new situation, or simply the anxiety of being alone. Groups can be a primary source of *security* against such threats. We have often heard that there is “safety in numbers.”
2. *Social Needs.* In addition, as discussed in previous chapters, basic theories of personality and motivation emphasize that most individuals have relatively strong *social needs*. They need to interact with other people and develop meaningful relationships. People are clearly social creatures. Groups provide structured environments in which individuals can pursue friendships.
3. *Self-Esteem.* Similarly, membership in groups can assist individuals in developing self-esteem. People often take pride in being associated with prestigious groups; note such examples as professors elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences or salespeople who qualify for a million dollar club as a reward for sales performance.
4. *Economic Self-Interest.* People often associate with groups to pursue their own *economic self-interest*. Labor unions are a prime example of this phenomenon, as are various professional and accrediting agencies, such as the American Bar Association. These organizations often attempt to limit the supply of tradespeople or professionals in order to maintain employment and salaries.
5. *Mutual Interest.* Some groups are formed to pursue goals that are of *mutual interest* to group members. Included here are bridge clubs, company-sponsored baseball teams, and literary clubs. By joining together, individuals can pursue group goals that are typically not feasible alone.
6. *Physical Proximity.* Finally, many groups form simply because people are located in close *physical proximity* to one another. In fact, office architecture and layout can have considerable influence over the development of social networks and groups. Consider, for example, two floors in the same building. On the first floor, all the managers have private offices arranged in a long row, with their assistants arranged in a similar row in front of them. This horizontal pattern of offices does not allow for frequent interaction between either the managers or the secretaries, and as a result group formation may be slowed. On the second floor, however, suppose all the managers' offices are arranged in a cluster surrounding a similar cluster of assistants. The result would be more frequent social interaction among employees. This is not to say that one arrangement is superior to the other; rather, it is simply to point out how variations in office arrangements can have an impact on group formation.

Stages in Group Development

Before we begin a comprehensive examination of the structure of groups, consider briefly the stages of group development. How do groups grow and develop over time? Tuckman has proposed one model of group development that consists of four stages through which groups generally proceed.⁵ These four stages are referred to by the deceptively simple titles *forming*, *storming*, *norming*, and *performing* (see [Exhibit 9.2](#)).

1. *Forming*. In the first stage of development, when group members first come together, emphasis is usually placed on making acquaintances, sharing information, testing one another, and so forth. This stage is referred to as forming. Group members attempt to discover which interpersonal behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable in the group. In this process of sensing out the environment, a new member is heavily dependent upon others for providing cues to acceptable behavior.
2. *Storming*. In the second stage of group development, a high degree of intergroup conflict (storming) can usually be expected as group members attempt to develop a place for themselves and to influence the development of group norms and roles. Issues are discussed more openly, and efforts are made to clarify group goals.
3. *Norming*. Over time, the group begins to develop a sense of oneness. Here, group norms emerge (norming) to guide individual behavior. Group members come to accept fellow members and develop a unity of purpose that binds them.
4. *Performing*. Once group members agree on basic purposes, they set about developing separate roles for the various members. In this final stage, role differentiation emerges to take advantage of task specialization in order to facilitate goal attainment. The group focuses its attention on the task (performing). As we consider this simple model, it should be emphasized that Tuckman does not claim that all groups proceed through this sequence of stages. Rather, this model provides a generalized conceptual scheme to help us understand the processes by which groups form and develop over time.

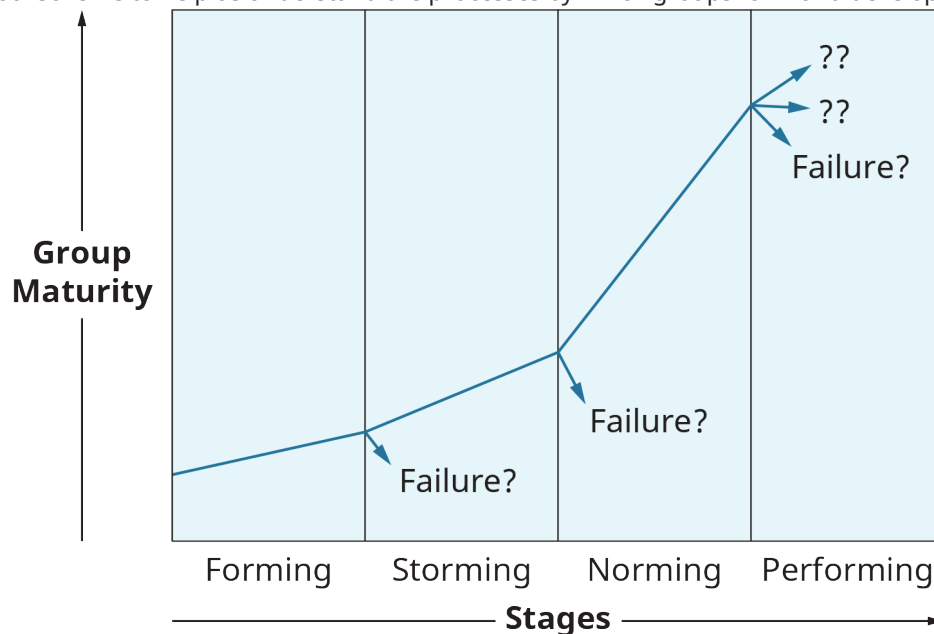


Exhibit 9.2 Stages in Group Development (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

CONCEPT CHECK



1. What are the reasons for joining a group?
2. What are the development stages groups often go through?
3. At the storming stage, what differences might you expect between groups formed for economic self-interest and groups formed for mutual self-interest?

9.2 Work Group Structure

2. How do group norms, roles, and status systems affect employee behavior and performance?

Work group structure can be characterized in many different ways. We examine several characteristics that are useful in describing and understanding what makes one group different from another. This matrix of variables will, when taken together, paint a portrait of work groups in terms of relatively enduring group properties. The aspects of group structure to be considered are (1) work roles, (2) work group size, (3) work group norms, (4) status relationships, and (5) work group cohesiveness. Each of these factors has been shown to influence group processes, as shown in [Exhibit 9.3](#). Thus, the material presented here will be important when we focus on group processes later in the text.

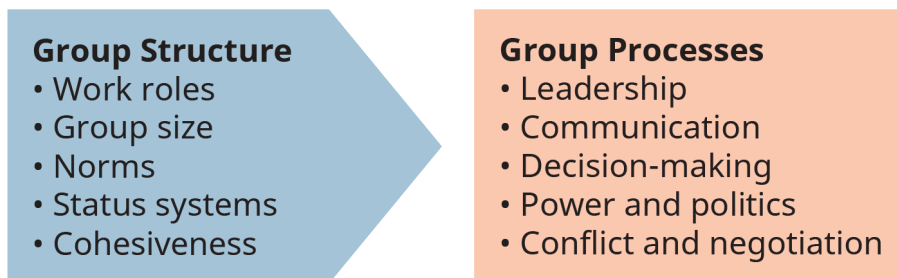


Exhibit 9.3 Group Structure and Process (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Work Roles

In order to accomplish its goals and maintain its norms, a group must differentiate the work activities of its members. One or more members assume leadership positions, others carry out the major work of the group, and still others serve in support roles. This specialization of activities is commonly referred to as role differentiation. More specifically, a **work role** is an expected behavior pattern assigned or attributed to a particular position in the organization. It defines individual responsibilities on behalf of the group.

It has been suggested that within organizational settings, work roles can be divided into three types on the basis of the nature of the activities that encompass the role.⁶ These are:

1. *Task-oriented roles*. These roles focus on task-related activities aimed at achieving group performance goals.
2. *Relations-oriented roles*. These roles emphasize the further development of the group, including building group cohesiveness and consensus, preserving group harmony, looking after group member welfare, and so forth.
3. *Self-oriented roles*. These roles emphasize the specific needs and goals of individual members, often at the

expense of the group.

As we might expect, individual group members often perform several of these roles simultaneously. A group leader, for example, must focus group attention on task performance while at the same time preserving group harmony and cohesiveness. To see how this works, consider your own experience. You may be able to recognize the roles you have played in groups you have been a member of. In your experience, have you played multiple roles or single roles?

Perhaps the best way to understand the nature of work roles is to examine a **role episode**. A role episode is an attempt to explain how a particular role is learned and acted upon. As can be seen in [Exhibit 9.4](#), a role episode begins with members' expectations about what one person should be doing in a particular position (Stage 1). These expectations are then communicated to the individual (Stage 2), causing the individual to perceive the expectations about the expected role (Stage 3). Finally, the individual decides to act upon the role in terms of actual role-related behavior (Stage 4). In other words, Stages 1 and 2 deal with the *expected* role, whereas Stage 3 focuses on the *perceived* role and Stage 4 focuses on the *enacted* role.

Consider the following simple example. A group may determine that its newest member is responsible for getting coffee for group members during breaks (Stage 1). This role is then explained to the incoming member (Stage 2), who becomes aware of his or her expected role (Stage 3). On the basis of these perceptions (and probably reinforced by group norms), the individual then would probably carry out the assigned behavior (Stage 4).

Several aspects of this model of a role episode should be noted. First, Stages 1 and 2 are initiated by the group and directed at the individual. Stages 3 and 4, on the other hand, represent thoughts and actions of the individual receiving the stimuli. In addition, Stages 1 and 3 represent cognitive and perceptual evaluations, whereas Stages 2 and 4 represent actual behaviors. The sum total of all the roles assigned to one individual is called the **role set**.

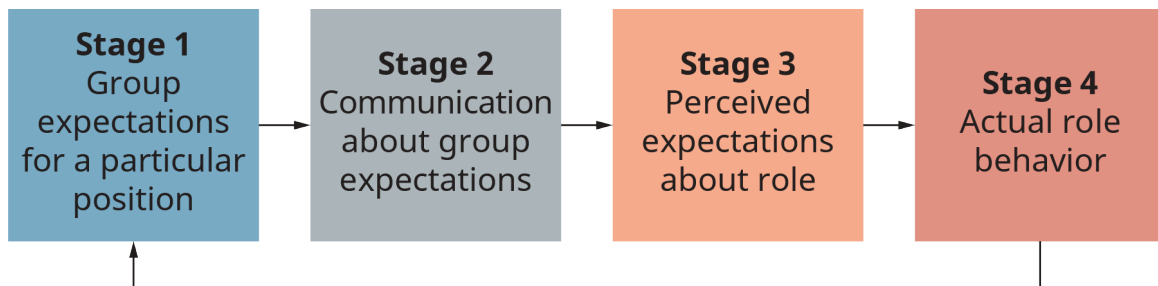


Exhibit 9.4 A Simplified Model of a Role Episode Source: Adapted from D. G. Myers and J. M. Twenge, *Social Psychology* 13th edition, (New York: McGraw Hill), 2018. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Although the role episode presented here seems straightforward, in reality we know that it is far more complicated. For instance, individuals typically receive multiple and sometimes conflicting messages from various groups, all attempting to assign them a particular role. This can easily lead to **role conflict**. Messages sent to an individual may sometimes be unclear, leading to **role ambiguity**. Finally, individuals may simply receive too many role-related messages, contributing to **role overload**. Discussion of these topics is reserved for later study, where examination of several important aspects of psychological adjustment to work.

Work Group Size

Obviously, work groups can be found in various sizes. Early management theorists spent considerable time and effort to no avail attempting to identify the right size for the various types of work groups. There is simply

no right number of people for most group activities. They did, however, discover a great deal about what happens as group size increases.⁷ A number of relevant size-outcome relationships are summarized in [Table 9.2](#).

Effects of Group Size on Group Dynamics		
Factor	Size of Group	
	Small	Large
Group interaction	Increased	Decreased
Group cohesiveness	Higher	Lower
Job satisfaction	Higher	Lower
Absenteeism	Lower	Higher
Turnover	Lower	Higher
Social loafing	Lower	Higher
Productivity	No clear relation	No clear relation

Table 9.2 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Group Interaction Patterns. First, we will consider the effects of variations in group size on group interaction patterns. A series of classic studies by Bales and Borgatta examined this issue using a technique known as **interaction process analysis**.⁸ This technique records who says what to whom; through using it, Bales and his colleagues found that smaller groups (2–4 persons) typically exhibited greater tension, agreement, and opinion seeking, whereas larger groups (13–16 persons) showed more tension release and giving of suggestions and information. This suggests that harmony is crucial in smaller groups and that people in them have more time to develop their thoughts and opinions. On the other hand, individuals in larger groups must be more direct because of the increased competition for attention.

Job Attitudes. Increases in work group size are fairly consistently found to be inversely related to satisfaction, although the relationship is not overly strong.⁹ That is, people working in smaller work units or departments report higher levels of satisfaction than those in larger units. This finding is not surprising in view of the greater attention one receives in smaller groups and the greater importance group members typically experience in such things as their role set.

Absenteeism and Turnover. Available research indicates that increases in work group size and absenteeism are moderately related among blue-collar workers, although no such relationship exists for white-collar workers.¹⁰ One explanation for these findings is that increased work group size leads to lower group cohesiveness, higher task specialization, and poorer communication. As a result, it becomes more difficult to satisfy higher-order needs on the job, and job attendance becomes less appealing. This explanation may be more relevant in the case of blue-collar workers, who typically have little job autonomy and control. White-collar workers typically have more avenues available to them for need satisfaction. Similar findings exist for employee turnover. Turnover rates are higher in larger groups.¹¹ It again can be hypothesized that because larger groups make need satisfaction more difficult, there is less reason for individuals to remain with the

organization.

Productivity. No clear relationship has been found between group size and productivity.¹² There is probably a good reason for this. Unless we take into consideration the type of task that is being performed, we really cannot expect a clear or direct relationship. Mitchell explains it as follows:

Think of a task where each new member adds a new independent amount of productivity (certain piece-rate jobs might fit here). If we add more people, we will add more productivity. . . . On the other hand, there are tasks where everyone works together and pools their resources. With each new person the added increment of new skills or knowledge decreases. After a while increases in size will fail to add much to the group except coordination and motivation problems. Large groups will perform less well than small groups. The relationship between group size and productivity will therefore depend on the type of task that needs to be done.¹³

However, when we look at productivity and group size, it is important to recognize the existence of a unique factor called **social loafing**,¹⁴ a tendency for individual group members to reduce their effort on a group task. This phenomenon occurs when (1) people see their task as being unimportant or simple, (2) group members think their individual output is not identifiable, and (3) group members expect their fellow workers to loaf. Social loafing is more prevalent in larger groups than in smaller groups, presumably because the above three factors are accentuated. From a managerial standpoint, this problem can be reduced by providing workers with greater responsibility for task accomplishment and more challenging assignments. This issue is addressed in the following chapter on job design.

Work Group Norms

The concept of work group norms represents a complex topic with a history of social psychological research dating back several decades. In this section, we will highlight several of the essential aspects of norms and how they relate to people at work. We will consider the characteristics and functions of work group norms as well as conformity with and deviance from them.

Characteristics of Work Group Norms. A *work group norm* may be defined as a standard that is shared by group members and regulates member behavior within an organization. An example can be seen in a typical classroom situation when students develop a norm against speaking up in class too often. It is believed that students who are highly visible improve their grades at the expense of others. Hence, a norm is created that attempts to govern acceptable classroom behavior. We see similar examples in the workplace. There may be a norm against producing too much or too little, against getting too close to the supervisor, against being late for work, and so forth.

Work group norms may be characterized by at least five factors:¹⁵

1. Norms summarize and simplify group influence processes. They denote the processes by which groups regulate and regularize member behavior.
2. Norms apply only to behavior, not to private thoughts and feelings. Although norms may be based on thoughts and feelings, they cannot govern them. That is, private acceptance of group norms is unnecessary—only public compliance is needed.
3. Norms are generally developed only for behaviors that are viewed as important by most group members.
4. Norms usually develop gradually, but the process can be quickened if members wish. Norms usually are developed by group members as the need arises, such as when a situation occurs that requires new ground rules for members in order to protect group integrity.
5. All norms do not apply to all members. Some norms, for example, apply only to young initiates (such as getting the coffee), whereas others are based on seniority, sex, race, or economic class.

Functions of Work Group Norms. Most all groups have norms, although some may be more extensive than others. To see this, examine the norms that exist in the various groups to which you belong. Which groups have more fully developed norms? Why? What functions do these norms serve? Several efforts have been made to answer this question. In general, work group norms serve four functions in organizational settings:¹⁶

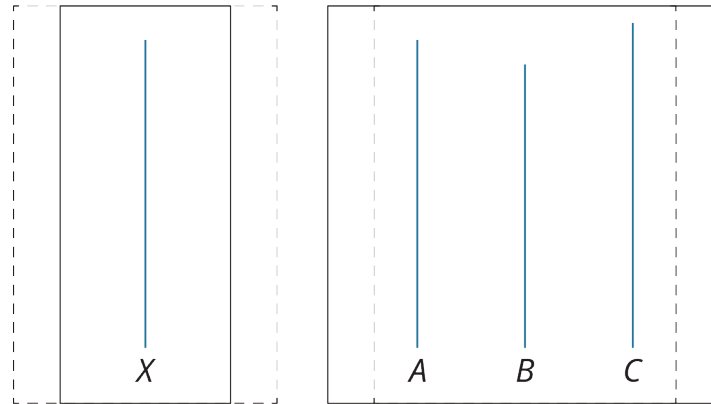
1. *Norms facilitate group survival.* When a group is under threat, norms provide a basis for ensuring goal-directed behavior and rejecting deviant behavior that is not purposeful to the group. This is essentially a “circle the wagons” phenomenon.
2. *Norms simplify expected behaviors.* Norms tell group members what is expected of them—what is acceptable and unacceptable—and allow members to anticipate the behaviors of their fellow group members and to anticipate the positive or negative consequences of their own behavior.
3. *Norms help avoid embarrassing situations.* By identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, norms tell group members when a behavior or topic is damaging to another member. For example, a norm against swearing signals group members that such action would be hurtful to someone in the group and should be avoided.
4. *Norms help identify the group and express its central values to others.* Norms concerning clothes, language, mannerisms, and so forth help tell others who belongs to the group and, in some cases, what the group stands for. Norms often serve as rallying points for group members.

Conformity and Deviance. Managers often wonder why employees comply with the norms and dictates of their work group even when they seemingly work against their best interests. This concern is particularly strong when workers intentionally withhold productivity that could lead to higher incomes. The answer to this question lies in the concept of conformity to group norms. Situations arise when the individual is swept along by the group and acts in ways that he would prefer not to.

To see how this works, consider the results of a classic study of individual conformity to group pressures that was carried out by Solomon Asch.¹⁷ Asch conducted a laboratory experiment in which a native subject was placed in a room with several confederates. Each person in the room was asked to match the length of a given line (*X*) with that of one of three unequal lines (*A*, *B*, and *C*). This is shown in [Exhibit 9.5](#). Confederates, who spoke first, were all instructed prior to the experiment to identify line *C* as the line most like *X*, even though *A* was clearly the answer. The results were startling. In over one-third of the trials in the experiment, the naive subject denied the evidence of his own senses and agreed with the answers given by the unknown confederates. In other words, when confronted by a unanimous answer from others in the group, a large percentage of individuals chose to go along with the group rather than express a conflicting opinion, even though these individuals were confident their own answers were correct.

What causes such conformity to group norms? And, under what conditions will an individual deviate from these norms? Conformity to group norms is believed to be caused by at least three factors.¹⁸ First, personality plays a major role. For instance, negative correlations have been found between conformity and intelligence, tolerance, and ego strength, whereas authoritarianism was found to be positively related. Essentially, people who have a strong self-identity are more likely to stick to their own norms and deviate from those of the group when a conflict between the two exists. Second, the initial stimulus that evokes responses can influence conformity. The more ambiguous the stimulus (e.g., a new and confusing order from top management), the greater the propensity to conform to group norms (“I’m not sure what the new order from management really means, so I’ll just go along with what others think it means”). In this sense, conformity provides a sense of protection and security in a new and perhaps threatening situation. Finally, group characteristics themselves can influence conformity to group norms. Factors such as the extent of pressure exerted on group members to conform, the extent to which a member identifies with the group, and the extent to which the group has

been successful in achieving previous goals can influence conformity.



Question: Is *X* closest in length to *A*, *B*, or *C*?

Exhibit 9.5 Asch's Experiment in Group Pressure and Individual Judgment (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

What happens when someone deviates from group norms? Research indicates that groups often respond by increasing the amount of communication directed toward the deviant member.¹⁹ This communication is aimed at bringing the deviant into the acceptable bounds set by the group. A good example of this process can be seen in Janis's classic study of the group processes leading up to the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba.²⁰ At one meeting, Arthur Schlesinger, an adviser to President Kennedy, expressed opposition to the plan even though no one else expressed similar doubts. After listening to his opposition for a while, Robert Kennedy took Schlesinger aside and said, "You may be right or you may be wrong, but the President has his mind made up. Don't push it any further. Now is the time for everyone to help him all they can." Janis elaborated on this group decision-making process and termed it "groupthink."

When a deviant member refuses to heed the message and persists in breaking group norms, group members often respond by rejecting or isolating the deviant. They tell the deviant, in essence, that they will no longer tolerate such behavior and prefer to reconstitute the group. If the deviant is not expelled, the group must continually confront behavior that conflicts with what it holds to be true. Rather than question or reexamine its beliefs, the group finds it simpler—and safer—to rid itself of dangerous influences.

Status Systems

A fourth characteristic, or structural property, of work groups is the status system. **Status systems** serve to differentiate individuals on the basis of some criterion or set of criteria. There are five general bases on which status differentiations are made: birth, personal characteristics, achievement, possessions, and formal authority. All five bases can be seen as establishing status in work groups. For example, an employee may achieve high status because he is the boss's son (birth), the brightest or strongest member of the group (personal characteristics), the best performer (achievement), the richest or highest paid (possessions), or the foreman or supervisor (formal authority).

Reasons for Status Systems. Status systems can be seen throughout most organizations. We differentiate between blue-collar and white-collar employees (and even pink and gold collar), skilled tradespersons and unskilled workers, senior and junior managers, high achievers and low achievers, and popular and unpopular employees. Why do we do this? In essence, status differentiation in organizations (and their related status symbols) serves four purposes:²¹

Motivation. We ascribe status to persons as rewards or incentives for performance and achievement. If high achievement is recognized as positive behavior by an organization, individuals are more willing to exert effort.

Identification. Status and status symbols provide useful cues to acceptable behavior in new situations. In the military, for example, badges of rank quickly tell members who has authority and who is to be obeyed. Similarly, in business, titles serve the same purpose.

Dignification. People are often ascribed status as a means of signifying respect that is due them. A clergyman's attire, for instance, identifies a representative of the church.

Stabilization. Finally, status systems and symbols facilitate stabilization in an otherwise turbulent environment by providing a force for continuity. Authority patterns, role relationships, and interpersonal interactions are all affected and, indeed, defined by the status system in effect. As a result, much ambiguity in the work situation is reduced.

Status can be conferred on an individual in many different ways. One way common in organizations is through the assignment and decoration of offices. John Dean, counsel to former President Nixon, provides the following account concerning status in the White House:

Everyone [on the White House Staff] jockeyed for a position close to the President's ear, and even an unseasoned observer could sense minute changes in status. Success and failure could be seen in the size, decor, and location of offices. Anyone who moved into a smaller office was on the way down. If a carpenter, cabinetmaker, or wallpaper hanger was busy in someone's office, this was the sure sign he was on the rise. Every day, workmen crawled over the White House complex like ants. Movers busied themselves with the continuous shuffling of furniture from one office to another as people moved in, up, down, or out. We learned to read office changes as an index of the internal bureaucratic power struggles. The expense was irrelevant to Haldeman. . . . He once retorted when we discussed whether we should reveal such expense, "This place is a national monument, and I can't help it if the last three Presidents let it go to hell." Actually, the costs had less to do with the fitness of the White House than with the need of its occupants to see tangible evidence of their prestige.²²

Modern businesses looking to attract top talent do not have office spaces that have a group of workers siloed in their own walled-off offices with doors 20 years old.²³

One Orlando business, for instance, spent about \$330,000 on the design and build-out of its space.

Status Incongruence. An interesting aspect of status systems in organizations is the notion of **status incongruence**. This situation exists when a person is high on certain valued dimensions but low on others, or when a person's characteristics seem inappropriate for a particular job. Examples of status incongruence include the college student who takes a janitorial job during the summer (usually referred to as the "college kid" by the other janitors), the president's son who works his way up through the organizational hierarchy (at an accelerated rate, needless to say), or the young fast-track manager who is promoted to a level typically held by older employees.

Status incongruence presents problems for everyone involved. The individual may become the target of hostility and jealousy from coworkers who feel the individual has risen above his station. The coworkers, on the other hand, may be forced to acknowledge their own lack of success or achievement. One might ask, "Why has this youngster been promoted over me when I have more seniority?" At least two remedies for this conflict are available to managers. An organization can (1) select or promote only those individuals whose characteristics are congruent with the job and work group, and (2) attempt to change the values of the group. Neither of these possibilities seems realistic or fair. Hence, dynamic organizations that truly reward high achievement (instead of seniority) must accept some level of conflict resulting from status

incongruence.

EXPANDING AROUND THE GLOBE



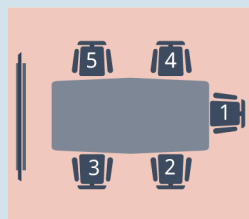
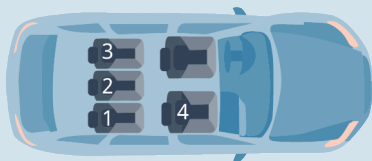
Status Systems in Japanese Business

In Japan, etiquette is not simply a prescription for appropriate social responses, it is a complete guide to conducting oneself in all social interactions. At the root of this system of social interaction is one's status within the organization and society.

The effects of status in Japan can be seen in many ways. For example, when two businesspeople meet for the first time, they exchange business cards—before they even say hello to each other. After carefully reading the cards, each knows precisely the other's rank (and status) in the organizational hierarchy and, thus, how to respond. The person with the lower status must bow lower than the person with the higher status.

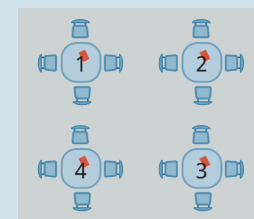
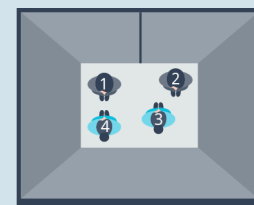
Moreover, when four managers get into a car, status determines where each will sit. This is shown in [Exhibit 9.6](#), where it can be seen that the most important (highest-status) manager will sit in the back seat, directly behind the driver. Similarly, when four managers enter an elevator, the least senior stands in front of the elevator controls, with the most senior behind. In a meeting room or in a restaurant, the most honored seat is farthest from the door, whereas the least honored is nearest the door. Even within the meeting room itself, a sofa is considered higher in rank than armchairs.

Automobile



Meeting Room

Elevator



Restaurant

The numbers indicate the proper place to sit or stand according to one's status, with 1 being the most honored and 4 or 5 being the least honored. Note that in Japan, the driver is on the right-hand side as illustrated here.

Exhibit 9.6 The Place of Honor in Japan (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Clearly, status plays an important role in Japanese (and several other East Asian) societies. Status recognizes age (an important cultural variable in these societies) and tells everyone involved how to behave. Though such prescriptive practices may seem strange to many Westerners, it is quite natural in Japan. In fact, many Japanese feel such guidelines are helpful and convenient in defining social relationships, avoiding awkward situations, and making business transactions more comfortable and productive. Whether or not this perception is accurate, status systems are a fact of life that must be

recognized by Western managers attempting to do business in Asia. Failure to understand such social patterns puts the Western manager at a distinct disadvantage.

Sources: Allison, "Useful Japanese Business Manners to Impress a Client or Guest," *Fast Japan*, October 21, 2016; M. Yazinuma and R. Kennedy, "Life Is So Simple When You Know Your Place," *Intersect*, May 1986, pp. 35–39.

Group Cohesiveness

A fifth characteristic of work groups is group cohesiveness. We have all come in contact with groups whose members feel a high degree of camaraderie, group spirit, and unity. In these groups, individuals seem to be concerned about the welfare of other group members as well as that of the group as a whole. There is a feeling of "us against them" that creates a closeness among them. This phenomenon is called group cohesiveness. More specifically, **group cohesiveness** may be defined as the extent to which individual members of a group are motivated to remain in the group. According to Shaw, "Members of highly cohesive groups are more energetic in group activities, they are less likely to be absent from group meetings, they are happy when the group succeeds and sad when it fails, etc., whereas members of less cohesive groups are less concerned about the group's activities."²⁴

We shall consider two primary aspects of work group cohesiveness. First, we look at major causes of cohesiveness. Following this, we examine its consequences.

Determinants of Group Cohesiveness. Why do some work groups develop a high degree of group cohesiveness while others do not? To answer this question, we have to examine both the composition of the group and several situational variables that play a role in determining the extent of cohesiveness. The major factors that influence group cohesiveness are shown in [Exhibit 9.7](#).²⁵ These include the following:

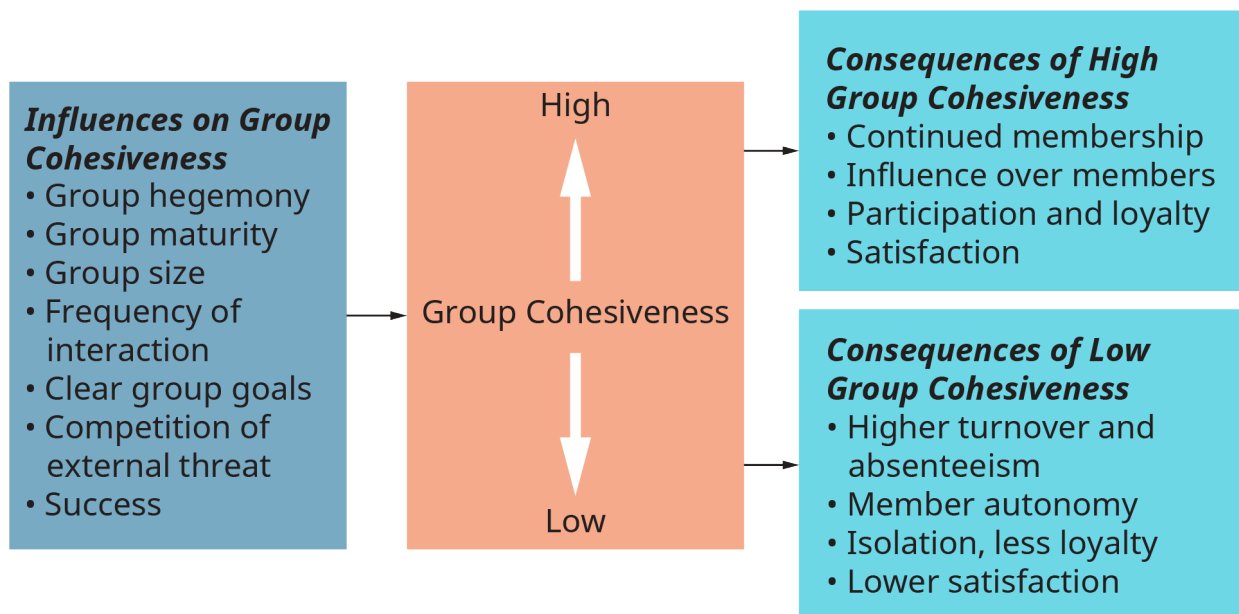


Exhibit 9.7 Determinants and Consequences of Group Cohesiveness (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

- *Group homogeneity.* The more homogeneous the group—that is, the more members share similar characteristics and backgrounds—the greater the cohesiveness.
- *Group maturity.* Groups tend to become more cohesive simply as a result of the passage of time. Continued interaction over long periods of time helps members develop a closeness born of shared experiences.
- *Group size.* Smaller groups have an easier time developing cohesiveness, possibly because of the less complex interpersonal interaction patterns.
- *Frequency of interaction.* Groups that have greater opportunities to interact on a regular or frequent basis tend to become more cohesive than groups that meet less frequently or whose members are more isolated.
- *Clear group goals.* Groups that know exactly what they are trying to accomplish develop greater cohesiveness, in part because of a shared sense of mission and the absence of conflict over mission.
- *Competition or external threat.* When groups sense external threat or hostility, they tend to band together more closely. There is, indeed, “safety in numbers.”
- *Success.* Group success on a previous task often facilitates increased cohesiveness and a sense of “we did it together.”

In other words, a wide variety of factors can influence work group cohesiveness. The precise manner in which these processes occur is not known. Even so, managers must recognize the existence of certain forces of group cohesiveness if they are to understand the nature of group dynamics in organizations. The second aspect of group cohesiveness that must be understood by managers relates to their consequences.

Consequences of Group Cohesiveness. As shown in [Exhibit 9.7](#), several consequences of group cohesiveness can also be identified. The first and most obvious consequence is *maintenance of membership*. If the attractiveness of the group is sufficiently stronger than the attractiveness of alternative groups, then we would expect the individual to remain in the group. Hence, turnover rates should be low.

In addition, high group cohesiveness typically provides the group with considerable *power over group members*. The power of a group over members depends upon the level of outcomes members expect to receive from the group compared to what they could receive through alternate means. When the group is seen as being highly instrumental to achieving personal goals, individuals will typically submit to the will of the group.

Third, members of highly cohesive groups tend to exhibit greater *participation and loyalty*. Several studies have shown that as cohesiveness increases, there is more frequent communication among members, a greater degree of participation in group activities, and less absenteeism. Moreover, members of highly cohesive groups tend to be more cooperative and friendly and generally behave in ways designed to promote integration among members.

Fourth, members of highly cohesive groups generally report high levels of *satisfaction*. In fact, the concept of group cohesiveness almost demands all this be the case, because it is unlikely that members will feel like remaining with a group with which they are dissatisfied.

Finally, what is the effect of group cohesiveness on *productivity*? No clear relationship exists here. Instead, research shows that the extent to which cohesiveness and productivity are related is moderated by the extent to which group members accept organizational goals. This is shown in [Exhibit 9.8](#). Specifically, when cohesiveness and acceptance of organizational goals are high, performance will probably be high. When acceptance is high but cohesiveness is low, group performance will typically be moderate. Finally, performance will generally be low when goal acceptance is low regardless of the extent of group cohesiveness. In other words, high performance is most likely to result when highly cohesive teams accept the goals of the

organization. At this time, both forces for performance are congruent.

		Agreement with Organizational Goals	
		High	Low
Degree of Group Cohesiveness	High	High performance	Low performance
	Low	Moderate performance	Low performance

Exhibit 9.8 Group Cohesiveness, Goal Agreement, and Performance (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

MANAGING CHANGE



Group Cohesiveness

In the fast-moving innovative car industry, it is always important to be thinking about improving and staying ahead of the competition. For Ford and Chevrolet however, they have such popular vehicles—the F-150 and the hybrid Volt, respectively—that finding ways to improve them without taking away the qualities that make them popular is key.

With the F-150, Ford had one of the best-selling vehicles for more than 30 years, but improving upon their most popular vehicle came with its challenges. In 2015, the team wanted to introduce an economically six-cylinder EcoBoost engine, and an all-aluminum body. The team was worried about the marketplace and hoped that the customers would accept the change to their beloved truck.

The planning started 18 months before, working in parallel work teams on various parts of the project. Each team was responsible for a piece of the overall project, and they frequently came together to make sure that they were working cohesively to create a viable vehicle. The most successful piece of the dynamic for Ford was teams' ability to share feedback. Pete Reyes expresses the teamwork mentality: "Everybody crosses boundaries, and they came back with all of the feedback that shaped what we are going to do."

Having team cohesiveness was ultimately what brought Ford to the finish line. With over 1,000 members of the overall team, employees were able to accomplish a truly viable vehicle that weighed 700 pounds less, as well as countless other innovations that gave the truck 29 percent more fuel economy.

"We stuck to common goals . . . I don't think I'll ever work on a team that tight again," stated Reyes about his team of developmental managers. As a result of their close teamwork, Ford announced third-quarter earnings of 1.9 billion, an increase of 1.1 billion from 2014.

Sources: J. Motivalli, "5 Inspiring Companies That Rely on Teamwork to Be Successful," *Success*, February 16, 2016, <https://www.success.com/5-inspiring-companies-that-rely-on-teamwork-to-be-successful/>; "All-

New 2015 F-150 Most Patented Truck in Ford History – New Innovations Bolster Next-Generation Light-Duty Pickup,” *Ford Media Center*, May 23, 2014, <https://media.ford.com/content/fordmedia/fna/us/en/news/2014/05/23/all-new-2015-f-150-most-patented-truck-in-ford-history--new-inno.html>; P. Friedman, “Body of Work,” Ford Corporate Website, accessed, December 13, 2018, <https://corporate.ford.com/innovation/f-150-body-of-work.html>.

Questions:

1. What challenges does a large project like Ford’s F-150 project have to take into account for success?
2. What kind of work teams did Ford employ throughout its project to get the best results?
3. Can Ford’s successes be translated into other smaller teams? How would you apply its best practices to a work environment of your own?

CONCEPT CHECK



1. Explain what work roles are.
2. What role does group size play in the interactions of group members?
3. What are group norms and what role do they play toward group cohesiveness?

9.3 Managing Effective Work Groups

3. How do managers develop group cohesiveness, which facilitates organizational goal attainment?

We have examined in detail the nature and structure of work groups, noting that work groups differ along such dimensions as size, norms, and roles. Some groups are more cohesive than others. In view of these differences, it is interesting to ask how managers can facilitate increased work group effectiveness. To answer this question, we will make use of Hackman’s model of group effectiveness.²⁶ According to this model, illustrated in [Exhibit 9.9](#), the effectiveness of a work group is influenced by environmental factors, design factors, and task-related interpersonal processes. These three factors combine to influence what are called intermediate criteria, which, in turn, combine with the nature of the work technology to determine ultimate group effectiveness.

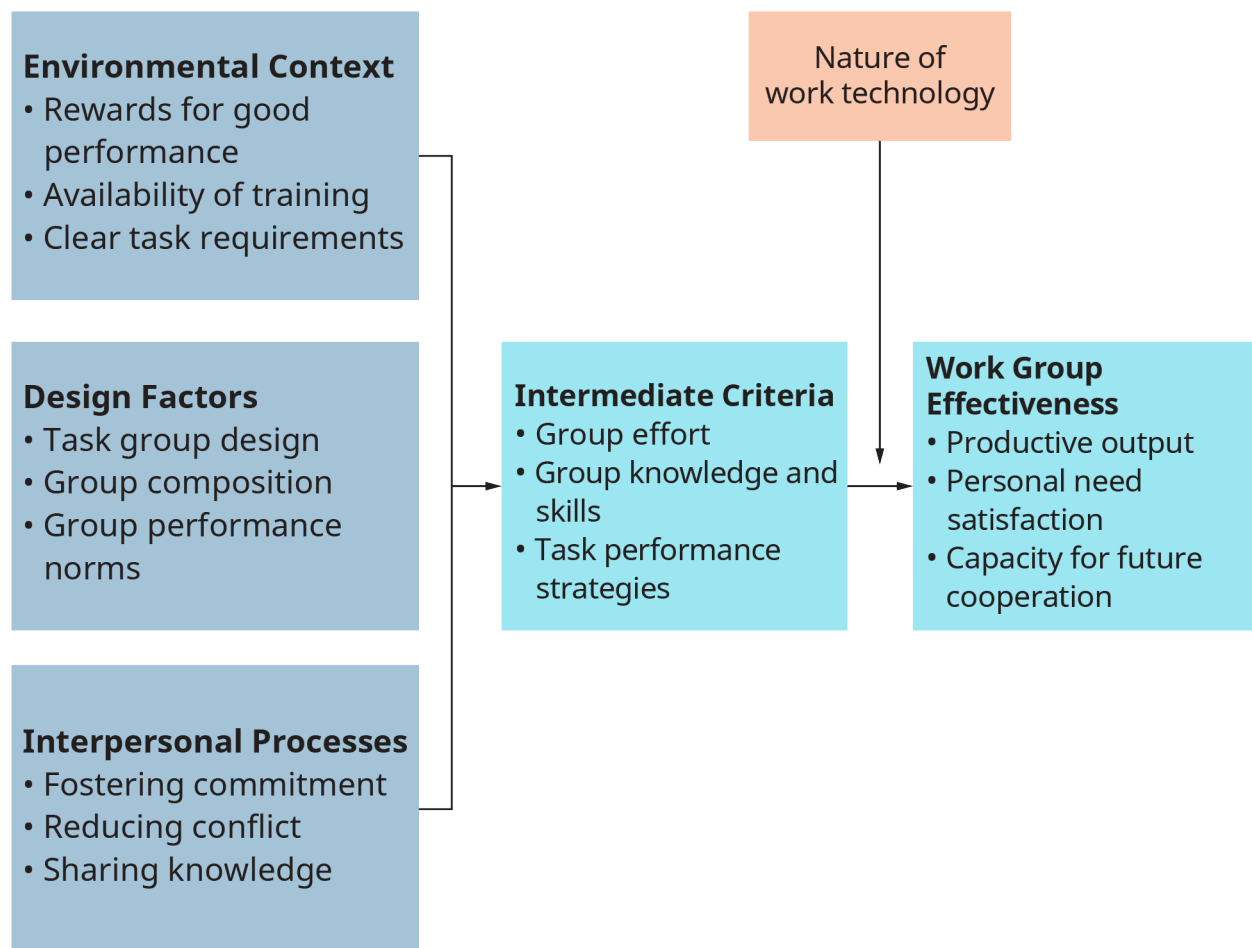


Exhibit 9.9 Determination of Work Group Effectiveness (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

What Is Work Group Effectiveness?

The first question to raise concerning work group effectiveness is what we mean by the concept itself. According to Hackman's model, effectiveness is defined in terms of three criteria:

1. *Productive output.* The productive output of the group must meet or exceed the quantitative and qualitative standards defined by the organization.
2. *Personal need satisfaction.* Groups are effective if membership facilitates employee need satisfaction.
3. *Capacity for future cooperation.* Effective groups employ social processes that maintain or enhance the capacity of their members to work together on subsequent tasks. Destructive social processes are avoided so members can develop long-term cohesiveness and effectiveness.

Determinants of Work-Group Effectiveness

Group effectiveness is largely determined by three factors that have been called *intermediate criteria*. These factors are as follows:

1. *Group effort.* The amount of effort group members exert toward task accomplishment.
2. *Group knowledge and skill.* The amount of knowledge and skills possessed by group members that are available for group effort and performance.
3. *Task performance strategies.* The extent to which the group's strategies for task performance (that is, how

it analyzes and attempts to solve problems) are appropriate.

Although the relative importance of each of these three intermediate factors may vary, all three are important. Without considerable group effort, appropriate skills and knowledge, and a clear strategy for task completion, groups are unlikely to be effective.

An important influence on the relative importance of these three variables is the nature of **work technology**. This includes the equipment and materials used in manufacture, the prescribed work procedures, and the physical layout of the work site. For example, if jobs are highly routinized, individual skills and knowledge may be somewhat less important than simple effort. On more complex tasks, however, such as research and development, effort alone will be of little help without concomitant skills and knowledge. Hence, although the relative importance of these three variables may vary with the job technology, all should be considered in any effort to understand determinants of work group effectiveness in a particular situation.

Finally, it must be recognized that these determinants of effectiveness are themselves influenced by three sets of factors (shown at the left-hand side of [Exhibit 9.9](#)). First, we must recognize a series of *environmental context* factors, such as the company's reward system, training programs, job descriptions, and so forth. Second are several *design factors*, including group structure, member composition, and performance norms. Finally, the role of *interpersonal processes*—such as efforts among group members and management to reduce conflict, foster commitment, and share knowledge—must be recognized. These three sets of factors, then, are largely responsible for determining the so-called intermediate criteria that, in turn, combine with appropriate job technologies to determine work group effectiveness.

Implications for Group Management

On the basis of this analysis of group processes in work organizations, we can identify several actions managers can take in order to help groups to be more effective.

Increased Managerial Awareness. To begin, managers can make themselves more aware of the nature of groups and the functions groups perform for individuals. By learning why individuals join groups, for example, managers should be able to better understand the motivational implications of group dynamics. Is high group cohesiveness in a particular group a result of high commitment to the organization and its goals, or is it a result of alienation from the organization?

Sensitivity to Group Norms. Managers can be sensitive to group norms and the extent to which they facilitate or inhibit group and organizational performance. The potency of group norms has been clearly established. It has also been shown that company actions can increase or decrease the likelihood that norms will work to the benefit of the organization. Much of the thrust of current organizational development efforts is to use process consultation techniques to develop group norms that are compatible with company goals.

Understanding Pressures for Conformity. Much has been said in the research literature about the effects of groups on individual conformity and deviance. Groups often place significant pressures on individuals to conform, and they punish deviants by such means as ostracism. From a managerial standpoint, conformity can represent a mixed blessing. On one hand, there are many work situations in which managers typically want workers to conform to standard operating procedures (this is called *dependable role performance*). On the other hand, employees must be sufficiently free to take advantage of what they believe to be unique or important opportunities on behalf of the organization (*innovative and spontaneous behavior*). If pressures toward conformity are too strong, this spontaneity may be lost, along with unique opportunities for the organization.

Harnessing Group Cohesiveness. Where it is desirable to develop highly cohesive groups, managers can show employees how group members can help one another by working together. It is important to note, however, that group cohesiveness by itself does not guarantee increased group effectiveness. Instead, managers must take the lead in showing group members why they benefit from working toward organizational goals. One way to accomplish this is through the reward systems used by the organization.

In short, there are several lessons for managers here concerning the effects of group dynamics on performance and effectiveness. The lesson is clear: managers must be sensitive to and deal with group processes in the workplace. Without doing so, the manager and the company are destined at best to achieve mediocre results.

CONCEPT CHECK



1. Why must managers be sensitive to and deal with group processes in the workplace

9.4 Intergroup Behavior and Performance

4. What are barriers to intergroup cooperation, and how do you take action to minimize such impediments and understand how to get the most out of the collective actions of groups in organizations in order to enhance industrial competitiveness?

We are now ready to move on to an examination of intergroup behavior. That is, what happens when one group in an organization must interact with another? Clearly, in any corporation, a high degree of intergroup interaction is vital to organizational success. Even in small companies, the production group must interact with the sales group, and both must accommodate the finance and accounting groups. Without smooth intergroup relations, organizational effectiveness and industrial competitiveness are virtually impossible.

Determinants of Intergroup Performance

To understand how groups interact with one another, it is important to identify the primary variables that characterize intergroup behavior.²⁷ We can do this by suggesting a model of intergroup performance. This model is outlined in [Exhibit 9.10](#). As shown, intergroup behavior occurs when two groups intersect. Each group has its own characteristics and uniqueness, but both operate within the larger confines of organizational policies, culture, reward systems, and so forth. Within this context, performance is largely influenced by three types of *interaction requirements*: interdependence requirements, information flow requirements, and integration requirements. The quality of intergroup performance is affected by the extent to which all parties to the interaction can meet these requirements.

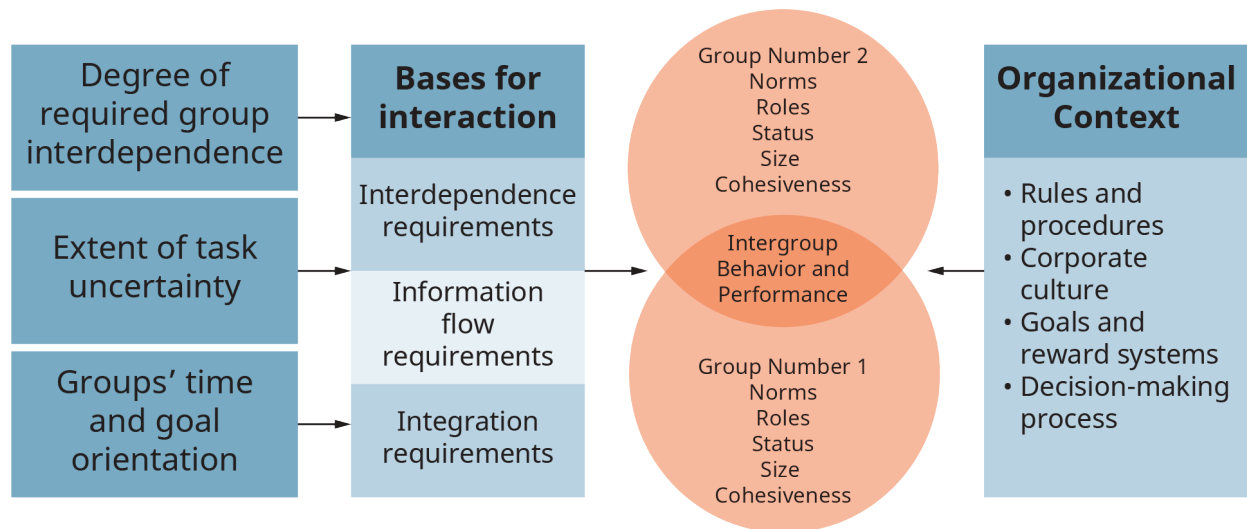
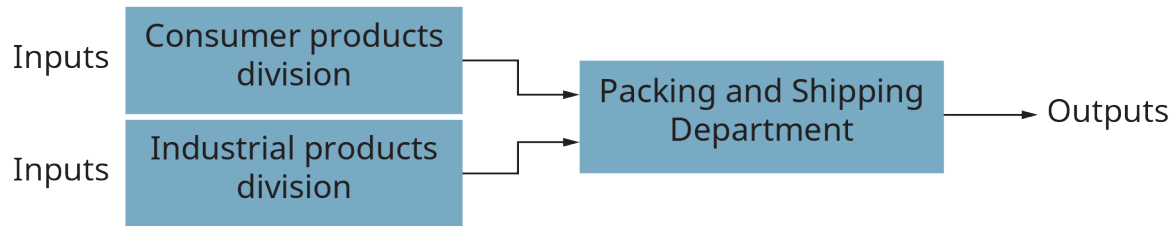


Exhibit 9.10 A Model of Intergroup Behavior and Performance (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Interdependence Requirements. *Interdependence requirements* relate to the frequency and quality of interactions among groups; high-quality interaction is required for successful task accomplishment. To successfully achieve corporate objectives, organizations must achieve enough intergroup interaction to coordinate resource allocation and utilization. The amount of interaction required is determined by the extent and nature of the groups' interdependence. Group interdependence takes three primary forms (see [Exhibit 9.11](#)):

Pooled interdependence



Sequential interdependence



Reciprocal interdependence

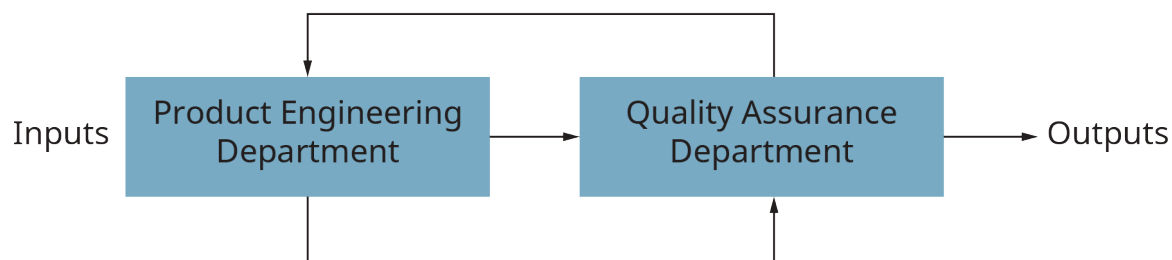


Exhibit 9.11 Three Types of Group Interdependence (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

1. *Pooled interdependence*. **Pooled interdependence** occurs when various groups are largely independent of one another, even though each contributes to and is supported by the larger organization. For example, although the physics and music departments may not interact frequently, both contribute to the larger goals of the university, and both use university resources. In a factory setting, pooled interdependence can be seen in a company with two distinct manufacturing divisions; e.g., one for consumer products and one for industrial products. Although produced separately, both kinds of products come together in the shipping department, and both represent products of the same company.
2. *Sequential interdependence*. **Sequential interdependence** exists when the outputs of one unit or group become the inputs for another. For example, the manufacturing department in a company is clearly dependent on the purchasing department for the success of its own operation, whereas the purchasing department is much less dependent on manufacturing.
3. *Reciprocal interdependence*. **Reciprocal interdependence** occurs when two or more groups depend on one another for inputs. For example, without product engineering, the marketing department would have nothing to sell. On the other hand, without consumer information from marketing, product engineering might not know what to manufacture. The two units are highly dependent on each other, thereby requiring a high degree of interaction.

In summary, the type of interdependence determines in large part the degree of interrelationship that develops among two or more groups. High interdependence typically requires high intergroup interaction, whereas low interdependence typically requires relatively low intergroup interaction.

Information Flow Requirements. The second requirement for successful intergroup performance is optimal

information flow. To be successful, groups need the appropriate amount of information. Information flow is influenced to a large degree by the extent of **task uncertainty**. When groups are working on highly uncertain tasks (e.g., a new product, an experiment, or an old product in a new environment), the need for communication increases. When task uncertainty is low, less information is typically needed.

Task uncertainty, in turn, is influenced by two factors. The first, *task clarity*, is the extent to which the requirements and responsibilities of the group are clearly understood. The use of standard operating procedures in organizations is an example of a group requirement. The other consideration is *task environment*, those factors inside and outside the organization that can affect the group's performance. The task environment has two aspects: the number of groups that must be dealt with and the relative stability of the environment. Obviously, the more groups that must interact and the more dynamic the environment, the greater the task uncertainty. In a dynamic environment, groups tend to expand their information-gathering efforts to detect and cope with environmental changes. Hence, the greater the task uncertainty, the greater the need for comprehensive information flow systems.

Integration Requirements. The final requirement for successful intergroup performance is integration. *Integration requirements* focus on the extent of collaboration, cooperation, or structural relationships among groups needed to ensure success. Typically, various departments within an organization have different goals and time orientations. A technical research department, for example, often sees its goals in scientific terms and has a long-term perspective. A marketing department in the same company, focusing its goals on market considerations on the other hand, would typically have a short-term orientation. The production department, concerned with technical goals, would probably attempt to maintain a moderate time orientation in order to take advantage of the economies of scale associated with longer production runs.

A successful organization finds ways to integrate groups so that they coordinate their efforts on behalf of corporate objectives. The trick is to achieve some commonly acceptable coordinating mechanism—not a state in which all units have the same goals and time orientations. It would prove disastrous, for example, if the research unit looked for short-term results or the marketing department ignored short-term shifts in the marketplace. Through integration, various units can accommodate one another's needs while maintaining their individuality. In this way, the strengths of all groups are used in addressing organizational problems.

When we put these various requirements and their antecedents together, we can see why achieving intergroup coordination and performance is no easy task. [Table 9.3](#) shows the defining characteristics of four typical units of an organization: research, development, sales, and manufacturing. The interdependence, task uncertainty, and time and goal orientation of each unit are shown. Consider the complexities managers face in attempting to lead such an organization efficiently and effectively. Indeed, business magazines are filled with examples of corporate failures that can be traced to poor coordination of such units. These examples point to an endless array of potential sources of conflict that can reduce the capacity of a company to compete successfully in an ever-changing environment.

Intergroup Characteristics in Four Units of One Company			
Group	Interdependence Examples	Task Uncertainty	Time and Goal Orientation
Research	<i>Reciprocal</i> with development <i>Sequential</i> with market research <i>Pooled</i> with shipping	High	<i>Time:</i> Long term <i>Goal:</i> Science
Development	<i>Reciprocal</i> with market research <i>Sequential</i> with manufacturing <i>Pooled</i> with shipping	Moderate to high	<i>Time:</i> Long term <i>Goal:</i> Science and technoeconomic
Sales	<i>Reciprocal</i> with market research <i>Sequential</i> with manufacturing <i>Pooled</i> with personnel	Moderate	<i>Time:</i> Moderate term <i>Goal:</i> Market
Manufacturing	<i>Reciprocal</i> with accounting <i>Sequential</i> with shipping <i>Pooled</i> with research	Low	<i>Time:</i> Short term <i>Goal:</i> Technoeconomic

Source: Adapted from A. Szilagyi and M. Wallace, *Organizational Behavior and Performance*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 272.

Table 9.3 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Managing Intergroup Behavior and Performance

When we analyze the challenge of managing intergroup behavior and performance, the key issue facing managers is the issue of coordination. In most situations, various units or departments in the organization all have talent needed to ensure task accomplishment. Yet, each unit has its own culture, goals, norms, and so forth. Hence, the challenge for managers is harnessing and coordinating this talent in such a way that group harmony is maintained while organizational objectives are achieved.

There are several techniques for managing intergroup relations and performance. These techniques include using rules and procedures, member exchange, linking roles, task forces, and decoupling. Let us briefly consider each as it relates to intergroup coordination and performance.

Rules and Procedures. A common way to manage intergroup relations is for senior management to establish rules and procedures governing the interactions of two or more departments or units. For example, if units

consistently fail to communicate with one another, which leads to poor coordination, the company may institute a new policy requiring all groups to post certain types of information at regular time intervals or to inform other department heads of proposed new activities or changes. By simply increasing communication flow, group coordination should increase.

Member Exchange. In some circumstances, it is desirable for the organization to temporarily transfer a member from one group to another. Such exchanges offer the employee an opportunity to better understand the problems and procedures of the other group. Upon returning to his original group, the employee can share information about the other group. In addition, the transferred employee often develops better interpersonal contacts with the other department, thereby enhancing communication and coordination. An example of this can be seen when a company transfers a production engineer into the quality assurance department. As a result, the employee sees firsthand the problems of the quality control group and can take the knowledge back to production engineering.

Linking Roles. A **linking role** is a position or unit within the organization that is charged with overseeing and coordinating the activities of two or more groups. A good example is a product manager who is responsible for coordinating manufacturing, sales, quality control, and product research for a certain product line (see [Exhibit 9.12](#)). In essence, these linking role positions are designed to enhance communication among the various functional units and ensure that the right products are designed, manufactured, and marketed. We will say more about the product manager's role in [Understanding and Managing Work Teams](#).

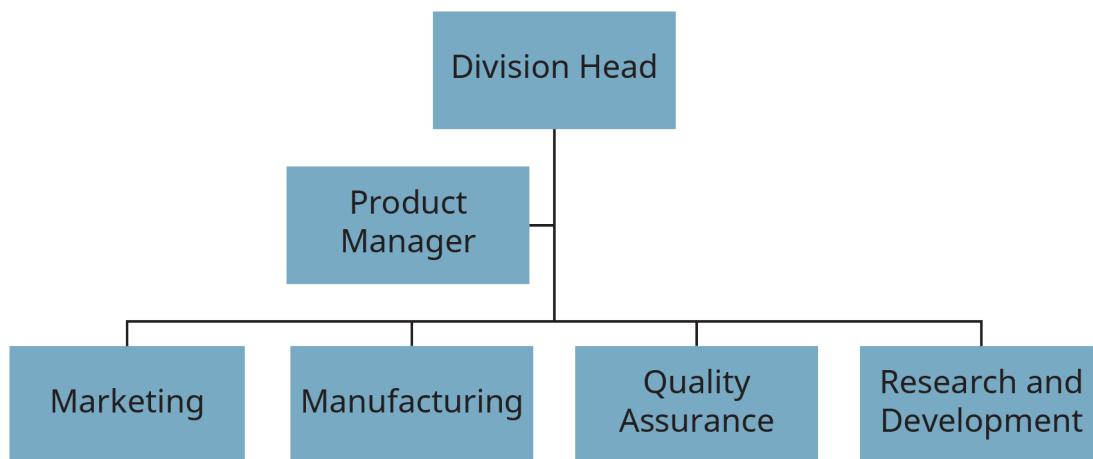


Exhibit 9.12 The Product Manager as a Linking Role (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)



Exhibit 9.13 Sales team The sales team at Dynamic Signal meets for reviewing goals. What can you say about the diversity of this team? (Credit: Jim Larisson/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Task Forces. A **task force** serves much the same purpose as a linking role except that the role is temporary instead of permanent. In a task force, individuals from several units are brought together to solve a specific problem, usually in a short period of time. It is felt that each unit has expertise to contribute and that by coordinating these efforts, a better solution can be achieved. A typical task force arrangement can be seen in [Exhibit 9.14](#). For instance, a company facing a major financial cutback may create a task force consisting of members from across the company to identify ways to resolve the crisis. Or a company may create a task force to consider a joint venture offer from a foreign company. In both cases, the problem is that immediate and diverse skills are required to reach an optimal solution.

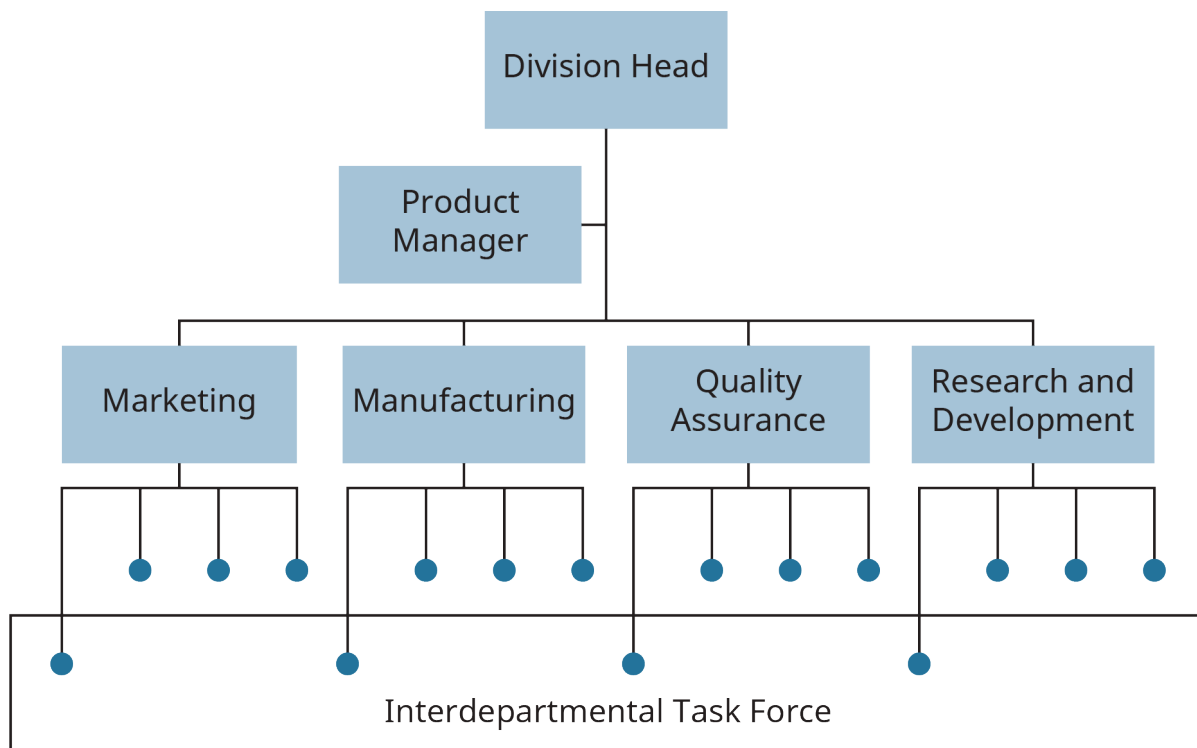


Exhibit 9.14 An Example of a Typical Task Force (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Decoupling. Finally, there are situations in which two or more closely related groups simply don't work together effectively. In such cases, **decoupling** may be the answer.²⁸ Decoupling involves separating two groups—physically or administratively—in such a way that the required tasks of the organization are fulfilled while the interaction between the two groups is minimized. For instance, hardware and software engineers ideally should work closely together on the design of a new computing system. Yet sometimes these people see problems and solutions quite differently, which may lead to overt hostility and uncooperative behavior. One solution would be to separate the two groups physically and then have one group (e.g., the hardware engineers) outline product specifications. Software engineers then could work more on their own to design software to meet these specifications. Obviously, some coordination would be required. Even so, such an approach could retain the services of two valued groups of engineers who see problems quite differently— a wise compromise strategy for the high-tech company.

In essence, several strategies are available to assist managers in coordinating the diverse talents of interdependent groups in ways that help achieve organizational goals. The choice of an appropriate technique depends upon the unique situation facing the manager. One such approach to managing intergroup coordination was practiced at General Motors Company as it approached the design and manufacture of the Saturn.

EXPANDING AROUND THE GLOBE



Engagement on Global Work Teams: IBM

Since 2008, IBM has increased its focus on becoming a globally integrated enterprise. Employing over 200,000 people from different countries and backgrounds, there are major challenges that IBM faces when managing its work teams on such a large global scale.

One of those main components is time zone management. Instead of being highly rigorous in work hours and causing employees to be available on teams at all hours of the night or day, IBM decided they would implement a results-oriented work environment (ROWE). This strategy allows employees to work where they live on virtual teams and base their hours on their own schedules. ROWE allows employees to work at the hours that they feel naturally most productive.

Another key component to managing a global work team is clear communication. IBM structures its leadership of the work teams with leaders that consist of four or five senior executives from multiple geographies. They must work side by side to understand one another's cultural differences, as well as provide input on their overall team objectives that enable business growth in that country. They are able to accommodate local differences, learn from one another's differences, and come to common objectives because of their remote location differences for a better outcome. Additionally, these leaders are better equipped to understand local nuances because of their deeper understanding of the global and cultural nuances of their team members.

IBM continues to focus on growing "global IBMers" by offering opportunities for global leadership experiences as well as offering opportunities to acquire new skills. The company focuses on three key actions:

1. Grow locally and globally via a consistent methodology. Align business strategies with national priorities and societal goals, build local expertise, and expand market relevance.
2. Develop leadership. Provide more employees with opportunities to enhance their skills, and offer more varied global experiences early in careers.
3. Enable the global integrated enterprise (GIE) vision. Accelerate enterprise-wide collaboration and an organizational culture based on shared values.

These key actions are clearly communicated by IBM and are demonstrated by leadership to help engage employees behind the methods. Utilizing the best technology to improve collaboration can garner the most productivity and empower employees. If leadership is engaged, employees will also engage with their work and workplace, which helps drive team cohesiveness overall.

Questions:

1. What challenges does IBM face due to the size and global reach of its employee base?
2. Name at least three strategies that managers and leaders can employ to help keep employees engaged, even when working in remote work teams.

Sources: K. White, "Enabling Growth through Global Enablement Teams," *IBM Thought Leadership*, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://ibm.com/services/us/gbs/thoughtleadership/ibv-global-leaders.html>; "Enabling Growth through Global Enablement teams," *IBM Thought Leadership*, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/gbs-integrated-enterprise-workforce.html>; T. Neely, "Global

Teams that Work," *Harvard Business Review*, October 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/10/global-teams-that-work>; D. DeRosa, "3 Companies With High-Performing Teams," *Onpoint Consulting*, October 3, 2017, <https://www.onpointconsultingllc.com/blog/3-companies-with-high-performing-virtual-teams>.

CONCEPT CHECK



1. Are well-functioning teams or groups in complex tasks more productive and leave workers more satisfied than in traditional arrangements?
2. What is the importance of the ability to effectively manage both the task requirements and the process or maintenance aspects of the group for them to function well?

 **Key Terms**

Command group A group that is permanent.

Decoupling Involves separating two groups—physically or administratively—in such a way that the required tasks of the organization are fulfilled while the interaction between the two groups is minimized.

Formal group Work units that are prescribed by the organization.

Friendship group Friendship groups tend to be long lasting.

Group An organized system of two or more individuals who are interrelated so that the system performs some function, has a standard set of role relationships among its members, and has a set of norms that regulate the function of the group and each of its members.

Group cohesiveness The extent to which individual members of a group are motivated to remain in the group.

Informal group Groups that evolve naturally out of individual and collective self-interest among the members of an organization and are not the result of deliberate organizational design.

Information flow To be successful, groups need the appropriate amount of information.

Interaction process analysis A technique that records who says what to whom, and through using it illustrates that smaller groups typically exhibit greater tension, agreement, and opinion seeking, whereas larger groups show more tension release and giving of suggestions and information.

Interest group A network that forms due to mutual interests such as working women or minority managers.

Linking role A position or unit within the organization that is charged with overseeing and coordinating the activities of two or more groups.

Norms These regulate the function of the group and each of its members.

Pooled interdependence Occurs when various groups are largely independent of each other, even though each contributes to and is supported by the larger organization.

Reciprocal interdependence Occurs when two or more groups depend on one another for inputs.

Role ambiguity A condition that arises when messages sent to an individual may be unclear.

Role conflict A condition that can arise when individuals receive multiple and sometimes conflicting messages from various groups, all attempting to assign them a particular role.

Role episode An attempt to explain how a particular role is learned and acted upon.

Role overload A condition where individuals may simply receive too many role-related messages.

Role set The sum total of all the roles assigned to one individual.

Sequential interdependence Exists when the outputs of one unit or group become the inputs for another.

Social loafing A tendency for individual group members to reduce their effort on a group task.

Status incongruence A situation that exists when a person is high on certain valued dimensions but low on others, or when a person's characteristics seem inappropriate for a particular job.

Status system Serves to differentiate individuals on the basis of some criterion or set of criteria.

Task force Serves the same purpose as a linking role except that the role is temporary instead of permanent.

Task group Serves the same purpose as a command role except that the role is temporary instead of permanent.

Task uncertainty When groups are working on highly uncertain tasks, the need for communication increases. When task uncertainty is low, less information is typically needed.

Work role An expected behavior pattern assigned or attributed to a particular position in the organization.

Work technology Includes the equipment and materials used in manufacture, the prescribed work procedures, and the physical layout of the work site.



Summary of Learning Outcomes

9.1 Work Groups: Basic Considerations

1. How do you manage group and intergroup processes effectively?

A group is a collection of individuals who share a common set of norms, who generally have differentiated roles among themselves, and who interact with one another in the joint pursuit of common goals. Groups may be divided into permanent and temporary groups and formal and informal groups. Formal groups include command and task groups, whereas informal groups include friendship and interest groups.

9.2 Work Group Structure

2. How do group norms, roles, and status systems affect employee behavior and performance?

People join groups because they offer security, meet social needs, enhance self-esteem, fulfill economic interests, introduce them to people with mutual interests, and, sometimes, because they are in close physical proximity. Groups typically develop through several distinct stages, including forming, storming, norming, and performing. A role may be defined as an expected behavior pattern assigned or attributed to a particular position in the organization. Roles may be oriented toward the task, social relations, or the self.

9.3 Managing Effective Work Groups

3. How do managers develop group cohesiveness, which facilitates organizational goal attainment?

Social loafing is a tendency for individual members of a group to reduce their task effort in the belief that other members will cover for them. A norm is a standard that is shared by group members and that regulates member behavior within an organization. Norms facilitate group survival, simplify expected behaviors, help members avoid embarrassing situations, and help identify group members. Asch's experiment in group pressure and individual judgment demonstrated that individuals will discount their own perceptions of a situation and follow the will of a group. Status systems serve to differentiate individuals on the basis of some criterion or set of criteria. Status incongruence occurs when one individual holds a position in the status hierarchy that is inconsistent with the conventional criteria for that position. Group cohesiveness is the extent to which individual members of a group are motivated to remain in the group. Work group effectiveness is defined by three criteria: group productivity, personal need satisfaction of the members, and the group's capacity for future cooperation.

9.4 Intergroup Behavior and Performance

4. What are barriers to intergroup cooperation, and how do you take action to minimize such impediments and understand how to get the most out of the collective actions of groups in organizations in order to enhance industrial competitiveness?

Intergroup performance is influenced by three interaction requirements. These include the requirements for interdependence, information, and integration. A linking role is a position or unit within the organization that is charged with overseeing and coordinating the activities of two or more groups. A task force consists of members from several departments or units who are brought together on a temporary basis to solve a specific and immediate problem. Decoupling refers to the practice of physically or administratively separating groups that are not able to work together effectively.



Chapter Review Questions

1. What are the various types of groups often found in work situations?
2. Why do people join groups?
3. Describe the stages of group development.
4. How does work group size influence individual and group behavior?
5. Discuss the role of work group norms in the work situation.
6. Consider how groups influence conformity and deviance in work situations.
7. What is the major conclusion of Asch's experiment on group pressure and individual judgment?
8. Define a *role episode*.
9. Why is knowledge of role relationships important for managers?
10. What purposes are served by status differentiations in work organizations? What problems emerge from these differentiations?
11. What determines group cohesiveness, and what impact does it have on group behavior?
12. Discuss how managers can improve intergroup relations and performance. Provide examples from your own experience to defend your arguments.



Management Skills Application Exercises

1. To assist in your analysis, you may wish to complete this self-assessment. Simply think of a group you have belonged to, and answer each question as honestly as possible. When you are through, refer to [Appendix B](#) for interpretation.

How Do You Behave in a Group?

Instructions: Think of a typical group situation in which you often find yourself (e.g., a club, study group, small work group), and answer the following items as accurately as possible.

	Never	Seldom	Fairly Often	Frequently
In a group, how often do you:				
1. Keep the group focused on the task at hand?	1	2	3	4
2. Help the group clarify the issues?	1	2	3	4
3. Pull various ideas together?	1	2	3	4
4. Push the group to make a decision or complete a task?	1	2	3	4
5. Support and encourage other groups members?	1	2	3	4
6. Try to reduce interpersonal conflicts?	1	2	3	4
7. Help the group reach a compromise?	1	2	3	4
8. Assist in maintaining group harmony?	1	2	3	4
9. Seek personal recognition from other group members?	1	2	3	4
10. Try to dominate group activities?	1	2	3	4
11. Avoid unpleasant or undesirable group activities?	1	2	3	4
12. Express your impatience or hostility with the group?	1	2	3	4

2. To see how group effectiveness works, try this self-assessment. Choose a work group (or groups) to which you belong (or did belong in the past). Once you have selected a group, simply answer the items on the questionnaire by checking either “mostly yes” or “mostly no.” When you have finished, refer to [Appendix B](#) for scoring.

How Effective Is Your Work Group?

Instructions: Select a group to which you belong, and use this group to answer the following questions. Check “mostly yes” or “mostly no” to answer each question.

	Mostly Yes	Mostly No
1. The atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable.	—	—
2. Group discussion is frequent, and it is usually pertinent to the task at hand.	—	—

3. Group members understand what they are trying to accomplish.	___	___
4. People listen to each other's suggestions and ideas.	___	___
5. Disagreements are tolerated, and an attempt is made to resolve them.	___	___
6. There is general agreement on most courses of action taken.	___	___
7. The group welcomes frank criticism from inside and outside sources.	___	___
8. When the group takes action, clear assignments are made and accepted.	___	___
9. There is a well-established, relaxed working relationship among the members.	___	___
10. There is a high degree of trust and confidence among the leader and subordinates.	___	___
11. The group members strive hard to help the group achieve its goal.	___	___
12. Suggestions and criticisms are offered and received with a helpful spirit.	___	___
13. There is a cooperative rather than a competitive relationship among group members.	___	___
14. The group goals are set high but not so high as to create anxieties or fear of failure.	___	___
15. The leaders and members hold a high opinion of the group's capabilities.	___	___
16. Creativity is stimulated within the group.	___	___
17. There is ample communication within the group of topics relevant to getting the work accomplished.	___	___
18. Group members feel confident in making decisions.	___	___
19. People are kept busy but not overloaded.	___	___
20. The leader of the group is well suited for the job.	___	___

Source: Adapted from A. J. DuBrin from *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).



Managerial Decision Exercises

1. Assume that you are the CEO of a major producer of potato chips. You have four plants and discover that one of the plants is more productive than the other three; specifically, the midnight to 8 a.m. shift is 22 percent more productive than every other shift. Since one of the things that makes chips more appealing to customers is freshness, increasing productivity and getting the product on the shelves is of enormous importance.

You decide to visit the plant based in San Antonio, Texas, and observe the 4 p.m. to midnight shift and then the midnight to 8 a.m. shift. During your visit, you are impressed with the effectiveness of the first shift and discuss the production process with the supervisor, which involves boiling the chips in hot oil, seasoning them in three varieties of salted seasoning, and having the chips go through a tube to fill the bags that are then placed in boxes for shipment to retailers. Everything seems to have been done efficiently, and you eagerly anticipate seeing what the midnight shift is doing to produce extraordinary results.

The new crew starts its shift by cleaning the production line and begins production. For the first hour, everything they do mirrors what the previous shift was doing. Then the shift supervisor calls out that it is time to clean the tubes, and for two minutes the team cleans the tubes that feed the bags with chips to remove the oil that has accumulated in the tubes. This process is repeated seven times throughout the night, with the final cleaning preparing the line for the morning shift. At the end of the night, the production report shows that this shift produced 23 percent more chips than the previous shifts. When you meet with the supervisor and workers, you ask them about their practice of cleaning the tubes. They report that they discovered that oil buildup in the tubes slowed the flow of chips, which caused everything before that step in the process to slow down. You thank them and consider what to do next. You obviously need to implement this practice across all shifts in the company and are considering how to roll this out. You also want to reward the shift supervisor, Manuel Santos, and the workers on the shift for their ingenuity. What are your next steps? Write the memo that you would send to all shift supervisors, or alternatively, write a memo to the general managers of the four plants to implement this. What are the benefits of each approach? Finally, decide on the rewards for Manuel Santos and the midnight shift workers, and write a letter that would be sent to them commending them. How might this incident be used to improve the performance of all work groups in the organization?



Critical Thinking Case

OECollaboration

At OECollaboration, a technology company that develops virtual collaboration software for new companies, Mike Jones is a new manager. One of the biggest challenges he has faced is that the team that he is managing is well established and because he is an outsider, the team members haven't yet developed trust in him.

Two weeks into his new employment, Mike held a meeting and discussed all of the changes to the remote work agreements as well as implementing new meeting requirements for each employee to have a biweekly meeting scheduled with him to discuss their projects. The team was outraged, they were not excited, and the following days he wasn't greeted in a friendly way; in addition, his team seemed less engaged when asked to participate in team functions.

Tracy James is also a new manager at OECollaboration who started at the same time as Mike, in a similar situation where she is a new manager of an existing team. Tracy was able to hold a meeting the first day on the job to listen to her team and get to know them. During this meeting she also told the team about herself and her past experiences. Additionally, she held one-on-one meetings to listen to each of her team members to discuss what they were working on and their career goals. After observation and discussion with upper management, she aligned her own team goals closely with the skills and experiences of her new team. She met with the whole team to make changes to a few policies, explaining why they were being changed, and set the strategy for the team moving forward.

Because she got her team involved and learned about them before implementing her new strategy, this was

well received. Her team still had questions and concerns, but they felt like they could trust her and that they were included in the changes that were being made.

Questions:

1. What challenges can a new manager encounter when starting to manage an existing team?
2. What strategies can a new manager implement to ensure that his new team is engaged with him and builds relationships to succeed in his new role?

Sources: J. Morris, "How Smart Manager's Win over New teams Without Bringing in Free Food," *The Muse*, accessed January 4, 2019, <https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-smart-managers-win-over-new-teams-without-bringing-in-free-food>; B. Tulgan, "The Challenge of Taking Over Leadership of an Existing Team," *Association for Talent Development*, January 5, 2015, <https://www.td.org/insights/the-challenge-of-taking-over-leadership-of-an-existing-team>;