

### *7. Case “Fatal designers”*

The group in question is a small team of five people in the design department of a successful appliance manufacturer. The group has an extremely friendly atmosphere. Everyone is on friendly terms with each other, and they are all confident in their personal skills and the skills of other team members. They constantly produce highly innovative designs and meet deadlines. These are fairly young people, 25-30 years old, who have been working together since their internship. Outside of work, they are all members of the same rock band, which is very successful locally. However, although they all enjoy this hobby, none of them has any intention of giving up engineering and pursuing a full-time music career.

One of their department manager's complaints is that they are too insular. Individually they are all nice people, but they tend to keep their distance from others in the design office. In fact, he suspects that they would make a much greater contribution to the department if only they shared their obvious talent with others. However, the only time he tried to do something positive about the situation was by seating the group among others in the office, he was met with a storm of protest from the team along with thinly veiled hints that they would all quit. Another problem that exists is the team's periodic conflicts with marketing who are not getting exactly what they need in the design framework, but what the team thinks marketing is getting. There are also periodic conflicts with the production engineers, who sometimes complain that although the designs may be very marketable, the cost of producing them is too high. When conflicts of one kind or another arise, all team members form a single unit to suppress complaints from marketers or production engineers.

#### *Questions*

1. How would you describe this group and are the characteristics of the group, from an organizational point of view, desirable or undesirable?
2. What should the department/company management do to correct the current situation?