Groups

Terminology

Crowd- assembly of people, appearing random and disorganized, sharing a common experience, with broad purpose in common

Group - smaller no. of people, generally shared objective, acting together to achieve objective

Team – special group,with a facilitator / coach, goals set by members, decisions taken together, work together based on co-operation, members jointly responsible for outcomes, communication patterns flow up and down

Communicating in groups

Advantages

❑ More commitment (**people are more committed to a decision when included in decision-making process**)

❑ Better decisions

✓ **- more available info.**

✓ **more and better suggestions**

✓ **more courageous decisions**

✓ **higher productivity**

Communicating in groups - continued

Disadvantages

- Time / time waste (**e.g. too much time pursuing 1 issue, discussing irrelevant points, 'speech' even when agreeing with other's point of view**)

- Group pressure

' mob psychology '

Under group pressure people agree with mediocre outcome

- Talk rather than action

  willingness to discuss any problem but solve none

Group effectiveness

Variables affecting group effectiveness

Uncontrollable variables

- ❑ Group variables
- ❑ Environmental variables
- ❑ Task variables

Group effectiveness - continued

Controllable variables

- ❑ leadership style
- ❑ motivation of group towards task
- ❑ friendship relations among members
- ❑ style and level of member participation

Group effectiveness- continued

Resulting variables

- ❑   group productivity
- ❑   member satisfaction

Uncontrollable variables – the group

Size

Optimum size : 5 – 7 people (size related to cohesiveness)

< 5 members : less cohesion

Larger groups = greater diversity of info., skills, tallent, background knowledge, experience + less chances of individual participation ; can solve some types of problems

!!! more powerful and forceful individuals tend to dominate communication time, reduced interaction, need to divide tasks, fractions appear

> 10 members : face-to-face contact difficult to achieve

> 15 members : interaction & creativity stifled

Uncontrollable variables – the group

Member characteristics and objectives

Group members bring along their different attitudes, values, beliefs which influence level & style of participation and interaction, as well as productivity and member satisfaction

Effective group : high level of compatibility , all members accept the group objectives and work to achieve the common goal

!!! ' hidden agenda' (personal objectives of various group members)

Uncontrollable variables – the group

Status and roles

e.g. of roles : stir up others and get some action, be the
logical thinker, pour oil on troubled water

Questions to answer:

Who am I in this group? What is my occupational role?

Am I to be a listener or a leader? Who will be judging me?

What is the pattern of influence? What are my personal
needs and objectives? Are they the same as the group's?
Compatible with them? If not, should they be?

Uncontrollable variables – the environment

❑ **Physical location**

Physical proximity, seating arrangements, shared facilities,shared discomfort encourage cohesiveness

❑ **Inter-group relations**

The way group is regarded by rest of organization or community (way group is perceived to influence events influence on key figures in the organization, group accepted as important, helpful, cooperative) influences performance of the group, as well as attitude of individual members to group

❑ **Expectations of the group**

Uncontrollable variables – the task

Nature of task, degree of difficulty,

special demands, affect attitude of group

Most common:

- ✓ **Information – sharing (exchange of views and information)**
- ✓ **Persuasive (recommending action)**
- ✓ **Creative/ problem – solving (generating ideas)**
- ✓ **Decision – making (choosing best alternative and planning action)**

Controllable factors

Controllable factors can be changed and adapted to improve group productivity and member satisfaction

❑ **Leadership style**

- democratic (group-oriented behaviour)

- autocratic (task-oriented behaviour)

- laissez-faire (self-oriented behaviour)

❑ **Motivation of group toward task**

❑ **Friendship relation among members**

❑ **Style and level of member participation**

Group interactions and roles

Interaction patterns

decentralized communication structure

centralized communication structure

Group roles and behaviour

➢ **Task roles**

➢ **Group building and maintenance roles**

➢ **Both group task and maintenance roles**

➢ **Non-functional behaviour**

Task roles

- - functions required in selecting and carrying out a group task –

- ☐ Initiating activity (propose solutions, suggest ideas etc.)
- ☐ Seeking information / opinions(e.g.clarify suggestions)
- ☐ **Giving information / opinions**(e.g. state opinions/beliefs)
- ☐ Elaborating(develop meanings, envisage follow-up)
- ☐ Coordinating
- ☐ Summarizing

Group building and maintenance roles

❑ Encouraging – **friendly, responsive to others, praising, agreeing, accepting**

❑ Gatekeeping – **give all a chance to be heard**

❑ Standard setting – **expressing standards for group to use**

❑ Following – **accepting others' ideas**

❑ Expressing group feeling

Group task and maintenance roles

- Evaluating – **compare group decisions, measure accomplishments against goals**

- Diagnosing – **determine sources of difficulty, analyze main blocks to progress**

- Testing for consensus

- Mediating – **harmonizing, conciliating differences**

- Relieving tension – **draining off negative feeling, putting tense situation in a wider context**

Non-functional behaviour

- ❑ Being aggressive
- ❑ Blocking
- ❑ Self-confessing
- ❑ Competing
- ❑ Seeking sympathy
- ❑ Special pleading
- ❑ Horsing around
- ❑ Seeking recognition
- ❑ Withdrawal