Understanding Groups

- Group
  - Two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve specific goals.
  - Formal groups
    - ❖ Work groups defined by the organization's structure that have designated work assignments and tasks.
      - – Appropriate behaviors are defined by and directed toward organizational goals.
  - Informal groups
    - ❖ Groups that are independently formed to meet the social needs of their members.

Exhibit 15–1   Examples of Formal Groups

- Command Groups

  - Groups that are determined by the organization chart and composed of individuals who report directly to a given manager.

- Task Groups

  - Groups composed of individuals brought together to complete a specific job task; their existence is often temporary because once the task is completed, the group disbands.

Exhibit 15–1   Examples of Formal Groups (cont'd)

- Cross-Functional Teams

   Groups that bring together the knowledge and skills of individuals from various work areas or groups whose members have been trained to do each others' jobs.

- Self-Managed Teams

   Groups that are essentially independent and in addition to their own tasks, take on traditional responsibilities such as hiring, planning and scheduling, and performance evaluations.

Stages in Group Development

- **Forming**
  - Members join and begin the process of defining the group's purpose, structure, and leadership.

- **Storming**
  - Intragroup conflict occurs as individuals resist control by the group and disagree over leadership.

- **Norming**
  - Close relationships develop as the group becomes cohesive and establishes its norms for acceptable behavior.

- **Performing**
  - A fully functional group structure allows the group to focus on performing the task at hand.

- **Adjourning**
  - The group prepares to disband and is no longer concerned with high levels of performance.

Exhibit 15–2   Stages of Group Development

Prestage 1

Stage I
Forming

Stage II
Storming

Stage III
Norming
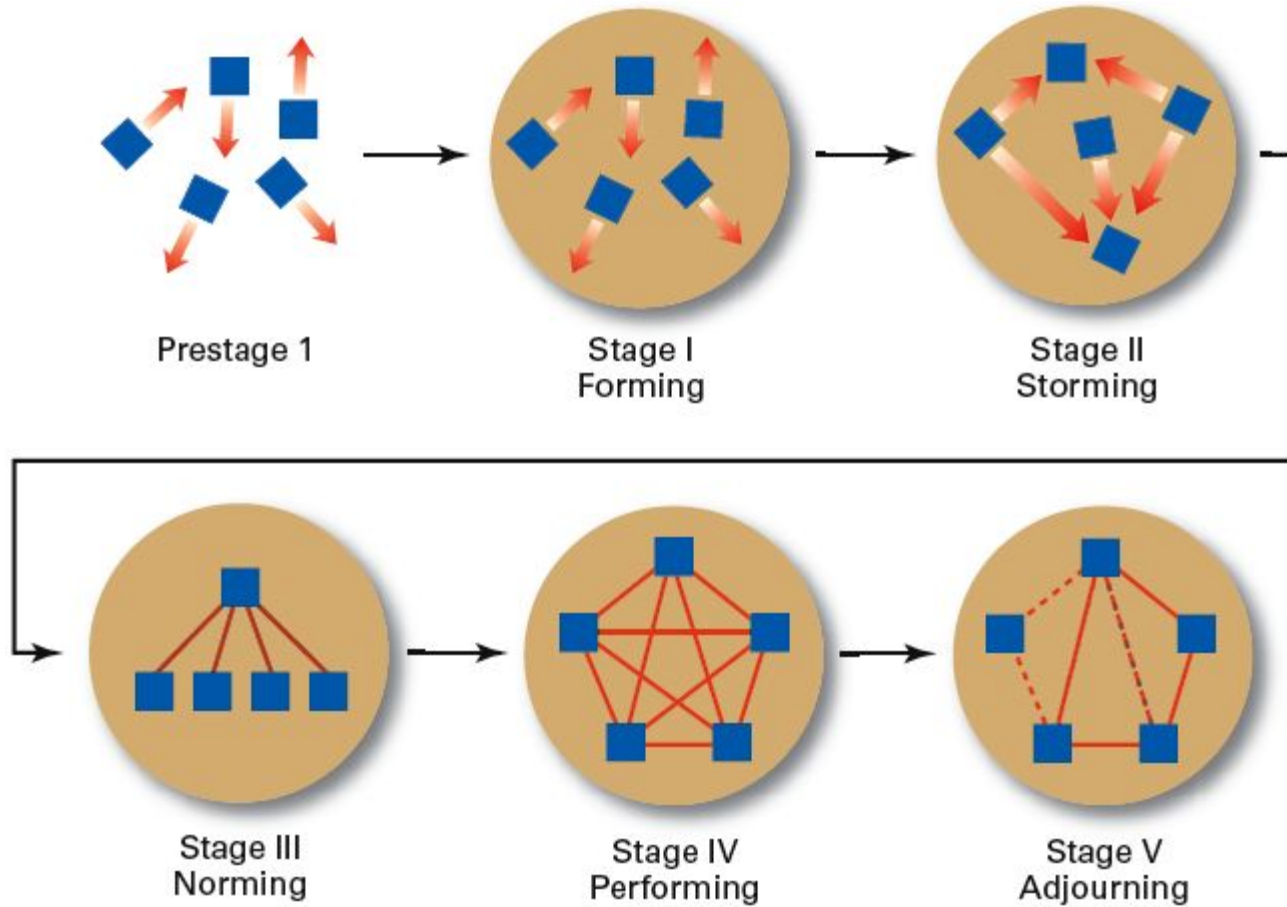
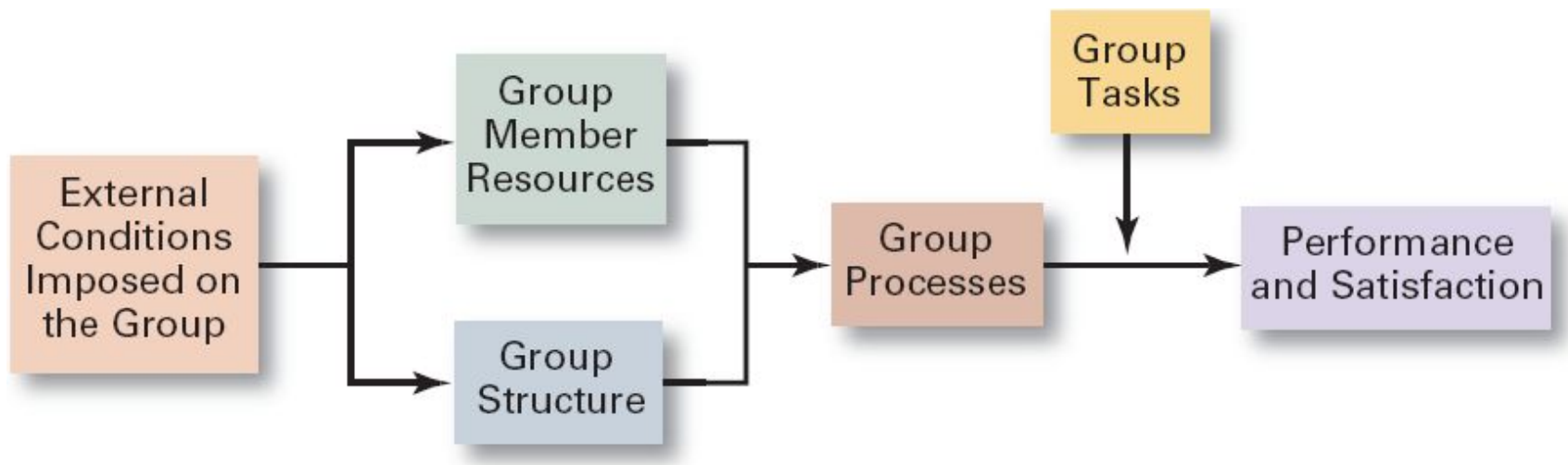Stage IV
Performing

Stage V
Adjourning

Exhibit 15–3   Group Behavior Model

Work Group Behavior

- Internal Variables Affecting Group Behavior

  - The individual abilities of the group's members

  - The size of the group

  - The level of conflict

  - The internal pressures on members to conform to the group's norms

Conditions Affecting Group Behavior

- External (Organizational) Conditions
  - Overall strategy
  - Authority structures
  - Formal regulations
  - Available organizational resources
  - Employee selection criteria
  - Performance management (appraisal) system
  - Organizational culture
  - General physical layout

- Internal Group Variables
  - Individual competencies and traits of members
  - Group structure
  - Size of the group
  - Cohesiveness and the level of intragroup conflict
  - Internal pressures on members to conform o the group's norms

Group Structure

- Role

  ☐ The set of expected behavior patterns attributed to someone who occupies a given position in a social unit that assist the group in task accomplishment or maintaining group member satisfaction.

  ☐ Role conflict: experiencing differing role expectations

  ☐ Role ambiguity: uncertainty about role expectations

Group Structure (cont'd)

- Norms
    - Acceptable standards or expectations that are shared by the group's members.

- Common types of norms
    - Effort and performance
        - ❖ Output levels, absenteeism, promptness, socializing
    - Dress
    - Loyalty

Group Structure (cont'd)

- Conformity
  - Individuals conform in order to be accepted by groups.
  - Group pressures can have an effect on an individual member's judgment and attitudes.
  - The effect of conformity is not as strong as it once was, although still a powerful force.
  - **Groupthink**
    - ❖ The extensive pressure of others in a strongly cohesive or threatened group that causes individual members to change their opinions to conform to that of the group.

Group Structure (cont'd)

- Status System

  ◻ The formal or informal prestige grading, position, or ranking system for members of a group that serves as recognition for individual contributions to the group and as a behavioral motivator.

    ❖ Formal status systems are effective when the perceived ranking of an individual and the status symbols accorded that individual are congruent.

Group Structure: Group Size
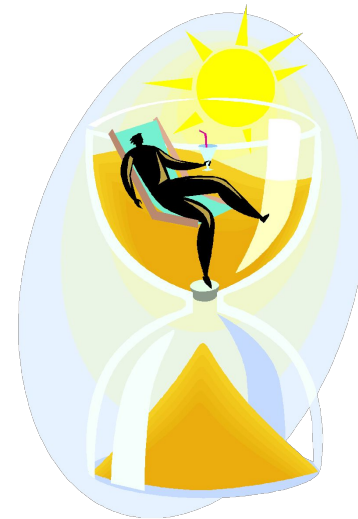
- **Small groups**
  - Complete tasks faster than larger groups.
  - Make more effective use of facts.

- **Large groups**
  - Solve problems better than small groups.
  - Are good for getting diverse input.
  - Are more effective in fact-finding.

- **Social Loafing**
  - The tendency for individuals to expend less effort when working collectively than when work individually.

Group Structure (cont'd)

- Group Cohesiveness
  - The degree to which members are attracted to a group and share the group's goals.
    - ❖ Highly cohesive groups are more effective and productive than less cohesive groups when their goals aligned with organizational goals.

Exhibit 15–5 The Relationship Between Cohesiveness and Productivity

		Cohesiveness	
		High	**Low**
Alignment of Group and Organizational Goals	**High**	Strong Increase in Productivity	Moderate Increase in Productivity
	Low	Decrease in Productivity	No Significant Effect on Productivity

Group Processes: Group Decision Making

- **Advantages**
  - ❑ Generates more complete information and knowledge.
  - ❑ Generates more diverse alternatives.
  - ❑ Increases acceptance of a solution.
  - ❑ Increases legitimacy of decision.

- **Disadvantages**
  - ❑ Time consuming
  - ❑ Minority domination
  - ❑ Pressures to conform
  - ❑ Ambiguous responsibility

Exhibit 15–6   Group versus Individual Decision Making

Criteria of Effectiveness	Groups	Individuals
Accuracy	✔	
Speed	✔	
Creativity	✔	
Degree of acceptance		✔
Efficiency		✔

Group Processes: Conflict Management

- Conflict

  □ The perceived incompatible differences in a group resulting in some form of interference with or opposition to its assigned tasks.

  ❖ **Traditional view:** conflict must be avoided.

  ❖ **Human relations view:** conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group.

  ❖ **Interactionist view:** conflict can be a positive force and is absolutely necessary for effective group performance.

Group Processes: Conflict Management (cont'd)

- Categories of Conflict

  - Functional conflicts are constructive.

 - Dysfunctional conflicts are destructive.

- Types of Conflict

  - Task conflict: content and goals of the work

  - Relationship conflict: interpersonal relationships

  - Process conflict: how the work gets done

Group Processes: Conflict Management (cont'd)

- Techniques to Reduce Conflict:

  - Avoidance

  - Accommodation

  - Forcing

  - Compromise

  - Collaboration

Exhibit 15–9   Conflict-Management Techniques
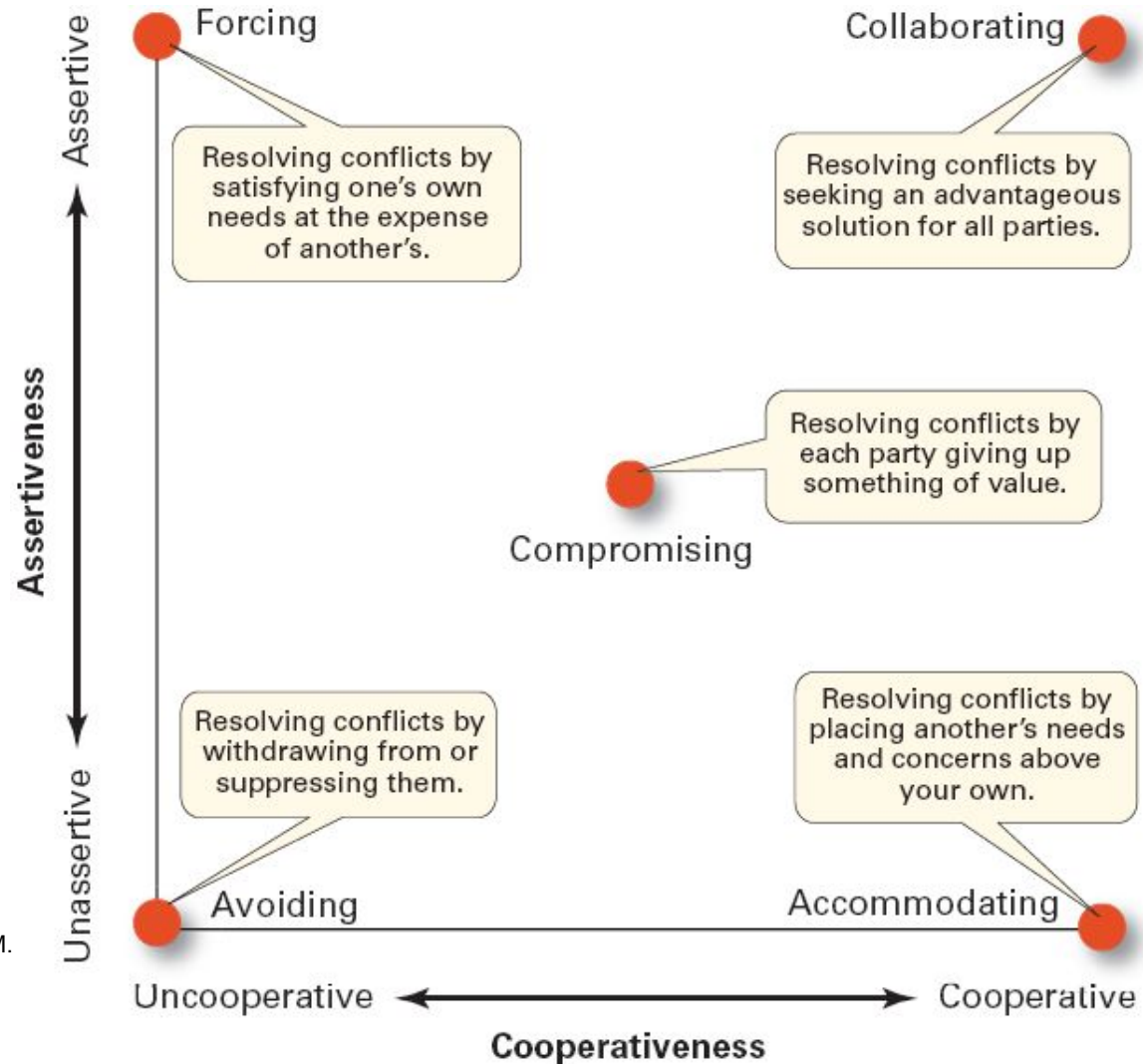
Source: Adapted from K.W. Thomas, "Conflict and Negotiation Processes in Organizations," in M.D. Dunnette and L.M. Hough (eds.) *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 3, 2d ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1992), p. 668. With permission

Group Tasks and Group Effectiveness

- Highly complex and interdependent tasks require:

  - Effective communications: discussion among group members.

  - Controlled conflict: More interaction among group members.

What Is a Team?

- Work Team
  - A group whose members work intensely on a specific common goal using their positive synergy, individual and mutual accountability, and complementary skills.

- Types of Teams
  - Problem-solving teams
  - Self-managed work teams
  - Cross-functional teams
  - Virtual teams

Exhibit 15–10   Groups versus Teams

Work Group	Team
• Strong, clearly focused leader	• Shared leadership roles
• Individual accountability	• Individual and mutual accountability
• The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission	• Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers
• Individual work products	• Collective work products
• Runs efficient meetings	• Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings
• Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (such as financial performance of the business)	• Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products
• Discusses, decides, and delegates together	• Discusses, decides, and does real work

Types of Teams

- Problem-solving Teams

  - Employees from the same department and functional area who are involved in efforts to improve work activities or to solve specific problems.

- Self-managed Work Teams

  - A formal group of employees who operate without a manager and responsible for a complete work process or segment.

Types of Teams (cont'd)

- Cross-functional Teams

  - A hybrid grouping of individuals who are experts in various specialties and who work together on various tasks.

- Virtual Teams

  - Teams that use computer technology to link physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal.

Advantages of Using Teams

- Teams outperform individuals.

- Teams provide a way to better use employee talents.

- Teams are more flexible and responsive.

- Teams can be quickly assembled, deployed, refocused, and disbanded.

Exhibit 15–11   Characteristics of Effective Teams

Characteristics of Effective Teams

- Have a clear understanding of their goals.
- Have competent members with relevant technical and interpersonal skills.
- Exhibit high mutual trust in the character and integrity of their members.
- Are unified in their commitment to team goals.
- Have good communication systems.
- Possess effective negotiating skills
- Have appropriate leadership
- Have both internally and externally supportive environments

Current Challenges in Managing Teams

- Getting employees to:
  - Cooperate with others
  - Share information
  - Confront differences
  - Sublimate personal interest for the greater good of the team

Managing Global Teams

- Group Member Resources
  - Unique cultural characteristics of team members
  - Avoiding stereotyping

- Group Structure
  - Conformity—less groupthink
  - Status—varies in importance among cultures
  - Social loafing—predominately a Western bias
  - Cohesiveness—more difficult to achieve

- Group processes—capitalize on diverse ideas

- Manager's role—a communicator sensitive to the type of globe team to use.

Exhibit 15–12   Drawbacks and Benefits of Global Teams

Drawbacks	Benefits
• Dislike team members	• Greater diversity of ideas
• Mistrust team members	• Limited groupthink
• Stereotyping	• Increased attention on understanding others' ideas, perspectives, etc.
• Communication problems	
• Stress and tension	

Understanding Social Networks

- Social Network
  - The patterns of informal connections among individuals within groups

- The Importance of Social Networks
  - Relationships can help or hinder team effectiveness
  - Relationships improve team goal attainment and increase member commitment to the team.