Group Communication –
Collaboration and Teamwork

EAC594

Week 2

Agenda

- Chapter 9: Collaboration and Teamwork
  - Unit 29: Teamwork
  - Unit 30: Conflict Resolution Strategies
  - Unit 31: Group Meetings and Web Conferencing

- Assignment Reminder: Professional Biography

"Collaboration and Teams

Understand the importance of teamwork in today's digital-era workplace

- Working with Teams
- Conflict resolution
- Leveraging technology for improved communication

Chapter 9: Review

Collaboration and Teamwork

Adding Value to Professional Teams

What do digital-age employers expect?

- Independence + Inter-dependence

- Education and experience

- **Hard skills:** Technical expertise in your field

- **Soft skills:** Communication and interpersonal abilities

Reality Check: Beyond Your Formal Degree

Knowledge workers need soft skills:

- Oral and written communication skills

- Active listening

- Proper business etiquette

- Appropriate nonverbal behavior

- Efficient and productive teamwork

6

Why Form Teams?

- Better decisions
- Increased productivity
- Improved employee morale
- Faster response
- Less resistance to change
- Reduced risks
- Greater **buy-in** (support and cooperation)

Why Form Teams?

They are effective in achieving **goals** – especially when the goals are clear.

Types of Teams

1. Cross-functional
2. Task forces
3. Virtual
4. Self-managed

Types of Teams

1. **Cross-functional**

    - Members from across the different functional areas of an organization.
    - Permanent or long-standing teams
    - Used to implement new solutions
    - Established to review and make recommendations on potential acquisitions or mergers.

Types of Teams

2. Task Forces

- Group or committee of experts or specialists
- Formed for analyzing, investigating, or solving a specific problem
- The goal of a task force is to offer solutions, support, and create preventive measures for issues.

Types of Teams

3. Virtual Teams

- Working together with a common purpose but from different locations.
- May overlap with other team
- Advantage - low cost, both in time and money
- Challenge - working across cultures; working with very different leadership styles and decision-making processes.

12

Types of Teams

4. Self-managed Teams

- Responsible for all or most aspects of producing a product or delivering a service.
- Supporting tasks - planning and scheduling;
- Human resource tasks - managing absences
- Autonomy - greater ownership of the jobs
- Accountability; great motivator
- Greater commitment - directly responsible for its results

13

Advantages of Teams

- Improves **motivation**

- Improves **efficiency**

Disadvantages of Teams

- Bad leadership

- Lack of focus

- Dominant (wrong mix of) personalities

- Poor communication

- Groupthink

- Social loafing

15

Disadvantages of Teams

Bad leadership

- Know it all attitude
- Micromanagement and Failure to Relinquish Control
- Lack of ambition/vision
- Poor communication
- No adaptability
- Setting Unrealistic Expectations
- Avoiding Conflict
- Rejecting Any Perspectives that Don't Align with Your Own (Confirmation Bias)
- Playing Loosely with Ethics

16

Disadvantages of Teams

Dominant Personalities

- exhibit arrogance, superiority, and conceit
- have higher-than-average levels of aggressive, disagreeable, manipulative personality traits
- **Do as I say, not as I do.**
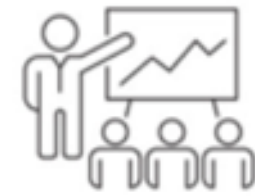
Disadvantages of Teams

Groupthink

- Accept a viewpoint that represents a perceived group consensus, whether or not the group members believe it to be valid, correct, or optimal.
- Groupthink reduces the efficiency of collective problem
- Leads to bad decisions because of group behaviours, biases, and pressures

Combating Groupthink

1. Striving for diversity in age, gender, experience, and training
2. Encouraging open discussion
3. Searching for relevant information
4. Evaluating many alternatives
5. Considering how a decision will be implemented

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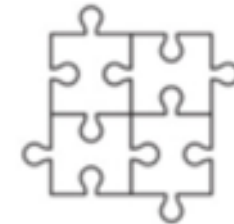
Disadvantages of Teams

Social loafing

- Psychological phenomenon that team members do less in a group setting
- People put less effort when working collectively as part of a group
- Individuals don't pull their own weight when they're judged as part of a group
- Detrimental in workplaces - lead to reduced productivity.

Disadvantages of Teams

4 steps to fix Social loafing

The problem isn't social loafing—it's clarity

1. Identify who's doing what by when
2. Coordinate work in one centralized tool
3. Reduce work about work - *60% of time on work about work, like chasing approvals, searching for documents, or attending status meetings.*
4. Connect daily work to company objectives

Reporting Structures

- Assist employees in understanding whom to approach when they are facing a challenge.

- Employees can understand different aspects of a business such as communication, decision channels and the interrelationship of positions.

- Clear reporting structures help employees understand how to observe protocol.

Reporting Structures

1. Traditional vertical reporting structure

2. Functional reporting structure

3. Divisional or product reporting structure

4. Line-and-staff reporting structure

5. Flat reporting structure

Reporting Structures

All teams need reporting structures...
Why?

- Creates **positive** information flow

- Avoids information **overload**

Positive Group Roles

Role	Actions
Initiator-coordinator	Suggests new ideas or new ways of looking at the problem
Elaborator	Builds on ideas and provides examples
Coordinator	Brings ideas, information, and suggestions together
Evaluator-critic	Evaluates ideas and provides constructive criticism
Recorder	Records ideas, examples, suggestions, and critiques
Comic relief	Uses humour to keep the team happy

Negative Group Roles

Role	Actions
Dominator	Dominates discussion so others can't take their turn
Recognition seeker	Seeks attention by relating the discussion to their actions
Special-interest pleader	Relates discussion to special interests or personal agenda
Blocker	Blocks attempts at consensus consistently
Slacker	Does little-to-no work, forcing others to pick up the slack
Joker or clown	Seeks attention through humour and distracting members

Identifying Positive and Negative Team Behavior

Always take a moment to reflect on your latest work session and ask if the behaviours that you and others exhibited belonged in either the positive or negative category

Team Problem Solving

1. Define the problem
2. Analyze the problem
3. Establish criteria for a successful resolution to the problem
4. Consider possible solutions
5. Decide on a solution or a select combination of solutions
6. Implement the solution(s)
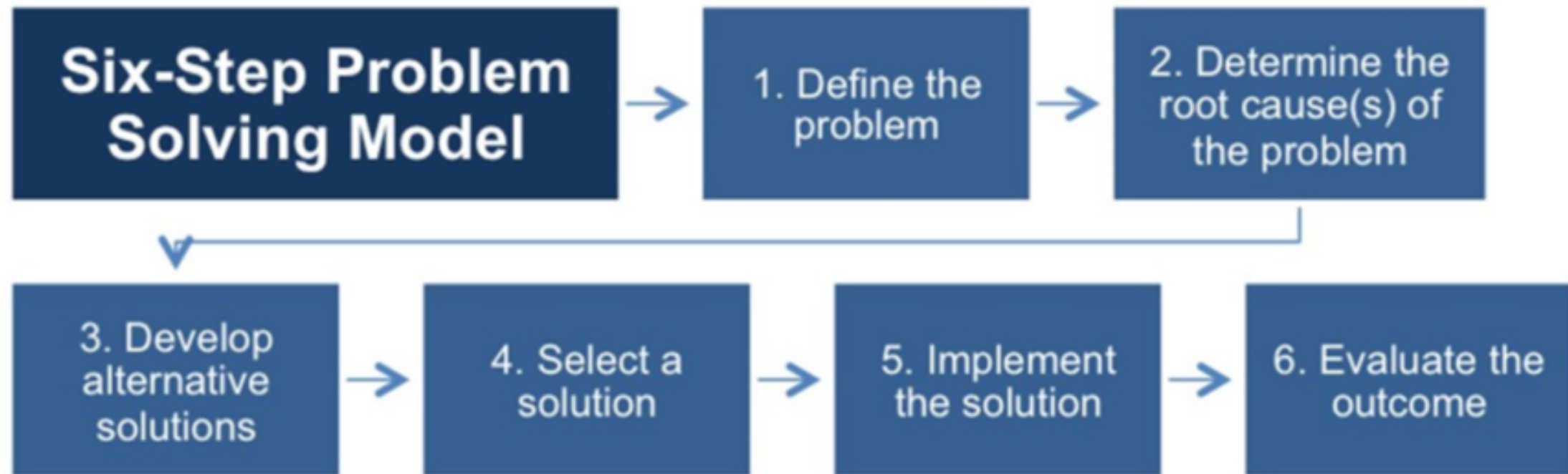7. Follow up on the solution(s)

Team Problem Solving

Figure 29.3: An illustration of the six steps to solving group problems (Free Management e-books, n.d.).

Conflict Resolution Strategies

$359 billion in paid hours or the equivalent of 385 million working days are lost each year to workplace conflict.

—Workplace Conflict and How Businesses Can Harness It to Thrive

Figure 30.1: Workplace conflict can be very costly (Short, 2016).

Common Causes

TOP THREE COMMON CAUSES OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT

49 percentage of conflict caused by WARRING EGOS

34 percentage of conflict caused by WORKPLACE STRESS

33 percentage of conflict caused by HEAVY WORKLOADS

Figure 30.2: Research on workplace conflict indicate the issues that fall within the affective issues area of conflict make up the largest percentage of workplace conflict (Short, 2016).

Five conflict resolution strategies

- **Competitive Style** (Win/Lose)

- **Collaboration** (Win/Win)

- **Compromise** (½ win, ½ lose)

- **Accommodate** (Lose/Win)

- **Avoidant**

Conflict Management Skills

- **Confront and Problem Solve**

- **Reframing**

- **Appeal to Third Party**

- **Negotiation**

  - *Conflicts are inevitable, but not dysfunctional.*

  - *Understand your conflict management style*

  - *Possess some conflict resolution skills*

Resolving Conflicts

Exercises

Exercises

1. Write a description of a situation you recall where you came into conflict with someone else. It may be something that happened years ago or a current issue that just arose. **Using the principles and strategies in this section, describe how the conflict was resolved or could have been resolved.**

2. Can you think of a time when a conflict led to a new opportunity, better understanding, or other positive results? If not, think of a past conflict and imagine a positive outcome. **Describe what happened, or what you imagine could happen**.

Collaborating in Virtual Teams

- Collaborate with co-workers in other cities and countries
- Coordinate tasks across time and geographic zones
- Accomplish shared tasks without face-to-face contact
- Participate and collaborate locally
- Pool expertise from various, diverse contributors

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Why are meetings important for your career growth?

Meetings are opportunities to demonstrate **leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.**

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Planning and Participating in Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings

Meet only when the topic demands a rich medium, because it is important and requires an exchange of ideas.

- Invite the right people.
- Use a digital calendar for scheduling.
- Distribute an agenda.
- Train participants on technology.

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Planning and Participating in Face-to-Face and Virtual Meetings

Running the Meeting

- Start on time and introduce the agenda.
- Appoint a recorder.
- Encourage participation.
- Confront conflict frankly.
- Summarize along the way.

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Whatever You Use

Always ask:

- What is **purpose** of communication?

- Who is my **audience**?

- What do I need to **show or talk** through?

When is team writing necessary?

- Projects are larger than one person can handle

- Projects have short deadlines

- Require the expertise or consensus of many people

Source: https://www.vectorstock.com/

41

How to Edit Team Writing Without Making Enemies

- What can you praise?

- Did you understand the purpose?

- Is the material well organized?

- What suggestions can you make to improve specifics?

Make polite statements such as:

- I would suggest…
- You might consider…
- How about doing this…

Source: https://www.vectorstock.com/

42

Collaborative Writing Tools

- Microsoft Word (track changes and compare documents)

- Google docs; Teams (allows for multi-user use)

- Dropbox, OneDrive (file storage and retention)

Review

1. Name the **four types of teams** commonly found in organizations?

2. Identify an **advantage** and **disadvantage** of workplace teams

3. **True or False:** Reporting structures create more work.

4. What are the different roles on a workplace team?

5. List the seven steps to solving a team problems?

6. What are the four ways groups come to a decision?

7. Name a common team-based communication tool used in the workplace

Weekly Inspiration

NONE OF US IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US

KEN BLANCHARD

https://www.goalcast.com/