

# **Group Behavior and Conflict**

# Agenda

- Characteristics of Group Behavior
- Factors that affect group performance
- Sources of conflict in a team
- Understanding the nature of conflict and resolution
- Two big disadvantages of groups in context of organizational culture

# Groups and Teams

- interdependent and interacting individuals who come together to achieve specific goals.
- have complementary skills
- Groups can also be informal, which are generally social groups and form naturally within formal groups.

# Attributes of Effective Teamwork

**Commitment to team success and shared goals:** all mobilized towards a common goal

**Interdependence:** seamless sharing of resources

**Interpersonal Skills :** trust and effective communication

**Appropriate team composition:** complementary skills being put to “best” use possible

# Advantages

Group serves the purpose of

- Information exchange
- Diversity
- Social Exchange
- Cohesiveness

# Advantages

A note on social exchange in groups:

Social exchange comes in the form of group rewards as follows:

**Group Rewards:** sometimes affiliation, identification, emotional support and proximity (this is also **information exchange** that can enable some help or assistance for you) are rewards.

# Factors that affect group performance

Some aspects of groups that create cutting-edge human performance are as follows:

**Group cohesiveness** : can improve productivity, efficiency, decision quality, member satisfaction and interaction. This is the “glue” that will make more possible with less resources!

**Group Homogeneity**: Somewhere between completely homogeneous and completely heterogeneous (what we label as slightly heterogeneous groups) is where the sweet spot of good performance is

# Factors that affect group performance

Some aspects of groups that create cutting-edge human performance are as follows:

**Group stability:** groups in which members remain for long periods of time are more cohesive and perform better than groups that have high turnover

**Outside Pressure:** Groups that are pressured by outside forces also tend to become highly cohesive.



# Factors that affect group performance

Response to outside pressure can be explained by the phenomenon of **psychological reactance**. When we believe that someone is trying to intentionally influence us to take some particular action, we often react by doing the opposite. In doing so, group “overcomes” trust issues and becomes more cohesive (or disintegrated!)

# Factors that affect group performance

**Group Size:** Ideally, the smaller the group, the better is their cohesiveness and performance.

The "magic number" is  $\sim 5^*$  – beyond which we start seeing the **bystander effect** and **social loafing** happening in the group

Therefore, large groups have to be divided into smaller groups to optimize performance (eg., a large org will have different teams/sub-groups)

# Factors that affect group performance

**Bystander effect:** A phenomenon where people are less likely to help someone in need when others are present. This can occur when people witness crimes, violence, or bullying. Here, **diffusion of responsibility** is taking place and we witness that individuals stop holding themselves accountable for outcomes.

**Social Loafing:** It's what happens when someone puts in less effort when they're judged as part of a group.

# Factors that affect group performance

Phenomena such as social loafing and bystander effect are a given. Knowing this, group performance is optimized when:

**Conjunctive tasks** are those for which the group's performance depends on the least effective group member

**Disjunctive tasks** are those for which the group's performance is based on the most talented group member. Examples of disjunctive tasks include problem solving, brainstorming

# Factors that affect group performance

**Group Status:** A group can be made more cohesive by increasing group status. The group does not actually have to have high status, but it is important that its members believe they have high status

One way leaders can increase their group's status is by increasing the perception that the group is difficult to join but that, once in, members will find that the group's activities are special and sets them apart (whether the task is conjunctive or disjunctive- the perception is that something uber-special is going on!)

# Factors that affect group performance

**Group Communication:** A good leader carefully chooses the communication network that best facilitates the goals of his group.

This needs to be one of the earliest to-dos when we get to know/build a team- what is the right way to communicate with the leader + each other!

In the absence of this, ambiguity takes over and the performance will drop.

# Why do issues crop up in teams?

The psychological reason is

## Group facilitation vs inhibition

Social facilitation involves the positive effects of the presence of others on an individual's behavior; social inhibition involves the negative effects of others' presence

# Why do issues crop up in teams?

The effect on behavior when two or more people are performing the same task in the presence of one another is called **coaction**.

The phenomenon of audience effects takes place when a group of people passively watch an individual. This is also called **Hawthorne effect**.



# Why do issues crop up in teams?

The first explanation holds that the mere presence of others naturally produces arousal, activating **comparison** and **evaluation apprehension**

Comparison and evaluation apprehension creates social inhibition- that stops us from putting in our best or sabotaging others' performance

# What issues can crop up in a team?

- Excessive meeting requirements (time based conflict)
- Lack of empowerment – have low decision latitude
- Lack of skill (eg., communication, problem solving)
- Distrust of the team process
- Unclear objectives

# Disadvantages

- **Groupthink**

Impaired decision-making at very high levels of management and describes a desire for unanimity

- This typically results in not thinking through the pros and cons, studying all possible alternatives, and not showing dissent, just to maintain conformity, bonds and cohesiveness in the group
- Because of this, we also fail to import an expert opinion, and we are largely closed to opinions/options

# Disadvantages

- **Social Loafing**

People work less efficiently when working on additive tasks sometimes because responsibility/accountability gets diffused.

Individuals use less effort in performing tasks if their contribution is hard to measure or detect.

# Discussion: How to?

**Build effective work relationships**

(Human competencies > Individual competencies)

# The Main Job!

- Managing often unending, conflicting, ambiguous demands of everyone in the team 😊
- Make decisions that are in line with what the organization needs (in the interest of the organization).
- Managers (especially senior managers + executives) can implement their agendas only by building effective work networks

# Explore

Cooperation vs Compliance (understanding how we react to power- explore your idea of power and how you express it)

Assess your network: whom are you dealing with- how are they different from you?

Best way to assess relationships: Assess the response of those around you. What can you improve/cultivate?

# Three Markers of a Good Work Relationship

- Mutual expectations (performance, goals, priorities)
- Mutual Trust (holding space/allowing/guiding vs directing)
- Mutual Influence (to what extent we can inspire – effortlessness 😊)

These are not quick goals, but relationship building must start regardless, even when we don't "need" anything in the short term.



# How to : Balance Inquiry and Advocacy

## When **Advocating**:

- Make your reasoning clear
- Encourage others to contribute, especially with differing thoughts and engage with their thought process

## When **Inquiring**: (remember you don't have any access to their brains, and you can't read their mind)

- State your assumptions and mention that they are "assumptions"
- Ask questions with a genuine interest in knowing their responses