

MGNT102 Business Communication

Topic 9: Team communication

Topics covered

- Drivers of team performance and the characteristics associated with team excellence
- Differentiate between project teams, self-managed work teams, hot groups, cross-functional teams and virtual teams
- Explain the dynamics of roles and norms in groups
- Describe the five stages of group development
- Identify factors that influence team performance
- Explain the communication processes that enable teams to function effectively

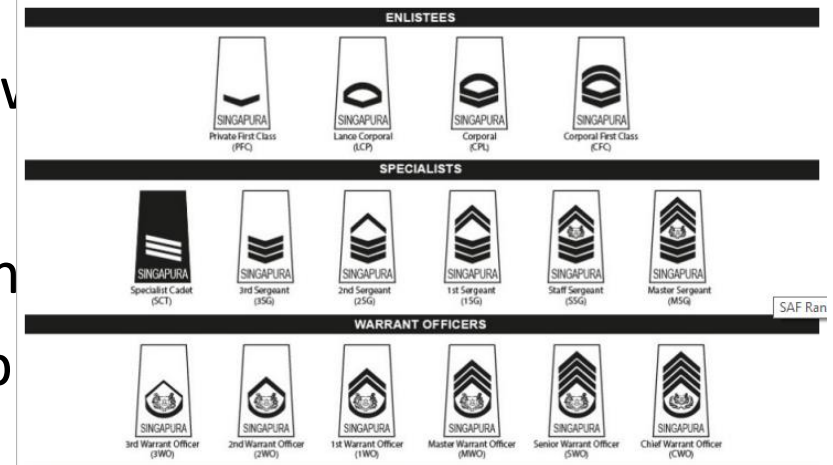
Nature of Teams



- Teams are essential
- Advantages of teams:
 - Productivity
 - Accuracy
 - Greater commitment
 - Greater enthusiasm

Formal and informal groups

- Two major categories of team or group
- A formal group
 - established by management
 - regulated through formal processes
- An informal group
 - not formally established within organisational structure
 - meets regularly about work
 - communicates through informal channels



Effective team performance

A group or team in an organisation consists of two or more people who work together to fulfill a particular task or to achieve a goal

- A team's role is to:
 - make decisions
 - make plans
 - achieve goals
 - reflect on and assess its own performance
 - review and revise plans



Effective team performance

Four necessary features

- Clear roles and accountability
- Effective communication system
- Performance monitoring and feedback
- Sound judgment & decision making



Characteristics of team excellence

- Clear & inspiring shared goals
- Results-driven structure
- Competent team members
- Unified commitment
- Collaborative climate
- Standards of excellence
- External support & recognition
- Principled leadership



Table 9.2: Critical success factors for self-managed teams

<i>Success factor</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1 Clear, engaging direction	Gives a sense of why the group exists and what it is trying to accomplish
2 A real team task	Requires the members to work together to complete significant tasks
3 Rewards for team excellence	Distribute at least 80% of rewards equally among team members: rewards that are 50/50 individual/group are associated with the lowest team performance
4 Basic material resources	Meet the team's needs for physical materials such as tools, meeting space, access to computing service
5 Authority to manage work	Allows the team and not the leader to make the decisions over basic work strategies
6 Team goals	Enhance team performance, but goals have to be aligned with the team's overall direction, provide a challenge and be completed by a specified deadline
7 Team norms that promote strategic thinking	Through informal rules, guide team members' behaviour in a way that gives an outward focus and an awareness of their environment

Source: Adapted from R. Wageman, 'Critical success factors for creating superb self-managing teams', *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 26, Issue 1, Summer 1997, pp. 49–62. © 1969, Reproduced with permission of Elsevier Science.

Types of work teams

- Project teams
 - Members are chosen because their backgrounds and experiences are directly useful to the team's purpose
- Self-managed work teams
 - Autonomous
 - Have the independence and discretion to determine the procedures and carry out the team's activities
 - Semi-autonomous
 - Have less freedom and discretion but still have high level of control over their work
- Hot groups (speed, flexibility, creativity)
 - Shares an attitude dedicated to the task
 - Goal-focused, with impassioned managers and employees who are creative
 - Get thing done quickly
- Cross-functional teams
 - Team members are experts in several specialities
 - Members have complementary skills, knowledge and experience
- Virtual teams
 - Specialists from different functional areas
 - Communicate remotely through communication technologies
 - E.g. global organisations, geographically dispersed team members

Virtual teams

- Physically dispersed
- Information technology
 - Synchronous
 - Asynchronous
- Unique competencies
- Integration to create value
- Quality communication
 - Familiarity
 - Relationships
 - Trust
- Shared understanding of goals, work, group processes



Stages of group development

- Forming Orientation phase
- Storming Conflict phase
- Norming Emergence phase
- Performing Reinforcement
- Adjourning Disbanding phase



Stages of group development

1. Forming

- Getting to know you, ice-breaking stage
- Attempt to identify what tasks they should be working on
- Begin to develop a sense of the group's independence
- Task (job-oriented) and socio-emotional (interpersonal) roles may be unclear



Stages of group development

2. Storming

- Conflicts over leadership, control and influence — ‘who’s in charge?’
- Misunderstandings about:
 - Role and style behaviour and norms
 - Conflicting goals
 - Poor feedback and listening
 - Ineffective group decision-making
 - Problem-solving processes



Stages of group development

3. Norming

- Formal and informal norms emerge
- Cohesion begins to develop
- Opinions are now stated more readily and are received in a less defensive manner



Stages of group development

4. Performing

- Balance of rules (norms) and roles emerge
- Synergy develops via positive role-playing
- Optimal mix of task (job-oriented) and socio-emotional (interpersonal) roles
- Destructive role-playing under control
- Begins to produce solutions to problems it is focusing on



Stages of group development

5. Adjourning

- Reaches closure on tasks
- Members may leave for a variety of reasons
- Destructive role-playing may become more prevalent



Stages of group development

- All groups – all five stages?
- No, because they may:
 - Be ‘immortal’
 - Move between different stages
 - Self-destruct before reaching stages 3–5
 - Have no storming phase at all

Ground rules

- Set expectations early
- Three elements
 - Processes
 - Norms
 - Task analysis and workload distribution
- Need to have good communication and interpersonal skills

Ground rules

1. Processes

- Ground rules to facilitate communication and reciprocal interactions among team members and other stakeholders; to establish communication channel (face-to-face, email, voice mail, text message, mobile, intranet), based on needs and processes, and to connect the work actions of team members.

2. Norms

- Ground rules about how decision will be made, how problems and conflict will be managed, how team members will be held accountable. Norms reflect the team's values.

3. Task analysis and workload distribution

- Task analysis and distribution of workload: ground rules about how tasks are assigned and workload distributed (according to members' roles, accountabilities and capabilities).

Interpersonal concerns

- There are three interpersonal concerns within groups:
 - inclusion
 - control
 - acceptance
- As the group moves through each stage in its development, these concerns usually develop in the above order

Roles people play

A role is an expected behaviour in a particular situation

- Task related roles
- Maintenance related roles
- Defensive roles
- Dysfunctional roles

Task-related roles

Task-related roles are the behaviours needed to focus on the specified goals to be completed as a group

Some task-related functions in a group are:

- briefing others in the group
- explaining and reporting to the group
- evaluation of performance, both of one's own self and of others
- initiation of processes, or finding new ways to view a problem
- leading and controlling by the leader

Maintenance-related roles

Maintenance-related roles are the behaviours needed to focus on people and relationships

These facilitate the group process by keeping the group together

Some maintenance-related functions in a group are:

- advising others
- counseling others
- harmonizing relationships by working to avoid conflict and to reduce tension

Defensive roles

Behaviours intended to protect the group from anxiety in situations when it is unable to function or perform effectively

Some defensive roles in a group are:

- playing the scapegoat to deflect group's feelings of failure or incompetence onto the person playing that role
- being the tension reliever, by cracking jokes or filling long silences with chatter

Defensive roles can help the group when tension needs to be broken

Dysfunctional roles

Dysfunctional roles are behaviours intended to distract the group from its purpose, or to inhibit the group's progress towards its goals

Some dysfunctional roles in a group are:

- Blocker – raises irrelevancies or obstacles
- Pessimist – expresses gloom and failure
- Aggressor – criticizes or blames others in a hostile manner
- Show-off, Attention-seeker, and Lobbyist

All these roles can disrupt the group's work with their own types of self-centered behaviour

Advantages and Disadvantages of groups

Advantages

- Synergy
- Diverse range of skills
- Wide range of alternatives, opinions, perceptions, ideas
- Participatory management style
 - Acceptance of decisions
- Increased morale, motivation
- Better risk management
- Faster, direct and more open communication

Disadvantages

- Social loafing
- Pressure towards conformity
- Group inertia, group think
- Low morale, motivation may allow group to be dominated
- Risk shifting – members avoid direct responsibility
- Slower decisions and actions
- Silo mentality

Group effectiveness (or not) is seen in...

- Synergy

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

- Social loafing

Free rider problem

- Combined effect from the interaction group is greater than the sum of their individual effects.
 - Leading to better-quality decision making and problem solving, and the generation of creative ideas and solutions
- Tendency of some group members to put in less effort because they believe their underperformance will not be noticed ('a free ride')
 - May slow down decision making and generate conservative, 'tried and safe' ideas and solutions

Effective Communication in Groups & Teams

Promote optimal level of cohesiveness



A group is more likely to be highly cohesive if members have similar values, attitudes and cultural background.

- Shared/compatible goals
- Progress toward goals
- Shared norms or values
- Minimal threat among members
- Interdependence
- Competition from outside group
- Shared group experiences

Eunson, 2012

“In a cohesive group, members obtain a high level of job **satisfaction** and feel they are **needed**. In a sense, they will not let other group members down”
(Dwyer 2016, p.227).



However, a cohesive group is also at the risk of the **‘Group think’** decision.

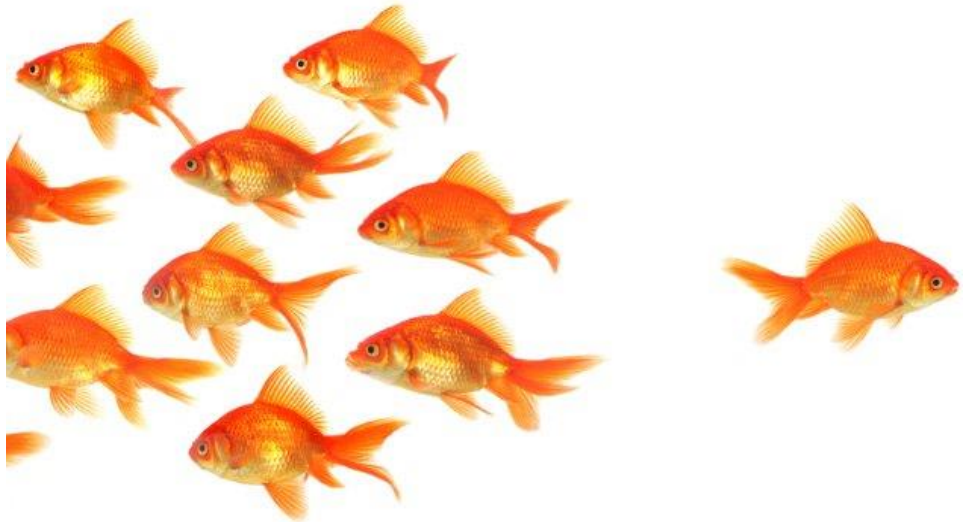
Groupthink

- Faulty decision making in a group (Janis 1971).
- Situation where no one in the group challenges the ideas of the group or wishes to be seen to be out of step with the rest of the groups.
- Group think impairs the group's performance because group members would rather make poor decisions than risk independent comments that could lead them being stereotyped as outside the group.



Groupthink

- Avoid excessive conformity
 - Risky shift
 - Cohesive groups most at risk



Groupthink - Symptoms

- Illusion of invulnerability
 - Creates excessive optimism that encourages taking extreme risks.
- Rationalisation
 - Members discount warnings and do not reconsider their assumptions.
- Belief in inherent morality
 - Members believe in the rightness of their cause and therefore ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.
- Stereotyping
 - Negative views of “enemy” make effective responses to conflict seem unnecessary.
- Direct pressure
 - Members are under pressure not to express arguments against any of the group’s views.
- Self-censorship
- Illusion of unanimity
 - agreement by all people involved; consensus
- Mind-guards
 - Members protect the group and the leader from information that is problematic or contradictory to the group’s cohesiveness, view, and/or decisions.

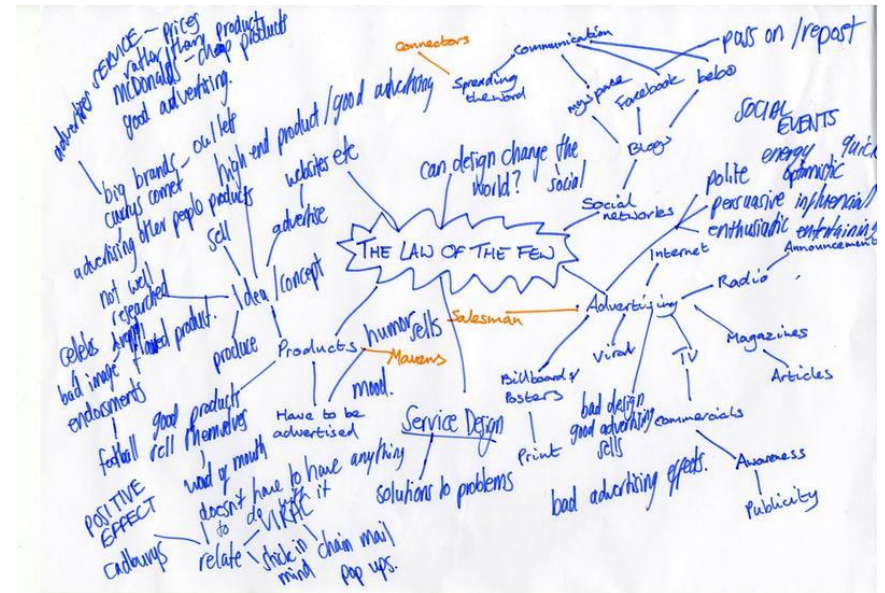


"That's unanimous then - we don't know what to do."

Groupthink - Cure

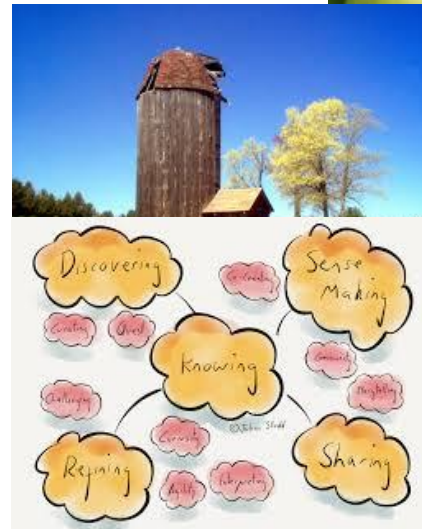
Encourage creativity

- Brainstorming
 - Rules of brainstorming
 - Avoid evaluation at first
 - Seek quantity of ideas
 - Seek new combinations
- Brainstorming Process
 - Generate possible solutions
 - Eliminate duplicate ideas
 - Evaluate ideas



Groupthink - Cure

- Examine alternatives
- Generate contingency plans
- Appoint devil's advocate
- Increase group size, heterogeneity
- Remove physical isolation
- Facilitate organisational graffiti
 - group members are encouraged to generate graffiti (sayings, slogans, pictures, symbols) so that organizational issues can be reflected in interesting and attention-getting ways



Eunson, 2012

Factors that affect a team

- Structure (influence on functioning) and size
- Leadership (quality)
- Members (skills and attitudes)
- Cohesiveness (shared values and attitudes)
- Climate (atmosphere of cohesiveness)
- Groupthink (no one in the group challenges ideas)
- Work group moods
- Leveraging diversity
- Environment (physical surroundings)

Effective Communication in Teams

- Recognize group and personal goals
 - Avoid hidden agendas
- Promote desirable norms
 - Establish norms early
 - Comply with established norms

Effective Communication in Teams

Communication practices

- Establish climate of trust
- Set goals and objectives
- Allocate tasks
- Balance between empowerment and accountability
- Monitor and follow up
- Evaluate and praise performance
- Deal with poor performance

Empowerment

- Empowerment is the key factor in the way a group works.
- Five key factors
 - Information sharing
 - Autonomy
 - Self-directed team members
 - Allowing members to be more self-directed
 - Explicit objectives
 - Ensuring the teams have explicit objectives
 - Accountability
 - Identifying and communicating

**Questions
Comments
Feedback**

Final Blog Post

Blog Post 4 - Case Study analysis

Samantha, a senior manager and union member, has requested an 8 percent raise for her department. Her request is based on recent financial reports showing that her team has significantly contributed to a 15 percent profit increase for the organization. Samantha believes her team should be rewarded for their dedication and long hours over the past few years to achieve this success.

Jason, the company's director, recognises the value of Samantha's team and fully acknowledges their accomplishments. However, he is aware that the company plans to expand and diversify, with most of the profit increase allocated to these initiatives for at least the next five years. Jason is open to discussing ways Samantha's team can contribute to the new project, which may offer opportunities such as overseas assignments, leadership roles, and potential promotions.

Despite this, Samantha remains firm in her stance that her team deserves a monetary raise and has even threatened to involve the union if her request is not approved.

Due 02/02/2025 6pm


Task:

1. Identify one conflict-handling style (accommodating/avoiding/competing/compromising/collaborating) evident in this scenario. Explain how you determined this.
2. Select one of the characters (Samantha or Jason) and analyse the bargaining approach (distributive or integrative) they are using. Justify your choice.
3. Discuss the aspect of interpersonal communication contributing to the tension in this situation. Provide examples from the case to support your analysis.
4. Using Hall's high- and low-context cultural framework, describe one character's behaviour and explain how this is reflected in their communication style.

Template submission on Moodle

- After completing (all posts) 4 weeks of posts and comments
- Fill up the template and submit it to Moodle
- Due 04/02/2024 6pm

Copy and paste all the text (only) over to the template for all your posts and comments. You only can submit ONE template



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MGSN192 Assignment 1

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Ms. Jessica Lee

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DECLARATION

We certify that this is entirely our own work, except where we have given fully documented references to the work of others, and that the material contained in this assignment has not previously been submitted for assessment in any formal course of study. We understand the definition and consequences of plagiarism.

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Student Signature: _____ (Print or sign name or type full name)

Text Entries only (images from WordPress are not required)

Blog Post 1

Blog post 1: [Insert Title] For example: Welcome to Jesslyn's Blog

Date posted: _____

Direct URL to this post: _____
Example <https://jesslynau.wordpress.com/2013/11/07/welcome-to-bcm110/>

Text entry (400 words): _____

Comments to 3 different classmates

Comment 1: [Insert Title] For example: My comment to Ruth Chua

Date posted: _____

Direct URL to this post: _____

Text entry (100 words): _____

Comment 2: [Insert Title] For example: My comment to David Sim

Date posted: _____

Direct URL to this post: _____

Text entry (100 words): _____

Comment 3: [Insert Title] For example: My comment to Jeremiah Tan

Date posted: _____

Direct URL to this post: _____

Text entry (100 words): _____

Blog Post 2

Blog post 2: [Insert Title] For example: Welcome to Jesslyn's Blog

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For Blog posts and
comments week
1 - 4

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Next Week

Effective meetings

Read chapter 10