

# Chapter 10

Robbins & Judge

**Organizational Behavior**

13th Edition

## *Understanding Work Teams*

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# Chapter Learning Objectives

- **After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**
  - Analyze the growing popularity of teams in organizations.
  - Contrast groups and teams.
  - Compare and contrast four types of teams.
  - Identify the characteristics of effective teams.
  - Show how organizations can create team players.
  - Decide when to use individuals instead of teams.
  - Show how our understanding of teams differs in a global context.

# Why Have Teams Become So Popular?

- Great way to use employee talents
- Teams are more flexible and responsive to changes in the environment
- Can quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and disband
- Facilitate employee involvement
- Increase employee participation in decision making
- Democratize an organization and increase motivation

▣ ***Note: teams are not ALWAYS effective***

# Differences between Groups and Teams

## □ Work Group

- A group that interacts primarily to share information and to make decisions to help each group member perform within his or her area of responsibility
- No joint effort required



## □ Work Team

- Generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. The individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs

# Comparing Work Groups and Work Teams

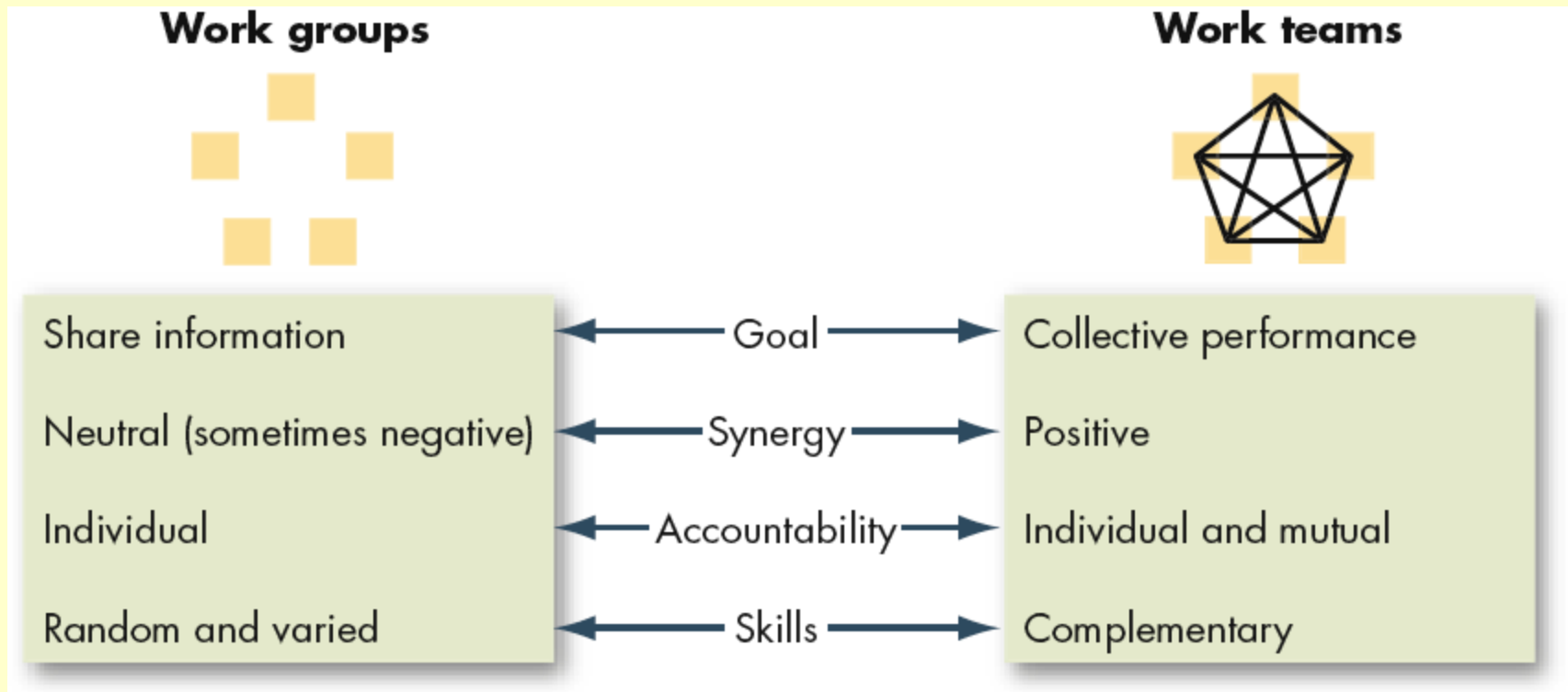
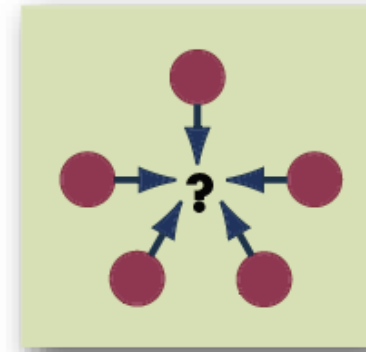


EXHIBIT 10-1

# Types of Teams

## □ Problem-Solving Teams

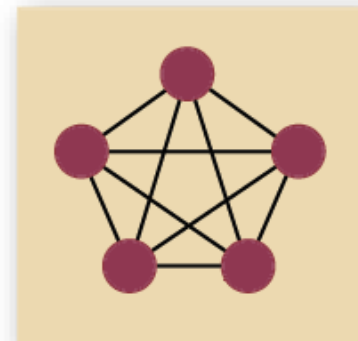
- Groups of 5 to 12 employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment



**Problem-solving**

## □ Self-Managed Work Teams

- Groups of 10 to 15 people who take on the responsibilities of their former supervisors



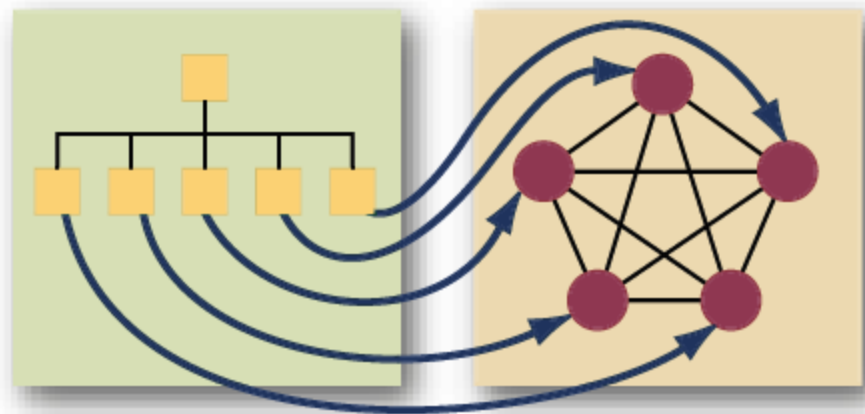
**Self-managed**

See EXHIBIT 10-2

# More Types of Teams

## □ Cross-Functional Teams

- Employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task
- Very common
- Task forces
- Committees



**Cross-functional**

# A Final Type of Team

## □ **Virtual Teams**

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

## □ **Characteristics**

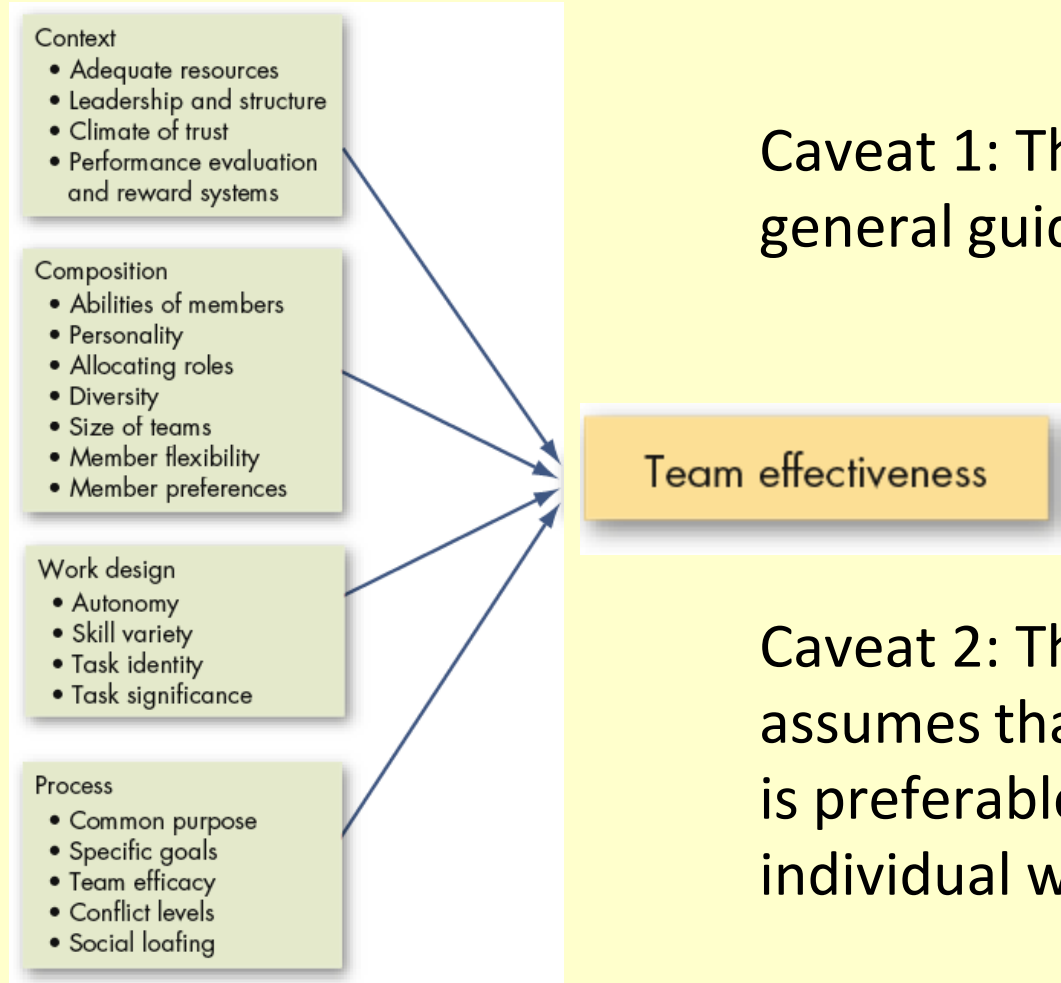
- Limited socializing
- The ability to overcome time and space constraints

## □ **To be effective, needs:**

- Trust among members
- Close monitoring
- To be publicized



# A Team-Effectiveness Model



Caveat 1: This is a general guide only.

Caveat 2: The model assumes that teamwork is preferable to individual work.

EXHIBIT 10-3

# Key Components of Effective Teams

- ❑ **Context**
- ❑ **Composition**
- ❑ **Work Design**
- ❑ **Process Variables**



# Creating Effective Teams: Context

## □ **Adequate Resources**

- Need the tools to complete the job

## □ **Effective Leadership and Structure**

- Agreeing to the specifics of work and how the team fits together to integrate individual skills
- Even “self-managed” teams need leaders
- Leadership especially important in multi-team systems

## □ **Climate of Trust**

- Members must trust each other and the leader

## □ **Performance and Rewards Systems that Reflect Team Contributions**

- Cannot just be based on individual effort

# Creating Effective Teams: Composition

## □ **Abilities of Members**

- Need technical expertise, problem-solving, decision-making, and good interpersonal skills

## □ **Personality of Members**

- Conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness all relate to team performance

## □ **Allocating Roles and Diversity**

- Many necessary roles must be filled
- Diversity can often lead to lower performance

## □ **Size of Team**

- The smaller the better: 5 to 9 is optimal

## □ **Member's Preference for Teamwork**

- Do the members want to be on teams?



# Creating Effective Teams: Work Design

## □ **Freedom and Autonomy**

- Ability to work independently

## □ **Skill Variety**

- Ability to use different skills and talents

## □ **Task Identity**

- Ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product

## □ **Task Significance**

- Working on a task or project that has a substantial impact on others



# Creating Effective Teams: Process

- ❑ **Commitment to a Common Purpose**
  - Create a common purpose that provides direction
  - Have *reflexivity*: willing to adjust plan if necessary
- ❑ **Establishment of Specific Team Goals**
  - Must be specific, measurable, realistic, and challenging
- ❑ **Team Efficacy**
  - Team believes in its ability to succeed
- ❑ **Mental Models**
  - Have an accurate and common mental map of how the work gets done
- ❑ **A Managed Level of Conflict**
  - Task conflicts are helpful; interpersonal conflicts are not
- ❑ **Minimized Social Loafing**
  - Team holds itself accountable both individually and as a team

# Turning Individuals into Team Players

## □ Selection

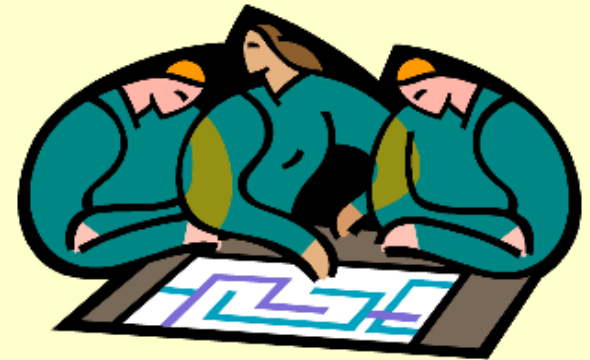
- Make team skills one of the interpersonal skills in the hiring process.

## □ Training

- Individualistic people can learn

## □ Rewards

- Rework the reward system to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive (individual) ones
- Continue to recognize individual contributions while still emphasizing the importance of teamwork



# Beware! Teams Aren't Always the Answer

*Teams take more time and resources than does individual work.*

## □ **Three tests to see if a team fits the situation:**

1. Is the work complex and is there a need for different perspectives: will it be better with the insights of more than one person?
2. Does the work create a common purpose or set of goals for the group that is larger than the aggregate of the goals for individuals?
3. Are members of the group involved in interdependent tasks?





# Global Implications

## □ **Extent of Teamwork**

- Other countries use teams more often than does the U.S.

## □ **Self-Managed Teams**

- Do not work well in countries with low tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty and a high power distance

## □ **Team Cultural Diversity and Team Performance**

- Diversity caused by national differences interferes with team efficiency, at least in the short run
- After about three months the differences between diverse and non-diverse team performance

# Summary and Managerial Implications

- **Effective teams have common characteristics:**
  - Adequate resources
  - Effective leadership
  - A climate of trust
  - Appropriate reward and evaluation systems
  - Composed of members with correct skills and roles
  - Are smaller
  - Do work that provides freedom, autonomy, and the chance to contribute
  - The tasks are whole and significant
  - Has members who believe in the team's capabilities
- *Managers should modify the environment and select team-oriented individuals to increase the chance of developing effective teams.*



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