

Teams

When individuals with similar interest, attitude, and taste come together to work for a common objective then a team is formed. Every individual contributes equally and performs his level best to meet the team targets and achieve the organization's goal. Team members strive hard to live up to the expectations of others and successfully accomplish the assigned task. A team cannot do well unless and until each and every member is focused and serious about his responsibilities. For every team member, his team should come first and everything else later. Personal interests must take a backseat.



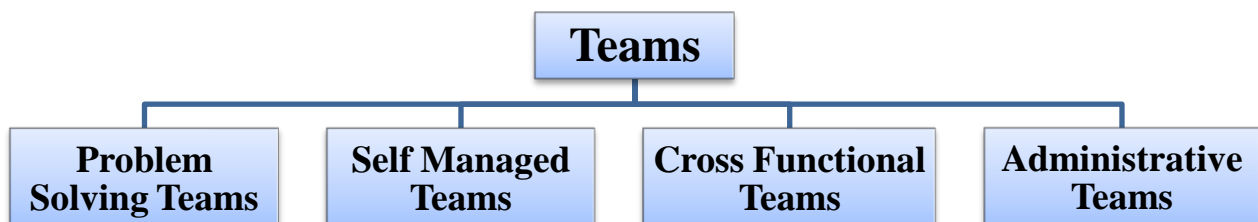
Every individual must feel motivated to perform his level best. Never impose things on anyone; instead, the individuals must take the initiative on their own. They should come forward and accept the challenge.

A team 'is a small number of employees with complementary competencies (abilities, skills and knowledge) who are committed to common performance goals and working relationships for which they hold themselves mutually accountable'.

Two or more people who are interdependent, who share responsibility for outcomes, whose themselves as (and who are seen by others as) an intact social entity in a larger social system are also called as "Teams".

When teams are formed, its members must have the right mix of complementary competencies to achieve the team's goals. Also its members need to be able to influence how they will work together to accomplish those goals.

Types of Teams



1. Problem Solving Teams

The problem solving teams are the most traditional types of teams. In the initial stages when the team work started gaining popularity almost all the teams were of this form. Typically, these teams comprise of 5 to 12 employees of the same department who meet a few hours every week to discuss the ways and means of improving quality, efficiency and the work environment.

The purpose of problem solving teams is just to share the ideas or offer suggestions on how work processes and methods can be improved. These are just suggestion giving teams. These are, generally, not given the authority to unilaterally implement any of their suggestions.

One of the most common examples of problem solving teams is the “Quality Circles”. This is the most widely practiced application of these team. Many Indian companies are having quality circles nowadays. A quality circle is a work group of employees who meet regularly to discuss their quality problems, investigate causes, recommend solutions and take corrective actions.

2. Self Managed Teams

Also known as self-directed work group, a self-managed team is set up to plan, organize, influence and control its own work situation with only minimal intervention and direction from the top management. This creative team design involves a highly integrated group of several skilled individuals who are cross-trained and have the responsibility and authority to perform some specified activity. It is responsible for the whole task as opposed to parts of a job.

Self-managed team is an important way of structuring, managing and rewarding work. Such teams require only minimum attention of the top management which can concentrate on strategic planning. The activities which may be delegated to the self-managed teams include setting of work schedules, establishing plant infrastructure, determining the level of increase in the salary and perquisites, performance appraisal, etc. Self-managed teams are being increasingly used in industrial organizations exposed to greater environmental changes. For the success of such teams, the members of such teams should be selected carefully and adequately trained.

3. Cross Functional Teams

A cross-departmental team tends to have a low complexity level but high team membership fluidity, meaning that the work is fairly simple but the teams are committed and fairly unchanging. Their goal is integration in structure and setting ground rules, and their focus is internal and very specific.

A cross-departmental task force is an example of this type of team. Perhaps an organization is installing a new system that will manage all their data, both at the main office and at their plants, in an entirely different way. The task force might come together from different areas of the organization to identify the types of data their departments generate and how that data will be

transferred over to the new system, how people will be trained to use the new system and even how change around the system will be managed.

4. Administrative Teams

An administrative team has high task complexity but low team membership fluidity, meaning that the problems the team deals with are complex but people stream in and out of the group. The goal of an administrative team is to problem solve and then “sell” their ideas to the rest of the organization. Their focus could be internal, external, or both, and the team members are usually management level.

An example of an administrative team might be a relocation committee that’s dedicated to relocating a plant to a new area. Members of the team might flow in and out, but the complexity of the task is rather high and not at all part of their regular routine. Management level members work for a finite period of time to accomplish the strategic objective of moving the plant - all its machinery, all its people, and so on - to a new address.

Creating Effective Teams

Team effectiveness is the extent to which the team achieves its objectives, achieves the needs and objectives of its members and sustains itself over time. Steven and Mary Ann Von have suggested following elements of team effectiveness:

1) Organizational and Team Environment: Organizational and team environment relates to the following elements:

- a) Reward system,
- b) Communication,
- c) Systems,
- d) Physical space,
- e) Organizational environment,
- f) Organizational structure, and
- g) Organizational leadership

2) Team Design: It involves following elements:

- a) Task characteristics,

- b) Team Size, and
- c) Team Composition.

3) Team Processes: It includes:

- a) Team development,
- b) Team norms,
- c) Team roles, and
- d) Team cohesiveness.

Kormanski and Mozenter have identified following elements which contribute to team effectiveness:

- Members understand and are committed to group goals;
- They are friendly, concerned and interested in others;
- They acknowledge and confront conflicts openly;
- They listen to others and understand them;
- They involve others in the process of decision-making;
- They recognize and respect individual differences;
- They contribute ideas and solutions;
- They value ideas and contributions of others;
- They recognize and reward team efforts; and
- They encourage and appreciate comments about team performance.

These are the major elements contributing to the team effectiveness. Moreover, there may be several factors which influence the team effectiveness. Managers are required to make detailed analysis of these factors and find out broader perspectives of the team effectiveness. The proper management and implementation of these elements may certainly improve the effectiveness of the team.