TEAM BUILDING AND PROBLEM SOLVING (NWTC)



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Team Building and Problem Solving

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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1.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. Have you ever been in a group that seems stuck in endless loops of conflict, where nothing gets done, and all the energy was spent on interpersonal conflicts? Can you share an example? Share and compare your results with classmates.
2. Have you ever been in a group that gets things done, where everyone seems to know their role and responsibilities, where all members contribute and perform? Can you share an example? Share and compare your results with classmates.

The ratio of We's to I's is the best indicator of the development of a team. - Anonymous

Getting Started

A group is people doing something together. It can be a large group of thousand and we'll call them a crowd. It can be a small group of just three members. People might be social, or work together, formal or informal with each other, they might be assigned or self-selected as members—the range is great and varied, and as the group grows so does the complexity.

In this section, we explore group development. Groups start out as a zero in our lives. They require no time, no thought, no energy, and no effort. Then we choose to be part of one or receive an assignment. Now the group is no longer a zero in our lives. It might have a number, like 10%, meaning we spend about 10% of our work time on a project with a group. It could be 100%, as in we work every day within the group. We could call it a 10 for the ten hours a week we invest in it. Regardless of what we call a group in our lives, we have to call it something because it now exists for us, where once it did not.

We can also anticipate conflicts in a group. At work, we may see people in terms, or between departments, conflict with each other. Even at home, we may observe the friction that occurs between family members even after years of interaction. Where there are groups there will be conflict.

We find norms and expectations within groups. Every group has a code of conduct, no matter how informal, of who does what when and how. Power, status, and even companionship all play a role in group expectations for its members.

Finally, all groups end. Families end, change, and transform. Work relationships change as well. Groups accept new members, lose former members, and they themselves become new groups, rising out of the ashes of the old.

All groups form, have conflicts, form norms, and dissolve. In this section we'll explore three related theories on group development, comparing their similarities and differences. We'll learn more about why we need groups, and why they need us. We will explore how it that we come to know each other, and how important groups are in our lives.

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1.2: Group Life Cycles

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the typical stages in the life cycle of a group

Groups are dynamic systems, in constant change. Groups grow together and eventually come apart. People join groups and others leave. This dynamic changes and transforms the very nature of the group. Group socialization involves how the group members interact with one another and form relationships. Just as you were once born, and changed your family, they changed you. You came to know a language and culture, a value system, and a set of beliefs that influence you to this day. You came to be socialized, to experience the process of learning to associate, communicate, or interact within a group. A group you belong to this year—perhaps a soccer team or the cast of a play—may not be part of your life next year. And those who are in leadership positions may ascend or descend the leadership hierarchy as the needs of the group, and other circumstances, change over time.

Group Life Cycle Patterns

Your life cycle is characterized by several steps, and while it doesn't follow a prescribed path, there are universal stages we can all recognize. You were born. You didn't choose your birth, your parents, your language, or your culture, but you came to know them through communication. You came to know yourself, learned skills, discovered talents, and met other people. You worked, learned, lived, and loved, and as you aged, minor injuries took longer to heal. You competed in ever-increasing age groups in your favorite sport, and while your time for each performance may have increased as you aged, your experience allowed you to excel in other ways. Where you were once the novice, you have now learned something to share. You lived to see some of your friends pass before you, and the moment will arrive when you too must confront death.

In the same way, groups experience similar steps and stages and take on many of the characteristics we associate with life. (Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153). They grow, overcome illness and dysfunction, and transform across time. No group, just as no individual, lives forever.

Your first day on the job may be comparable to the first day you went to school. At home, you may have learned some of the basics, like how to write with a pencil, but knowledge of that skill and its application are two different things. People spoke in different ways at school than at home, and you came to understand the importance of recess, of raising your hand to get the teacher's attention, and how to follow other school rules. At work, you may have trained for your profession, but the academic knowledge only serves as your foundation, much as your socialization at home served to guide you at school. On the job they use jargon terms, have schedules that may include coffee breaks (recess), have a supervisor (teacher), and have their own rules, explicit and understood. On the first day, it was all new, even if many of the elements were familiar.

In order to better understand group development and its life cycle, many researchers have described the universal stages and phases of groups. While there are modern interpretations of these stages, most draw from the model proposed by Tuckman. (Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384–399). This model, shown in Table 1.2.1, specifies the usual order of the phases of group development, and allows us to predict several stages we can anticipate as we join a new group.

Tuckman begins with the forming stage (also called the orientation stage or orientation phase) as the initiation of group formation. This stage is also called the orientation stage because individual group members come to know each other. Group members who are new to each other and can't predict each other's behavior can be expected to experience the stress of uncertainty. Uncertainty theory states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown. (Berger, C., & Calabrese, R. (1975). Some explorations in initial interactions and beyond: toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 1*, 99–112.ˈBerger, C. (1986). Response uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13*, 34–38.ˈ Gudykunst, W. (1995). Anxiety/uncertainty management theory. In R. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 8–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage). The more we know about others, and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are

never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week. Individuals are initially tentative and display caution as they begin to learn about the group and its members.

If you don't know someone very well, it is easy to offend. Each group member brings to the group a set of experiences, combined with education and a self-concept. You won't be able to read this information on a name tag, you will only come to know it through time and interaction. Since the possibility of overlapping and competing viewpoints and perspectives exists, the group will experience a storming stage, a time of struggles as the members themselves sort out their differences. There may be more than one way to solve the problem or task at hand, and some group members may prefer one strategy over another. Some members of the group may be senior to the organization in comparison to you, and members may treat them differently. Some group members may be as new as you are and just as uncertain about everyone's talents, skills, roles, and self-perceptions. The wise communicator will anticipate the storming stage and help facilitate opportunities for the members to resolve uncertainty before the work commences. There may be challenges for leadership and conflicting viewpoints. The sociology professor sees the world differently than the physics professor. The sales agent sees things differently than someone from accounting. A manager who understands and anticipates this normal challenge in the group's life cycle can help the group become more productive.

A clear definition of the purpose and mission of the group can help the members focus their energies. Interaction prior to the first meeting can help reduce uncertainty. Coffee and calories can help bring a group together. Providing the group with what they need, and opportunities to know each other, prior to their task can increase efficiency.

Groups that make a successful transition from the storming stage will next experience the norming stage, where the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behavior and interaction. Who speaks first? Who takes notes? Who is creative and visual, and who is detail-oriented? Sometimes our job titles and functions speak for themselves, but human beings are complex. We are not simply a list of job functions, and in the dynamic marketplace of today's business environment, you will often find that people have talents and skills well beyond their "official" role or task. Drawing on these strengths can make the group more effective.

The norming stage is marked by less division and more collaboration. The level of anxiety associated with interaction is generally reduced, making for a more positive work climate that promotes listening. When people feel less threatened, and their needs are met, they are more likely to focus their complete attention on the purpose of the group. If they are still concerned with who does what, and whether they will speak in error, the interaction framework will stay in the storming stage. Tensions are reduced when the normative expectations are known, and the degree to which a manager can describe these at the outset can reduce the amount of time the group remains in uncertainty. Group members generally express more satisfaction with clear expectations and are more inclined to participate.

Ultimately, the purpose of a workgroup is performance, and the preceding stages lead us to the performing stage, in which the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals. To facilitate performance, group members can't skip the initiation of getting to know each other, or the sorting out of roles and norms, but they can try to focus on performance with clear expectations from the moment the group is formed. Productivity is often how we measure success in business and industry, and the group has to produce. Outcome assessments may have been built into the system from the beginning and would serve as a benchmark for success. Wise managers know to celebrate success, as it brings more success, social cohesion, group participation, and a sense of job satisfaction. Incremental gains toward a benchmark may also be cause for celebration and support, and failure to reach a goal should be regarded as an opportunity for clarification.

It is generally wiser to focus on the performance of the group rather than individual contributions. Managers and group members will want to offer assistance to underperformers as well as congratulating members for their contributions. If the goal is to create a community where competition pushes each member to perform, individual highlights may serve your needs, but if you want a group to solve a problem or address a challenge as a group, you have to promote group cohesion. Members need to feel a sense of belonging, and praise (or the lack thereof) can be a sword with two edges. One stimulates and motivates, while the other demoralizes and divides.

Groups should be designed to produce and perform in ways and at levels that individuals cannot, or else you should consider compartmentalizing the tasks. The performing stage is where productivity occurs, and it is necessary to make sure the group has what it needs to perform. Missing pieces, parts, or information can stall the group, and reset the cycle to storming all over again. Loss of performance is inefficiency, and that carries a cost. Managers will be measured by the group's productivity and

performance, and their success reflects on the manager. Make sure the performing stage is one that is productive and healthy for its members.

Imagine that you are the manager of a group that has produced an award-winning design for an ecologically innovative four-seat car. Their success is your success. Their celebrations are yours, even if you are not the focus of them. A manager manages the process, while group members perform. If you were a member of the group, and you helped design the beltline, you made a fundamental contribution to the style of the car. Individual consumers may never consider the line from the front fender, across the doors, to the rear taillight as they make a purchase decision, but they will recognize beauty. You will know that you could not have achieved that fundamental part of car design without help from the engineers in the group, and if the number-crunching accountants had not seen the efficiency of the production process that produced it, it may never have survived the transition from prototype to production. The group came together and accomplished its goals with amazing results.

Now, as typically happens eventually with all groups, the time has come to move on to new assignments. In the adjourning stage, group members leave the group. Before you leave the group it may be time for a debriefing, a meeting to go over what worked, what didn't, and ways to improve for next time, or if you are in the US military, to participate in the "After Action Review" or AAR. While it is important to focus on group progress throughout the cycle, closure brings perspective. The completion of any training, mission, task, or journey provides an opportunity to review what occurred with a bit of distance. This stage can provide an important opportunity for managers and group members alike to learn from failure and success.

The group may cease to exist, or it may be transformed with new members and a new set of goals. Your contributions may have caught the attention of management, and you may be assigned to the redesign of the flagship vehicle, the halo car of your marque or brand. It's quite a professional honor, and it's yours because of your successful work in a group. Others will be reassigned to tasks that require their talents and skills, and you may or may not collaborate with them in the future.

You may miss the interactions with the members, even the more cantankerous ones, and will experience both relief and a sense of loss. Like life, the group process is normal, and mixed emotions are to be expected. A wise manager anticipates this stage and facilitates the separation with skill and ease. We often close this process with a ritual marking its passing, though the ritual may be as formal as an award or as informal as a "thank you" or a verbal acknowledgment of a job well done over coffee and calories.

On a more sober note, it is important not to forget that groups can reach the adjourning stage without having achieved success. Some businesses go bankrupt, some departments are closed, and some individuals lose their positions after a group fails to perform. Adjournment can come suddenly and unexpectedly, or gradually and piece by piece. Either way, a skilled business communicator will be prepared and recognize it as part of the classic group life cycle.

Table 1.2.1 Tuckman's Linear Model of Group Development. Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384–399.

Stages	Activities
Forming	Members come together, learn about each other, and determine the purpose of the group.
Storming	Members engage in more direct communication and get to know each other. Conflicts between group members will often arise during this stage.
Norming	Members establish spoken or unspoken rules about how they communicate and work. Status, rank, and roles in the group are established.
Performing	Members fulfill their purpose and reach their goal.
Adjourning	Members leave the group.

Let's now turn our attention to two other model's group lifecycles. While Tuckman's model is familiar, both Tubbs and Fisher offer two distinct, though similar views. Each model provides an area of emphasis, and all follow a similar progression.

In Tubb's Small Group Communication Theory (1995), the emphasis is on conflict vs. groupthink. As we've discussed, conflict is present in all groups, and we see the danger of groupthink raised in its absence. When the emphasis is on conformity, the group lacks diversity of viewpoints and the tendency to go along with the flow can produce disastrous results.

First Tubb's (Tubbs, Stewart. (1995). *A systems approach to small group interaction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995) asserts that we are involved in an orientation phase. We get to know each other, focus on limitations, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses, and begin to discuss the task at hand. This stage is followed by the conflict stage, characterized by different viewpoints, disagreements, competing agendas, and debate. This stage is natural and in this model is viewed as necessary to inhibit conformity or groupthink. The consensus stage follows conflict, where group members select some ideas or actions over others and the group proceeds to get the task done. It is characterized by agreement and teamwork. Individual differences are not as apparent, having been sorted out during the previous conflict stage. All groups end, and once the task has been completed as a result of consensus and action, the group dissolves in the closure stage. This stage often features statements of agreement and support for the result, action, or outcome.

We can compare and contrast Tubb's model of group development to Fisher's (Fisher, B. Aubrey. (1970). Decision emergence: Phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs, 37*, 53–66) and view both overlap and divergence. Here the emphasis is on the group process of individuals becoming a functioning group that emerges successfully from conflict. The first stage is familiar: Orientation. It is characterized by awkward moments as individuals get to know each other, their backgrounds or special skill areas, and people size each other up. The group turns the corner to conflict where divergent points of view are presented, often characterized by struggles for power or a speech turn. As the group descends into conflict there can emerge allies and challengers, as members persuade each other and present alternatives. This process continues until one viewpoint, course of action, or path becomes the generally-agreed upon course for the group, and they emerge together in the emergence stage. Dissension and argument are no longer features of the conversation, and the emphasis is on action. The team acts and then progresses to the reinforcement stage, characterized by affirmations and statements of agreement or support for the task or actions. Group members often look to each other for support at this stage, and it sharply contrasts with the preceding conflict stage, where opposing viewpoints were aired. The emphasis is on group members to reinforce each other and the decision or outcome.

Finally, we can consider Poole's (Poole, Marshall Scott, & Roth, Jonelle. (1989). Decision development in small groups V: Test of a contigency model. *Human Communication Research, 15*, 549–589) approach to group development, itself a distinct and divergent model that provides additional insight into group dynamics. In the case of Tuckman, Tubbs, and Fisher, we can observe a step-by-step process from start to finish. Poole asserts group development is far more complex but offers three distinct, interdependent tracks or patterns of communication that overlap, start and stop, and go back and forth as the group wrestles with the challenges. Here the emphasis is on the transitions between the two main tracks: Topic and Relation. In the topic track, group members discuss the topic and all the relevant issues as they explore how to approach it, get a handle on it, or resolve it. In the relation track, group members also discuss themselves, self-disclosure information, and ask questions to learn more about each other. It relates to reducing uncertainty between group members, and sometimes the group shifts from the topic track to the relationship track as members sort out personal issues or work on relationships. In this moment where the group shifts between the two main tracks emerges a third track: breakpoints. The breakpoint stage is characterized by turns in the conversation that regulate interaction, from an actual break in the discussion like a coffee break to a shift in the conversation to something they all have in common, like participation in a softball league. Breakpoints can also include postponement, where decisions are delayed to allow for further research or consideration, regression in the conversation, where topics once considered and addressed are raised yet again, or even adjournment, where the group closes for a time, for the day, or disbands to address new tasks as members of new groups.

Finally, let's turn our attention to assessing whether the group is working together, pulling apart, and ways to improve group interactions. An effective group can be recognized in several ways including:

- Group members are active, interested, and involved.
- Group members are comfortable; no obvious tensions.
- Group members understand and accept the task, goal, or activity.
- Disagreement is resolved amicably.
- Active listening behaviors can be frequently observed.
- Group members interact freely; no one member is in control.
- Group members openly discuss their progress.

- Criticism is present, accepted, and discussed openly.

These signs allow us insight into the group dynamics, and we can observe how they contribute to task completion as well as group health. Conversely, there are also several ways we can recognize when a group is ineffective:

- Some group members are not active, interested, or involved.
- Group member interactions include obvious tensions.
- Group members do not understand or accept the task, goal, or activity; passive/aggressive behaviors may be present.
- Disagreement is not resolved.
- Active listening behaviors cannot be frequently observed.
- Group members do not interact freely; one member is in control.
- Group members do not discuss their progress.
- Criticism is not present; groupthink is a significant risk.

With these telltale signs in mind, we can take an active part in promoting an active, effective, and healthy group:

- Encourage every member to contribute, speak, or share their thoughts.
- Encourage every member to understand their role, and everyone's roles, and how they complement each other.
- Encourage interdependence and interaction.
- Encourage the group to build on their common strengths and skills, celebrating incremental success.
- Encourage active listing and refrain from interruptions.
- Encourage group members to assess their collective progress frequently.

In this section we have examined group development and several theories on how groups come together, complete their task, goal, or activity, and grow apart. Just like interpersonal relationships include signs of health and prosperity, so do groups. The effective group leader understands both group process and ways to make a positive difference.

- Individual members demonstrate interest and involvement.
- There are no obvious tensions.
- It is clear the group understands and accepts the task.
- Listen behaviors are clearly demonstrated.
- Difference of opinion or viewpoint doesn't upset the group. Humor is a common characteristic, and tensions that may arise are quickly and amicably resolved.
- People feel free to express their viewpoints, thoughts, and feelings. Criticism is considered by group members and not considered as a personal attack.
- Consensus in decision-making is apparent.
- No one individual dominates the group.
- The group self-regulates, evaluating progress, regrouping, or advancing towards a common goal.
- Group member roles are clear and accepted.

An ineffective group can also be recognized in several ways:

- Some topics are not discussed and understood as off-limits.
- There is a sense of urgency, preferring advancement and task completion before consideration or consensus.
- One or more group members dominate the discussion.
- Individual members demonstrate a lack of interest and involvement.
- There are obvious tensions.
- It is clear the group does not understand or accepts the task. Group members are arguing in cycles, returning again and again to themes with no resolution.
- Listen behaviors are not clearly demonstrated.
- Difference of opinion or viewpoint upsets the group. Tensions rise with the expression of criticism.
- Criticism is not considered by group members and often interpreted as a personal attack.
- Consensus in decision-making is not apparent.
- The group does not self-regulate, and little discussion on group progress is present.
- Group member roles are not clear or accepted.

As we close our discussion on group development, let's consider five action steps members can encourage to help a group become more effective:

- Group members take turns speaking and listening and do not interrupt.
- Group members acknowledge and combine their strengths.
- Group members separate the issues from personalities, the message from the messenger.
- Group members outline action steps and discuss progress periodically.
- Group members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.

Key Takeaway

Groups come together and grow apart in predictable patterns.

Exercise 1.2.1

1. Is it possible for an outsider (a non-group member) to help a group move from the storming stage to the norming stage? Explain your answer and present it to the class.
2. Think of a group of which you are a member and identify some roles played by group members, including yourself. Have your roles, and those of others, changed over time? Are some roles more positive than others? Discuss your answers with your classmates.
3. In the course where you are using this book, think of yourself and your classmates as a group. At what stage of group formation are you currently? What stage will you be at when the school year ends?

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1.3: Why People Join Groups

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the role of interpersonal needs in the communication process

“What are you doing?” You may have had no problem answering the question, and simply pulled a couple of lines from yesterday’s Twitter or reviewed your online calendar. But if you had to compose an entirely original answer, would it prove to be a challenge? Perhaps at first, this might appear to be a simple task. You have to work and your job required your participation in a meeting, or you care about someone and met him or her for lunch.

Both scenarios make sense on the surface, but we have to consider the "why" with more depth. Why that meeting, and why that partner? Why not another job, or a lunch date with someone else? If we consider the question long enough, we’ll come around to the conclusion that we communicate with others in order to meet basic needs, and our meetings, interactions, and relationships help us meet those needs. We may also recognize that not all of our needs are met by any one person, job, experience, or context; instead, we diversify our communication interactions in order to meet our needs. At first, you may be skeptical of the idea that we communicate to meet our basic needs, but let’s consider a theory on the subject and see how well it predicts, describes, and anticipate our tendency to interact.

William Schutz, (Schutz, W. (1966). *The interpersonal underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books) offers an alternate version of interpersonal needs. Like Maslow, he considers the universal aspects of our needs, but he outlines how they operate within a range or continuum for each person. According to Schutz, the need for affection, or appreciation, is basic to all humans. We all need to be recognized and feel like we belong but may have differing levels of expectations to meet that need. When part of the merger process is announced and the news of layoffs comes, those co-workers who have never been particularly outgoing and have largely kept to themselves may become even more withdrawn. Schutz describes underpersonals as people who seek limited interaction. On the opposite end of the spectrum, you may know people where you work that are often seeking attention and affirmation. Schutz describes overpersonals as people who have a strong need to be liked and constantly seek attention from others. The person who strikes a healthy balance is called a personal individual.

Humans also have a need for control, or the ability to influence people and events. But that need may vary by the context, environment, and sense of security. You may have already researched similar mergers, as well as the forecasts for the new organization, and come to realize that your position and your department are central to the current business model. You may have also of taken steps to prioritize your budget, assess your transferable skills, and look for opportunities beyond your current context. Schutz would describe your efforts to control your situation as autocratic, or self-directed. At the same time, there may be several employees who have not taken similar steps who look to you and others for leadership, in effect abdicating their responsibility. Abdicrats shift the burn of responsibility from themselves to others, looking to others for a sense of control. Democrats share the need between the individual and the group and may try to hold a departmental meeting to gather information and share.

Finally, Schutz echoes Maslow in his assertion that belonging is a basic interpersonal need, but notes that it exists within a range or continuum, where some need more and others less. Undersocials may be less likely to seek interaction, may prefer smaller groups, and will generally not be found on center stage. Oversocials, however, crave the spotlight of attention and are highly motivated to seek belonging. A social person is one who strikes a healthy balance between being withdrawn and being the constant center of attention.

Schutz describes these three interpersonal needs of affection, control, and belonging as interdependent and variable. In one context an individual may have a high need for control, while in others he or she may not perceive the same level of motivation or compulsion to meet that need. Both Maslow and Schutz offer us two related versions of interpersonal needs that begin to address the central question: why communicate?

We communicate with each other to meet our needs, regardless of how we define those needs. From the time you are a newborn infant crying for food or the time you are a toddler learning to say “please” when requesting a cup of milk, to the time you are an adult learning the rituals of the job interview and the conference room, you learn to communicate in order to gain a sense of self within the group or community, meeting your basic needs as you grow and learn.

Key Takeaway

Through communication, we meet universal human needs.

Exercise 1.3.1

1. Review the types of individuals from Schutz's theory described in this section. Which types do you think fit you? Which types fit some of your co-workers or classmates? Why? Share your opinions with your classmates and compare your self-assessment with the types they believe describe you.
2. Think of two or more different situations and how you might express your personal needs differ from one situation to the other. Have you observed similar variations in personal needs in other people from one situation to another? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

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1.4: Social Penetration Theory

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss social penetration theory, self-disclosure, and the principles of self-disclosure
2. Describe interpersonal relations

How do you get to know other people? If the answer springs immediately to mind, we're getting somewhere: communication. Communication allows us to share experiences, come to know ourselves and others, and form relationships, but it requires time and effort. You don't get to know someone in a day, a month, or even a year. At the same time, you are coming to know them, they are changing, adapting, and growing—and so are you. When groups come together people get to know each other and start the trust-building process. When we do not take the time to get to know each other, and focus simply on the task at hand, the group often suffers.

Altman and Taylor, (Altman, I., & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press) describe this progression from superficial to intimate levels of communication in social penetration theory, which is often called the Onion Theory because the model looks like an onion and involves layers that are peeled away. According to the social penetration theory, we fear that which we do not know. That includes people. Strangers go from being unknown to known through a series of steps that we can observe through conversational interactions. People come together in groups and teams and do amazing things.

If we didn't have the weather to talk about, what would we say? People across cultures use a variety of signals to indicate neutral or submissive stances in relation to each other. A wave, a nod, or a spoken reference about a beautiful day can indicate an open, approachable stance rather than a guarded, defensive posture. At the outermost layer of the onion, in this model, there is only that which we can observe. We can observe the characteristics of each other and make judgments, but they are educated guesses at best. Our nonverbal displays of affiliation, like a team jacket, a uniform, or a badge, may communicate something about us, but we only peel away a layer when we engage in conversation, oral or written.

As we move from public to private information we make the transition from small talk to substantial, and eventually intimate, conversations. Communication requires trust and that often takes time. Beginnings are fragile times and when expectations, roles, and ways of communicating are not clear, misunderstandings can occur. Some relationships may never proceed past observations on the weather, while others may explore controversial topics like politics or religion. A married couple that has spent countless years together may be able to finish each other's sentences, and as memory fades, the retelling of stories may serve to bond and reinforce the relationship. Increasingly intimate knowledge and levels of trust are achieved over time, involving frequency of interaction and well as length and quality. Positive interactions may lead to more positive interactions, while negative ones may lead to less overall interaction.

This may appear to be common sense at first, but let's examine an example. You are new to a position and your supervisor has been in his or her role for a number of years. Some people at the same level as you within the organization enjoy a level of knowledge and ease of interaction with your supervisor that you lack. They may have had more time and interactions with the supervisor, but you can still use this theory to gain trust and build a healthy relationship. Recognize that you are unknown to your supervisor, and they to you. Start with superficial conversations that are neutral and non-threatening, but that demonstrate a willingness to engage in communication. Silence early in a relationship can be a sign of respect, but it can also send the message that you are fearful, shy, or lack confidence. It can be interpreted as an unwillingness to communicate, and may actually discourage interaction. If the supervisor picks up the conversation, keep your responses short and light. If not, keep an upbeat attitude and mention the weather.

Over time the conversations may gradually grow to cross topics beyond the scope of the office, and a relationship may form that involves trust. To a degree, you and your co-workers learn to predict one another's responses and relax in the knowledge of mutual respect. If, however, you skip from superficial to intimate topics too quickly, you run the risk of violating normative expectations. Trust takes time, and with can come empathy and understanding, but if you share with your supervisor your personal struggles on day one, it may erode your credibility. According to the social penetration theory, people go from superficial to intimate conversations as trust develops through repeated, positive interactions. Self-disclosure is "information, thoughts, or feelings we tell others about ourselves that they would not otherwise know." (McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*.

Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. pp. 112).Taking it step by step, and not rushing to self-disclose or asking personal questions too soon, can help develop positive business relationships.

Principles of Self-Disclosure

Write down five terms that describe your personal self, and five terms that describe your professional self. Once you have completed your two lists, compare the results. They may have points that overlap or may have words that describe you in your distinct roles that are quite different. This difference can be easy to address, but at times it can be a challenge to maintain. How much of "you" do you share in the workplace? Our personal and professional lives don't exist independently, and in many ways are interdependent.

How do people know more about us? We communicate information about ourselves, whether or not we are aware of it. You cannot not communicate. (Watzlawick, P. (1993). *The language of change: elements of therapeutic communication*. New York, NY: Norton & Company). From your internal monologue and intrapersonal to communication, to verbal and nonverbal communication, communication is constantly occurring. What do you communicate about yourself by the clothes (or brands) you wear, the tattoos you display, or the piercing you remove before you enter the workplace? Self-disclosure is a process by which you intentionally communicate information to others, but can involve unintentional, but revealing slips. Beebe, Beebe, and Redmond (Beebe, S., Beebe, S., & Redmond, M. (2002). *Interpersonal communication relating to others* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon) offer us five principles of self-disclosure that remind us that communication is an integral part of any business or organizational setting. Let's discuss them one by one.

Self-Disclosure Usually Moves in Small Steps

Would you come to work on your first day wearing a large purple hat? If you knew that office attire was primarily brown and gray suits? Most people would say, "of course not!" as there is a normative expectation for dress, sometimes called a dress code. After you have worked within the organization, earned trust and established credibility, and earned your place in the community, the purple hat might be positively received with a sense of humor. But if you haven't yet earned your place, your fashion statement may be poorly received. In the same way, personal information is normally reserved for those of confidence, and earned over time. Take small steps as you come to know your colleagues, taking care to make sure who you are does not speak louder than what you say.

Self-Disclosure Moves from Impersonal to Intimate Information

So you decided against wearing the purple hat to work on your first day, but after a successful first week you went out with friends from your college days. You shut down the bar late in the evening and paid for it on Sunday. At work on Monday, is it a wise strategy to share the finer tips of the drinking games you played on Saturday night? Again, most people would say, "of course not!" It has nothing to do with work and only makes you look immature. Some people have serious substance abuse issues, and your stories could sound insensitive, producing a negative impact. How would you know, as you don't really know your co-workers yet? In the same way, it is not a wise strategy to post photos from the weekend's escapades on your Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, or similar social networking web page. Employers are increasingly aware of their employees' web pages, and the picture of you looking stupid may come to mind when your supervisor is considering you for a promotion. You represent yourself, but you also represent your company and its reputation. If you don't represent it well, you run the risk of not representing it at all.

Self-Disclosure Is Reciprocal

Monday morning brings the opportunity to tell all sorts of stories about the weekend, and since you've wisely decided to leave any references to the bar in the past, you may instead choose the wise conversational strategy of asking questions. You may ask your co-workers what they did, what it was like, who they met, and where they went, but eventually, all conversations form a circle that comes back to you. The dance between source and receiver isn't linear, it's transactional. After a couple of stories, sooner or later, you'll hear the question "What did you do this weekend?" It's now your turn. This aspect of conversation is universal. We expect when we reveal something about ourselves that others will reciprocate. The dyadic effect is the formal term for this process and is often thought to meet the need to reduce uncertainty about conversational partners. If you stay quiet or decline to answer after everyone else has taken a turn, what will happen? They may be put off at first, they may invent stories and let their imaginations run wild, or they may reject you. It may be subtle at first, but reciprocity is expected.

You have the choice of what to reveal, and when. You may choose to describe your weekend by describing friends and conversations while omitting any reference to the bar. You may choose to focus on your Sunday afternoon gardening activities. You may just say you read a good book and mention the title of the one you are reading. Regardless of what option you choose, you have the freedom and responsibility within the dyadic effect to reciprocate, but you have a degree of control. You can learn to anticipate when your turn will come and to give some thought to what you will say before the moment arrives.

Self-Disclosure Involves Risk

If you decided to go with the "good book" option, or perhaps mention that you watched a movie, you just ran the risk that whatever you are reading or watching may be criticized. If the book you are enjoying is controversial, you might anticipate a bit of a debate, but if you mentioned a romance novel or one that has a science fiction theme, you may have thought it wouldn't generate criticism. Sometimes the most innocent reference or comment can produce conflict when the conversational partners have little prior history. At the same time, nothing ventured, nothing gained. How are you going to discover that the person you work with appreciates the same author or genre if you don't share that information? Self-disclosure involves risk but can produce positive results.

Self-Disclosure Involves Trust

Before you mention the title of the book or movie you saw this weekend, you may consider your audience and what you know about them. If you've only known them for a week, your awareness of their habits, quirks, likes, and dislikes may be limited. At the same time, if you feel safe and relatively secure, you may test the waters with a reference to the genre but not the author. You may also decide that it is just a book, and they can take it or leave it.

"Trust is the ability to place confidence in or rely on the character or truth of someone." (McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. pp 114). Trust is a process, not a badge to be earned. It takes time to develop and can be lost in a moment. Even if you don't agree with your co-worker, understand that self-revelation communicates a measure of trust and confidence. Respect that confidence, and respect yourself.

Also, consider the nature of the information. Some information communicated in confidence must see the light of day. Sexual harassment, fraud, theft, and abuse are all issues in the workplace, and if you become aware of these behaviors you will have a responsibility to report them according to your organization's procedures. A professional understands that trust is built over time and understands how valuable this intangible commodity can be to success.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal communication can be defined as communication between two people, but the definition fails to capture the essence of a relationship. This broad definition is useful when we compare it to intrapersonal communication, or communication with ourselves, as opposed to mass communication, or communication with a large audience, but it requires clarification. The developmental view of interpersonal communication places emphasis on the relationship, rather than the size of the audience, and draws a distinction between impersonal and personal interactions.

For example, one day your co-worker and best friend, Iris, whom you've come to know on a personal as well as a professional level, gets promoted to the position of manager. She didn't tell you ahead of time because it wasn't certain, and she didn't know how to bring up the possible change of roles. Your relationship with Iris will change as your roles transform. Her perspective will change, and so will yours. You may stay friends, or she may not have as much time for after-hours activities as she once did. Over time you and Iris gradually grow apart, spending less time together. You eventually lose touch. What is the status of your relationship?

If you have ever had even a minor interpersonal transaction such as buying a cup of coffee from a clerk, you know that some people can be personable, but does that mean you've developed a relationship within the transaction process? For many people, the transaction is an impersonal experience, however pleasant. What is the difference between the brief interaction of a transaction and the interactions you periodically have with your colleague Iris who is now your manager?

The developmental view places an emphasis on the prior history but also focuses on the level of familiarity and trust. Over time and with increased frequency, we form bonds or relationships with people, and if that time and frequency are diminished, we lose that familiarity. The relationship with the clerk may be impersonal, but so can the relationship with the manager after time has

passed and the familiarity is lost. From a developmental view, interpersonal communication can exist across this range of experience and interaction.

Review the lists you made for Introductory Exercise #3 at the beginning of this chapter. If you evaluate your list of what is important to you, will you find objects or relationships? You may value your home or vehicle, but for most people, relationships with friends and family are at the top of the list. Interpersonal relationships take time and effort to form, and they can be challenging. All relationships are dynamic, meaning that they transform and adapt to changes within the context and environment. They require effort and sacrifice, and at times give rise to the question: why bother? A short answer may be that we as humans are compelled to form bonds, but it still fails to answer the question, why?

Uncertainty theory states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown. (Berger, C., & Calabrese, R. (1975). Some explorations in initial interactions and beyond: toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 1*, 99–112.ʼBerger, C. (1986). Response uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13*, 34–38.ʼ Gudykunst, W. (1995) Anxiety/uncertainty management theory. In R. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 8–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage). The more we know about others, and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week. The predicted outcome value theory asserts that not only do we want to reduce uncertainty, we also want to maximize our possible benefit from the association. (Sunnafrank, M. (1986). Predicted outcome value during initial interactions: a reformulation of uncertainty reduction theory. *Human Communication Research*, 3–33.ʼ Sunnafrank, M. (1990). Predicted outcome value and uncertainty reduction theory: a test of competing perspective. *Human Communication Theory, 17*, 76–150.ʼ Kellerman, K., & Reynolds, R. (1990). when ignorance is bliss: the role of motivation to reduce uncertainty in uncertainty reduction theory. *Human Communication Research, 17*, 5–75.) This theory would predict that you would choose Tuesday or later for a meeting in order to maximize the potential for positive interaction and any possible rewards that may result. One theory involves the avoidance of fear while the other focuses on the pursuit of a reward, and together they provide a point of reference as we continue our discussion on interpersonal relationships.

Regardless of whether we focus on collaboration or competition, we can see that interpersonal communication is necessary for the business environment. We want to know our place and role within the organization, accurately predict those within our proximity, and create a sense of safety and belonging. Family for many is the first experience in interpersonal relationships, but as we develop professionally, our relationships at work may take on many of the attributes we associate with family communication. We look to each other with similar sibling rivalries, competition for attention and resources, and support. The workplace and our peers can become as close, or closer, than our birth families, with similar challenges and rewards.

Key Takeaways

- Interpersonal relationships are an important part of the work environment.
- We come to know one another gradually.
- Self-disclosure involves risk and reward and is a normal part of communication.

Exercise 1.4.1

1. Write down five terms that describe your personal self, and five terms that describe your professional self. Compare your results with a classmate.
2. Think of someone you trust and who trusts you. How did you come to have a mutually trusting relationship? Did it take effort on both people's part? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
3. How important do you think self-disclosure is in business settings? Give some examples. Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

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1.5: Group Norms

Learning Objectives

1. Define group norms
2. Discuss the role and function of group norms
3. Discuss the effect of group norms on a group's development

A new vice president came into an organization. At the end of her first weekly meeting with her staff members, she tossed a nerf ball to one of them and asked the person to say how she was feeling. When that person finished, the vice president asked her to toss the ball to someone else, and so on, until everyone had expressed himself or herself. This process soon became a regular feature of the group's meetings.

In our earlier section on group life cycles, you learned about Bruce Tuckman's model of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Along with roles, status, and trust, which we'll encounter in the next chapter, norms are usually generated and adopted after a group's "forming" and "storming" stages.

As a group moves from "forming" toward "performing," then, norms help guide its members along the way. Whether we see them or not, norms are powerful predictors of a group's behavior.

What Norms Are

Group norms are rules or guidelines that reflect expectations of how group members should act and interact. They define what behaviors are acceptable or not; good or not; right or not; or appropriate or not (O'Hair, D. & Wiemann, M.O. (2004). *The essential guide to group communication*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's).

Norms may relate to how people look, behave, or communicate with each other. Tossing a nerf ball around a circle of workers is perhaps a peculiar way to start a meeting, and it probably doesn't contribute directly to achieving substantive goals, but it did represent a norm in the vice president's group we described—which, by the way, was a real group and not a product of imagination!

Some norms relate to how a group as a whole will act—e.g., when and how often it will meet, for instance. Others have to do with the behavior of individual group members and the roles those members play within the group.

By defining what social behavior lies within acceptable boundaries, norms can help a group function smoothly and face conflict without falling apart (Hayes, p. 31). Hayes, N. (2004). *Managing teams: A strategy for success*. London: Thomson. Thus, they can constitute a potent force to promote positive interaction among group members.

Origin of Norms

In a new group, norms may arise organically as members settle into their relationships and start to function together. Decisions need to be made and time needs to be taken for diverse activities such as identifying goals, determining tasks, and allocating human and tangible resources. Who will take the lead on these areas of the group's behavior has to be determined.

Further questions need to be answered as the group gets off the ground. Here are some examples:

- What topics are and are not appropriate for the group to discuss?
- How and to what degree will members respect and attend to each other's statements and viewpoints?
- How and when, if ever, will the group behave casually?
- What mechanisms will the group use to solve problems?

Any group eventually needs to deal with these questions, and the answers it reaches will become embodied as norms.

Implicit Norms

Whether a group is new or not, its norms aren't always expressed or discussed. People may simply assume that certain norms exist and accept them "by unspoken consent" (Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill). in which case they are implicit norms.

Consider “same seat syndrome,” for example. How often have you found that people in a college classroom seem to gravitate every day to exactly the same chairs they’ve always sat in? Nobody says, “Hey, I’ve decided that this will be my chair forever” or “I see that that’s your territory, so I’ll never sit there,” do they?

Often norms are difficult for group members to express in words. What topics are okay or not okay to talk about during informal “chit-chat” may be a matter of unstated intuition rather than something that people can readily describe. Nevertheless, implicit norms may be extremely powerful, and even large groups are apt to have at least some implicit norms.

The cultural background each member brings to a group may lie beneath conscious awareness, yet it may exert a powerful influence on both that person’s and the group’s behavior and expectations. Just as a fish is unaware that it lives in water, a person may easily go through life and participate in group interactions without perceiving that he or she is the product of a culture.

Explicit Norms

Sometimes group norms are stated outright, either orally or in writing; then they are explicit norms. Such explicit rules may be imposed by an authority figure such as an executive or designated team leader. They may be part of formal policies or regulations. Wearing a uniform or answering the telephone in a certain way, for instance, may be written requirements in a workplace group.

Manuals, and even books, have been composed to provide members of groups with norms of how to behave. A manager in one organization we know wrote a policy in response to almost every problem or difficulty his division experienced. Because the manager served for more than 15 years in his position, the collection of these incident-based policies eventually filled a large tabbed binder. The bigger the group, the more likely it is that its norms will be rigid and explicit like these (Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L. (2002). *Human relations: Strategies for success* (2nd ed.). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill).

Table 1.5.1 Implicit, Explicit, Individual, and Whole-Group Norms.

Norm	Individual	Whole-Group
Explicit	Each new member receives a copy of the group’s bylaws	The group keeps minutes of all its meetings
Implicit	A person should raise his/her hand to signal a desire to speak	Someone brings doughnuts or other treats every time the group meets

Interaction, Procedure, Status, and Achievement Norms

Norms may relate to four aspects of a group’s identity: interaction, procedure, status, and achievement (Engleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson). Let’s look at each of these kinds of norms.

Interaction norms specify how people communicate in the group. Is it expected that everyone in the group should have an opportunity to speak about any topic that the group deals with? How long is it okay for one person to speak?

Procedure-oriented norms identify how the group functions. Does it hold meetings according to an established schedule? Who speaks first when the group gets together? Does someone distribute a written record of what happened after every time the group gets together?

Status norms indicate the degree of influence that members possess and how that influence is obtained and expressed. Who decides when a group discussion has concluded? When and how are officers for the group elected?

Achievement norms relate to standards the group sets for the nature and amount of its work. Must members cite readings or the comments of authorities when they make presentations to the group? What happens to a group member who completes tasks late or fails to complete them at all?

As we’ll discover in the next chapter, enforcing and changing the norms of a group throughout its life cycle may present substantial challenges. Those challenges can best be overcome if members share a common understanding of their group’s norms.

Key Takeaway

Group norms, whether explicit or implicit, underlie and affect almost all aspects of a group’s activities.

Exercise 1.5.1

1. Think of an unusual norm you've encountered in a group you were part of. Do you know how and from whom it originated? If not, what is your speculation about its origin?
2. Identify an implicit norm in a group you were part of. Would it have been a good idea to make the norm explicit instead? Why or why not?
3. Describe a group norm you've experienced that dealt with either interaction, procedure, status, or achievement.

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1.6: Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed group development and several theories. We have discussed group stages of development and their hallmark features. Working in a group can be challenging, but with insight and understanding into the group development process, the effective group communicator can make a positive difference.

Review Questions

1. Discuss storming as a stage, how to recognize it and the role it plays in group development.
2. Discuss adjournment as a stage, how to recognize it, and the role it plays in group development.
3. Select the least important group development stage and discuss why you selected it.
4. Select the most important group development stage and discuss why you selected it.
5. Conflict is present in all groups. Discuss one positive role of conflict in a group and provide an example.

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1.7: Additional Resources

- Read about groups and teams on the business website 1000 Ventures. http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/team_main.html
- Learn more about Tuckman's Linear Model. http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm
- Learn more about Dewey's sequence of group problem solving on this site from Manatee Community College in Florida. faculty.mccfl.edu/frithl/SPC1600/handouts/Dewey.htm
- Read a hands-on article about how to conduct productive meetings. www.articlesnatch.com/Article/How-To-Conduct-Productive-Meetings-/132050
- Visit this WikiHow site to learn how to use VOIP. http://www.wikihow.com/Use-VoIP
- Watch a YouTube video on cloud computing. www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q
- Read about groups and teams, and contribute to a wiki about them, on Wikibooks. http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Managing_Groups_and_Teams
- How did Twitter get started? Find out. http://twitter.com/about
- Take a (nonscientific) quiz to identify your leadership style. http://psychology.about.com/library/quiz/bl-leadershipquiz.htm

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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2.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. List the family and social groups you belong to and interact with on a regular basis—for example, within a 24-hour period or within a typical week. Please also consider forums, online communities, and websites where you follow threads of discussion or post regularly. Discuss your results with your classmates.
2. List the professional (i.e., work-related) groups you interact with in order of frequency. Please also consider informal as well as formal groups (e.g., the 10:30 coffee club and the colleagues you often share your commute with). Compare your results with those of your classmates.
3. Identify one group to which you no longer belong. List at least one reason why you no longer belong to this group. Compare your results with those of your classmates.

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." - Andrew Carnegie

Getting Started

As humans, we are social beings. We naturally form relationships with others. In fact, relationships are often noted as one of the most important aspects of a person's life, and they exist in many forms. Interpersonal communication occurs between two people, but group communication may involve two or more individuals. Groups are a primary context for interaction within the business community. Groups may have heroes and enemies, sages alongside new members. Groups overlap, and may share common goals, but may also engage in conflict. Groups can be supportive or coercive and can exert powerful influences over individuals.

Within a group, individuals may behave in distinct ways, use unique or specialized terms, or display symbols that have meaning to that group. Those same terms or symbols may be confusing, meaningless, or even unacceptable to another group. An individual may belong to both groups, adapting his or her communication patterns to meet group normative expectations. Groups are increasingly important across social media venues, and there are many examples of successful business ventures on the web that value and promote group interaction.

Groups use words to exchange meaning, establish territory, and identify who is a stranger versus who is a trusted member. Are you familiar with the term "troll"? It is often used to identify someone who is not a member of an online group or community, who does not share the values and beliefs of the group, and who posts a message in an online discussion board to initiate flame wars, cause disruption, or otherwise challenge the group members. Members often use words to respond to the challenge that are not otherwise common in the discussions, and the less than flattering descriptions of the troll are a rallying point.

Groups have existed throughout human history, and continue to follow familiar patterns across emerging venues as we adapt to technology, computer-mediated interaction, suburban sprawl, and modern life. We need groups, and groups need us. Our relationship with groups warrants attention to this interdependence as we come to know ourselves, our communities, and our world.

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2.2: What Is a Group?

Learning Objectives

1. Define groups and teams
2. Discuss how primary and secondary groups meet our interpersonal needs
3. Discuss how groups tend to limit their own size and create group norms

Let's get into a time machine and travel way, way back to join early humans in prehistoric times. Their needs are like ours today: they cannot exist or thrive without air, food, and water—and a sense of belonging. How did they meet these needs? Through cooperation and competition. If food scarcity was an issue, who got more and who got less? This serves as our first introduction to roles, status and power, and hierarchy within a group. When food scarcity becomes an issue, who gets to keep their spoon? In some Latin American cultures, having a job or earning a living is referred to by the slang term "*cuchara*," which literally means "spoon" and figuratively implies food, safety, and security.

Now let's return to the present and enter a modern office. Cubicles define territories, and corner offices denote status. In times of economic recession or slumping sales for the company, there is a greater need for cooperation, and there is competition for scarce resources. The loss of a "spoon"—or of one's cubicle—may now come in the form of a pink slip of paper instead of no food around the fire, but it is no less devastating.

We form self-identities through our communication with others, and much of that interaction occurs in a group context. A group may be defined as three or more individuals who affiliate, interact, or cooperate in a familial, social, or work context. Group communication may be defined as the exchange of information with those who are alike culturally, linguistically, and/or geographically. Group members may be known by their symbols, such as patches and insignia on a military uniform. They may be known by their use of specialized language or jargon; for example, someone in information technology may use the term "server" in reference to the internet, whereas someone in the foodservice industry may use "server" to refer to the worker who takes customer orders in a restaurant. Group members may also be known by their proximity, as in gated communities. Regardless of how the group defines itself, and regardless of the extent to which its borders are porous or permeable, a group recognizes itself as a group. Humans naturally make groups a part of their context or environment.

Types of Groups in the Workplace

As a skilled communicator, learning more about groups, group dynamics, management, and leadership will serve you well. Mergers, forced sales, downsizing, and entering new markets all call upon individuals within a business or organization to become members of groups. In our second introductory exercise you were asked to list the professional (i.e., work-related) groups you interact with in order of frequency. What did your list include? Perhaps you noted your immediate co-workers, your supervisor and other leaders in your work situation, members of other departments with whom you communicate, and the colleagues who are also your personal friends during off-work times. Groups may be defined by function. They can also be defined, from a developmental viewpoint, by the relationships within them. Groups can also be discussed in terms of their relationship to the individual, and the degree to which they meet interpersonal needs.

Some groups may be assembled at work to solve problems, and once the challenge has been resolved, they dissolve into previous or yet to be determined groups. Functional groups like this may be immediately familiar to you. You take a class in sociology from a professor of sociology, who is a member of the discipline of sociology. To be a member of a discipline is to be a disciple, and adhere to a common framework to for viewing the world. Disciplines involve a common set of theories that explain the world around us, terms to explain those theories, and have grown to reflect the advance of human knowledge. Compared to your sociology instructor, your physics instructor may see the world from a completely different perspective. Still, both may be members of divisions or schools, dedicated to teaching or research, and come together under the large group heading we know as the university.

In business, we may have marketing experts who are members of the marketing department, who perceive their tasks differently from a member of the sales staff or someone in accounting. You may work in the mailroom, and the mailroom staff is a group in itself, both distinct from and interconnected with the larger organization.



Figure 2.2.1: Groups and teams are an important part of business communication © Jupiter Images

Relationships are part of any group, and can be described in terms of status, power, control, as well as role, function, or viewpoint. Within a family, for example, the ties that bind you together may be common experiences, collaborative efforts, and even pain and suffering. The birth process may forge a relationship between mother and daughter, but it also may not. An adoption may transform a family. Relationships are formed through communication interaction across time, and often share a common history, values, and beliefs about the world around us.

In business, an idea may bring professionals together, and they may even refer to the new product or service as their "baby," speaking in reverent tones about a project they have taken from the drawing board and "birthed" into the real world. As in family communication, workgroups or teams may have challenges, rivalries, and even "birthing pains" as a product is adjusted, adapted, and transformed. Struggles are a part of relationships, both in families and business, and form a common history of shared challenged overcome through effort and hard work.

Through conversations and a shared sense that you and your co-workers belong together, you meet many of your basic human needs, such as the need to feel included, the need for affection, and the need for control. (Schutz, W. (1966). *The Interpersonal Underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books). In a work context, "affection" may sound odd, but we all experience affection at work in the form of friendly comments like "good morning," "have a nice weekend," and "good job!" Our professional lives also fulfill more basic needs such as air, food, and water, as well as safety. While your workgroup may be gathered together with common goals, such as to deliver the mail in a timely fashion to the corresponding departments and individuals, your daily interactions may well go beyond this functional perspective.

In the same way, your family may provide a place for you at the table and meet your basic needs, but they also may not meet other needs. If you grow to understand yourself and your place in a way that challenges group norms, you will be able to choose which parts of your life to share and to withhold in different groups, and to choose where to seek acceptance, affection, and control.

Primary and Secondary Groups

There are fundamentally two types of groups that can be observed in many contexts, from church, to school, from family to work: primary and secondary groups. The hierarchy denotes the degree to which the group(s) meet your interpersonal needs. Primary groups meet most, if not all, of one's needs. Groups that meet some, but not all, needs are called secondary groups. Secondary groups often include work groups, where the goal is to complete a task or solve a problem. If you are a member of the sales department, your purpose is to sell.

In terms of problem-solving, work groups can accomplish more than individuals. People, each of whom have specialized skills, talents, experience, or education come together in new combinations with new challenges, find new perspectives to create unique approaches that they themselves would not have formulated alone.

Secondary groups may meet your need for professional acceptance, and celebrate your success, but may not meet your need for understanding and sharing on a personal level. Family members may understand you in ways that your co-workers cannot, and vice versa.

If Two's Company and Three's a Crowd, What Is a Group?

This old cliché refers to the human tendency to form pairs. Pairing is the most basic form of relationship formation; it applies to childhood "best friends," college roommates, romantic couples, business partners, and many other dyads (two-person relationships). A group, by definition, includes at least three people. We can categorize groups in terms of their size and complexity.

When we discuss demographic groups as part of a market study, we may focus on large numbers of individuals that share common characteristics. If you are the producer of an ecologically innovative car such as the Smart ForTwo, and know your customers have an average of four members in their family, you may discuss developing a new model with additional seats. While the target audience is a group, car customers don't relate to each other as a unified whole. Even if they form car clubs and have regional

gatherings, a newsletter, and competitions at their local race tracks each year, they still subdivide the overall community of car owners into smaller groups.

The larger the group grows, the more likely it is to subdivide. Analysis of these smaller, or microgroups, is increasingly a point of study as the internet allows individuals to join people of similar mind or habit to share across time and distance. A microgroup is a small, independent group that has a link, affiliation, or association with a larger group. With each additional group member the number of possible interactions increases. (Harris, T., & Sherblom, J. (1999). *Small Group and Team Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.'McLean, S. (2003). *The Basics Of Speech Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Table 2.2.1 Possible Interaction in Groups

Number of Group Members	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of Possible Interactions	2	9	28	75	186	441	1,056

Small groups normally contain between three and eight people. One person may involve intrapersonal communication, while two may constitute interpersonal communication, and both may be present within a group communication context. You may think to yourself before taking a speech turn or writing your next post, and you may turn to your neighbor or co-worker and have a side conversation, but a group relationship normally involves three to eight people.

In Table 2.2.1, you can quickly see how the number of possible interactions grows according to how many people are in the group. At some point, we all find the possible and actual interactions overwhelming and subdivide into smaller groups. Forums may have hundreds or thousands of members, and you may have hundreds of friends on MySpace or Facebook, but how many do you regularly communicate with? You may be tempted to provide a number well north of eight, but if you exclude the “all to one” messages, such as a general Twitter to everyone (but no one person in particular), you’ll find the group norms will appear.

Group norms are customs, standards, and behavioral expectations that emerge as a group forms. If you blog every day on your FaceBook page, and your friends stop by to post on your wall and comment, and then stop for a week, you’ll violate a group norm. They will wonder if you are sick or in the hospital where you can’t access a computer to keep them updated. If, however, you only post once a week, the group will come to naturally expect your customary post. Norms involve expectations, self and group imposed, that often arise as groups form and develop.

If there are more than eight members, it becomes a challenge to have equal participation, where everyone has a chance to speak, be heard, listen, and respond. Some will dominate, others will recede, and smaller groups will form. Finding a natural balance within a group can also be a challenge. Small groups need to have enough members to generate a rich and stimulating exchange of ideas, information, and interaction, but not so many people that what each brings cannot be shared. (Galanes, G., Adams, K., & Brilhart, J. (2000). *Communication in Groups: Applications and Skills* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill).

Key Takeaway

Forming groups fulfills many human needs, such as the need for affiliation, affection, and control; individuals also need to cooperate in groups to fulfill basic survival needs.

Exercise 2.2.1

1. Think of the online groups you participate in. Forums may have hundreds or thousands of members, and you may have hundreds of friends on MySpace or Facebook, but how many do you regularly communicate with? Exclude the “all-to-one” messages, such as a general Twitter to everyone (but no one person in particular). Do you find that you gravitate toward the group norm of eight or fewer group members? Discuss your answer with your classmates.
2. What are some of the primary groups in your life? How do they compare with the secondary groups in your life? Write a 2–3 paragraph description of these groups and compare it with a classmate’s description.

3. What group is most important to people? Create a survey with at least two questions, identify a target sample size, and conduct your survey. Report how you completed the activity and your findings. Compare the results with those of your classmates.
4. Are there times when it is better to work alone rather than in a group? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.

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2.3: Group Life Cycles and Member Roles

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the typical stages in the life cycle of a group
2. Describe different types of group members and group member roles

Groups are dynamic systems, in constant change. Groups grow together and eventually come apart. People join groups and others leave. This dynamic changes and transforms the very nature of the group. Group socialization involves how the group members interact with one another and form relationships. Just as you were once born, and changed your family, they changed you. You came to know a language and culture, a value system, and a set of beliefs that influence you to this day. You came to be socialized, to experience the process of learning to associate, communicate, or interact within a group. A group you belong to this year—perhaps a soccer team or the cast of a play—may not be part of your life next year. And those who are in leadership positions may ascend or descend the leadership hierarchy as the needs of the group, and other circumstances, change over time.

Group Life Cycle Patterns

Your life cycle is characterized by several steps, and while it doesn't follow a prescribed path, there are universal stages we can all recognize. You were born. You didn't choose your birth, your parents, your language, or your culture, but you came to know them through communication. You came to know yourself, learned skills, and discovered talents, and met other people. You worked, learned, lived, and loved, and as you aged, minor injuries took longer to heal. You competed in ever-increasing age groups in your favorite sport, and while your time for each performance may have increased as you aged, your experience allowed you to excel in other ways. Where you were once the novice, you have now learned something to share. You lived to see some of your friends pass before you, and the moment will arrive when you too must confront death.

In the same way, groups experience similar steps and stages and take on many of the characteristics we associate with life. (Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153). They grow, overcome illness and dysfunction, and transform across time. No group, just as no individual, lives forever.

Your first day on the job may be comparable to the first day you went to school. At home you may have learned some of the basics, like how to write with a pencil, but knowledge of that skill and its application are two different things. People spoke in different ways at school than at home, and you came to understand the importance of recess, of raising your hand to get the teacher's attention, and how to follow other school rules. At work, you may have trained for your profession, but the academic knowledge only serves as your foundation, much as your socialization at home served to guide you at school. On the job they use jargon terms, have schedules that may include coffee breaks (recess), have a supervisor (teacher), and have their own rules, explicit and understood. On the first day, it was all new, even if many of the elements were familiar.

In order to better understand group development and its life cycle, many researchers have described the universal stages and phases of groups. While there are modern interpretations of these stages, most draw from the model proposed by Tuckman. (Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384–399). This model, shown in Table 2.3.1, specifies the usual order of the phases of group development, and allows us to predict several stages we can anticipate as we join a new group.

Tuckman begins with the forming stage as the initiation of group formation. This stage is also called the orientation stage because individual group members come to know each other. Group members who are new to each other and can't predict each other's behavior can be expected to experience the stress of uncertainty. Uncertainty theory states that we choose to know more about others with whom we have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown. (Berger, C., & Calabrese, R. (1975). Some explorations in initial interactions and beyond: toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 1*, 99–112.' Berger, C. (1986). Response uncertain outcome values in predicted relationships: uncertainty reduction theory then and now. *Human Communication Research, 13*, 34–38.' Gudykunst, W. (1995). Anxiety/uncertainty management theory. In R. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Intercultural Communication Theory* (pp. 8–58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage). The more we know about others, and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict

how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week. Individuals are initially tentative and display caution as they begin to learn about the group and its members.

If you don't someone very well, it is easy to offend. Each group member brings to the group a set of experiences, combined with education and a self-concept. You won't be able to read this information on a name tag, you will only come to know it through time and interaction. Since the possibility of overlapping and competing viewpoints and perspectives exists, the group will experience a storming stage, a time of struggles as the members themselves sort out their differences. There may be more than one way to solve the problem or task at hand, and some group members may prefer one strategy over another. Some members of the group may be senior to the organization in comparison to you, and members may treat them differently. Some group members may be as new as you are and just as uncertain about everyone's talents, skills, roles, and self-perceptions. The wise communicator will anticipate the storming stage and help facilitate opportunities for the members to resolve uncertainty before the work commences. There may be challenges for leadership and conflicting viewpoints. The sociology professor sees the world differently than the physics professor. The sales agent sees things differently than someone from accounting. A manager who understands and anticipates this normal challenge in the group's life cycle can help the group become more productive.

A clear definition of the purpose and mission of the group can help the members focus their energies. Interaction prior to the first meeting can help reduce uncertainty. Coffee and calories can help bring a group together. Providing the group with what they need, and opportunities to know each other, prior to their task can increase efficiency.

Groups that make a successful transition from the storming stage will next experience the norming stage, where the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behavior and interaction. Who speaks first? Who takes notes? Who is creative and visual, and who is detail-oriented? Sometimes our job titles and functions speak for themselves, but human beings are complex. We are not simply a list of job functions, and in the dynamic marketplace of today's business environment you will often find that people have talents and skills well beyond their "official" role or task. Drawing on these strengths can make the group more effective.

The norming stage is marked by less division and more collaboration. The level of anxiety associated with interaction is generally reduced, making for a more positive work climate that promotes listening. When people feel less threatened, and their needs are met, they are more likely to focus their complete attention on the purpose of the group. If they are still concerned with who does what, and whether they will speak in error, the interaction framework will stay in the storming stage. Tensions are reduced when the normative expectations are known, and the degree to which a manager can describe these at the outset can reduce the amount of time the group remains in uncertainty. Group members generally express more satisfaction with clear expectations and are more inclined to participate.

Ultimately, the purpose of a workgroup is performance, and the preceding stages lead us to the performing stage, in which the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals. To facilitate performance, group members can't skip the initiation of getting to know each other, or the sorting out of roles and norms, but they can try to focus on performance with clear expectations from the moment the group is formed. Productivity is often how we measure success in business and industry, and the group has to produce. Outcome assessments may have been built into the system from the beginning and would serve as a benchmark for success. Wise managers know to celebrate success, as it brings more success, social cohesion, group participation, and a sense of job satisfaction. Incremental gains toward a benchmark may also be cause for celebration and support, and failure to reach a goal should be regarded as an opportunity for clarification.

It is generally wiser to focus on the performance of the group rather than individual contributions. Managers and group members will want to offer assistance to underperformers as well as congratulating members for their contributions. If the goal is to create a community where competition pushes each member to perform, individual highlights may serve your needs, but if you want a group to solve a problem or address a challenge as a group, you have to promote group cohesion. Members need to feel a sense of belonging, and praise (or the lack thereof) can be a sword with two edges. One stimulates and motivates, while the other demoralizes and divides.

Groups should be designed to produce and perform in ways and at levels that individuals cannot, or else you should consider compartmentalizing the tasks. The performing stage is where productivity occurs, and it is necessary to make sure the group has what it needs to perform. Missing pieces, parts, or information can stall the group, and reset the cycle to storming all over again. Loss of performance is inefficiency, and that carries a cost. Managers will be measured by the group's productivity and

performance, and their success reflects on the manager. Make sure the performing stage is one that is productive and healthy for its members.

Imagine that you are the manager of a group that has produced an award-winning design for an ecologically innovative four-seat car. Their success is your success. Their celebrations are yours, even if you are not the focus of them. A manager manages the process, while group members perform. If you were a member of the group, and you helped design the beltline, you made a fundamental contribution to the style of the car. Individual consumers may never consider the line from the front fender, across the doors, to the rear taillight as they make a purchase decision, but they will recognize beauty. You will know that you could not have achieved that fundamental part of car design without help from the engineers in the group, and if the number-crunching accountants had not seen the efficiency of the production process that produced it, it may never have survived the transition from prototype to production. The group came together and accomplished its goals with amazing results.

Now, as typically happens eventually with all groups, the time has come to move on to new assignments. In the adjourning stage, group members leave the group. The group may cease to exist, or it may be transformed with new members and a new set of goals. Your contributions may have caught the attention of management, and you may be assigned to the redesign of the flagship vehicle, the halo car of your marque or brand. It's quite a professional honor, and it's yours because of your successful work in a group. Others will be reassigned to tasks that require their talents and skills, and you may or may not collaborate with them in the future.

You may miss the interactions with the members, even the more cantankerous ones, and will experience both relief and a sense of loss. Like life, the group process is normal, and mixed emotions are to be expected. A wise manager anticipates this stage and facilitates the separation with skill and ease. We often close this process with a ritual marking its passing, though the ritual may be as formal as an award or as informal as a "thank you" or a verbal acknowledgment of a job well done over coffee and calories.

On a more sober note, it is important not to forget that groups can reach the adjourning stage without having achieved success. Some businesses go bankrupt, some departments are closed, and some individuals lose their positions after a group fails to perform. Adjournment can come suddenly and unexpectedly, or gradually and piece by piece. Either way, a skilled business communicator will be prepared and recognize it as part of the classic group life cycle.

Table 2.3.1 Tuckman's Linear Model of Group Development. (Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63,* 384–399).

Stages	Activities
Forming	Members come together, learn about each other, and determine the purpose of the group.
Storming	Members engage in more direct communication and get to know each other. Conflicts between group members will often arise during this stage.
Norming	Members establish spoken or unspoken rules about how they communicate and work. Status, rank and roles in the group are established.
Performing	Members fulfill their purpose and reach their goal.
Adjourning	Members leave the group.

The Life Cycle of Member Roles

Just as groups go through a life cycle when they form and eventually adjourn, so the members of groups fulfill different roles during this life cycle. These roles, proposed by Moreland and Levine, (Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153) are summarized in Table 2.3.2.

Suppose you are about to graduate from school, and you are in the midst of an employment search. You've gathered extensive information on a couple of local businesses and are aware that they will be participating in the university job fair. You've explored their websites, talked to people currently employed at each company, and learned what you can from the public information

available. At this stage, you are considered a potential member. You may have an electrical, chemical, or mechanical engineering degree soon, but you are not a member of an engineering team.

You show up at the job fair in professional attire and completely prepared. The representatives of each company are respectful, cordial, and give you contact information. One of them even calls a member of the organization on the spot and arranges an interview for you next week. You are excited at the prospect and want to learn more. You are still a potential member.

The interview goes well the following week. The day after the meeting you receive a call for a follow-up interview, which leads to a committee interview. A few weeks later, the company calls you with a job offer. However, in the meantime, you have also been interviewing with other potential employers, and you are waiting to hear back from two of them. You are still a potential member.

After careful consideration, you decide to take the job offer and start the next week. The projects look interesting, you'll be gaining valuable experience, and the commute to work is reasonable. Your first day on the job is positive, and they've assigned you a mentor. The conversations are positive, but at times you feel lost, as if they are speaking a language you can't quite grasp. As a new group member, your level of acceptance will increase as you begin learning the groups' rules, spoken and unspoken. (Fisher, B. A. (1970). Decision emergence: phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs, 37*, 56–66). You will gradually move from the potential member role to the role of a new group member as you learn to fit into the group.



Figure 2.3.1: As a member of a new group, you will learn new customs and traditions © Jupiter Images

Over time and projects, you gradually increase your responsibilities. You are no longer looked at as the new person, and you can follow almost every conversation. You can't quite say "I remember when" because your tenure hasn't been that long, but you are a known quantity and know your way around. You are a full member of the group. Full members enjoy knowing the rules and customs, and can even create new rules. New group members look to full members for leadership and guidance. Full group members can control the agenda and have considerable influence on the agenda and activities.

Full members of a group, however, can and do come into conflict. When you were a new member, you may have remained silent when you felt you had something to say, but now you state your case. There is more than one way to get the job done. You may suggest new ways that emphasize efficiency over existing methods. Co-workers who have been working in the department for several years may be unwilling to adapt and change, and tension may result. Expressing different views can cause conflict and may even interfere with communication.

When this type of tension arises, divergent group members pull back, contribute less, and start to see themselves as separate from the group. Divergent group members have less eye contact, seek out each other's opinions less frequently, and listen defensively. At the beginning of the process, you felt a sense of belonging, but now you don't. Marginal group members start to look outside the group for their interpersonal needs.

After several months of trying to cope with these adjustments, you decide that you never really investigated the other two companies; that your job search process was incomplete. Perhaps you should take a second look at the options. You will report to work on Monday but will start the process of becoming an ex-member, one who no longer belongs. You may experience a sense of relief upon making this decision, given that you haven't felt like you belonged to the group for a while. When you line up your next job and submit your resignation, you make it official.

Table 2.3.2 The Life Cycle of Member Roles. (Moreland, R., & Levine, J. (1982). Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual group relations. (L. Berkowitz, Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 15*, 153).

1	Potential Member	Curiosity and Interest
2	New Member	Joined the group but still an outsider, and unknown
3	Full Member	Knows the "rules" and is looked to for leadership
4	Divergent Member	Focuses on differences
5	Marginal Member	No longer involved
6	Ex-Member	No longer considered a member

This process has no set timetable. Some people overcome differences and stay in the group for years. Others get promoted and leave the group only when they get transferred to regional headquarters. As a skilled communicator, you will recognize the signs of divergence, just like you anticipate the storming stage, and do your best to facilitate success.

Positive and Negative Member Roles

If someone in your group always makes everyone laugh, that can be a distinct asset when the news is less than positive. At times when you have to get work done, however, the class clown may become a distraction. Notions of positive and negative will often depend on the context when discussing groups. Table 2.3.3 and Table 2.3.4 list both positive and negative roles people sometimes play in a group setting. (Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. *Journal of Social Issues, 37*, 41–49.ˈMcLean, S. (2005). *The Basics of Interpersonal Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Table 2.3.3 Positive Roles. (Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. *Journal of Social Issues, 37*, 41–49.ˈMcLean, S. (2005). *The Basics Of Interpersonal Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

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

Table 2.3.4 Negative Roles (Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. *Journal of Social Issues, 37*, 41–49.ˈMcLean, S. (2005). *The Basics of Interpersonal Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Dominator	Dominates discussion, not allowing others to take their turn
Recognition Seeker	Relates discussion to their accomplishments, seeks attention
Special-Interest Pleader	Relates discussion to special interest or personal agenda
Blocker	Blocks attempts at consensus consistently
Joker or Clown	Seeks attention through humor and distracts group members

Now that we've examined a classical view of positive and negative group member roles, let's examine another perspective. While some personality traits and behaviors may negatively influence groups, some are positive or negative depending on the context.

Just as the class clown can have a positive effect in lifting spirits or a negative effect in distracting members, so a dominator may be exactly what is needed for quick action. An emergency physician doesn't have time to ask all the group members in the emergency

unit how they feel about a course of action; instead, a self-directed approach based on training and experience may be necessary. In contrast, the pastor of a church may have ample opportunity to ask members of the congregation their opinions about a change in the format of Sunday services; in this situation, the role of coordinator or elaborator is more appropriate than that of dominator.

The group is together because they have a purpose or goal, and normally they are capable of more than any one individual member could be on their own, so it would be inefficient to hinder that progress. But a blocker, who cuts off collaboration, does just that. If a group member interrupts another and presents a viewpoint or information that suggests a different course of action, the point may be well taken and serve the collaborative process. If that same group member repeatedly engages in blocking behavior, then the behavior becomes a problem. A skilled communicator will learn to recognize the difference, even when positive and negative aren't completely clear.

Key Takeaway

Groups and their individual members come together and grow apart in predictable patterns.

Exercise 2.3.1

1. Is it possible for an outsider (a non-group member) to help a group move from the storming stage to the norming stage? Explain your answer and present it to the class.
2. Think of a group of which you are a member and identify some roles played by group members, including yourself. Have your roles, and those of others, changed over time? Are some roles more positive than others? Discuss your answers with your classmates.
3. In the course where you are using this book, think of yourself and your classmates as a group. At what stage of group formation are you currently? What stage will you be at when the school year ends?
4. Think of a group you no longer belong to. At what point did you become an ex-member? Were you ever a marginal group member or a full member? Write a 2–3 paragraph description of the group, how and why you became a member, and how and why you left. Share your description with a classmate.

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2.4: Why Communicate in Groups?

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the role of interpersonal needs in group communication

"I love mankind. It's people I can't stand." - Charles M. Schulz (through Charlie Brown)

"Communication is a continual balancing act, juggling the conflicting needs for intimacy and independence." - Deborah Tannen



Figure 2.4.1

Munro Leaf wrote and illustrated a classic children's book in 1936 called *Manners Can Be Fun*. Here are the drawings and text from its first few pages:



Figure 2.4.2

If you lived all by yourself out on a desert island, others would not care whether you had good manners or not. It wouldn't bother them. But if someone else lived there with you, you would both have to learn to get along together pleasantly.

If you did not, you would probably quarrel and fight all the time, or—

stay apart and be lonesome because you could not have a good time together. Neither would be much fun.

Although Leaf's drawings and text are simple and plain, they convey important truths about human beings: we need to get along with other people, and to get along we need to communicate in groups.

If we ask ourselves, then, "What's the point of communicating in groups instead of just sitting at home or in a workplace alone?" we'll conclude that our group interactions and relationships help us meet basic human needs. We may also recognize that not all our needs are met by any one person, job, experience, or context; instead, we need to diversify our communication interactions in order to meet our needs. (McLean, S. (2010). *Business Communication for Success*. Irvington, NY: Flat World Knowledge).

At first, you may be skeptical of the idea that we communicate to meet our basic needs. Let's consider two theories on the subject, however, and see how well they predict, describe, and anticipate our tendency to interact.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, represented in Figure 2.3.3 may be familiar to you. (Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and Personality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row). We need the resources listed in level one (e.g., air, food, and water) to survive. If we have met those basic needs, we move to level two: safety. A job may represent this level of safety at its most basic level. Regardless of how much satisfaction you may receive from a job well done, a paycheck ultimately represents meeting the basic needs of many.

If we feel safe and secure, we are more likely to seek the companionship of others. Human beings tend to form groups naturally, and if basic needs are met, love and belonging occur in level three. Perhaps you've been new to a class, or a club, or at work and didn't understand the first thing about what was going on. Conflict may have been part of that experience, but you were probably still eager to interact with the other people in the group rather than staying by yourself like the miserable stick figure in Leaf's final drawing of the desert island.

As you came to know what was what and who was who, you learned how to negotiate the landscape and avoid landmines. Your self-esteem (level four) improved as you perceived that you belonged as part of the group.

Over time, you may have learned your job tasks and the strategies for succeeding in your class, your club, or your job. Perhaps you even came to be known as a reliable resource for others, as someone who would know how to respond helpfully if someone came to you with a problem. People may eventually have looked up to you within your role and have been impressed with your ability to make a difference. Maslow called this "self-actualization" (level five) and discussed how people come to perceive a sense of control or empowerment over their context and environment.

Beyond self-actualization, Maslow recognized our innate need to know (level six) that drives us to grow and learn, explore our environment, or engage in new experiences. We come to appreciate a sense of self that extends beyond our immediate experiences, beyond the function, and into the community and the representational. We can take in beauty for its own sake, and value aesthetics (level seven) that we previously ignored or had little time to consider.

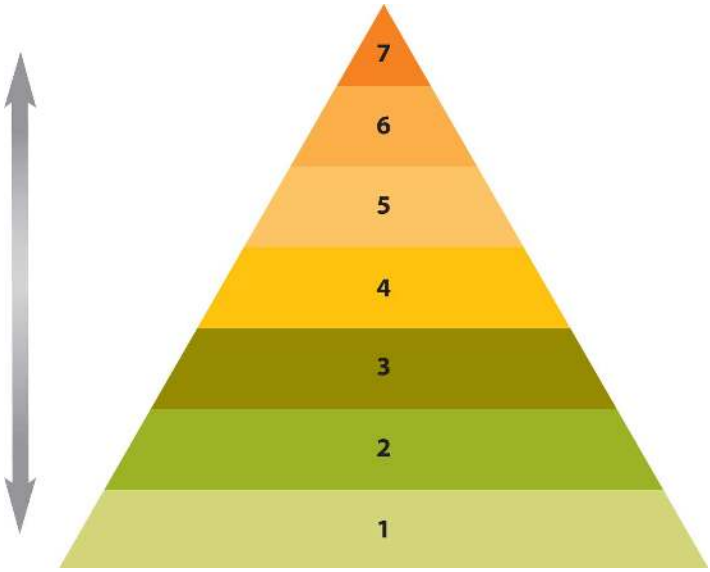


Figure 2.4.3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory is individualistic, focusing primarily on how one person at a time may meet his or her basic needs. The theory has been criticized in light of the fact that many cultures are not centered on the individual. It's also been pointed out that even people whose physical resources are severely limited can enjoy rich interpersonal relationships and experience cultural, intellectual, and social treasures. Nevertheless, Maslow's hierarchy serves as a good place from which to begin our discussion about group communication.

What do we need from our environment? Why do we communicate in groups? The answers to both questions are often related.

William Schutz's Interpersonal Needs offered an alternate version of human interaction. (Schutz, W. (1966). *The Interpersonal Underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books). Like Maslow, he considered the universal aspects of our needs, but he contended that they operate within a range or continuum for each person. (McLean, S. (2010). *Business Communication for Success*. Irvington, NY: Flat World Knowledge). According to Schutz, the need for affection, or appreciation, is basic to all humans. We all need to be recognized and feel like we belong, but some people need more interaction with groups than others. Schutz describes underpersonals as people who seek limited interaction. On the opposite end of the spectrum, you may know people in school or at work who continually seek attention and affirmation. Schutz refers to these people as overpersonals. The

individual who strikes a healthy balance between meeting needs through solitary action and group interaction is referred to as a personal individual.

Humans also have a need for control, or the ability to influence people and events. But that need may vary according to the context, environment, and sense of security. If you act primarily autonomously to plan and organize your affairs as part of a group, Schutz would describe your efforts to control your situation as autocratic, or self-directed. Abdicrats, on the other hand, are people who according to Schutz shift the burden of responsibility from themselves to others and rely upon others for a sense of control. Democrats, finally, balance individual and group and are apt to gather and share information on the road to group progress.

Finally, Schutz echoed Maslow in his assertion that belonging is a basic interpersonal need, but he noted that it exists within a range or continuum and that some people need more and others less. Undersocials may be less likely to seek interaction, may prefer smaller groups, and will generally not be found on center stage. Oversocials, by contrast, crave attention and are highly motivated to seek belonging. A social person is one who strikes a healthy balance between being withdrawn and being the constant center of attention.

Schutz described these three interpersonal needs of affection, control, and belonging as interdependent and variable. In one context, an individual may have a high need for control, while in others he or she may not perceive the same level of motivation or compulsion to meet that need. Maslow and Schutz offer us two related versions of interpersonal needs that begin to address the central question: why communicate in groups?

We communicate with each other to meet our needs, regardless of how we define those needs. From the time you are a newborn infant crying for food or the time you are a toddler learning to say “please” when requesting a cup of milk, to the time you are an adult learning the rituals of a college classroom or a job interview, you learn to communicate in groups to gain a sense of self within the group or community, meeting your basic needs as you grow and learn.

Key Takeaway

Human beings communicate in groups in order to meet some of their most important basic needs.

Exercise 2.4.1

1. Review the types of individuals from Schutz’s theory described in this section. Which types do you think fit you? Which types fit some of your coworkers or classmates? Why? Share your opinions with your classmates and compare your self-assessment with the types they believe describe you.
2. Think of two or more different situations and how you might express your personal needs differ from one situation to the other. Have you observed similar variations in personal needs in other people from one situation to another? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.

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2.5: Group Communication Theory

Learning Objectives

1. Identify ways in which group communication theory can help groups
2. Understand how theories are properly developed
3. Identify prominent theoretical paradigms regarding communication

"[C]reating a new theory is not like destroying an old barn and erecting a skyscraper in its place. It is rather like climbing a mountain, gaining new and wider views, discovering unexpected connections between our starting point and its rich environment. But the point from which we started out still exists, and can be seen, although it appears smaller and forms a tiny part of our broad view gained by the mastery of the obstacles on our adventurous way up." - Albert Einstein (Einstein, A., & Infeld, L. (1938). The Evolution of Physics. New York: Simon and Schuster.)

"In making theories, always keep a window open so that you can throw one out if necessary." - Béla Schick

Functions of Group Communication Theory

Theory helps us to bear our ignorance of facts. - George Santayana in The Sense of Beauty

What can theories about group communication do for us? Like all theories, they can help us explain, postdict, and predict behavior. Specifically, theory can help us deal with group communication in four ways. (Hahn, L.K., Lipper, L., & Paynton, S.T. (2011). *Survey of Communication Study*. http://bit.ly/ImokVO).

First, these theories can help us interpret and understand what happens when we communicate in groups. For example, a person from a culture such as Japan's may be taken by surprise when someone from mainstream US culture expresses anger openly in a formal meeting. If we're familiar with a theory which describes and identifies "high" versus "low-context" cultures, we can make better sense of interactions like this with people from cultures other than our own.

Second, the theories can help us choose what elements of our experience in groups to pay attention to. As Einstein wrote, "It is theory that decides what can be observed." If we know that cultures can be "high-" or "low-context," then when we interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds we'll watch for behaviors that we believe are associated with each of those categories. For example, if people are from high-context cultures they may tend to avoid explicit explanations and questions.

Third, the theories can enlarge our understanding. Theories strengthen as they're examined and tested in the light of people's experience. Students, scholars, and citizens can all broaden their knowledge by discussing and explaining theories. Reflecting on questions and other reactions they receive in response can also refine theories and make them more useful.

Fourth, the theories may impel us to challenge prevailing cultural, social, and political practices. Most of the ways that people behave in groups are products of habit, custom, and learning. They aren't, in other words, innate. By applying theoretical perspectives to how groups operate, we may be able to identify fairer and more just approaches.

Where Group Communication Theories Come From

"It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data." - Arthur Conan Doyle (via Sherlock Holmes in "A Scandal in Bohemia," 1891)

To develop group communication theories, people generally follow a three-step process that parallels what Western science calls "the scientific method." (Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2005). *Theories of Human Communication* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth).

1. Ask important questions. What stages should most groups expect to pass through as they form and adopt goals? How does the size of a group affect its ability to pursue its goals? What methods of group decision-making work best with which kinds of people? Which blend of individual personalities contributes most to the satisfaction of a group? All these questions are meaningful and significant to groups, and all of them have served as the foundation of theories about group communication.
2. Observe people's behavior in groups. To be productive, this observation should proceed on the basis of well-defined terms and within clear boundaries. To find out which blend of individual personalities contributes most to group satisfaction, for instance,

it's necessary first to define "personality" and "satisfaction." It is also important to decide which kinds of groups to observe under which circumstances.
3. Analyze the results of the observation process and base new theories upon them. The theories should fit the results of the observations as closely as possible.

You may want to go online and look at a journal devoted to group communication topics, such as "Small Group Research." If you do, you'll see that the titles of its articles refer often to existing theories and that the articles themselves describe experiments with groups that have tested and elaborated upon those theories.

Theoretical Paradigms for Group Communication

Groups of theories may compose theoretical paradigms, which are collections of concepts, values, assumptions, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for a community that shares them. (Hahn, L.K., Lipper, L., & Paynton, S.T. (2011). *Survey of Communication Study*. http://bit.ly/ImokVO) Group communication theories tend to cluster around the following five paradigms:

- The systems theory paradigm. Systems theory examines the inputs, processes, and outputs of systems as those systems strive toward balance, or homeostasis. This paradigm for group communication emphasizes that processes and relationships among components of a group are interdependent and goal-oriented. Thus, the adage that "it is impossible to do just one thing" is taken to be true by systems theorists. Focus is placed more on developing a complete picture of groups than upon examining their parts in isolation.
- The rhetorical theories paradigm. The field of rhetoric originated with the Greeks and Romans and is the study of how symbols affect human beings. For example, Aristotle's three elements of persuasion—ethos (credibility), logos (logic), and pathos (appeal to emotion)—are still used today to describe and categorize people's statements. Rhetorical analysis of group communication lays the greatest emphasis on describing messages, exploring their functions, and evaluating their effectiveness.
- The empirical laws paradigm. This paradigm, also known as the positivist approach, bases investigation of group communication on the assumption that universal laws govern human interaction in much the same way that gravity or magnetism act upon all physical objects. "If X, then Y" statements may be used to characterize communication behavior in this paradigm. For instance, you might claim that "If people in a group sit in a circle, a larger proportion of them will share in a conversation than if they are arranged in rows facing one direction." The effects of empirical laws governing group communication are usually held to be highly likely rather than absolute.
- The human rules paradigm. Instead of contending that behavior by people in groups conforms to absolute and reliable laws, this paradigm holds that people construct and then follow rules for their interactions. Because these rules are subjective and arise out of social circumstances and cultural environments which may change, they can't be pinned down the way that laws describing the physical world can be and are apt to evolve over time.
- The critical theories paradigm. Should we simply analyze and describe the ways in which groups communicate, or should we challenge those ways and propose others? The critical theories paradigm proposes that we should strive to understand how communication may be used to exert power and oppress people. (Foss, K. A., & Foss, S. K. (1989). Incorporating the feminist perspective in communication scholarship: A research commentary. In C. Spitzack & K. Carter (Eds.), *Doing Research on Women's Communication: Alternative Perspectives in Theory and Method* (pp. 64–94). Norwood, NJ: Ablex). When we have determined how this oppression takes place, we should seek to remedy it. This combination of theory and action is defined as praxis.

No single theoretical paradigm is accepted by everyone who studies group communication. Whether a description or prediction concerning people's behavior in groups is found to be accurate or not will depend on which viewpoint we come from and which kinds of groups we observe.

Key Takeaway

If they are properly developed, theories of group communication can help group members understand and influence group processes.

Exercise 2.5.1

1. Identify a group that you've been part of at school or in the workplace. What aspects of its behavior do you feel you might have better understood if you'd had a grasp of group communication theory?
2. Think of another significant experience you've had recently as part of a group. Of the theoretical paradigms for group communication described in this section, which would you feel most comfortable in applying to the experience? Which paradigm, if any, do you feel it would be inappropriate to apply? Why?

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2.6: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. In order to communicate with others, you need to know yourself. Please complete a personal inventory, a simple list of what comes to mind in these five areas:
    1. Your knowledge. What is your favorite subject?
    2. Your skills. What can you do?
    3. Your experience. What has been your experience writing to date?
    4. Your interests. What do you enjoy?
    5. Your relationships. Who is important to you?
2. To be a successful communicator, it is helpful to be conscious of how you view yourself and others. Please consider what groups you belong to, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity or culture. Imagine that you had to communicate your perception of just one of these groups. Please choose five terms from the list below, and indicate the degree that the term describes the group accurately.
    - Term Describes the Group Accurately = 1
    - Strongly Disagree = 2
    - Somewhat Disagree = 3
    - Neither Agree nor Disagree = 4
    - Somewhat Agree = 5
    - Strongly Agree = 6

Independent	Dependent
Hard working	Lazy
Progressive	Traditional
Sophisticated	Simple
Creative	Practical

3. Now consider how you know someone is listening to you. Make a list of the behaviors you observe that indicate they are listening, and understand you. Share and compare the results with classmates.

Your mind is like a parachute. It works best when it's open. - Anonymous

If speaking is silver then listening is gold. - Turkish Proverb

Getting Started

Communicating involves the translation of your thoughts and ideas to words. Speaking or writing involves sharing your perspective with others. Listening, therefore, involves making sense of what is shared with us, and can require all of our attention. A Cuban saying captures it best: "Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. In every head is a world." For us to understand each other we have to listen, and make sense of each other's perspectives. In order for us to work effectively as a group or team, we need to listen to each other, not just hear each other or wait for our turn to deliver a monologue, make our point, or convince others that we are right. Each group member brings a valuable perspective, indeed a world, to contribute to the team.

When group members interact, do you find yourself getting lost in your own thoughts. While text messages and other distractions can be powerful, the most distracting voice by far is our own internal monologue. If you silently talk to yourself, the action is a reflection of the communication process, but you play the role of audience. In your own head, you may make sense of your words and their meaning. You may have rehearsed your "lines" or what you want to say, and completing miss the turns and contributions in the conversation. Then, when I hear what you said, what you meant may escape me. I might not "get it" because I don't know you, your references, your perspectives, your word choices, your underlying meaning and motivation for speaking in the first place.

In this chapter we'll discuss perspectives, and how people perceive information, as we learn how communication is an imperfect bridge to understanding each other. It requires our constant attention, maintenance, and effort. Listening is anything but simple or easy.

Sometimes people mistake hearing for listening. Hearing involves the physiological process of recognizing sounds. Your ears receive and transmit the information to your brain. Once your brain receives the signals, then it starts to make sense to you. This is the listening stage, where you create meaning based on previous experiences and contextual cues to make sense of the sounds.

Knowing your team involves understanding others, and their perspectives, to see if they understand your words, examples, or the frames of reference you use to communicate your experiences, points and conclusions. Ask yourself when was the last time you had a miscommunication with someone. No doubt it was fairly recently, as it is for most people. It's not people's fault that language, both verbal and nonverbal, is an imperfect system. We can, however, take responsibility for the utility and limitations of language to try to gain a better understanding of how we can communicate more effectively. We can choose to actively listen to each other, and ask clarifying questions instead of rushing to judgment or making statement.

As a communicator, consider both the role of the speaker and the group, and not only what and how you want to communicate but what and how your team needs you to communicate with them in order to present an effective message.

Take, for example, the word "love." Yes, we recognize those four little letters all in a row, but what does it really mean? You can use it to describe the feelings and emotions associated with your mother, a partner, or perhaps your dog. Or you might say you love chocolate cake. Does your use of the word in any given context allow the audience to get any closer to what you mean by this word, "love?" The key here is context, which provides clues to how you mean the word, and what its use means to you. The context allows you to close the gap between your meaning of "love" and what the receiver, or group member, has in their range of understanding of the same word. Your experiences are certainly different, but through clues, contexts, and attempts to understand each other's perspectives, we can often communicate more effectively.

Let's first follow the advice given by the character Polonius in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "to thine own self be true." This relates to the notion that you need to know yourself, or your perspective, before you can explore ways to know others and communicate more effectively. You will examine how you perceive stimuli, choosing some information over others, organizing the information according to your frame of reference, and interpreting it, deciding what it means to you and whether you should remember it or just ignore it and move on. We can recognize that not everyone tunes into the same music, trends in clothing, or even classes, so experiences or stimuli can have different meanings. Still, we can find common ground and communicate effectively, if we only choose to listen to each other.

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2.7: Listening to Understand

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the importance of becoming an active listener and reader

As the popular author and Hollywood entrepreneur Wilson Mizner said, “A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while, he knows something.” Learning to listen to your conversational partner, customer, supplier, or supervisor is an important part of business communication. Too often, instead of listening we mentally rehearse what we want to say. Similarly, when we read, we are often trying to multitask and therefore cannot read with full attention. Inattentive listening can cause us to miss much of what the speaker is sharing with us.

Communication involves the sharing and understanding of meaning, To fully share and understand, practice active listening so that you are fully attentive, fully present in the moment of interaction. Pay attention to both the actual words and for other clues to meaning, such as tone of voice or writing style. Look for opportunities for clarification and feedback when the time comes for you to respond, not before. Remember we hear with our ears, but listen with our brain, and sometimes it is all too easy to tune out the messenger or their message.

Active Listening

You’ve probably experienced the odd sensation of driving somewhere and, having arrived, have realized you don’t remember driving. Your mind may have been filled with other issues and you drove on autopilot. It’s dangerous when you drive, and it is dangerous in communication. Choosing to listen or read attentively takes effort. People communicate with words, expressions, and even in silence, and your attention to them will make you a better communicator. From discussions on improving customer service to retaining customers in challenging economic times, the importance of listening comes up frequently as a success strategy.

Here are some tips to facilitate active listening:

- Maintain eye contact with the speaker
- Don’t interrupt
- Focus your attention on the message, not your own internal monologue
- Restate the message in your own words and ask if you understood correctly
- Ask clarifying questions to communicate interest and gain insight

When the Going Gets Tough

Our previous tips will serve you well in daily interactions, but suppose you have an especially difficult subject to discuss. In a difficult situation like this, it is worth taking extra effort to create an environment and context that will facilitate positive communication.

Here are some tips that may be helpful:

- Special time. To have the difficult conversation, set aside a special time when you will not be disturbed. Close the door and turn off the TV, music player, and instant messaging client.
- Don’t interrupt. Keep silence while you let the other person “speak their piece.” Make an effort to understand and digest the news without mental interruptions.
- Non-judgmental. Receive the message without judgment or criticism. Set aside your opinions, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Acceptance. Be open to the message being communicated, realizing that acceptance does not necessarily mean you agree with what is being said.
- Take turns. Wait until it is your turn to respond, then measure your response in proportion to the message that was delivered to you. Reciprocal turn-taking allows each person have their say.
- Acknowledge. Let the other person know that you have listened to the message or read it attentively.
- Understanding. Be certain that you understand what your partner is saying. If you don’t understand, ask for clarification. Restate the message in your own words.

- Keep your cool. Speak your truth without blaming. Use “I” statements (e.g., “I felt concerned when I learned that my department is going to have a layoff”) rather than “you” statements (e.g., “You want to get rid of some of our best people”).

Finally, recognize that mutual respect and understanding are built one conversation at a time. Trust is difficult to gain and easy to lose. Be patient and keep the channels of communication open, as a solution may develop slowly over the course of many small interactions. Recognize that it is more valuable to maintain the relationship over the long term than to “win” in an individual transaction.

Key Takeaway

Part of being an effective communicator is learning to practice active listening.

Exercise 2.7.1

1. Pair up with a classmate and do a role-play exercise in which one person tries to deliver a message while the other person multitasks and interrupts. Then try it again while the listener practices active listening. How do the two communication experiences compare? Discuss your findings.
2. Select a news article and practice “active reading” by reading the article and summarizing each of its main points in your own words. Write a letter to the editor commenting on the article—you don’t have to send it, but you may if you wish.
3. In a half-hour period of time, see if you can count how many times you are interrupted. Share and compare with your classmates.

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2.8: Types of Listening

Learning Objectives

1. Identify four preferences and four purposes of listening
2. Distinguish among the components of the "HURIER model" of listening
3. Identify foundations for good learning, including the features of "dialogic listening"
4. Identify several kinds of negative listening

I'd invited my wife to accompany me to a professional conference in Portland. Since I was going to be making a presentation there, my colleague and co-presenter Sally was with us for the trip down and back. Driving along the Interstate, Sally and I talked shop. What about our supervisor? Yak yak yak. What about our faculty union? Yak yak yak. And our plans for next year? Yak yak yak. After 20 minutes of chatter with Sally, I realized that what we were discussing might not mean much to my wife. Being the considerate guy that I am, I paused and looked over at her.

"Sorry we've been talking so much about work. Thanks for listening." "I'm not listening," she replied. - Phil Venditti

Preferences, Purposes, and Types of Listening

People speak for various reasons and with various goals in mind. Likewise, the ways we listen vary according to our preferences and purposes. Several theorists have identified types of listening which can help us understand our own behavior and that of others.

Galanes and Adams, (Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill) wrote that people fall into four possible orientation categories as they listen to one another in groups. People-oriented listeners, also known as "relational listeners," direct themselves toward detecting and preserving positive emotional features of a relationship. For instance, best friends are probably people who practice nonjudgmental listening in an effort to understand and support each other. In a group, people-oriented listeners may share their feelings openly and strive to defuse anger or frustration on the part of other members.

Action-oriented listeners, by comparison, prefer to focus on tasks that they and their fellow communicators have set for themselves. (Think back to where we differentiated between the "task" and "relationship" sides of group interaction). Action-oriented listeners will generally retain and share details and information which they believe will keep a group moving.

Content-oriented listeners are those who care particularly about the specifics of a group's discussions. They tend to seek, provide, and analyze information that has been gathered through research. What they primarily choose to hear and to share with others, thus, is material that they consider to be factual.

Time-oriented listeners concern themselves above all with how a group's activities fit into a calendar or schedule. They may listen and watch especially for signs that other group members want to accelerate the pace of the group's activities. Their preference is usually for short, concise messages rather than extended ones.

In the real world, few people fit neatly and completely into a single category within Galanes and Adams's typology of listeners. Instead, each of us embodies a mixture of the four preferences depending on the topic a group is dealing with, the developmental stage of the group, and other factors.

Like Galanes and Adams, Waldeck, Kearney, and Plax (Waldeck, J. H., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. (2013). *Business & professional communication in a digital age*. Boston: Wadsworth) proposed four purposes which they believe people have in mind as they listen to others. First, we may want to acquire information. Students listening to class lectures are pursuing this purpose. Second, we may listen in order to screen and evaluate what we hear. For instance, we may have the radio on continuously but listen especially for and to stories and comments which are relevant to our work or study. Third, we may listen recreationally, to relax and enjoy ourselves. Perhaps we listen to music or watch and listen to video images on a mobile device, or we might attend a concert of music we enjoy. Finally, just as Galanes and Adams indicated, we may listen because it helps other people or ourselves from the standpoint of our relationships. When we listen attentively to friends, classmates, or work colleagues, we demonstrate our interest in them and thereby develop positive feelings in them about us.

Beebe and Masterson, (Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T. (2006). *Communicating in small groups; Principles and practices* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson) cited Allan Glatthorn and Herbert Adams, (Glatthorn, A.A., & Adams, H.R. (1984). *Listening your way to management success*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman). as identifying the following three types of listening:

Type one: hearing. This is the simple physical act of having sound waves enter our ears and be transmitted into neural impulses sent to our brain. In 1965, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel sang in "The Sound of Silence" about "people hearing but not listening," and this is really what Glatthorn and Adams were referring to.

Type two: analyzing. Beyond simply receiving sound waves, listeners may employ critical judgment to ascertain the purpose behind a speaker's message(s). In so doing, they may consider not only the content of the message, but also its stated and unstated intent, its context, and what kind of persuasive strategy the speaker may be using it as part of.

Kelly, (Kelly, M.S. (2006). *Communication @ work: Ethical, effective, and expressive communication in the workplace*. Boston: Pearson) offered a helpful elaboration on this type of listening. She suggested that "analyzing" may also involve discriminating—that is, distinguishing—between information and propaganda, research and personal experience, official business and small talk, and simple information and material which requires a listener to take action.

Type three: empathizing. Empathizing requires that a listener not only discern a speaker's intention, but also withhold judgment about that person and see things from his or her perspective. Once this is accomplished, it may be possible to respond to the speaker with acceptance.

The Listening Process

Even though listening is a natural human process, and one in which we spend most of our communication time, it may not occur to us how complex the activity really is. Many authorities have proposed models that comprise what they consider to be steps in the process. We'll consider one such model.

Engleberg & Wynn, (Engleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson) described the HURIER model, an acronym developed by Judi Brownell. (Brownell, J. (2010). *Listening: Attitudes, principles, and skills* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon). That model proposed that, in listening, people first hear; then understand; next interpret (including the emotional grounds/status of the speaker); evaluate (including whether the message is meant to persuade, and if so whether it should do so); remember; and finally respond. Among the strengths of this model for application to group settings are that its steps take a group's goals into account and that it recognizes both the task and relationship elements of communication.

Foundations for Good Listening

Each of us can probably think of a few people whom we consider to be outstanding listeners. What makes them that way, and what attitudes and behaviors do they display in their listening that we most appreciate? Let's consider some answers that various theorists have offered concerning the strengths of good listeners.

First, the famous educator and philosopher John Dewey, (Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education*. New York: Macmillan_ exhorted people to show what he called "intellectual hospitality." By this, he meant "an active disposition to welcome points of view hitherto alien." If a person is willing to entertain perspectives outside his or her previous experience, listening can proceed on favorable ground.

Objectivity represents a related initial ingredient in good listening. As Rohlander, (Rohlander, D.G. (2000, February). The well-rounded IE. *IIE Solutions*, 32 (2), 22_ wrote, people should be prepared to weigh facts and emotional elements in their listening "on imaginary balanced scales."

Stewart and Thomas, (Stewart, J., & Thomas, M. (1990). Dialogic listening: Sculpting mutual meanings. In J. Stewart (Ed.), *Bridges not walls* (5th ed.) (pp. 192–210). New York: McGraw-Hill.) coined the term "dialogic listening" to identify what they considered to be ideal listening behavior. They characterized dialogic listeners in these ways:

1. They are "deeply in" the transaction with those with whom they communicate.
2. They deal with present topics and concerns.
3. They consider the speaking and listening process to be a shared enterprise—"ours" rather than "yours" or "mine."
4. They see speaking and listening as being open-ended and playful.

Whatever models they propose, and whatever vocabulary they use, all the authorities who write about listening share the belief that listening needs to be active rather than passive. We'll provide specific steps later in this chapter for how to engage in active, positive listening.

Negative Kinds of Listening



Figure 2.8.1

Now for some unfortunate news. There is a rich array of ways to be a bad listener.

Adler and Towne, (Adler, R.B., & Towne, N. (2002). *Looking out/looking in* (10th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers) named and described several of these ways. The first is pseudo-listening. You've seen this many times in your own life, and probably you've even done it. It's the act of seeming to be listening while your mind is actually somewhere else. When you're pseudo-listening, you may nod your head and emit periodic sounds of approval, just as you would if you were really paying attention, but those actions are for show.



Figure 2.8.2

Then there's "stage-hogging," also known as "disruptive listening." This is an active behavior—but the action isn't good, since the listener attends only minimally to what the other person is saying and butts in persistently and repeatedly to insert views or express needs of his or her own.

The first panel of a "Far Side" cartoon by Gary Larson shows a man scolding his dog. He starts out by saying, "Okay, Ginger" and then goes on at length. Once or twice more in the harangue the man says Ginger's name. In the second panel, the "speech balloon" of the master is altered to show what the dog hears: "Blah blah Ginger. Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah GINGER blah blah blah blah…" In this case, the fact that Ginger is a dog means that she can only detect the sound of her own name in her master's speech. Selective listening among human beings, on the other hand, consists of listening only to the parts of someone else's communication that are personally important to us—even though we could certainly understand and respond to the rest of it if we chose to.



Figure 2.8.3

Insulated listening is, in a way, the reverse of selective listening. In this self-protective behavior, the listener takes in and responds actively to everything the speaker says *except* what's unpleasant to him or her.

Defensive listening is performed by a person when he or she interprets much or most of another person's statements as being personal attacks. A defensive listener is apt to ignore, exclude, or fail to accurately interpret parts of a speaker's comments.

Face-value listening can be described as aural nitpicking. That is to say, the face-value listener pays a great deal of attention to the terminology of someone else's message and very little to the person's intentions or feelings.

Davis, Paleg, & Fanning, (Davis, M., Paleg, K., & Fanning, P. (2004). *How to communicate workbook; Powerful strategies for effective communication at work and home*. New York: MJF Books) identified three further ways to be a bad listener: rehearsing, identifying, and sparring. Rehearsing is the practice of planning a response to another person's message while the message is still being delivered. Identifying takes place when a large portion of a speaker's message triggers memories of the listener's own experiences and makes the listener want to dive into a story of his or her own. Finally, a listener who engages in sparring attends to messages only long enough to find something to disagree with and then jabs back and forth with the speaker argumentatively.

Key Takeaway

To function well in a group, people should become familiar with both positive and negative purposes and types of listening.

Exercise 2.8.1

1. Do you consider yourself to be primarily a people-oriented, action-oriented, or content-oriented listener? Describe a time when you found yourself listening with an orientation other than your primary one. What caused you to use that orientation? What was the result?

2. Think about a time when you tried unsuccessfully to share an important message with someone. How did the other person respond? What “bad kind(s)” of listening behaviors did the person display?
3. Stewart and Thomas believe that listening should be “open-ended and playful.” What does this mean to you? Describe a time when you listened “playfully” and how others around you reacted.
4. Imagine that you’re in a group that is assessing its members’ performance and that you expect to be criticized because of a mistake you’ve made. What will you do to avoid defensive listening, sparring, or other bad kinds of listening?

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2.9: Group Members and Listening

Learning Objectives

1. Identify seven challenges of listening in a group as opposed to listening to one person
2. Identify two advantages of group listening as opposed to listening to one person
3. Identify pros and cons of listening in digital groups

In the beginning, God made an individual—and then He made a pair. The pair formed a group, and together they begot others and thus the group grew. Unfortunately, working in a group led to friction, and the group disintegrated in conflict. And Cain settled in the land of Nod. There has been trouble with groups ever since. - Davis Sharp (Sharp, D. 2004, February 24. Workgroups that actually work. Business Times, p. 10).

I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening. - Larry King

All listening takes energy, concentration, and fortitude. To a degree that will depend on the topic and the listener's individual personality, it also requires self-sacrifice, since at least part of the time that we're listening we may need to stifle the urge to question, correct, interrupt, or even silence a speaker.

Listening in a group is especially portentous. If you do it well, you can learn a great deal, present yourself in a favorable light, and contribute to a positive atmosphere and high level of productivity on the part of the group.

Poor listening in a group, on the other hand, can lead to serious negative consequences. Take the case of a group numbering six members. For every time it has to retrace its ground for five minutes and repeat things because of poor listening, that's 30 minutes of time wasted. Furthermore, misunderstandings among group members can be spread and magnified outside the group to the point that its image and effectiveness are weakened. When we get to chapter 12 we'll examine this danger and some of the other things that can go wrong when groups of people take part in formal meetings.

Challenges of Listening in a Group

Although all of us get practice at it for years as students and eventually as employees, listening in a group isn't easy. It presents more of a challenge to each member, in fact, than does listening to one other person at a time. Why? We'll consider seven reasons, all of which stem from the inherent differences between groups and pairs of people.

First, in a typical one-on-one conversation you're probably going to listen about 50% of the time, right? Compare that to your participation in a group, in which you're likely to spend between 65% and 90% of your time listening. (Steil, L.K. (1997). Listening training: The key to success in today's organizations. In M. Purdy & D. Borisoff (Eds.), *Listening in everyday life* (pp. 213–237). Landham, MD: University Press of America). If you listen with the same depth of energy and concentration in the group that you do with a single conversation partner, you're going to get tired out a lot more quickly.

Second, unless you know each of the other members of a group very well, you may not adequately gauge their knowledge and perspectives on a given topic before it's discussed. This may make you less likely to be receptive and responsive to their views on a topic, especially a contentious one. You may also have to work harder to understand their viewpoints.

Third, it may be difficult to keep up with changing levels of engagement on the part of other members of your group. People's attention and involvement may fluctuate because they're anxious about the circumstances of a discussion, about a particular message that's being sent, or even about extraneous factors in their lives that come to mind. At some moments in a group's activities, everyone may be attentive and actively involved; at others, they come and go both mentally and physically. Because all the members are rarely simultaneously "firing on all cylinders," you'll need to work particularly hard to distinguish between vital messages and routine, mundane, or irrelevant ones.

Fourth, in a group, you have less of an opportunity to influence others' thoughts and actions than you do in one-on-one communication. Deciding when to cease listening and interject your viewpoints so that they'll be most likely to be received positively by the largest possible proportion of group members is hard, especially if conversation is fast and free-wheeling.

Fifth, listening for long periods prevents you from releasing some of your own energy. Because you speak less in a group than in a one-on-one conversation, this build-up of energy may frustrate you and interfere with your ability to process what other people are saying.

Sixth, in a group, you have lots of time to daydream. People talk at about 100–150 words per minute, but your mind can process information at up to 600 words a minute. (Wolvin, A., & Coakley, C.G. *Listening* (3rd ed.). Dubuque, IA: 1988). You may not be compelled or feel a need to listen actively all the time that a group is interacting, nor do you have to worry about other people's assessment of your behavior if you're not the one speaking at a particular time. Thus, you'll be able to fill in the gap between other people's talking speed and your own thinking speed with thoughts of your choice…or with thoughts that just float into and out of your consciousness. You may even be tempted to surreptitiously glance at reading material unrelated to the group's activities, or to send or receive text messages.

Seventh, it may be harder to listen in a group because of the existence of social loafing. This is the tendency for each member to devote less energy to a task than she or he would alone because it's possible to let others take responsibility for getting things done.

Advantages to Listening in a Group

Now that we've reviewed some of its challenges and pitfalls, we should note that listening in a group offers potential benefits as well. Let's consider two major kinds.

The first big advantage to listening in a group is that it embodies the possibility of taking one of the characteristics that we earlier said could be used negatively—i.e., that you have time and opportunity to think about and react to what you hear—and using it in a positive way. Rather than using that surplus time to daydream or plan a rebuttal to other group members' messages, you can try in your mind to empathetically interpret the messages and decide whether and how to respond in ways that promote the well-being of the speakers and the whole group. Here's an illustration with a cross-cultural dimension (and with the person's name changed):

Yukio Sakai was a young Japanese man enrolled in a college public speaking class. Whatever went on in class, Yukio watched and listened raptly…and silently. Often the instructor posed open-ended questions to the group as a whole, such as, "What do you think John did well in his persuasive speech?" When such questions were posed, almost anyone in class except Yukio would pipe up with an opinion. To a casual observer, Yukio would seem to be "just sitting there."

If the instructor directly asked Yukio one of the questions, however, what usually happened was that he replied without the slightest hesitation. Furthermore, his answers conveyed insight, sound reasoning, and common sense. It would have been a mistake to take his apparent lack of activity at any given moment as a sign of incapacity.

As we discovered earlier in our chapter on intercultural and international group communication, someone from a high power distance culture such as Japan's may not outwardly react to messages from an authority figure such as a college instructor. What appears to be the person's inert passivity, however, could actually be thoughtful analysis and reflection. (Of course, you don't have to be Japanese to practice those good habits).

The second advantage of listening in groups is a product of the fact that there will always be more diverse perspectives and more interaction in a group than in a dyad. People can be fascinating, can't they? And many times the product of discussion among different people, with their different backgrounds and values, is something entirely unexpected. What this means, if you're a curious person at all, is that you should find lots to keep you entertained and educated as you listen to people in a group setting.

Listening in Digital Groups

As we mentioned earlier, digital groups can communicate either synchronously or asynchronously; that is, in real-time or with delays between messages. If you use synchronous tools, such as Skype or some other form of audio or video conferencing, the same challenges and advantages apply to digital groups that we've already presented. The only difference may be that you and the other group participants aren't physically in the same place.

On the other hand, group members who exchange oral messages asynchronously may confront more intense pros and cons. (Davis, M., Paleg, K., & Fanning, P. (2004). *How to communicate workbook; Powerful strategies for effective communication at work and home*. New York: MJF Books). The good news is that you'll have even more time than in a face-to-face group discussion to review and think about messages before reacting to them, which may yield wiser and calmer responses. The bad news is that the freshness

and spontaneity of listening to each other's comments in real-time will be lost, which could tend to homogenize people's attitudes and make it less likely for "aha moments" to take place.

Furthermore, if other group members can't actually see you when you're communicating, you may feign attentiveness or behave in unorthodox ways. One of the authors remembers being part of a group that was conducting a phone interview with a candidate for a job at a university many years ago. When the person in charge of the interview started the exchange by saying, "We know it may be uncomfortable for you to have to do an interview without being able to see us," one of the candidates said, "That's all right. I'm sitting here on my couch naked, anyway."

Key Takeaway

Listening in a group presents significant challenges but can also pay important dividends.

Exercise 2.9.1

1. If you're enrolled in college courses, do a little measuring in one of your next class sessions. Use a stopwatch to measure exactly how long you and one or two other students actually spend speaking during the class period. Ask a classmate to do the same for the instructor. Afterward, compare the measurements. What did you learn from the results?
2. Pick two groups of which you're a member. How would you compare the level of participation of their members in group discussions? How do their members' listening practices compare? In which group do you find it harder to function as a listener? Why?
3. The next time a group you're part of meets, watch and listen for the person who says the least. Does the person appear to be listening? If you feel comfortable doing so, ask the person afterward how much of the time he or she was attending closely to the discussion. Does the person's answer fit with how you'd assessed his or her behavior?
4. "To become a leader, you need to talk; to stay a leader, you need to listen." Do you agree, or not? What examples can you give to support your viewpoint?

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2.10: Strategies to Improve Listening in Groups

Learning Objectives

1. Identify physical actions that contribute to good listening
2. Identify effective pre-listening behaviors
3. Identify what to do and what to avoid doing when listening in a group



Figure 2.10.1

The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer. - Henry David Thoreau

Listening to people keeps them entertained. - Mason Cooley

First Things First

In the last few sections, we've established that listening is a vital skill in groups. Now let's review two fundamental points before we discuss specific steps for doing it well.

The first point is that before you can listen, you have to stop talking. This might seem self-evident, but in a culture like that of the United States, in which talking is highly valued, we may tend to overlook it.

The second point, though less obvious, is just as important. It is that both senders and receivers—both speakers and listeners—are responsible for effective listening. Listening actually transcends the mere reception of messages by listeners and imposes obligations on both senders and receivers in what Waldeck, Kearney, and Plax, (Waldeck, J. H., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. (2013). *Business & professional communication in a digital age*. Boston: Wadsworth) called "sender-receiver reciprocity."

Senders should choose their messages according to the context or occasion. Furthermore, they should consider what media they will use to communicate them—for instance, face-to-face interaction or synchronous or asynchronous transmissions—and be mindful of the implications of their selection.



Figure 2.10.2: Image from http://www.public-domain-image.com

For their part, receivers must make an effort to listen, be prepared to provide feedback, and manage their responses to ensure relevance and civility. They should also practice what Beebe, Beebe, and Ivy (Beebe, S.A., Beebe, S.J., & Ivy, D.K. (2007). *Communication: Principles for a lifetime* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson) labeled "social decentering"—i.e., "stepping away from your own thoughts and attempting to experience the thoughts of others."

The Physical Side of Listening

As we've already pointed out, good listening is an active process. As such, it requires energy. In fact, listening is work—and not just mental work, either. To do the work of listening, which generally consumes the majority of your time whenever you interact with a group, you should be sure you're physically primed and ready to go. To confirm that your body is really prepared for high-quality listening, you should first check your posture. Assuming that you're seated, sit up straight and lean slightly forward. Not only does good posture allow you to remain relaxed and alert, but it makes it more likely that other people will see you as competent and confident. (Burgoon, J.K., & Saine, T.J. (1978). *The unspoken dialogue: An introduction to nonverbal communication*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin).

Next, notice your breathing. Be sure you're inhaling and exhaling deeply. Also, identify any aches or pains that may interfere with your ability to take in other people's messages. See if you can shift into a position that will allow you to remain comfortable and attentive throughout the communication process.

Pre-listening

How much time and effort you put into getting ready to listen will depend among other things on what kind of group you're in, how well you and the other members know each other, and what topics you're dealing with. Sometimes you're talking about light or superficial matters—like "Where shall we get together after we complete our project?"—and you can just dive into a conversation without any particular thought to getting ready to listen.

There will be occasions, however, when you ought to stop, consider, and plan your listening carefully. Let's say you're in a student government group considering requests for activity fee money, for instance, or a screening committee involved in hiring a new person to join your business. In cases like these, when careful, accurate listening will be at a premium, you should probably take some or all of these preparatory steps:

Assign listening tasks to people. Because social loafing is more likely when members aren't held accountable for their behavior, (Thompson, L. (2008). *Organizational behavior today*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education) you may want to ask individuals to listen for different kinds of information or divide a long period of listening into segments, each of which has a designated "major listener."

Confirm (or reconfirm) your group's norms with respect to listening. Remind yourselves about how you plan to take turns speaking.

Identify any potential contextual barriers to listening. (Kelly, M.S. (2006). *Communication @ work: Ethical, effective, and expressive communication in the workplace*. Boston: Pearson_. Such barriers may include the location in which you're communicating, the cultural identity of group members, and the mixture of genders represented in the group.

Remind the members of the group that they should recognize their own biases, including their tendency to interpret information in the light of their beliefs. (Hybels, S., & Weaver, R.L. (1998). *Communicating effectively* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill_. Perhaps note that each group members is tuned in to a special mental radio station, "WII-FM," which stands for "What's in it for me?"

Decide whether it's all right for group members to take notes or make audio recordings during the upcoming communication. If it is, decide whether you'd like to name one or more members "primary note-takers" or recorders.

Determine how often and when you plan to take breaks. Remember that "the mind can absorb only what the seat can endure." Even though parts of a lengthy discussion may be engrossing, when the time for a scheduled break comes your listening ability will probably be rejuvenated if you pause at least long enough for people to stand and stretch for 30–60 seconds before proceeding.

Listening Itself

All right. Let's say the members of your group have physically and mentally readied themselves to listen, and you've begun a discussion. What do you need to do as the process unfolds? Here are some important dos and don'ts:

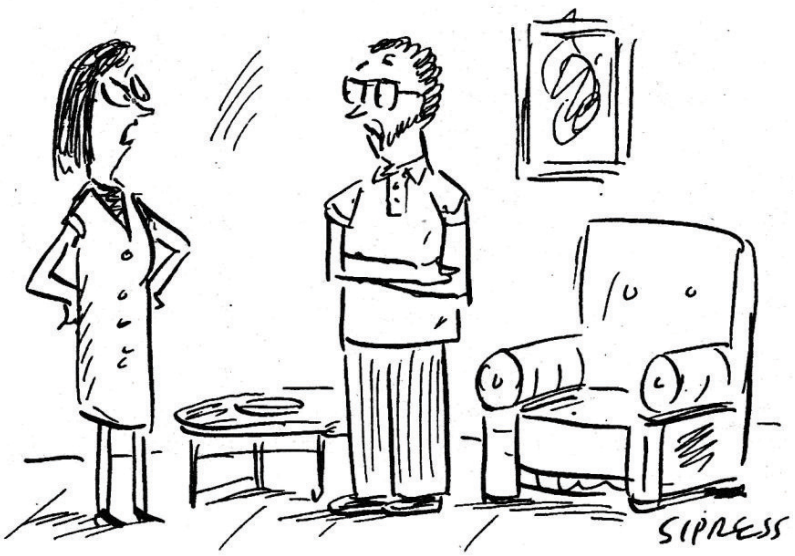
In listening, do…

1. Determine your purpose in listening, and keep it in mind. Thinking back to earlier in this chapter, are you listening to acquire information, to evaluate messages, to relax and enjoy ourselves, or to demonstrate empathy?
2. Identify the levels at which group members are communicating their messages—e.g., emotional, political, or intellectual.
3. Assess the relative significance of people's comments and listen for main ideas rather than trying to take in everything on an equal plane. To help you do this, you may want from time to time to mentally summarize the message(s) you're listening to.
4. When possible and appropriate, urge other members of the group to speak, especially those who are less dominant. Say things like "Please go on"; "Tell me more"; "Care to expand on that?" Remember that each person has a unique perspective that can add to the group's ability to consider ideas and make decisions.
5. "Listen with your eyes." Observe people's body language and other nonverbal cues carefully, since those physical manifestations may add to or sometimes contradict their spoken words.
6. Show interest in others' messages through your own nonverbal actions. Establish and maintain eye contact. Smile. Adopt an open posture. Avoid fidgeting or slouching.
7. Use "interactive questioning". (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams; Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson). Ask open-minded and open-ended questions to clarify ideas & information; to probe a speaker's reasoning and evidence; and to expand incomplete information. Use and ask for examples so that the speaker can connect your questions with his or her own world of experiences.
8. Use tentative clarifying/confirming statements: e.g., "It sounds like…"; "You seem to think that…"; "As I get it, you…"
9. Make polite, "targeted" interruptions (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams; Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson). to get answers to pressing questions, or if you'd like establish your place in line to speak next. Be judicious and infrequent with interruptions, however.
10. Paraphrase. Don't just see if you can accurately reflect what a person is saying; see if you can determine if your understanding of the person's "inner world" is accurate and whether you see things as the other person is experiencing them at the moment.
11. Respond after listening, sincerely and constructively. Focus on content, ideas, & analysis rather than on personal matters.
12. Allow for, and be careful how you interpret, silence. Keep in mind that people may have many reasons, positive or otherwise, for not speaking at a particular time.

In listening, don't…

1. Let listening be a dead end, in which you receive messages and don't react at all.
2. Allow the listening behavior of others to sway your own. If they're inattentive, don't lose your own focus; if they're especially positive or negative, don't lose your objectivity or critical ability.

3. Cut off or put down a speaker.
4. Interrupt excessively.
5. Pose “counterfeit questions”—belligerent statements masquerading as questions simply because they end with question marks.
6. Allow the tone of someone’s message, or how agreeable you find the person to be, to color your interpretation or reactions to it.
7. Express your interpretations of other people’s messages excessively. Why not? First of all, your interpretation may be wrong. Second, even if you’re right, you may arouse a defensive reaction that in turn leads to unproductive argumentation.



“Why do you always get defensive whenever I attack you?”

Figure 2.10.3

No matter how often you listen to people, and no matter how many groups you may be part of, each new listening situation will be unique. It’s your responsibility, shared with your fellow group members, to see that in each new conversation or discussion you exercise proper practices and skills in your listening.

Key Takeaway

To listen well in a group, it’s important to prepare properly and heed several dos and don’ts.

Exercise 2.10.1

1. Observe a televised, recorded, or live group discussion. Identify the listening processes which furthered understanding and those which impeded it. What suggestions would you make to the members of the group to improve their listening? Which person in the discussion listened most effectively, and how did she or he accomplish that?
2. Visit the website of the International Listening Association (http://www.listen.org) and read an article in one of the Association’s online publications. What discoveries did you make in your reading? How will you apply the discoveries to your future group interactions?
3. Who’s the best listener you know? What does the person do (or not do) that makes him/her so effective? Give an example of how the person has listened well.

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2.11: Summary

We discussed many ways to gain a better understanding of your group members. To begin, it is important to understand yourself: your attitudes, beliefs, and values. It is also helpful to understand the processes that influence perception and listening. There are many individual differences in the ways people perceive things. Demographic traits such as age, gender, and employment can determine people's interests, needs, and goals. Effective communication involves recognizing these differences in perception and practicing fairness in delivering your message to your group or team. Finally, an important dimension of group communication is the ability to receive messages from others through active listening.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Interpretive Questions
    1. How does listening limit or expand our view?
    2. How does our internal monologue influence our listening?
    3. In what ways, if any, are all group members the same?
2. Application Questions
    1. What are some of the ways people demonstrate listening among people you know? Identify a target sample size (20 is a good number), and ask members of your family, friends, and peers about they know someone is listening to them. Compare your results with those of your classmates.
    2. What impact does technology and specifically the cell phone have on listening? Investigate the issue and share your findings.
    3. Investigate two ways to learn more about your group members and share them with your classmates.

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2.12: Additional Resources

- Read about groups and teams on the business website 1000 Ventures. http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/team_main.html
- Learn more about Tuckman's Linear Model. http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm
- Learn more about Dewey's sequence of group problem solving on this site from Manatee Community College in Florida. faculty.mccfl.edu/frithl/SPC1600/handouts/Dewey.htm
- Read a hands-on article about how to conduct productive meetings. www.articlesnatch.com/Article/How-To-Conduct-Productive-Meetings-/132050
- Visit this WikiHow site to learn how to use VOIP. http://www.wikihow.com/Use-VoIP
- Watch a YouTube video on cloud computing. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q
- Read about groups and teams, and contribute to a wiki about them, on Wikibooks. http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Managing_Groups_and_Teams
- How did Twitter get started? Find out. http://twitter.com/about
- Take a (nonscientific) quiz to identify your leadership style. psychologyabout.com/library/quiz/bl-leadershipquiz.htm
- Explore the website of the National Association for Self-Esteem. www.self-esteem-nase.org/
- Forum Network offers a wealth of audio and video files of speeches on various topics. Listen to a lecture titled "Selective Attention: Neuroscience and the Art Museum" by Barbara Stafford, Professor of Art History, University of Chicago. forum-network.org/lecture/selective-attention-neuroscience-and-art-museum
- Explore the website of the journal *Perception*. www.perceptionweb.com/
- Visit this About.com site to learn more about the Gestalt principles of perception. http://psychology.about.com/od/sensationandperception/ss/gestaltlaws_4.htm
- Visit About.com to read an article by Kendra Van Wagner on the Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization. http://psychology.about.com/od/sensationandperception/ss/gestaltlaws.htm
- Visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's site to read about demographic traits and their relationship to environmental issues. www.epa.gov/greenkit/traits.htm
- Philosophe.com offers a collection of articles about understanding your audience when you design a website. http://philosophe.com/understanding_users/
- Read more about active listening on this MindTools page. http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm
- Consider these academic survival tips provided by Chicago State University. www.csu.edu/engineeringstudies/acadsurvivaltips.htm
- A collection of articles and other resources to assist in improving listening and other communication skills. http://conflict911.com/resources/Communication/Listening

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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3.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. Think of a group to which you belong. Make a list of the members and include one describing word for each one, focusing on what they do or contribute to the group. Share your results with classmates.
2. Think of a group to which you no longer belong. Make a list of the members and include one describing word for each one, focusing on what they do or contribute to the group. Share your results with classmates.

Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. - Vince Lombardi

Getting Started

If all the world is a stage, then we each play distinct roles, whether we know it or not, when we are members of a group, team, family, or community. If we are aware of our roles, then we can know our lines, our responsibilities, and perform. When we do not know what we are supposed to do it is awfully hard to get the right job done correctly the first time. In this chapter, we will explore the many facets to group membership.

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3.2: Introducing Member Roles

Learning Objectives

1. Describe group member roles and their impact on group dynamics

The performance of a team or group is often influenced, if not determined, by its members' roles.

We can start our analysis of member roles with the work of Benne and Sheats (1948). They focused on studying small discussion groups that engaged in problem-solving activities. From their observations, they proposed three distinct types of roles: task, building and maintenance, and self-centered. Task roles were identified by facilitating and co-coordinating behaviors such as suggesting new ideas or ways of solving problems. Building and maintenance roles involved encouragement, including praise, statements of agreement, or acceptance of others and their contributions nonverbally or verbally. Self-centered roles involved ego-centric behaviors that call attention to the individual, not the group, and distract or disrupt the group dynamic.

Table 3.2.1 Group Roles

Group Task Roles	Coordinator: facilitates order and progress Evaluator-critic: analyzes suggestions for strengths and weaknesses Orienter: focuses on group progress, recaps discussions Recorder: takes notes on the group discussions, important decisions, and commitments to action
Group Building and Maintenance Roles	Supporter: Encourages everyone, making sure they have what they need to get the job done Harmonizer: Helps manage conflict within the group, facilitating common ground, helping define terms, and contributing to consensus Tension-releaser: Uses humor and light-hearted remarks, as well as nonverbal demonstrations (brings a plate of cookies to the group), to reduce tensions and work-related stress Compromiser: Focuses on common ground, common points of agreement, and helps formulate an action plan that brings everyone together towards a common goal, task, or activity Standard Setter: Sets the standard for conduct and helps influence the behavior of group members
Self-Centered Roles	Aggressor: Belittles other group members Block: Frequently raises objections Deserter: Abandons group or is very unreliable Dominator: Demand control and attention Recognition-seeker: Frequently seeks praise Confessor: Uses the group to discuss personal problems Joker or Clown: Frequent use of distracting humor, often attention-seeking behavior.

Bales (1950) built on their research and analyzed interaction from two categorical perspectives: task-orientation and socio-emotional. Belbin's (1981) work on successful teams focused on the number of team members in a group and their respective roles. Imagine a baseball team, with each distinct team member with a clearly defined role and territory. Someone guards first base, and someone covers left field. Each person has both a role and a personality. The role, according to Belbin, was imposed. The team manager would assign a team member, or player in our example, to a position. Some people place first base better than others. Personality traits, talents, and relative skills are relatively stable over time (Pervin, 1989), and it was a challenge to match the best

player to the most appropriate role. Get the combinations right across the whole team and you have a serious contender for the World Series. Get the combinations wrong and the manager will be looking for a job in short order.

Again the emphasis in this area of inquiry was the effectiveness of teams. It is all about the win, or the progress, or the degree of completion. This line of investigation does not explore what it means to be a healthy family, or a productive community, though each type of group is related to this discussion.

Belbin (1981, 1983) used a Self Perception Inventory that consists of seven sections to assess which group member would be best for his nine group roles:

Table 3.2.2 Belbin's Role Characteristics

Number	Title	Description
1	Plant (PL)	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult tasks and problems.
2	Resource Investigator (RI)	Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Develops contacts, networks, and explores opportunities.
3	Co-Coordinator	Mature, confident, effective chairperson. Promotes decision-making, delegates, and clarifies goals.
4	Shaper (SH)	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. The drive and courage to overcome obstacles.
5	Monitor Evaluator (ME)	Sober, strategic, and discerning. Makes accurate judgments. Perceives several options.
6	Team Worker (TW)	Cooperative, perceptive, mild, and diplomatic. Avoids tension, listens, a consensus builder
7	Implementer (IMP)	Reliable, disciplined, and efficient. Turns abstract ideas into practical actions
8	Completer-Finisher (CF)	Anxious, detail-oriented, and conscientious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time.
9	Specialist (SP)	Dedicated, self-motivated, and single-minded. Provides specific knowledge or skills

If someone in your group always makes everyone laugh, that can be a distinct asset when the news is less than positive. At times when you have to get work done, however, the class clown may become a distraction. Notions of positive and negative will often depend on the context when discussing groups. Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 list both positive and negative roles people sometimes play in a group setting. (Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. *Journal of Social Issues, 37*, 41–49.·McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon).

Table 3.2.3 Positive Roles. Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. Journal of Social Issues, 37, 41–49.,McLean, S.

(2005). The basics of interpersonal communication. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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

Table 3.2.4 Negative Roles. Beene, K., & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. Journal of Social Issues, 37, 41–49.,McLean, S. (2005). The basics of interpersonal communication. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dominator	Dominates discussion, not allowing others to take their turn
Recognition Seeker	Relates discussion to their accomplishments, seeks attention
Special-Interest Pleader	Relates discussion to special interest or personal agenda
Blocker	Blocks attempts at consensus consistently
Joker or Clown	Seeks attention through humor and distracts group members

Now that we've examined a classical view of positive and negative group member roles, let's examine another perspective. While some personality traits and behaviors may negatively influence groups, some are positive or negative depending on the context.

Just as the class clown can have a positive effect in lifting spirits or a negative effect in distracting members, so a dominator may be exactly what is needed for quick action. An emergency physician doesn't have time to ask all the group members in the emergency unit how they feel about a course of action; instead, a self-directed approach based on training and experience may be necessary. In contrast, the pastor of a church may have ample opportunity to ask members of the congregation their opinions about a change in the format of Sunday services; in this situation, the role of coordinator or elaborator is more appropriate than that of dominator.

The group is together because they have a purpose or goal, and normally they are capable of more than any one individual member could be on their own, so it would be inefficient to hinder that progress. But a blocker, who cuts off collaboration, does just that. If a group member interrupts another and presents a viewpoint or information that suggests a different course of action, the point may be well taken and serve the collaborative process. If that same group member repeatedly engages in blocking behavior, then the behavior becomes a problem. A skilled communicator will learn to recognize the difference, even when positive and negative aren't completely clear.

Key Takeaway

Group members perform distinct roles that impact and influence the group in many ways.

Exercise 3.2.1

1. Think of a group of which you are currently a member. Create a list of the members of your group and see if you can match them to group roles as discussed in this section. Use describing words to discuss each member. Share and compare with classmates.
2. Think of a group of which you are no longer a member. Create a list of the members of the group and see if you can match them to group roles as discussed in this section. Use describing words to discuss each member. Share and compare with classmates.

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3.3: Norms among Group Members

Learning Objectives

1. Identify positive sentiments, as well as challenges, associated with group norms
2. Discuss ways in which group norms may be enforced
3. Identify processes for challenging and changing group norms

Knotty Norms

Before we had our daughter, my husband and I used to just take a couple of moments before dinner and hold hands, just to bring us to a still quiet place, before beginning the evening meal. So, when he had our little girl, really from the time she could sit in the high chair, we held hands together, just for a few moments of silence, and then we squeezed hands and released.

Well, we did this day in, day out, year in, year out, and then when she was old enough to count--I don't know how old she was--but one evening we squeezed hands and she looked up and smiled and said, "I got to 35."

And her dad and I both looked at her and said, "What?"

And she said, "I got to 35." She said, "Usually I only get to 20 or 25."

And simultaneously, my husband and I said, "You count?"

And she looked at us and said, "Well, what do you do?"

And here all these years, where we thought this was just this little almost a spiritual moment, we never explained to her what that was about or what we were doing, and she thought we were all counting.

A *New Yorker* cartoon shows a couple that's apparently just left a large room filled with people partying. The woman is reaching to press the button of an elevator, while the man holds a tripod, a long pointer, and several large charts and graphs under his arm. The woman says, "Frankly, Benjamin, you're beginning to bore everyone with your statistics."

It's important to identify a group's norms if we're to have a good shot at predicting what it will do under different circumstances. In the comments above, the mother whose daughter used the quiet time before dinner to count in her head thought her family's mealtime norms were clear to all its members, but she was mistaken.

Do members of a group understand its norms, then? And if they understand them, do they accept and follow them? When and how do they change them? The answers to these questions play a large role in determining the effectiveness of the members and of the group as a whole.

Responding to Norms

What does it mean to you if you say something is "normal"? Probably it means that you feel it's usual and right—correct? Part of your reaction to something you consider "normal," therefore, is likely to be a sense of comfort and assurance. Furthermore, you wouldn't want to intentionally engage in or be around someone who engages in behavior that you don't consider to be normal. The term for such behavior is, after all, "abnormal."

Shortly we'll examine how groups enforce their norms, what happens when people violate them, and how we can best try to change them. Let's recognize first, however, that considering something "normal" or "the norm" in the first place can lead to challenges. As we'll be reminded later when we discuss conflict in groups, one such challenge arises from the fact that people's opinions—about everything—differ.

In a large organization where one of the authors worked, a male colleague told a joke while he and some other employees waited for a staff meeting to start. In the joke, a man who thought he had cleverly avoided being assaulted found that he had been outsmarted and was going to be executed instead. The people who heard the joke laughed, work-related topics came up, and the staff meeting commenced.

Sometimes differences of opinion in groups deal with inconsequential topics or norms and therefore cause no difficulty for anyone. Who cares, for instance, whether people bring coffee with them to morning meetings or not, or whether they wear bright-colored

articles of clothing?

Up to a certain point, furthermore, we all tend to accommodate differences between ourselves and others on a daily basis without giving it a second thought. We may even pride ourselves on our tolerance when we accept those differences.

On the other hand, we know that things which are customary aren't always right. Slavery was once considered normal throughout the world, for instance, and so was child labor. Obviously, we may find it challenging to confront norms that differ significantly from our personal beliefs and values.

Enforcing Norms

Whether a group enforces a norm, and if so in what way, depends on several factors. These factors may include the level of formality of the group, the importance the group attaches to a particular norm, and the degree and frequency with which the norm is violated.

If a norm is of minor importance, and especially if it's implicit, violating it may not provoke much of a response. Perhaps someone will just frown, shake a finger at the "violator," or otherwise convey displeasure without using words. (Think about a time when someone's cell phone went off in a large crowd at a speech or professional conference, for example).

On the other hand, explicit norms are often accompanied by explicit efforts to enforce them. A group may make it clear, either orally or in writing, what will happen if someone violates such a norm. The syllabus produced by one university professor we know, for instance, stipulated that anyone whose cell phone rings during a lesson must either write a 500-word essay or bring donuts to everyone else in class the next time they met.

Policy manuals and rule books comprise formal, clear expressions of norms both in and outside academe. So do city ordinances, state and federal laws, and IRS regulations. These manifestations of norms include statements of what consequences will be associated with violating them.

On the level of a small group, a team of college students preparing for a class presentation might decide to have its members sign an agreement indicating their willingness to meet at certain predetermined times or to contact each other regularly by phone or text messages. The agreement might also indicate that the group will report a teammate to their instructor if that person fails to observe its terms.

The example we've just considered involves a form of punishment, which can be one consequence of violating a norm. What else can happen if you violate a group norm? Galones and Adams (Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill) identify these consequences:

- Loss of influence
- Ostracism
- Exclusion

Particularly within large organizations, groups can benefit from contemplating early in their "life cycle" just how they would expect to respond to various kinds of behavior that violate their norms. They may decide that punishment will be part of the picture for serious violations. If so, they should probably reflect on how members might rejoin the group or regain their stature within it after a punishment has been administered and an offense has been corrected.

Challenging and Changing Group Norms

Think back to the story about our colleague at the staff meeting. Evidently, he thought that the norms of the organization permitted him to tell his joke. When his fellow employees laughed, he probably also assumed that they found the joke to be amusing.

After the meeting, however, as four or five people lingered in the room, one of the female staffers spoke. "It's really hard for me to say this," she said, "but I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't tell jokes about execution."

The woman who expressed herself to the group made clear that she felt its norms needed to be changed if jokes about execution were considered acceptable. The woman was right in two respects. First, execution is no laughing matter, and a group norm that condones jokes about it ought to be rejected. Second, when she told her colleagues "It's really hard for me to say this," she illustrated that it's difficult to confront other people to propose that they change the norms they operate under.

In this case, one group member submitted a polite request to her fellow group members. As it turned out, those members accepted her request. The man who told the joke apologized, and to our knowledge, no more jokes about execution were told in the group.

Things aren't always this straightforward, though. Therefore, adopting a systematic approach may prepare you for the wide-ranging situations in which you or your fellow group members want to change your norms. What principles and behaviors, then, should you follow if you feel a group norm is ineffective, inappropriate, or wrong?

Lamberton and Minor-Evans (Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L. (2002). *Human relations: Strategies for success* (2nd ed.). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill). recommend that you follow these steps:

1. Confirm whether everyone in the group agrees on the purpose of the group. Different norms will arise from different assumptions about the group's purpose and will fit the different assumptions on which they are based. Misunderstandings or disagreements about the purpose of the group need to be identified and worked through.
2. See if other people's understanding of the group's current norms is the same as yours. Again, it's important to know whether other members of the group agree on what norms the group actually has.

Remember the examples at the beginning of this section, in which a small daughter thought that holding hands before dinner was a time for silent counting and a man thought it was okay to bring charts and graphs to a social occasion? They illustrate that it's possible to completely misconstrue a group norm even in close, ongoing relationships and at any age.

1. Explain to the group why you feel a particular norm ought to be changed.
2. Offer a plan for changing the norm, including a replacement for it which you feel will be better, drawing upon the full potential of each member.
3. If necessary, change the composition and role assignments of the group.

Key Takeaway

Once they have been established, group norms are generally enforced in some way but can also be challenged and modified.

Exercise 3.3.1

1. Identify two norms, one explicit and one implicit, that you've encountered in a group setting. Did you observe the norms being enforced in some way? If so, what kind of enforcement was employed, and by whom?
2. Describe a time when you were part of a group and believed that one of its norms needed to be changed. What made you feel that way? Was your view shared by anyone else in the group?
3. What steps have you taken to challenge a group norm? How did the other members of the group respond to your challenge? If you had a chance to go back and relive the situation, what if anything would you change about your actions? (If you don't recall ever having challenged a group norm, describe a situation in which someone else did so).

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3.4: Status

Learning Objectives

1. Define status
2. Discuss behaviors associated with high status in a group
3. Identify dangers associated with status differentials

When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen. - Advertising slogan for a stock brokerage firm.

If you want to see your plays performed the way you wrote them, become President. - Vaclav Havel

The higher up you go, the more mistakes you are allowed. Right at the top, if you make enough of them, it's considered to be your style. - Fred Astaire

Status can be defined as a person's level of importance or significance within a particular environment. In a group, members with higher status are apt to command greater respect and possess more prestige than those with lower status.

Have you ever wanted to join a group partly because you knew other people would respect you a little more if they knew you were a member of it? Whether an informal group, a club, or any other kind of organization thrives or fades away may depend to some degree on whether belonging to it is perceived as being a sign of status. In fact, one of the major reasons why many of us enter groups is that we expect to gain status by doing so.

Understanding status, thus, can help both group members and the groups they join function smoothly and productively.

Origins of Status in a Group

Where does a group member's status come from? Sometimes a person joins a group with a title that causes the other members to accord him or her status at their first encounter. In professional circles, for instance, having earned a "terminal" degree such as a Ph.D. or M.D. usually generates a degree of status. The same holds true for the documented outcomes of schooling or training in legal, engineering, or other professional fields. Likewise, people who've been honored for achievements in any number of areas may bring status to a group by virtue of that recognition if it relates to the nature and purpose of the group.

Some groups may confer status upon their members on the basis of age, wealth, physical stature, perceived intelligence, or other attributes. On one floor of a new college residence hall where one of the authors lived, for example, two men gained instant status. Why? Because they both took part in varsity athletics, and one of them was the son of an All-American football player.

Once a group has formed and begun to sort out its norms, it will also build upon the initial status that people bring to it by further allocating status according to its own internal processes and practices. For instance, choosing a member to serve as an officer in a group generally conveys status to that person.

The two athletes in the residence hall just mentioned were elected president and vice president of their floor, which simply reflected their original status. Meanwhile, other residents were chosen to fill additional roles in the group's government, which did add to those individuals' status.

What High Status Means

All right. Let's say you've either come into a group with high status or have been granted high status by the other members. What does this mean to you, and how are you apt to behave? Here are some predictions based on research from several sources (Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T., 2006, Borman, 1989; Brilhart & Galanes, 1997; and Homans, 1992): Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T. (2006). *Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson.' Borman, E.G. (1989). *Discussion and group methods: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.' Brilhart, J.K., & Galanes, G.J. (1997). *Effective group discussion*. Dubuque, IA: Brown.' Homans, G.C. (1992). *The human group*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World).

First, the volume and direction of your speech will differ from those of others in the group. You'll talk more than the low-status members do, and you'll communicate more with other high-status members than you will with lower-status individuals. In addition, you'll be more likely to speak to the whole group than will members with lower status.

Second, some indicators of your participation will be particularly positive. Your activity level and self-regard will surpass those of lower-status group members. So will your level of satisfaction with your position. Furthermore, the rest of the group is less likely to ignore your statements and proposals than it is to disregard what lower-status individuals say.

Finally, the content of your communication will probably be different from what your fellow members discuss. Because you may have access to special information about the group's activities and may be expected to shoulder specific responsibilities because of your position, you're apt to talk about topics that are relevant to the central purposes and direction of the group. Lower-status members, on the other hand, are likely to communicate more about other matters.

When group members' status is clear to everyone, it becomes easier for all members to understand what they expect of each other. They'll know, among other things, whom to approach when they're wondering about how the group operates or are grappling with a problem that concerns them all.

If you've got high status, then, be prepared to have people approach you with questions and concerns that you'd otherwise not encounter. If it makes you feel good to help others in this way, having high status will probably enhance your self-respect and self-esteem. If it doesn't, you may feel overwhelmed.

Dangers of Status

Having people with different status levels adds spice and diversity to a group. It can, however, also result in risks and challenges.

Here's an example. In one large state, all the public and private college presidents have joined into an association to share information and promote their common interests. The executive director of the association is a woman we know well. She organizes the group's meetings, distributes agendas and minutes, and provides other high-level support for the group. According to this woman, presidents in the group continuously jockey for position and status. In fact, they spend so much time trying to gain more status that they sometimes fail to contribute constructively to the work of the association.

At one annual conference of the presidents' organization, a particularly prominent and nationally-known figure from the business world was on the schedule as an after-lunch speaker. Several of the most active and assertive presidents approached the executive director and asked her to seat them next to the visitor at lunch.

Our friend was in a quandary. She didn't want to disappoint or displease any of the presidents. She knew, though, that no matter whom she allowed to sit next to the important visitor, all the other presidents who'd approached her would be disgruntled. We'll explain in a later section of this book how she solved this vexing problem. The point, for now, is simply that competition among status seekers can disrupt a group's progress.

"If you're riding ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there."

Will Rogers

A second peril associated with the inevitable status differences in a group is the possibility that status may not correspond to competence. We'd like to believe that groups are meritocracies—that is, that they recognize and reward talent. Sometimes, however, people's talents may be submerged or suppressed instead.

People in groups sometimes gain status and its perks just by sticking around longer than anyone else. Being involved in a group for an extended period does not, however, necessarily lead to wisdom or the capability to handle new responsibilities. As someone once put it, "It's possible to have 10 years of experience or one year of experience 10 times." Lawrence Peter (Peter, L.J., & Hull, R.(1969). *The Peter Principle: Why things always go wrong*. New York: William Morrow and Company) made a case for what he called "The Peter Principle," which stated that everyone in an organization rises to his or her level of incompetence and that eventually every role is performed by someone unfit to manage it.

Someone who gains status without possessing the skills or attributes required to use it well may cause real damage to other members of a group, or to a group as a whole. A high-status, low-ability person may develop an inflated self-image, begin to abuse power, or both. One of us worked for the new president of a college who acted as though his position entitled him to take whatever actions he wanted. In the process of interacting primarily with other high-status individuals who shared the majority of his viewpoints and goals, he overlooked or pooh-poohed concerns and complaints from people in other parts of the organization. Turmoil and dissension broke out. Morale plummeted. The president eventually suffered votes of no confidence from his college's faculty, staff, and students and was forced to resign.

There's no such thing as a "status neutral" group—one in which everyone always has the same status as everyone else. Some people are always going to have higher status than others. As we've noted in this section, a group can make positive use of status differentials if it first recognizes them and then

Key Takeaway

Differences in status within a group are inevitable and can be dangerous if not recognized and managed.

Exercise 3.4.1

1. Think of a time when you aspired to a new and higher status within a group. How did you demonstrate your desire? How did others in the group respond when you expressed what you hoped to achieve?
2. Recall a time when you gained status in a group. How, if at all, did the other members treat you differently after you acquired it? What new responsibilities or expectations did you face?
3. Consider a group that you're part of. What advice would you offer to someone seeking to raise his or her status in that group?
4. Have you ever been part of a group in which all the members seemed to have the same status? How were the group's activities affected by this equivalence?

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3.5: Trust

Learning Objectives

1. Define trust
2. Identify reasons why trust is difficult to establish and maintain in groups
3. Discuss qualities and behaviors which contribute to establishing trust
4. Describe how self-disclosure influences the level of trust in a group

To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float. - Alan Watts

To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful. - Edward R. Murrow

(T)he biggest problem we have in human society now is…our tribalism, our tendency to go beyond a natural pride in our group, whether it's a racial or an ethnic or religious group…, to fear and distrust and dehumanization and violence against the other… So what we have got to learn to do is not just to tolerate each other, but to actually celebrate our differences. And the only way you can do that is to be secure in the knowledge that your common humanity is more important than your most significant differences. - Bill Clinton

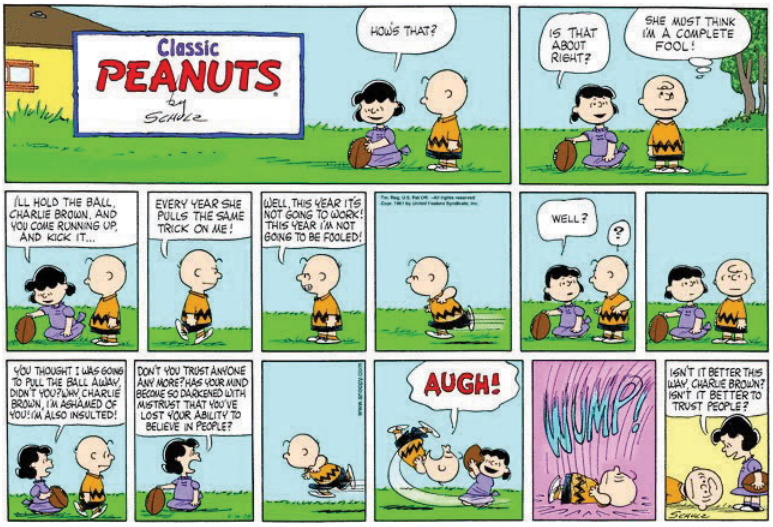


Figure 3.5.1

Did you ever see the series of "Peanuts" cartoons by Charles Schulz in which Lucy Van Pelt held a football for Charlie Brown to kick? In each cartoon, Charlie would run toward the ball at full speed. Lucy would jerk it away at the last instant. Charlie would then fly into the air and fall on his back. Time after time the cycle would repeat itself. Somehow, Charlie trusted Lucy over and over again despite her deceptive behavior.

Now recall the Aesop's fable, "The boy who cried wolf." The first time or two that the shepherd boy in the fable falsely called out an alarm, as you remember, people came running because they believed him. Eventually, when a wolf actually did show up, the boy's cries went unheeded.

The cartoon relationship between Charlie and Lucy may present an exaggerated view of human behavior. Likewise, most of us don't get exposed to multiple false reports about wolves or other dangers. Charlie's story amuses us, however, and the fable rings true. Why? Because we know that trust does play an important role in real human interactions and that it can be either rewarded or betrayed.

Building and maintaining trust can, in fact, be considered vital to the healthy functioning of a group. In his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni contended that trusting one another is the foundation for any truly cohesive team (Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass). If trust is lacking, according

to Lencioni, four other dysfunctions are almost sure to follow: fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results.

What, then, is trust? We can define it as reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, or dependability of a person or thing. Ideally, we trust people the way Alan Watts wrote that we should trust water when we're swimming: we should relax and forget that we're even performing an action called "trusting." Unfortunately, sometimes the water we swim in as part of a group are sometimes murky, and occasionally they're even infested with sharks.

Why Is It Hard to Trust?

Trusting ourselves is sometimes difficult. We've all made mistakes, so it's natural that we might occasionally doubt our own reliability.

To trust a family member or a person in some other primary group may also present challenges from time to time. We may misunderstand each other, hurt each other's feelings by behaving in unexpected ways, and so forth.

What about trusting people in secondary groups like the ones we join in school or work settings, then? Most likely it's going to be harder still. Why? First, we usually don't spend as much time over as long a period with secondary group members as we do with our families and other primary group members. In other words, we don't have as much to go on as we decide whether we can trust these people.

Second, the dynamics and level of mutual reliability of a secondary group may vary over time as people enter and leave the group, change status within it, or experience new circumstances in their own lives. In an academic environment, for instance, a teacher who's established a reputation for fairness and wisdom in that role may raise doubts or even suspicions among former peers about his or her trustworthiness upon accepting an administrative position in the same organization.

The more people are involved in a group, the more changes are apt to take place in it. Because trust rests in large part on constancy and predictability, such changes may endanger or weaken it. As Richard Reichert (Reichert, R. (1970). *Self-awareness through group dynamics*. Dayton, OH: Fglaum) wrote, "Trust is always a gamble."

Cultivating and Reinforcing Trust

Charlie Brown kept letting Lucy hold the football for him because he was naively trusting. Even though she deceived him time and time again, he engaged in what the organizational theorist Robert Kharasch (Kharasch, Robert N. (1973). *The institutional imperative; How to understand the United States government and other bulky objects*. New York: Charterhouse Books) called "regeneration of the organs of belief": he forgot or overlooked her past behavior and allowed himself to be duped over and over.

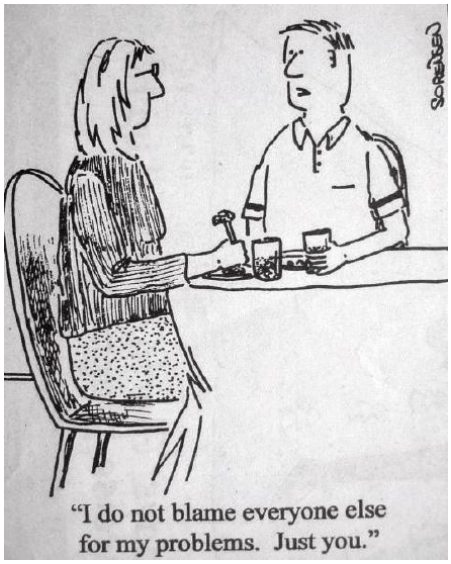


Figure 3.5.2

Alternatives to Charlie's approach certainly exist. In arms control dealings with Mikhail Gorbachev, for instance, Ronald Reagan used to quote a Russian saying—*doveryay, no proveryay* (Venditti, P. (2007). *Building business success: Write, speak, think, and*

get along well in the professional world. Centralia, WA: Gorham Printing). This meant "Trust, but verify." Reagan insisted that promises made by the Soviet Union concerning its nuclear weapons program be substantiated through empirical means such as official visits to military sites.

What Charlie Brown apparently didn't know, but Ronald Reagan evidently did, was that trust needs to be cultivated and reinforced—and occasionally even consciously tested—rather than taken for granted.

When we consciously decide we'll trust someone, it's best that we do so carefully and systematically. Gay and Donald Lumsden (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams; Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson) wrote that trust can be created if and when people demonstrate most or all of these qualities and behaviors:

- Directness—In mainstream American culture, "getting to the point" is usually valued over subtle or vague communication.
- Openness to influence—If a person seems receptive to others' ideas and preferences, he or she is likely to be seen as reliable and trustworthy.
- Commitment to others' success—When we feel that a person is concerned about others, we tend to feel more comfortable relying on him or her.
- Personal accountability—We prefer working with people who display integrity, in the sense that they can accept individual blame as well as praise for their actions.
- A willingness to share responsibility for problems—Very few difficulties in a group are caused by just one person. When someone admits that he or she "owns" at least part of a problem, we tend to feel that we can rely on him or her.

Bill Clinton's comments at the start of this section reflect the fact that trust can, indeed, be hard to establish. It can also be easy to lose, particularly in low-context cultures such as that of the United States which value explicit, comprehensive transmission of messages and feelings among people.

Self-Disclosure and Trust

Isn't it marvelous that groups, composed of so many different people each with constantly changing perceptions and desires, can function as well as they do? As we discovered earlier, groups decide upon norms that guide and govern their internal interactions and their relationships with people outside their membership. Somehow, people in most groups also successfully decide how much information is appropriate to communicate about themselves to others at what times.

Self-disclosure, which is the deliberate communication of information about yourself to others (Beebe, S.A., & Masterson, J.T. (2006). *Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices*. Boston: Pearson) can be risky. It's natural for us to want to play things safe in our lives. As the comedian Milton Berle said, "A worm has some things going for it. For instance, it can't fall down." No one wants to live like a worm, but revealing personal information opens us to "falling down" by being rejected.

We can share our feelings and concerns on many levels. These may range from superficial pleasantries—"Nice weather, isn't it?"—to what John Powell (Powell, J. (1990). *Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?* Niles, IL: Argus Communications) called "peak communication." What level of self-disclosure the members of a group select will usually depend on the kind of situation or topic they're dealing with and the expectations they've established for each other.

Self-disclosure generally deepens and expands as a group matures, but members should always be conscious of how their level of self-disclosure fits each other's needs and desires. Like all other kinds of communication, self-disclosure needs to be reciprocal rather than one-sided if it is to grow healthfully. If one person discloses something personal and the second doesn't respond in kind, trust between them can be strained or broken.

Self-disclosure can clearly contribute to trust, but we need to be discreet when employing it. Too much, too soon, can hinder rather than help a group. In Chapter 1 we drew a distinction between the task and relationship functions of groups. Although by its very nature self-disclosure engages people in considering personal material that may strengthen their relationship, it should also be relevant to whatever topic is being discussed at a particular time.

Key Takeaway

Although it's difficult to establish and maintain, trust among group members is vital if they are to function at the highest possible level.

Exercise 3.5.1

1. Think of one of the groups you participate in. Which member of the group do you trust most? What has the person done or demonstrated to you that led you to trust him or her?
2. Describe a time when someone in a group of which you were apart betrayed or abused the group's trust. What might have prevented that behavior?
3. Identify a time when you engaged in appropriate self-disclosure in a group. What were the results?
4. Recall a time when you or someone else in a group practiced self-disclosure in a way that was not helpful to the group. What happened, and why did the results turn out as they did?

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3.6: Membership in Digital Groups

Learning Objectives

1. Identify dangers involved in moving from one communication environment to another
2. Identify major features of digital groups and what they imply regarding their members' behavior

Unlike you, Phil, I hate computers. So I'm writing this in full view of my computer in order to torture it. - A friend of one of the authors, in a letter written by hand in 2004

You think because you understand "one" you must understand "two," because one and one make two. But you must also understand "and." - Sufi Tradition

Different Strokes for Different Folks

The term "code-switching" is used by linguists to describe how bilingual speakers sometimes sprinkle expressions from one language into another. The title of a classic article about code-switching provides an example of the phenomenon: "Sometimes I start a sentence in English y *termino en español*". Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English *y termino en español*: Toward a typology of code-switching (Poplack, S. (1980) In J. Amastea & L. Elías-Olivares (Eds.), *Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic aspects*, pp. 230–263. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press).

Anyone who has come to command more than one language can attest that each of them transmits thoughts and emotions in unique and distinct ways. Code-switching can sometimes lead to serendipitous insights, but it can also bring about awkward moments. Combining two languages, as the Sufi adage above suggests, is not just a matter of adding one and one.

The slang expression "different strokes for different folks," which was popular in the 1960s, indicated that it's fine to have diverse opinions and styles in society. Today, just as half a century ago, different folks use different methods of communicating depending on the groups they're members of. In the same way that mixing parts of whole languages may yield unexpected results, switching between sub-vocabularies within one language may produce happy surprises or difficulties. A story will illustrate how.

The father of one of the authors was raised in a traditional family in the American Midwest. Just after high school, as World War II was coming to a close, he was drafted into the army and sent to the Philippines. Almost all the people with whom he spent the next three years were other young American men like himself.

Part of army culture in those days was that soldiers of equal ranks routinely peppered their talk with profanity. Perhaps this shocked some new recruits, but most quickly overcame their initial reaction and got used to using blue language with everyone else. For virtually all the enlisted personnel, a "code" of foul language became habitual.

When the author's father completed his tour of duty and returned to the U.S. in 1948, he spent some time at home before going off to college under the GI Bill. Just a few days after his joyous return to his hometown, he and his parents and younger sister were eating lunch in their dining room. Conversation was lively but routine. At some point, in a polite tone, he said, "Mom, please pass the f-ing butter."

Nature and Implications of Social Media

In Chapter 1 we defined social media and considered how they may affect people's interactions. Whether we employ them individually or with others as part of a group, such media generally permit or even encourage broad communication. They make it easy for us to spread information about our personalities, interests, and activities as broadly as we wish—even to total strangers.

Among the positive points of social media which we mentioned in Chapter 1 were that they 1) allow people in different places to collaborate on projects; 2) permit people to maintain contact with each other when they're not meeting formally; 3) enable group members to identify and collect information pertinent to their aims; and 4) focus attention primarily on messages instead of "status markers."

We noted that people using social media may commit unintentional or good-natured mistakes which lead to awkwardness or embarrassment. What we didn't mention then is that some people may purposely employ techniques via social media to hurt others. Ivester (Ivester, M. (2011). *Lol…omg!: What every student needs to know about online reputation management, digital citizenship*

and cyberbullying. Reno, NV: Serra Knight Publishing) identified many examples of such intentionally harmful social media communication. Among others, these included "flaming," which is sending abusive messages with an intent to enrage someone; impersonating another person; "outing" an individual's personal or secret information; spamming, or sending large volumes of unwanted material; and mashups, which are alterations of digital content in such a way as to humiliate someone.

Social media, as we've seen, are wide-open spaces. Like the American "Wild West" 150 years ago, they can be unfettered and unpredictable territory.

Characteristics of Digital Groups

Now let's put aside our discussion of social media and think about what it means to be a member of a group connected by older and perhaps tamer forms of computer-mediated communication. In particular, let's consider digital groups that communicate solely or in large part via email, online discussion forums, or synchronous audio or video conferencing.

First, here are some notes about the nature of the kinds of digital groups we've just referred to:

Digital groups are pervasive. As of the end of 2011, nearly one of every three persons on Planet Earth had Internet access. In their guide to email, Shipley and Schwalbe (Shipley, D., & Schwalbe W. (2007). *Send; The essential guide to email for office and home*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf) indicated that trillions of email messages are sent each week in the United States alone. At the Federal level, they noted, the National Archives was expected to receive more than 100 million email messages from the Bush administration when it left office.

Digital groups range widely in their formality level and longevity. Some are casual, whereas others are more official and rigorous. Like other secondary groups, they may also be temporary and directed toward short-term goals or permanent.

Digital groups are, at least at face value, egalitarian. Assuming they can access the Internet, all the members of a digital group have an equal chance to enter and communicate in its discussions.

Digital groups come in all sizes. Many, if not most, comprise more than the eight individuals that lots of authorities deem to be the upper limit of a "small group." This can be deceiving, however, since once something gets shared within the group it may very well be sent outside it, either intentionally or not. Given that nothing on the Web is ever really "private," it's probably wise to assume that messages in digital groups are shared either with no one or with everyone.

Digital groups may communicate via either "rich" or "lean" media (Waldeck, J. H., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. (2013). *Business & professional communication in a digital age*. Boston: Wadsworth). Although it's possible to be brusque or even rude in any digital medium, some media tend to be better able to convey signals of civility than others. Rich media, such as audio or video conferencing, tend to permit or facilitate understanding because they transmit non-verbal as well as verbal communication cues. Lean media such as email or text messaging, which depend on written communication, are by their nature less capable of doing so.

Asynchronous feedback sent in digital groups may be limited, untimely, or otherwise inadequate. Because group members who use email or discussion forums usually don't see or hear each other immediately, "personalness" may be less than it would be if they were face to face. Without immediate cues to respond to, people sometimes shorten their messages or fail to include pleasantries that can promote easy understanding.

Regardless of the relatively intimate size of digital groups and the mutual familiarity among their members, the impact of asynchronous messages within them is always invisible. By this, we mean that someone who sends a message can't see and hear how its recipient responds right when that person reads, sees, or hears it.

Unlike what happens in face-to-face groups, when individual members write to someone about something in a digital environment it's possible that others may be doing so without their knowledge. Thus, the positive or negative impact of individually innocuous or mild messages may be magnified many times.

Advice for Members of Digital Groups

Even those of us who use computers all day long at work or school for serious purposes may participate in informal digital groups there or elsewhere. Usually, we move back and forth between these communication worlds easily and without causing ourselves or others any problems.

Still, we run the risk that, like the author's father, we may accidentally transfer habits and practices that are appropriate in one environment to another in which they don't fit. Here are some tips on how to minimize this kind of risk and others associated with communication in a digital group:

First, know your group's norms. If you're not sure about something, ask. When in doubt, don't.

Second, be especially careful about sending or responding to any message if you've just been in a physical or digital location with different norms. Depending on your interests, you may be part of some social media in which most messages are snarky. In fact, digital forums exist in which participants try to outdo each other at being mean. Why? In order to attract attention--which is, after all, one of the chief purposes many people use social media in the first place.

Third, be aware of potential gender-related communication differences. According to research by Susan Herring, for instance, many men find using aggressive language to be amusing (Shipley, D., & Schwalbe W. (2007). *Send; The essential guide to email for office and home*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf). Women, on the other hand, may take such communication at face value and be put off or feel threatened by it.

Fourth, try to empathize. The physical distance inherent in digital communication can make us less sensitive to other people's feelings. Try to imagine the person(s) you're writing to sitting in front of you.

Finally, think twice about using what you consider to be humor. Use what Matt Ivester (Ivester, M. (2011). *Lol…omg!: What every student needs to know about online reputation management, digital citizenship, and cyberbullying*. Reno, NV: Serra Knight Publishing) calls "the 'Get It?' test" and ask whether your message might be misinterpreted. What seems clever or witty to you may come across very differently to those who read it. Be particularly wary of using sarcasm (a word which, incidentally, comes from a Greek term for rending or tearing flesh).

Because of their electronic foundations, digital groups offer their members convenience and efficiency. Being a successful member of a digital group, however, requires focus, patience, and attention to the results of one's actions in a way that membership in a face-to-face group does not.

Key Takeaway

Members of digital groups need to understand the nature and implications of those groups and act accordingly.

Exercise 3.6.1

1. Discuss these questions with one or two classmates: When considering communication in digital groups, is it truly possible to distinguish between personal and professional communication? Why or why not?
2. Think of a permanent digital group you're a member of and a temporary one. How, if at all, do the styles and contents of messages in the two groups differ?
3. Describe a misunderstanding you've experienced that resulted from the characteristics of a digital group using a "lean" rather than a "rich" medium.

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3.7: Individual and Cultural Differences



Figure 3.7.1 (Credit: US Army Africa/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Learning Objectives

After reading this section, you should be able to answer these questions:

- How do managers and organizations appropriately select individuals for particular jobs?
- How do people with different abilities, skills, and personalities build effective work teams?
- How do managers and employees deal effectively with individual differences in the workplace?
- How can organizations foster a work environment that allows employees an opportunity to develop and grow?
- How do managers know how to get the best from each employee?
- What is the role of ethical behavior in managerial actions?
- How do you manage and do business with people from different cultures?

Exploring Managerial Careers

Building Back Trust on the Back End

One institution that has been around for generations is banking. However, many individuals have lost faith in the banking system, and who's to blame them? Big banks have let the general consumer down with security breaches and countless stories of scandals. One glaring example is Wells Fargo & Co., who are still recovering their brand from their admission of creating nearly two million accounts for customers without their permission. But this problem is not new. The approach to bolstering this trust factor is, however, taking on a new perspective with some quick adaptation and managerial foresight.

One CEO, Cathie Mahon, chief executive officer of the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, is not taking the disparities between credit unions and big banks lying down. Credit unions have always operated differently from big banks, and one key factor is that they are nonprofit while their big-bank counterparts are for-profit enterprises. This also can mean that they offer higher interest rates on deposits due to their size. Mahon has begun a keen undertaking to educate and empower low-income residents about financial resources. Her most recent endeavor is to provide a platform called CU Impact that keeps customers more informed about their balances, creates more trustworthy auto-pay features, more information delivered at ATMs as well. The improvements to the back-end reliability within the credit union system sustain the small, community feel of the credit union, while providing powerful, trustworthy systems that restore faith in their business. Her willingness to embrace technology and embrace differences of customers, employees, and the company structure overall made her the key to success for the future of their business.

Sources: Cohen, Arianne, "The CEO Who's Leveling the Playing Field Between Credit Unions and Big Banks," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 9, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-09/ the-ceo-who-s-leveling-the-playing-field-between-credit-unions-and-big-banks; Koren, James Rufus, "It's been a year since the Wells Fargo scandal broke—and new problems are still surfacing," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2017, www.latimes.com/business/la-f...lls-fargo-one- year-20170908-story.html.

How do managers and organizations appropriately select individuals for particular jobs?

As we can see in the example of Cathie Mahon, our unique personal characteristics can have a dramatic influence on both individual behavior and the behavior of those around us. To succeed in any managerial position, it is necessary to have the appropriate skills and abilities for the situation. Moreover, when selecting subordinates, managers have similar concerns. In short, individual differences can play a major role in how well someone performs on the job. They can even influence whether someone gets the job in the first place. Because of this, we begin this section with a look at individual differences in the workplace.

Several factors can be identified that influence employee behavior and performance. One early model of job performance argued simply that performance was largely a function of *ability* and *motivation.* [1] Using this simple model as a guide, we can divide our discussion of individual factors in performance into two categories: those that influence our *capacity to respond* and those that influence our will or *desire to respond*. The first category includes such factors as mental and physical abilities, personality traits, perceptual capabilities, and stress-tolerance levels. The second category includes those variables dealing with employee motivation. Both of these sets of factors are discussed in this part of the book as a prelude to more complex analyses of overall organizational performance.

Specifically, we begin our analysis in this chapter with a look at individual differences, including employee abilities and skills, personality variables, and work values. We will also examine the nature of culture and cultural diversity as it affects behavior in organizations both at home and abroad. Later we look at perception and job attitudes, and we review basic learning and reinforcement techniques. The basic theories of employee motivation are then introduced, including the concept of employee needs. More complex cognitive models of motivation will be examined, and finally, we review contemporary approaches to performance appraisals and reward systems in organizations. All told, this coverage aims to introduce the reader to the more salient aspects of individual behavior as they relate to organizational behavior and effectiveness.

Example 3.7.1

1. What are the various abilities and skills that should be considered when hiring employees?
2. How should the personality differences and work values be taken into account when selecting employees?
3. What is the role of cultural diversity in selecting employees?

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3.8: Employee Abilities and Skills

How do people with different abilities, skills, and personalities build effective work teams?

We begin with a look at *employee abilities and skills*. Abilities and skills generally represent those physical and intellectual characteristics that are relatively stable over time and that help determine an employee's capability to respond. Recognizing them is important in understanding organizational behavior, because they often bound an employee's ability to do the job. For example, if a clerk-typist simply does not have the manual dexterity to master the fundamentals of typing or keyboard entry, her performance will likely suffer. Similarly, a sales representative who has a hard time with simple numerical calculations will probably not do well on the job.

Mental Abilities

It is possible to divide our discussion of abilities and skills into two sections: mental abilities and physical abilities. **Mental abilities** are an individual's intellectual capabilities and are closely linked to how a person makes decisions and processes information. Included here are such factors as verbal comprehension, inductive reasoning, and memory. A summary is shown in Table 3.8.1.

Dimensions of Mental Abilities
• *Verbal comprehension*. The ability to understand the meanings of words and their relations to each other. • *Word fluency*. The ability to name objects or use words to form sentences that express an idea. • *Number aptitude*. The ability to make numerical calculations speedily and accurately. • *Inductive reasoning*. The ability to discover a rule or principle and apply it to the solution of a problem. • *Memory*. The ability to remember lists of words and numbers and other associations. • *Spatial aptitude*. The ability to perceive fixed geometric figures and their relations with other geometric figures. • *Perceptual speed*. The ability to perceive visual details quickly and accurately.

Table 3.8.1

From a managerial standpoint, a key aspect of mental ability is cognitive complexity. **Cognitive complexity** represents a person's capacity to acquire and sort through various pieces of information from the environment and organize them in such a way that they make sense. People with high cognitive complexity tend to use more information—and to see the relationships between aspects of this information—than people with low cognitive complexity. For example, if a manager was assigned a particular problem, would she have the capacity to break the problem down into its various facets and understand how these various facets relate to one another? A manager with low cognitive complexity would tend to see only one or two salient aspects of the problem, whereas a manager with higher cognitive complexity would understand more of the nuances and subtleties of the problem as they relate to each other and to other problems.

People with *low* cognitive complexity typically exhibit the following characteristics:[2]

- They tend to be categorical and stereotypical. Cognitive structures that depend upon simple fixed rules of
- integration tend to reduce the possibility of thinking in terms of degrees.
- Internal conflict appears to be minimized with simple structures. Since few alternative relationships are generated, closure is quick.
- Behavior is apparently anchored in external conditions. There is less personal contribution in simple structures.
- Fewer rules cover a wider range of phenomena. There is less distinction between separate situations.

On the other hand, people with *high* levels of cognitive complexity are typically characterized by the following:3

- Their cognitive system is less deterministic. Numerous alternative relationships are generated and considered.
- The environment is tracked in numerous ways. There is less compartmentalization of the environment.
- The individual utilizes more internal processes. The self as an individual operates on the process.

Research on cognitive complexity has focused on two important areas from a managerial standpoint: leadership style and decision-making.

In the area of leadership, it has been found that managers rated high on cognitive complexity are better able to handle complex situations, such as rapid changes in the external environment. Moreover, such managers also tend to use more resources and information when solving a problem and tend to be somewhat more considerate and consultative in their approach to managing their subordinates.[4]

In the area of decision-making, fairly consistent findings show that individuals with high cognitive complexity (1) seek out more information for a decision, (2) actually process or use more information, (3) are better able to integrate discrepant information, (4) consider a greater number of possible solutions to the problem, and (5) employ more complex decision strategies than individuals with low cognitive complexity.[5]

Physical Abilities

The second set of variables relates to someone's **physical abilities**. Included here are both basic physical abilities (for example, strength) and **psychomotor abilities** (such as manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, and manipulation skills). These factors are summarized in Table 3.8.2.[6]

Considering both mental and physical abilities helps one understand the behavior of people at work and how they can be better managed. The recognition of such abilities—and the recognition that people have *different* abilities—has clear implications for employee recruitment and selection decisions; it brings into focus the importance of matching people to jobs. For example, Florida Power has a 16-hour selection process that involves 12 performance tests. Over the test period of a couple of years, 640 individuals applied for "lineperson" jobs. Of these, 259 were hired. As a consequence of the new performance tests and selection process, turnover went from 43 percent to 4.5 percent, and the program saved net $1 million.[7] In addition to selection, knowledge of job requirements and individual differences is also useful in evaluating training and development needs. Because human resources are important to management, it is imperative that managers become more familiar with the basic characteristics of their people.

Dimensions of Physical Abilities
Physical Abilities
• *Dynamic strength*. The ability to exert muscular force repeatedly or continuously for a period of time. • *Trunk strength*. The ability to exert muscular strength using the back and abdominal muscles. • *Static strength*. The amount of continuous force one is capable of exerting against an external object. • *Explosive strength*. The amount of force one is capable of exerting in one or a series of explosive acts. • *Extent flexibility*. The ability to move the trunk and back muscles as far as possible. • *Dynamic flexibility*. The ability to make rapid and repeated flexing movements. • *Gross body coordination*. The ability to coordinate the simultaneous actions of different parts of the body. • *Equilibrium*. The ability to maintain balance and equilibrium in spite of disruptive external forces. • *Stamina*. The ability to continue maximum effort requiring prolonged effort over time; the degree of cardiovascular conditioning.
Psychomotor Abilities
• *Control precision.* The ability to make fine, highly controlled muscular movements needed to adjust a control mechanism. • *Multilimb coordination*. The ability to coordinate the simultaneous movement of hands and feet. • *Response orientation*. The ability to make an appropriate response to a visual signal indicating a direction. • *Rate control*. The ability to make continuous anticipatory motor adjustments in speed and direction to follow a continuously moving target. • *Manual dexterity*. The ability to make skillful and well-directed arm-hand movements in manipulating large objects quickly. • *Finger dexterity*. The ability to make skillful and controlled manipulations of small objects. • *Arm-hand steadiness*. The ability to make precise arm-hand movements where steadiness is extremely important, and speed and strength are relatively unimportant. • *Reaction time.* How quickly a person can respond to a single stimulus with a simple response. • *Aiming.* The ability to make highly accurate, restricted hand movements requiring precise eye-hand coordination.

Table 3.8.2

Exercise 3.8.1

1. Why should abilities and skills be taken into account when selecting employees?
2. Describe the components of mental abilities, cognitive complexity, physical ability, and psychomotor abilities.

2 R.J. Ebert and T.R. Mitchell, *Organization Decision Processes: Concepts and Analysis* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1975), p. 81.

3 Ibid.

4 T.R. Mitchell, “Cognitive Complexity and Leadership Style,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1970, *16*, pp. 166–174.

5 H. M. Schroder, M. H. Driver, and S. Streufert, *Human Information Processing* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).

6 E. J. McCormick and J. Tiffin, *Industrial Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

7 Dale Feuer & Chris Lee. 1988. The Kaizen Connection: How Companies Pick Tomorrow’s Workers. Training. May, 23–35.

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3.9: Personality - An Introduction

How do managers and employees deal effectively with individual differences in the workplace?

The second individual difference variable deals with the concept of personality. We often hear people use and misuse the term **personality**. For example, we hear that someone has a "nice" personality. For our purposes, we will examine the term from a psychological standpoint as it relates to behavior and performance in the workplace. To do this, let us start with a more precise definition of the concept.

Definition of Personality

Personality can be defined in many ways. Perhaps one of the more useful definitions for purposes of organizational analysis is offered by Salvatore Maddi, who defines *personality* as follows:

". . . a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determine those communalities and differences in the psychological behavior (thoughts, feelings, and actions) of people that have continuity in time and that may not be easily understood as the sole result of the social and biological pressures of the moment."[8]

Several aspects of this definition should be noted. First, personality is best understood as a constellation of interacting characteristics; it is necessary to look at the whole person when attempting to understand the phenomenon and its effects on subsequent behavior. Second, various dimensions of personality are relatively stable across time. Although changes—especially evolutionary ones—can occur, seldom do we see major changes in the personality of a normal individual. And third, the study of personality emphasizes both similarities and differences across people. This is important for managers to recognize as they attempt to formulate actions designed to enhance performance and employee well-being.

Influences on Personality Development

Early research on personality development focused on the issue of whether heredity or environment determined an individual's personality. Although a few researchers are still concerned with this issue, most contemporary psychologists now feel this debate is fruitless. As noted long ago by Kluckhohn and Murray:

"The two sets of determinants can rarely be completely disentangled once the environment has begun to operate. The pertinent questions are: (1) which of the various genetic potentialities will be actualized as a consequence of a particular series of life-events in a given physical, social, and cultural environment? and (2) what limits to the development of this personality are set by genetic constitution?"[9]

In other words, if the individual is viewed from the whole-person perspective, the search for the determinants of personal traits focuses on both heredity and environment as well as the interaction between the two over time. In this regard, five major categories of determinants of personal traits may be identified: physiological, cultural, family and social group, role, and situational determinants.

Physiological Determinants. Physiological determinants include factors such as stature, health, and sex that often act as constraints on personal growth and development. For instance, tall people often tend to become more domineering and self-confident than shorter people. Traditional sex-role stereotyping has served to channel males and females into different developmental patterns. For example, males have been trained to be more assertive and females more passive.

Cultural Determinants. Because of the central role of culture in the survival of a society, there is great emphasis on instilling cultural norms and values in children growing up. For instance, in capitalist societies, where individual responsibility is highly prized, emphasis is placed on developing achievement-oriented, independent, self-reliant people, whereas in socialistic societies, emphasis is placed on developing cooperative, group-oriented individuals who place the welfare of the whole society ahead of individual needs. Cultural determinants affect personal traits. As Mussen notes, "The child's cultural group defines the range of experiments and situations he is likely to encounter and the values and personality characteristics that will be reinforced and hence learned."10 Consider, for example, how Japanese society develops its world-renowned work ethic.

Family and Social Group Determinants. Perhaps the most important influences on personal development are family and social group determinants. For instance, it has been found that children who grow up in democratic homes tend to be more stable, less

argumentative, more socially successful, and more sensitive to praise or blame than those who grow up in authoritarian homes.[11] One's immediate family and peers contribute significantly to the socialization process, influencing how individuals think and behave through an intricate system of rewards and penalties.

Role Determinants. People are assigned various roles very early in life because of factors such as sex, socioeconomic background, and race. As one grows older, other factors, such as age and occupation, influence the roles we are expected to play. Such role determinants often limit our personal growth and development as individuals and significantly control acceptable behavior patterns.

Situational Determinants. Finally, personal development can be influenced by situational determinants. These are factors that are often unpredictable, such as a divorce or death in the family. For instance, James Abegglen studied 20 successful male executives who had risen from lower-class childhoods and discovered that in three-fourths of the cases these executives had experienced some form of severe separation trauma from their fathers. Their fathers (and role models) had either died, been seriously ill, or had serious financial setbacks. Abegglen hypothesized that the sons' negative identification with their fathers' plights represented a major motivational force for achievement and success.[12]

Exercise 3.9.1

1. What is the role of personality and personality development in the workplace?

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8 S.R. Maddi, *Personality Theories: A Comparative Analysis* (Homewood, III.: Dorsey, 1980), p. 10.

9. C. Kluckhohn and H. Murray, *Personality in Society and Nature*, (New York: Knopf, 1953).

10. P.H. Mussen, *The Psychological Development of the Child* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

11. Ibid.

12. J. C. Abegglen, "Personality Factors in Social Mobility: A Study of Occupationally Mobile Businessmen," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, August 1958, pp. 101–159.

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3.10: Personality and Work Behavior

How can organizations foster a work environment that allows employees an opportunity to develop and grow?

Personality theories that utilize the trait approach have proven popular among investigators of employee behavior in organizations. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, trait theories focus largely on the normal, healthy adult, in contrast to psychoanalytic and other personality theories that focus largely on abnormal behavior. Trait theories identify several characteristics that describe people. Allport insisted that our understanding of individual behavior could progress only by breaking behavior patterns down into a series of elements (traits).[13] "The only thing you can do about a *total* personality is to send flowers to it," he once said. Hence, in the study of people at work, we may discuss an employee's dependability, emotional stability, or cognitive complexity. These traits, when taken together, form a large mosaic that provides insight into individuals. A third reason for the popularity of trait theories in the study of organizational behavior is that the traits that are identified are measurable and tend to remain relatively stable over time. It is much easier to make comparisons among employees using these tangible qualities rather than the somewhat mystical psychoanalytic theories or the highly abstract and volatile self theories.

The number of traits people are believed to exhibit varies according to which theory we employ. In an exhaustive search, over 17,000 can be identified. Obviously, this number is so large as to make any reasonable analysis of the effects of personality in the workplace impossible. In order for us to make any sense out of this, it is necessary for us to concentrate on a small number of personality variables that have a direct impact on work behavior. If we do this, we can identify six traits that seem to be relatively important for our purposes here. It will be noted that some of these traits (for example, self-esteem or locus of control) have to do with how we see ourselves, whereas other traits (for example, introversion-extroversion or dependability) have to do with how we interact with others. Moreover, these traits are largely influenced by one's personality development and, in turn, influence actual attitudes and behaviors at work, as shown in Figure 3.10.1.

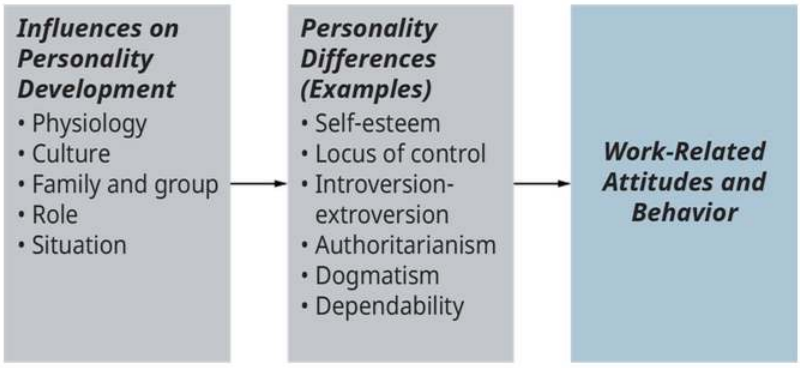


Figure 3.10.1 Relation of Personality to Attitudes and Behavior

Self-Esteem

One trait that has emerged recently as a key variable in determining work behavior and effectiveness is an employee's self-esteem. **Self-esteem** can be defined as one's opinion or belief about one's self and self-worth. It is how we see ourselves as individuals. Do we have confidence in ourselves? Do we think we are successful? Attractive? Worthy of others' respect or friendship?

Research has shown that high self-esteem in school-age children enhances assertiveness, independence, and creativity. People with high self-esteem often find it easier to give and receive affection, set higher goals for personal achievement, and exert energy to try to attain goals set for them. Moreover, individuals with high self-esteem will be more likely to seek higher-status occupations and will take more risks in the job search. For example, one study found that students possessing higher self-esteem were more highly rated by college recruiters, received more job offers, and were more satisfied with their job search than students with low self-esteem.14 Hence, personality traits such as this one can affect your job and career even before you begin work!

Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to the tendency among individuals to attribute the events affecting their lives either to their own actions or to external forces; it is a measure of how much you think you control your own destiny. Two types of individual are identified. People with an *internal* locus of control tend to attribute their successes—and failures—to their own abilities and efforts. Hence, a student would give herself credit for passing an examination; likewise, she would accept blame for failing.

In contrast, people with an *external* locus of control tend to attribute things that happen to them as being caused by someone or something else. They give themselves neither credit nor blame. Hence, passing an exam may be dismissed by saying it was “too easy,” whereas failing may be excused by convincing one’s self that the exam was “unfair.”

If you want to determine your own locus of control, fill out the self-assessment in the end-of-chapter assignments. This is an abbreviated and adapted version of the scale originally developed by Rotter. When you have finished, refer to that reference for scoring procedures.

Recent research on locus of control suggests that people with an internal locus of control (1) exhibit greater work motivation, (2) have stronger expectations that effort will lead to actual high job performance, (3) perform better on tasks requiring learning or problem-solving, (4) typically receive higher salaries and salary increases, and (5) exhibit less job-related anxiety than externals.[15] Locus of control has numerous implications for management. For example, consider what would happen if you placed an “internal” under tight supervision or an “external” under loose supervision. The results probably would not be very positive. Or what would happen if you placed both internals and externals on a merit-based compensation plan? Who would likely perform better? Who might perform better under a piece-rate system?

Introversion-Extroversion

The third personality dimension we should consider focuses on the extent to which people tend to be shy and retiring or socially gregarious. *Introverts* (**introversion**) tend to focus their energies inwardly and have a greater sensitivity to abstract feelings, whereas *extroverts* (**extroversion**) direct more of their attention to other people, objects, and events. Research evidence suggests that both types of people have a role to play in organizations.[16] Extroverts more often succeed in first-line management roles, where only superficial "people skills” are required; they also do better in field assignments—for example, as sales representatives. Introverts, on the other hand, tend to succeed in positions requiring more reflection, analysis, and sensitivity to people’s inner feelings and qualities. Such positions are included in a variety of departments within organizations, such as accounting, personnel, and computer operations. In view of the complex nature of modern organizations, both types of individuals are clearly needed.

Authoritarianism and Dogmatism

Authoritarianism refers to an individual’s orientation toward authority. More specifically, an authoritarian orientation is generally characterized by an overriding conviction that it is right and proper for there to be clear status and power differences among people.[17] According to T.W. Adorno, a high authoritarian is typically (1) demanding, directive, and controlling of her subordinates; (2) submissive and deferential toward superiors;

(3) intellectually rigid; (4) fearful of social change; (5) highly judgmental and categorical in reactions to others; (6) distrustful; and (7) hostile in response to restraint. Nonauthoritarians, on the other hand, generally believe that power and status differences should be minimized, that social change can be constructive, and that people should be more accepting and less judgmental of others.

In the workplace, the consequences of these differences can be tremendous. Research has shown, for example, that employees who are high in authoritarianism often perform better under rigid supervisory control, whereas those rated lower on this characteristic perform better under more participative supervision.[18] Can you think of other consequences that might result from these differences?

Related to this authoritarianism is the trait of dogmatism. **Dogmatism** refers to a particular cognitive style that is characterized by closed-mindedness and inflexibility.[19] The dimension has particularly profound implications for managerial decision-making; it is found that dogmatic managers tend to make decisions quickly, based on only limited information and with a high degree of confidence in the correctness of their decisions.[20] Do you know managers (or professors) who tend to be dogmatic? How does this behavior affect those around them?

Dependability

Finally, people can be differentiated with respect to their behavioral consistency, or **dependability**. Individuals who are seen as self-reliant, responsible, consistent, and dependable are typically considered to be desirable colleagues or group members who will cooperate and work steadfastly toward group goals.[21] Personnel managers often seek a wide array of information concerning dependability before hiring job applicants. Even so, contemporary managers often complain that many of today's workers simply lack the feeling of personal responsibility necessary for efficient operations. Whether this is a result of the personal failings of the individuals or a lack of proper motivation by superiors remains to be determined.

Obviously, personality factors such as those discussed here can play a major role in determining work behavior both on the shop floor and in the executive suite. A good example of this can be seen in the events leading up to the demise of one of America's largest and oldest architectural firms. Observe the role of personality in the events that follow.

Managing Change

Personality Clash: Design vs. Default

Philip Johnson, at age 86, was considered the dean of American architecture and was known for such landmarks as the AT&T building in New York and the Pennzoil Center in Houston, but he was also forced out of the firm that he built, only to watch it fall into default and bankruptcy.

In 1969, Johnson invited John Burgee, who was just 35, to become his sole partner to handle the management side of the business and thereby allow him to focus on the creative side. "I picked John Burgee as my righthand man. Every design architect needs a Burgee. The more leadership he took, the happier I was," Johnson said. Burgee's personality was perfectly suited to the nuts-and-bolts tasks of managing the firm and overseeing the projects through construction.

For all his management effort, Burgee felt that only Johnson's name ever appeared in the press. "It was always difficult for me, being a younger man and less flamboyant," commented Burgee. Eventually, Burgee was able to get Johnson to change the name of the firm, first to Philip Johnson & John Burgee Architects, then to Johnson/Burgee Architects, and finally to John Burgee Architects, with Philip Johnson. Although Burgee wanted to be involved in all aspects of the business, Johnson was unwilling to relinquish control over design to Burgee.

In 1988, Burgee sent a four-page memo to Johnson in which he listed each of the firm's 24 projects and outlined the ones for which Johnson could initiate designs, initiate contact with clients, or work on independently at home. Burgee also instructed Johnson not to involve himself with the younger architects or advise them on their drawings.

The clash of the creative personality of Johnson and the controlling personality of Burgee came to a climax when Burgee asked Johnson to leave the firm. Unfortunately, Burgee underestimated the reaction of clients and lost many key contracts. Eventually, Burgee had to file for bankruptcy, and Johnson continued working on his own, including a project for Estée Lauder.

Source: Michelle Pacelle, "Design Flaw." *Wall Street Journal*, September 2, 1992, p. A1, A5.

Exercise 3.10.1

1. What are the things that managers can do to foster an environment where employees can gain personal development and grow?

13. G.W. Allport, *Pattern and Growth in Personality* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

14. R. A. Ellis and M. S. Taylor, "Role of Self-Esteem within the Job Search Process," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1983, *68*, pp. 632–640.

15. P. Spector, "Behavior in Organizations as a Function of Locus of Control," *Psychological Bulletin*, May 1982, pp. 482–497; P. Nystrom, "Managers' Salaries and Their Beliefs About Reinforcement Control," *Journal of Social Psychology*, August 1983, pp. 291–292.

16. L. R. Morris, *Extroversion and Introversion: An Interactional Perspective* (New York: Hemisphere, 1979), p.8.

17. T. W. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Brunswik, and D. J. Levinson, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950).

18. V. H. Vroom, *Some Personality Determinants of the Effects of Participation* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice- Hall, 1960).

19. M. Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

20. R. N. Taylor and M. D. Dunnette, "Influence of Dogmatism, Risk-Taking Propensity, and Intelligence on Decision-Making Strategies for a Sample of Industrial Managers," *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 1974, *59*, pp. 420–423.

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3.11: Personality and Organization- A Basic Conflict?

How do managers know how to get the best from each employee?

Most theories of personality stress that an individual's personality becomes complete only when the individual interacts with other people; growth and development do not occur in a vacuum. Human personalities are the individual expressions of our culture, and our culture and social order are the group expressions of individual personalities. This being the case, it is important to understand how work organizations influence the growth and development of the adult employee.

A model of person-organization relationships has been proposed by Chris Argyris.[22] This model, called the **basic incongruity thesis**, consists of three parts: what individuals want from organizations, what organizations want from individuals, and how these two potentially conflicting sets of desires are harmonized.

Argyris begins by examining how healthy individuals change as they mature. On the basis of previous work, Argyris suggests that as people grow to maturity, seven basic changes in needs and interests occur:

1. People develop from a state of passivity as infants to a state of increasing activity as adults.
2. People develop from a state of dependence upon others to a state of relative independence.
3. People develop from having only a few ways of behaving to having many diverse ways of behaving.
4. People develop from having shallow, casual, and erratic interests to having fewer, but deeper, interests.
5. People develop from having a short time perspective (i.e., behavior is determined by present events) to having a longer time perspective (behavior is determined by a combination of past, present, and future events).
6. People develop from subordinate to superordinate positions (from child to parent or from trainee to manager).
7. People develop from a low understanding or awareness of themselves to a greater understanding of and control over themselves as adults.

Although Argyris acknowledges that these developments may differ among individuals, the general tendencies from childhood to adulthood are believed to be fairly common.

Next, Argyris turns his attention to the defining characteristics of traditional work organizations. In particular, he argues that in the pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness, organizations create work situations aimed more at getting the job done than at satisfying employees' personal goals. Examples include increased task specialization, unity of command, a rules orientation, and other things aimed at turning out a standardized product with standardized people. In the pursuit of this standardization, Argyris argues, organizations often create work situations with the following characteristics:

1. Employees are allowed minimal control over their work; control is often shifted to machines.
2. They are expected to be passive, dependent, and subordinate.
3. They are allowed only a short-term horizon in their work.
4. They are placed on repetitive jobs that require only minimal skills and abilities.
5. On the basis of the first four items, people are expected to produce under conditions leading to psychological failure.

Hence, Argyris argues persuasively that many jobs in our technological society are structured in such a way that they conflict with the basic growth needs of a healthy personality. This conflict is represented in Figure 3.11.1. The magnitude of this conflict between personality and organization is a function of several factors. The strongest conflict can be expected under conditions where employees are very mature, organization are highly structured and rules and procedures are formalized, and jobs are fragmented and mechanized. Hence, we would expect the strongest conflict to be at the lower levels of the organization, among blue-collar and clerical workers. Managers tend to have jobs that are less mechanized and tend to be less subject to formalized rules and procedures.

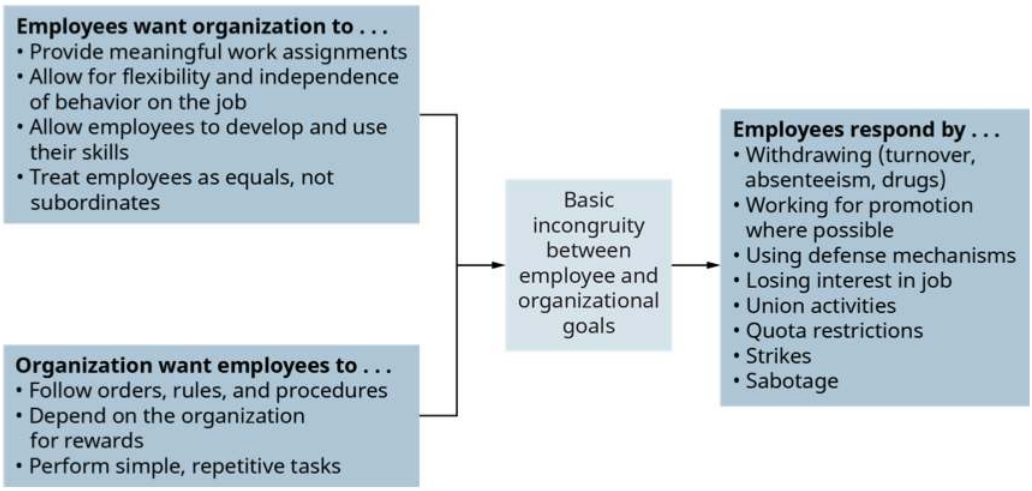


Figure 3.11.1 Basic Conflict Between Employees and Organizations

Where strong conflicts between personalities and organizations exist, or, more precisely, where strong conflicts exist between what employees and organizations want from each other, employees are faced with difficult choices. They may choose to leave the organization or to work hard to climb the ladder into the upper echelons of management. They may defend their self-concepts and adapt through the use of defense mechanisms. Disassociating themselves psychologically from the organization (e.g., losing interest in their work, lowering their work standards, etc.) and concentrating instead on the material rewards available from the organization is another possible response. Or they may find allies in their fellow workers and, in concert, may further adapt *as a group* by such activities as quota restrictions, unionizing efforts, strikes, and sabotage.

Unfortunately, although such activities may help employees feel that they are getting back at the organization, they do not alleviate the basic situation that is causing the problem. To do this, one has to examine the nature of the job and the work climate. Personality represents a powerful force in the determination of work behavior and must be recognized before meaningful change can be implemented by managers to improve the effectiveness of their organizations.

Managing Change

Integrating Employee and Organizational Goals at Kayak

In many ways the above scenario paints a bleak portrait of the relationship of many workers to their employers. However, it should be noted that many companies are trying to change this relationship and create a partnership between employees and company in which the goals of both are realized. In doing so, however, these companies are careful to select and hire only those employees who have the potential to fit in with the company's unique culture. A case in point is Kayak, an Internet-based travel company in Stamford, Connecticut. The company strives to create customer satisfaction, starting with their own culture and employees within the walls of their building. Cofounder and former CTO Paul English's goal was to bring a constant stream of "new-new ideas" and surround himself with "childlike creative people" to liven up the space and be able to promote inspiration.

Kayak doesn't hire based on technical skills; their philosophy is to hire an employee on the basis of being the smartest person that somebody knows. Employees are constantly pushed to put their ideas to the test, and the company emphasizes a work-life balance that puts their employees first, which in turn makes for a productive work environment.

Kayak's ability to make fast-paced decisions comes from the empowerment of their employees to try out their ideas. Current CTO Giorgos Zacharia takes pride in the way they are able to keep order and drive deadlines. "Anyone on any team can come up with the idea, prototype it, and then we see what the user thinks about it. If it works, great! But there's no grand design; it's very organic and we see that as a strength," says Zacharia.

By encouraging and rewarding risk-taking, Kayak is able to make fast decisions, fail fast, and then turn around and come up with something more innovative that will be better than the last idea. Overall, the company hopes to offer its employees a work

environment that allows for considerable personal growth and need-satisfaction. In short, the company aims to reduce the possibility of a basic incongruity developing between employee and organizational goals.

Sources: Hawkes, Jocelyn, "KAYAK on Creating a Culture of Innovation," *Fast Company*, April 4, 2012. (https://www.fastcompany.com/1827003/...ure-innovation); Hickey, Matt, "How KAYAK

Converts Employee Well-Being Into Customer satisfaction," *Forbes*, October 4, 2015. www.forbes.com/sites/matthic...ll-being-into- customer-satisfaction/#6c97f519b7a4.

Personality and Employee Selection

Recent years have seen an increased interest in the use of preemployment screening tests. Several key assumptions underlie the use of personality tests as one method of selecting potential employees: (1) individuals have different personalities and traits, (2) these differences affect their behavior and performance, and (3) different job have different requirements. Consequently, tests can be used to select individuals who match the overall company as well as match particular types of people to specific jobs. However, managers must be careful in their use of these selection instruments. Legally all selection tests must meet the guidelines for nondiscrimination set forth in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. Specifically, in 1971 the Supreme Court ruled (Griggs v. Duke Power Company) that "good intent or the absence of discriminatory intent does not redeem . . . testing mechanisms that operate as built-in 'head-winds' for minority groups and are unrelated to measuring job capability." This ruling led to two important cases in which discrimination might apply to selection practices. First, "disparate treatment" involves the intentional discrimination against an individual based on race, color, gender, religion, or national origin. Second, "disparate impact" involves the adverse effect of selection practices (as well as other practices) on minorities regardless of whether these practices were intended to have an adverse impact or not. Consequently, although personality tests can be an important means of selecting potential employees as well as matching them to appropriate jobs, care must be taken to demonstrate that the characteristics measured actually predict job performance.

Exercise 3.11.1

1. What are some things that managers can do to foster organizational harmony where they get the best results from all employees?

22 C. Argyris, "Personality and Organization Theory Revisited," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1973, *18*, pp. 141–167.

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3.12: Personal Values and Ethics

What is the role of ethical behavior in managerial actions?

A factor that has surprised many business leaders is the alarming rise in accusations of unethical or disreputable behavior in today's companies. We hear with increasing regularity of stock market manipulations, disregard of environmental hazards, bribes, and kickbacks. To understand these behaviors, we must examine the role of values and personal ethics in the workplace. We begin with the concept of values.

A *value* may be defined as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence."[23] In other words, a value represents a judgment by an individual that certain things are "good" or "bad," "important" or "unimportant," and so forth. As such, values serve a useful function in providing guidelines or standards for choosing one's own behavior and for evaluating the behavior of others.

Characteristics of Values

The values people have tend to be relatively stable over time. The reason for this lies in the manner in which values are acquired in the first place. That is, when we first learn a value (usually at a young age), we are taught that such-and-such behavior is *always* good or *always* bad. For instance, we may be taught that lying or stealing is always unacceptable. Few people are taught that such behavior is acceptable in some circumstances but not in others. Hence, this definitive quality of learned values tends to secure them firmly in our belief systems. This is not to say that values do not change over time. As we grow, we are increasingly confronted with new and often conflicting situations. Often, it is necessary for us to weigh the relative merits of each and choose a course of action. Consider, for example, the worker who has a strong belief in hard work but who is pressured by her colleagues not to outperform the group. What would you do in this situation?

Rokeach has identified two fundamental types of values: instrumental and terminal.[24] **Instrumental values** represent those values concerning the way we approach end-states. That is, do we believe in ambition, cleanliness, honesty, or obedience? What factors guide your everyday behavior? **Terminal values**, on the other hand, are those end-state goals that we prize. Included here are such things as a comfortable life, a sense of accomplishment, equality among all people, and so forth. Both sets of values have significant influence on everyday behavior at work.

You can assess your own instrumental and terminal values by completing the self-assessment in the end-of- chapter assignments. Simply rank-order the two lists of values, and then refer to the reference for scoring procedures.

Role of Values and Ethics in Organizations

Personal values represent an important force in organizational behavior for several reasons. In fact, at least three purposes are served by the existence of personal values in organizations: (1) values serve as standards of behavior for determining a correct course of action; (2) values serve as guidelines for decision-making and conflict resolution; and (3) values serve as an influence on employee motivation. Let us consider each of these functions.

Standards of Behavior. First, values help us determine appropriate standards of behavior. They place limits on our behavior both inside and outside the organization. In such situations, we are referring to what is called *ethical behavior*, or **ethics**. Employees at all levels of the organization have to make decisions concerning what to them is right or wrong, proper or improper. For example, would you conceal information about a hazardous product made by your company, or would you feel obliged to tell someone? How would you respond to petty theft on the part of a supervisor or coworker in the office? To some extent, ethical behavior is influenced by societal values. Societal norms tell us it is wrong to engage in certain behaviors. In addition, however, individuals must often determine for themselves what is proper and what is not. This is particularly true when people find themselves in "gray zones"—situations where ethical standards are ambiguous or unclear. In many situations, a particular act may not be illegal. Moreover, one's colleagues and friends may disagree about what is proper. In such circumstances, people have to determine their own standards of behavior.

Expanding Around the Globe

Two Cultures' Perspectives of Straight Talk

Yukiko Tanabe, a foreign exchange student from Tokyo, Japan, was both eager and anxious about making new friends during her one-year study abroad in the United States. After a month-long intensive course in English over the summer, she began her studies at the University of California. Yukiko was in the same psychology class as Jane McWilliams. Despite Yukiko's somewhat shy personality, it did not take long before she and Jane were talking before and after class and studying together.

Part of the way through the term, the professor asked for volunteers to be part of an experiment on personalities and problem-solving. The professor also offered extra credit for participation in the experiment and asked interested students to stay after class to discuss the project in more detail.

When class was over, Jane asked Yukiko if she wanted to stay after and learn more about the project and the extra credit. Yukiko hesitated and then said that she was not sure. Jane replied that it would only take a few minutes to listen to the explanation, and so the two young women went up to the front of the class, along with about 20 other students, to hear the details.

The project would simply involve completing a personality questionnaire and then attempting to solve three short case problems. In total, it would take about one hour of time and would be worth 5 percent extra credit. Jane though it was a great idea and asked Yukiko if she wanted to participate. Yukiko replied that she was not sure. Jane responded that they could go together, that it would be fun, and that 5 percent extra credit was a nice bonus. To this Yukiko made no reply, so Jane signed both of them up for the project and suggested that they meet at the quad about 10 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the experiment.

On the day of the experiment, however, Yukiko did not show up. Jane found out later from Yukiko that she did not want to participate in the experiment. "Then why didn't you just say so?" asked Jane. "Because I did not want to embarrass you in front of all your other friends by saying no," explained Yukiko.

Source: Personal communication by the author. Names have been disguised.

Guidelines for Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution. In addition, values serve as guidelines for making decisions and for attempting to resolve conflicts. Managers who value personal integrity are less likely to make decisions they know to be injurious to someone else. Relatedly, values can influence how someone approaches a conflict. For example, if your boss asks your opinion about a report she wrote that you don't like, do you express your opinion candidly or be polite and flatter her?

An interesting development in the area of values and decision-making involves integrity or honesty tests. These tests are designed to measure an individual's level of integrity or honesty based on the notion that honest or dishonest behavior and decisions flow from a person's underlying values. Today over 5,000 firms use these tests, some of which use direct questions and some of which use camouflaged questions. Although the reliability of the most common tests seem good, their validity (i.e., the extent to which they can accurately predict dishonest behavior) is more open to question.[25] Nevertheless, because they do not cost much and are less intrusive than drug or polygraph testing, integrity are increasingly used to screen potential employees.

Influence on Motivation. Values affect employee motivation by determining what rewards or outcomes are sought. Employees are often offered overtime work and the opportunity to make more money at the expense of free time and time with their families. Which would you choose? Would you work harder to get a promotion to a perhaps more stressful job or "lay back" and accept a slower and possibly less rewarding career path? Value questions such as these confront employees and managers every day.

Prominent among work-related values is the concept of the **work ethic**. Simply put, the work ethic refers to the strength of one's commitment and dedication to hard work, both as an end in itself and as a means to future rewards. Much has been written lately concerning the relative state of the work ethic in North America. It has been repeatedly pointed out that one reason for our trouble in international competition lies in our rather mediocre work ethic. This is not to say that many Americans do not work hard; rather, it is to say that others (most notably those in East Asia) simply work harder.

There are many ways to assess these differences, but perhaps the simplest way is to look at actual hours worked on average in different countries both in Asia and Western Europe. Looking at Table 3.12.1, you may be surprised to discover that although the

average American works 1,789 hours (and takes an average of 19.5 vacation days) per year, the average South Korean works 2,070 hours per year (and takes only 4.5 days of vacation)![26] The typical Japanese worker works 1,742 hours per year and takes 9.6 days of vacation. Meanwhile, Western Europeans work fewer hours and take more vacation days. Thus, although Americans may work longer hours than many Europeans, they fall far behind many in East Asia.

Average Hours Worked and Vacation Taken per Worker		
Country	Average Hours Worked per Year	Vacation Days Actually Taken
South Korea	2,070	4.5
United States	1,789	19.5
OECD Average	1,763	
Japan	1,742	9.6
United Kingdom	1,676	22.5
Germany	1,288	30.2
France	1,472	25.0

Source: Adapted from OECD.Stat, "Average annual hours actually worked per worker," accessed July 20, 2018, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ANHRS; and Richard M. Steers, Yoo Keun Shin, and Gerardo R. Ungson, *The Chaebol: Korea's New Industrial Might* (Philadelphia: Ballinger, 1989).

Table 3.12.1

Example: A Country Tries to Reduce Its Workweek

What does a country do when its people are over motivated? Consider the case of Japan. On the basis of Japan's newfound affluence and success in the international marketplace, many companies—and the government—are beginning to be concerned that perhaps Japanese employees work too hard and should slow down. They may be too motivated for their own good. As a result, the Japanese Department of Labor has initiated a drive to shorten the workweek and encourage more Japanese employees to take longer holidays. The effort is focusing on middle-aged and older employees, because their physical stamina may be less than that of their more junior colleagues. Many companies are following this lead and are beginning to reduce the workweek. This is no easy task in a land where such behavior may be seen by employees as showing disloyalty toward the company. It requires a fundamental change in employee attitudes.

At the same time, among younger employees, cracks are beginning to appear in the fabled Japanese work ethic. Younger workers are beginning to express increased frustration with dull jobs and routine assignments, and job satisfaction appears to be at an all-time low. Young Japanese are beginning to take longer lunch periods and look forward to Friday and the coming weekend. Whether this is attributable to increasing affluence in changing society or simply the emergence of a new generation, things are changing—however slowly-in the East.[27]

Exercise 3.12.1

1. What role do managers undertake to ensure an environment where ethics and values are followed?

23. M. Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1973), p. 5.

24. Ibid.

25. Paul R. Sackett, Laura R. Burris, and Christine Callahan. 1989. Integrity Testing for Personnel Selection. Personnel Psychology, *42*, 491–529.

26. R. M. Steers, Y. K. Shin, and G. R. Ungson, *The Chaebol: Korea's New Industrial Might* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 96.

27. L. Smith, “Cracks in the Japanese Work Ethic,” *Fortune*, May 14, 1984, pp. 162–168; K. Van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (New York: Knopf, 1989).

Table 2.3 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

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3.13: Cultural Differences

How do you manage and do business with people from different cultures?

The final topic we will discuss in this chapter is the role of culture and cultural diversity in organizational behavior. Cultural diversity can be analyzed in many ways. For instance, we can compare cultural diversity *within* one country or company, or we can compare cultures *across* units. That is, we can look inside a particular North American firm and see employees who are Asian, black, Latino, American Indian, white, and so forth. Clearly, these individuals have different cultural backgrounds, frames of reference, traditions, and so forth. Or we can look more globally and compare a typical American firm with a typical Mexican, Italian, or Chinese firm and again see significant differences in culture.

We can also analyze cultural diversity by looking at different patterns of behavior. For instance, Americans often wonder why Japanese or Korean businesspeople always bow when they meet; this seems strange to some. Likewise, many Asians wonder why Americans always shake hands, a similarly strange behavior. Americans often complain that Japanese executives say "yes" when they actually mean something else, while Japanese executives claim many Americans promise things they know they cannot deliver. Many of these differences result from a lack of understanding concerning the various cultures and how they affect behavior both inside and outside the workplace. As the marketplace and economies of the world merge ever closer, it is increasingly important that we come to understand more about cultural variations as they affect our world.

What Is Culture?

Simply put, **culture** may be defined as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another; the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a human group's response to its environment."[28] More to the point, culture is the "collective mental programming of a people."[29] It is the unique characteristics of a people. As such, culture is:

- Something that is shared by all or most of the members of a society
- Something that older members of a society attempt to pass along to younger members
- Something that shapes our view of the world

The concept of culture represents an easy way to understand a people, albeit on a superficial level. Thus, we refer to the Chinese culture or the American culture. This is not to say that every member within a culture behaves in exactly the same way. On the contrary, every culture has diversity, but members of a certain culture tend to exhibit similar behavioral patterns that reflect where and how they grew up. A knowledge of a culture's patterns should help us deal with its members.

Culture affects the workplace because it affects what we do and how we behave. As shown in Figure 3.13.1, cultural variations influence our values, which in turn affect attitudes and, ultimately, behaviors. For instance, a culture that is characterized by hard work (e.g., the Korean culture discussed above) would exhibit a value or ethic of hard work. This work ethic would be reflected in positive attitudes toward work and the workplace; people would feel that hard work is satisfying and beneficial—they might feel committed to their employer and they might feel shame if they do not work long hours. This, in turn, would lead to actual high levels of work. This behavior, then, would serve to reinforce the culture and its value, and so on.

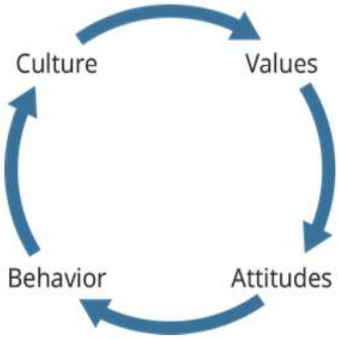


Figure 3.13.1 Relationship of Culture to Values, Attitudes, and Behavior

To see how this works, consider the results of a survey of managerial behavior by French researcher Andre Laurent.[30] He asked managers how important it was for managers to have precise answers when asked a question by subordinates.The results, shown in Figure 3.13.2, clearly show how culture can influence very specific managerial behavior. In some countries, it is imperative for the manager to "know" the answer (even when she really doesn't), whereas in other countries it made little difference. Thus, if we want to understand why someone does something in the workplace, at least part of the behavior may be influenced by her cultural background.

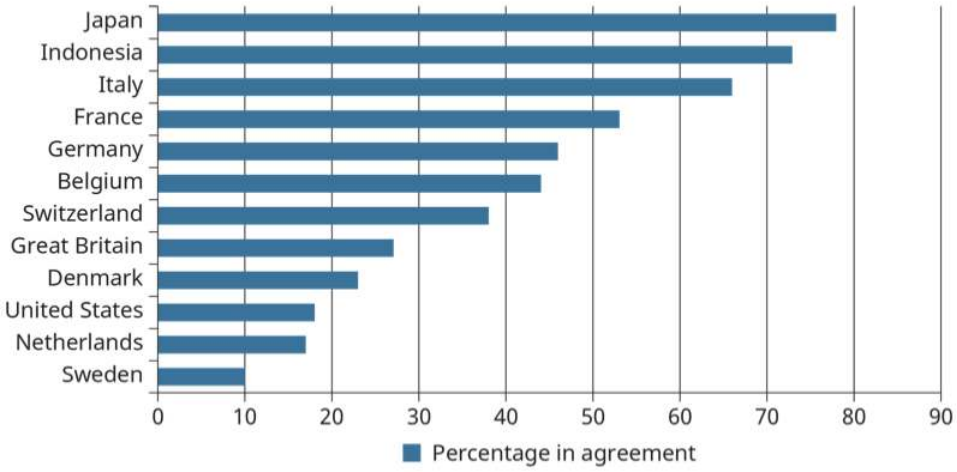


Figure 3.13.2 Appropriate Managerial Behavior in Different Countries

Dimensions of Culture

There are several ways to distinguish different cultures from one another. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck have identified six dimensions that are helpful in understanding such differences.[31] These are as follows:

1. *How people view humanity*. Are people basically good, or are they evil? Can most people be trusted or not? Are most people honest? What is the true nature of humankind?
2. *How people see nature*. What is the proper relationship between people and the environment? Should people be in harmony with nature, or should they attempt to control or harness nature?
3. *How people approach interpersonal relationships*. Should one stress individualism or membership in a group? Is the person more or less important than the group? What is the "pecking order" in a society? Is it based on seniority or on wealth and power?
4. *How people view activity and achievement*. Which is a more worthy goal: activity (getting somewhere) or simply being (staying where one is)?
5. *How people view time*. Should one focus on the past, the present, or the future? Some cultures are said to be living in the past, whereas others are looking to the future.
6. *How people view space*. How should physical space be used in our lives? Should we live communally or separately? Should important people be physically separated from others? Should important meetings be held privately or in public?

To see how this works, examine Figure 3.13.3, which differentiates four countries (Mexico, Germany, Japan, and the United States) along these six dimensions. Although the actual place of each country on these scales may be argued, the exhibit does serve to highlight several trends that managers should be aware of as they approach their work. For example, although managers in all four countries may share similar views on the nature of people (good versus bad), significant differences are noted on such dimensions as people's relation to nature and interpersonal relations. This, in turn, can affect how managers in these countries approach contract negotiations, the acquisition of new technologies, and the management of employees.



Figure 3.13.3 Japanese train station

Dimensions such as these help us frame any discussion about how people differ. We can say, for example, that most Americans are individualistic, activity-oriented, and present/future-oriented. We can further say that they value privacy and want to control their environment. In another culture, perhaps the mode is past-oriented, reflective, group-oriented, and unconcerned with achievement. In Japan we hear that “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down”—a comment reflecting a belief in homogeneity within the culture and the importance of the group. In the United States, by contrast, we hear “Look out for Number One” and “A man’s home is his castle”—comments reflecting a belief in the supremacy of the individual over the group. Neither culture is “right” or “better.” Instead, each culture must be recognized as a force within individuals that motivates their behaviors within the workplace. However, even within the U.S. workforce, we must keep in mind that there are subcultures that can influence behavior. For example, recent work has shown that the Hispanic culture within the United States places a high value on groups compared to individuals and as a consequence takes a more collective approach to decision-making.[32] As we progress through this discussion, we shall continually build upon these differences as we attempt to understand behavior in the workplace.

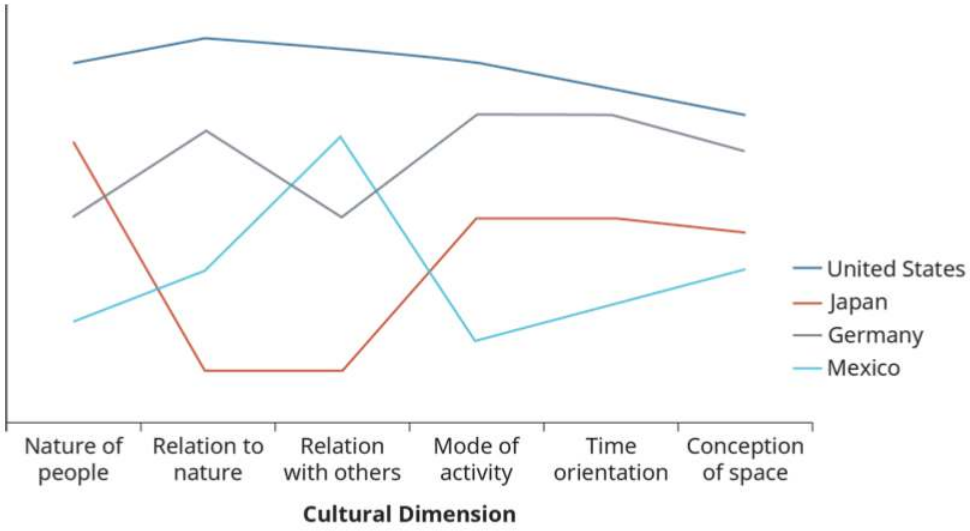


Figure 3.13.4 Cultural Differences among Managers in Four Countries

Exercise 3.13.1

1. What role do managers play to ensure that the culture of individuals are valued and appreciated and contribute to a successful work environment?

28. G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequence*, (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1980), p. 25.

29. Ibid.

30. A. Laurent, "The Cultural Diversity of Western Conceptions of Management," *International Studies of Management and Organization*, XII, 1–2, Spring-Summer 1983, pp. 75–96.

31. F. Kluckhohn and F. Strodtbeck, *Variations in Value Orientations* (Evanston, III.: Row, Peterson, 1961).

32. T. Cox, et al., "Effects of Ethnic Group Cultural Differences on Cooperative and Competitive Behavior on a Group Task," Academy of Management J., *34*, pp. 827–847; and S. Gruman, cited in N. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* (Boston: PWS/Kent, 1986), pp. 13–14.

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Exhibit 2.5 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Exhibit 2.6 Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck identified six dimensions that are helpful in understanding such differences. Japan is a populous country that requires workers to take public transportation to and from work. *How does the Japanese geography affect Japanese culture?* (Credit: elminium/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Exhibit 2.7 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

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3.14: Glossary

Authoritarianism Refers to an individual's orientation toward authority.

Basic incongruity thesis Consists of three parts: what individuals want from organizations, what organizations want from individuals, and how these two potentially conflicting sets of desires are harmonized.

Cognitive complexity Represents a person's capacity to acquire and sort through various pieces of information from the environment and organize them in such a way that they make sense.

Culture The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another; the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a human group's response to its environment.

Dependability Individuals who are seen as self-reliant, responsible, and consistent, are viewed as dependable.

Dogmatism Refers to a particular cognitive style that is characterized by closed-mindedness and inflexibility.

Ethics Values that help us determine appropriate standards of behavior and place limits on our behavior both inside and outside the organization.

Extroversion Refers to people who direct more of their attention to other people, objects, and events.

Instrumental values Represent those values concerning the way we approach end-states and whether individuals believe in ambition, cleanliness, honesty, or obedience.

Introversion Refers to people who focus their energies inwardly and have a greater sensitivity to abstract feelings.

Locus of control Refers to the tendency among individuals to attribute the events affecting their lives either to their own actions or to external forces; it is a measure of how much you think you control your own destiny.

Mental abilities An individual's intellectual capabilities and are closely linked to how a person makes decisions and processes information. Included here are such factors as verbal comprehension, inductive reasoning, and memory.

Personal values Represent an important force in organizational behavior for several reasons.

Personality A stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determine those communalities and differences in the psychological behavior (thoughts, feelings, and actions) of people that have continuity in time and that may not be easily understood as the sole result of the social and biological pressures of the moment.

Physical abilities Basic functional abilities such as strength, and psychomotor abilities such as manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, and manipulation skills.

Psychomotor abilities Examples are manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, and manipulation skills.

Self-esteem One's opinion or belief about one's self and self-worth.

Terminal values End-state goals that we prize.

Work ethic Refers to the strength of one's commitment and dedication to hard work, both as an end in itself and as a means to future rewards.

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3.15: Management Skills Application Exercises

What Is Your Locus of Control?

Instructions: This instrument lists several pairs of statements concerning the possible causes of behavior. For each pair, select the letter (*A* or *B*) that better describes your own beliefs. Remember: there are no right or wrong answers. To view the scoring key, go to **Appendix B**.

1. A. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.

   B. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

2. A. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.

   B. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

3. A. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.

   B. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

4. A. Without the right breaks, one cannot be an effective leader.

   B. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

5. A. Many times, I feel I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

   B. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

6. A. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

   B. There really is no such thing as "luck."

7. A. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard she tries.

   B. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve.

Source: Adapted from Julian B. Rotter, "Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement." *Psychological Monographs, 80* (Whole No. 609, 1966), pp. 11–12.

Which Values Are Most Important to You?

Instructions: People are influenced by a wide variety of personal values. In fact, it has been argued that values represent a major influence on how we process information, how we feel about issues, and how we behave. In this exercise, you are given an opportunity to consider your own personal values. Below are listed two sets of statements. The first list presents several instrumental values, while the second list presents several terminal values. For each list you are asked to rank the statements according to how important each is to you personally. In the list of instrumental values, place a "1" next to the value that is most important to you, a "2" next to the second most important, and so forth. Clearly, you will have to make some difficult decisions concerning your priorities. When you have completed the list for instrumental values, follow the same procedure for the terminal values. Please remember that this is not a test—there are no right or wrong answers—so be completely honest with yourself. To view the scoring key, go to **Appendix B**.

Instrumental Values

_____ Assertiveness; standing up for yourself
_____ Being helpful or caring toward others
_____ Dependability; being counted upon by others
_____ Education and intellectual pursuits
_____ Hard work and achievement
_____ Obedience; following the wishes of others
_____ Open-mindedness; receptivity to new ideas
_____ Self-sufficiency; independence

_____ Truthfulness; honesty
_____ Being well-mannered and courteous toward others

Terminal Values

_____ Happiness; satisfaction in life
_____ Knowledge and wisdom
_____ Peace and harmony in the world
_____ Pride in accomplishment
_____ Prosperity; wealth
_____ Lasting friendships
_____ Recognition from peers
_____ Salvation; finding eternal life
_____ Security; freedom from threat
_____ Self-esteem; self-respect

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3.16: Managerial Decision Exercises

Exercise 1

You work for a large multinational corporation with offices around the globe. One of your colleagues has been offered an assignment overseas to either the Japanese, South Korean, or German offices for a long- term assignment (three to seven years). She has asked your advice on the opportunity because she is concerned about the failure some others have encountered. Often, they want to return home before their assignment is complete, or they decide to quit. She is also concerned about building relationships as a manager with the local employees. Your friend is very skilled technically and you know that she could be successful in the positions being offered. You wonder whether her apprehension has to do with her personality, and whether that might have an impact on her success for this role.

1. Identify the personality traits you think might be relevant to being successful in a global assignment in either Japan, South Korea, or Germany.
2. Develop a personality test aimed at measuring these dimensions.
3. Do you think that your friend will fill out this questionnaire honestly? If not, how would you ensure that the results you get would be honest and truly reflect her personality?
4. How would you validate such a test? Describe the steps you would take.

Exercise 2

It's your final semester in college and you're going through several interviews with recruiters on campus. Among the opportunities that you are interviewing for is an entry-level position as a data analyst with a large accounting firm. You have been told during the initial interview that the firm uses a personality assessment as part of their selection process. You feel that this job requires someone who is very high in introversion since it involves a lot of individual work involving analysis of data on the one hand, but that in potential future roles on an audit team, one would need a high level of extroversion dealing with colleagues on the team and with clients. You have a high level of technical ability and can concentrate on tasks for long periods and also feel that you are sociable, but perhaps not as much as some other students in other disciplines. The opportunity is terrific, it is a great stepping-stone to career advancement, and your faculty adviser is very supportive. Refer to the personality test in the Managerial Skills Application Exercises question 2 as an example of the personality test that will be given. How are you going to respond when completing the personality test? Are you going to answer the questions truthfully?

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of completing the questions honestly?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of completing the questions in a way you think the company is looking for?

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3.17: Critical Thinking Case

Making a Diverse Workplace the Top Priority

Johnson & Johnson is a leader in multinational medical devices as well as pharmaceutical and consumer packaged goods. Founded in 1886, the company has been through generations of cultural differences and is consistently listed among the Fortune 500. Johnson & Johnson is a household name for millions with many of their products lining the shelves of medicine cabinets around the globe. In 2017, Johnson & Johnson took the number two spot on the Thomson Reuters Diversity & Inclusion Index.

At such a multinational company, with over 130,000 employees worldwide, the forefront of the focus on their internal workforce is diversity. At the forefront of their mission statement, this is clearly stated: “Make diversity and inclusion how we work every day.” Having a mission statement is wonderful, but how does Johnson & Johnson live up to these standards day in and day out?

Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer Wanda Bryant Hope works tirelessly to inject the company with the very founding principles that built the company 130 years ago. She is one of 46 percent of employees worldwide that are women, and is delivering solutions that serve all of the patients and companies that work with Johnson & Johnson.

One initiative that sets Johnson & Johnson apart in the diversity category is their programs and initiatives such as the Scientist Mentoring and Diversity Program (SMDP), which is a yearlong mentorship program pairing ethnically diverse students with industry leaders.

Additionally, the company commits to alignment with Human Rights Campaign Equality Index benchmarks, as well as supporting the armed forces and wounded soldiers. These benefits include transgender-inclusive health insurance coverage and paid time off after military leave for soldiers to acclimate back to life at home.

These commitments make Johnson & Johnson one of the best cases for a company that is making great strides in a tough cultural climate to bridge the gaps and make all of their employees, customers, and clients feel included and a part of the bigger whole.

Questions:

1. What diversity challenges do you think Johnson & Johnson management and employees face due to their presence as worldwide organization?
2. What other considerations should the company take in order to increase their impact of diversity and inclusion in the workplace?
3. Johnson & Johnson prides themselves on bridging the gender equality gap. What are some challenges or concerns to consider in the future with their hiring practices?

Sources: Johnson & Johnson website accessed August 1, 2018, https://www.jnj.com/about-jnj/diversity; Johnson & Johnson website accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.careers.jnj.com/careers/w...sity-inclusion.

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3.18: Individual and Cultural Factors in Employee Performance

Exploring Managerial Careers

Building Back Trust on the Back End

One institution that has been around for generations is banking. However, many individuals have lost faith in the banking system, and who's to blame them? Big banks have let the general consumer down with security breaches and countless stories of scandals. One glaring example is Wells Fargo & Co., who are still recovering their brand from their admission of creating nearly two million accounts for customers without their permission. But this problem is not new. The approach to bolstering this trust factor is, however, taking on a new perspective with some quick adaptation and managerial foresight.

One CEO, Cathie Mahon, chief executive officer of the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, is not taking the disparities between credit unions and big banks lying down. Credit unions have always operated differently from big banks, and one key factor is that they are nonprofit while their big-bank counterparts are for-profit enterprises. This also can mean that they offer higher interest rates on deposits due to their size. Mahon has begun a keen undertaking to educate and empower low-income residents about financial resources. Her most recent endeavor is to provide a platform called CU Impact that keeps customers more informed about their balances, creates more trustworthy auto-pay features, more information delivered at ATMs as well. The improvements to the back-end reliability within the credit union system sustain the small, community feel of the credit union, while providing powerful, trustworthy systems that restore faith in their business. Her willingness to embrace technology and embrace differences of customers, employees, and the company structure overall made her the key to success for the future of their business.

Sources: Cohen, Arianne, "The CEO Who's Leveling the Playing Field Between Credit Unions and Big Banks," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 9, 2018, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-09/the-ceo-who-s-leveling-the-playing-field-between-credit-unions-and-big-banks; Koren, James Rufus, "It's been a year since the Wells Fargo scandal broke—and new problems are still surfacing," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2017, www.latimes.com/business/la-f...lls-fargo-one- year-20170908-story.html.

How do managers and organizations appropriately select individuals for particular jobs?

As we can see in the example of Cathie Mahon, our unique personal characteristics can have a dramatic influence on both individual behavior and the behavior of those around us. To succeed in any managerial position, it is necessary to have the appropriate skills and abilities for the situation. Moreover, when selecting subordinates, managers have similar concerns. In short, individual differences can play a major role in how well someone performs on the job. They can even influence whether someone gets the job in the first place. Because of this, we begin this section with a look at individual differences in the workplace.

Several factors can be identified that influence employee behavior and performance. One early model of job performance argued simply that performance was largely a function of *ability* and *motivation.* [1] Using this simple model as a guide, we can divide our discussion of individual factors in performance into two categories: those that influence our *capacity to respond* and those that influence our will or *desire to respond*. The first category includes such factors as mental and physical abilities, personality traits, perceptual capabilities, and stress-tolerance levels. The second category includes those variables dealing with employee motivation. Both of these sets of factors are discussed in this part of the book as a prelude to more complex analyses of overall organizational performance.

Specifically, we begin our analysis in this chapter with a look at individual differences, including employee abilities and skills, personality variables, and work values. We will also examine the nature of culture and cultural diversity as it affects behavior in organizations both at home and abroad. Later we look at perception and job attitudes, and we review basic learning and reinforcement techniques. The basic theories of employee motivation are then introduced, including the concept of employee needs. More complex cognitive models of motivation will be examined, and finally, we review contemporary approaches to performance appraisals and reward systems in organizations. All told, this coverage aims to introduce the reader to the more salient aspects of individual behavior as they relate to organizational behavior and effectiveness.

Exercise 3.18.1

1. What are the various abilities and skills that should be considered when hiring employees?
2. How should the personality differences and work values be taken into account when selecting employees?
3. What is the role of cultural diversity in selecting employees?

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3.19: Summary

In this chapter, we have introduced task, group building, maintenance, and self-centered group member roles. We have described nine role characteristics, as well as five positive and five negative roles of group members. We have defined group norms and considered how people respond to norms, how norms are enforced, and how they may be challenged and changed. We have defined status; analyzed its origins and meaning within a group; and identified risks associated with it. We have examined the features of trust in groups, including ways to cultivate and reinforce it through such measures as self-disclosure. Finally, we have discussed the nature and implications of social media for groups and their members and made recommendations for actions to be taken by members of digital groups.

Review Questions

1. Interpretive Questions
    1. If a group member objects to the group's norms, what responsibility do you feel the other members bear for responding to the objection? Under what circumstances might the other members be justified in dismissing the objections out of hand?
    2. Competing for status in a group is considered by some people to be a healthy process which causes people to work hard and strive to excel. Given your experience in groups, do you endorse competition for status? Why or why not?
    3. What changes do you foresee in the technologies that can be used by digital groups? Which of the changes do you feel most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why?
2. Application Questions
    1. How do different types of member behaviors affect a group's behavior according to circumstances? Talk to someone who's part of a group you know something about. Ask for an example of how a dominator, a recognition seeker, or a self-interest pleader helped the group and have the person explain why this positive outcome took place.
    2. What risks are associated with status in groups? Interview at least one individual from three groups that you're not a member of yourself. Ask each person to recount a situation in which the status of an individual in the group caused misunderstandings, repressed communication, or brought about other negative outcomes within the group.
    3. What are reasonable bounds of self-disclosure in a group? Ask four people to identify a group of which they are members and describe circumstances in which they have found or might find it appropriate to share information within that group about their financial, marital, religious, or political status.

2.1 Individual and Cultural Factors in Employee Performance

How do managers and organizations appropriately select individuals for particular jobs?

Because people enter organizations with preset dispositions, it is important to be able to analyze important individual characteristics, effectively select individuals, and appropriately match them to their jobs. However, this must be done carefully in light of both ethical and legal issues that face managers today.

2.2 Employee Abilities and Skills

How do people with different abilities, skills, and personalities build effective work teams?

Ability refers to one's capacity to respond, whereas motivation refers to one's desire to respond. Abilities can be divided into mental abilities and physical abilities. Personality represents a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determines the psychological behavior of people.

Personality development is influenced by several factors, including physiological, cultural, family and group, role, and situational determinants.

2.3 Personality: An Introduction

How do managers and employees deal effectively with individual differences in the workplace? Self-esteem represents opinions and beliefs concerning one's self and one's self-worth.

Locus of control is a tendency for people to attribute the events affecting their lives either to their own actions (referred to as internal locus of control) or to external forces (referred to as external locus of control).

2.4 Personality and Work Behavior

How can organizations foster a work environment that allows employees an opportunity to develop and grow?

Authoritarianism represents an individual's orientation toward authority and is characterized by an overriding conviction that it is appropriate for there to be clear status and power differences between people.

2.5 Personality and Organization: A Basic Conflict?

How do managers know how to get the best from each employee?

Dogmatism refers to a cognitive style characterized by closed-mindedness and inflexibility.

The basic incongruity thesis asserts that individuals and organizations exist in a constant state of conflict because each has different goals and expectations from the other. Employees want organizations to provide more autonomy and meaningful work, while organizations want employees to be more predictable, stable, and dependable.

2.6 Personal Values and Ethics

What is the role of ethical behavior in managerial actions?

A value is an enduring belief that one specific mode of conduct or end-state is preferable to others. Instrumental values are beliefs concerning the most appropriate ways to pursue end-states, whereas terminal values are beliefs concerning the most desirable end-states themselves.

Ethics are important to individuals because they serve as (1) standards of behavior for determining a correct course of action, (2) guidelines for decision-making and conflict resolution, and (3) influences on employee motivation. The work ethic refers to someone's belief that hard work and commitment to a task are both ends in themselves and means to future rewards.

2.7 Cultural Differences

How do you manage and do business with people from different cultures?

Culture refers to the collective mental programming of a group or people that distinguishes them from others. Culture (1) is shared by the members of the group, (2) is passed on from older members to younger members, and (3) shapes our view of the world. Six dimensions of culture can be identified: (1) how people see themselves, (2) how people see nature, (3) how people approach interpersonal relationships, (4) how people view activity and achievement, (5) how people view time, and (6) how people view space.

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3.20: Additional Resources

- Belbin Self-Perception Inventory with scoring guide: executive.development.users.btopenworld.com/media/downloads/belbin_forms.pdf
- Belbin's Self-Peception Inventory with scoring guide: leadershippersonalities.wikispaces.com/file/detail/252727_BelbinSelfPerceptionInventory.doc
- Belbin's Team Analysis with scoring guide: leadershippersonalities.wikispaces.com/TEAM+Analysis
- Belbin Test: freespace.virgin.net/richard.clifford/BelbinTest.doc
- *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, written by Thorstein Veblen and first published in 1899, presented the concept of "conspicuous consumption" as one way for people to display and retain their status in society. Veblen's viewpoint was somewhat acerbic, but much of what he wrote still rings true in today's world and applies to group interactions.
- Alain Botton's *Status Anxiety* provides an entertaining and thought-provoking perspective on the quest for status in the 21st century.

Public Speaking Resources:

- http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/student/groups/smallgrouproles.html
- wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/1624/1663615/apxc_12.pdf

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Groups and Meetings

4.1: Chapter Introduction
4.2: Planning a Meeting
4.3: Facilitating a Meeting
4.4: A Brief Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order
4.5: Post Meeting Communication and Minutes
4.6: Summary
4.7: Additional Resources
4.8: Appendix A - Assessment of a Student's Campus/Community Participation
4.9: Appendix B - Critique of Formal Campus or Community Gathering

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4.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

The OOCSIP (On-And-Off-Campus Student Involvement Project)

Rationale:

Educational, social, and recreational events take place on college campuses all the time. You've probably seen information about these activities and been invited to them. But have you ever attended a campus committee meeting or a community meeting whose members include college employees? Probably not. Thus, you may not understand how a college and its community function. This project will help you acquire such understanding.

What Students Should Gain:

1. Contact with knowledgeable college professionals whose ideas and actions affect students.
2. Appreciations for the nature and aims of campus and community groups.
3. Knowledge about group dynamics—including formal processes.
4. A chance to expose college employees to students' circumstances and perspectives.

Steps Students Should Take:

1. Identify an Employee Contact at their college or university who's willing to meet them at or take them to two on- or off-campus events.
2. Attend two (2) on- or off-campus events with their Employee Contact.
3. Complete an Assessment of a Student's Campus/Community Participation Form [Note 12.47], including the front page signed by the Employee Contact.
4. Complete a typed Critique of Formal Campus or Community Gathering Form [Note 12.48].
5. Send a hand-written thank-you note to their Employee Contact.

Once I ran across something in a book that really agitated me. The volume presented lists of ideas for living a happy and fulfilled life. One of the lists was headed "Five Great Ways to Find a Friend." Its first four ideas were to find a cause, find a church, find a class, and find a club. All those ideas seemed reasonable to me. Recommendation #5, however, was "find a committee." When I saw this, I immediately asked myself, "What were the authors of this book eating, drinking, or smoking when they wrote this? Who with more sense than a pencil eraser would suggest actually LOOKING FOR A COMMITTEE TO JOIN for any reason whatsoever?" - Phil Venditti



Figure 4.1.1: Are you lonely? Source: www.codinghorror.com/blog/2012/02/meetings-where-work-goes-to-die.html

Getting Started

A college administrator we know overheard her seven-year-old daughter and another little girl talking about their parents. "What does your mother do?" asked the other child. "She goes to meetings," replied the administrator's child.

Whether in educational settings or business or elsewhere, meetings dominate the way many groups operate in American society. Estimates of the number of meetings that take place every day in our country range from 11 million to more than 30 million http://www.studergroup.com/dotCMS/knowledgeAssetDetail?inode=269049. One authority claims that the average chief executive officer spends 17 hours per week in meetings, whereas the average senior executive spends 23 hours per week. (Amos, J. (2002). *Making meetings work* (2nd ed.). Oxford, England: Howtobooks).

If the average number of people in each of these meetings is only five and the average meeting lasts only one hour, this means that between 55,000,000 and 150,000,000 person-hours each day are being consumed by meetings. Assuming a 50-week work year, then, the total time devoted to meetings each year amounts to at least fifteen billion person-hours. As for you, yourself, one estimate is that you'll spend 35–50% of every workweek in meetings, for a total of more than 9,000 hours over the course of your lifetime. (Doyle, M., & Straus, D. (1993). *How to make meetings work: The new interaction method.* New York: Jove Books).

If meetings are so central to what groups do, and so time-consuming, it makes sense to pay attention to how they're conducted. Like any other course of action, the process of engaging in meetings has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In our first section, we'll consider the beginning—the planning part. Later we'll look at techniques for facilitating a meeting, the use of *Robert's Rules of Order*, and the best ways to follow up after a meeting.

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4.2: Planning a Meeting

Learning Objectives

1. Identify questions whose answers can determine whether a meeting should be held
2. List obligations that group members should accept when they attend meetings
3. Discuss guidelines for planning an effective meeting

Aller Anfang ist schwer. - German saying ("All beginnings are difficult.")

The beginning is half the job. - Korean saying

"Meetings should be viewed skeptically from the outset, as risks to productivity."www.codinghorror.com/blog/2012/02/meetings-where-work-goes-to-die.html - Jeff Atwood

Whether and how carefully you plan any undertaking will determine in large part how well it turns out. Bad planning makes it harder to achieve your goals; good planning makes it easier. This certainly applies to meetings of groups, so it's wise for us to examine how to plan those meetings effectively. Before we consider the ins and outs of that planning, however, let's reflect on the proper role of meetings.

What Are Meetings for?

Office equipment and supplies constitute tools to support the work of most modern groups such as student teams in college classes, employees and executives in businesses, and collections of people in other organizations. None of those groups would say, however, that using copy machines and staplers is one of their goals. And none of them would visit a copy machine unless they had something they needed to reproduce. They wouldn't grab a stapler, either, unless they had some papers to attach to each other.



Figure 4.2.1

Meetings resemble office supplies in at least one way: they can help a group accomplish its goals. But meetings are like office supplies in another way, too: they're only a means toward reaching group goals, not an end in themselves. And sometimes they're even antithetical to the efficient functioning of a group. One statistical analysis of workers' reactions to meetings discovered a significant positive relationship between the number of meetings attended and both the level of fatigue and the sensation of being subjected to a heavy workload. (Luong, A., & Rogelberg, S.G. (2005). Meetings and more meetings: The relationship between meeting load and the daily well-being of employees. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 9(1)*, 58–67).

Remember these truths, therefore: If it is operating well, your group at some point probably adopted goals for itself. It may even have ranked those goals in order of importance. Members of a student team might, for example, decide that their joint goals are to earn a high grade on their group project, to have fun together, and to ensure that all of them can secure a positive recommendation from the instructor when they look for a job after graduation.

"To meet" is not one of the goals of any group, though, is it? No; your goals involve doing things, not meeting—not even meeting to decide what you're going to do and whether you're doing it. Therefore, you should not meet until and unless doing so will

clearly contribute to a real goal of your group.

What this means in practical reality is that many, many regularly-scheduled meetings probably ought to be canceled, postponed, or at the very least substantially shortened. It means that meetings which aren't part of an official, ongoing series should be conducted only if the people who would be participating agree that having the meetings is necessary to answer a question, solve a problem, make a decision, or ensure that people know what it is they are and should be doing. It means, in short, that a group's "default position" should be never to meet.

If you're in a position to decide whether and when a meeting will take place, you're in control of what some might consider other people's most valuable possession: their time. If you take this responsibility seriously and act on it wisely, your fellow group members will appreciate it—especially since many group leaders don't do so.

To Meet or Not to Meet

In the twenty-first century, technology offers techniques for accomplishing many group goals without meeting face to face. A helpful website called "Lifehacker"www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/kill-meetings-to-get-more-done.html suggests that you follow these steps before scheduling in-person meetings:

Get done what you can by email. If email doesn't accomplish your aims, use the telephone. Only if neither email nor the phone works should you meet face to face.

Calculate the opportunity cost of a potential meeting. What task(s) that you could be engaged in at the time of the meeting will you have to postpone, or forgo entirely, because of the meeting? Is it worth it?

Ask yourself what bad results, if any, will come to pass if you don't meet. What about if you don't meet this time, but later instead? If the bad things which you expect to arise if you don't meet are minimal or can be dealt with easily, don't meet, or at least not now.

Ask if it's essential for everyone in the group to be at the same physical location at the time of the meeting. Assess whether the chore of just moving people's molecules from one place to another could render a face-to-face meeting undesirable.

If It's "to Meet," Then What?

Once you've decided that you should hold a meeting of some sort, you should do your best to make sure it will run well. Part of this undertaking is to ensure that all the members of your group understand the significance of the time they'll be devoting to getting together. To this end, you may want to create a list of basic obligations you feel everyone should fulfill with respect to all meetings. These obligations might include the following items:

- If you can't make it to a meeting, let the person who's organizing it know in a timely fashion. If you were expected to make a report or complete a task of some sort by the time of the meeting, either submit the report through someone else who will be there or inform the organizer of when you'll finish what you're committed to be doing. If you can find someone to fill in for you at the meeting, do it.
- If you can attend the meeting, prepare for it. Read meeting announcements and agendas. Take necessary and appropriate information and tools with you to each meeting. Come to meetings with an open mind and with a mental picture of what you may contribute to the discussion.
- Pay attention. Avoid side conversations or other actions that might keep you from understanding what's going on in a meeting.
- Be clear and concise. Seek parsimonious discourse. Don't speak unless you're sure you'll improve over silence by doing so.
- Wait to express your own opinion until you're sure you understand others' views.
- Challenge assumptions, but stick to the topic and offer constructive rather than destructive criticism.
- Know when to give in on a matter of disagreement. Stick to your convictions, but consider carefully whether you need to have your way in any particular situation.

Guidelines for Planning a Meeting

Again, first of all: don't meet at all unless you need to. Once you've determined that a meeting will promote rather than hinder productivity, preparing for it well will give you a head start on maximizing its effectiveness. Here are six guidelines to take into account as you plan a meeting:

Identify the Specific Goals

Identify the specific goals you plan to achieve in the meeting and the methods you'll use to decide if you've achieved them. Write the goals down. Reread them. Let them sit awhile. Read them again to see if they're still appropriate and necessary.

If the goals of the meeting still look as though they're all valuable, remember Dwight Eisenhower's dictum that "What is important is seldom urgent, and what is urgent is seldom important http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_91.htm." If you're not sure you can get everything done that you hope to in the time you'll have available, set priorities so that the most urgent items are taken care of quickly and you can postpone others without endangering what's most important to get done.

Decide Carefully Who Needs to Attend

At one point, Amazon Corporation implemented a "two-pizza guideline" whereby it limited the number of people who composed its teams to the quantity that could be fed with two pizzashttp://www.fastcompany.com/50106/inside-mind-jeff-bezos. If you calculate that the people you plan to invite to your meeting constitute larger than a two-pizza group, ask yourself if all of them really, really, really need to be there.

Produce a Clear, Brief, Thorough, Informative Agenda



Figure 4.2.2

Don't spring surprises on people. To give them a solid idea of what to expect, divide the meeting's agenda into simple categories: for instance, the establishment of a quorum; approval of minutes and the agenda; officers' and (sub)committee reports; unfinished business; new business, and "other." For each item, name the individual in charge of it, indicate whether it will require action by the group, and provide an estimated duration. (You'll need to confirm these estimates with the responsible parties, of course). If you expect some or all of the group's members to complete a task before they arrive, such as reading a report or generating possible solutions to a problem, tell them so clearly.

Here's a special note, too: Don't plan to stretch the contents of a meeting to fit a preordained time. Strive to cut down on how long you spend to handle each item on your agenda as much as you can so that members of your group can get back to their other responsibilities as soon as possible. A shorter-than-expected meeting is usually a thing of joy.

Pick a Good Venue

If you have a choice, plan to gather in a place with plenty of light, comfortable furniture, and a minimum of distracting sounds or sights. You should be able to adjust the temperature, too, if people get too hot or cold. Make sure that any technological tools you think will be available to you are actually going to be on hand when you meet and that they're all functioning. Even if you expect to have access to a laptop computer and a projector, plan to bring a flip chart and markers so that people will be able to express and record ideas spontaneously during the meeting. And all other things being equal, find a place to meet regularly which is large enough and secure enough to allow your group members to store the "tools of their trade" there—flipcharts, writing supplies, reference books, etc.—between gatherings.

Make Sure the Participants Receive the Agenda

Make sure people receive the agenda you've prepared in a timely fashion so they'll know why, when, where, and for how long the group is expected to meet. Two reminders per meeting may be enough—one by letter and one by e-mail, for instance—but three are

better, including one the day before the meeting itself. Free computer-based confidential text-messaging services such as Class Parrot (classparrot.com/) and kikutext (kikutext.com/) can provide another channel for reaching group members.

One college president from a Southern state maintained that he'd gotten his board of trustees to act "like trained seals," partly through thorough preparation for their meetings. In fact, the president actually ran practice meetings with the board to make sure there would be no surprises when the real meetings took place. You should practice, too, at gently, repeatedly, and clearly notifying other group members of the time and agenda of each meeting. For every person who thinks you're being repetitive, two or three will thank you for keeping them from overlooking the meeting.

If you're planning to meet in a place for the first time, or if you're expecting someone to attend your meeting for the first time, be sure to provide clear and complete directions to the location. With online tools such as mapquest.com and google maps at your disposal, it should cost you very little time to locate such directions and send them to members of your group.

Arrive Early

Arrive early to size up and set up the place where you're meeting. Rooms sometimes get double-booked, furniture sometimes gets rearranged, technological tools such as LCD projectors and laptop computers sometimes break down or get taken away to be repaired, and so on and on. If you're the person in charge of leading the meeting, you need to know first if unexpected happenings like these have taken place.



Figure 4.2.3: Source: www.google.com/search?as_q=Meetings&safe=active&orq=&tbs=sur:fmc&biw=834&bih=479&sei=swJyUOelHqGmigLdy4CADw&tbm=isch

Following these half-dozen guidelines won't guarantee that your meetings will be as successful as you wish them to be. If you don't heed them, however, you're apt to encounter considerable difficulty in achieving that aim.

Key Takeaways

Meetings should be avoided unless they are clearly necessary, but preparing for them well can enable a group to advance its objectives.

Exercise 4.2.1

1. Identify a group of which you're a member. What percentage of its meetings in the past year do you feel contributed significantly to its stated objectives? What role did pre-meeting planning play in producing that outcome?
2. Think about a time when a group you were part of canceled or postponed a meeting. On what grounds did it reach that decision? Why do you approve or disapprove of the decision?
3. What do you consider to be the pros and cons of limiting the number of people invited to a group meeting?
4. Describe for a classmate your ideal venue for a group meeting. What equipment, amenities, and other provisions do you feel would best assist a group to achieve the aims of its meetings?

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4.3: Facilitating a Meeting

Learning Objectives

1. Describe features of a poorly-facilitated group meeting
2. Identify guidelines for facilitating a meeting effectively
3. Discuss steps for facilitating virtual meetings

Most committees I've served on have been inefficient, superfluous, repetitive, sluggish, unproductive, erratic, rancorous, or boring—or all of the above. By and large, they've wasted my time and the time of many other people.

Frequently, everyone in the group eagerly helped identify jobs that needed to be accomplished, but just a few members ended up shouldering the burdens and completing the tasks. The rest did their best to avoid the group entirely and had to be cajoled or badgered to take part in meetings and work. Most of the meetings oscillated between tedium, dreariness, and fruitless conflict. In short, the meetings were cesspools of futility. - Phil Venditti

Preparing for group meetings well takes you a third of the way toward ensuring their productivity, and follow-up takes care of another third. The middle third of the process is to run the meetings efficiently.

Make no mistake: facilitating a meeting well is difficult. It requires care, vigilance, flexibility, resilience, humility, and humor. In a way, in fact, to run a meeting effectively calls upon you to act the way a skilled athletic coach does, watching the action, calling plays, and encouraging good performance. Furthermore, you need to monitor the interaction of everyone around you and "call the plays" based on a game plan that you and your fellow group members have presumably agreed upon in advance. Finally, like a coach, you sometimes need to call timeouts—breaks—when people are weary or the action is starting to get raggedy or undisciplined.

A Meeting Heroine

We will list and explain several principles and practices of good meeting facilitation in this section, but first, let's consider a friend and colleague of ours named Bonnie. Bonnie is the best meeting facilitator we've ever met, for several reasons. First of all, she makes it a point to become familiar with not only the issues and topics to be dealt with in a meeting, but also the personalities, strengths, and foibles of the other people who will be participating. Although she behaves in a warm and friendly manner at all times during a meeting, she never veers off into extraneous or superfluous details just for the sake of being sociable.

Because she attends closely to every interaction in a meeting and takes the time in advance to become familiar with the styles and proclivities of participants, Bonnie prevents discussions from getting off track. In fact, she has an uncanny knack of being able to spot a train of discussion that might even just be getting ready to go off track so that she can nudge it safely around bends and down slippery slopes. Furthermore, she seems to always know exactly what questions to ask, and to whom, to elicit concise, purposeful information which helps the group keep moving in the proper direction.

Bonnie is totally efficient and systematic in her pacing and wastes no time from the moment a meeting begins to the moment it ends…or afterward, either. If you go to a meeting led by Bonnie and its purpose is to plan an event—an Arbor Day celebration, for example, since that's a project she oversees every year in the town where she lives—you can be confident of the outcome. When the meeting ends, the event will be planned and you will be feeling good about yourself, about the meeting itself, and about the future of the group.

Perils of Poor Facilitation

Unfortunately, many people lack the skills of our friend Bonnie. As a result, a variety of negative results can take place as they fail to act capably as meeting facilitators. Here are some signs that there's "Trouble in River City" in a meeting:

- An argument starts about an established fact
- Opinions are introduced as if they were truths
- People intimidate others with real or imaginary "knowledge"
- People overwhelm each other with too many proposals for the time available to consider them

- People become angry for no good reason
- People promote their own visions at the expense of everyone else's
- People demand or offer much more information than is needed
- Discussion becomes circular; people repeat themselves without making any progress toward conclusions

If you've experienced any of these symptoms of a poorly-facilitated meeting, you realize how demoralizing they can be for a group.

Guidelines for Facilitating a Meeting

Barge (Barge, J.K. (1991, November). Task skills and competence in group leadership. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, GA), Lumsden and Lumsden (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams: Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning), and Parker and Hoffman (Parker, G., & Hoffman, R. (2006). *Meeting excellence: 33 tools to lead meetings that get results.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass) are among many authorities who have recommended actions and attitudes which can help you facilitate a meeting well. Here are several such suggestions, taken partly from these writers' works and partly from the authors' experiences as facilitators and participants in meetings over the years:

Start Promptly... Always

Some time, calculate the cost to your group—even at minimum-wage rates—for the minutes its members sit around waiting for meetings to begin. You may occasionally be delayed for good reasons, but if you're chronically late you'll eventually aggravate folks who've arrived on time—the very ones whose professionalism you'd particularly like to reinforce and praise. Consistently starting on time may even boost morale: "Early in, early out" will probably appeal to most of a group's members, since they are likely to have other things they need to do as soon as a meeting ends.

Begin With Something Positive

Face it: no matter what you do, many people in your group would probably rather be somewhere else than in a meeting. If you'd like them to overcome this familiar aversion and get pumped up about what you'll be doing in a meeting, therefore, you might emulate the practice of City Year, a Boston-based nonprofit international service organization. City Year begins its meetings by inviting members to describe from their own recent life experiences an example of what Robert F. Kennedy referred to as a "ripple of hope." (Grossman, J. (1998, April). We've got to start meeting like this. *Inc.*, 70–74). This could be a good deed they've seen someone do for someone else, a news item about a decline in the crime rate, or perhaps even a loving note they've received from a child or other family member. Sharing with their fellow group members such examples of altruism, love, or community improvement focuses and motivates City Year members by reminding them in specific, personal terms of why their meetings can be truly worthwhile.

Tend to Housekeeping Details

People's productivity depends in part on their biological state. Once you convene your meeting, announce or remind the group members of where they can find rest rooms, water fountains, vending machines, designated smoking areas, and any other amenities that may contribute to their physical comfort.

Make Sure People Understand Their Roles

At the start of the meeting, review what you understand is going to happen and ask for confirmation of what you think people are expected to do in the time you're going to be spending together. Calling on someone to make a report if he or she isn't aware it's required can be embarrassing for both you and that person.

Keep to Your Agenda

Social time makes people happy and relieves stress. Most group meetings, however, should not consist primarily of social time. You may want to designate a "sheriff"—rotating the role at each meeting—to watch for departures from the agenda and courteously direct people back on task. Either you or the "sheriff" might want to periodically provide "signposts" indicating where you are in your process, too, such as "It looks like we've got 25 minutes left in our meeting, and we haven't discussed yet who's going to be working on the report to give to Mary."

If your meetings habitually exceed the time you allot for them, consider either budgeting more time or, if you want to stick to your guns, setting a kitchen timer to ring when you've reached the point when you've said you'll quit. The co-founder of one technology firm, Jeff Atwood, put together a list of rules for his company's meetings which included this one: "No meeting should ever be more than an hour, under penalty of death." (Milian, M. (2012, June 11-June 17). It's not you, it's meetings. *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 51–52). Similarly, the library staff at one college in the Midwest conducts all their meetings standing up in a circle, which encourages brevity and efficiency.

Guide, Don't Dictate

If you're in charge of the meeting, that doesn't mean you're responsible for everything people say in it, nor does it mean you have to personally comment on every idea or proposal that comes up. Let the other members of the group carry the content as long as they're not straying from the process you feel needs to be followed.

You may see that some people regularly dominate discussion in your group's meetings and that others are perhaps slower to talk despite having important contributions to make. One way to deal with these disparities is by providing the group with a "talking stick" and specifying that people must hold it in their hands in order to speak. You could also invoke the "NOSTUESO rule" with respect to the talking stick, which says that "No One Speaks Twice Until Everybody Speaks Once."

Keep Your Eyes Open For Nonverbal Communication

As a meeting progresses, people's physical and emotional states are likely to change. As the facilitator, you should do your best to identify such change and accommodate it within the structures and processes your group has established for itself. When people do something as simple as crossing their arms in front of them, for instance, they might be signaling that they're closed to what others are saying—or they might just be trying to stay warm in a room that feels too cold to them.

When one person in the meeting has the floor and is talking, it's a good idea to watch how the rest of the group seems to be responding. You may notice clues indicating that people are pleased and receptive, or that they're uninterested, skeptical, or even itching to respond negatively. You may want to do a perception check to see if you're interpreting nonverbal cues accurately. For instance, you might say, "Terry, could we pause here a bit? I get the impression that people might have some questions for you." As an alternative, you might address the whole group and ask "Does anyone have questions for Terry at this point?"

Capture and Assign Action Items

Unless they are held purely to communicate information, or for other special purposes, most meetings result in action items, tasks, and other assignments for one or more participants. Sometimes these items arise unexpectedly because someone comes up with a great new idea and volunteers or is assigned to pursue it after the discussion ends. Be on the alert for these elements of a meeting.

Make things Fun and Healthy

Appeal to people's tummies and funnybones. Provide something to eat or drink, even if it's just coffee or peanuts in a bowl. Glenn Parker and George Hoffman's book on how to run meetings well (Parker, G., & Hoffman, R. (2006). *Meeting excellence: 33 tools to lead meetings that get results.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass) includes a chapter titled "Eating Well=Meeting Well," and it also refers to the fact that the American Cancer Society offers a program to help groups organize meetings and other events with good health in mind. www.cancer.org/healthy/morewaysacshelpsyoustaywell/meeting-well-description

Avoid Sarcasm and Cynicism

Encourage humor and merriment. If your agenda includes some challenging items, try to start out with "quick wins" to warm the mood of the group.

Take Breaks Regularly, Even When You Think You Don't Need Them

If you've ever gone on a long hike on a beautiful day, you may have decided to continue a mile or two beyond your original intended destination because the scenery was beautiful and you were feeling spunky. If you're like the authors, though, you probably regretted "going the extra mile" later because it meant you had to go back that mile plus all the rest of the way you'd come.

Something similar can arise in a meeting. People sometimes feel full of energy and clamor to keep a lively discussion going past the time scheduled for a break, but they may not realize that they're tiring and losing focus until someone says or does something

ill-advised. Taking even five-minute breathers at set intervals can help group members remain physically refreshed over the long haul.

Show Respect for Everyone

Seek consensus. Avoid “groupthink” by encouraging a free and full airing of opinions. Observe the Golden Rule. Listen sincerely to everyone, but avoid giving a small minority so much clout that in disputed matters “99-to-1 is a tie.” Keep disagreements agreeable. If you must criticize, criticize positions, not people. If someone’s behavior shows a pattern of consistently irritating others or disrupting the flow of your group’s meetings, talk to the person privately and express your concern in a polite but clear fashion. Be specific in stating what you expect the person to do or stop doing, and keep an open mind to whatever response you receive.

Expect the Unexpected

Do your best to anticipate and prepare for confrontations and conflicts. If you didn’t already make time to do so earlier, take a minute just before the start of the meeting to mark items on your agenda which you think might turn out to be especially contentious or time-consuming.

Conduct Multiple Assessments of the Meeting

Formative assessment takes place during an activity and allows people to modify their behavior in response to its results. Why not perform a brief interim evaluation during every meeting in which you ask, for instance, “If we were to end this meeting right now, where would it be, and if we need to make changes now in what’s happening in our meeting, what should they be?”

Summative assessment is implemented at the end of an activity. When you finish a meeting, for example, you might check to see how well people feel that the gathering met its intended goals. If you want something in writing, you might distribute a half sheet of paper to each person asking “What was best about our meeting?” and “What might have made this meeting better?” Or you could write two columns on a whiteboard, one with a plus and the other with a minus, and ask people orally to identify items they think belong in each category. If you feel a less formal check-up is sufficient, you might just go around the table or room and ask every person for one word that captures how she or he feels.

Think (and Talk) Ahead

If you didn’t write it on your agenda—which would have been a good idea, most likely—remind group members, before the meeting breaks up, of where and when their next gathering is to take place.

Tips For Virtual Meetings

Meetings conducted via Skype or other synchronous technological tools can function as efficiently as face-to-face ones, but only if the distinctive challenges of the virtual environment are taken into account. It’s harder to develop empathy with other people, and easier to engage in unhelpful multitasking, when you’re not in the same physical space with them. To make it more likely that a virtual meeting will be both pleasant and productive, then, it makes sense to tell people upfront what your expectations are of their behavior. If you want them to avoid reading emails or playing computer solitaire on their computers while the meeting is underway, for example, say so.

A major goal of most meetings is to reach decisions based on maximum involvement, so it pays to keep in mind that people work best with other people whom they know and understand. With this in mind, you might choose to email a photo of each person scheduled to be in the meeting and include a quick biography for everyone to look over in advance. This communication could take place along with disseminating the meeting’s agenda and other supporting documentation.

Here are some further tips and suggestions for leading or participating in virtual meetings, each based on the unique features of such gatherings:

1. Get all the participants in an audio meeting to say something brief at the start of the meeting so that everyone becomes familiar with everyone else’s voice
2. Remind people of the purpose of the meeting and of the key outcome(s) you hope to achieve together
3. Listen/watch for people who aren’t participating and ask them periodically if they have thoughts or suggestions to add to the discussion

4. Summarize the status of the meeting from time to time
5. If you're holding an audio conference, discourage people from calling in on a cell phone because of potential problems with sound quality
6. Because you may not have nonverbal cues to refer to, ask other members to clarify their meanings and intentions if you're not sure their words alone convey all you need to know
7. If you know you're going to have to leave a meeting before it ends, inform the organizer in advance. Sign off publicly, but quickly, when you leave rather than just hanging up on the meeting connection.

Key Takeaway

Facilitating a meeting well requires a large number of skills and talents and depends on overcoming many potential pitfalls, but following specific recommendations from authorities on the subject can make it possible.

Exercise 4.3.1

1. Reread the description of Bonnie's abilities. With a partner, list the abilities and rank them in what you feel is their order of importance. Which of the abilities, if any, do you feel are absolutely essential to successful leadership of meetings?
2. Which instances of "Trouble in River City" have you experienced in group meetings? Describe two or three such instances. What action might the group leader have taken to prevent or resolve the episodes?
3. Some cultures value exact punctuality differently from others. If you were leading a series of meetings comprising members of several cultural groups, what steps, if any, would you take to accommodate or modify people's habits and expectations concerning the starting and ending times of the meetings?
4. Imagine that you're the new chairperson of a group that got seriously off track in the first of its meetings that you presided over. You tried gently redirecting people to discuss pertinent issues, but they first ignored and then resisted your attempts. What steps might you take to address the situation?

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4.4: A Brief Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

Learning Objectives

1. Identify ways in which parliamentary procedure can help a group conduct its business effectively
2. Distinguish between *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)* and related summaries of parliamentary procedure
3. Master terminology related to major actions undertaken within parliamentary procedure

Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use. - Emily Post

In the previous two sections, we considered a number of practical planning, human relations, and communication guidelines to help you get ready for a meeting and facilitate it. Now we'll discuss a system of formal rules called "parliamentary procedure" which you may follow as you facilitate a meeting to save lots of time, prevent ill feelings, promote harmony, and ensure that everyone's viewpoints can be expressed and discussed democratically.

Why Parliamentary Procedure?

It's easy to make fun of individuals or groups who follow procedures "to the letter," especially in a country like the United States where we at least say that we prize spontaneity and self-determination. When it comes to most groups you work in or lead as a student or employee, you'll probably be able to get away with conducting their meetings fairly informally, or even "by the seat of your pants." In such groups—"among friends," as it were—parliamentary procedure may seem boring or unnecessary. You may just assume, for instance, that you'll observe the will of the majority in cases of disagreement and that you'll keep track of what you do by taking a few simple notes when you get together.



Figure 4.4.1

But what about when you're asked to chair your children's PTA someday? Or when you're elected president of a community service group like Kiwanis or Rotary? Or when you become an officer in a professional society? Under those circumstances, you'll have entered a "deliberative assembly"—a body that considers options and reaches decisions—and you'll benefit from knowing at least the rudiments of parliamentary procedure in order to fulfill your duties within it. When you're in charge of running such a group's meetings, you should be able to ensure that things run smoothly, efficiently, and fairly. As odd as it sounds, under those circumstances, you'll probably actually find that imposing regulation on the group is necessary to preserve its freedom to act.

On a very practical level, parliamentary procedure can help you answer these common, important questions as you lead a meeting:

- Who gets to speak when, and for how long?
- What do we do if our discussion seems to be going on and on without any useful results?
- When and how do we make decisions?
- What do we do if we're not ready yet to say yes or no to a proposal but need to move on to something else in the meantime?
- What do we do if we change our minds?

Learning some parliamentary procedure promises at least two personal benefits, as well. First, you'll probably discover that the structures you become familiar with through using parliamentary procedure boost your confidence in general. Second, you're apt to find that you've laid the foundations for establishing yourself as a solid, reliable leader. Third, although you shouldn't be stricter or more formal than is good for your group, using parliamentary procedure regularly and as a matter, of course, should contribute to the impression that you care about consistency, equity, and efficiency in your dealings with other people in general.

Background of *Robert's Rules*

Henry Martyn Robert was an engineer who rose to the rank of brigadier general in the U.S. Army and first put together his *Rules of Order* in 1876. His aim was to keep that publication to 50 pages, but its first edition contained 176 pages. The eleventh edition now runs nearly four times as long—more than 650 pages. This current edition, abbreviated as "RONR" (*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*), was formulated by a team of parliamentarians which includes Robert's grandson.

A shorter summary, also prepared in part by Henry Martyn Robert III, comprises the most important features of RONR. It includes the contention that "at least 80 percent of the content of RONR will be needed less than 20 percent of the time" in even the largest, most complicated groups (Robert, H.M., Evans, W.J., Honemann, D.H., & Balch, T. J. (2011). *Robert's rules of order newly revised, in brief.* Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.). Thus, a formal group which adopts RONR as its parliamentary authority may decide to use the summary volume to help it get through most common operational situations, since the summary's sections are all linked item-by-item to more detailed portions of RONR itself.

Ingredients of RONR

Robert's Rules offers guidance for all the essential processes a group is apt to conduct. It suggests that a group select a chairperson ("chairman" in Robert's original language) and a secretary, that it decide on what proportion of its membership constitutes a quorum and is thus able to conduct substantive business, and that it follow at least a "simplified standard order of business" which may be as straightforward as this:

1. Reading and approval of minutes. Deciding whether notes of the previous meeting, generally taken by the group's secretary, can be accepted as written or need to be modified.
2. Reports. Statements by officers and heads of committees, along with any recommendations associated with them. For instance, the finance committee of a student government association might propose that the association as a whole spend money from a particular budget to send a student representative to a professional conference or purchase new bookkeeping software for the association's treasurer.
3. Unfinished business. Some groups use the term "old business" in this part of their agendas and allow members to bring up any topics that have occupied the body's attention throughout its history, but RONR discourages this. Instead, it insists that "unfinished business" be restricted to items which were left incomplete at the conclusion of the previous meeting or which were scheduled to be considered in the previous meeting but could not be because of insufficient time and were therefore specifically postponed to the next one. (Robert, H.M., Evans, W.J., Honemann, D.H., & Balch, T. J. (2011)).
4. New business. This part of a meeting revolves around motions introduced by members and considered by the group as a whole.

Agendas

Although a bare-bones standard order of business may satisfy the requirements of RONR, most groups decide to make use of an agenda such as the ones we've discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. Such agendas, if and when they are approved by groups at the outset of their meetings, may be individualized to name the persons who are to give reports and make recommendations. They may also include timelines that refer to specific topics, offer background information, and say when breaks will take place. RONR recognizes that every group has a personality of its own and should have the flexibility to express that personality through a well-crafted agenda tailored to meet its needs.

Making Decisions

Generally speaking, RONR specifies that decisions about proposals should be made as soon as possible after the proposals are made. For instance, if a recommendation is made during an officer's report, it should be handled at that time.

Nothing may be decided in RONR unless a motion—a formal proposal put forth orally by a participant in the meeting—has been made. The proper way to submit a motion is to say, “I move that…” (not “I make a motion that…”). Some groups may decide that any motion raised by a member will be deliberated, but RONR requires that nearly all motions receive a second before the chairperson can proceed with the next step. That step is for the chairperson to “state the question”—that is, announce to the group that a motion has been made and seconded and is open for debate. Details on exceptions to this process can be found in RONR itself, but the basic reason for requiring a second is to ensure that more than a single individual would like to consider a proposal.

Assuming that the person who submits a motion has done so according to the procedures of the group, the motion is considered to be pending, and its initial form it is referred to as the “main motion.” The chairperson is responsible for soliciting and guiding debate about any motion.

In the course of debate, the main motion may be amended or withdrawn, in part according to subsidiary motions and in part according to the will of the person who originally proposed it. It’s also possible for a group to refer a matter to a subgroup or postpone discussion of it to a set time.

Generally, members should be recognized by the chairperson in the order in which they make it clear that they wish to speak. RONR stipulates that a speaker has up to 10 minutes each time he or she speaks and that the speaker isn’t permitted to “save” time or transfer it to another person. If a motion being considered in a large group is particularly controversial, the chairperson should make an effort to recognize proponents and opponents back and forth so as to ensure balance in the presentations.

When debate ceases on a motion, the chairperson should say “The question is on the adoption of the motion that…” and put the question to a vote of the membership. When the vote has been observed or tallied, the chairperson announces which side “has it”—that is, which side has won the vote. He or she then declares that the motion has been adopted or lost and indicates the effect of the vote, as necessary.

For instance, someone in a student committee might move that $250 be spent toward sending Jamie, its vice president, to a conference in New York City. After the motion has been seconded and debated, you as the chairperson might call for a vote and announce afterward, “The ‘ayes’ have it. The motion carries, and Jamie will receive $250 toward expenses for the trip to New York. Jamie, you’ll need to talk to Cameron, our treasurer, to get a check cut for you in advance of your travel.”

Being Civil

The point of following *Robert’s Rules* is to preserve order, decorum, and civility so that a group can make wise decisions. RONR allows a group’s chairperson to rule people’s comments out of order if the comments are irrelevant (not “germane”) or are considered to be personal attacks.

Robert’s Rules even makes provisions for group members to avoid direct attack. It attempts to accomplish this by allowing members of a group to refer to each other in the third person—e.g., “the previous speaker” or “the treasurer”—rather than by using each other’s names. Unfortunately, in long-established organizations such as the US Congresspeople sometimes get away with incivility even within such tight interpretations of the strictures of RONR. Consider the story, which may or may not be historically accurate, of two US Senators. Senator Smith had just spoken passionately in favor of earmarking funds to build a bridge across a certain river in his state. Senator Jones said, “That’s ridiculous. We don’t need a bridge there. I could pee halfway across that river!” Senator Smith retorted, “The previous speaker is out of order!” to which Senator Jones replied, “I suppose I am. Otherwise, I could pee all the way across it.”

More Details

How punctiliously a particular group observes the requirements of RONR will depend on the group’s purposes, its level of formality, and sometimes even on the personalities of its members and leaders. One statewide college faculty organization in the Pacific Northwest prides itself on operating according to what it jocularly calls “Bobby’s Rules of Order,” although its bylaws stipulate that it is governed by RONR. The faculty organization has found for nearly 40 years that it can achieve its aims and maintain civility without observing many of the official trappings of RONR. Your group, on the other hand, may want and need the consistency and specificity of RONR to get its work done.



Figure 4.4.2

In any case, knowing the basic nature of *Robert's Rules* and how to get guidance on its finer points can be advantageous to anyone who wants to promote efficient operations and decision-making by a group. In addition to referring to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief*, you may want to consult the website of the American Institute of Parliamentarians at www.parliamentaryprocedure.org for further information.

Key Takeaway

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR), a thorough and well-established system of parliamentary procedure, can be followed in greater or lesser detail as a group attempts to ensure civility, fairness, and efficiency in the conduct of its business.

Exercise 4.4.1

1. Watch a broadcast on C-SPAN television of either the opening of a session of the US House of Representatives or of debate on legislation in the House or Senate. What specialized terms or forms of address did you hear which fit with your understanding of *Robert's Rules of Order*? What function did those terms or forms of address fulfill?
2. Locate a meeting agenda for a student group or employee committee on your campus. To what degree do its contents differ from the simplified standard order of business described in this section? Why do you think the organizers of the meeting modified the standard order as they did?
3. Draft an agenda for a meeting of an imaginary student group and share it with 2–3 fellow students. Explain why you structured your agenda the way you did.

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4.5: Post Meeting Communication and Minutes

Learning Objectives

1. Identify a tool for recording and preserving notes of professional group conversations
2. Acquire a format for minutes that emphasizes actions taken by a group and the people assigned to accomplish them
3. Identify three ways in which a good group leader should follow up on meetings of the group

Bookends hold books up. Without them, the books tumble onto each other or off the shelf. The "bookends" of a meeting, likewise, are as important as the meeting itself. Without them, nobody knows beforehand what's going to happen or remembers afterward what did.

We've discussed the first major bookend of a meeting, its agenda. In this section, we'll turn our attention to the kinds of bookends that follow a meeting, including principally its minutes.

One Administrative Tool

A college administrator we know developed a form to give people after any conversation they had in his office, much less a formal meeting. He would take notes on the form of what he and the other people in the conversation said, and especially of what they agreed or disagreed on at the end of their meeting. Then he would share the notes with the other people, make a photocopy for each, and have them all initial their copies. Why? Because the administrator knew that busy people may quickly forget exactly what they decided in a conversation, or even what they talked about, unless they keep a shared record of what happened. Whether we like or believe it or not, our individual impressions of a meeting start changing and diverging the moment we leave the site. As one business writer noted, "Even with the ubiquitous tools of organization and sharing ideas…the capacity for misunderstanding is unlimited." (Matson, E. (1996, April-May). The seven sins of deadly meetings. *Fast Company*, 122).



Figure 4.5.1

The Why and How of Minutes

Among the exasperating experiences in group meetings are moments when people say, "We talked about this before—at least twice. Why are we going over the same ground again?" There are also those times when we hear, "John, you were supposed to report on this. What's your report?" and John replies, "But I didn't know I was supposed to make a report."

The best way to prevent such deflating episodes is to follow up after each meeting with good records. Here are two ways to do this:

Keep Ironclad Minutes

One college in Washington State has used this template for many years to shape and retain minutes of its academic committee meetings:

Date/time/location of meeting: _____

Purpose/goals of meeting: _____

Person presiding: _____

Officers in Attendance: _____

Other members in attendance: _____

Members absent: _____

Table 4.5.1 Agenda Template

Agenda Item	Discussion/Motions	Action Taken	Follow-Up
1. Minutes		Approved as printed.	
2. Agenda		Approved as disseminated 5/29/2013.	
3. Roof problem	John Smith reported that the ceiling in the staff washroom leaks. Motion by Mary Jones to have the ceiling repaired; motion passed.	Plant/Maintenance will be asked to patch the leak.	John Smith will contact Jane Doe, head of Plant/Maintenance, by 6/15 to schedule repair.

Time of adjournment: _____

Date/time/place of next meeting: _____

Notice that this style of minutes lacks extensive text and “he said/she said” descriptions.



Figure 4.5.2

Instead, it makes crystal clear who’s responsible for what actions prior to the next meeting. Its contents are brief, easy to read, and very difficult to misinterpret (or evade). It promotes action and accountability.

Distribute Minutes Promptly

When and how you disseminate minutes shows whether and how much you care about what your group does. If your group has bylaws, it may be a good idea for them to include a time frame within which minutes of meetings need to be distributed (such as

"within five days").



"Just reading the minutes back will be sufficient."

Figure 4.5.3

Make sure your mailing list of people to receive minutes is up to date and accurate. This will ensure that no one misses the next meeting because he or she didn't see when and where it was scheduled to take place.

Sloppy minutes degrade the value of the work and time people invest together. They can also weaken a group's morale. Professional minutes, on the other hand, may even make people who weren't at a meeting wish they had been—although that's perhaps asking a lot, unless you served pizza!—and can strengthen your group's pride and solidarity.

What Else?

If you're the leader of the group, making sure that minutes are prepared and distributed well is only one step toward increasing the likelihood that your meetings will achieve their full potential of transmitting discussions into plans and plans into action. You should do three other things after a meeting.

First, you should contact group members who were identified in the minutes as being responsible for follow-up action. See if they need information, resources, or other help to follow through on their assignments. If a committee or subcommittee was asked to take action on some point, get in touch with whoever heads it and offer to provide materials or other support that may be needed to accomplish its work.

Second, you should set a positive example. Take a few minutes to reflect on how effective you were in facilitating the last meeting and ask yourself what you might change at the next one. Be sure, too, to implement any decisions in a timely fashion that you as the leader were given.

Third, you should make sure that the minutes of your group's meetings are stored in secure form, either physically or digitally or both, so that they are available to both you and other group members at any time. Your group's institutional memory, which is the foundation for future members to build upon, needs to be tended regularly and diligently. When in doubt, it's better to hold onto information and documentation related to your group. Discarding something because you think to yourself "nobody will forget this" may very well turn out to be a mistake.

Observing these suggestions may not make the experiences associated with following up on group meetings heavenly, but it might at least keep them from being too hellish.

Key Takeaway

After a group meets, its leader should ensure that professional minutes are disseminated and that other members of the group follow through with their responsibilities.

Exercise 4.5.1

1. Pay special attention to conversations you carry on over the next several days in school and at home. Pick one of them and write simulated minutes according to the format shown in this section. What did you learn from this process about distilling and summarizing information from oral interactions?
2. Locate a website of an academic, business, or civic organization that includes minutes of a recent meeting by some of its members. Identify portions of the minutes that you feel would enable you as a member of the group to adequately understand an important action taken by the group if you were unable to attend the meeting. If you were part of the group, what improvements would you make in the format of its minutes to further enhance their effectiveness?

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4.6: Summary

In this chapter, we have reviewed mechanisms and approaches to handling meetings. We have explored the purposes of meetings and discovered that alternatives to meetings can often yield satisfactory results within a group. We have reviewed specific steps in planning, facilitating, and following up after meetings, including the use of Robert's Rules of Order. Meetings play a large role in the life and development of most groups, so acquiring tools for putting meetings to the best possible use can be of great value to their members.

Review Questions

Interpretive Questions

1. Search the website of the Congressional Record at thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=Record&c=111 for a legislative topic of your choice and locate 3–4 transcriptions of comments entered into the Record concerning it. What terminology or structure do you see in the text which differs from day-to-day conversational norms? What purposes do you believe these communication features might be intended to serve?
2. If you've participated in a virtual meeting which reached a decision of some sort, what elements of the medium do you feel contributed positively to making the decision? What elements, if any, made it more challenging for you to achieve your aims?

Application Questions

1. Think of a problem at your college that you and some of your fellow students feel needs to be addressed. Imagine that you've been told you have two weeks to present a proposal to the president of the college for remedying the problem. Draft an agenda for as many meetings as you feel would be necessary to involve the proper people in confronting the problem. Describe how the meetings would take place, including what rules you would follow, who would be invited, and what specific items would be dealt with in what sequence.
2. Review the minutes of 3–4 recent meetings of a local governmental agency such as a city council or parks commission. What portion of the text in each set of minutes, if any, do you feel could be eliminated without diminishing the effectiveness of the documents as records of the meetings? Write up a revised version of one of the sets of minutes which most efficiently conveys what was important in the meeting.

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4.7: Additional Resources

Books and Articles

- Mosvick, R.K., & Nelson, R.B. (1996). *A guide to successful meeting management.* Indianapolis, IN: Park Avenue. Includes information about business meetings, along with suggestions on how to improve them.
- Silberman, M. (1999). *101 ways to make your meetings active.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Provides fun activities and exercises to help prepare people to conduct meetings effectively.
- Streibel, B.J. (2003). *The manager's guide to effective meetings.* New York: McGraw-Hill. Includes advice on conducting virtual meetings, as well as useful examples and checklists related to meeting management.
- Facilitation at a Glance; *Ingred Bens*
- A wonderful pocket guide to facilitation, filled with tools and techniques useful to both novice and advanced facilitators. Great set of tools for problem-solving.
- Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making; *Sam Kaner*
- An excellent resource for ideas on facilitation, with a focus on decision-making tools and techniques. The book includes excellent illustrations, which can be reproduced to help explain facilitation concepts to others.

Other Meeting Design and Facilitation Resources

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF)

The IAF promotes, supports, and advances the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking, and support services.

Interaction Associates

Interaction Associates is the creator and distributor of the Mastering Meetings: Tools for Collaborative Action and Essential Facilitation classes which MIT is licensed to teach. The Tips and Techniques section at their Web site is particularly useful.

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4.8: Appendix A - Assessment of a Student's Campus/Community Participation

Dear Fellow College Employee:

Thank you very much for taking the time to assist a student in learning about the nature and functions of groups in our college and community. Please assess the student's behavior candidly so s/he and I can make future student/employee encounters more positive and productive. Please return this form to the student so that s/he can learn from your comments. Again, thank you for your assistance!

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

TWO ACTIVITIES YOU ATTENDED: _____

Please place an "X" on the following scales to show your evaluation of the student's behavior before, during, and after the interactions you've had with him/her:

1. The student approached me in a polite and courteous manner.

Strongly Disagree |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Strongly Agree

2. The student explained the purpose of our prospective interaction well.

Strongly Disagree |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Strongly Agree

3. The student's questions were clear and easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Strongly Agree

4. The student thanked me appropriately for my time and assistance.

Strongly Disagree |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Strongly Agree

What could the student do in future interactions with college staff, faculty, and administrators to increase his/her professionalism, clarity, or courtesy?

Your name: _____ (Phone): _____

For Students: Description of Interactions with a Faculty/Staff/Administrative Employee Contact

1. How did you first contact the college employee? (i.e., by phone? face to face? by e-mail?)
2. How did the person respond when you contacted him/her?
3. What two activities did you participate in with the employee?

   Name/nature of activity #1: _____ Date and time:_____

   Name/nature of activity #2: _____ Date and time:_____

4. What actions did your Employee Contact take to help you prepare for your experiences together?
5. What might have made the activities with your Employee Contact more educational for you?
6. Check and explain how your experience with the Employee Contact helped you in the following areas:

Statement	Yes	No	Comments/Explanations
I learned more about how our college functions			
I learned how to act professionally in a business/educational/community organization			
I met people who may help me in my future schooling			
I met people who may help me in my future career			
I learned these other things from my experiences:			

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4.9: Appendix B - Critique of Formal Campus or Community Gathering

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

Date: _____

I attended a meeting/event of this group: _____

on this date: _____ at this location: _____

from _____ a.m./p.m. to _____ a.m./p.m.

My Employee Contact was: _____ (Phone): _____

The subject of the meeting/event was: _____

The purpose of the meeting/event was: _____

Name of the person leading the meeting/event: _____

The person's title within the group (e.g., president, chair, etc.): _____

The person's title at our college: _____

At what time was the meeting/event scheduled to begin? _____

At what time did the meeting/event begin? _____

At what time was the meeting/event scheduled to end? _____

At what time did the meeting/event end? _____

Was an agenda used at the meeting/event? _____ YES _____ NO

[If an agenda was used, please attach a copy to this form]

How many people attended the meeting/event? _____

What main topic(s) was/were discussed at the meeting/event? _____

If the group made any decisions, please list them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What method(s) did the group use to make its decision(s)?:

_____ Voice vote _____ Written voting _____ Consensus ("We all agree that XYZ")

_____ Other: _____

_____ Unsure of method

What particularly effective words, actions, stories, examples, or arguments stick in your mind from the event/activity?

Please place an "X" on the following scales to show your evaluation of the meeting/event:

Boring |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Fascinating

Chaotic |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|| Well-Organized

Unintelligible |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Clear / Easy to Understand

Routine |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____| Controversial

The event/activity could have been improved by...

This is what I learned from the meeting/event that will make me a better student, employee, or citizen:

Other comments about the meeting/event:

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Groups and Problem-Solving

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5.2: Group Problem-Solving
5.3: Group Decision-Making
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5.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. Contact two people who work in different parts of your college or university and ask them what problems they consider to be most significant in their immediate office or work area. What similarities and differences do you see between the two groups of problems?
2. Ask a family member to describe a problem he or she has solved recently. Describe the steps the person took in reaching the solution and identify the one(s) that you feel were most important in contributing to the solution. Which of the steps would you be most likely to take in a similar situation?
3. Identify two or three aspects of a course you're taking or have recently taken that you feel could be improved (e.g., grading, course policies, nature of reading materials, etc.). Describe the steps you might take with a group of fellow students to respond to those elements of the course.
4. What decision have you made in the last 2–3 years that you're proudest of? What lessons or advice do you think someone else could draw from the way you reached that decision?

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5.2: Group Problem-Solving

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and describe how to implement seven steps for group problem-solving

No matter who you are or where you live, problems are an inevitable part of life. This is true for groups as well as for individuals. Some groups—especially work teams—are formed specifically to solve problems. Other groups encounter problems for a wide variety of reasons. Within a family group, a problem might be that a daughter or son wants to get married and the parents do not approve of the marriage partner. In a workgroup, a problem might be that some workers are putting in more effort than others, yet achieving poorer results. Regardless of the problem, having the resources of a group can be an advantage, as different people can contribute different ideas for how to reach a satisfactory solution.

Once a group encounters a problem, the questions that come up range from "Where do we start?" to "How do we solve it?" While there are many ways to approach a problem, the American educational philosopher John Dewey's reflective thinking sequence has stood the test of time. This seven-step process, (Adler, R. (1996). *Communicating at work: principles and practices for business and the professions.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill) has produced positive results and serves as a handy organizational structure. If you are member of a group that needs to solve a problem and don't know where to start, consider these seven simple steps, (McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon):

1. Define the problem
2. Analyze the problem
3. Establish criteria
4. Consider possible solutions
5. Decide on a solution
6. Implement the solution
7. Follow up on the solution

Let's discuss each step in detail.

Define the Problem

If you don't know what the problem is, how can you know you've solved it? Defining the problem allows the group to set boundaries of what the problem is and what it is not; and begin to formalize a description or definition of the scope, size, or extent of the challenge the group will address. A problem that is too broadly defined can overwhelm the group. If the problem is too narrowly defined, important information will be missed or ignored.

In the following example, we have a web-based company called Favorites that needs to increase its customer base and ultimately sales. A problem-solving group has been formed, and they start by formulating a working definition of the problem.

- Too Broad: "Sales are off, our numbers are down, and we need more customers."
- More Precise: "Sales have been slipping incrementally for 6 of the past 9 months and are significantly lower than a seasonally adjusted comparison to last year. Overall this loss represents a 4.5% reduction in sales from the same time last year. However, when we break it down by product category, sales of our non-edible products have seen a modest but steady increase, while sales of edibles account for the drop off and we need to halt the decline."

Analyze the Problem

Now the group analyzes the problem, trying to gather information and learn more. The problem is complex and requires more than one area of expertise. Why do non-edible products continue selling well? What is it about the edibles that is turning customers off? Let's meet our problem-solvers at Favorites.

Kevin is responsible for customer resource management. He is involved with the customer from the point of initial contact through purchase and delivery. Most of the interface is automated in the form of an online "basket model," where photographs and product descriptions are accompanied by "Buy It" buttons. He is available during normal working business hours for live chat and voice

interface if needed, and customers are invited to request additional information. Most Favorites customers do not access this service, but Kevin is kept quite busy, as he also handles returns and complaints. Because Kevin believes that superior service retains customers while attracting new ones, he is always interested in better ways to serve the customer. Looking at edibles and non-edibles, he will study the cycle of customer service and see if there are any common points, from the main webpage through the catalog to the purchase process to returns, at which customers abandon the sale. He has existing customer feedback loops with end-of-sale surveys, but most customers decline to take the survey and there is currently no incentive to participate.

Mariah is responsible for products and purchasing. She wants to offer the best products at the lowest price, and to offer new products that are unusual, rare, or exotic. She regularly adds new products to the Favorites catalog and culls underperformers. Right now she has the data on every product and its sales history, but it is a challenge to represent it. She will analyze current sales data and produce a report that specifically identifies how each product, edible and non-edible, is performing. She wants to highlight "winners" and "losers" but also recognizes that today's "losers" may be the hit of tomorrow. It is hard to predict constantly changing tastes and preferences, but that is part of her job. It's not all science, and it's not all art. She has to have an eye for what will catch on tomorrow while continuing to provide what is hot today.

Suri is responsible for data management at Favorites. She gathers, analyzes, and presents information gathered from the supply chain, sales, and marketing. She works with vendors to make sure products are available when needed, makes sales predictions based on past sales history, and assesses the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

The problem-solving group members already have certain information on hand. They know that customer retention is one contributing factor. Attracting new customers is a constant goal, but they are aware of the well-known principle that it takes more effort to attract new customers than to keep existing ones. Thus, it is important to insure a quality customer service experience for existing customers and encourage them to refer friends. The group needs to determine how to promote this favorable customer behavior.

Another contributing factor seems to be that customers often abandon the shopping cart before completing a purchase, especially when purchasing edibles. The group members need to learn more about why this is happening.

Establish Criteria

Establishing the criteria for a solution is the next step. At this point, information is coming in from diverse perspectives, and each group member has contributed information from their perspective, even though there may be several points of overlap.

Kevin: Customers who complete the post-sale survey indicate that they want to know 1) what is the estimated time of delivery, 2) why a specific item was not in stock and when it will be, and 3) why their order sometimes arrives with less than a complete order, with some items back-ordered, without prior notification.

He notes that a very small percentage of customers complete the post-sale survey, and the results are far from scientific. He also notes that it appears the interface is not capable of cross-checking inventory to provide immediate information concerning back orders, so that the customer "buys it" only to learn several days later that it was not in stock. This seems to be especially problematic for edible products, because people may tend to order them for special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. But we don't really know this for sure because of the low participation in the post-sale survey.

Mariah: There are four edible products that frequently sell out. So far, we haven't been able to boost the appeal of other edibles so that people would order them as a second choice when these sales leaders aren't available. We also have several rare, exotic products that are slow movers. They have potential, but currently are underperformers.

Suri: We know from a zip code analysis that most of our customers are from a few specific geographic areas associated with above-average incomes. We have very few credit cards declined, and the average sale is over $100. Shipping costs represent on average 8% of the total sales cost. We do not have sufficient information to produce a customer profile. There is no specific point in the purchase process where basket abandonment tends to happen; it happens fairly uniformly at all steps.

Consider Possible Solutions to the Problem

The group has listened to each other and now starts to brainstorm ways to address the challenges they have addressed while focusing resources on those solutions that are more likely to produce results.

Kevin: Is it possible for our programmers to create a cross-index feature, linking the product desired with a report of how many are in stock? I'd like the customer to know right away whether it is in stock, or how long they may have to wait. As another idea, is it possible to add incentives to the purchase cycle that won't negatively impact our overall profit? I'm thinking a small volume discount on multiple items, or perhaps free shipping over a specific dollar amount.

Mariah: I recommend we hold a focus group where customers can sample our edible products and tell us what they like best and why. When the best sellers are sold out, could we offer a discount on related products to provide an instant alternative? We might also cull the underperforming products with a liquidation sale to generate interest.

Suri: If we want to know more about our customers, we need to give them an incentive to complete the post-sale survey. How about a five percent off coupon code for the next purchase, to get them to return and to help us better identify our customer base? We may also want to build in a customer referral rewards program, but it all takes better data in to get results out. We should also explore the supply side of the business and see if we can get a more reliable supply of the leading products, and try to get more advantageous discounts from our suppliers, especially in the edible category.

Decide on a Solution

Kevin, Mariah, and Suri may want to implement all of the solution strategies, but they do not have the resources to do them all. They'll complete a cost/benefit analysis, which ranks each solution according to its probable impact. The analysis is shown in Table 5.2.1.

Table 5.2.1 Cost/Benefit Analysis

Source	Proposed Solution	Cost	Benefit	Comment
Kevin	Integrate the cross-index feature	High	High	Many of our competitors already have this feature
Kevin	Volume discount	Low	Medium	May increase sales slightly
Kevin	Free shipping	Low	Low	This has a downside in making customers more aware of shipping costs if their order doesn't qualify for free shipping
Mariah	Hold a focus group to taste edible products	High	Medium	Difficult to select participants representative of our customer base
Mariah	Search for alternative products to high performers	Medium	Medium	We can't know for sure which products customers will like best
Mariah	Liquidate underperformers	Low	Low	Might create a "bargain basement" impression inconsistent with our brand
Suri	Incentive for post-sale survey completion	Low	Medium	Make sure the incentive process is easy for the customer
Suri	Incentive for customer referrals	Low	Medium	People may feel uncomfortable referring friends if it is seen as putting them in a marketing role
Suri	Find a more reliable supply of top-selling edibles	Medium	High	We already know customers want these products
Suri	Negotiate better discounts from vendors	Low	High	If we can do this without alienating our best vendors, it will be a win-win

Now that the options have been presented with their costs and benefits, it is easier for the group to decide which courses of action are likely to yield the best outcomes. The analysis helps the group members to see beyond the immediate cost of implementing a given solution. For example, Kevin's suggestion of offering free shipping won't cost Favorites much money, but it also may not pay off in customer goodwill. And even though Mariah's suggestion of having a focus group might sound like a good idea, it will be expensive and its benefits are questionable.

A careful reading of the analysis indicates that Kevin's best suggestion is to integrate the cross-index feature in the ordering process so that customers can know immediately whether an item is in stock or on back order. Of Mariah's suggestions, searching for alternative products is probably the most likely to benefit Favorites. And Suri's two supply-side suggestions are likely to result in positive outcomes.

Implement the Solution

Kevin is faced with the challenge of designing the computer interface without incurring unacceptable costs. He strongly believes that the interface will pay for itself within the first year—or, to put if more bluntly, that Favorites' declining sales will get worse if the website does not soon have this feature. He asks to meet with top management to get budget approval and secures their agreement, on one condition: He must negotiate a compensation schedule with the Information Technology consultants that includes delayed compensation in the form of bonuses after the feature has been up and running successfully for six months.

Mariah knows that searching for alternative products is a never-ending process, but it takes time and the company needs results. She decides to invest time evaluating products that competing companies currently offer, especially in the edible category, on the theory that customers who find their desired items sold out on the Favorites website may have been buying alternative products elsewhere instead of choosing an alternative from Favorites's product lines.

Suri decides to approach the vendors of the four frequently sold-out products and ask point blank: "What would it take to get you to produce these items more reliably in greater quantities?" By opening the channel of communication with these vendors, she is able to motivate them to make modifications that will improve the reliability and quantity. She also approaches the vendors of the less popular products with a request for better discounts in return for cooperation in developing and test-marketing new products.

Follow up on the Solution

Kevin: After several beta tests, the cross-index feature was implemented and has been in place for 30 days. Now customers see either "In stock" or "Available [mo/da/yr]" in the shopping basket. As expected, Kevin notes a decrease in the number of chat and phone inquiries to the effect of, "Will this item arrive before my wife's birthday?" However, he notes an increase in inquiries asking "Why isn't this item in stock?" It is difficult to tell whether customer satisfaction is higher overall.
Mariah: In exploring the merchandise available from competing merchants, she got several ideas for modifying Favorites' product line to offer more flavors and other variations on popular edibles. Working with vendors, she found that these modifications cost very little. Within the first 30 days of adding these items to the product line, sales are up. Mariah believes these additions also serve to enhance the Favorites brand identity, but she has no data to back this up.
Suri: So far, the vendors supplying the four top-selling edibles have fulfilled their promise of increasing quantity and reliability. However, three of the four items have still sold out, raising the question of whether Favorites needs to bring in one or more additional vendors to produce these items. Of the vendors with which Favorites asked to negotiate better discounts, some refused, and two of these were "stolen" by a competing merchant so that they no longer sell to Favorites. In addition, one of the vendors that agreed to give a better discount was unexpectedly forced to cease operations for several weeks because of a fire.

This scenario allows us to see the problem may have many dimensions, and may have several solutions, but resources can be limited and not every solution is successful. Even though the problem is not immediately resolved, the group problem-solving pattern serves as a useful guide through the problem-solving process.

Key Takeaway

Group problem-solving can be an orderly process when it is broken down into seven specific stages.

Exercise 5.2.1

1. Think of a problem encountered in the past by a group of which you are a member. How did the group solve the problem? How satisfactory was the solution? Discuss your results with your classmates.
2. Consider again the problem you described in Exercise #1. In view of the seven-step framework, which steps did the group utilize? Would following the full seven-step framework have been helpful? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.
3. Research one business that you would like to know more about and see if you can learn about how they communicate in groups and teams Compare your results with those of classmates.
4. Think of a decision you will be making some time in the near future. Apply the cost/benefit analysis framework to your decision. Do you find this method helpful? Discuss your results with classmates.

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5.3: Group Decision-Making

Learning Objectives

1. Define decision-making and distinguish between decision-making and problem-solving
2. Describe five methods of group decision-making
3. Identify six guidelines for consensus decision-making
4. Define autocratic, democratic, and participative decision-making styles and place them within the Tannenbaum-Schmidt continuum

Life is the sum of all your choices. - Albert Camus

Simply put, decision-making is the process of choosing among options and arriving at a position, judgment, or action. It usually answers a "wh-" question—i.e., what, who, where, or when?—or perhaps a "how" question.

A group may, of course, make a decision in order to solve a problem. For instance, a group of students might discover halfway through a project that some of its members are failing to contribute to the required work. They might then decide to develop a written timeline and a set of deadlines for itself if it believes that action will lead them out of their difficulty.

Not every group decision, however, will be in response to a problem. Many decisions relate to routine logistical matters such as when and where to schedule an event or how to reach someone who wasn't able to make it to a meeting. Thus, decision-making differs from problem-solving.

Any decision-making in a group, even about routine topics, is significant. Why? Because decision-making, like problem-solving, results in a change in a group's status, posture, or stature. Such change, in turn, requires energy and attention on the part of a group in order for the group to progress easily into a new reality. Things will be different in the group once a problem has been solved or a decision has been reached, and group members will need to adjust.

Methods of Reaching Decisions

Research does indicate that groups generate more ideas and make more accurate decisions on matters for which a known preferred solution exists, but they also operate more slowly than individuals. (Hoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Random House). Under time pressure and other constraints, some group leaders exercise their power to make a decision unilaterally—alone—because they're willing to sacrifice a degree of accuracy for the sake of speed. Sometimes this behavior turns out to be wise; sometimes it doesn't.

Assuming that a group determines that it must reach a decision together on some matter, rather than deferring to the will of a single person, it can proceed according to several methods. Parker and Hoffman, (Parker, G., & Hoffman, R. (2006). *Meeting excellence: 33 tools to lead meetings that get results.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), along with Hartley and Dawson, (Hartley, P., & Dawson, M. (2010). *Success in groupwork.* New York: St. Martin's Press), place decision-making procedures in several categories. Here is a synthesis of their views on how decision-making can take place:

"A Plop"

A group may conduct a discussion in which members express views and identify alternatives but then reach no decision and take no action. When people go their own ways after such a "plop," things sometimes take care of themselves, and the lack of a decision causes no difficulties. On the other hand, if a group ignores or postpones a decision that really needs attention, its members may confront tougher decisions later—some of which may deal with problems brought about by not addressing a topic when it was at an early stage.

Delegation to an Expert

A group may not be ready to make a decision at a given time, either because it lacks sufficient information or is experiencing unresolved conflict among members with differing views. In such a situation, the group may not want to simply drop the matter and move on. Instead, it may turn to one of its members who everyone feels has the expertise to choose wisely among the

alternatives that the group is considering. The group can either ask the expert to come back later with a final proposal or simply allow the person to make the decision alone after having gathered whatever further information he or she feels is necessary.

Averaging

Group members may shift their individual stances regarding a question by "splitting the difference" to reach a "middle ground." This technique tends to work most easily if numbers are involved. For instance, a group trying to decide how much money to spend on a gift for a departing member might ask everyone for a preferred amount and agree to spend whatever is computed by averaging those amounts.

Voting

If you need to be quick and definitive in making a decision, voting is probably the best method. Everyone in mainstream American society is familiar with the process, for one thing, and its outcome is inherently clear and obvious. A majority vote requires that more than half of a group's members vote for a proposal, whereas a proposal subject to a two-thirds vote will not pass unless twice as many members show support as those who oppose it.

Voting is essentially a win/lose activity. You can probably remember a time when you or someone else in a group composed part of a strong and passionate minority whose desires were thwarted because of the results of a vote. How much commitment did you feel to support the results of that vote?

Voting does offer a quick and simple way to reach decisions, but it works better in some situations than in others. If the members of a group see no other way to overcome a deadlock, for instance, voting may make sense. Likewise, very large groups and those facing serious time constraints may see advantages to voting. Finally, the efficiency of voting is appealing when it comes to making routine or noncontroversial decisions that need only to be officially approved.



Figure 5.3.1: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/sashakimel/6244465144/

Consensus

In consensus decision-making, group members reach a resolution which all of the members can support as being acceptable as a means of accomplishing some mutual goal even though it may not be the preferred choice for everyone. In common use, "consensus" can range in meaning from unanimity to a simple majority vote. In public policy facilitation and multilateral international negotiations, however, the term refers to a general agreement reached after discussions and consultations, usually without voting."consensus". (In *Dictionary of Conflict Resolution, Wiley*. Retrieved from www.credoreference.com/entry/wileyconfres/consensus)

Consensus should not be confused with unanimity, which means only that no one has explicitly stated objections to a proposal or decision. Although unanimity can certainly convey an accurate perspective of a group's views at times, groupthink also often leads to unanimous decisions. Therefore, it's probably wise to be cautious when a group of diverse people seems to have formed a totally unified bloc with respect to choices among controversial alternatives.

When a consensus decision is reached through full interchange of views and is then adopted in good faith by all parties to a discussion, it can energize and motivate a group. Besides avoiding the win/lose elements intrinsic to voting, it converts each

member's investment in a decision into a stake in preserving and promoting the decision after it has been agreed upon.

Guidelines for Seeking Consensus

How can a group actually go about working toward consensus? Here are some guidelines for the process:

First, be sure everyone knows the definition of consensus and is comfortable with observing them. For many group members, this may mean suspending judgment and trying something they've never done before. Remind people that consensus requires a joint dedication to moving forward toward improvement in and by the group.

Second, endeavor to solicit participation by every member of the group. Even the naturally quietest person should be actively "polled" from time to time for his or her perspectives. In fact, it's a good idea to take special pains to ask for varied viewpoints when discussion seems to be stalled or contentious.

Third, listen honestly and openly to each group member's viewpoints. Attempt to seek and gather information from others. Do your best to subdue your emotions and your tendency to judge and evaluate.

Fourth, be patient. To reach consensus often takes much more time than voting would. A premature "agreement" reached because people give in to speed things up or avoid conflict is likely later to weaken or fall apart.

Fifth, always look for mutually acceptable ways to make it through challenging circumstances. Don't resort to chance mechanisms like flipping a coin, and don't trade decisions arbitrarily just so that things come out equally for people who remain committed to opposing views.

Sixth, resolve gridlock earnestly. Stop and ask, "Have we really identified every possible feasible way that our group might act?" If members of a group simply can't agree on one alternative, see if they can all find and accept the next-best option. Then be sure to request an explicit statement from them that they are prepared to genuinely commit themselves to that option.

One variation on consensus decision-making calls upon a group's leader to ask its members, before initiating a discussion, to agree to a deadline and a "safety valve." The deadline would be a time by which everyone in the group feels they need to have reached a decision. The "safety valve" would be a statement that any member can veto the will of the rest of the group to act in a certain way, but only if he or she takes responsibility for moving the group forward in some other positive direction.

Although consensus entails full participation and assent within a group, it usually can't be reached without guidance from a leader. One college president we knew was a master at escorting his executive team to consensus. Without coercing or rushing them, he would regularly involve them all in discussions and lead their conversations to a point at which everyone was nodding in agreement, or at least conveying acceptance of a decision. Rather than leaving things at that point, however, the president would generally say, "We seem to have reached a decision to do XYZ. Is there anyone who objects?" Once people had this last opportunity to add further comments of their own, the group could move forward with a sense that it had a common vision in mind.

Consensus decision-making is easiest within groups whose members know and respect each other, whose authority is more or less evenly distributed, and whose basic values are shared. Some charitable and religious groups meet these conditions and have long been able to use consensus decision-making as a matter of principle. The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, began using consensus as early as the 17th century. Its affiliated international service agency, the American Friends Service Committee, employs the same approach. The Mennonite Church has also long made use of consensus decision-making.

Decision-Making by Leaders

People in the business world often need to make decisions in groups composed of their associates and employees. Take the case of a hypothetical businessperson, Kerry Cash.

Kerry owns and manages Wenatcheese, a shop that sells gourmet local and imported cheese. Since opening five years ago, the business has overcome the challenge of establishing itself and has built a solid clientele. Sales have tripled. Two full-time and four part-time employees—all productive, reliable, and customer-friendly—have made the store run efficiently and bolstered its reputation.

Now, with Christmas and the New Year coming, Kerry wants to decide, "Shall I open another shop in the spring?" Because the year-end rush is on, there's not a lot of time to weigh the pros and cons.



Figure 5.3.2: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/richardnorth/7696781276/

As the diagram indicates, many managers in Kerry's situation employ two means to make decisions like this: intuition and analysis. They'll feel their gut instinct, analyze appropriate financial facts, or do a little bit of both.

Unfortunately, this kind of dualistic decision-making approach restricts an individual leader's options. It doesn't do justice to the complexity of the group environment. It also fails to fully exploit the power and relevance of other people's knowledge.

Too much feeling may produce arbitrary outcomes. And, as the management theorist Peter Drucker observed, too much fact can create stagnation and "analysis paralysis": "(A)n overload of information, that is, anything much beyond what is truly needed, leads to information blackout. It does not enrich, but impoverishes." (Drucker, P.F. (1993). *The effective executive.* New York: Harper business).

Fortunately, a couple of authorities wrote an article in 1973 which can help members of groups assess and strengthen the quality of their decision-making (Tannenbaum, R., & Schmidt, W. (1973, May-June). How to choose a leadership pattern. *Harvard Business Review*, 3–11). Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt were those authorities. Their article so appealed to American readers that more than one million reprints eventually sold.

The Tannnenbaum-Schmidt Continuum

Kerry Cash, wondering whether to open another Wenatcheese outlet, can refer to the Tannenbaum-Schmidt model in Table 5.3.1 to identify a spectrum of ways to resolve the question:

Table 5.3.1 Tannenbaum-Schmidt Continuum

Autocratic	-	-	Democratic	-	-	Participative
Manager makes decision and announces it	Manager sells decision	Manager presents ideas and invites questions	Manager presents tentative decisions subject to change	Manager presents problem, gets suggestions, and makes decision	Manager defines limits asks group to make decision	Manager permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior

Let's take a look at the components of this continuum, from left to right. First, we have two autocratic options:

- OPTION ONE: Pure announcement. "All right, folks, I've decided we're going to open a new shop in Dryden over Memorial Day weekend."
- OPTION TWO: "Selling". "I'd like us to open a new shop in Dryden. I have five reasons. Here they are…"

Next, three democratic options are available:

- OPTION THREE: Presentation with questions. "I've decided we'll open a new shop in Dryden. What would you like to know about the plan?"
- OPTION FOUR: Tentative decision. "I want to open a new shop in Dryden. Do you have any observations or questions about this possibility?"

- OPTION FIVE: Soliciting suggestions. “I think we’re in a position to open a new shop. Dryden seems like the best location, but I’d also consider Cashmere or Leavenworth or Okanogan. I’ll decide which way to go after you give me your thoughts.”

Finally, two participative kinds of approaches present themselves:

- OPTION SIX: Limited group autonomy. “I want to open a new shop in either Dryden, Cashmere, or Leavenworth sometime between Easter and Independence Day. Talk it over and let me know what we should do.”
- OPTION SEVEN: Full group autonomy. “I’m willing to establish a new shop if you’d like. Let me know by two weeks from now whether you want to do that, and if so, where and when.”

Of course, many decisions embody more complications and include more details than Kerry Cash’s. Some are related to people: Shall we bring more people into the group? If we do, how many should be full-fledged and how many should be temporary or provisional? Or do we need to reduce our number of members?

Other decisions depend on financial variables and constraints: Can we trust the economy enough to invest in new equipment? Do we have time to develop and promote any new ideas?

The Tannenbaum-Schmidt model doesn’t tell us how to choose between its own options. Tannenbaum and Schmidt, however, did offer some advice on this score. These are some topics they suggested that leaders address as they decide where to position themselves on the continuum:

- THE ORGANIZATION. What kind is it? Is it a new, or is it relatively solid and secure?
- THE PEOPLE. How mature are they? How experienced? How motivated?
- THE PROBLEM OR DECISION. How intricate is it? What kind of expertise is required to solve it?
- TIME. What deadlines, if any, do we face? Is there enough time to involve as many people as we’d like?



“Am I to understand that my proposal is greeted with some skepticism?”

Figure 5.3.3

Robert Tannenbaum died in 2003 after more than 50 years as a consultant, an academic, and a writer for businesses and organizations. Warren Schmidt lives on as an emeritus professor in the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California.

Intel Corporation actually identifies in advance of its meetings the kind of decision-making that will be associated with each question or topic (Matson, E. (1996, April-May). The seven sins of deadly meetings. *Fast company*, 122). The four categories it uses resemble some of the components of the Tannenbaum/Schmidt model, as follows:

- Authoritative (the leader takes full responsibility)
- Consultative (the leader makes a decision after weighing views from the group)
- Voting
- Consensus



Figure 5.3.4

Once you've reached a decision, take a few steps back. Ask yourself, "Is it truly consistent with our group's values, or was it perhaps simply a technocratic outcome: i.e., procedurally proper but devoid of empathy and human understanding? Throughout history, many a group's decision reached "by the book" later caused dissension, disappointment, or even dissolution of the group itself.

Key Takeaways

Groups may choose among several methods of decision-making, including consensus, depending on their circumstances and the characteristics of their leaders and members. Making decisions that are consistent with the group's values is of paramount importance.

Exercise 5.3.1

1. Think of major decisions made in the last couple of years by two groups you're a part of. Which method from this section did the groups use in each case? Which of the decisions are you more satisfied with now? Why? To what degree do you feel the decision-making methods the groups used fit the circumstances and the characteristics of the groups themselves?
2. Tell a classmate about a decision that a group you're part of needs to make shortly. Ask the classmate for his/her advice on which decision-making method the group should employ.
3. A major hesitation raised by some people with respect to consensus decision-making is that it requires much more time than voting or other direct methods. In what kind of situation would you be, or have you been, willing to invest "as much time as it takes" to reach consensus in a group?
4. If you were compelled to make every decision either totally by intuition or totally by analysis, which would you choose? On the basis of what experience or value do you feel this way? If you could choose to have every group leader around you make decisions by only one of the two methods, which would you prefer, and why?

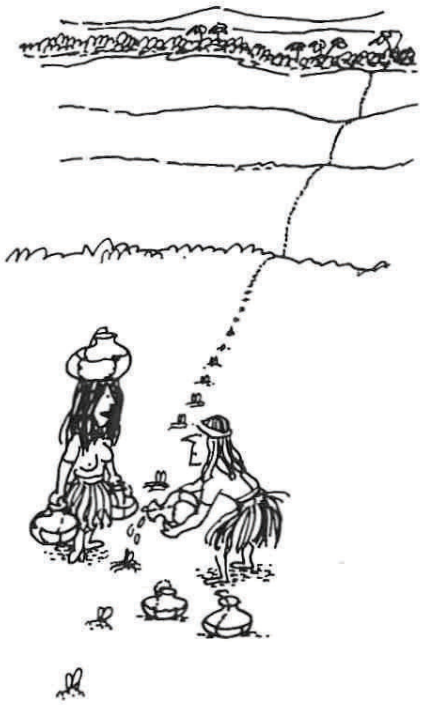
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5.4: Effective Strategies for Group Creativity

Learning Objectives

1. Define and explain “bisociation”
2. Describe brainstorming and identify criteria for its effective use
3. Differentiate between neophiles and neophobes
4. Distinguish between the creative styles of “brooders” and “spawners”



“I know this sounds crazy, but couldn’t we plant a lot of short rows, side by side?”

Figure 5.4.1

Sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, teachers—everybody starts to douse your imagination and creativity. At a young age it starts, and then all of a sudden you’re like a trunk going through an airport, covered in stickers. I think I have spent most of my life pulling off stickers. - Kim Basinger

Very few people do anything creative after the age of thirty-five. The reason is that very few people do anything creative before the age of thirty-five. - Joel Hildebrand

You can’t wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club. - Jack London

Human beings are naturally creative from an early age. Think of any four- or five-year-old child you’ve ever met, and you can verify this for yourself. Here are some examples from journals kept by one of the authors concerning his children’s development before age six:

I was reading *Animal Farm* the other day and mentioned that one of the “Seven Commandments” of the animals had to do with the beliefs that the beasts liked anything with four legs or wings. Amelia said, “Oh—then they like airplanes!”

Last night at dinner, Claire looked at the roll-top wooden bread storage compartment over the countertop in our kitchen and said, “That’s a garage door where food parks.”

When I was explaining that there are only four tastes which human tongues can detect—salty, sweet, sour, and bitter—Claire asked, "What about 'yucky'?"

Last night on the way to folk-dancing, we started talking about vocabulary. For some reason, Amelia created a new word: "trampede." According to her, a "trampede" is a centipede on a trampoline.

Solving problems and making decisions both work best if people in a group are creative; i.e., if they entertain new perspectives and generate new ideas. Can this be a simple matter of having the group's leader tell people "Be creative," though? Probably not. It's like saying, "Don't think of an elephant": it's apt to produce just the opposite effect of the command itself. Still, tools and techniques for encouraging creativity in a group do exist.

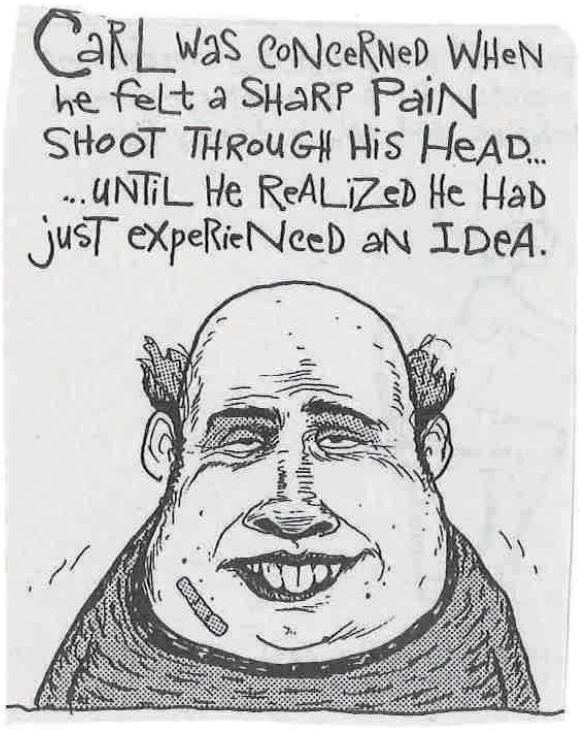


Figure 5.4.2

A Theory of Creativity

Arthur Koestler, a major intellectual and political force in Europe and the United States throughout most of the 20th century, contended that all creativity comprises a process he called "bisociation." (Koestler, A. (1964). *The act of creation.* New York: Macmillan). Koestler's seminal book on this topic, titled *The Act of Creation*, put forth a theory that he believed accounted for people's "Aha" reaction of scientific discovery, their "Ha-ha" reaction to jokes, and their "Ah" reaction of mystical or religious insight.

Above all, creativity creates new things—things that weren't there before the creative act took place. In every kind of creative situation, according to Koestler, the result is produced by a meeting of lines of thought that bring together hitherto unconnected ideas and fuse them into something new. If the lines of thought concern devotional matters, mystical insight emerges, and when they concern more mundane matters the result is apt to be a joke. If they are scientific, the result is a scientific discovery.

The expression "to think outside the box" is often used to refer to creativity. Koestler's view seems to be that creativity consists, instead, of linking existing but separate "boxes" together. One implication of his theory is that, to be creative, a person not only needs to depart from the status quo but also needs to be familiar and comfortable with a range of alternatives from a wide variety of fields. Koestler's perspective would seem to be consistent with the association we often make between creativity on the one hand and intelligence and breadth of knowledge on the other.

Overcoming Inertia

At every crossroads on the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed 10,000 men to guard the past. - Maurice Maeterlinck

When you cannot make up your mind which of two evenly balanced courses of action you should take, choose the bolder. - William Joseph Slim

Groups generally comprise a mixture of people when it comes to openness to change. A small fraction of the members may position themselves at one end of the openness continuum or the other. Some of these people, called neophiles, will eagerly embrace almost anything novel. Others, known as neophobes, will invariably shun what's new and prefer the security of what they know and have done in the past. The majority of people, however, probably don't fit neatly into either of these categories. Instead, they may prefer to produce or experiment with new things under certain circumstances and resist them under others.

It's rarely possible to provoke creativity on the part of an entire group all at once. You needn't agree with Thomas Fuller's aphorism that "a conservative believes nothing should be done for the first time" to realize that some people in groups will hold onto what they're familiar with all the more stubbornly as others begin to waver and experiment with something new.

Brainstorming

In regard to every problem that arises, there are counselors who say, "Do nothing" [and] other counselors who say, "Do everything"…I say to you: "Do something"; and when you have done something, if it works, do it some more; and if it does not work, then do something else. - Franklin Delano Roosevelt

One familiar technique that experts in the realm of creative thinking have long recommended is brainstorming. Alex Osborn, an advertising executive, began using the term in the mid-1950s and described the method in detail in his book *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Problem Solving*. (Osborn, A.F. (1963) *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem solving* (3rd revised ed.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).

One criterion of proper brainstorming is that it must begin with an unrestricted search for quantity and creativity rather than quality. It should actually solicit and reward craziness and zaniness, in other words.

A second criterion for good brainstorming is that it should encourage and praise "piggybacking" on ideas that have already emerged. A third is that brainstormers should avoid making any judgments until they've generated an extensive list of ideas.

Robert Sutton, a respected organizational consultant, published a book in 2002 called *Weird Ideas That Work*. (Sutton, R. (2002). *Weird ideas that work*. New York: Free Press. Among other things, Sutton's book paid tribute to brainstorming).



Figure 5.4.3: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/shizhao/3755850/

One of Sutton's central contentions was that excellence arises from "a range of differences"—precisely what brainstorming aims to generate. To illustrate, Sutton declared that such prodigious geniuses as Shakespeare, Einstein, Mozart, Edison, and Picasso were first and foremost productive. In fact, he argued that these brilliant individuals didn't succeed at a higher rate than anyone else; they just did more.

Mozart, for instance, started composing when he was seven years old and wrote at least 20 pieces of music per year from then until his death at the age of 35. Several of his compositions were routine or even dull, but many were sublime and some are unquestioned masterpieces.

Closer to home, Sutton noted that today's toy business offers examples of the value of starting with lots of ideas and only then selecting quality ones. Skyline, an arm of California's IDEO Corporation, employed just 10 staff members in 1998 but generated 4,000 ideas in that year for new toys.

According to Sutton, those 4,000 ideas boiled down to 230 possibilities worth examining through careful drawings or working prototypes. Of the 230 concepts, 12 were ultimately sold. In other words, the "yield" of saleable products came to only 3/10 of one percent of the original ideas. Sutton quoted Skyline's founder, Brendan Boyle, as saying, "You can't get any good new ideas without having a lot of dumb, lousy, and crazy ones."

The Ostrich and the Sea Urchin

Now let's take a look at what two animals have to do with ideas in general, and with varied ways of being creative about ideas in specific. The two animals are the ostrich and the sea urchin.

The ostrich's reproductive processes lie at one end of a continuum, the sea urchin's at the other. Like the 350-pound mother which lays it, an ostrich egg is large, imposing, and tough. For 42 days after it's laid, it grows until it weighs more than three pounds. It will then reliably crack open and release a baby ostrich. Unless something highly unexpected happens, its mother will tend it well, and that single baby ostrich will in turn grow up and become a mature ostrich.

A sea urchin differs in almost every respect from an ostrich. The whole animal takes up less space and weighs less than an ostrich egg, for one thing. It has no eyes. It hardly moves all its life. To propagate, an urchin spews a cloud of more than a million miniscule eggs into the ocean. The eggs disperse immediately into the tide pools and reef inlets populated by their spiny parents.



Figure 5.4.4: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/jennifurr-jinx/1387200062/

Some of the sea urchin eggs meet sea urchin sperm and combine to form tiny, transparent, free-floating embryos. Eggs remain viable for only 6–8 hours, however, so lots of them die before this happens. Of a one-million-egg cloud, those which are to have a chance of becoming embryos must do so within 48 hours. The odds aren't good.

Then things thin out even more. A Stanford University publication points out that "the young embryo is totally at the mercy of the sea. There are many organisms that will consume the young sea urchin embryo and later the young sea urchin."Brooders vs spawners. www.stanford.edu/group/Urchin/bvss.htm In other words, the overwhelming majority of sea urchin eggs die of loneliness or get eaten.

Biologists call animals like ostriches "brooders" because they create only a few offspring but take care of each one faithfully. Creatures such as sea urchins, which produce vast numbers of candidates for fertilization but don't take care of them and lose most of them to predators, are called "spawners." Brainstorming is clearly a "spawning" process rather than a "brooding" one.

Threats to the Effectiveness of Brainstorming

Although it is meant to generate large quantities of ideas on which to base sound decision-making, brainstorming entails some same challenges. One group of researchers (Stroebe, W., Diehl, M., & Abakoumkin, G. (1992). The illusion of group affectivity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 18* (5): 643–650) identified three potential weakening factors inherent within brainstorming:

1. Blocking. Since only one person at a time in a group can speak, other members may lose the desire to contribute their own ideas or even forget those ideas in the midst of a lively brainstorming session.

2. Social matching. (Brown, V., & Paulus, P. B. (1996). A simple dynamic model of social factors in group brainstorming. *Small Group Research*, *27*, 91–114). People in a group tend to calibrate their own degree of contribution to its activities on the basis of what the other members do. If someone has lots of ideas but sees that the rest of the group is less productive, that person is apt to reduce his or her own creative production.
3. Illusion of group productivity. Group members are apt to rate the level of their output as being higher than it actually is. For one thing, members describe their group as being above average in productivity with respect to other groups. They also overrate their individual contributions; people in one study, for instance, said that they had contributed 36% of their group's ideas when in fact they had offered only 25%. (Paulus, P. B., Dzindolet, M. T., Poletes, G., & Camacho, L. M. (1993). Perception of performance in group brainstorming: The illusion of group productivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64* (4), 575–586).

Key Takeaways

Creativity, which can play a positive role in group decision-making, has been described as a process of combining two disparate elements. It can be stimulated through brainstorming.

Exercise 5.4.1

1. Do you agree with Arthur Koestler that all creativity involves bringing disparate trains of thought together? Provide 2–3 examples that support your answer.
2. Do you consider yourself a "brooder" or a "spawner"? Explain your response to a fellow student, providing examples that support your answer.
3. When was the last time you showed exceptional creativity? What factors in your environment or within you at the time contributed most to that creativity?
4. Think of a neophile and a neophobe whom you've encountered in a group. Describe actions that each person took which illustrate his/her neophilia or neophobia.

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5.5: Facilitating the Task-Oriented Group

Learning Objectives

1. Define “group facilitation”
2. Identify five guidelines for facilitating a task-oriented group
3. Distinguish between collaboration and “coliberation”

Remember the story that Pope John XXIII told about himself. He admitted, “It often happens that I wake at night and begin to think about a serious problem and decide I must tell the Pope about it. Then I wake up completely and remember that I am the Pope.” - Glenn van Ekeren

I’m extraordinarily patient provided I get my own way in the end. - Margaret Thatcher

You’ve probably experienced being part of groups that pleased and motivated you. One reason you experienced those positive feelings may have been that the groups planned and executed their tasks so smoothly that you were hardly aware the processes were taking place. In this section, we’ll examine ways in which leaders can contribute to such pleasant, easy experiences.

Just as “facile” in English and “fácil” in Spanish mean “easy,” the word “facilitate” itself means “to make something easy” and “group facilitation” consists in easing a group’s growth and progress. Most student, community, and business groups are task-oriented, so we’ll consider here how they can most easily be guided toward accomplishing the tasks they set for themselves. Another section of this book deals specifically with the details of leading meetings, so for now we’ll consider broader questions and principles.

If you’re in a position to facilitate a group, you need to take that position seriously. Just as Pope John XXIII realized with respect to his authority and responsibility in the Catholic Church, it’s best to consider yourself the primary source of direction and the ultimate destination for questions in your group. With those concepts in mind, let’s consider five major guidelines you should probably follow in order to facilitate a group whose purposes include achieving tasks.

Know the Group's Members

This means more than just identifying their names and recognizing their faces. If you hope to accomplish anything significant together, you need to be familiar with people’s opinions, their needs, their desires, and their personalities.

Perhaps one member of a group you’re leading is particularly time-conscious, another likes to make jokes, and a third prefers to see concepts represented visually. If you take these propensities into account and respond to them as much as possible, you can draw the best cooperative effort from each of the people.

You may want to keep track of who’s done what favors for whom within the group, too. Like it or not, many people operate at least from time to time on the principle that “I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine.”

Weigh Task and Relationship Considerations

The word “equilibristic” is sometimes applied to the actions of athletes and musicians. It refers to a capability to balance differing and sometimes conflicting forces so as to maintain continuous movement in a chosen direction.

Although almost any group has some work to do, and all groups comprise people whose welfare needs to be tended to, the effective facilitator realizes that it’s impossible to emphasize both those elements to the same degree all the time. If people are disgruntled or frustrated, they can’t contribute well to accomplishing a task. Likewise, if people are always contented with one another and their group but can’t focus on getting things done, the group will be unable to attain its objectives. To facilitate a group well, thus, requires that you be equilibristic.

Understand and Anticipate Prevalent Features of Human Psychology

Keep in mind that everyone in a group will perceive what the facilitator does in light of his or her own circumstances and wishes.

Recall also that everyone possesses diverse and numerous capacities for self-justification and self-support. In their book *Mistakes were made (but not by me)*, Carol Tavris and Ellion Aronson referred to studies of married couples’ behavior. They indicated that

when husbands and wives are asked what proportion of the housework they perform, the totals always exceed 100 percent by a large margin. (Tavris, C., & Aronson, E. (2007). *Mistakes were made (but not by me).* Orlando, FL: Harcourt). Tavris and Aronson also described the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, which presents visitors with interactive exhibits portraying categories of people about whom many of us harbor negative preconceptions—including ethnic and racial minorities, obese individuals, people with disabilities, and so on. A video attempts to persuade visitors that they possess prejudices, after which two doors are offered as an exit. One is marked "Prejudiced" and the other is labeled "Unprejudiced." The second door is locked, to make the point that all of us are indeed subject to prejudice.



Figure 5.5.1: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/jeffsand/1466204908/

Deal Well With Disruptions

The playwright Paddy Chayevsky wrote that "life is problems." An effective group facilitator needs to anticipate and skillfully cope with problems as a part of life, whether they're caused by other people's behavior or by physical and logistical factors.

If you're an adherent of Theory Y, you probably believe that people enjoy pursuing their goals energetically, in groups or individually. You also probably believe that people prefer to select times and places along the way to relax and recharge. Unfortunately, interruptions often arise in such a way as to make both these aims difficult to achieve. Think about all the unexpected academic, family, and work-related reasons why you and other students you know have found it challenging to "stay the course" toward your personal and collective goals.

A group's facilitator, thus, needs to make sure that interruptions and disruptions don't derail it. In fact, he or she might profit from actually celebrating these elements of life, as one Seattle office executive did. According to Dale Turner, the executive's office had a sign on the wall reading "Don't be irritated by interruptions. They are your reason for being." Turner went on to quote the executive as saying "Happily, I have learned how to sit loose in the saddle of life, and I'm not usually disturbed by interruptions. I have made it a habit through the years to leave a stretch factor in my daily schedule. I start early and have tried not to so crowd my day with appointments that I have no time for the unexpected. I have not seen interruptions as an intrusion." (Turner, D. (1991, March 23). Slaves of habit—we lose when there's no room for interruptions in our lives. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from ProQuest Database).

Keep Returning to the Task

You've probably been part of a group in which the leader or facilitator had what might be called a divergent, rather than a convergent, personality. Perhaps that person had lots of good ideas but seemed to jump around from topic to topic and chore to chore so much that your head spun and you couldn't keep track of what was going on. Maybe the person "missed the forest for the trees" because of dwelling excessively on minutia—small and insignificant details. Or perhaps each time you met with the group its facilitator led a discussion of something valuable and important, but every time it was a different thing.

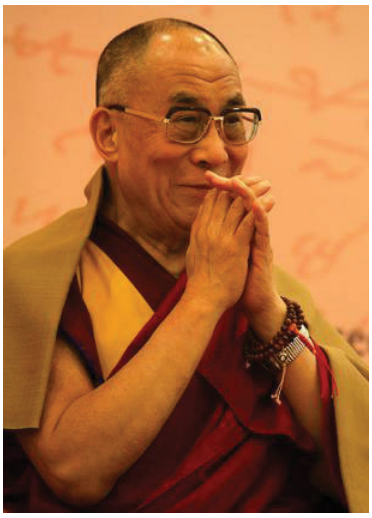


Figure 5.5.2: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/36668473@N05/4133002232/

The organizational theorist Anthony Jay wrote that it's important for leaders to "look for problems through a telescope, not a microscope." (Jay, A. (1967). *Management and Machiavelli: An inquiry into the politics of corporate life.* New York: Bantam Books). He also contended that, as far as a leader is concerned, "other people can cope with the waves, it's [the leader's] job to watch the tide." By these comments, Jay meant that the primary duty of a group facilitator is to maintain an unwavering focus on the group's central tasks, whatever they may be.

The Dalai Lama has written, "Whether you are a spiritual leader or a leader in an organization, it is your job to inspire faith." (His Holiness the Dalai Lama & Muyzenberg, L. (2009). *The leader's way: The art of making the right decisions in our careers, our companies, and the world at large.* New York: Broadway Books). Slogans, mottos, mission statements, quotations, logos, and written objectives can all contribute to a facilitator's ability to inspire faith by maintaining a group's focus and resolve to move in a common direction. Busy students and others in our society often need reminders like these to block out the competing stimuli surrounding them and focus their attention. Such mechanisms, however, should not be merely gimmicks, nor should they be used to promote blind faith in the group's facilitator.

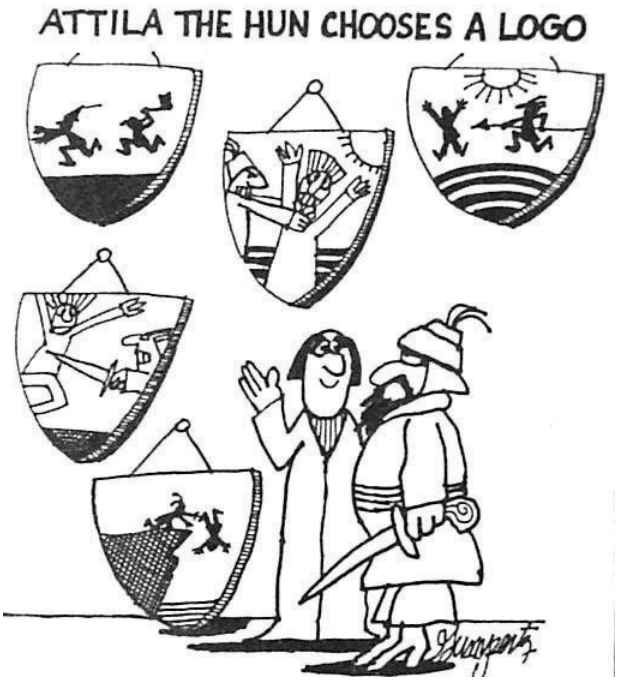


Figure 5.5.3

Another way to think of how a facilitator should keep bringing the group's attention back to its tasks relates to the process of meditation. Practitioners of meditation know that people's minds are naturally active and tend to move readily from subject to subject. When someone is meditating, they say, thoughts will naturally pop into his or her mind. The way to deal with this phenomenon is to regard the thoughts as clouds drifting across the sky. Rather than trying to banish them, the better approach is to allow them to pass by and dissipate, and then to return to serene contemplation. (Rondon, N. (2006, Meditate. *Current Health 2* (32), 20–23. Retrieved from ProQuest Database).

Coliberation

Above all, a facilitator's responsibility is to enable members of a group to function together as easily and happily as possible as they pursue their goals. When this happens, the group will achieve a high level of collaboration. In fact, it may rise beyond collaboration to achieve what the author and computer game designer Bernard DeKoven called "coliberation." In speaking about meetings, he had this to say: "Good meetings aren't just about work. They're about fun—keeping people charged up. It's more than collaboration, it's 'coliberation'—people freeing each other up to think more creatively." (Matson, E. (1996, April-May). The seven sins of deadly meetings. *Fast Company*, 122).

Key Takeaway

To facilitate a task-oriented group requires several skills and behaviors and can lead to a state of "coliberation."

Exercise 5.5.1

1. Recall a time when you were in a group whose leader stressed either its task or relationship factors too much. How did the members of the group react? Did the leader eventually develop an equilibristic approach?
2. Do you agree with the business executive who said that interruptions are "your reason for being"? In your studies and family life, what measures do you take to ensure that interruptions are beneficial rather than destructive? What further steps do you feel you might take in this direction?
3. Think of someone who effectively facilitated a group you were part of. Did the person perform the job identified by the Dalai Lama—inspiring faith in the group? If so, how?
4. What, if anything, do you feel members of most groups need to be "coliberated" from?

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5.6: Summary

In this chapter, we have explored problem-solving in groups. We have identified steps that groups can use to attack and solve problems, as well as several methods of reaching decisions. We have considered the nature of group creativity and reviewed how brainstorming may contribute to creative problem-solving and decision-making. Finally, we have identified methods that can be used to facilitate the problem-solving and decision-making behavior or task-oriented groups. Following systematic, sequential processes can help groups communicate in ways that resolve problems and lead to appropriate decisions.

Review Questions

Interpretive Questions

1. In what 2–3 ways has your view of problem-solving or decision-making changed as a result of reading this chapter?
2. Under what circumstances, or with what kinds of group members, do you feel brainstorming is most likely to produce better results than other methods of generating creative ideas?

Application Questions

1. Call the office of a state senator or representative. Ask the person who answers the phone to provide you with a list of five creative ideas the legislator has put forth to solve problems facing his or her constituency. If you wanted to expand on the list, who else would you consult, and what process would you use to generate more ideas?
2. Pick two historical figures who you believe made it easy for people they lived or worked with to achieve shared goals. Find two or three descriptions of episodes in which those figures took action demonstrating that capacity. Identify someone leading a group of which you're now a member and share the information about the historical figures with that person. What is the person's reaction? What do you feel might have made the leader's response more positive?
3. Look up the phrase "group decision support system" online and locate 4–5 software programs meant to assist groups with decisions. List the advantages and disadvantages of each and share your conclusions with your classmates.

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5.7: Additional Resources

- www.deepfun.com/coliberation/: Bernard “Bernie” De Koven’s blog. A source of provocative ideas on why and how to indulge in creative fun as part of a group.
- bit.ly/PV635method: A YouTube video describing the “6-3-5 method,” which offers an alternative to traditional brainstorming that attempts to draw and expand upon more ideas from a group of six people.
- bit.ly/URuMVG: An article in the *Minnesota Daily* describing how groups of students, faculty members, and community leaders envisioned problems facing higher education and developed pragmatic proposals for solving them.
- www.co-intelligence.org/I-decisionmakingwithout.html (“How to Make a Decision Without Making a Decision”): An article describing how guided “non-decision-making” can be used by groups to discover what the author refers to as “big obvious truths.”
- www.tobe.net/: The website of Dynamic Facilitation Associates, a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching groups how to create choices through intentional facilitation. One of the site’s pages, www.co-intelligence.org/dynamicfacilitationGT.html, describes “Co-Counseling” and compassionate communication as further facilitation tools.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Group Leadership

6.1: Chapter Introduction
6.2: What is Leadership?
6.3: Leadership Theories
6.4: Becoming a Leader
6.5: Teamwork and Leadership
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6.7: Summary
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6.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. Please indicate your favorite superhero, movie star, or inspirational leader that you perceive has qualities worthy of learning from to apply in your own life. What traits or behaviors to they possess or exhibit that inspire you and why? Please share your results with your classmates.
2. Please list five facts, points, or things about you that you would want an audience to know about you as a professional. Post your results and compare with classmates.
3. Leadership Interview

   Name of Student: _____

   Name of Person Interviewed: _____

   What is leadership? Do you think leadership is the same now as in the past, or will change in the future?

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. - Peter Drucker, economist, management guru, author (1909–2005)

A good leader inspires others with confidence; a great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves. - Unknown

Getting Started

Leadership in groups and organization can be an opportunity and a challenge. How we approach it can make all the difference. In this chapter, we explore what leadership is, how we become leaders, the role of teamwork and interdependence in leadership, and finally diverse forms and representations of leadership in action.

Leadership is a complicated and mystery thing. Is it a behavior or set of actions? Is it a talent, that some are born with while others are not? Is it an ability to communicate clearly and effectively with contagious enthusiasm? These are some of the questions we'll address in this chapter but first let's be clear: There is no universal definition of leadership. Across cultures what we consider leadership varies greatly, and yet we know it when we see it. We are not born with it, but our experiences can influence our ability to act when the context demands action.

Communication is learned, not innate, and how we learn to follow, and to lead, is a reflection of that process. We can learn to lead in more effective ways. We can solve new challenges in collaborative ways. We can respond to a crisis with skill and expertise, learned from drill and practice. We can make a difference in the groups in which we participate, as leaders or followers. In this chapter, we explore the many fascinating aspects of leadership.

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6.2: What is Leadership?

Learning Objectives

1. Define and describe leadership

When you hear the word “leadership” what comes to mind? Is it Superman, with amazing abilities to overcome almost all obstacles combined with altruism and his concern for humanity? Is it Lara Croft, the fictional video game character who solves all her own problems and doesn’t need anyone to save her as she is no “damsel in distress?” Is it the action movie hero, alone against all odds, the rises from the ashes victorious? Is it the person who, observing that someone is choking and cannot breathes, performs the Heimlich maneuver, dislodging the obstruction and saving someone’s life? Or finally, is the person who gets up every morning, helps others at their tasks and on their way, who juggles two jobs and more responsibilities than they can count, and still remains accessible, helpful, and caring day after day? You might answer all of the above and to a certain extent you would be correct, but we need to examine these distinct expressions of leadership to learn from each one.

Superman represents the ideal hero for some, with a combination of strength and virtue. Natural born leaders have been discussed, explored, and investigated time and time again across history. It was once thought that a leader was born, not made, but the evidence indicates otherwise. What makes a leader is complicated and not easy to define. Across cultures leadership is considered many things, and requires many different, if not opposing, behaviors. There is no universal standard, trait, or quality that makes a leader, but still people sometimes look to a strong leader to solve their problems. Some cultures have embraced a single person’s leadership without checks or balances, like Stalin or Hitler, only to learn devastating lessons that cost millions of lives. There is no superman.

Therefore, what does make a leader? Is it a combination of talents (that you are born with) and skills (that you learn in life)? Ligon, Hunter, and Mumford (Ligon, G.S., Hunter, S.T. & Mumford, M.D. (2008). Development of outstanding leadership: A life narrative approach. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19* (3) 312–334) explore exceptional leaders in *Development of outstanding leadership: A life narrative approach*. Their goal was to further understanding of how different childhood and young adult experiences may impact leadership, searching for identifiable patterns in predicting different types of leadership. Their conclusion may surprise you: what makes a leader across contexts are individuals who, in the presence of a crisis or challenge, can formulate and implement a plan of action. Leadership, therefore, is the ability to effectively formulate and implement a plan of action based on the context. The person who calls 911 when someone appears to have a heart attack has observed and assessed the situation, and creates a rational plan to address the current crisis. What might be normally considered a simple phone call, in this context, becomes of paramount importance. The ability to provide a location or street address, or describe observations, or even perform CPR while emergency services are in route are all examples of leadership in action. Even if the person doesn’t know CPR, the act of asking people in the area if anyone knows CPR and can help is matching needs to skill sets, an important aspect of leadership. Leadership can be demonstrated in your own life or can involve teams and groups.

There is no universal definition of leadership. Across cultures what we consider leadership varies greatly, and yet we know it when we see it. We are not born with it, but our experiences can influence our ability to act when the context demands action. To state that leadership is a mystery is an understatement. We cannot define it, and yet we can recognize it. So we start to use terms to describe what we observe and arrive at a definition, and then try to explain it, predict it, and develop it.

Throughout history, many people have speculated about leadership and its nature. Howe, (Howe, W. (1996). Leadership vistas: From the constraints of the behavioral sciences to emancipation through the humanities. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 3*(2), 32–69) for example, proposes the field of leadership is too narrowly viewed and challenges to be open to leadership in its many forms. This complexity makes it difficult for researchers, authors, or philosophers to arrive at a common definition of leadership. The behavioral sciences have been the home of many of these investigations, but as the field grows, leadership itself is increasingly considered a cross-disciplinary concept.

The study of leadership began with the focus on control and hierarchy, (House, R. J., & Aditya, R. N. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo vadis? *Journal of Management, 23* (3), 409–4 73) but that is changing. For example, Mendenhall, Osland, Bird, Oddou, and Maxneyski, (Mendenhall, M., Osland, J., Bird, A., Oddou, G., & Mazneyski, M. (2008). *Global leadership: Research, practice, and development*. New York: NY: Routledge) explored global leadership and attempted to define a universal

leader. They observed a shift from hierarchal leadership (the boss tells you what to do and how to do it) to a more participatory leadership (the boss discusses the task with the team as they formulate a plan). The ancient view of global leadership was one of domination, commanding followers, and clear demonstrations of the power of a leader. This reflected a more of authoritarian style than a participative style of leadership that we observe today. According to Rajah, Song and Arvey, (Rajah, R., Song, Z. & Arvey, R., A., (2011). Emotionality and leadership: Taking stock of the past decade of research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 22, 1107–1119) there a current shift from the perceptive of a leaders' controlling perspective to one of the followers' participatory perspective. Across fields, leadership is increasing perceived as a dynamic relationship involving leader-follower behaviors. Today, issues such as diversity, gender, culture, and ethics are increasingly considered relevant, even critical, elements of leadership. Day and Antonakis, (Day, D., & Antonakis, J. (2012) *The nature of leadership: Second edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.) suggest a new paradigm where leadership is, in fact, just starting to be understood as a hybrid approach that combines insights, frameworks, strategies, and approaches across disciplines.

As globalization increases and our interconnected world becomes smaller, there is a growing appreciation for the role of an effective leader in terms of vision, success, and overall organization effectiveness. Leaders are required to possess increasingly complex skill sets and are expected to effectively communicate with individuals, groups and teams, and within and between organizations. This gives rise to the central question: how best to prepare or develop effective leaders? Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber (Avolio, B., Walumbwa, F., & Weber, T. (2009) Leadership: Current Theories, Research, Future Direction Annual Review of Psychology 60 (2009), pp. 421–449; doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.16362) provide a developmental approach, conceptualizing authentic leadership as a pattern of leadership behavior that develops from a combination of positive psychological qualities and strong ethics. Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, (Avolio, B., Walumbwa, F., & Weber, T. (2009) Leadership: Current Theories, Research, Future Direction Annual Review of Psychology 60 (2009), pp. 421–449; doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.16362) also suggest that leadership is composed of four distinct but related components; self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

We can observe that leadership has been investigated, and that it has many factors, but we are still challenged to fully answer our central question: what is leadership? We'll conclude with a term from the US Navy: deckplate leadership. Get out of the office and get on the deckplates. It means that, in order to get the job done an effective leader has to be on the deck of the ship, interacting and learning what are the challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities present, emphasizing both task orientation with relationship. That takes initiative, self-motivation, skills, and talent, all elements of effective leadership. You, as a student, are taking charge of your education. As we proceed in our exploration of leadership remember to get up, get out, and see the many examples of leadership all around you.

Key Takeaway

Leadership traits, situational leadership, functional leadership, and transformative leadership comprise four key approaches to leadership theory.

Exercise 6.2.1

1. What has been your experience to date as a leader? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Describe a leader that you know or have known in the past that you perceived as skilled or effective. How did they act and what did they do that was inspirational? Write a 2–3 paragraph discussion of your experience and share it with a classmate.
3. Think of a leader you were challenged to follow or perceived as ineffective. What did they do or say that was ineffective? How would you characterize this leader's style (use descriptive terms) and why? Please share your observations with your classmates.

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6.3: Leadership Theories

Learning Objectives

1. Define and describe traits, situational, context-based, and transformative leadership theories

There are many perspectives on leadership, but they generally fall into four main categories: leadership traits, situational or context-based leadership, functional leadership, and transformational leadership. Let's examine each in turn.

The first approach we'll consider is the oldest of all: universal leadership traits, or the view that there are inherent traits, that may be part of a person from birth as in talents, or acquired skills that express those in-born traits, that are somehow universal or constant across contexts and cultures. It is a significant challenge to even begin to consider the many contexts where leadership might be displayed, and so instead of focusing on the context, in this view, we focus on the individual and his or her traits. Some studies, (Bass, B. (1981). Traits of Leadership: A follow-up to 1970. In R.M. Stogdill (ed.), *Handbook of Leadership*. New York: Free Press, pp. 73–96.' Baker, D. (1990). A qualitative and quantitative analysis of verbal style and the elimination of potential leaders in small groups. *Small Group Research*, 38, pp. 13–26) have indicated that people in leadership possess the following ten traits as shown in Table 6.3.1.

Table 6.3.1 Universal Leadership Traits

Number	Trait	Explanation	Example
1	Achievement Orientation	A clear focus on achievement	She consistently makes time in her busy schedule for her school work. She is focused on completing her degree.
2	Adaptability	The ability to adapt to the context, including constraints or resources, to be successful	She understands the challenges of running a household and raising children on a budget, and still makes her studies a priority.
3	Energy	The ability to devote time, concentration, and effort to a challenge	Even though she is tired in the evening she makes time, after the children have gone to bed, to complete her studies each night.
4	Intelligence	The ability to perceive, understand, formulate a response to, and implement a plan of action to solve a challenge	There are never enough hours in the day, but she understands the challenges, sets priorities, and consistently gets the job done.
5	Innovation	The ability to perceive alternate plans of action to achieve similar or improved results	She understands the challenge and finds a faster, more efficient way to get the job done.
6	Persistence	The ability to persevere, or to stick with a challenge until it is solved.	She consistently completes her work on time, has completed all of her classes to date successfully, and is on track to graduate as planned.
7	Responsibility	The ability to respond and the awareness of duty, obligation, or commitment to solve a challenge	She knows she has the ability to respond to the many challenges, recognizes the importance of a university degree to herself and her children, and completed her obligations.
8	Self-confidence	The confidence in one's ability to solve a challenge	She knows she can do it.
9	Sociability	The ability to interact with others effectively	She can work in groups effectively, even with challenging members.
10	Verbal Communication Ability	The ability to articulate effectively, or express one's thoughts, ideas, or opinions in ways that others can understand them with minimal or no miscommunication	She can express herself effectively. People understand her when she speaks.

As we review these terms we can observe many of them in ourselves and others in daily life. Are leaders those who possess all ten traits? Are these ten traits the only traits that represent leadership? No on both counts. Leaders may possess or exhibit some or all of these traits, but not all the time in every context. In addition, what we consider leadership in one context might be considered insubordination in another. Cultures vary as to their expectations for leaders and what traits they must possess, and we learn culture from each other. We are not born with it. We learn to communicate from and with each other. We are not built with an innate ability to communicate and our surroundings, including those who model behaviors for us, influence how we communicate with ourselves and others. If we are raised in a community where people take responsibility for their challenges and work together to solve them, we are more likely to model that behavior. If we are raised in a community that looks to an institution or an individual to solve problems for them, we are more likely to expect our problems to be solved for us. Since we can see that our environment influences our communication, our culture, and these traits, let's examine alternatives as we continue to explore the concept of leadership.

Our second approach to leadership shifts the focus or attention from the individual to the context, or situation. As we discussed previously, this makes for a significant challenge. How can we assess the myriad of situation factors at any given moment in time? In reality, we cannot, but we can make the concerted effort to limit the factors we consider and explore the influence of context on our behaviors, including those associated with leadership within a specific cultural framework.

Situational leadership, or leadership in context, means that leadership itself depends on the situation at hand. In sharp contrast to the "natural born leader," "universal leadership traits" model of leadership we previously discussed, this viewpoint is relativist. Leadership is relative or varies, based on the context. There is no one "universal trait" to which we can point or principle to which we can observe in action. There is no style of leadership that is more or less effective than another unless we consider the context. Then our challenge presents itself: how to match the most effective leadership strategy with the current context?

In order to match leadership strategies and context we first need to discuss the range of strategies as well as the range of contexts. While the strategies list may not be as long as we might imagine, the context list could go on forever. If we were able to accurately describe each context, and discuss each factor, we would quickly find the task led to more questions, more information, and the complexity would increase, making an accurate description or discussion impossible. Instead, we can focus our efforts on factors that each context contains and look for patterns, or common trends, that help us make generalizations about our observations.

For example, an emergency situation may require a leader to be direct, giving specific order to each person. Since each second counts the quick thinking and actions at the direction of a leader may be the most effective strategy. To stop and discuss, vote, or check everyone's feelings on the current emergency situation may waste valuable time. That same approach applied to common governance or law-making may indicate a dictator is in charge, and that individuals and their vote are of no consequence. Instead an effective leader in a democratic process may ask questions, gather viewpoints, and seek common ground as lawmakers craft a law that applies to everyone equally.

Hersey and Blanchard, (Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1977). *Management of Organizational Behavior 3rd Edition—Utilizing Human Resources*. New Jersey/Prentice Hall) take the situational framework and apply to an organizational perspective that reflects our emphasis on group communication. They assert that, in order to be an effective manager, one needs to change their leadership style based on the context, including the maturity of the people they are leading and the task details. Hersey and Blanchard (Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1977). *Management of Organizational Behavior 3rd Edition—Utilizing Human Resources*. New Jersey/Prentice Hall) focus on two key issues: tasks and relationships, and present the idea that we can to a greater or lesser degree focus on one or the other to achieve effective leadership in a given context. They offer four distinct leadership styles or strategies (abbreviated with an "S"):

1. Telling (S1). Leaders tell people what to do and how to do it.
2. Selling (S2). Leaders provide direction, information, and guidance, but sell their message to gain compliance among group members.
3. Participating (S3). Leaders focus on the relationships with group members and shares decision-making responsibilities with them.
4. Delegating (S4). Leaders focus on relationships, rely on professional expertise or group member skills, and monitor progress. They allow group members to more directly responsible for individual decisions but may still participate in the process.

Telling and selling strategies are all about getting the task done. Participating and delegating styles are about developing relationships and empowering group members to get the job done. Each style or approach is best suited, according to Hersey and

Blanchard, (Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1977). *Management of Organizational Behavior 3rd Edition—Utilizing Human Resources*. New Jersey/Prentice Hall) to a specific context. Again, assessing a context can be a challenging task but they indicate the focus should be on the maturity of the group members. It is the responsibility of the leader to assess the group members and the degree to which they possess the maturity to work independently or together effective, including whether they have the right combination of skills and abilities that the task requires. Once again, they offer us four distinct levels (abbreviated with "M" for maturity):

1. M1, or level one. This is the most basic level where group members lack the skills, prior knowledge, skills, or self-confidence to accomplish the task effectively. They need specific directions, and systems of rewards and punishment (for failure) may be featured. They will need external motivation from the leader to accomplish the task.
2. M2, or level two. At this level the group members may possess the motivation, or the skills and abilities, but not both. They may need specific, additional instructions or may require external motivation to accomplish the task.
3. M3, or level three. In this level we can observe group members who are ready to accomplish the task, are willing to participate, but may lack confidence or direct experience, requiring external reinforcement and some supervision.
4. M4, or level four. Finally, we can observe group members that are ready, prepared, willing, and confident in their ability to solve the challenge or complete the task. They require little supervision.

Now it is our task to match the style or leadership strategy to the maturity level of the group members as shown in Table 6.3.2.

Table 6.3.2 Situational Leadership: Leadership Style and Maturity Level

Number	Leadership Style (S)	Maturity Level (M)
1	S1	M1
2	S2	M2
3	S3	M3
4	S4	M4

This is one approach to situational leadership that applies to our exploration of group communication, but it doesn't represent all approaches. What other factors might you consider other than style and maturity? How might we assess diversity, for example, in this approach? We might have a skilled professional who speaks English as their second language, and who comes from a culture where constant supervision is viewed as controlling or domineering, and if a leader takes a S1 approach to provide leadership, we can anticipate miscommunication and even frustration. There is no "One Size Fits All" leadership approach that works for every context, but the situational leadership viewpoint reminds us of the importance of being in the moment and assessing our surroundings, including our group members and their relative strengths and areas of emerging skill. The effective group communicator recognizes the Hersey-Blanchard, (Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1977). *Management of Organizational Behavior 3rd Edition—Utilizing Human Resources*. New Jersey/Prentice Hall) approach provides insight and possible solutions to consider, but also keeps the complexity of the context in mind when considering a course of action.

Our third approach to consider is called functional leadership, or leadership that focused on behaviors that address needs and help the group achieve its goals. (Hackman, J. R., & Walton, R. E. (1986). Leading groups in organizations. In P. S. Goodman (Ed.), Designing effective work groups (pp. 72–119). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.' McGrath, J. E. (1962). Leadership behavior: Some requirements for leadership training. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Civil Service Commission.' Adair, J. (1988). Effective Leadership. London. Pan Books.' Kouzes, J. M. and Posner, B. Z. (2002). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass). The leader needs to assess needs, including task, team, and individual group member needs. Balance and performance are emphasized, and the time the leader spends on a specific approach varies based on their assessment of the area of need. The highest priority is completion of the task in this approach, but it is balanced against team and individual group member needs. Each activity or approach targets each area of need, and the leader focuses on it emphasize the area, alternating their time on any given activity based on the existing needs.

Table 6.3.3 Functional Leadership

Number	Task Need	Team Need	Individual Need
1	Assessing the situation	Training	Training and Coaching
2	Understanding the task	Building team spirit	Recognizing individual skills and abilities; leveraging them on the task
3	Preparing the plan to address the task	Focus on the mission; sense of purpose	Focus on the mission; sense of purpose
4	Implementing the plan addressing the task	Motivation, praise, and rewards	Motivation, praise, and rewards
5	Allocating time and resources to the task	Focus on the tempo or pace of performance	Fostering interdependence while respecting individual performance, including roles and tasks
6	Re-evaluating the plan and making adjustments	Status recognition or performance acknowledgement	Status recognition or performance acknowledgement
7	Understanding Quality Standards	Discipline, including sanctions and punishment	Attending to personal problems
8	Quality control	Quality Control	Individual output
9	Evaluating outcomes	Redirection, review of the action plan	Individual role and task review
10	Sharing the outcomes (Communication)	Facilitating group interactions (Communication)	Individual interaction (Communication)

As we can see in Table 6.3.3, the functional leader focuses on the short and long term needs of the group. If the group is lost, perhaps time invested in re-evaluating the plan and making adjustments, meeting a task and a team need at the same time, might prove effective. If an individual group member is struggling, perhaps supportive coaching and even additional training might yield results. Based on the leader's assessment of the needs, they will select the appropriate action and maintain a priority order. They will also be constantly attuned to change, ready to adapt and meet the ever-changing needs of the task, team, or individual.

Our final approach to consider, called transformational leadership, emphasizes the vision, mission, motivations, and goals of a group or team and motivates them to accomplish the task or achieve the result. This model of leadership asserts that people will follow a person who inspires them, who clearly communicates their vision with passion, and helps get things done with energy and enthusiasm.

James MacGregor Burns, a presidential biographer, first introduced the concept, discussing the dynamic relationship between the leader and the followers, as they together motivate and advance towards the goal or objective. (Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row). Bernard Bass, (Bass, B. (1985). *Leadership and Performance*. New York: Free Press) contributed to his theory, suggesting there are four key components of transformation leadership, as shown in Table 6.3.4.

Table 6.3.4 Four Key Components of Transformational Leadership

Number	Component of Transformational Leadership	Explanation
1	Intellectual Stimulation	Transformational leaders encourage creativity and ingenuity, challenging the status quo and encouraging followers to explore new approaches and opportunities.
2	Individualized Consideration	Transformational Leaders recognize and celebrate each follower's unique contributions to the group.
3	Inspirational Motivation	Transformational Leaders communicate a clear vision, helping followers understand the individual steps necessary to accomplish the task or objective while sharing in the anticipation of completion.
4	Idealized Influence	Transformational Leaders serve as role models, demonstrating expertise, skills, and talent that others seek to emulate, inspiring positive actions while reinforcing trust and respect.

The leader conveys the group's goals and aspirations, displays passion for the challenge that lies ahead, and demonstrates a contagious enthusiasm that motivates group members to succeed. This approach focuses on the positive changes that need to occur in order for the group to be successful, and requires the leader to be energetic and involved with the process, even helping individual members complete their respective roles or tasks.

In this section, we have discussed leadership traits, situational leadership, functional leadership, and finally transformative leadership theories. We can recognize that there are no universal traits associated with leadership, but there are traits that are associated with it that we develop across time through our experiences. We can also recognize that the context or situation makes a significant impact on leadership, and matching the situation to the leadership approach requires skill and expertise. Every challenge is unique in some way, and the effective leader can recognize that aligning their actions and support with the needs of the group makes sense. The functional perspective requires a leader to assess task needs, group needs, and individual needs, and then devote time, energy, and resources to them in priority order. Finally, a transformative leadership approach involves an articulate leader with a clear vision that is shared with energy and enthusiasm with followers, encouraging them to embrace the steps required as well as the end goal, objective, or mission result. Each approach offers us a viewpoint to consider as we approach leadership in teams, and all serve as important insights into how to better lead an effective group.

Key Takeaway

Leadership traits, situational leadership, functional leadership, and transformative leadership comprise four key approaches to leadership theory.

Exercise 6.3.1

1. Do you think natural leaders exist? Why or why not? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Describe a transformative leader that you know or have known in the past. How did they act and what did they do that was inspirational? Write a 2–3 paragraph discussion of your experience and share it with a classmate.
3. Think of a leader you admire and respect. Which approach do they best represent (traits, situational, functional, or transformative) and why? How would you characterize this leader's style and why? Please share your observations with your classmates.

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6.4: Becoming a Leader

Learning Objectives

1. Describe three ways group members become leaders

Whether or not there is a “natural leader,” born with a combination of talents and traits that enable a person to lead others, has been a subject of debate across time. In a modern context, we have come to recognize that leadership comes in many form and representations. Once it was thought that someone with presence of mind, innate intelligence, and an engaging personality was destined for leadership, but modern research and experience shows us otherwise. Just as a successful heart surgeon has a series of skill sets, so does a dynamic leader. A television producer must both direct and provide space for talent to create, balancing control with confidence and trust. This awareness of various leadership styles serves our discussion as groups and teams often have leaders, and they may not always be the person who holds the title, status, or role.

Leaders take on the role because they are appointed, elected, or emerge into the role. The group members play an important role in this process. An appointed leader is designated by an authority to serve in that capacity, irrespective of the thoughts or wishes of the group. They may serve as the leader and accomplish all the designated tasks, but if the group does not accept their role as leader, it can prove to be a challenge. As Tuckman (Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, *63*, 384–399) notes, “storming” occurs as group members come to know each other and communicate more freely, and an appointed leader who lacks the endorsement of the group may experience challenges to his or her authority.

A democratic leader is elected or chosen by the group, but may also face serious challenges. If individual group members or constituent groups feel neglected or ignored, they may assert that the democratic leader does not represent their interests. The democratic leader involves the group in the decision-making process, and insures group ownership of the resulting decisions and actions as a result. Open and free discussions are representative of this process, and the democratic leader acknowledges this diversity of opinion.

An emergent leader contrasts the first two paths to the role by growing into the role, often out of necessity. The appointed leader may know little about the topic or content, and group members will naturally look to the senior member with the most experience for leadership. If the democratic leader fails to bring the group together, or does not represent the whole group, subgroups may form, each with an informal leader serving as spokesperson.

So if we take for granted that you have been elected, appointed, or emerged as a leader in a group or team you may be interested in learning a bit about how to lead. While we’ve discussed several theories on what makes a leader, and even examined several common approaches, we still need to answer the all-important question: how does one become an effective leader? There is no easy answer, but we will also take for granted that you recognize that a title, a badge, or a corner office does not make one an effective leader. Just because the boss says you are the leader of your work group doesn’t mean those members of the workgroup regard you as a leader, look to you to solve problems, or rely on you to inform, persuade, motivate, or promote group success.

“Research on leadership indicates that 50–75% of organizations are currently managed by people sorely lacking in leadership competence". (Hogan, R. (2003). *Leadership in Organizations*. Paper presented at The Second International Positive Psychology Summit, Washington, D.C. October 2–5). They are hired or promoted based on technical competence, business knowledge and politics—not on leadership skill. Such managers often manage by crisis, are poor communicators, are insensitive to moral issues, are mistrustful, over-controlling and micro-managing, fail to follow through on commitments they’ve made and are easily excitable and explosive. The result is low morale, alienated employees, and costly attrition. (Ostrow, E. (2008). *20 ways to become an effective leader*. Retrieved on September 9, 2012, at: www.emergingleader.com/article31.shtml).

Deckplate leadership is a US Navy approach to leadership that is applied and practical, and effectively serves our discussion. It means you need to get out of the office and get on the deckplates, the deck of the ship, or where the action is occurring. If you are in manufacturing it might be on the assembly line floor. If you are in sales, it might mean out where sales actually occur. Deckplate leadership means that, in order to get the job done an effective leader has to be on the deck of the ship, interacting and learning what are the challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities present, emphasizing both task orientation with relationship. Jeff Wuorio, (Wuorio, J. (2011). 8 tips for becoming a true leader. Microsoft Business for Small and Midsize Companies. Retrieved on September 9, 2012, from: www.microsoft.com/business/en-us/resources/management/leadership-training/8-tips-for-becoming-a-

true-leader.aspx?fbid=L-7CgraXG7d of Microsoft Business for Small and Midsize Companies), offers an excellent list of suggestions, attributes, on how to become an effective leader that we've adapted in Table 6.4.1.

Table 6.4.1 How to Become an Effective Leader

Number	Attributes	Explanation
1	Real leadership means leading yourself	This is where it all starts. People respect you when you respect yourself, and one way to address this attribute is to meet your personal goals. Get up early, learn the skills and procedures, and be the meaningful, contributing member of a team or group. People will naturally look to you for solutions when your self-discipline combined with your skills allows them to accomplish their tasks or goals.
2	No dictators allowed.	Sitting on a throne will not improve your leadership skills, gain you new, useful information, or develop you as a leader. Get on the deckplate, the assembly line floor, our out with the customer service representative to learn what is happening right now and be a resource for team members to solve problems.
3	Be open to new ways of doing things.	One size does not fit all. What motivates one team member may not motivate the rest. You will need to be open to new approaches to achieve similar, or improved, results. The status quo, or the way we have always done it, is not an effective approach to produce improvements. While we may want to stick with what works, we have to keep in mind that as conditions and contexts change, those who adapt, thrive. Those who do not adapt become obsolete.
4	Value diversity	Diversity in its many forms means more than race, gender, or even class distinctions. It means diverse perspectives that bring unique and often promising approaches to a challenge. Take advantage of this important aspect of teams and groups to produce outstanding results for everyone.
5	Establish and display a genuine sense of commitment.	To be an effective leader you need to be committed to the mission, vision, or goal, and you need to display it clearly, communicating contagious enthusiasm and energy to team or group members. Slogans and programs that lack commitment will only be seen as meaningless, empty words. Bring the vision to life in action and deed.
6	Be results-oriented	Stephen Covey (1989)Covey, Stephen R. (1989) "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People." New York: Fireside promotes the approach of “begin with the end in mind”

Number	Attributes	Explanation
		and here it clearly applies. We need to achieve results, and celebrate incremental steps towards the goal, in order to achieve it. As a leader, you have to be results-oriented in today's world, and be engaged with the process to observe, and highlight, incremental gains.
7	Demonstrate genuine appreciation	A slap on the back or a handshake can be meaningful, but it is often not enough to celebrate success or motivate team members. Know your team well enough to know how each member prefers recognition and communicate it with respect. Your genuine efforts to acknowledge incremental progress will help your group members stay engaged, and help address fatigue or attrition.
8	Remember that leaders learn	Once you have it all figured out, it is time to recognize that you've lost your way. Contexts and conditions are constantly changing, and as in any dynamic system, so are we. If you are not renewing as a leader, learning new skills that can make a positive difference, then you become stale, detached, and obsolete. Change is an ever-present part of group dynamics.
9	An effective leader has, and shares, a plan	A plan of action, clearly communicated and embraced by team members, can make all the difference. Being proactive means the leader needs to identify potential problems before they happen and providing solutions before they escalate into a crisis. Being reactive means addressing the challenge after it is already an issue, hardly an effective plan. While the ability to respond to an emergency is key, the effective leader anticipates challenges, and shares that awareness and understanding with team members.
10	Leaders know roles and responsibilities, and share them with the team	An effective leader knows team members, their roles and responsibilities, and shares them with the group, promoting interdependence and peer recognition while remaining alert to the need for individual coaching, training, or reinforcement.

As we consider these attributes we can see the importance of communication throughout each one. The effective leader is engaged, practices active listening, and is open to learn as well as to instruct, coach, or cheer.

Developing Virtual Leadership

In order to be most effective, groups or teams need a sense of community. A community can be defined as a physical or virtual space where people seeking interaction and shared interest come together to pursue their mutual goals, objectives, and shared values. (Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in Cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers). For our purposes, the setting or space can be anywhere, at any time, but includes group or team members and, as you might have guessed, a leader. The need for clear expectations is key to the effective community, and it is never more true than in an online environment where asynchronous communication is the norm and physical interaction is limited or non-existent. Increasingly we manage teams from a distance, outsource services to professionals across the country, and interact across video and voice chats on a daily basis. The effective leader understands this and leverages the tools and technology to maximize group and team performance.

Through interaction in groups and teams, we meet many of our basic human needs, including the need to feel included, and the need for love and appreciation. (Shutz, W. (1966). *The Interpersonal Underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, pp. 13–20). From the opening post, welcome letter, or virtual meeting, the need to perceive acknowledgment and belonging is present, and the degree to which we can reinforce these messages will contribute to higher levels of interaction, better engagement across the project, retention throughout the mission, and successful completion of the goal or task. Online communities can have a positive effect by reducing the group member's feeling of isolation through extending leader-to-team member and team member-to-team member interaction. Fostering and developing a positive group sense of community is a challenge, but the effective leader recognizes it as an important, if not critical, element of success.

Given the diversity of our teams and groups, there are many ways to design and implement task-oriented communities. Across this diversity, communication and the importance of positive interactions in each group is common ground. The following are five "best practices" for developing an effective online community as part of a support and interaction system for your team or group:

1. Clear expectations—The plan is the central guiding document for your project. It outlines the project information, expectations, deadlines, and often how communication will occur in the group. Much like a syllabus guides a course, a plan of action, from a business plan to a marketing plan, can serve as an important map for group or team members. With key benchmarks, quality standards, and proactive words of caution on anticipated challenges, the plan of action can be an important resource that contributes to team success.
2. Effective organization—Organization may first bring to mind the tasks, roles, and job assignments and their respective directions but consider: Where do we interact? What are the resources available? When do we collaborate? All these questions should be clearly spelled out to help team members know when and where to communicate.
3. Prompt and meaningful responses—Effective leaders are prompt. They understand that when Germans are waking up, the Chinese are tucking their children into bed. They know when people will be available and juggle time zones and contact information with ease. Same-day responses to team members are often the norm, and if you anticipate longer periods of time before responding, consider a brief email or text to that effect. The online community is fragile and requires a leader to help facilitate effective communication.
4. A positive tone in interaction and feedback—Constructive criticism will no doubt be a part of your communication with team members, but by demonstrating respect, offering praise as well as criticism, and by communicating in a positive tone, you'll be contributing to a positive community. One simple rule of thumb is to offer two comments of praise for every one of criticism. Of course, you may adapt your message for your own needs, but as we've discussed previously, trust is the foundation of the relationship and the student needs to perceive you are supportive of their success.

How Do I Build an Effective Online Team?

In order for people to perceive a sense of community or feel like they belong to a team, they need group socialization. Group socialization is the development of interpersonal relationships within a group context. Group success is built on the foundation of the relationships that form as a part of group development. You can emphasize activities and environments that create a supportive group climate, paying attention to relationship messages as well as content messages. Palloff and Pratt, (Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in Cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers) recommend seven steps for building a successful team.

- Clearly define the purpose of the community

- Create a clear, distinct place for the group to gather
- Promote effective leadership from within the community
- Define norms and a clear code of conduct
- Allow for a range of member roles
- Allow for leadership and facilitating of subgroups
- Allow members to resolve their own disputes, while adhering to class established norms

Palloff and Pratt, (Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in Cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers) caution that it is possible to develop a community that has strong social connections between the team members but where very little performance actually takes place. Here is where the leader plays a central role. The leader needs to be visibly present and actively engaged in the process, encouraging learners focus their energies on the social aspect to the detriment of the learning goals of the project and the community. Palloff and Pratt, (Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in Cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers) suggest:

- Engaging team members with subject matter and related resources
- Visibly accounting for attendance and participation
- Working individually with team members who are struggling
- Understanding the signs that indicate that a team member is in trouble
- Building online communities that accommodate personal interaction

Palloff and Pratt, *Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in Cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers) further indicate that a leader can tell if the community is working when the following emerge:

- Active interaction
- Sharing of resources among team members rather than team member to leader
- Collaborative learning evidenced by comments directed primarily team member to team member
- Socially constructed meaning evidenced by agreement or questioning with the intent to achieve agreement on issues of meaning in order to achieve group goals or results
- Expression of support and encouragement exchanged between team members as well as willingness to critically evaluate the work of others

It is not easy to create and manage a team online, but recognizing a sense of community as well as the signs of positive interaction and productivity will help contribute to team success.

In this section, we discussed how to become a leader, from the election process, appointment, or emergence, and ways to develop our leadership skills. We discussed how leadership starts with the self, and self-discipline, and that group or team members will naturally turn to leader that can solve not only their own problems, but contribute to group member's success. When team members see that a leader can help them get their job done right the first time, it only makes sense that they will be more likely to turn to them time and time again. Leadership is a dynamic process, and change is a constant. Developing yourself as a leader requires time and effort, and recognizing that team members want a sense of community, appreciate a proactive plan, and sometimes need reinforcement or recognition, can go a longs ways towards your goal.

Key Takeaway

Group members become leaders when they are elected to the role, they emerge into the role, or through appointment.

Exercise 6.4.1

1. Do you prefer electing a leader or observing who emerges? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each process of becoming a leader? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Describe an appointed leader that you know or have known in the past. How did they manage their new role? Were they well-received (why or why not)? Write a 2–3 paragraph discussion of your experience with an appointed leader and share it with a classmate.

3. Think of a leader you admire and respect. How did this individual become a leader—for example, by appointment, democratic selection, or emergence? How would you characterize this leader's style—is the leader autocratic or laissez-faire; a technician or a coach?

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6.5: Teamwork and Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Define teamwork and explain how to overcome various challenges to group success
2. Describe the process of leader development
3. Describe several different leadership styles and their likely influence on followers

Two important aspects of group communication, especially in the business environment, are teamwork and leadership. You will work in a team and at some point may be called on to lead. You may emerge to that role as the group recognizes your specific skill set in relation to the task, or you may be appointed to a position of responsibility for yourself and others. Your communication skills will be your foundation for success as a member, and as a leader. Listen and seek to understand both the task and your group members as you become involved with the new effort. Have confidence in yourself and inspire the trust of others. Know that leading and following are both integral aspects of effective teamwork.

Teamwork

Teamwork is a compound word, combining team and work. Teams are a form of group normally dedicated to production or problem-solving. That leaves us with the work. This is where our previous example of problem-solving can serve us well. Each member of the team has skills, talents, experience, and education. Each is expected to contribute. Work is the activity, and while it may be fun or engaging, it also requires effort and commitment, as there is a schedule for production with individual and group responsibilities. Each member must fulfill his or her own obligations for the team to succeed, and the team, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest member. In this context, we don't measure strength or weakness at the gym, but in terms of productivity.

Teams can often achieve higher levels of performance than individuals because of the combined energies and talents of the members. Collaboration can produce motivation and creativity that may not be present in single-contractor projects. Individuals also have a sense of belonging to the group, and the range of views and diversity can energize the process, helping address creative blocks and stalemates. By involving members of the team in decision-making, and calling upon each member's area of contribution, teams can produce positive results.

Teamwork is not without its challenges. The work itself may prove a challenge as members juggle competing assignments and personal commitments. The work may also be compromised if team members are expected to conform, and pressured to go along with a procedure, plan, or product that they themselves have not developed. Groupthink, or the tendency to accept the group's ideas and actions in spite of individual concerns, can also compromise the process and reduce efficiency. Personalities and competition can play a role in a team's failure to produce.

We can recognize that people want to belong to a successful team, and celebrating incremental gain can focus the attention on the project and its goals. Members will be more willing to express thoughts and opinions, and follow through with actions, when they perceive that they are an important part of the team. By failing to include all of the team members, valuable insights may be lost in the rush to judgment or production. Making time for planning, and giving each member time to study, reflect, and contribute can allow them to gain valuable insights from each other, and may make them more likely to contribute information that challenges the status quo. Unconventional or "devil's advocate" thinking may prove insightful and serve to challenge the process in a positive way, improving the production of the team. Respect for divergent views can encourage open discussion.

Thill and Bovee, (Thill, J. V., & Bovee, C. L. (2002). *Essentials of business communication*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall) provide a valuable list to consider when setting up a team, which we have adapted here for our discussion:

- Select team members wisely
- Select a responsible leader
- Promote cooperation
- Clarify goals
- Elicit commitment
- Clarify responsibilities
- Instill prompt action

- Apply technology
- Ensure technological compatibility
- Provide prompt feedback

Group dynamics involve the interactions and processes of a team, and influence the degree to which members feel a part of the goal and mission. A team with a strong identity can prove to be a powerful force, but requires time and commitment. A team that exerts too much control over individual members can run the risk or reducing creative interactions and encourage tunnel vision. A team that exerts too little control, with attention to process and areas of specific responsibility, may not be productive. The balance between motivation and encouragement, and control and influence, is challenging as team members represent diverse viewpoints and approaches to the problem. A skilled business communicator creates a positive team by first selecting members based on their areas of skill and expertise, but attention to their style of communication is also warranted. Individuals that typically work alone, or tend to be introverted, may need additional encouragement to participate. Extroverts may need to be encouraged to listen to others and not dominate the conversation. Teamwork involves teams and work, and group dynamics play an integral role in their function and production.

Types of Leaders

We can see types of leaders in action and draw on common experience for examples. The heart surgeon does not involve everyone democratically, is typically appointed to the role through earned degrees and experience, and resembles a military sergeant more than a politician. The autocratic leader is self-directed and often establishes norms and conduct for the group. In some settings, we can see that this is quite advantageous, such as open-heart surgery or during a military exercise, but it does not apply equally to all leadership opportunities.

Contrasting the autocrat is the laissez-faire leader, or “live and let live” leader. In a professional setting, such as a university, professors may bristle at the thought of an autocratic leader telling them what to do. They have earned their role through time, effort, and experience and know their job. A wise laissez-faire leader recognizes this aspect of working with professionals and may choose to focus efforts on providing the professors with the tools they need to make a positive impact. Imagine that you are in the role of a television director, and you have a vision or idea of what the successful pilot program should look like. The script is set, the lighting correct, and the cameras are in the correct position. You may tell people what to do and where to stand, but you remember that your job is to facilitate the overall process. You work with talent, and creative people are interesting on camera. If you micromanage your actors, they may perform in ways that are not creative, and that will not draw audiences. If you let them run wild through improvisation, the program may not go well at all. Balancing the need for control with the need for space is the challenge of the laissez-faire leader.

Not all leaders are autocrats or laissez-faire leaders. Harris and Sherblom, (Harris, T., & Sherblom, J. (1999). *Small group and team communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon) specifically, note three leadership styles that characterize the modern business or organization, and reflect our modern economy. We are not born leaders but may become them if the context or environment requires our skill set. A leader-as-technician role often occurs when we have skills that others do not. If you can fix the copy machine at the office, your leadership and ability to get it running again are prized and sought-after skills. You may instruct others on how to load the paper, or how to change the toner, and even though your pay grade may not reflect this leadership role, you are looked to by the group as a leader within that context. Technical skills, from Internet technology to facilities maintenance, may experience moments where their particular area of knowledge is required to solve a problem. Their leadership will be in demand.

The leader-as-conductor involves a central role of bringing people together for a common goal. In the common analogy, a conductor leads an orchestra and integrates the specialized skills, and sounds, of the various components the musical group comprises. In the same way, a leader who conducts may set a vision, create benchmarks, and creative collaborate with group as they interpret a set script. Whether it is a beautiful movement in music, or a group of teams that comes together to address a common challenge, the leader-as-conductor keeps the time and tempo of the group.

Coaches are often discussed in business-related books as models of leadership for good reason. A leader-as-coach combines many of the talents and skills we’ve discussed here, serving as a teacher, motivator, and keeper of the goals of the group. A coach may be autocratic at times and give pointed direction without input from the group, and they may stand on the sidelines while the players do what they’ve been trained to do and make the points. The coach may look out for the group and defend it against bad calls, and may motivate players with words of encouragement. We can recognize some of the behaviors of coaches, but what specific traits

have a positive influence on the group? Peters and Austin, (Peters, T., & Austin, N. (1985). *A passion for excellence: the leadership difference*. New York: Random House) identify five important traits that produce results:

- Orientation and education
- Nurturing and encouragement
- Assessment and correction
- Listening and counseling
- Establishing group emphasis

Coaches are teachers, motivators, and keepers of the goals of the group. There are times when members of the team forget that there is no "I" in the word "team." At such times coaches serve to redirect the attention and energy of the individuals to the overall goals of the group. They conduct the group with a sense of timing and tempo, and at times relax and let the members demonstrate their talents. Through their listening skills and counseling, they come to know each member as an individual, but keep the team focus for all to see. They set an example. Coaches, however, are human and by definition are not perfect. They can and do prefer some players over others, and can display less than professional sideline behavior when they don't agree with the referee, but the style of leadership is worthy of your consideration in its multidisciplinary approach. Coaches use more than one style of leadership and adapt to the context and environment. A skilled business communicator will recognize that this approach has its merits

Key Takeaway

Teamwork allows individuals to share their talents and energy to accomplish goals, and an effective leader facilitates this teamwork process.

Exercise 6.5.1

1. Do you prefer working in a group or team environment, or working individually? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Imagine that you could choose anyone you wanted to be on a team with you. Who would you choose, and why? Write a 2–3 paragraph description and share it with a classmate.
3. Think of a leader you admire and respect. What leadership traits to they display or possess? How would you characterize this leader's style—is the leader autocratic or laissez-faire; a technician or a coach?

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6.6: Diverse Forms of Leadership

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish between laissez-faire, autocratic, and democratic leadership styles
- Describe differences between transactional and transformational leadership
- Identify examples and characteristics of matriarchal leadership
- Identify differences between leadership styles associated with males and females

President Harry Truman once said he didn't want economists hedging by saying, "On the one hand" and then adding "but on the other hand." Truman said: "Bring me a one-armed economist." - Jean Godden (Godden, J. 2008, April 28. Send for a one-armed economist. Seattle Post Intelligencer. Retrieved from http://www.seattlepi.com/local/opinion/article/Send-for-a-one-armed-economist-1271762.php)

Leadership theory resembles economics in at least one respect. Despite the fact that leadership has been investigated intensively for decades, if not centuries, no one has come up with a definitive prescription for how to practice it in every situation. The major reasons for this failure are that every situation differs from every other situation, and every leader differs from every other leader. What is great leadership, then? It depends!

Gay and Donald Lumsden, (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams: Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning) described this situation succinctly: "This is one of those good-sense things. You can't expect one approach to work in all situations." Diverse people with diverse personalities in diverse situations call for diverse forms of leadership.

A "Goldilocks" Continuum of Leadership

Although it was perhaps simplistic even when it were proposed half a century ago, a continuum of three styles of leadership may seem at first glance to be logical. It's soothing, isn't it, to think that, like Goldilocks, we can consider and rule out possibilities that are "too this" and "too that" in favor of a choice that's just right?



Figure 6.6.1

At one end of a leadership continuum proposed in the 1960s and 1970s, (White, R.K., & Lippett, R.O. (1960). *Autocracy and democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.' Likert, R. (1967). *The human organization: Its management and value*. New York: McGraw-Hill) lies laissez-faire leadership, whose main feature is a willingness to let people in a group behave as they wish. If a group comprises skilled and competent members who willingly share responsibilities and are already motivated to work hard, this kind of leadership may be appropriate—or, at least, it may not cause harm to the group. Most individuals and groups, however, are apt to have difficulty maintaining focus and productivity under laissez-faire leadership.

At the other end of the continuum would be autocratic leadership, also known as command and control management. (Zak, M.W. (1994). "It's like a prison in there": Organizational fragmentation in a demographically diversified workplace. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 8,* 281–298). An autocratic leader uses coercive power or the dispensation or withholding of rewards to control how the group operates. Some group members may appreciate, or at least accept, autocratic leadership because of the structure and definitiveness it provides. In fact, when autocratic leadership is first imposed on a group, it can increase short-term productivity. (Lumsden, G., & Lumsden, D. (2004). *Communicating in groups and teams: Sharing leadership* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning). Later, however, aggressive behavior may develop under an autocratic leader, and turnover rates are likely to rise.



Figure 6.6.2

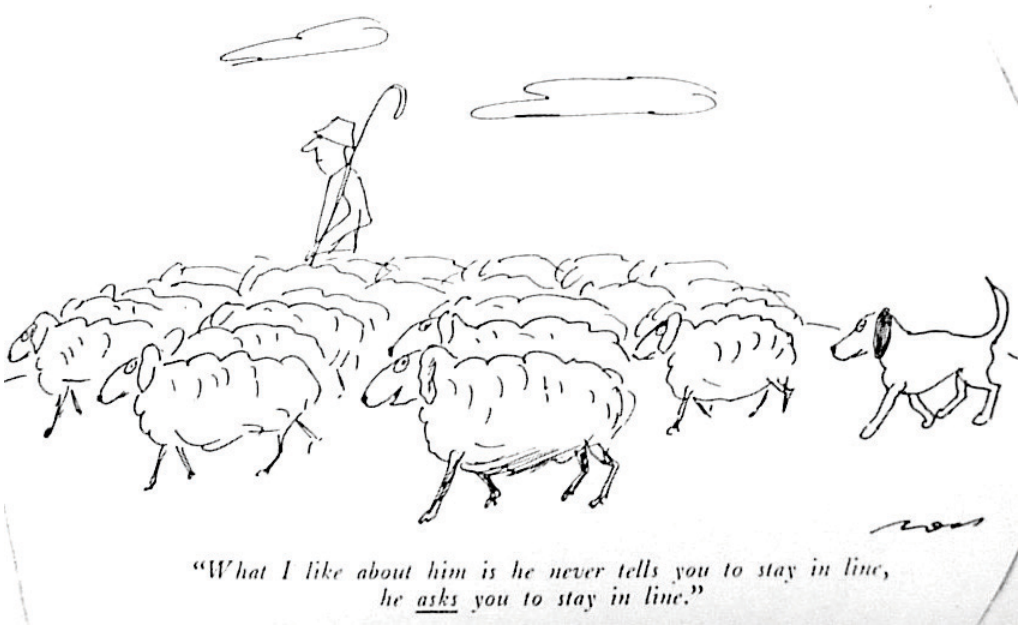


Figure 6.6.3

In the middle of the continuum, in the place that Goldilocks would presumably have considered to be just right, is democratic leadership. Sometimes called "participative leadership," this variety is characterized by distribution of responsibility among group members; empowerment of the members to determine their activities and express their opinions freely; and assistance with (but not domination of) the group's decision-making. Under this kind of leadership, most or all of a group's members are entrusted to perform important functions and may actually sometimes exchange the roles of leader and follower. (Gastil, J. (1994). A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. *Human Relations*, *47*, 953–975). Native-born Americans might consider democratic leadership to be the ideal kind, but it yields benefits in some situations more than in others. It is most advantageous when a group is first forming, and other factors that contribute to its success are breadth of talent and ideas among group members and lack of clarity about the group's goals.

Transactional and Transformational Leadership

A new movement in leadership theory, known at the time as "new leadership," first emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Among other things, its adherents drew a distinction between transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Bryman, (Bryman, A. (1992). *Charisma and leadership in organizations*. London: Sage) wrote that transactional leaders exchange rewards for performance. In other words, they employ what we will describe in our next chapter as a behaviorist approach to motivating group members.

Transformational leaders, by contrast, provide group members with a vision to which they can all aspire. They also work to develop a team spirit so that it becomes possible to achieve that vision.

Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Kopman, (Den Hartog, D.N., Van Muijen, J.J., & Kopman, P.L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 70*, 19–35) distinguished clearly between these two kinds of leaders. They held that transactional leaders motivate group members to perform as expected, whereas transformational leaders inspire followers to achieve more than what is expected. Nanus, (Nanus, D. (1992). *Visionary leadership: Creating a compelling sense of direction for your organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass) wrote that transformational leaders accomplish these tasks by instilling pride and generating respect and trust; by communicating high expectations and expressing important goals in straightforward language; by promoting rational, careful problem-solving; and by devoting personal attention to group members.

Matriarchal Leadership

We've discussed in other parts of this book how gender can affect interactions in small groups. We haven't touched yet, however, on the implications of matriarchal leadership—leadership in which women exercise primary influence instead of men—on how whole societies and the groups within them function. Examples of such leadership from North America, Africa, and Europe will help us understand some of those implications.

In Native American society, women have long occupied major leadership roles. Anthony Day, (Day, A. (2004, Jan 16). Book review: *The worlds of Pocahontas; Pocahontas: Medicine woman, spy, entrepreneur, diplomat*; Paula Gunn Allen; Harper San Francisco. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. 27–E.27. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/421887463?accountid=1611) noted that a book by Paula Gunn Allen made this point with reference to three Native American women known today for the guidance and support they provided to men exploring North America: Pocahontas, who saved John Smith in early Virginia and later wed Captain John Rolfe; Malinche, Hernán Cortés's lover and the mother of his son; and Sacagawea, without whose help the Lewis and Clark expedition might have ended in disaster. According to Allen, each of these women was "doing the traditional work of highborn Native American women in a matriarchal society." Furthermore, each occupied a leadership position among her own people which made it possible for her to enact change, bridge worlds, and bring about harmony among diverse groups.

Two other authorities, (Tarrell Awe, A. P., & Michael, T. G. (2005). Beloved women: Nurturing the sacred fire of leadership from an American Indian perspective. *Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD*, *83*(3), 284–291. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/219017519?accountid=1611) have had this to say about leadership in today's Native American tribal groups: "American Indian governance is filled not with the romantic notion of male 'chiefs' … but with tribal councils or committees consisting of multiple leaders (male and female) holding positions of leadership, most often with a group of women holding the ultimate power for decisions that affect the entire tribe." These same writers also quoted a Mohawk Woman, Lorraine Canoe, As cited in McFadden, S. (Ed.). (1994). *The little book of Native American wisdom*. Rockport, MA: Element. as saying, "We are a matriarchal society. Even our language honors the women. It is a female language. When we dance, the men dance on the outside of the circle. The inside of the circle is to honor the women."

Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, who in 2005 became the first elected female head of state in Africa and was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize with two other Third World women, noted that "at least 250 prominent African women leaders have made the 'history books' since Western historians took an interest in Africa, let alone those that passed unrecorded but live on in folk history."Johnson-Sirleaf, E. (2010) Africa's women have led in the past and will lead in the future. *New African*, 78–79. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/807485982?accountid=1611. According to Sirleaf-Johnson, these leaders have included chiefs, queens, ministers, prime ministers, and others. Liberia, where Sirleaf-Johnson is president, has six female cabinet ministers who hold strategic positions, including justice, foreign affairs, agriculture, and commerce.

In contemporary Europe, women occupy far fewer upper-level leadership positions in business than do men, but their numbers are greater in family-run corporations than in listed companies. According to Richard Milne, (Milne, R. (2008, October 15). A matriarchal leadership. *FT.Com*. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/229232082?accountid=1611) women in European family-held businesses tend to be guided by four distinctive drives: a focus on long-term rather than short-term goals; a sense of empathy for co-workers, including subordinates; a desire to emulate their own mothers' style of organizing a family; and a powerful commitment to support the business in times of challenge.

Asia covers a vast area encompassing many diverse cultures and sociological features. It is also a fast-changing region of the world, technologically, economically, and culturally. Recent writings indicate, however, that matriarchal leadership has existed there for centuries in at least parts of China and is established also as part of Philippine culture.

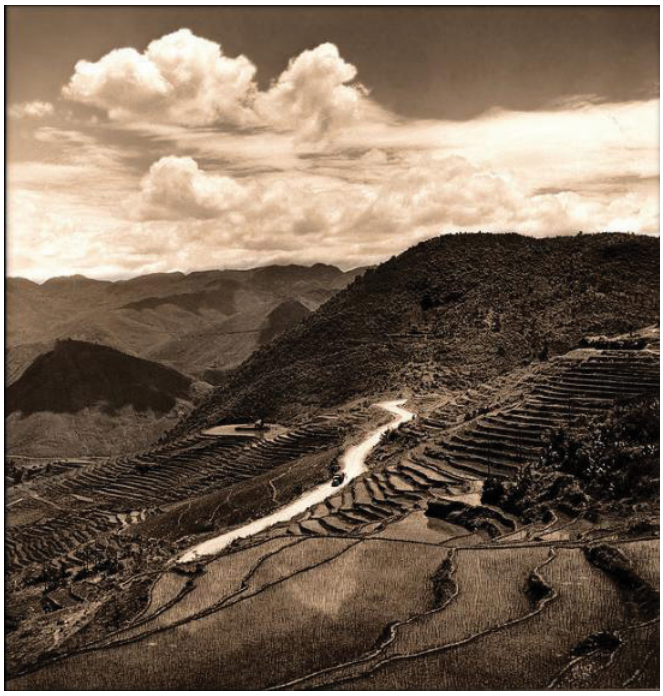


Figure 6.6.4: Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/ralphrepo_photolog/4165081611

Among the approximately 50,000 members of the Mosuo ethnic group in remote southern China, until as recently as 15 years ago the women made all major decisions and held the purse strings. Property and names still pass from mothers to daughters in the area's agrarian villages. One man interviewed by the author of an article about the area, (Farley, M. (1998, Dec 26). Saturday journal; In Lugu Lake, marriage is a ticklish affair; females call the shots as men hand over matters of life and love in remote Chinese matriarchal society. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. 1–1. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/421475684?accountid=1611) said that in his small business transactions with outside visitors "I hand the money over to my wife's mother. She gives me enough to buy cigarettes and a drink, and I do what she says." The headman of another village informed the author that he made decisions outside the village but not inside. "If I want to do something," he said, "I must get permission from my mother."

A study of women in positions of business leadership in the Philippines revealed several features related to matriarchy. (Roffey, B. (2002). Beyond culture-centric and gendered models of management: Perspectives on Filipina business leadership. *Women in Management Review, 17*(7), 352–363. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/213138203?accountid=1611). First, the businesses examined in the study displayed greater interconnectedness with the women's families than is usually the case in Western male-led firms. Employees were in many instances treated as family members, even to the extent of being provided with food and accommodation. Second, the values which the women associated with effective leadership included several that are generally linked to women's perceived strengths: diplomacy, tact, "grace," "charm", "humility," and "integrity."

Male vs. Female Leadership

The "nature *versus* nurture" debate continues to rage in the social sciences. Controversy still exists over how much of human behavior is caused by biology and how much of it results from social conditioning. The American political scientist Francis

Fukuyama, (Fukuyama, F. (1998). Women and the evolution of world politics. *Foreign Affairs, 77* (5), 24–40. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/214292115?accountid=1611). however, has forcefully contended that "virtually all reputable evolutionary biologists today think there are profound differences between the sexes that are genetically rather than culturally rooted, and that these differences extend beyond the body into the realm of the mind."

What might some of these differences be when it comes to leadership, and how persistent might they be? Fukuyama answered that "male tendencies to band together for competitive purposes, seek to dominate status hierarchies, and act out aggressive fantasies toward one another can be rechanneled but never eliminated." According to him, boys have been shown in hundreds of studies to be more aggressive, both verbally and physically, in their dreams, words, and actions than girls.

With respect to international relations, Fukuyama wrote that women are less likely than men to see force as a legitimate tool for resolving conflicts. Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson added that "it is the skills of cooperation and collaboration that count in a new age of interconnectedness, qualities in which women excel." (Johnson-Sirleaf, E. (2010, Africa's women have led in the past, and will lead in the future. New African, 78–79. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/807485982?accountid=1611). And in the Philippine businesses studied by Roffey, the women leaders were more frequently found to demonstrate nurturance and flexible risk-taking than traits often ascribed to male leaders, such as firmness and single-mindedness.

Key Takeaway

Leadership can take many forms, including nontraditional ones such as matriarchal leadership, and the results of various forms may differ substantially.

Exercise 6.6.1

1. Think of the last several movies you've watched. Who took leadership in their stories, and how effectively? Assuming that the leadership was not matriarchal, how do you think the films would have come across differently if the leadership had featured women rather than men? How do you think men and women in the audience might have reacted differently?
2. If all their skills and authority were the same, and you were forced to choose between a woman and a man as the leader of a group you were part of, what choice would you make? Would it depend on what kind of group? If so, why? Explain your answers to a classmate.
3. Google "women heads of state" and determine how many countries in the world are currently led by women. Would you expect any common threads among the countries, or among their leaders? Why or why not?

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6.7: Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed what leadership is, examining the amazing range of behaviors, actions and traits associated with leadership across contexts and cultures. We also explored how one becomes a leader, through a democratic election, by appointment, or through a process of emerging as a leader to meet a need, address an issue, or through experience or skill. When people turn to you to help them solve their problems it is a sure sign you've become, in some respect, a leader. We explored a range of theories associated with leadership, from the idea that there are born leaders with universal traits, to the recognition that the situation or context can make a significant impact. We also discussed transformative leadership, where the leader, through energy and enthusiasm, motivates the group or team to accomplish their goals with the conclusion: "We did it!" Leadership is an important part of teams and groups, and learning to listen, to recognize skills and talents, and how to facilitate a positive team environment can make all the difference. Leaders are an important part of groups, and they use their effective communication skills to get the job done.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Interpretive Question

   Our world is changing rapidly in terms of technology, economics, political forces, and other features. Which of these changes, if any, do you feel may call upon outstanding leaders to behave differently than they might have in the past? What do you expect those differences to be?

2. Application Question

   In a small group of students, identify a task or situation which requires leadership. Now have half the group think of a male leader whom they admire and the other half identify such a female leaders. Have each half of the group write a paragraph or two describing the key behaviors it feels the leader would be likely to exhibit under the circumstances you've set forth. Compare the paragraphs and discuss whether and to what degree the gender of the leader might account for differences between the descriptions.

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6.8: Additional Resources

- Read about groups and teams on the business website 1000 Ventures. http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/team_main.html
- Learn more about Tuckman's Linear Model. http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm
- Learn more about Dewey's sequence of group problem solving on this site from Manatee Community College in Florida. http://faculty.mccfl.edu/frithl/SPC1600/handouts/Dewey.htm
- Read a hands-on article about how to conduct productive meetings. http://www.articlesnatch.com/Article/How-To-Conduct-Productive-Meetings-/132050
- Visit this WikiHow site to learn how to use VOIP. http://www.wikihow.com/Use-VoIP
- Watch a YouTube video on cloud computing. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PNuQHUiV3Q
- Read about groups and teams, and contribute to a wiki about them, on Wikibooks. http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Managing_Groups_and_Teams
- How did Twitter get started? Find out. http://twitter.com/about
- Take a (nonscientific) quiz to identify your leadership style. http://psychology.about.com/library/quiz/bl-leadershipquiz.htm
- A review of leadership qualities in a self-assessment format. http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/LeadSA.html
- Leadership Self-Assessment Activity. http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/survlead.html
- The Trusted Leader Self-Assessment. http://www.thetrustedleader.com/self-assess-1.html
- Personal Reflection, Hill Consulting Group Leadership Self-Assessment. http://www.hillconsultinggroup.org/assets/pdfs/leadership-assessment.pdf
- The Leadership Motivation Assessment from MindTools. http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_01.htm
- Leadership Self-Assessment Tool from the National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families. http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/reflective-practice-program-development/leadership-self-assessment-tool.html
- Leadership Self-Assessment, Online Form and Scoring, from McGraw-Hill. http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0070876940/student_view0/chapter6/activity_6_4.html
- WikiBooks: Managing Groups and Teams/Effective Team Leadership. https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Managing_Groups_and_Teams/Effective_Team_Leadership
- Successful Small Team Leadership: Manage the Group, Not the Individuals. http://knowwpcarey.com/article.cfm?aid=229
- TealTrust, What makes a good team leader? http://www.teal.org.uk/et/page5.htm
- About.com: 10 Ways to Become a Better Leader. http://psychology.about.com/od/leadership/tp/become-a-better-leader.htm
- 12 Rules for Team Leadership (Transformative Model). http://www.legacee.com/Info/Leadership/TeamLeadership.html
- Leadership Exercises and Tips from the University of Oregon. http://leadership.uoregon.edu/resources/exercises_tips

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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7.1: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. Identify three things that you feel motivate you more than any others to work together with other people. Tell a classmate about a situation in which you benefited from those three things. Be as specific as you can about how each thing affected your attitude and behavior.
2. Think of a time interval during which your level of motivation to contribute to the work of a group increased or decreased dramatically. What caused the change? When you lost motivation, who or what might have prevented you from doing so?
3. What's the most challenging goal that a group you were part of ever set for itself? Did you achieve it? List several factors that contributed to your reaching it or failing to do so.
4. Think of one of the most successful groups you've been a member of. What steps did the group take regularly, if any, to check the level of its effectiveness?

Gettin' good players is easy. Gettin' 'em to play together is the hard part. - Casey Stengel

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success. - Henry Ford

A football coach was attempting to motivate his players through a difficult season. They were discouraged. Finally, the coach gathered the team together roughly and bellowed, "Did Michael Jordan ever quit?" The team yelled back, "No!" The coach then shouted, "What about the Wright brothers? Did they ever give up?" "No way!" the team yelled. "How about John Elway?" They all responded, "No!" "What about Mother Teresa?" "No! No!" they screamed. "Did Elmer Smith ever quit?" There was a long silence. Finally, one player was bold enough to ask, "Gosh, Coach, who's Elmer Smith? We never heard of him." The coach snapped back, "Of course you never heard of him—he quit!"

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll address four major questions. They are "Why do people take action at any given time, instead of remaining inert and inactive?", "Why do people choose to act in the particular ways they do?", "How can we get individuals, by themselves, to act in certain ways?", and "Once people are acting properly as individuals, how can we get them to work together for the good of a group?"

These questions are short and simple, but their answers are not. Just think of some times in your own experience when you wished you had some way to get another person, or a group you were part of, to "get off the dime" and move in a direction you felt was the right way to go! The frustration you felt has echoed through the ages; the task of motivating people has challenged human beings since at least the dawn of history. Without motivation, we flounder or stagnate.

In the pages ahead, we'll review a number of theories of motivation, ranging from complex to relatively straightforward ones, and consider factors that influence how susceptible people are to being motivated. Next, we'll list and examine two kinds of strategies: first, those which can produce motivation in people, and second, those which can lead people, once motivated, to collaborate with one another.

No matter how people act, and whether they take any action at all, the process of determining and stating whether something happened or didn't happen will always be crucial to understanding the past and preparing for the future. You can probably recall situations in your life when a person or a group seemed to be wandering about in circles, repeating statements and behaviors rather than building on them to move forward. Perhaps it was because, even though there was action going on, no one was examining what the action was leading to. To end our chapter, therefore, we'll consider the vital role that feedback and assessment play in generating and maintaining group motivation.

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7.2: Group Motivation and Collaboration

Learning Objectives

1. Identify two fundamental questions related to group motivation and collaboration
2. Identify factors that affect the ability to exercise persuasion and influence toward motivating collaborative behavior in groups

Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I should labour with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow. - David Hume

"Let everyone sweep in front of his own door, and the whole world will be clean." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"A dark night in a city that knows how to keep its secrets, but on the 12th floor of the Acme Building, one man is still trying to find the answers to life's persistent questions: Guy Noir, Private Eye." Since 1974, Garrison Keillor (Keillor, G. (2012, May 26). *Guy Noir, private eye*. Retrieved from http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/programs/2012/05/26/scripts/noir.shtml) has hosted a nationally-broadcast weekly radio program called "A Prairie Home Companion." One regular feature of Keillor's show, about a bumbling detective from Minnesota, has always begun with the words we've just quoted.

The fictitious detective may not know it, but among life's persistent questions are those dealing with motivation and collaboration. As the theologian H.E. Luccock wrote, "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." The same goes for any other group of people: no individual can carry the whole load or produce the whole group's required outcomes.

Before we analyze motivation and collaboration in detail, let's first lay the groundwork by considering what we mean by the terms. Engleburg and Wynn, (Engleberg, I.N., & Wynn, D. R. (2013). *Working in groups* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson) wrote that motivation consists of giving a person "a cause, or reason, to act." Collaboration, in turn, consists of joint expenditure of energy by two or more people in pursuit of a shared goal or aim.

Two Fundamental Questions

We can see that two fundamental questions need to be confronted by anyone who hopes to motivate a group to collaborate:

1. How can we induce any single individual to act in any particular way?
2. How can we induce many individuals to act together?

Society can function only if people are motivated to collaborate in groups. Getting people to do that, however, can be extremely difficult. As Garrison Keillor would put it, it's a persistent question, and it's one that can tire people out if they persist in trying to answer it. One of Keillor's "Guy Noir" episodes illustrates this reality.

The episode describes a field trip by a middle school band class to Washington, D.C. Ostensibly, the purpose of the field trip is to have the students produce and perform music together while enjoying the experience of visiting the capital. Once the group reaches the National Mall however, its band director gives up on any attempt to herd his students from one destination to another—to collaborate. When Guy sweetly asks one of the girls in the band why she has shaved half her head and why a boy has tattoos on his ears, she calls him a freak and tells him to mind his own business. Soon the clarinet section moves off in six different directions and the percussion section disappears entirely.

In the middle of all this, the band director is wearing earplugs to avoid having to listen to his students. "Earplugs; they're a blessing," he claims, as a noisy motorcycle nearly flattens him. "I'm going to retire in two weeks to Wyoming," he continues, where "the only horns are on the cattle and the only winds are in the trees."

As far as musical performance is concerned, the band director lets his students play three-minute concerts because he can't get them to concentrate any longer than that. (The idea of making things short by eliminating repetition is, Keillor writes, revolutionary in Washington).

People in the real world generally show better manners and are able to focus more readily than the characters in this fictional account. Still, motivating real people to collaborate is no simple matter. Garrison Keillor wrote this about the actual Washington, D.C.: "It occurred to me that most of the people I saw in Washington were special needs people, and the Congress is designed for

verbally aggressive listening-impaired people, and that months go by and nothing gets done, and in an election year, less than nothing, and maybe that's what the balance of powers means."

Persuasion and Influence

Hybels & Weaver, (Hybels, S., & Weaver, R.L. (1998). *Communicating effectively* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill). indicated that getting people to act in a certain way requires persuasion and influence. How and where to best direct the persuasion and influence, however, will vary with time. It may be possible to motivate people to work together at certain times on certain tasks, but not at other times on other tasks. Why? Think back to those middle school students. Many factors will vary from time to time, including these:

Individuals' and groups' level of receptiveness. Sometimes we're open to suggestions and proposals; sometimes we're not. Middle school students, for instance, might be more apt to collaborate right after a good lunch than first thing in the morning or in the late afternoon.

The surrounding circumstances. We're more likely to focus our attention if we're not distracted by external noise or other sensory inputs. Putting middle school students in the middle of a bustling urban center is not likely to help them focus on a joint task.

People's physical condition. Obviously, if a group task is physically demanding, those who possess strength or stamina will be better able to participate than those who don't. If the middle school students were hot or exhausted, they'd be less likely to cooperate in getting anything done together. The wise grandmother of one of the authors of this book always used to advise other parents, "If your kids aren't cooperating, feed them."

People's attitudes toward a particular task. Getting people to do what they already want to do is no big deal; someone has written that an easy way to be a leader is to "watch where people are headed and just get out in front of them." Middle school students might not need a lot of persuasion to eat a few boxes of pizza together out on the grass by the Washington Monument. To get them to walk quietly together through an exhibit of Renaissance porcelain in the National Gallery of Art, on the other hand, would not be easy.

Lest we conclude that motivating people to collaborate is a hopeless enterprise, we can look around us any day and see that, although it isn't easy, it is possible. Tyler and Blader, (Tyler, T.R., & Blader, S.L. (2000). *Cooperation in groups*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press) pointed out that intentional actions, policies, and practices can often influence people's dispositions, and through them shape cooperation. We'll consider some such actions, policies, and practices later in this chapter. Above all, we'll see that adopting a flexible attitude can help us influence people to adopt the motivation to collaborate.

Key Takeaway

Motivating people to collaborate in groups is challenging because the effectiveness of persuasion and influence depend on changeable human factors.

Exercise 7.2.1

1. If you were leading a middle-school field trip, what principles and practices would you follow to yield better results than the ones described by Garrison Keillor?
2. Think of a time when you or someone in a group with you successfully motivated the group to take action. What factors of the situation contributed favorably to the positive motivation? What factors made it difficult to motivate the group?

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7.3: Role of Motivation

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish between content and process theories of motivation
2. Identify five content theories of motivation and four process theories
3. Identify three kinds of action that individuals or groups who are motivated may take

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. - Helen Keller

The Latin term *sine qua non* literally means "without which, not" or "that without which, nothing." In other words, if something is a *sine qua non*, it's absolutely necessary. Emerson's comment indicates that he considered enthusiasm to be the *sine qua non* of greatness. Our position in this book is that motivation is the *sine qua non* of effective group action.

As Hoy & Miskel, (Hoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Random House) noted, motivation comprises "complex forces that start and maintain voluntary activity directed to achieve personal goals." In short, being motivated means having energy and wanting to put it to work.

Before we examine just what motivation accomplishes within an individual or in a group setting, we should first take a look at a number of views concerning where it comes from.

Theories of Motivation

Thinkers in business, education, psychology, and many other fields have long wondered about and performed research into the causes of motivation. Their theories fall into two major categories: content theories and process theories.

Content theories of motivation focus on the factors which motivate behavior by rewarding or reinforcing it. Process theories attempt instead to determine how factors that motivate behavior interact with each other.

Content Theories of Motivation

Several content theories of motivation were developed in the middle to late years of the 20th century. Probably the most well-known today is Maslow's need hierarchy, with its five levels, which we reviewed earlier in this book.

Another content theory from this period is Clayton Alderfer's "ERG" theory. (Alderfer, C.P. (1972). *Existence, relatedness, and growth: Human needs in organizational settings*. New York: Free Press). According to Alderfer, people's needs can be broken down into the categories of existence, relatedness, and growth. Like Maslow's hierarchy, Alderfer's model portrayed people's needs in a hierarchical fashion. It differed from Maslow's hierarchy, however, both in its nomenclature for the levels in the hierarchy and in its contention that development through the hierarchy takes place in a cycle between differentiation and integration. Differentiation is a broadening of people's awareness through new and challenging experiences, whereas integration follows as an individual brings together diverse elements of his or her personality into a new and more unified form. When you decide to join a new club or organization, for instance, you first meet many people whose habits and behaviors may be new and perhaps disorienting to you. Later, however, you become more familiar with the way things work and feel consolidated and confident in your role within that group.

A third content theory is Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory. (Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work*. New York: Wiley). Herzberg classed rewards as either "motivators" or "hygienes." He held that motivators—including achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the opportunity to advance within a group—are factors that contribute to satisfaction, but which when absent don't cause dissatisfaction. In other words, we appreciate them but can do without them. Hygienes, on the other hand—such as money, status, and job security—don't create satisfaction when they're present, according to Herzberg, but do lead to dissatisfaction if they're absent. In a sense, thus, they're what people consider to be basic minimal needs and can go only as far as preventing dissatisfaction.

Two more content theories of motivation have been identified by more contemporary authorities. Kenneth Thomas (Thomas, K.W. (2000). *Intrinsic motivation at work: Building energy and commitment*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler) drew a distinction between

extrinsic rewards—those which come from the external environment—and intrinsic rewards, which come from within an individual or group.

Thomas believed that intrinsic rewards are more likely to motivate people and identified four kinds of intrinsic motivators. The first is a sense of meaningfulness, which is the idea that what a person or group is doing is worthwhile. The second is a sense of choice, which is the feeling that the person or group can make decisions about how to behave. The third is a sense of competence, which is the belief that the person or group is behaving capably. The fourth motivator is a sense of progress, which is the feeling that the person or group is actually accomplishing something.

A final content theory of motivation was put forth by Steven Reiss (Reiss, S. (2000). *Who am I? The 16 basic desires that motivate our behavior and define our personality*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam and researchnews.osu.edu/archive/whoami.htm) and developed as the outgrowth of a study involving more than 6,000 people. On the basis of statistical analysis of his results, Reiss contended that 16 basic desires motivate people's behavior: power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical exercise, and tranquility.

Interestingly, Reiss asserted that 14 of the 16 desires are similar to those found in animals and are likely to be genetically determined. He also suggested that people's motivations differ substantially from individual to individual and group to group because each person's ranking of the 16 desires is unique.

Process Theories of Motivation

Theorists who espouse process theories of motivation are more interested in what starts, sustains, and stops behavior than they are in the things that motivate the behavior in the first place. We'll consider four kinds of process theories in this section.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory was originated by Victor Vroom, (Vroom, V. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley) and has been broadened and popularized since then by other authorities. Vroom's theory is complex, but its central idea is straightforward: People are most likely to be motivated in a certain way if they believe 1) that they will receive a reward, 2) that the reward they expect to receive is something they value highly, and 3) that they can do what it takes to achieve the reward.

Here's an example. If the members of a team of employees think they will receive praise from their boss if they produce a snappy PowerPoint presentation as part of a project they've been assigned, if they all care about receiving the boss's praise, and if they think they have the skills to create the presentation, then they're apt to work hard on the activity.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory holds that people's behavior is motivated by how they interpret the behavior of others around them. For instance, we may think that what's causing others to act as they do is a combination of internal, personal factors. On the other hand, we may think that their behavior is a product of environmental variables.

According to attribution theory, people might actually be motivated to convey more significant rewards for someone's failure than for success. Take the case of the team of employees working on the project. Let's say that their PowerPoint presentation has several errors in it. If the boss observes it and thinks, "Wow—they must've put a lot of time into this," he or she might be motivated to congratulate the team on its hard work and offer some kindly advice for improving the presentation. On the other hand, if the presentation is letter-perfect but the boss thinks, "I'll bet the department head down the hall showed them exactly how to do that," the boss may be motivated to offer only a routine acknowledgment that the assignment has been completed.

Goal Theory

Goal theory, (Locke, E.A. (1968). Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 3*, 157–189) contends that people are motivated to behave in certain ways, and to keep behaving in those ways, primarily because they intend to achieve particular goals. This sounds simple and reasonable enough, but goal theorists believe that reaching a goal actually includes seven steps. The first five steps bring behavior about, whereas the last two maintain and regulate it.

Here's what a goal-setter has to do in these seven steps: first, survey and understand his or her environment; second, evaluate which elements of the environment are of value to him or her; third, make an emotional assessment of possible courses of action; fourth, decide what is apt to happen if he or she behaves in a particular way; fifth, decide how likely it is that the results he or she desires can actually be produced; sixth, decide exactly how to behave; and seventh, take action. The authors of this book appreciate the intellectual elegance of goal theory but wonder if they, you, or anyone any of us know has ever deliberately followed all these steps!

Behaviorism

Behaviorism has probably received more attention and is better known throughout the public at large than any of the other three theories we've discussed. B.F. Skinner, (Skinner, B.F. (1974). *About behaviorism*. New York: Knopf) the most prominent Western exponent of behaviorism in the last century, wrote that all human behavior is a lawful process determined and controlled in systematic and consistent ways. Furthermore, Skinner and his adherents contended that all behavior is a function of its consequences in the environment. What this means is that any action people take will depend completely on what happens afterward. If the action affects the environment in such a way that it afterward strengthens the behavior, the behavior will persist or reoccur. If what happens afterward does not strengthen the behavior, on the other hand, the behavior will eventually cease.

Unlike other theorists of motivation, behaviorists do not describe what happens inside people when they act in certain ways. They don't deny that people have feelings and thoughts, but to the degree that they deal with such phenomena at all, they consider them to be effects rather than causes of behavior.

Fruits of Motivation

We've already established that motivation is a necessary condition to the functioning of any individual or group. If we have it, we possess the capacity to take action.

So, what action might we take? Three possibilities stand out, each of them either for better or worse. First of all, we may comply with other people's wishes, rules, or expectations. We may be motivated, for instance, to obey traffic signals and "no trespassing" signs.

Second, we may produce outcomes or create resources for a group. Motivated members of a political party, for example, may prepare or distribute flyers or make phone calls supporting the party's candidates.

Third, we may decide to sacrifice some of our own comfort or security for the sake of others. The classic example of this behavior is wartime military service.

Notice that motivation, wherever it comes from, provides a capacity for action but doesn't guarantee it. In other words, it's a necessary but not a sufficient condition for getting things done. In the next section, we'll take a look at ways to both produce motivation and ensure that people take action based on it.

Key Takeaway

Content theories of motivation concentrate upon rewards and reinforcing factors, whereas process theories focus on what starts, sustains, and stops behavior in response to those rewards and reinforcers.

Exercise 7.3.1

1. Frederick Herzberg wrote that people's motivation can be maintained only if they are given responsibility and an opportunity to achieve something. Do you agree? Provide an example that supports your answer.
2. Name and rank your top five desires from Steven Reiss's list of 16 desires. Share and compare your desires with a classmate. What do the results imply with respect to how you and the other person might best become motivated in a group?
3. Expectancy theory says that people will be motivated under three conditions: if they believe they will receive a reward for doing something, if they value the reward, and if they believe they can do what it takes to achieve the reward. Describe a situation in which you were motivated to do something and explain whether and how those three conditions were met.

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7.4: Effective Motivation Strategies

Learning Objectives

1. Acknowledge the value of trust among group members
2. Identify four effective motivation strategies

No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you. - Althea Gibson



Figure 7.4.1

In the first parts of this chapter, we've discussed several theories of motivation. Some of the theories laid greatest emphasis on identifying factors that attract people to become motivated, whereas others focused on how the factors interact to produce motivation. What we haven't answered yet, however, is a very important question: "How can we get a person to acquire motivation and actually act on it?"

At first glance, we might think this is a very easy question to answer. After all, we see people acting in ways that other people want them to every day. What if getting a person motivated and having the person do something on the basis of that motivation is a really simple matter? What if all we need to do is follow a few steps, like these, which are based on the behaviorist concepts of B.F. Skinner that we touched on earlier?

1. Tell the person what you want him or her to do in measurable terms. Explain specifically what you have in mind.
2. Measure the person's current level of performance. Determine whether and how well the person is doing the activity in question.
3. Let the person know what kind of reward he or she will receive if he or she does what you've asked. Be sure to make clear that the reward *will* follow if the performance goal is achieved.
4. When the person does what you've asked, give the person the reward you said you would.

In the world of business, some organizations have tried to follow exactly these four behaviorist steps to motivate employees. Burke, (Burke, W.W. (2011). *Organization change* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications) and Kello (Kello, J.E. (2008). Reflections on I-O psychology and behaviorism. In N. K. Innis (ed.), *Reflections on adaptive behavior: Essays in honor of J.E.R. Staddon* (pp. 291–313). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) wrote that in the 1970s Emery Air Freight was one of the first and most publicized examples. As it turned out, Emery found that performance by its employees increased and that costs to the company

declined by approximately $3 million over a three-year period. (Schulz, D., & Schulz, S.E. (2002). *Psychology and work today* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall).

But things are more complicated than this in other places, aren't they? Emery Air Freight was in the business of processing packages, and that's a pretty cut-and-dried industrial procedure. College students and church members and people in community organizations or not-for-profit agencies are involved in broader, more complex activities than those that many air freight workers or other employees in commercial enterprises perform.

Requirements for Motivating Action

According to behaviorism, it's unnecessary to pay attention to people's interior states in order to motivate them to do things. Emery Air Freight's approach, with its predetermined regimen of consequences for its employees' behavior, was consistent with this belief.

Most theorists today, however, believe that people need to undergo certain mental processes and reach certain mental states in order to take any particular action. Specifically, for people to be motivated to act the way someone else wants them to, they first need to possess the skills and abilities required to accomplish the action. If they have those skills and abilities, they also need to know what the other person wants them to do, how to do it, and what will happen if they do it.

In a group, having a designated leader propose that people act in a certain way can often be helpful. This will depend on the structure and mood and purpose of the group, however.

If you're part of a team of students that has been assigned a project, for instance, you might not decide to choose a leader. Instead, you and the other members may want to motivate each other by discussing your needs and options as equals to see what ideas and directions bubble up spontaneously.

No matter who is trying to motivate whom to act, one final consideration should be taken into account. Motivation, as we noted in chapter 4, is at least partly determined by whether people trust each other.

What if you think someone's primary reason for asking you to do something in a group is that the person hopes to gain personally from what you do? If that's the case, you're not very apt to be motivated. If the person seems to care about you genuinely, on the other hand, you're more likely to go along with his or her suggestions.

Motivation Strategies

Let's take a look at four strategies for motivating people in groups. Three of the strategies are based in longstanding organizational research, whereas one is a broader approach to motivation in general.

Based on their study of research in groups, Hoy and Miskel, (Hoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Random House) contended that taking the following steps will lead people to be motivated:

1. Allow all members of the group to set goals together, rather than imposing goals upon them. Research indicates that people who get to participate in developing their own goals become more satisfied during the performance of their tasks than those who don't. If your student group is supposed to deliver a presentation together, you should all meet at the start of your assignment and decide what you plan to accomplish.
2. Establish goals that are specific. Broad or unclear goals are unlikely to cause people in a group to focus their attention and energy well. Instead of saying, "Let's all pitch in and give our presentation 10 days from now," it's better to decide which person will talk about which subjects in the presentation, for how many minutes, and with how many handouts or projected images.
3. Establish the highest possible goals. You've perhaps heard the adage "Shoot for the moon; even if you miss, at least you'll hit the stars." The saying isn't astronomically accurate, of course, since the stars are a lot farther away than the moon. The principle is a good one, though, since research shows that the more difficult the goals, the more effort people will put into achieving them, as long as they accept the more difficult goals in the first place.

Hoy and Miskel contended that these three strategies tend to reinforce one another. In particular, they wrote, members of a group who are allowed to participate in setting its goals may not necessarily perform at a higher level than those who aren't, but they're

likely to set higher goals for themselves than people who have goals imposed upon them. Thus, at least indirectly, the outcomes of their work may be better for the group.

In his book *Intrinsic Motivation at Work*, Kenneth Thomas wrote about a fourth strategy for motivating people: developing rewards tentatively and being prepared to change them as circumstances dictate. Personal goals and desires may shift with time, he contended, and people also sometimes have multiple and even conflicting goals. Sometimes a person who initially was enthusiastic about working on a task might say, “My get-up-and-go got up and went.”

Students working on a team project, for example, may go through a cycle of changing personal goals. When they first get together, they may want more than anything else to minimize the time they spend on the project. Later, they might start to care much more about receiving a good grade—or about building relationships among themselves, or about something else entirely. To motivate them requires flexibility.

Key Takeaway

Allowing group members to set specific, challenging goals and being willing to modify those goals as circumstances change is likely to motivate them to act in a desired manner.

Exercise 7.4.1

1. Think of a group you’ve been a part of in which trust among its members was strong. How did you know that the trust existed? What caused it to develop? How did its presence affect the group’s motivation?
2. Some people might claim that part of leadership is to set goals for a group, not to ask people to set its goals together. If you were ever in a group whose leader established its goals, how do you feel that influenced the members’ attitudes and motivation?
3. In what ways do you feel a group’s motivation might benefit if its members operated without a designated leader? In what ways might its motivation suffer?

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7.5: Effective Collaboration Strategies

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the nature and implications of theories that assume that people collaborate for instrumental reasons
2. Identify a theory of group collaboration that emphasizes social links among group members
3. Identify five strategies for fostering group collaboration

I maintain that cooperation is good, and competition is bad, that society does not flourish by the antagonism of its atoms, but by the mutual helpfulness of human beings. - Helen Keller

In the last section, we discussed ways to motivate individuals to act in certain ways. Now we turn to a harder question: How do we get them to work together?

A Prevalent Theory

In addition to setting goals that are specific, challenging, and jointly developed, how we try to get people to work together with others depends on our view of what makes people decide to do so. A prevalent theory, which Tom Tyler (Tyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) contends has been especially influential in the past few decades throughout American society, has been that people collaborate for instrumental reasons. What this means is that they weigh costs and benefits and choose what they feel will be most advantageous to themselves. Their amount and quality of participation in a group then depends on "material exchanges"—transfers of rewards back and forth between the group's members. (Rusbult, C.E., & Van Lange, P.A.M. (1996). Interdependence processes. In E.T. Higgins & A.W. Kruglanski (eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 564–596). New York: Guilford). If these transfers don't favor them as individuals, they will simply abandon the group.

If we operate according to this theory, there are many implications. First, we may want to spend considerable effort to decide on incentives to offer group members. Second, we may feel we need to be continually vigilant to make sure our incentives are working. Third, we may need to watch people carefully to see who is pitching in sufficiently. And fourth, we may want to create sanctions that we can impose upon people who don't comply with the group's rules and directions.

The Role of Social Links

An alternative theory, based on recent research by Tyler, (Tyler, T.R. (2006). *Why people obey the law* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press_ and others, suggests that people do take their self-interest into account when they participate in groups, but that they collaborate primarily for social reasons.

According to this alternative theory, people will be best motivated to collaborate on the basis of social links. These are defined as "long-term connections based on attitudes, emotional connections, shared identities, common values, trust in the motivation of others, & joint commitment to fairness." (Tyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). Tyler's book *Why People Cooperate* presents the results of his studies in business, legal settings, and political organizations as evidence that people are often willing to give up the opportunity for personal gain in order to contribute to the welfare of a group as a whole. Specifically, Tyler's research with groups in more than 15 countries showed that "in none of the countries were people's behaviors consistent with a narrow self-interest model." (Tyler, T.R. (2011). *Why people cooperate: The role of social motivations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

The proponents of this theory believe that using a combination of incentives or punishments—"carrots" and "sticks"—is not always going to produce collaborative behavior in a group. It's very possible, for instance, for group members who are treated this way to do just enough to get exactly the incentives they've been promised rather than to go beyond the call of duty for the sake of the group as a whole.

Tyler pointed out that soldiers can be forced into the military in times of war. Neither money nor legislation nor a military draft nor even the threat of severe legal actions such as courts-martial, however, can actually make them willing to lay down their lives. Something else has to be part of the picture.

Strategies to Promote Collaboration

Indeed, fighting successfully in a war requires total and complete collaboration on the part of soldiers. In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, prior to the Battle of Agincourt, King Henry rallies troops in the famous "St. Crispin's Day Speech." In the speech, he refers to "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers—for whoever sheds his blood with me today shall be my brother." As a result of his speech, the English soldiers fight valiantly, and ultimately they defeat the French and win the battle.

What can we learn from Shakespeare's account, as well as from the thoughts of modern theorists, to promote collaboration within a group? Here are several strategies which researchers now believe can be successful:

Appeal to Members' Social Links.

Appeal explicitly to members' social links, including their belief in and reliance on each other, rather than only to their narrow self-interest.

As Tyler and Blader, (Tyler, T.R., & Blader, S.L. (2000). *Cooperation in groups*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press]) wrote, "Social motivations lead not only to compliance, but to voluntary deference to rules and to more general willing cooperation." We don't have to say that our fellow group members are brothers and sisters, even metaphorically, but we can remind them of their mutual reliance.

Identify and Revisit Values and Goals

Ensure that the group identifies and periodically revisits its values and goals by means of full participation of its members. Heath and Sias (Heath, R.G., & Sias, P.M. (1999). Communicating spirit in a collaborative alliance. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*, 356–376). pointed out that leaving someone out of these processes at any time can weaken that person's social links with the group and thereby make it less likely for the person to work on behalf of its purposes later on.

Create Relational Contracts

Besides adopting formal written agreements, create "relational contracts." (Baker, G., Gibbons, R., & Murphy, K.J. (2002). Relational contracts and the theory of the firm. *Quarterly journal of economics (117)*, 39–84). These are informal statements that rest on mutual trust and describe the knowledge and other strengths that various group members will bring to bear in conducting the group's work. For instance, in a group planning a community bazaar, one person might pledge to prepare banners because he or she possesses artistic talent. This pledge would not be part of the group's initial goal-setting process. Neither would it last beyond the completion of the bazaar. Still, it would help carry the group successfully through one of its important activities.

Because relational contracts are tied to particular situations and circumstances, they are more flexible than formal, permanent agreements. At the same time, it's important to take into account that they are also harder to enforce because of their very informality.

Think Big and Long Term

Ask group members to think big and think long-term. Burke, *Burke, W.W. (2011). *Organization change: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) wrote that group members should engage in "systemic thinking." He meant by this that they should regard their group as an enduring and organic totality, rather than simply as the sum of many individuals at a particular time.

King Henry said this when he told his soldiers of the lasting importance of their combined actions:

"This story shall the good man teach his son,

And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by

From this day to the ending of the world,

But we in it shall be remembered"

In the same spirit, Burke urged groups to build and maintain an organizational memory—a record, preferably in hard-copy or digital form, of the history of the group. Such a record will tend to promote cohesion and identity in a group. It should also help integrate new members into the group as they join it.

Celebrate Group Accomplishments

Celebrate the group's accomplishments. People are busy, and members of groups may often feel rushed to accomplish their tasks and move on to other activities. Unless they pause from time to time and take stock of their accomplishments, therefore, they may lose focus and energy.

Once a group is on the road to collaboration, its strengths can be further ensured through feedback and assessment. In the last section of this chapter, we'll consider those two final vital elements of effective motivational behavior.

Key Takeaway

Understanding the significance of social links in a group can provide the foundation for five strategies to promote collaboration.

Exercise 7.5.1

1. Think of a group of which you're a member. To what degree do you believe your fellow members are motivated to collaborate for instrumental reasons, including self-interest, and to what degree by what Tyler calls "social links"? Give examples which support your opinion.
2. When have you relinquished the opportunity to achieve personal gain in a group in order to contribute to the group as a whole? What made you do so? How did the other group members respond to your sacrifice?
3. Consider two academic groups of which you were once a part—perhaps your high school graduating class and a school club or athletic team. What efforts, if any, did each group make to maintain an organizational memory? Comparing the two groups, which one has experienced better collaboration among its members since you left it?

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7.6: Feedback and Assessment

Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate between feedback and assessment
2. Identify the importance of feedback and assessment in motivating group members
3. Identify seven characteristics of feedback and assessment which motivate group members
4. Identify eight appropriate subjects of group feedback and assessment

Any old farmer in Vermont can tell you that you don't fatten your lambs by weighing them. - Jonathan Kozol

To succeed as a team is to hold all of the members accountable for their expertise. - Mitchell Caplan

Jonathan Kozol's point about lambs was that improving something requires that we do more than just check to see if it's getting better. As we've noted in the past several sections with respect to motivation and collaboration in groups, such positive change also requires hard work, concentration, persistence, patience, and a willingness to invest personal energy and time on behalf of goals.

Although he said that weighing lambs by itself will not fatten them, Kozol didn't say that weighing them isn't important at all. If a farmer does nothing but feed and tend animals, after all, how will the farmer know if the feeding and tending are working? And the same thing goes for group communication: if members of a group do nothing but work hard and concentrate intensively on pursuing their goals, how will they know if they're actually moving in the right direction?

Feeding and tending of animals are necessary for them to grow, just as tending a group is necessary for it to progress toward its goals. But for farmers, as well as for members of groups, so are feedback and assessment. As Thompson, (Thompson, L. (2008). *Organizational behavior today*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education) wrote, "It is the feedback element that is the critical ingredient in producing change in behavior." Motivation, in short, depends on both feedback and assessment.

How Feedback and Assessment Differ

Feedback is a general term that simply means communicating with someone in response to a message from that person or with respect to a perception you have about him or her. In day-to-day conversations, it may be a straightforward descriptive comment about facts that happen to catch your attention, like "It looks like you just got a haircut." In a group, an example of feedback might be something like "You've completed your part of the project now."

Assessment, on the other hand, is one variety of feedback. It is an expression of judgment about the value, significance, or merit of a person's nature or behavior. Instead of just describing someone's haircut or indicating that the person has finished a project, an assessment might be more like "Your haircut looks great" or "It's about time you finished your part of the project."

When you transmit any message to other people, and particularly if you share an impression or perception about them, you're asking them to enter a communication transaction with you. They're going to have to focus on your message and use mental energy to decide how to respond. When, then, should you ask people to make this kind of effort by giving them feedback? What kind should you give? And how much? Answering these questions constitutes a normal part of everyday human life with people with whom we interact routinely, but it's a particularly challenging part of working in a group with people whom we may not know as well as we do our family or close friends. Offering assessment can be even more difficult, since it puts us at risk of making a mistake or upsetting other people.

One source of group motivation is a sense of movement and growth. Therefore, among the most useful tools in preparing to provide feedback and assessment are benchmarks. These are qualitative or quantitative descriptions of a group's initial conditions to be used later for comparative purposes. For example, a newly-formed student group might make a list of how many and which books they have read by a particular author or on a particular assigned topic.

Effective Feedback and Assessment in a Group

Feedback and assessment should be planned and delivered carefully and intentionally. If they are to motivate people in a group, they should possess the following characteristics:

1. Relevance. The feedback or assessment should deal with actions the group has decided to take, values the group wants to embody, and especially goals the group has set for itself.
2. Frequency. People are busy and are bombarded with messages all day long, every day. In order to maintain a sense of purpose and focus with regard to their group's activities, members need to be reminded regularly of what and how they're doing.
3. Simplicity. The more direct and readily understandable the feedback and assessment, the better. In the 1960s, a whimsical bumper sticker said "Eschew obfuscation"—which means "avoid unclear communication." Keep things simple.
4. Candor. People generally appreciate honesty. In order to improve what they're doing in a group, give them forthright information about where they stand.
5. Civility. Too much candor can turn into rudeness. Politeness in feedback and assessment makes them easier to accept.
6. Specificity. Everyone in the group needs to understand the message as close to the same way as possible. Do your best, therefore, to be precise and to avoid ambiguity.
7. Eclecticism. Especially in large organizations such as schools and corporations, surveys and polls used as assessment tools can become tedious and burdensome. It's a good idea to invest time in developing creative new ways to monitor a group's stature and progress.

Subjects of Effective Feedback and Assessment

In order to assist and motivate group members, it's important to select the proper items to collect and express feedback and assessment about. Here are some possible topics about which feedback can be given:

1. Group configuration/patterns. Are the boundaries of your group clear? Have those boundaries changed, or are they the same as when the group was formed? Hartley and Dawson, (Hartley, P., & Dawson, M. (2010). *Success in groupwork*. New York: St. Martin's Press) also suggested asking which members occupy positions of status at the center of the group and which members are on its edge.
2. Actions taken by the group. Does everyone agree on what the results of your group's decisions are? Have you kept track of what you've done with lists or other records?
3. Relationship of actions to goals. Which of your group's actions have been guided by its a priori goals, i.e., the ones it established intentionally and explicitly at the outset of its activities? What *ad hoc actions*, if any—that is, ones in response to specific unanticipated circumstances—have you taken since originating the group?

Other topics which your group should consider pertain to assessment, including the following:

1. Adequacy of communication processes. To what degree are your group's members satisfied with the quantity and nature of communication among yourselves? What communication practices do you especially appreciate, and which would you prefer to change?
2. Adequacy of progress toward goals. To what degree are your group's goals being met? If your group's level of progress isn't what you hoped for initially, are you nevertheless comfortable with the lesser results, perhaps because you encountered tougher-than-expected challenges along the way?
3. Group members' individual satisfaction/mood. Unhappy or disgruntled members don't add to the motivational spirit of a group. Try asking the simple question, "So, how are you feeling?" at the conclusion of every major group task. Probing individuals too often about how they're feeling about your group's activities can be distracting, and it can even cause doubts to expand. If you don't check often enough, however, small areas of disagreement or dissatisfaction can grow to damaging proportions. A plan for frequent, regular assessment will help group members feel supported rather than importuned by assessment of their satisfaction.
4. The group's satisfaction with itself. Does your group's "self-portrait" change with time? This sort of question can be posed in efficient, uncomplicated ways. In addition to asking individual members, "So, how are *you* feeling?", it's possible also to ask, "So, how do you think our group's doing?" Even fanciful questions like "What kind of animal are we?" or "What kind of plant?" can quickly help ascertain how positive your group's climate and outlook may be.
5. External views about the group. To remain motivated to collaborate, groups can benefit from asking for perspectives on their activities from outsiders. A fresh view will often raise thoughtful new questions for your group itself to consider.

As Mitchell Caplan's quotation at the beginning of this section indicated, success in groups does depend at least in part on drawing upon the strengths of their members. Feedback and assessment make it possible to determine whether those strengths are being properly exploited and maximized for the benefit of the group.

Key Takeaway

Feedback and assessment in groups should possess definite characteristics and deal with well-thought-out subjects.

Exercise 7.6.1

1. Think of a group of which you're a part which engages in regular, frequent assessment of its activities. Who conducts the assessments? How and when are details of the assessments shared with members of the group? What, if anything, would you do to enhance the assessment process in the group?
2. Consider this feedback: "The group is doing all right, but it could improve." How would you change the message to make it more helpful in motivating members of the group? State a possible revision.
3. In some cultures, delivering direct negative feedback to others is avoided. If you worked in such a culture or with a representative of one, what measures would you take to ensure that the positive outcomes associated in mainstream American society with direct feedback and assessment could be achieved in other ways?
4. What is the most creative feedback or assessment technique you've ever seen used in a group? How effective was the technique? What might have made it even more helpful in motivating group members?

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7.7: Additional Resources

Many organizations employ professional speakers whose chief function is to motivate groups in business, education, and other areas of society. See what you can learn by visiting and assessing the opportunities offered by the following websites associated with organizations of this sort:

- publicspeakers4hire.com
- http://www.speaking.com/: “Speakers’ Platform”
- www.motivational-celebrity-speakers.com/ (sports figures and celebrities)
- http://premierespeakers.com/women_motivational_speaker (women)
- http://nsb.com/speakers (Canadian motivational speakers)

Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman’s book *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, published in 1997 by Perseus Books, describes an impressive example of successful creative collaboration by a small group of employees in Lockheed Martin Corporation during World War II. Lockheed’s “skunkworks”—an unstructured, independent offshoot of the parent company—encouraged collaboration among engineers and others to produce innovative new products in a very short time.

The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington strives to provide its students with a fully collaborative learning environment built around “learning communities.” Visiting the college’s campus or its website (http://www.evergreen.edu) will reveal some of the principles and practices underlying Evergreen’s collaborative philosophy.

Many pairs of musicians have created famous and popular musical compositions. Read about these partnerships to see how well they were able to collaborate and what they felt made their collaboration successful:

- W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan
- Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein
- Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel
- John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Carolyn Wiley of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga published an article in the *International Journal of Manpower*, “What motivates employees according to over 40 years of motivation surveys” (1997—volume 18, issue 3), in which she claimed that employees overwhelmingly chose “good wages” as their top motivator. Although wages seem to be purely extrinsic, Wiley contended that they communicate what an organization values and that they affect employees’ emotional and psychological wellbeing. Reading Wiley’s article should give you a potentially new perspective on what motivates people to put forth effort in the business world.

Many theorists believe that what motivates people is culture-specific. Asians, in particular, are held to behave according to Confucian principles and collectivist motives. The chapter “The nature of achievement motivation in collectivist societies” in *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications* (1994; Cross-cultural research and methodology series, Vol. 18; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications) offers an explanation of this viewpoint.

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7.8: Motivation- Direction and Intensity

Exploring Managerial Careers

Bridget Anderson

Bridget Anderson thought life would be perfect out in the "real world." After earning her degree in computer science, she landed a well-paying job as a programmer for a large nonprofit organization whose mission she strongly believed in. And—initially—she was happy with her job.

Lately, however, Bridget gets a sick feeling in her stomach every morning when her alarm goes off. Why this feeling of misery? After all, she's working in her chosen field in an environment that matches her values. What else could she want? She's more puzzled than anyone.

It's the end of her second year with the organization, and Bridget apprehensively schedules her annual performance evaluation. She knows she's a competent programmer, but she also knows that lately she's been motivated to do only the minimum required to get by. Her heart is just not in her work with this organization. Not exactly how she thought things would turn out, that's for sure.

Bridget's manager Kyle Jacobs surprises her when he begins the evaluation by inquiring about her professional goals. She admits that she hasn't thought much about her future. Kyle asks if she's content in her current position and if she feels that anything is missing. Suddenly, Bridget realizes that she *does* want more professionally.

Question: Are Bridget's motivational problems intrinsic or extrinsic? Which of her needs are currently not being met? What steps should she and her manager take to improve her motivation and ultimately her performance?

Outcome: Once Bridget admits that she's unhappy with her position as a computer programmer, she's ready to explore other possibilities. She and Kyle brainstorm for tasks that will motivate her and bring her greater job satisfaction. Bridget tells Kyle that while she enjoys programming, she feels isolated and misses interacting with other groups in the organization. She also realizes that once she had mastered the initial learning curve, she felt bored. Bridget is ready for a challenge.

Kyle recommends that Bridget move to an information systems team as their technical representative. The team can use Bridget's knowledge of programming, and Bridget will be able to collaborate more frequently with others in the organization.

Bridget and Kyle set specific goals to satisfy her needs to achieve and to work collaboratively. One of Bridget's goals is to take graduate classes in management and information systems. She hopes that this will lead to an MBA and, eventually, to a position as a team leader. Suddenly the prospect of going to work doesn't seem so grim—and lately, Bridget's been beating her alarm!

If you've ever worked with a group of people, and we all have, you have no doubt noticed differences in their performance. Researchers have pondered these differences for many years. Indeed, John B. Watson first studied this issue in the early 1900s. Performance is, of course, an extremely important issue to employers because organizations with high-performing employees will almost always be more effective.

To better understand why people perform at different levels, researchers consider the major determinants of performance: ability, effort (motivation), accurate role perceptions, and environmental factors (see Figure 7.8.1. Each performance determinant is important, and a deficit in one can seriously affect the others. People who don't understand what is expected of them will be constrained by their own inaccurate role perceptions, even if they have strong abilities and motivation and the necessary resources to perform their job. None of the performance determinants can compensate for a deficiency in any of the other determinants. Thus, a manager cannot compensate for an employee's lack of skills and ability by strengthening their motivation.

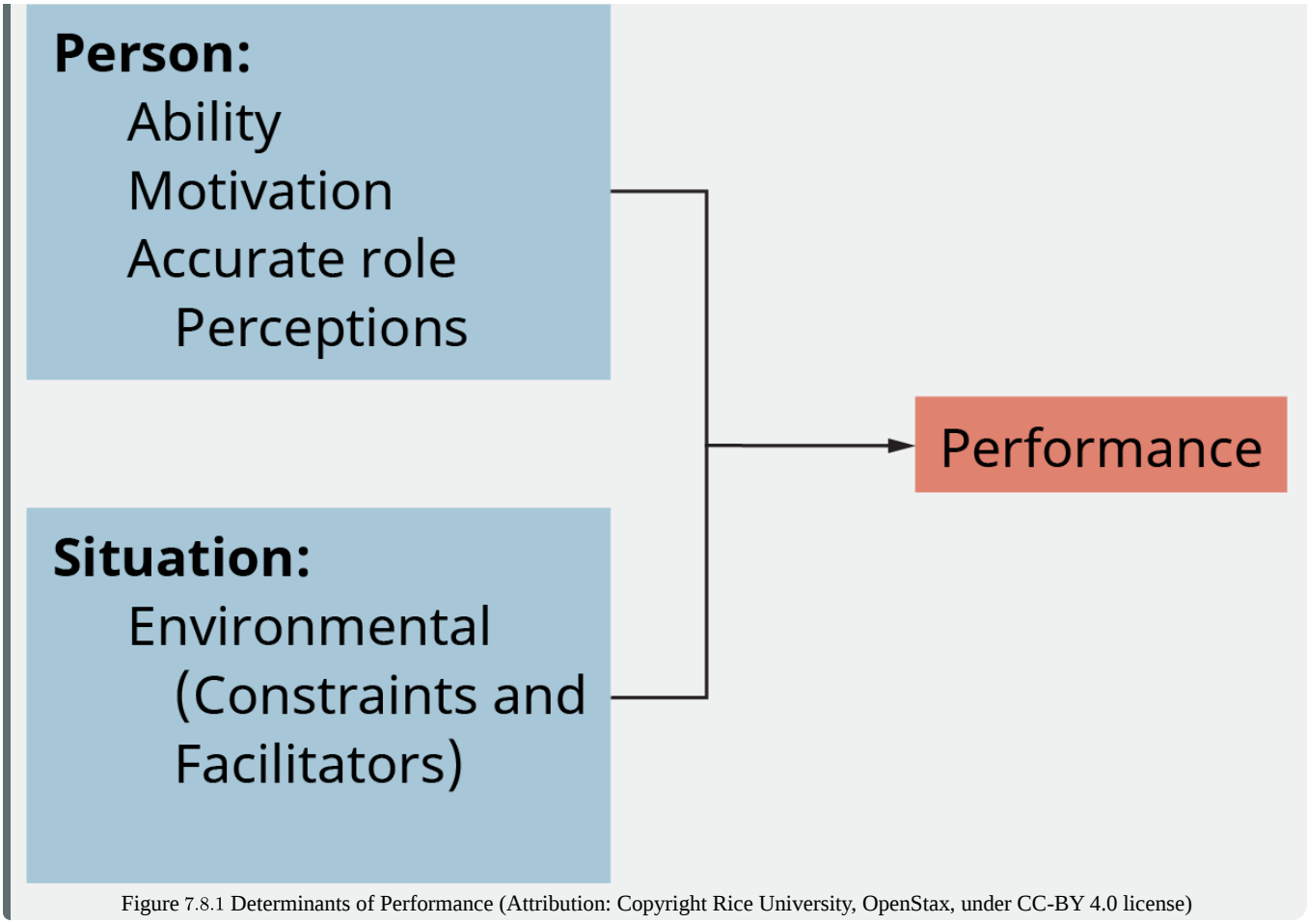


Figure 7.8.1 Determinants of Performance (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

Define motivation and distinguish direction and intensity of motivation.

Ability refers to the knowledge, skills, and receptiveness to learning that a person brings to a task or job. Knowledge is what a person knows. Skill is their capacity to perform some particular activity (like welding or accounting), including knowing what is expected of them (called accurate role perceptions). Receptiveness to learning is a function of how quickly a person acquires new knowledge. Some people have more ability than others, and high-ability people generally perform better than low-ability people (although we will see that this is not always the case).[1]

Accurate **role perceptions** refer to how well an individual understands their organizational role. This includes the goals (outcomes) the person is expected to achieve and the process by which the goals will be achieved. An employee who has accurate role perceptions knows both their expected outcomes *and* how to go about making those outcomes a reality. Incomplete or inaccurate role perceptions limit employees' capacity to meet expectations, regardless of their abilities and motivation.

The **performance environment** refers to those factors that impact employees' performance but are essentially out of their control. Many environmental factors influence performance. Some factors facilitate performance, while others constrain it. A word processor who has to work with a defective personal computer is certainly not going to perform at peak levels, regardless of ability or desire. Students who are working full time and carrying a full load of classes may not do as well on an exam as they would if they could cut back on their work hours, despite the fact that they have high ability and high motivation.

Motivation is the fourth major factor that determines whether a person will perform a task well. **Motivation** is a force within or outside of the body that energizes, directs, and sustains human behavior. Within the body, examples might be needs, personal values, and goals, while an incentive might be seen as a force outside of the body. The word stems from its Latin root *movere*, which means "to move." Generally speaking, motivation arises as a consequence of a person's desire to (1) fulfill unmet needs or (2) resolve conflicting thoughts that produce anxiety (an unpleasant experience). There are many ways in which we describe and categorize human needs, as we will see later in this chapter. Certain needs are fundamental to our existence, like the need for food

and water. When we are hungry, we are energized to satisfy that need by securing and ingesting food. Our other needs operate in a similar manner. When a need is unfulfilled, we are motivated to engage in behaviors that will satisfy it. The same is true for situations in which we experience conflicting thoughts. When we find ourselves in situations inconsistent with our beliefs, values, or expectations, we endeavor to eliminate the inconsistency. We either change the situation, or change our perception of it. In both cases, motivation arises out of our interaction with and perception of a particular situation. We perceive the situation as satisfying our needs, or not. Motivation is thus a result of our interacting with situations to satisfy unmet needs or to resolve cognitive dissonance.



Figure 7.8.2 Tom Brady. At the University of Michigan, Tom Brady was always a backup to high-potential quarterbacks and was a sixth-round draft pick after his college career. He commented, “A lot of people don’t believe in you. It’s obvious by now, six other quarterbacks taken and 198 other picks. And I always thought ‘you know what, once I get my shot, I’m gonna be ready. I’m gonna really take advantage of that.’” Rather than give up, he hired a sports psychologist to help him deal with constant frustrations. Brady would eventually become an elite quarterback and is now considered one of the greatest players ever. “I guess in a sense I’ve always had a chip on my shoulder. If you were the 199th pick, you were the 199th pick for a reason: because someone didn’t think you were good enough.” His passion and motivation helped him achieve that status. (Credit: Brook Ward/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Simply stated, **work motivation** is the amount of effort a person exerts to achieve a certain level of job performance. Some people try very hard to perform their jobs well. They work long hours, even if it interferes with their family life. Highly motivated people go the "extra mile." High scorers on an exam make sure they know the examination material to the best of their ability, no matter how much midnight oil they have to burn. Other students who don't do as well may just want to get by—football games and parties are a lot more fun, after all.

Motivation is of great interest to employers: *All* employers want their people to perform to the best of their abilities. They take great pains to screen applicants to make sure they have the necessary abilities and motivation to perform well. They endeavor to supply all the necessary resources and a good work environment. Yet motivation remains a difficult factor to manage. As a result, it receives the most attention from organizations and researchers alike, who ask the perennial question "What motivates people to perform well?"

In this chapter, we look at the current answers to this question. What work conditions foster motivation? How can theories of motivation help us understand the general principles that guide organizational behavior? Rather than analyze why a particular student studies hard for a test, we'll look at the underlying principles of our general behavior in a variety of situations (including test-taking). We also discuss the major theories of motivation, along with their implications for management and organizational behavior. By the end of this chapter, you should have a better understanding of why some people are more motivated than others. Successful employees know what they want to achieve (direction), and they persist until they achieve their goals (intensity).

Our discussion thus far implies that motivation is a matter of effort. This is only partially true. Motivation has two major components: direction and intensity. **Direction** is *what* a person wants to achieve, what they intend to do. It implies a target that motivated people to try to "hit." That target may be to do well on a test. Or it may be to perform better than anyone else in a workgroup. **Intensity** is *how hard* people try to achieve their targets. Intensity is what we think of as effort. It represents the energy we expend to accomplish something. If our efforts are getting nowhere, will we try different strategies to succeed? (High-intensity-motivated people are persistent!)

It is important to distinguish the direction and intensity aspects of motivation. If *either* is lacking, performance will suffer. A person who knows what they want to accomplish (direction) but doesn't exert much effort (intensity) will not succeed. (Scoring 100 percent on an exam—your target—won't happen unless you study!) Conversely, people who don't have a direction (what they want to accomplish) probably won't succeed either. (At some point you have to decide on a major if you want to graduate, even if you do have straight As.)

Employees' targets don't always match with what their employers want. Absenteeism (some employees call this "calling in well") is a major example.[2] Pursuing your favorite hobby (your target) on a workday (your employer's target) is a conflict in direction; below, we'll examine some theories about why this conflict occurs.

There is another reason why employees' targets are sometimes contrary to their employers'—sometimes employers do not ensure that employees understand what the employer wants. Employees can have great intensity but poor direction. It is the management's job to provide direction: Should we stress quality as well as quantity? Work independently or as a team? Meet deadlines at the expense of costs? Employees flounder without direction. Clarifying direction results in accurate *role perceptions*, the behaviors employees think they are expected to perform as members of an organization. Employees with accurate role perceptions understand their purpose in the organization and how the performance of their job duties contributes to organizational objectives. Some motivation theorists assume that employees know the correct direction for their jobs. Others do not. These differences are highlighted in the discussion of motivation theories below.

At this point, as we begin our discussion of the various motivation theories, it is reasonable to ask "Why isn't there just one motivation theory?" The answer is that different theories are driven by different philosophies of motivation. Some theorists assume that humans are propelled more by needs and instincts than by reasoned actions. Their **content motivation theories** focus on *the content of what* motivates people. Other theorists focus on the process by which people are motivated. **Process motivation theories** address *how* people become motivated—that is, how people perceive and think about a situation. Content and process theories endeavor to predict motivation in a variety of situations. However, none of these theories can predict what will motivate an individual in a given situation 100 percent of the time. Given the complexity of human behavior, a "grand theory" of motivation will probably never be developed.

A second reasonable question at this point is “Which theory is best?” If that question could be easily answered, this chapter would be quite short. The simple answer is that there is no “one best theory.” All have been supported by organizational behavior research. All have strengths and weaknesses. However, understanding something about each theory is a major step toward effective management practices.

Exercise 7.8.1

1. Explain the two drivers of motivation: direction and intensity.
2. What are the differences between content and process theories of motivation?
3. Will there ever be a grand theory of motivation?

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7.9: Content Theories of Motivation

Describe a content theory of motivation.

The theories presented in this section focus on the importance of human needs. A common thread through all of them is that people have a variety of needs. A **need** is a human condition that becomes "energized" when people feel deficient in some respect. When we are hungry, for example, our need for food has been energized. Two features of needs are key to understanding motivation. First, when a need has been energized, we are motivated to satisfy it. We strive to make the need disappear. **Hedonism,** one of the first motivation theories, assumes that people are motivated to satisfy mainly their own needs (seek pleasure, avoid pain). Long since displaced by more refined theories, hedonism clarifies the idea that needs provide direction for motivation. Second, once we have satisfied a need, it ceases to motivate us. When we've eaten to satiation, we are no longer motivated to eat. Other needs take over and we endeavor to satisfy them. A **manifest need** is whatever need is motivating us at a given time. Manifest needs dominate our other needs.

Instincts are our natural, fundamental needs, basic to our survival. Our needs for food and water are instinctive. Many needs are learned. We are not born with a high (or low) need for achievement—we learn to need success (or failure). The distinction between instinctive and learned needs sometimes blurs; for example, is our need to socialize with other people instinctive or learned?

Manifest Needs Theory

One major problem with the need approach to motivation is that we can make up a need for every human behavior. Do we "need" to talk or be silent? The possibilities are endless. In fact, around the 1920s, some 6,000 human needs had been identified by behavioral scientists!

Henry A. Murray recognized this problem and condensed the list into a few instinctive and learned needs.[3] Instincts, which Murray called **primary needs**, include physiological needs for food, water, sex (procreation), urination, and so on. Learned needs, which Murray called **secondary needs**, are learned throughout one's life and are basically psychological in nature. They include such needs as the need for achievement, for love, and for affiliation (see Table 7.9.1).[4]

Sample Items from Murray's List of Needs

Social Motive	Brief Definition
Abasement	To submit passively to external force. To accept injury, blame, criticism, punishment. To surrender.
Achievement	To accomplish something difficult. To master, manipulate, or organize physical objects, human beings, or ideas.
Affiliation	To draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with an allied other (an other who resembles the subject or who likes the subject). To please and win affection of a coveted object. To adhere and remain loyal to a friend.
Aggression	To overcome opposition forcefully. To fight. To revenge an injury. To attack, injure, or kill another. To oppose forcefully or punish another.
Autonomy	To get free, shake off restraint, break out of confinement.
Counteraction	To master or make up for a failure by restriving.
Defendance	To defend the self against assault, criticism, and blame. To conceal or justify a misdeed, failure, or humiliation. To vindicate the ego.
Deference	To admire and support a superior. To praise, honor, or eulogize.
Dominance	To control one's human environment. To influence or direct the behavior of others by suggestion, seduction, persuasion, or command.
Exhibition	To make an impression. To be seen and heard. To excite, amaze, fascinate, entertain, shock, intrigue, amuse, or entice others.
Harm avoidance	To avoid pain, physical injury, illness, and death. To escape from a dangerous situation. To take precautionary measures.
Infavoidance	To avoid humiliation. To quit embarrassing situations or to avoid conditions that may lead to belittlement or the scorn or indifference of others.
Nurturance	To give sympathy and gratify the needs of a helpless object: an infant or any object that is weak, disabled, tired, inexperienced, infirm, defeated, humiliated, lonely, dejected, sick, or mentally confused. To assist an object in danger. To feed, help, support, console, protect, comfort, nurse, heal.
Order	To put things in order. To achieve cleanliness, arrangement, organization, balance, neatness, tidiness, and precision.
Play	To act for "fun" without further purpose. To like to laugh and make jokes. To seek enjoyable relaxation from stress.
Rejection	To separate oneself from a negatively valued object. To exclude, abandon, expel, or remain indifferent to an inferior object. To snub or jilt an object.
Sentience	To seek and enjoy sensuous impressions.

Source: Adapted from C. S. Hall and G. Lindzey, *Theories of Personality.* Sample items from Murray's List of Needs. Copyright 1957 by John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Social Motive	Brief Definition
Sex	To form and further an erotic relationship. To have sexual intercourse.
Succorance	To have one's needs gratified by the sympathetic aid of an allied object.
Understanding	To ask or answer general questions. To be interested in theory. To speculate, formulate, analyze, and generalize.
Source: Adapted from C. S. Hall and G. Lindzey, *Theories of Personality.* Sample items from Murray's List of Needs. Copyright 1957 by John Wiley & Sons, New York.	

Table 7.9.1

Murray's main premise was that people have a variety of needs, but only a few are expressed at a given time. When a person is behaving in a way that satisfies some need, Murray called the need manifest. **Manifest needs theory** assumes that human behavior is driven by the desire to satisfy needs. Lucretia's chattiness probably indicates her need for affiliation. This is a manifest need. But what if Lucretia also has a need to dominate others? Could we detect that need from her current behavior? If not, Murray calls this a latent need. A **latent need** cannot be inferred from a person's behavior at a given time, yet the person may still possess that need. The person may not have had the opportunity to express the need. Or she may not be in the proper environment to solicit behaviors to satisfy the need. Lucretia's need to dominate may not be motivating her current behavior because she is with friends instead of coworkers.

Manifest needs theory laid the groundwork for later theories, most notably McClelland's learned needs theory, that have greatly influenced the study of organizational behavior. The major implication for management is that some employee needs are latent. Managers often assume that employees do not have certain needs because the employees never try to satisfy them at work. Such needs may exist (latent needs); the work environment is simply not conducive to their manifestation (manifest needs). A reclusive accountant may not have been given the opportunity to demonstrate his need for achievement because he never received challenging assignments.

Learned Needs Theory

David C. McClelland and his associates (especially John W. Atkinson) built on the work of Murray for over 50 years. Murray studied many different needs, but very few in any detail. McClelland's research differs from Murray's in that McClelland studied three needs in-depth: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power (often abbreviated, in turn, as nAch, nAff, and nPow).[5] McClelland believes that these three needs are learned, primarily in childhood. But he also believes that each need can be taught, especially nAch. McClelland's research is important because much of the current thinking about organizational behavior is based on it.

Need for Achievement

The **need for achievement (nAch)** is how much people are motivated to excel at the tasks they are performing, especially tasks that are difficult. Of the three needs studied by McClelland, nAch has the greatest impact. The need for achievement varies in intensity across individuals. This makes nAch a personality trait as well as a statement about motivation. When nAch is being expressed, making it a manifest need, people try hard to succeed at whatever task they're doing. We say these people have a high achievement motive. A **motive** is a source of motivation; it is the need that a person is attempting to satisfy. Achievement needs become manifest when individuals experience certain types of situations.

To better understand the nAch motive, it's helpful to describe high-nAch people. You probably know a few of them. They're constantly trying to accomplish something. One of your authors has a father-in-law who would much rather spend his weekends digging holes (for various home projects) than going fishing. Why? Because when he digs a hole, he gets results. In contrast, he can exert a lot of effort and still not catch a fish. A lot of fishing, no fish, and no results equal failure!

McClelland describes three major characteristics of high-nAch people:

1. They feel personally responsible for completing whatever tasks they are assigned. They accept credit for success and blame for failure.
2. They like situations where the probability of success is moderate. High-nAch people are not motivated by tasks that are too easy or extremely difficult. Instead, they prefer situations where the outcome is uncertain, but in which they believe they can succeed if they exert enough effort. They avoid both simple and impossible situations.
3. They have very strong desires for feedback about how well they are doing. They actively seek out performance feedback. It doesn't matter whether the information implies success or failure. They want to know whether they have achieved or not. They constantly ask how they are doing, sometimes to the point of being a nuisance.

Why is nAch important to organizational behavior? The answer is, the success of many organizations is dependent on the nAch levels of their employees.[6] This is especially true for jobs that require self-motivation and managing others. Employees who continuously have to be told how to do their jobs require an overly large management team, and too many layers of management spell trouble in the current marketplace. Today's flexible, cost-conscious organizations have no room for top-heavy structures; their high-nAch employees perform their jobs well with minimal supervision.

Many organizations manage the achievement needs of their employees poorly. A common perception about people who perform unskilled jobs is that they are unmotivated and content doing what they are doing. But, if they have achievement needs, the job itself creates little motivation to perform. It is too easy. There are not enough workers who feel personal satisfaction for having the cleanest floors in a building. Designing jobs that are neither too challenging nor too boring is key to managing motivation. Job enrichment is one effective strategy; this frequently entails training and rotating employees through different jobs, or adding new challenges.



Figure 7.9.1 **New York Metro workers carrying a sign.** The New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority undertook a new approach to how they perform critical inspection and maintenance of subway components that are necessary to providing reliable service. Rather than schedule these inspections during regular hours, they consulted with the maintenance workers, who suggested doing the inspections while sections of the subway were closed to trains for seven consecutive hours. This process was adopted and provided a safer and more efficient way to maintain and clean New York City's sprawling subway. With no trains running, MTA employees are able to inspect signals, replace rails and crossties, scrape track floors, clean stations, and paint areas that are not reachable during normal train operation. Workers also took the opportunity to clean lighting fixtures, change bulbs, and repair platform edges while performing high-intensity station cleaning. (Credit: Patrick Cashin/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Need for Affiliation

This need is the second of McClelland's learned needs. The **need for affiliation (nAff)** reflects a desire to establish and maintain warm and friendly relationships with other people. As with nAch, nAff varies in intensity across individuals. As you would expect, high-nAff people are very sociable. They're more likely to go bowling with friends after work than to go home and watch television. Other people have lower affiliation needs. This doesn't mean that they avoid other people, or that they dislike others. They simply don't exert as much effort in this area as high-nAff people do.

The nAff has important implications for organizational behavior. High-nAff people like to be around other people, including other people at work. As a result, they perform better in jobs that require teamwork. Maintaining good relationships with their coworkers is important to them, so they go to great lengths to make the workgroup succeed because they fear rejection. So, high-nAff employees will be especially motivated to perform well if others depend on them. In contrast, if high-nAff people perform jobs in isolation from other people, they will be less motivated to perform well. Performing well on this job won't satisfy their need to be around other people.

Effective managers carefully assess the degree to which people have high or low nAff. Employees high in nAff should be placed in jobs that require or allow interactions with other employees. Jobs that are best performed alone are more appropriate for low-nAff employees, who are less likely to be frustrated.

Need for Power

The third of McClelland's learned needs, the **need for power (nPow)**, is the need to control things, especially other people. It reflects a motivation to influence and be responsible for other people. An employee who is often talkative, gives orders, and argues a lot is motivated by the need for power over others.

Employees with high nPow can be beneficial to organizations. High-nPow people do have effective employee behaviors, but at times they're disruptive. A high-nPow person may try to convince others to do things that are detrimental to the organization. So, when is this need good, and when is it bad? Again, there are no easy answers. McClelland calls this the "two faces of power."[7] A *personal power seeker* endeavors to control others mostly for the sake of dominating them. They want others to respond to their wishes whether or not it is good for the organization. They "build empires," and they protect them.

McClelland's other power seeker is the *social power seeker.* A high social power seeker satisfies needs for power by influencing others, like the personal power seeker. They differ in that they feel best when they have influenced a workgroup to achieve the group's goals, and not some personal agenda. High social power-seekers are concerned with goals that a workgroup has set for itself, and they are motivated to influence others to achieve the goal. This need is oriented toward fulfilling responsibilities to the employer, not to the self.

McClelland has argued that the high need for social power is the most important motivator for successful managers. Successful managers tend to be high in this type of nPow. High need for achievement can also be important, but it sometimes results in too much concern for personal success and not enough for the employer's success. The need for affiliation contributes to managerial success only in those situations where the maintenance of warm group relations is as important as getting others to work toward group goals.

The implication of McClelland's research is that organizations should try to place people with high needs for social power in managerial jobs. It is critical, however, that those managerial jobs allow the employee to satisfy the nPow through social power acquisition. Otherwise, a manager high in nPow may satisfy this need through the acquisition of personal power, to the detriment of the organization.

Ethics in Practice

Corporate Social Responsibility as a Motivating Force

Whatever their perspective, most people have a cause that they are passionate about. Bitcoin or net neutrality, sea levels or factory farming—social causes bind us to a larger context or assume a higher purpose for living better.

So what motivates employees to give their all, work creatively, and be fully engaged? According to CB Bhattacharya, the Pietro Ferrero Chair in Sustainability at ESMT European School of Management and Technology in Berlin, Germany, employment engagement, or how positive employees feel about their current job, was at an all-time low globally in 2016: 13 percent. But not all companies battle such low engagement rates. Unilever employees more than 170,000 workers globally and has an employ engagement level around 80 percent. How? Bhattacharya credits the success of Unilever, and other companies with similar engagement levels, to an emphasis on a "sustainable business model." He outlines eight steps that companies take to move sustainability and social responsibility from buzzwords to a company mission capable of motivating employees (Knowledge @ Wharton 2016).

According to Bhattacharya, a company needs to first define what it does and its long-term purpose, and then reconcile its sustainability goals with its economic goals. With its purpose and goals defined, it can then educate the workforce on sustainable methods to create knowledge and competence. Champions for the effort must be found throughout the organization, not just at the top. Competition should be encouraged among employees to find and embrace new goals. Sustainability should be visible both within and outside the company. Sustainability should be tied to a higher purpose and foster a sense of unity not simply among employees, but even with competition at a societal level (Knowledge @ Wharton 2016).

Other companies have made social responsibility an everyday part of what they do. Launched in 2013, Bombas is the brainchild of Randy Goldberg and David Heath. Goldberg and Heath discovered that socks are the most-requested clothing at homeless shelters. In response, the two entrepreneurs launched a line of socks that not only "reinvents" the sock (they claim),

but also helps those in need. For each pair of socks purchased, the company donates a pair of socks to someone in need (Mulvey 2017). According to the company website, “Bombas exists to help solve this problem, to support the homeless community, and to bring awareness to an under-publicized problem in the United States” (n.p.). Although the New York-based company is still growing, as of October 2017 Bombas had donated more than four million pairs of socks (Bombas 2017).

In 2016, the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) launched a pilot program called Jump in which employees participated in challenges on ways to save water and electricity, as well as other sustainability issues. At the end of the pilot, 95 percent of the employees reported that they felt the program had contributed to employee engagement, team building, and environmental stability. Given the success of the program, in 2017 it was expanded to all RBS sites and a smartphone app was added to help employees participate in the challenges (Barton 2017).

Placing a *company* in a larger context and adding a second, higher purpose than the established company goals motivates employees to police the company itself to be a better global citizen. Companies benefit from reduced waste and increased employee engagement. Many companies are successfully motivating their staff, and working toward more sustainable practices, while improving lives directly.

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Questions:

1. Do you think social responsibility to promote sustainable practices? Why or why not?
2. Do you think most companies’ CSR programs are essentially PR gimmicks? Why or why not? Give examples.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Any discussion of needs that motivate performance would be incomplete without considering Abraham Maslow.[8] Thousands of managers in the 1960s were exposed to Maslow’s theory through the popular writings of Douglas McGregor.[9] Today, many of them still talk about employee motivation in terms of Maslow’s theory.

Maslow was a psychologist who, based on his early research with primates (monkeys), observations of patients, and discussions with employees in organizations, theorized that human needs are arranged hierarchically. That is, before one type of need can manifest itself, other needs must be satisfied. For example, our need for water takes precedence over our need for social interaction (this is also called *prepotency*). We will always satisfy our need for water before we satisfy our social needs; water needs have prepotency over social needs. Maslow’s theory differs from others that preceded it because of this hierarchical, prepotency concept.

Maslow went on to propose five basic types of human needs. This is in contrast to the thousands of needs that earlier researchers had identified, and also fewer than Murray identified in his theory. Maslow condensed human needs into a manageable set. Those five human needs, in the order of prepotency in which they direct human behavior, are:

1. *Physiological and survival needs.* These are the most basic of human needs and include the needs for water, food, sex, sleep, activity, stimulation, and oxygen.
2. *Safety and security needs.* These needs invoke behaviors that assure freedom from danger. This set of needs involves meeting threats to our existence, including extremes in environmental conditions (heat, dust, and so on), assault from other humans, tyranny, and murder. In other words, satisfaction of these needs prevents fear and anxiety while adding stability and predictability to life.

3. *Social needs.* These needs reflect human desires to be the target of affection and love from others. They are especially satisfied by the presence of spouses, children, parents, friends, relatives, and others to whom we feel close. Feelings of loneliness and rejection are symptoms that this need has not been satisfied.
4. *Ego and esteem.* Esteem needs to go beyond social needs. They reflect our need to be respected by others, and to have esteem for ourselves. It is one thing to be liked by others. It is another thing to be respected for our talents and abilities. Ego and esteem needs have internal (self) and external (others) focuses. An internal focus includes desires for achievement, strength, competence, confidence, and independence. An external focus includes desires to have prestige, recognition, appreciation, attention, and respect from others. Satisfaction of external esteem needs can lead to satisfaction of internal esteem needs.
5. *Self-actualization.* Self-actualization needs are the most difficult to describe. Unlike the other needs, the need for self-actualization is never completely satisfied. Self-actualization involves a desire for self-fulfillment, "to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming."[10] Because people are so different in their strengths and weaknesses, in capacities and limitations, the meaning of self-actualization varies greatly. Satisfying self-actualization needs means developing all of our special abilities to their fullest degree.



Figure 7.9.2 Seattle protester with sign (Credit: Adrenalin Tim /flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Figure 7.9.2 A protester at an anti-war demonstration in Seattle held up this sign. Where would you place that on Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

Figure 7.9.3 illustrates Maslow's proposed hierarchy of needs. According to his theory, people first direct their attention to satisfying their lower-order needs. Those are the needs at the bottom of the pyramid (physiological, safety, and security). Once those needs have been satisfied, the next level, social needs, becomes energized. Once satisfied, we focus on our ego and esteem needs. Maslow believed that most people become fixated at this level. That is, most people spend much of their lives developing self-esteem and the esteem of others. But, once those esteem needs are satisfied, Maslow predicted that self-actualization needs would dominate. There are no higher levels in the pyramid, because self-actualization needs can never be fully satisfied. They represent a continuing process of self-development and self-improvement that, once satisfied on one dimension (painting), create motivation to continue on other dimensions (sculpting). One wonders if athletes like Tim Tebow are self-actualizing when they participate in multiple sporting endeavors at the professional level.

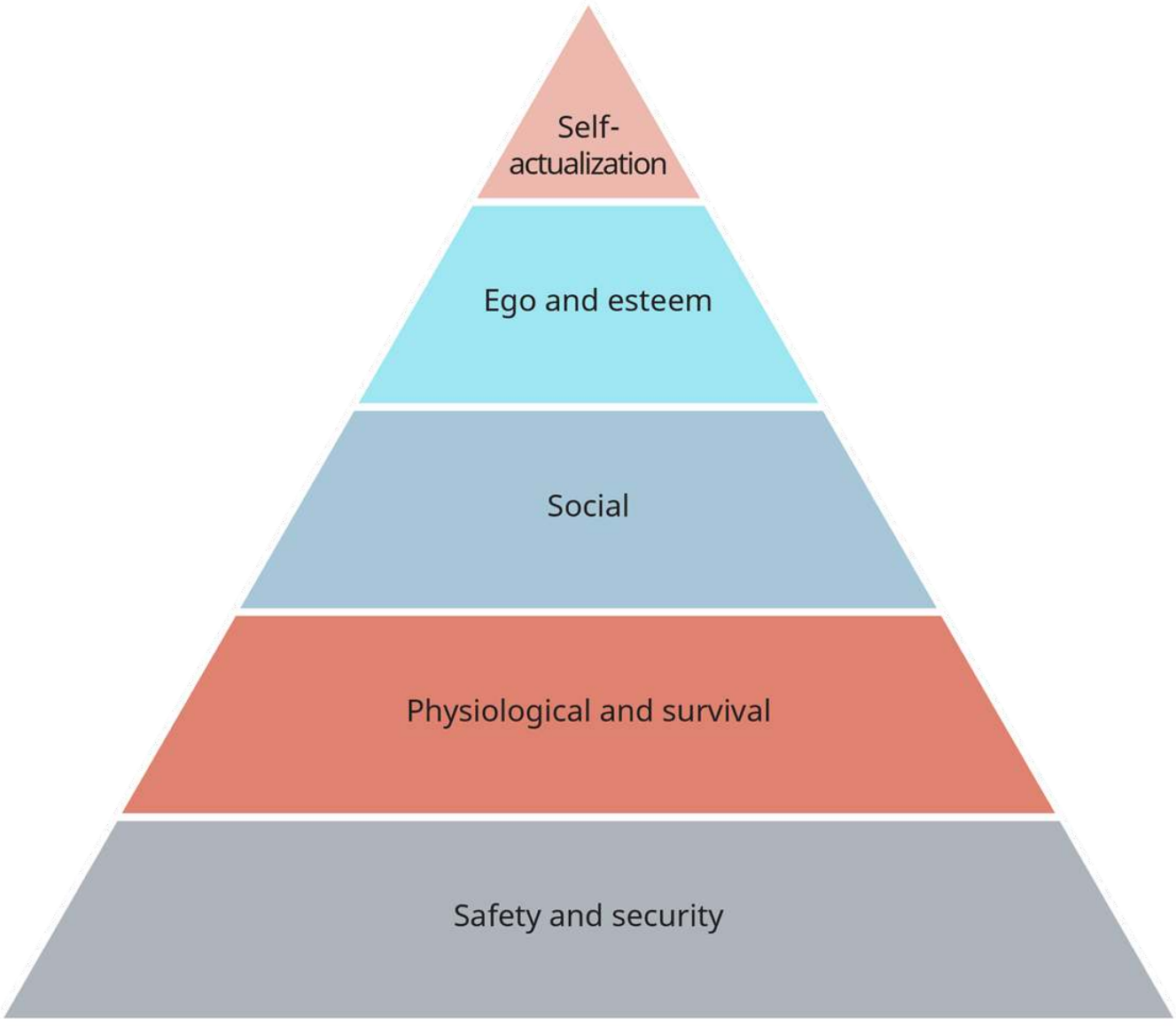


Figure 7.9.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Source:* Based on A. H. Maslow. 1943. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin* 50:370–396.

An overriding principle in this theory is that a person's attention (direction) and energy (intensity) will focus on satisfying the lowest-level need that is not currently satisfied. Needs can also be satisfied at some point but become active (dissatisfied) again.

Needs must be “maintained” (we must continue to eat occasionally). According to Maslow, when lower-level needs are reactivated, we once again concentrate on that need. That is, we lose interest in the higher-level needs when lower-order needs are energized.

The implications of Maslow’s theory for organizational behavior are as much conceptual as they are practical. The theory posits that to maximize employee motivation, employers must try to guide workers to the upper parts of the hierarchy. That means that the employer should help employees satisfy lower-order needs like safety and security and social needs. Once satisfied, employees will be motivated to build esteem and respect through their work achievements. **Exhibit 7.6** shows how Maslow’s theory relates to factors that organizations can influence. For example, by providing adequate pay, safe working conditions, and cohesive work groups, employers help employees satisfy their lower-order needs. Once satisfied, challenging jobs, additional responsibilities, and prestigious job titles can help employees satisfy higher-order esteem needs.

Maslow’s theory is still popular among practicing managers. Organizational behavior researchers, however, are not as enamored with it because research results don’t support Maslow’s hierarchical notion. Apparently, people don’t go through the five levels in a fixed fashion. On the other hand, there is some evidence that people satisfy the lower-order needs before they attempt to satisfy higher-order needs. Refinements of Maslow’s theory in recent years reflect this more limited hierarchy.[11] The self-assessment below will allow you to evaluate the strength of your five needs.

Alderfer’s ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer observed that very few attempts had been made to test Maslow’s full theory. Further, the evidence accumulated provided only partial support. During the process of refining and extending Maslow’s theory, Alderfer provided another need-based theory and a somewhat more useful perspective on motivation.[12] Alderfer’s **ERG theory** compresses Maslow’s five need categories into three: existence, relatedness, and growth.[13] In addition, ERG theory details the dynamics of an individual’s movement between the need categories in a somewhat more detailed fashion than typically characterizes interpretations of Maslow’s work.

As shown in Figure 7.9.4, the ERG model addresses the same needs as those identified in Maslow’s work:



Figure 7.9.4 Alderfer's ERG Theory (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

- *Existence needs* include physiological and material safety needs. These needs are satisfied by material conditions and not through interpersonal relations or personal involvement in the work setting.
- *Relatedness needs* include all of Maslow's social needs, plus social safety and social esteem needs. These needs are satisfied through the exchange of thoughts and feelings with other people.
- *Growth needs* include self-esteem and self-actualization needs. These needs tend to be satisfied through one's full involvement in work and the work setting.

Figure 7.9.5 identifies a number of ways in which organizations can help their members satisfy these three needs.



Figure 7.9.5 Satisfying Existence, Relatedness, and Growth Needs (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

Four components—satisfaction progression, frustration, frustration regression, and aspiration—are key to understanding Alderfer's ERG theory. The first of these, *satisfaction progression*, is in basic agreement with Maslow's process of moving through the needs. As we increasingly satisfy our existence needs, we direct energy toward relatedness needs. As these needs are satisfied, our growth needs become more active. The second component, *frustration*, occurs when we attempt but fail to satisfy a particular need. The resulting frustration may make satisfying the unmet need even more important to us—unless we repeatedly fail to satisfy that need. In this case, Alderfer's third component, *frustration regression*, can cause us to shift our attention to a previously satisfied, more concrete, and verifiable need. Lastly, the *aspiration* component of the ERG model notes that, by its very nature, growth is intrinsically satisfying. The more we grow, the more we want to grow. Therefore, the more we satisfy our growth need, the more important it becomes and the more strongly we are motivated to satisfy it.



Figure 7.9.6 Jamie Dimon. Jamie Dimon, CEO at JP Morgan Chase, is reported to make $27 million dollars per year, and as CEO has an interesting and intrinsically rewarding job. Starting tellers at a Chase Bank make a reported $36,100 per year and are in a position that has repeated tasks and may not be the most rewarding from a motivational point of view. How does this pay structure relate to the self-determination theory (SDT)? (Credit: Stefan Chow/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Alderfer's model is potentially more useful than Maslow's in that it doesn't create false motivational categories. For example, it is difficult for researchers to ascertain when interaction with others satisfies our need for acceptance and when it satisfies our need for recognition. ERG also focuses attention explicitly on movement through the set of needs in both directions. Further, evidence in support of the three need categories and their order tends to be stronger than evidence for Maslow's five need categories and their relative order.

Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory

Clearly one of the most influential motivation theories throughout the 1950s and 1960s was Frederick Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory.[14] This theory is a further refinement of Maslow's theory. Herzberg argued that there are two sets of needs, instead of the five sets theorized by Maslow. He called the first set "motivators" (or growth needs). **Motivators**, which relate to the jobs we perform and our ability to feel a sense of achievement as a result of performing them, are rooted in our need to experience growth and self-actualization. The second set of needs he termed "hygienes." **Hygienes** relate to the work environment and are based in the basic human need to "avoid pain." According to Herzberg, growth needs motivate us to perform well and, when these needs are met, lead to the experience of satisfaction. Hygiene needs, on the other hand, must be met to avoid dissatisfaction (but do not necessarily provide satisfaction or motivation).[15]

Hygiene factors are not directly related to the work itself (job content). Rather, hygienes refer to job context factors (pay, working conditions, supervision, and security). Herzberg also refers to these factors as "dissatisfiers" because they are frequently associated with dissatisfied employees. These factors are so frequently associated with dissatisfaction that Herzberg claims they never really provide satisfaction. When they're present in sufficient quantities, we avoid dissatisfaction, but they do not contribute to satisfaction. Furthermore, since meeting these needs does not provide satisfaction, Herzberg concludes that they do not motivate workers.

Motivator factors involve our long-term need to pursue psychological growth (much like Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs). Motivators relate to *job content*. Job content is what we actually *do* when we perform our job duties. Herzberg considered job duties that lead to feelings of achievement and recognition to be motivators. He refers to these factors as "satisfiers" to reflect their ability to provide satisfying experiences. When these needs are met, we experience satisfaction. Because meeting these needs provides satisfaction, they motivate workers. More specifically, Herzberg believes these motivators lead to high performance (achievement), and the high performance itself leads to satisfaction.

The unique feature of Herzberg's theory is that job conditions that prevent dissatisfaction do not cause satisfaction. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction are on different "scales" in his view. Hygienes can cause dissatisfaction if they are not present in sufficient levels. Thus, an employee can be dissatisfied with low pay. But paying him more will not cause long-term satisfaction *unless* motivators are present. Good pay *by itself* will only make the employee neutral toward work; to attain satisfaction, employees need challenging job duties that result in a sense of achievement. Employees can be dissatisfied, neutral, or satisfied with their jobs, depending on their levels of hygienes and motivators. Herzberg's theory even allows for the possibility that an employee can be satisfied and dissatisfied at the same time—the "I love my job but I hate the pay" situation!

Herzberg's theory has made lasting contributions to organizational research and managerial practice. Researchers have used it to identify the wide range of factors that influence worker reactions. Previously, most organizations attended primarily to hygiene factors. Because of Herzberg's work, organizations today realize the potential of motivators. Job enrichment programs are among the many direct results of his research.

Herzberg's work suggests a two-stage process for managing employee motivation and satisfaction. First, managers should address the hygiene factors. Intense forms of dissatisfaction distract employees from important work-related activities and tend to be demotivating.[16] Thus, managers should make sure that such basic needs as adequate pay, safe and clean working conditions, and opportunities for social interaction are met. They should then address the much more powerful motivator needs, in which workers experience recognition, responsibility, achievement, and growth. If motivator needs are ignored, neither long-term satisfaction nor high motivation is likely. When motivator needs are met, however, employees feel satisfied and are motivated to perform well.

Self-Determination Theory

One major implication of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory is the somewhat counterintuitive idea that managers should focus more on motivators than on hygienes. (After all, doesn't everyone want to be paid well? Organizations have held this out as a chief motivator for decades!) Why might concentrating on motivators give better results? To answer this question, we must examine *types* of motivation. Organizational behavior researchers often classify motivation in terms of what stimulates it. In the case of **extrinsic motivation**, we endeavor to acquire something that satisfies a lower-order need. Jobs that pay well and that are performed in safe, clean working conditions with adequate supervision and resources directly or indirectly satisfy these lower-order needs. These "outside the person" factors are *extrinsic rewards*.

Factors "inside" the person that cause people to perform tasks, **intrinsic motivation**, arise out of performing a task in and of itself because it is interesting or "fun" to do. The task is enjoyable, so we continue to do it *even in the absence* of extrinsic rewards. That is, we are motivated by *intrinsic rewards*, rewards that we more or less give ourselves. Intrinsic rewards satisfy higher-order needs like relatedness and growth in ERG theory. When we sense that we are valuable contributors, are achieving something important, or are getting better at some skill, we like this feeling and strive to maintain it.

Self-determination theory (SDT) seeks to explain not only what causes motivation, but also how extrinsic rewards affect intrinsic motivation.[17] In SDT, extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some valued outcome, while intrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. SDT specifies when an activity will be intrinsically motivating and when it will not. Considerable numbers of studies have demonstrated that tasks are intrinsically motivating when they satisfy at least one of three higher-order needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. These precepts from SDT are entirely consistent with earlier discussions of theories by McClelland, Maslow, Alderfer, and Herzberg.

SDT takes the concepts of extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation further than the other need theories. SDT researchers have consistently found that as the level of extrinsic rewards increases, the amount of intrinsic motivation *decreases*. That is, SDT posits that extrinsic rewards not only do not provide intrinsic motivation, they diminish it. Think of this in terms of hobbies. Some people like to knit, others like to carve wood. They do it because it is intrinsically motivating; the hobby satisfies needs for competence,

autonomy, and relatedness. But what happens if these hobbyists start getting paid well for their sweaters and carvings? Over time the hobby becomes less fun and is done in order to receive extrinsic rewards (money). Extrinsic motivation increases as intrinsic motivation decreases! When extrinsic rewards are present, people do not feel like what they do builds competence, is self-determined, or enhances relationships with others.

SDT theory has interesting implications for the management of organizational behavior. Some jobs are by their very nature uninteresting and unlikely to be made interesting. Automation has eliminated many such jobs, but they are still numerous. SDT would suggest that the primary way to motivate high performance for such jobs is to make performance contingent on extrinsic rewards. Relatively high pay is necessary to sustain performance on certain low-skill jobs. On the other hand, SDT would suggest that to enhance intrinsic motivation on jobs that are interesting, don't focus only on increasing extrinsic rewards (like large pay bonuses). Instead, create even more opportunities for employees to satisfy their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. That means giving them opportunities to learn new skills, to perform their jobs without interference, and to develop meaningful relationships with other customers and employees in other departments. Such actions enhance intrinsic rewards.

You may have noticed that content theories are somewhat quiet about what determines the intensity of motivation. For example, some people steal to satisfy their lower-order needs (they have high intensity). But most of us don't steal. Why is this? Process theories of motivation attempt to explain this aspect of motivation by focusing on the intensity of motivation as well as its direction. According to self-determination theory, skilled workers who are given a chance to hone their skills and the freedom to practice their craft will be intrinsically motivated.

Exercise 7.9.1

1. Understand the content theories of motivation.
2. Understand the contributions that Murray, McClelland, Maslow, Alderfer, and Herzberg made toward an understanding of human motivation.

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7.10: Process Theories of Motivation

Describe the process theories of motivation, and compare and contrast the main process theories of motivation: operant conditioning theory, equity theory, goal theory, and expectancy theory.

Process theories of motivation try to explain *why* behaviors are initiated. These theories focus on the mechanism by which we choose a target, and the effort that we exert to "hit" the target. There are four major process theories: (1) operant conditioning, (2) equity, (3) goal, and (4) expectancy.

Operant Conditioning Theory

Operant conditioning theory is the simplest of the motivation theories. It basically states that people will do those things for which they are rewarded and will avoid doing things for which they are punished. This premise is sometimes called the "law of effect." However, if this were the sum total of conditioning theory, we would not be discussing it here. Operant conditioning theory does offer greater insights than "reward what you want and punish what you don't," and knowledge of its principles can lead to effective management practices.

Operant conditioning focuses on the learning of voluntary behaviors.[18] The term **operant conditioning** indicates that learning results from our "operating on" the environment. After we "operate on the environment" (that is, behave in a certain fashion), consequences result. These consequences determine the likelihood of similar behavior in the future. Learning occurs because we do something to the environment. The environment then reacts to our action, and our subsequent behavior is influenced by this reaction.

The Basic Operant Model

According to **operant conditioning theory**, we learn to behave in a particular fashion because of consequences that resulted from our past behaviors.[19] The learning process involves three distinct steps (see Table 7.10.1). The first step involves a *stimulus* (S). The stimulus is any situation or event we perceive that we then respond to. A homework assignment is a stimulus. The second step involves a *response* (R), that is, any behavior or action we take in reaction to the stimulus. Staying up late to get your homework assignment in on time is a response. (We use the words response and behavior interchangeably here.) Finally, a *consequence* (C) is any event that follows our response and that makes the response more or less likely to occur in the future. If Colleen Sullivan receives praise from her superior for working hard, and if getting that praise is a pleasurable event, then it is likely that Colleen will work hard again in the future. If, on the other hand, the superior ignores or criticizes Colleen's response (working hard), this consequence is likely to make Colleen avoid working hard in the future. It is the experienced consequence (positive or negative) that influences whether a response will be repeated the next time the stimulus is presented.

Process Theories of Motivation	
General Operant Model: S → R → C	
Ways to Strengthen the S → R Link	
1. S → R → C+	(Positive Reinforcement)
2. S → R → C–	(Negative Reinforcement)
3. S → R → (no C–)	(Avoidance Learning)
Ways to Weaken the S → R Link	
1. S → R → (no C)	(Nonreinforcement)
2. S → R → C–	(Punishment)

Table 7.10.1 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

Reinforcement occurs when a consequence makes it more likely the response/behavior will be repeated in the future. In the previous example, praise from Colleen's superior is a reinforcer. **Extinction** occurs when a consequence makes it less likely the

response/behavior will be repeated in the future. Criticism from Colleen's supervisor could cause her to stop working hard on any assignment.

There are three ways to make a response more likely to recur: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and avoidance learning. In addition, there are two ways to make the response less likely to recur: nonreinforcement and punishment.

Making a Response More Likely

According to reinforcement theorists, managers can encourage employees to repeat a behavior if they provide a desirable consequence, or reward, after the behavior is performed. A **positive reinforcement** is a desirable consequence that satisfies an active need or that removes a barrier to need satisfaction. It can be as simple as a kind word or as major as a promotion. Companies that provide "dinners for two" as awards to those employees who go the extra mile are utilizing positive reinforcement. It is important to note that there are wide variations in what people consider to be a positive reinforcer. Praise from a supervisor may be a powerful reinforcer for some workers (like high-nAch individuals) but not others.

Another technique for making a desired response more likely to be repeated is known as **negative reinforcement**. When a behavior causes something undesirable to be taken away, the behavior is more likely to be repeated in the future. Managers use negative reinforcement when they remove something unpleasant from an employee's work environment in the hope that this will encourage the desired behavior. Ted doesn't like being continually reminded by Philip to work faster (Ted thinks Philip is nagging him), so he works faster at stocking shelves to avoid being criticized. Philip's reminders are a negative reinforcement for Ted.

Approach using negative reinforcement with extreme caution. Negative reinforcement is often confused with punishment. Punishment, unlike reinforcement (negative or positive), is intended to make a particular behavior go away (not be repeated). Negative reinforcement, like positive reinforcement, is intended to make a behavior more likely to be repeated in the future. In the previous example, Philip's reminders simultaneously punished one behavior (slow stocking) and reinforced another (faster stocking). The difference is often a fine one, but it becomes clearer when we identify the behaviors we are trying to encourage (reinforcement) or discourage (punishment).



Figure 7.10.1 Workers stacking eggs. A worker stacks eggs on the shelves at a supermarket. Consider the interchange between Ted and Philip regarding speeding up the shelf restocking process. What could go wrong? (Credit: Alex Barth/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

A third method of making a response more likely to occur involves a process known as avoidance learning. **Avoidance learning** occurs when we learn to behave in a certain way to avoid encountering an undesired or unpleasant consequence. We may learn to wake up a minute or so before our alarm clock rings so we can turn it off and not hear the irritating buzzer. Some workers learn to get to work on time to avoid the harsh words or punitive actions of their supervisors. Many organizational discipline systems rely heavily on avoidance learning by using the threat of negative consequences to encourage desired behavior. When managers warn an employee not to be late again, when they threaten to fire a careless worker, or when they transfer someone to an undesirable position, they are relying on the power of avoidance learning.

Making a Response Less Likely

At times it is necessary to discourage a worker from repeating an undesirable behavior. The techniques managers use to make a behavior less likely to occur involve doing something that frustrates the individual's need satisfaction or that removes a currently satisfying circumstance. **Punishment** is an aversive consequence that follows a behavior and makes it less likely to reoccur.

Note that managers have another alternative, known as **nonreinforcement**, in which they provide no consequence at all following a worker's response. Nonreinforcement eventually reduces the likelihood of that response reoccurring, which means that managers who fail to reinforce a worker's desirable behavior are also likely to see that desirable behavior less often. If Philip never rewards Ted when he finishes stocking on time, for instance, Ted will probably stop trying to beat the clock. Nonreinforcement can also reduce the likelihood that employees will repeat undesirable behaviors, although it doesn't produce results as quickly as punishment does. Furthermore, if other reinforcing consequences are present, nonreinforcement is unlikely to be effective.

While punishment clearly works more quickly than does nonreinforcement, it has some potentially undesirable side effects. Although punishment effectively tells a person what *not* to do and stops the undesired behavior, it does not tell them what they *should* do. In addition, even when punishment works as intended, the worker being punished often develops negative feelings toward the person who does the punishing. Although sometimes it is very difficult for managers to avoid using punishment, it works best when reinforcement is also used. An experiment conducted by two researchers at the University of Kansas found that using nonmonetary reinforcement in addition to punitive disciplinary measures was an effective way to decrease absenteeism in an industrial setting.[20]

Schedules of Reinforcement

When a person is learning a new behavior, like how to perform a new job, it is desirable to reinforce effective behaviors every time they are demonstrated (this is called *shaping*). But in organizations it is not usually possible to reinforce desired behaviors every time they are performed, for obvious reasons. Moreover, research indicates that constantly reinforcing desired behaviors, termed *continuous reinforcement*, can be detrimental in the long run. Behaviors that are learned under continuous reinforcement are quickly extinguished (cease to be demonstrated). This is because people will expect a reward (the reinforcement) every time they display the behavior. When they don't receive it after just a few times, they quickly presume that the behavior will no longer be rewarded, and they quit doing it. Any employer can change employees' behavior by simply not paying them!

If behaviors cannot (and should not) be reinforced every time they are exhibited, how often should they be reinforced? This is a question about **schedules of reinforcement**, or the frequency at which effective employee behaviors should be reinforced. Much of the early research on operant conditioning focused on the best way to maintain the performance of desired behaviors. That is, it attempted to determine how frequently behaviors need to be rewarded so that they are not extinguished. Research zeroed in on four types of reinforcement schedules:

Fixed Ratio. With this schedule, a fixed number of responses (let's say five) must be exhibited before any of the responses are reinforced. If the desired response is coming to work on time, then giving employees a $25 bonus for being punctual every day from Monday through Friday would be a fixed ratio of reinforcement.

Variable Ratio. A variable-ratio schedule reinforces behaviors, *on average*, a fixed number of times (again let's say five). Sometimes the tenth behavior is reinforced, other times the first, but on average every fifth response is reinforced. People who perform under such variable-ratio schedules like this don't know *when* they will be rewarded, but they do know that they *will* be rewarded.

Fixed Interval. In a fixed-interval schedule, a certain amount of time must pass before a behavior is reinforced. With a one-hour fixed-interval schedule, for example, a supervisor visits an employee's workstation and reinforces the first desired behavior she

sees. She returns one hour later and reinforces the next desirable behavior. This schedule doesn't imply that reinforcement will be received automatically after the passage of the time period. The time must pass *and* an appropriate response must be made.

Variable Interval. The variable interval differs from fixed-interval schedules in that the specified time interval passes *on average* before another appropriate response is reinforced. Sometimes the time period is shorter than the average; sometimes it is longer.

Which type of reinforcement schedule is best? In general, continuous reinforcement is best while employees are learning their jobs or new duties. After that, variable-ratio reinforcement schedules are superior. In most situations the fixed-interval schedule produces the least effective results, with fixed ratio and variable interval falling in between the two extremes. But remember that effective behaviors must be reinforced with some type of schedule, or they may become extinguished.

Equity Theory

Suppose you have worked for a company for several years. Your performance has been excellent, you have received regular pay increases, and you get along with your boss and coworkers. One day you come to work to find that a new person has been hired to work at the same job that you do. You are pleased to have the extra help. Then, you find out the new person is making $100 more per week than you, despite your longer service and greater experience. How do you feel? If you're like most of us, you're quite unhappy. Your satisfaction has just evaporated. Nothing about your job has changed—you receive the same pay, do the same job, and work for the same supervisor. Yet, the addition of one new employee has transformed you from a happy to an unhappy employee. This feeling of unfairness is the basis for equity theory.

Equity theory states that motivation is affected by the outcomes we receive for our inputs compared to the outcomes and inputs of other people.[21] This theory is concerned with the reactions people have to outcomes they receive as part of a "social exchange." According to equity theory, our reactions to the outcomes we receive from others (an employer) depend both on how we value those outcomes in an absolute sense *and* on the circumstances surrounding their receipt. Equity theory suggests that our reactions will be influenced by our perceptions of the "inputs" provided in order to receive these outcomes ("Did I get as much out of this as I put into it?"). Even more important is the comparison of our inputs to what we believe others received for their inputs ("Did I get as much for my inputs as my coworkers got for theirs?").

The Basic Equity Model

The fundamental premise of equity theory is that we continuously monitor the degree to which our work environment is "fair." In determining the degree of fairness, we consider two sets of factors, inputs and outcomes (see Figure 7.10.2). **Inputs** are any factors we contribute to the organization that we feel have value and are relevant to the organization. Note that the value attached to an input is based on *our* perception of its relevance and value. Whether or not anyone else agrees that the input is relevant or valuable is unimportant to us. Common inputs in organizations include time, effort, performance level, education level, skill levels, and bypassed opportunities. Since any factor we consider relevant is included in our evaluation of equity, it is not uncommon for factors to be included that the organization (or even the law) might argue are inappropriate (such as age, sex, ethnic background, or social status).

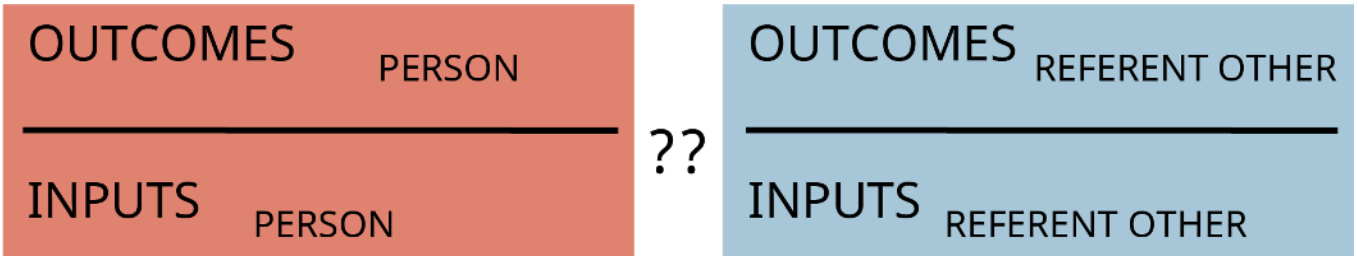


Figure 7.10.2 The Equity Theory Comparison (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

Outcomes are anything we perceive as getting back from the organization in exchange for our inputs. Again, the value attached to an outcome is based on our perceptions and not necessarily on objective reality. Common outcomes from organizations include pay, working conditions, job status, feelings of achievement, and friendship opportunities. Both positive and negative outcomes influence our evaluation of equity. Stress, headaches, and fatigue are also potential outcomes. Since any outcome we consider relevant to the exchange influences our equity perception, we frequently include unintended factors (peer disapproval, family reactions).

Equity theory predicts that we will compare our outcomes to our inputs in the form of a ratio. On the basis of this ratio we make an initial determination of whether or not the situation is equitable. If we perceive that the outcomes we receive are commensurate with our inputs, we are satisfied. If we believe that the outcomes are not commensurate with our inputs, we are dissatisfied. This dissatisfaction can lead to ineffective behaviors for the organization if they continue. The key feature of equity theory is that it predicts that we will compare our ratios to the ratios of other people. It is this comparison of the two ratios that has the strongest effect on our equity perceptions. These other people are called referent others because we "refer to" them when we judge equity. Usually, referent others are people we work with who perform work of a similar nature. That is, **referent others** perform jobs that are similar in difficulty and complexity to the employee making the equity determination (see Figure 7.10.2).

Three conditions can result from this comparison. Our outcome-to-input ratio could equal the referent other's. This is a **state of equity**. A second result could be that our ratio is greater than the referent other's. This is a state of **overreward inequity**. The third result could be that we perceive our ratio to be less than that of the referent other. This is a state of **underreward inequity**.

Equity theory has a lot to say about basic human tendencies. The motivation to compare our situation to that of others is strong. For example, what is the first thing you do when you get an exam back in class? Probably look at your score and make an initial judgment as to its fairness. For a lot of people, the very next thing they do is look at the scores received by fellow students who sit close to them. A 75 percent score doesn't look so bad if everyone else scored lower! This is equity theory in action.

Most workers in the United States are at least partially dissatisfied with their pay.[22] Equity theory helps explain this. Two human tendencies create feelings of inequity that are not based in reality. One is that we tend to overrate our performance levels. For example, one study conducted by your authors asked more than 600 employees to anonymously rate their performance on a 7-point scale (1 = poor, 7 = excellent). The average was 6.2, meaning the *average* employee rated his or her performance as *very good to excellent.* This implies that the average employee also expects excellent pay increases, a policy most employers cannot afford if they are to remain competitive. Another study found that the average employee (one whose performance is better than half of the other employees and worse than the other half) rated her performance at the 80th percentile (better than 80 percent of the other employees, worse than 20 percent).[23] Again it would be impossible for most organizations to reward the average employee at the 80th percentile. In other words, most employees inaccurately overrate the inputs they provide to an organization. This leads to perceptions of inequity that are not justified.

The second human tendency that leads to unwarranted perceptions of inequity is our tendency to *overrate* the outcomes of others.[24] Many employers keep the pay levels of employees a "secret." Still other employers actually forbid employees to talk about their pay. This means that many employees don't know for certain how much their colleagues are paid. And, because most of us overestimate the pay of others, we tend to think that they're paid more than they actually are, and the unjustified perceptions of inequity are perpetuated.

The bottom line for employers is that they need to be sensitive to employees' need for equity. Employers need to do everything they can to prevent feelings of inequity because employees engage in effective behaviors when they perceive equity and ineffective behaviors when they perceive inequity.

Perceived Overreward Inequity

When we perceive that overreward inequity exists (that is, we unfairly make more than others), it is rare that we are so dissatisfied, guilty, or sufficiently motivated that we make changes to produce a state of perceived equity (or we leave the situation). Indeed, feelings of overreward, when they occur, are quite transient. Very few of us go to our employers and complain that we're overpaid! Most people are less sensitive to overreward inequities than they are to underreward inequities.[25] However infrequently they are used for overreward, the same types of actions are available for dealing with both types of inequity.

Perceived Underreward Inequity

When we perceive that underreward inequity exists (that is, others unfairly make more than we do), we will likely be dissatisfied, angered, and motivated to change the situation (or escape the situation) in order to produce a state of perceived equity. As we discuss shortly, people can take many actions to deal with underreward inequity.

Reducing Underreward Inequity

A simple situation helps explain the consequences of inequity. Two automobile workers in Detroit, John and Mary, fasten lug nuts to wheels on cars as they come down the assembly line, John on the left side and Mary on the right. Their inputs are equal (both fasten the same number of lug nuts at the same pace), but John makes $500 per week and Mary makes $600. Their equity ratios are thus:

$500	$600
John:	<Mary:
10 lug nuts/car	10 lug nuts/car

As you can see, their ratios are not equal; that is, Mary receives greater outcome for equal input. Who is experiencing inequity? According to equity theory, both John *and* Mary—underreward inequity for John, and overreward inequity for Mary. Mary's inequity won't last long (in real organizations), but in our hypothetical example, what might John do to resolve this?

Adams identified a number of things people do to reduce the tension produced by a perceived state of inequity. They change their own outcomes or inputs, *or* they change those of the referent other. They distort their own perceptions of the outcomes or inputs of either party by using a different referent other, or they leave the situation in which the inequity is occurring.

1. Alter inputs of the person. The perceived state of equity can be altered by changing our own inputs, that is, by decreasing the quantity or quality of our performance. John can effect his own mini slowdown and install only nine lug nuts on each car as it comes down the production line. This, of course, might cause him to lose his job, so he probably won't choose this alternative.
2. Alter outcomes of the person. We could attempt to increase outcomes to achieve a state of equity, like ask for a raise, a nicer office, a promotion, or other positively valued outcomes. So John will likely ask for a raise. Unfortunately, many people enhance their outcomes by stealing from their employers.
3. Alter inputs of the referent other. When underrewarded, we may try to achieve a state of perceived equity by encouraging the referent other to increase their inputs. We may demand, for example, that the referent other "start pulling their weight," or perhaps help the referent other to become a better performer. It doesn't matter that the referent other is already pulling their weight—remember, this is all about perception. In our example, John could ask Mary to put on two of his ten lug nuts as each car comes down the assembly line. This would not likely happen, however, so John would be motivated to try another alternative to reduce his inequity.
4. Alter outcomes of the referent other. We can "correct" a state of underreward by directly or indirectly reducing the value of the other's outcomes. In our example, John could try to get Mary's pay lowered to reduce his inequity. This too would probably not occur in the situation described.
5. Distort perceptions of inputs or outcomes. It *is* possible to reduce a perceived state of inequity without changing input or outcome. We simply distort our own perceptions of our inputs or outcomes, *or* we distort our perception of those of the referent other. Thus, John may tell himself that "Mary does better work than I thought" or "she enjoys her work much less than I do" or "she gets paid less than I realized."
6. Choose a different referent other. We can also deal with both over- and underreward inequities by changing the referent other ("my situation is really more like Ahmed's"). This is the simplest and most powerful way to deal with perceived inequity: it requires neither actual nor perceptual changes in anybody's input or outcome, and it causes us to look around and assess our situation more carefully. For example, John might choose as a referent other Bill, who installs dashboards but makes less money than John.
7. Leave the situation. A final technique for dealing with a perceived state of inequity involves removing ourselves from the situation. We can choose to accomplish this through absenteeism, transfer, or termination. This approach is usually not selected unless the perceived inequity is quite high or other attempts at achieving equity are not readily available. Most automobile workers are paid quite well for their work. John is unlikely to find an equivalent job, so it is also unlikely that he will choose this option.

Implications of Equity Theory

Equity theory is widely used, and its implications are clear. In the vast majority of cases, employees experience (or perceive) underreward inequity rather than overreward. As discussed above, few of the behaviors that result from underreward inequity are good for employers. Thus, employers try to prevent unnecessary perceptions of inequity. They do this in a number of ways. They try to be as fair as possible in allocating pay. That is, they measure performance levels as accurately as possible, then give the highest performers the highest pay increases. Second, most employers are no longer secretive about their pay schedules. People are naturally curious about how much they are paid relative to others in the organization. This doesn't mean that employers don't practice discretion—they usually don't reveal specific employees' exact pay. But they do tell employees the minimum and maximum pay levels for their jobs and the pay scales for the jobs of others in the organization. Such practices give employees a factual basis for judging equity.

Supervisors play a key role in creating perceptions of equity. "Playing favorites" ensures perceptions of inequity. Employees want to be rewarded on their merits, not the whims of their supervisors. In addition, supervisors need to recognize differences in employees in their reactions to inequity. Some employees are highly sensitive to inequity, and a supervisor needs to be especially cautious around them.[26] Everyone is sensitive to reward allocation.[27] But "equity sensitives" are even more sensitive. A major principle for supervisors, then, is simply to implement fairness. Never base punishment or reward on whether or not you like an employee. Reward behaviors that contribute to the organization, and discipline those that do not. Make sure employees understand what is expected of them, and praise them when they do it. These practices make everyone happier and your job easier.

Goal Theory

No theory is perfect. If it was, it wouldn't be a theory. It would be a set of facts. Theories are sets of propositions that are right more often than they are wrong, but they are not infallible. However, the basic propositions of goal theory* come close to being infallible. Indeed, it is one of the strongest theories in organizational behavior.

The Basic Goal-Setting Model

Goal theory states that people will perform better if they have difficult, specific, accepted performance goals or objectives.[28],[29] The first and most basic premise of goal theory is that people will attempt to achieve those goals that they *intend* to achieve. Thus, if we intend to do something (like get an A on an exam), we will exert effort to accomplish it. Without such goals, our effort at the task (studying) required to achieve the goal is less. Students whose goals are to get As study harder than students who don't have this goal—we all know this. This doesn't mean that people without goals are unmotivated. It simply means that people with goals are more motivated. The intensity of their motivation is greater, and they are more directed.

The second basic premise is that *difficult* goals result in better performance than easy goals. This does not mean that difficult goals are always achieved, but our performance will usually be better when we intend to achieve harder goals. Your goal of an A in Classical Mechanics at Cal Tech may not get you your A, but it may earn you a B+, which you wouldn't have gotten otherwise. Difficult goals cause us to exert more effort, and this almost always results in better performance.

Another premise of goal theory is that *specific* goals are better than vague goals. We often wonder what we need to do to be successful. Have you ever asked a professor "What do I need to do to get an A in this course?" If she responded "Do well on the exams," you weren't much better off for having asked. This is a vague response. Goal theory says that we perform better when we have specific goals. Had your professor told you the key thrust of the course, to turn in *all* the problem sets, to pay close attention to the essay questions on exams, and to aim for scores in the 90s, you would have something concrete on which to build a strategy.

A key premise of goal theory is that people must *accept* the goal. Usually we set our own goals. But sometimes others set goals for us. Your professor telling you your goal is to "score at least a 90 percent on your exams" doesn't mean that you'll accept this goal. Maybe you don't feel you can achieve scores in the 90s. Or, you've heard that 90 isn't good enough for an A in this class. This happens in work organizations quite often. Supervisors give orders that something must be done by a certain time. The employees may fully understand what is wanted, yet if they feel the order is unreasonable or impossible, they may not exert much effort to accomplish it. Thus, it is important for people to accept the goal. They need to feel that it is also their goal. If they do not, goal theory predicts that they won't try as hard to achieve it.

Goal theory also states that people need to *commit* to a goal in addition to accepting it. **Goal commitment** is the degree to which we dedicate ourselves to achieving a goal. Goal commitment is about setting priorities. We can accept many goals (go to all classes,

stay awake during classes, take lecture notes), but we often end up doing only some of them. In other words, some goals are more important than others. And we exert more effort for certain goals. This also happens frequently at work. A software analyst's major goal may be to write a new program. Her minor goal may be to maintain previously written programs. It is minor because maintaining old programs is boring, while writing new ones is fun. Goal theory predicts that her commitment, and thus her intensity, to the major goal will be greater.

Allowing people to participate in the goal-setting process often results in higher goal commitment. This has to do with ownership. And when people participate in the process, they tend to incorporate factors they think will make the goal more interesting, challenging, and attainable. Thus, it is advisable to allow people some input into the goal-setting process. Imposing goals on them from the outside usually results in less commitment (and acceptance).

The basic goal-setting model is shown in Figure 7.10.3. The process starts with our values. Values are our beliefs about how the world should be or act, and often include words like "should" or "ought." We compare our present conditions against these values. For example, Randi holds the value that everyone should be a hard worker. After measuring her current work against this value, Randi concludes that she doesn't measure up to her own value. Following this, her goal-setting process begins. Randi will set a goal that affirms her status as a hard worker. Figure 7.10.3 lists the four types of goals. Some goals are self-set. (Randi decides to word process at least 70 pages per day.) Participative goals are jointly set. (Randi goes to her supervisor, and together they set some appropriate goals for her.) In still other cases, goals are assigned. (Her boss tells her that she must word process at least 60 pages per day.) The fourth type of goal, which can be self-set, jointly determined, or assigned, is a "do your best" goal. But note this goal is vague, so it usually doesn't result in the best performance.

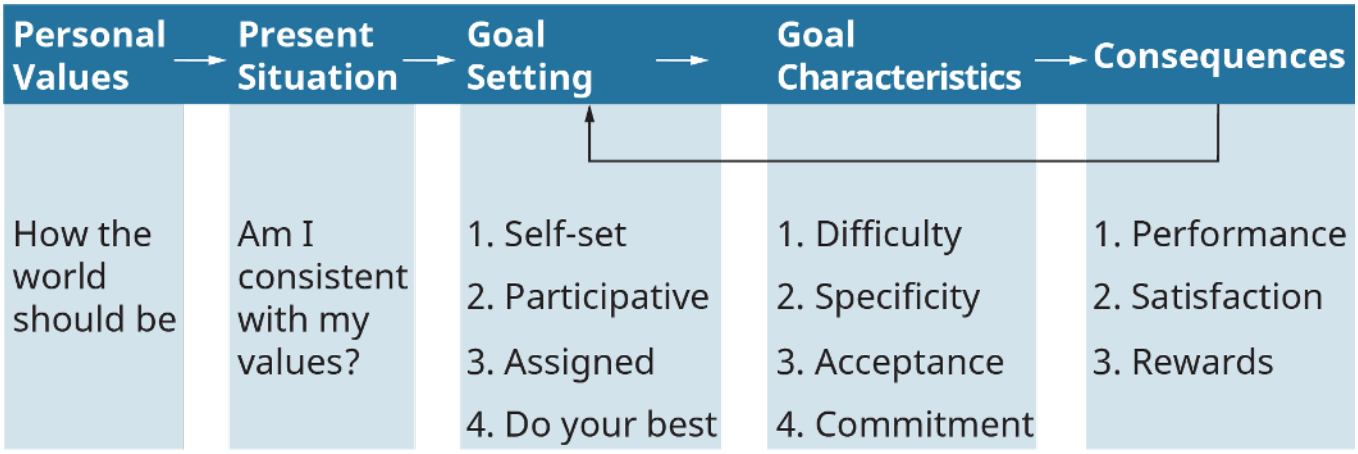


Figure 7.10.3The Goal-Setting Process (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

Depending on the characteristics of Randi's goals, she may or may not exert a lot of effort. For maximum effort to result, her goals should be difficult, specific, accepted, and committed to. Then, if she has sufficient ability and lack of constraints, maximum performance should occur. Examples of constraints could be that her old computer frequently breaks down or her supervisor constantly interferes.

The consequence of endeavoring to reach her goal will be that Randi will be satisfied with herself. Her behavior is consistent with her values. She'll be even more satisfied if her supervisor praises her performance and gives her a pay increase!

In Randi's case, her goal achievement resulted in several benefits. However, this doesn't always happen. If goals are not achieved, people may be unhappy with themselves, and their employer may be dissatisfied as well. Such an experience can make a person reluctant to accept goals in the future. Thus, setting difficult yet attainable goals cannot be stressed enough.

Goal theory can be a tremendous motivational tool. In fact, many organizations practice effective management by using a technique called "management by objectives" (MBO). MBO is based on goal theory and is quite effective when implemented consistently with goal theory's basic premises.

Despite its many strengths, several cautions about goal theory are appropriate. Locke has identified most of them.[30] First, setting goals in one area can lead people to neglect other areas. (Randi may word process 70 pages per day, but neglect her proofreading responsibilities.) It is important that goals be set for most major duties. Second, goal setting sometimes has unintended

consequences. For example, employees set easy goals so that they look good when they achieve them. Or it causes unhealthy competition between employees. Or an employee sabotages the work of others so that only she has goal achievement.

Some managers use goal setting in unethical ways. They may manipulate employees by setting impossible goals. This enables them to criticize employees even when the employees are doing superior work and, of course, causes much stress. Goal setting should never be abused. Perhaps the key caution about goal setting is that it often results in too much focus on quantified measures of performance. Qualitative aspects of a job or task may be neglected because they aren't easily measured. Managers must keep employees focused on the qualitative aspects of their jobs as well as the quantitative ones. Finally, setting individual goals in a teamwork environment can be counterproductive.[31] Where possible, it is preferable to have group goals in situations where employees depend on one another in the performance of their jobs.

The cautions noted here are not intended to deter you from using goal theory. We note them so that you can avoid the pitfalls. Remember, employees have a right to reasonable performance expectations and the rewards that result from performance, and organizations have a right to expect high performance levels from employees. Goal theory should be used to optimize the employment relationship. Goal theory holds that people will exert effort to accomplish goals if those goals are difficult to achieve, accepted by the individual, and specific in nature.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory posits that we will exert much effort to perform at high levels so that we can obtain valued outcomes. It is the motivation theory that many organizational behavior researchers find most intriguing, in no small part because it is currently also the most comprehensive theory. Expectancy theory ties together many of the concepts and hypotheses from the theories discussed earlier in this chapter. In addition, it points to factors that other theories miss. Expectancy theory has much to offer the student of management and organizational behavior.

Expectancy theory is sufficiently general that it is useful in a wide variety of situations. Choices between job offers, between working hard or not so hard, between going to work or not—virtually any set of possibilities can be addressed by expectancy theory. Basically, the theory focuses on two related issues:

1. When faced with two or more alternatives, which will we select?
2. Once an alternative is chosen, how motivated will we be to pursue that choice?

Expectancy theory thus focuses on the two major aspects of motivation, *direction* (which alternative?) and *intensity* (how much effort to implement the alternative?). The attractiveness of an alternative is determined by our "expectations" of what is likely to happen if we choose it. The more we believe that the alternative chosen will lead to positively valued outcomes, the greater its attractiveness to us.

Expectancy theory states that, when faced with two or more alternatives, we will select the most attractive one. And, the greater the attractiveness of the chosen alternative, the more motivated we will be to pursue it. Our natural hedonism, discussed earlier in this chapter, plays a role in this process. We are motivated to maximize desirable outcomes (a pay raise) and minimize undesirable ones (discipline). Expectancy theory goes on to state that we are also logical in our decisions about alternatives. It considers people to be *rational.* People evaluate alternatives in terms of their "pros and cons," and then choose the one with the most "pros" and fewest "cons."

The Basic Expectancy Model

The three major components of expectancy theory reflect its assumptions of hedonism and rationality: effort-performance expectancy, performance-outcome expectancy, and valences.

The **effort-performance expectancy**, abbreviated E1, is the perceived probability that effort will lead to performance (or E ➡ P). Performance here means anything from doing well on an exam to assembling 100 toasters a day at work. Sometimes people believe that no matter how much effort they exert, they won't perform at a high level. They have weak E1s. Other people have strong E1s and believe the opposite—that is, that they can perform at a high level if they exert high effort. You all know students with different E1s—those who believe that if they study hard they'll do well, and those who believe that no matter how much they study they'll do poorly. People develop these perceptions from prior experiences with the task at hand, and from self-perceptions of their

abilities. The core of the E1 concept is that people don't always perceive a direct relationship between effort level and performance level.

The **performance-outcome expectancy**, E2, is the perceived relationship between performance and outcomes (or P ➡ O).[1] Many things in life happen as a function of how well we perform various tasks. E2 addresses the question "What will happen if I perform well?" Let's say you get an A in your Classical Mechanics course at Cal Tech. You'll be elated, your classmates may envy you, and you are now assured of that plum job at NASA. But let's say you got a D. Whoops, that was the last straw for the dean. Now you've flunked out, and you're reduced to going home to live with your parents (perish the thought!). Likewise, E2 perceptions develop in organizations, although hopefully not as drastically as your beleaguered career at Cal Tech. People with strong E2s believe that if they perform their jobs well, they'll receive desirable outcomes—good pay increases, praise from their supervisor, and a feeling that they're really contributing. In the same situation, people with weak E2s will have the opposite perceptions—that high performance levels don't result in desirable outcomes and that it doesn't really matter how well they perform their jobs as long as they don't get fired.

Valences are the easiest of the expectancy theory concepts to describe. Valences are simply the degree to which we perceive an outcome as desirable, neutral, or undesirable. Highly desirable outcomes (a 25 percent pay increase) are positively valent. Undesirable outcomes (being disciplined) are negatively valent. Outcomes that we're indifferent to (where you must park your car) have neutral valences. Positively and negatively valent outcomes abound in the workplace—pay increases and freezes, praise and criticism, recognition and rejection, promotions and demotions. And as you would expect, people differ dramatically in how they value these outcomes. Our needs, values, goals, and life situations affect what valence we give an outcome. Equity is another consideration we use in assigning valences. We may consider a 10 percent pay increase desirable until we find out that it was the lowest raise given in our work group.

Figure 7.10.4 summarizes the three core concepts of expectancy theory. The theory states that our perceptions about our surroundings are essentially predictions about "what leads to what." We perceive that certain effort levels result in certain performance levels. We perceive that certain performance levels result in certain outcomes. Outcomes can be **extrinsic**, in that others (our supervisor) determine whether we receive them, or **intrinsic**, in that we determine if they are received (our sense of achievement). Each outcome has an associated valence (outcome A's valence is VaVa). Expectancy theory predicts that we will exert effort that results in the maximum amount of positive-valence outcomes.[2] If our E1 or E2 is weak, or if the outcomes are not sufficiently desirable, our motivation to exert effort will be low. Stated differently, an individual will be motivated to try to achieve the level of performance that results in the most rewards.

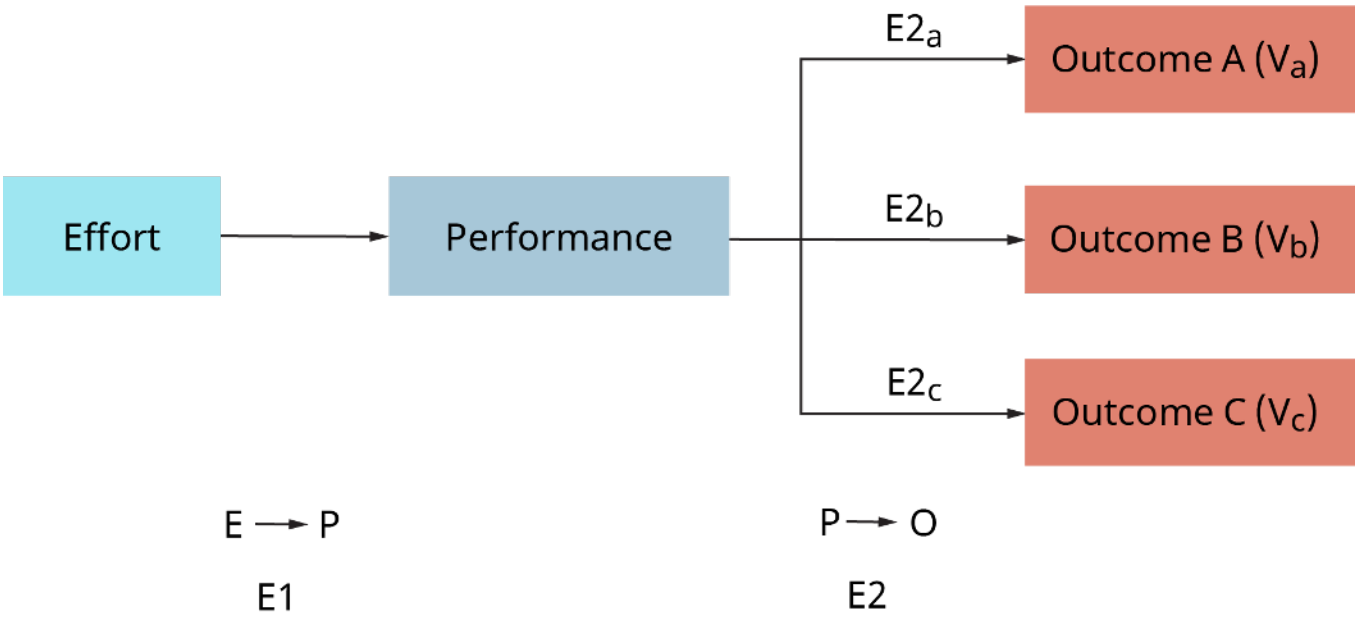


Figure 7.10.4 The Expectancy Theory of Motivation (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

V_o is the valence of the outcome. The effort level with the greatest force associated with it will be chosen by the individual.

Implications of Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory has major implications for the workplace. Basically, expectancy theory predicts that employees will be motivated to perform well on their jobs under two conditions. The first is when employees believe that a reasonable amount of effort will result in good performance. The second is when good performance is associated with positive outcomes and low performance is associated with negative outcomes. If neither of these conditions exists in the perceptions of employees, their motivation to perform will be low.

Why might an employee perceive that positive outcomes are not associated with high performance? Or that negative outcomes are not associated with low performance? That is, why would employees develop weak E2s? This happens for a number of reasons. The main one is that many organizations subscribe too strongly to a principle of equality (not to be confused with equity). They give all of their employees equal salaries for equal work, equal pay increases every year (these are known as across-the-board pay raises), and equal treatment wherever possible. Equality-focused organizations reason that some employees "getting more" than others leads to disruptive competition and feelings of inequity.

In time employees in equality-focused organizations develop weak E2s because no distinctions are made for differential outcomes. If the best and the worst salespeople are paid the same, in time they will both decide that it isn't worth the extra effort to be a high performer. Needless to say, this is not the goal of competitive organizations and can cause the demise of the organization as it competes with other firms in today's global marketplace.

Expectancy theory states that to maximize motivation, organizations must make outcomes contingent on performance. This is the main contribution of expectancy theory: it makes us think about *how* organizations should distribute outcomes. If an organization, or a supervisor, believes that treating everyone "the same" will result in satisfied and motivated employees, they will be wrong more times than not. From equity theory we know that some employees, usually the better-performing ones, will experience underreward inequity. From expectancy theory we know that employees will see no difference in outcomes for good and poor

performance, so they will not have as much incentive to be good performers. Effective organizations need to actively encourage the perception that good performance leads to positive outcomes (bonuses, promotions) and that poor performance leads to negative ones (discipline, termination). Remember, there is a big difference between treating employees equally and treating them equitably.

What if an organization ties positive outcomes to high performance and negative outcomes to low performance? Employees will develop strong E2s. But will this result in highly motivated employees? The answer is maybe. We have yet to address employees' E1s. If employees have weak E1s, they will perceive that high (or low) effort does *not* result in high performance and thus will not exert much effort. It is important for managers to understand that this can happen despite rewards for high performance.

Task-related abilities are probably the single biggest reason why some employees have weak E1s. **Self-efficacy** is our belief about whether we can successfully execute some future action or task, or achieve some result. High self-efficacy employees believe that they are likely to succeed at most or all of their job duties and responsibilities. And as you would expect, low self-efficacy employees believe the opposite. Specific self-efficacy reflects our belief in our capability to perform a specific task at a specific level of performance. If we believe that the probability of our selling $30,000 of jackrabbit slippers in one month is .90, our self-efficacy for this task is high. Specific self-efficacy is our judgment about the likelihood of successful task performance measured immediately before we expend effort on the task. As a result, specific self-efficacy is much more variable than more enduring notions of personality. Still, there is little doubt that our state-based beliefs are some of the most powerful motivators of behavior. Our efficacy expectations at a given point in time determine not only our initial decision to perform (or not) a task, but also the amount of effort we will expend and whether we will persist in the face of adversity.[32] Self-efficacy has a strong impact on the E1 factor. As a result, self-efficacy is one of the strongest determinants of performance in any particular task situation.[33]

Employees develop weak E1s for two reasons. First, they don't have sufficient resources to perform their jobs. Resources can be internal or external. Internal resources include what employees bring to the job (such as prior training, work experience, education, ability, and aptitude) and their understanding of what they need to do to be considered good performers. The second resource is called role perceptions—how employees believe their jobs are done and how they fit into the broader organization. If employees don't know *how* to become good performers, they will have weak E1s. External resources include the tools, equipment, and labor necessary to perform a job. The lack of good external resources can also cause E1s to be weak.

The second reason for weak E1s is an organization's failure to measure performance accurately. That is, performance *ratings* don't correlate well with actual performance *levels*. How does this happen? Have you ever gotten a grade that you felt didn't reflect how much you learned? This also happens in organizations. Why are ratings sometimes inaccurate? Supervisors, who typically give out ratings, well, they're human. Perhaps they're operating under the mistaken notion that similar ratings for everyone will keep the team happy. Perhaps they're unconsciously playing favorites. Perhaps they don't know what good and poor performance levels are. Perhaps the measurements they're expected to use don't fit their product/team/people. Choose one or all of these. Rating people is rarely easy.

Whatever the cause of rating errors, some employees may come to believe that no matter what they do they will never receive a high performance rating. They may in fact believe that they are excellent performers but that the performance rating system is flawed. Expectancy theory differs from most motivation theories because it highlights the need for accurate performance measurement. Organizations cannot motivate employees to perform at a high level if they cannot identify high performers.

Organizations exert tremendous influence over employee choices in their performance levels and how much effort to exert on their jobs. That is, organizations can have a major impact on the direction and intensity of employees' motivation levels. Practical applications of expectancy theory include:

1. Strengthening the effort ➡ performance expectancy by selecting employees who have the necessary abilities, providing proper training, providing experiences of success, clarifying job responsibilities, etc.
2. Strengthening the performance ➡ outcome expectancy with policies that specify that desirable behavior leads to desirable outcomes and undesirable behavior leads to neutral or undesirable outcomes. Consistent enforcement of these policies is key—workers must believe in the contingencies.
3. Systematically evaluating which outcomes employees value. The greater the valence of outcomes offered for a behavior, the more likely employees will commit to that alternative. By recognizing that different employees have different values and that values change over time, organizations can provide the most highly valued outcomes.

4. Ensuring that effort actually translates into performance by clarifying what actions lead to performance and by appropriate training.
5. Ensuring appropriate worker outcomes for performance through reward schedules (extrinsic outcomes) and appropriate job design (so the work experience itself provides intrinsic outcomes).
6. Examining the level of outcomes provided to workers. Are they equitable, given the worker's inputs? Are they equitable in comparison to the way other workers are treated?
7. Measuring performance levels as accurately as possible, making sure that workers are capable of being high performers.

Managing Change

Differences in Motivation across Cultures

The disgruntled employee is hardly a culturally isolated feature of a business, and quitting before leaving takes the same forms, regardless of country. Cross-cultural signaling, social norms, and simple language barriers can make the task of motivation for the global manager confusing and counterintuitive. Communicating a passion for a common vision, coaching employees to see themselves as accountable and as owning their work, or attempting to create a "motivational ecosystem" can all fall flat with simple missed cues, bad translations, or tone-deaf approaches to a thousand-year-old culture.

Keeping employees motivated by making them feel valued and appreciated is not just a "Western" idea. The Ghanaian blog site Starrfmonline emphasizes that employee motivation and associated work quality improve when employees feel "valued, trusted, challenged, and supported in their work." Conversely, when employees feel like a tool rather than a person or feel unengaged with their work, then productivity suffers. A vicious cycle can then begin when the manager treats an employee as unmotivated and incapable, which then demotivates the employee and elicits the predicted response. The blogger cites an example from Eastern Europe where a manager sidelined an employee as inefficient and incompetent. After management coaching, the manager revisited his assessment and began working with the employee. As he worked to facilitate the employee's efficiency and motivation, the employee went from being the lowest performer to a valuable team player. In the end, the blog says, "The very phrase 'human resources' frames employees as material to be deployed for organizational objectives. While the essential nature of employment contracts involves trading labour for remuneration, if we fail to see and appreciate our employees as whole people, efforts to motivate them will meet with limited success" (Starrfmonline 2017 n.p.)

Pavel Vosk, a business and management consultant based in Puyallup, Washington, says that too often, overachieving employees turn into unmotivated ones. In looking for the answer, he found that the most common source was a lack of recognition for the employee's effort or exceptional performance. In fact, Vosk found that most employees go the extra mile only three times before they give up. Vosk's advice is to show gratitude for employees' effort, especially when it goes above and beyond. He says the recognition doesn't have to be over the top, just anything that the employees will perceive as gratitude, from a catered lunch for a team working extra hours to fulfill a deadline to a simple face-to-face thank you (Huhman 2017).

Richard Frazao, president of Quaketek, based in Montreal, Quebec, stresses talking to the employees and making certain they are engaged in their jobs, citing boredom with one's job as a major demotivating factor (Huhman 2017).

But motivating employees is not "one size fits all" globally. Rewarding and recognizing individuals and their achievements works fine in Western cultures but is undesirable in Asian cultures, which value teamwork and the collective over the individual. Whether to reward effort with a pay raise or with a job title or larger office is influenced by culture. Demoting an employee for poor performance is an effective motivator in Asian countries but is likely to result in losing an employee altogether in Western cultures. According to Matthew MacLachlan at Communicaid, "Making the assumption that your international workforce will be motivated by the same incentives can be dangerous and have a real impact on talent retention" (2016 n.p.).

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1. As a Western manager working in the Middle East or sub-Saharan Africa, what motivational issues might you face?
2. What problems would you expect a manager from a Confucian culture to encounter managing employees in America? In Europe?
3. What regional, cultural, or ethnic issues do you think managers have to navigate within the United States?

Expectancy Theory: An Integrative Theory of Motivation

More so than any other motivation theory, expectancy theory can be tied into most concepts of what and how people become motivated. Consider the following examples.

1. *Need theories* state that we are motivated to satisfy our needs. We positively value outcomes that satisfy unmet needs, negatively value outcomes that thwart the satisfaction of unmet needs, and assign neutral values to outcomes that do neither. In effect, the need theories explain how valences are formed.
2. *Operant conditioning theories* state that we will probably repeat a response (behavior) in the future that was reinforced in the past (that is, followed by a positively valued consequence or the removal of a negatively valued consequence). This is the basic process involved in forming performance ➡ outcome expectancies. Both operant theories and expectancy theory argue that our interactions with our environment influence our future behavior. The primary difference is that expectancy theory explains this process in cognitive (rational) terms.
3. *Equity theories* state that our satisfaction with a set of outcomes depends not only on how we value them but also on the circumstances surrounding their receipt. Equity theory, therefore, explains part of the process shown in **Exhibit 7.11**. If we don’t feel that the outcomes we receive are equitable compared to a referent other, we will associate a lower or even negative valence with those outcomes.
4. *Goal theory* can be integrated with the expanded expectancy model in several ways. Locke has noted that expectancy theory explains how we go about choosing a particular goal.[34] A reexamination of **Exhibit 7.11** reveals other similarities between goal theory and expectancy theory. Locke’s use of the term “goal acceptance” to identify the personal adoption of a goal is similar to the “choice of an alternative” in the expectancy model. Locke’s “goal commitment,” the degree to which we commit to reaching our accepted (chosen) goal, is very much like the expectancy description of choice of effort level. Locke argues that the difficulty and specificity of a goal are major determinants of the level of performance attempted (goal-directed effort), and expectancy theory appears to be consistent with this argument (even though expectancy theory is not as explicit on this point). We can reasonably conclude that the major underlying processes explored by the two models are very similar and will seldom lead to inconsistent recommendations.

Exercise 7.10.1

1. Understand the process theories of motivation: operant conditioning, equity, goal, and expectancy theories.
2. Describe the managerial factors managers must consider when applying motivational approaches.

Footnotes

- 1 Sometimes E2s are called *instrumentalities* because they are the perception that performance is instrumental in getting some desired outcome.
- 2 It can also be expressed as an equation:

$$Force\ to\ Choose\ a\ Level\ of\ Effort \quad = \quad \mathrm{E1} \times \sum (\mathrm{E2_o} \times \mathrm{V_o}) \tag{7.10.1}$$

Where V_0 is the valence of a given outcome (o), and $\mathrm{E_2o}$ is the perceived probability that a certain level of performance (e.g., Excellent, average, poor) will result in that outcome. So, for multiple outcomes, and different performance levels, the valence of the outcome and its associated performance ➔ outcome expectancy (E2) are multiplied and added to the analogous value for the other outcomes. Combined with the E1 (the amount of effort required to produce a level of performance), the effort level with the greatest *force* associated with it will be chosen by the individual.

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7.11: Recent Research on Motivation Theories

Describe the modern advancements in the study of human motivation.

Employee motivation continues to be a major focus in organizational behavior.[35] We briefly summarize current motivation research here.

Content Theories

There is some interest in testing content theories (including Herzberg's two-factor theory), especially in international research. Need theories are still generally supported, with most people identifying such workplace factors as recognition, advancement, and opportunities to learn as the chief motivators for them. This is consistent with need satisfaction theories. However, most of this research does not include actual measures of employee performance. Thus, questions remain about whether the factors that employees *say* motivate them to perform actually do.

Operant Conditioning Theory

There is considerable interest in operant conditioning theory, especially within the context of what has been called organizational behavior modification. Oddly enough, there has not been much research using operant conditioning theory in designing reward systems, even though there are obvious applications. Instead, much of the recent research on operant conditioning focuses on punishment and extinction. These studies seek to determine how to use punishment appropriately. Recent results still confirm that punishment should be used sparingly, should be used only after extinction does not work, and should not be excessive or destructive.

Equity Theory

Equity theory continues to receive strong research support. The major criticism of equity theory, that the inputs and outcomes people use to evaluate equity are ill-defined, still holds. Because each person defines inputs and outcomes, researchers are not in a position to know them all. Nevertheless, for the major inputs (performance) and outcomes (pay), the theory is a strong one. Major applications of equity theory in recent years incorporate and extend the theory into the area called *organizational justice*. When employees receive rewards (or punishments), they evaluate them in terms of their fairness (as discussed earlier). This is *distributive justice*. Employees also assess rewards in terms of how fair the processes used to distribute them are. This is *procedural justice*. Thus during organizational downsizing, when employees lose their jobs, people ask whether the loss of work is fair (distributive justice). But they also assess the fairness of the process used to decide *who* is laid off (procedural justice). For example, layoffs based on seniority may be perceived as more fair than layoffs based on supervisors' opinions.

Goal Theory

It remains true that difficult, specific goals result in better performance than easy and vague goals, assuming they are accepted. Recent research highlights the positive effects of performance feedback and goal commitment in the goal-setting process. Monetary incentives enhance motivation when they are tied to goal achievement, by increasing the level of goal commitment. There are negative sides to goal theory as well. If goals conflict, employees may sacrifice performance on important job duties. For example, if both quantitative and qualitative goals are set for performance, employees may emphasize quantity because this goal achievement is more visible.

Expectancy Theory

The original formulation of expectancy theory specifies that the motivational force for choosing a level of effort is a function of the multiplication of expectancies and valences. Recent research demonstrates that the individual components predict performance just as well, without being multiplied. This does not diminish the value of expectancy theory. Recent research also suggests that high performance results not only when the valence is high, but also when employees set difficult goals for themselves.

One last comment on motivation: As the world of work changes, so will the methods organizations use to motivate employees. New rewards—time off instead of bonuses; stock options; on-site gyms, cleaners, and dental services; opportunities to telecommute; and others—will need to be created in order to motivate employees in the future. One useful path that modern

researchers can undertake is to analyze the previous studies and aggregate the findings into more conclusive understanding of the topic through meta-analysis studies.[36]

Catching the Entrepreneurial Spirit

Entrepreneurs and Motivation

Motivation can be difficult to elicit in employees. So what drives entrepreneurs, who by definition have to motivate themselves as well as others? While everyone from Greek philosophers to football coaches warns about undirected passion, a lack of passion will likely kill any start-up. An argument could be made that motivation is simply *part* of the discipline or the *outcome* of remaining fixed on a purpose to mentally remind yourself of why you get up in the morning.

Working from her home in Egypt, at age 30 Yasmine El-Mehairy launched Supermama.me, a start-up aimed at providing information to mothers throughout the Arab world. When the company began, El-Mehairy worked full time at her day job and 60 hours a week after that getting the site established. She left her full-time job to manage the site full time in January 2011, and the site went live that October. El-Mehairy is motivated to keep moving forward, saying that if she stops, she might not get going again (Knowledge @ Wharton 2012).

For El-Mehairy, the motivation didn't come from a desire to work for a big company or travel the world and secure a master's degree from abroad. She had already done that. Rather, she said she was motivated to "do something that is useful and I want to do something on my own" (Knowledge @ Wharton 2012 n.p.).

Lauren Lipcon, who founded a company called Injury Funds Now, attributes her ability to stay motivated to three factors: purpose, giving back, and having fun outside of work. Lipcon believes that most entrepreneurs are not motivated by money, but by a sense of purpose. Personally, she left a job with Arthur Andersen to begin her own firm out of a desire to help people. She also thinks it is important for people to give back to their communities because the change the entrepreneur sees in the community loops back, increasing motivation and making the business more successful. Lipcon believes that having a life outside of work helps keep the entrepreneur motivated. She particularly advocates for physical activity, which not only helps the body physically, but also helps keep the mind sharp and able to focus (Rashid 2017).

But do all entrepreneurs agree on what motivates them? A July 17, 2017 survey on the hearpreneur blog site asked 23 different entrepreneurs what motivated them. Seven of the 23 referred to some sense of purpose in what they were doing as a motivating factor, with one response stressing the importance of discovering one's "personal why." Of the remaining entrepreneurs, answers varied from keeping a positive attitude (three responses) and finding external sources (three responses) to meditation and prayer (two responses). One entrepreneur said his greatest motivator was fear: the fear of being in the same place financially one year in the future "causes me to take action and also alleviates my fear of risk" (Hear from Entrepreneurs 2017 n.p.). Only one of the 23 actually cited money and material success as a motivating factor to keep working.

However it is described, entrepreneurs seem to agree that passion and determination are key factors that carry them through the grind of the day-to-day.

Sources:

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Questions:

1. In the article from Hear from Entrepreneurs, one respondent called motivation "garbage"? Would you agree or disagree, and why?

2. How is staying motivated as an entrepreneur similar to being motivated to pursue a college degree? Do you think the two are related? How?
3. How would you expect motivation to vary across cultures?[/BOX]

Exercise 7.11.1

1. Understand the modern approaches to motivation theory.

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7.12: Glossary

ability The knowledge, skills, and receptiveness to learning that an individual brings to a task or job.

content motivation theories Theories that focus on what motivates people.

direction What a person is motivated to achieve.

intensity (1) The degree to which people try to achieve their targets; (2) the forcefulness that enhances the likelihood that a stimulus will be selected for perceptual processing.

motivation A force within or outside of the body that energizes, directs, and sustains human behavior. Within the body, examples might be needs, personal values, and goals, while an incentive might be seen as a force outside of the body. The word stems from its Latin root movere, which means “to move.”

performance environment Refers to those factors that impact employees’ performance but are essentially out of their control.

process motivation theories Theories that focus on the how and why of motivation.

role perceptions The set of behaviors employees think they are expected to perform as members of an organization.

work motivation The amount of effort a person exerts to achieve a level of job performance.

ERG theory Compresses Maslow’s five need categories into three: existence, relatedness, and growth.

extrinsic motivation Occurs when a person performs a given behavior to acquire something that will satisfy a lower-order need.

hedonism Assumes that people are motivated to satisfy mainly their own needs (seek pleasure, avoid pain).

hygienes Factors in the work environment that are based on the basic human need to “avoid pain.”

instincts Our natural, fundamental needs, basic to our survival.

intrinsic motivation Arises out of performing a behavior in and of itself, because it is interesting or “fun” to do.

latent needs Cannot be inferred from a person’s behavior at a given time, yet the person may still possess those needs.

manifest needs Are needs motivating a person at a given time.

manifest needs theory Assumes that human behavior is driven by the desire to satisfy needs.

motivators Relate to the jobs that people perform and people’s ability to feel a sense of achievement as a result of performing them.

motive A source of motivation; the need that a person is attempting to satisfy.

need for achievement (nAch) The need to excel at tasks, especially tasks that are difficult.

need for affiliation (nAff) The need to establish and maintain warm and friendly relationships with other people.

need for power (nPow) The need to control things, especially other people; reflects a motivation to influence and be responsible for other people.

need A human condition that becomes energized when people feel deficient in some respect.

primary needs Are instinctual in nature and include physiological needs for food, water, and sex (procreation).

secondary needs Are learned throughout one’s life span and are psychological in nature.

self-determination theory (SDT) Seeks to explain not only what causes motivation, but also the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation.

avoidance learning Occurs when people learn to behave in a certain way to avoid encountering an undesired or unpleasant consequence.

effort-performance expectancy E1, the perceived probability that effort will lead to performance (or E ➡ P).

equity theory States that human motivation is affected by the outcomes people receive for their inputs, compared to the outcomes and inputs of other people.

expectancy theory Posits that people will exert high effort levels to perform at high levels so that they can obtain valued outcomes.

extinction Occurs when a consequence or lack of a consequence makes it less likely that a behavior will be repeated in the future.

extrinsic outcomes Are awarded or given by other people (like a supervisor).

goal commitment The degree to which people dedicate themselves to achieving a goal.

goal theory States that people will perform better if they have difficult, specific, accepted performance goals or objectives.

input Any personal qualities that a person views as having value and that are relevant to the organization.

intrinsic outcomes Are awarded or given by people to themselves (such as a sense of achievement).

negative reinforcement Occurs when a behavior causes something undesirable to be removed, increasing the likelihood of the behavior reoccurring.

nonreinforcement Occurs when no consequence follows a worker's behavior.

operant conditioning A learning process based on the results produced by a person "operating on" the environment.

operant conditioning theory Posits that people learn to behave in a particular fashion as a result of the consequences that followed their past behaviors.

outcome Anything a person perceives as getting back from an organization in exchange for the person's inputs.

overreward inequity Occurs when people perceive their outcome/input ratio to be greater than that of their referent other.

performance-outcome expectancy E2, the perceived relationship between performance and outcomes (or P ➡ O).

positive reinforcement Occurs when a desirable consequence that satisfies an active need or removes a barrier to need satisfaction increases the likelihood of a behavior reoccurring.

punishment An aversive consequence that follows a behavior and makes it less likely to reoccur.

referent others Workers that a person uses to compare inputs and outcomes, and who perform jobs similar in difficulty and complexity to the employee making an equity determination.

reinforcement Occurs when a consequence makes it more likely a behavior will be repeated in the future.

schedules of reinforcement The frequency at which effective employee behaviors are reinforced.

self-efficacy A belief about the probability that one can successfully execute some future action or task, or achieve some result.

state of equity Occurs when people perceive their outcome/input ratio to be equal to that of their referent other.

underreward inequity Occurs when people perceive their outcome/input ratio to be less than that of their referent other.

valences The degree to which a person perceives an outcome as being desirable, neutral, or undesirable.

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7.13: Chapter Review Questions

1. Discuss the benefits that accrue when an organization has a good understanding of employee needs.
2. How might Maslow explain why organizational rewards that motivate workers today may not motivate the same workers in 5 or 10 years?
3. Describe the process by which needs motivate workers.
4. Discuss the importance of Herzberg's motivators and hygienes.
5. Describe a work situation in which it would be appropriate to use a continuous reinforcement schedule.
6. Discuss the potential effectiveness and limitations of punishment in organizations.
7. How can equity theory explain why a person who receives a high salary might be dissatisfied with their pay?
8. Equity theory specifies a number of possible alternatives for reducing perceived inequity. How could an organization influence which of these alternatives a person will pursue?
9. What goals would be most likely to improve your learning and performance in an organizational behavior class?
10. Identify two reasons why a formal goal-setting program might be dysfunctional for an organization.
11. What steps can an organization take to increase the motivational force for high levels of performance?
12. Discuss how supervisors sometimes unintentionally weaken employees E ➡ P and P ➡ O expectancies.
13. How can an employee attach high valence to high levels of performance, yet not be motivated to be a high performer?
14. Is there "one best" motivation theory? Explain your answer.

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7.14: Management Skills Application Exercises

1. Many companies strive to design jobs that are intrinsically motivating. Visit several small and large company websites and search their career section. What job features related to motivation are highlighted? What type of employees do you think the companies will attract with these jobs?
2. You will be paired with another student in this class. Each of you will take one side of the issue and debate:
   a. Student A: All members of the organization should be given the same specific, difficult-to-achieve goals.
   b. Student B: Specific, difficult-to-achieve goals should only be given to certain members of the organization.
3. Assume the role of sales manager, and write a memo to two of your reports that have the following situations and job performance.
   a. Employee 1: Shawn is a onetime stellar performer. They were twice the top performing salesperson in the company in the past decade. In the past year, Shawn has missed goal by 4 percent. Shawn recently became the parent to twins and says that the reason for missing goal this year was due to the territory being saturated with product from previous years.
   b. Employee 2: Soo Kim is an energetic salesperson who is putting in long hours and producing detailed sales reports, but their performance on the sales side has not met expectations. When you examine the customer feedback page on your website, you notice that they have five times as many positive reviews and glowing comments about Soo Kim.

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7.15: Managerial Decision Exercises

1. You are a manager and it's performance appraisal time, which is a yearly exercise to provide feedback to your direct reports that is often stressful for both the employee and the manager. You feel that the feedback process should be more of an ongoing process than the yearly formal process. What are the benefits of this yearly process, and what, if any, are the drawbacks of providing both positive and remediation feedback to your direct reports?
2. You have been told by a worker on another team that one of your direct reports made an inappropriate comment to a coworker. What do you do to investigate the matter, and what actions would you take with your report, the person that the comment was directed to, and other people in the organization?
3. You learn that an employee who doesn't report to you has made an inappropriate comment to one of your direct reports. What do you do to investigate the matter, and what actions would you take with your report, the person that made the comment, their manager, and other people in the organization?
4. Your company is considering implementing a 360° appraisal system where up to 10 people in the organization provide feedback on every employee as part of the annual performance appraisal process. This feedback will come from subordinates, peers, and senior managers as well as individuals in other departments. You have been asked to prepare a memo to the director of human resources about the positive and negative effects this could have on the motivation of employees. Note that not all of the employees are on a bonus plan that will be impacted by this feedback.

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7.16: Critical Thinking Case

Motivating Employees at JCPenney, Walmart, and Amazon in the Age of Online Shopping

In the 1980s, Walmart had killed (or was killing) the mom-and-pop store. “Buy local” signs were seen, urging consumers to buy from their local retailers rather than from the low-cost behemoth. Markets have continued to shift and the “buy local” signs are still around, but now the battleground has shifted with the disruptive growth of e-commerce. Even mighty Walmart is feeling some growing pains.

Census Bureau data for 2017 shows that e-commerce, or online shopping, accounted for 8.9 percent of all retail sales in the United States, accounting for $111.5 billion (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). Feeling the pinch, many malls across the country are closing their doors, and their empty retail spaces are being repurposed. Credit Suisse predicts that due to competition from online shopping, 20 to 25 percent of American malls will close within the next five years (Dying Malls Make Room for New Condos Apartment 2017). Furthermore, according to a 2017 study, 23 percent of Americans already purchase their groceries online (Embrace the Internet, Skip the Checkout 2017).

Whether face-to-face with customers or filling orders in a warehouse, motivated employees are essential to business success. And company culture helps drive that motivation. As a 2015 *Harvard Business Review* article put it, “Why we work determines how well we work” (McGregor & Doshi 2015). Adapting earlier research for the modern workplace, the study found six reasons that people work: play, purpose, potential, emotional pressure, economic pressure, and inertia. The first three are positive motives while that later three are negative. The researchers found that role design, more than any other factor, had the highest impact on employee motivation.

Anecdotally, using role design to motivate employees can be seen across industries. Toyota allows factory workers to innovate new processes on the factory floor. Southwest Airlines encourages a sense of "play" among crewmembers who interact directly with passengers (which has resulted in some humorous viral videos). A sense of the organization’s identity (and a desire to be part of it) and how the career ladder within the company is perceived are second and third in their impact on employee motivation. Unhealthy competition for advancement can do more harm than good to employee motivation, and as a result many large companies are restructuring their performance review and advancement systems (McGregor & Doshi 2015). Conversely, costs from unmotivated employees can be high. In August 2017, retailer JCPenney had an employee arrested who had allegedly cost the company more than $10,000 in stolen cash and under-rung merchandise at a mall store. Another employee had stolen more than $1,000 of clothes from the store less than a month earlier.

Brick-and-mortar retail outlets from Macy’s to Walmart have come under pressure by increased online shopping, particularly at Amazon.com. Walmart has responded by both trying to improve the shopping experience in its stores and creating an online presence of its own. A recent study funded by Walmart found that 60 percent of retails workers lack proficiency in reading and 70 percent have difficulty with math (Class is in session at Walmart Academy 2017). Increasing math and team skills for the employees would increase efficiency and certainly help improve employee self-image and motivation. With this in mind, Walmart has created one of the largest employer training programs in the country, Walmart Academy (McGregor & Doshi 2015). The company expects to graduate more than 225,000 of its supervisors and managers from a program that covers topics such as merchandising and employee motivation. In another program, Pathways, Walmart has created a course that covers topics such as merchandising, communication, and retail math (Walmart 2016 Global Responsibility Report 2016). The Pathways program was expected to see 500,000 entry-level workers take part in 2016 (Walmart 2016). All employees who complete the course receive a dollar an hour pay increase. Educating employees pays off by recognizing that the effort put in pays off with better-motivated and better-educated employees. In the case of Walmart, “upskilling” has become a priority.

Walmart has gone beyond education to motivate or empower employees. In 2016, pay raises for 1.2 million employees took effect as part of a new minimum-wage policy, and it streamlined its paid time off program that same year (Schmid 2017). In its 2016 Global Responsibility Report, Walmart points out that over the course of two years, the company has invested $2.7 billion in wages, benefits, and training in the United States (Staley 2017).

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Critical Thinking Questions:

1. A 2015 *New York Times* article described Amazon as “a soulless, dystopian workplace where no fun is had and no laughter heard” (Cook 2015 n.p.). Employees themselves came to the company’s defense (Ciubotariu 2015). Does this reputation continue to haunt Amazon, or has it been addressed?
2. How do employees differ between a Walmart retail location and an Amazon order fulfillment center? How many white-collar or skilled jobs does Amazon have compared to Walmart?
3. With Amazon moving into the retail market with the purchase of Whole Foods, and with Walmart expanding its e-commerce, how are employee motivation challenges going to shift?

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7.17: Work Motivation for Performance



Figure 7.17.1 (Credit: mohamed_hassan/ Pixabay/ (CC BY 0))

Learning Objectives

After reading this section, you should be able to answer these questions:

- Define motivation, and distinguish the direction and intensity of motivation.
- Describe a content theory of motivation, and compare and contrast the main content theories of motivation: manifest needs theory, learned needs theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, and self-determination theory.
- Describe the process theories of motivation, and compare and contrast the main process theories of motivation: operant conditioning theory, equity theory, goal theory, and expectancy theory.
- Describe the modern advancements in the study of human motivation.

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7.18: Summary

In this chapter, we first defined motivation and collaboration. We then considered the roles that motivation play in human behavior. We identified and explained the place of strategies for bringing about motivation and collaboration. Finally, we explored the crucial role played by feedback and assessment in motivating members of a group.

Chapter Review Questions

Interpretive Questions

1. What factors might cause a highly-motivated individual to lose his or her motivation abruptly?
2. Under what circumstances might collaboration be of minor importance to members of a group?
3. How would you rank the collaboration strategies described in section 4 of this chapter? On what basis do you feel your ranking is justified?

Application Questions

1. Do motivational speakers actually cause members of their audiences to be motivated? Identify a total of at least half a dozen members of your family, friends, and peers who have heard motivational speakers and ask them how, if at all, the speakers changed their behavior or outlook.
2. A commonly-held view of coaches in competitive sport is that they motivate athletes to achieve personal triumphs and develop productive collaboration with teammates. Investigate this issue and share your findings.
3. Some people feel that, despite its intended purpose of increasing achievement, “high-stakes” assessment of K-12 students entails more drawbacks than advantages. Do you agree? Locate writings by three supporters and three opponents of such assessment, share the documents with classmates, and explain why you endorse or disagree with any two of them.

7.1 Motivation: Direction and Intensity

Define motivation, and distinguish the direction and intensity of motivation.

This chapter has covered the major motivation theories in organizational behavior. Motivation theories endeavor to explain how people become motivated. Motivation has two major components: direction and intensity. The direction is what a person is trying to achieve. Intensity is the degree of effort a person expends to achieve the target. All motivation theories address the ways in which people develop direction and intensity.

7.2 Content Theories of Motivation

Describe a content theory of motivation, and compare and contrast the main content theories of motivation: manifest needs theory, learned needs theory, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Alderfer’s ERG theory, Herzberg’s motivator-hygiene theory, and self-determination theory.

Motivation theories are classified as either content or process theories. Content theories focus on what motivates behavior. The basic premise of content theories is that humans have needs. When these needs are not satisfied, humans are motivated to satisfy the need. The need provides direction for motivation. Murray’s manifest needs theory, McClelland’s learned needs theory, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and Herzberg’s motivator-hygiene theory are all content theories. Each has something to say about the needs that motivate humans in the workplace.

7.3 Process Theories of Motivation

Describe the process theories of motivation, and compare and contrast the main process theories of motivation: operant conditioning theory, equity theory, goal theory, and expectancy theory.

Process theories focus on how people become motivated. Operant conditioning theory states that people will be motivated to engage in behaviors for which they have been reinforced (rewarded). It also states that people will avoid behaviors that are punished. The rate at which behaviors are rewarded also affects how often they will be displayed. Equity theory’s main premise is that people compare their situations to those of other people. If a person feels that they are being treated unfairly relative to a referent other, the person may engage in behaviors that are counterproductive for the organization. Employers should try to develop

feelings of fairness in employees. Goal theory is a strong theory. It states that difficult, specific goals will result in high performance if employees accept the goals and are committed to achieving them.

7.4 Recent Research on Motivation Theories

Describe the modern advancements in the study of human motivation.

Expectancy theory is a process theory. It also is the broadest of the motivation theories. Expectancy theory predicts that employees will be motivated to be high performers if they perceive that high performance leads to valued outcomes. Employees will be motivated to avoid being low performers if they perceive that it leads to negative outcomes. Employees must perceive that they are capable of achieving high performance, and they must have the appropriate abilities and high self-efficacy. Organizations need to provide adequate resources and to measure performance accurately. Inaccurate performance ratings discourage high performance. Overall, the expectancy theory draws attention to how organizations structure the work environment and distribute rewards.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Group Conflict

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8.1: Chapter Introduction



Figure 8.1.1. **Strike** (Credit: Charles Edward Miller/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. How does conflict arise in organizations?
2. How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

Exploring Managerial Careers

Conflict at Google

Over the past two years at Google, 48 people have been terminated for sexual harassment. There is a firm policy at Google pertaining to this type of misconduct, but when the effects of these types of events cause an uproar based on reports that a former top executive was paid millions of dollars after leaving Google despite misconduct and harassment allegations, it's important to get to the point of conflict and face it head on.

That's exactly why Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai did just that. In an attempt to get ahead of the storm, Pichai wrote an email to explaining that none of the individuals that were asked to leave were given severance packages. Despite this, employees are still feeling upset over such claims.

"The culture of stigmatization and silence *enables* the abuse by making it harder to speak up and harder to be believed," Liz Fong-Jones, who is quoted in the *Times's* story, wrote on Twitter. "It's the abuse of power relationships in situations where there was no consent, or consent was impossible."

After the article came out in the *New York Times* reporting that Google gave Andy Rubin, former Android chief, a $90 million exit package, it was not just employees that were upset; there was external conflict between the company and Rubin. The media was heavily involved, including Bloomberg, and Rubin used social channels as well, making it even more complicated to counteract the negative comments or come to a resolution. Since the reports of Rubin's actions as well as additional reports regarding Google's permissive culture became public, Google has taken actions to update its policy on relationship disclosure.

This stance from the Google executive team is just one step in the right direction to address a culture that suggests a high level of conflict due to the protection of executives over the safety and well-being of the employees, who may be less likely to report incidents of abuse of power.

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In all organizations, including Google, some conflict is inevitable. Simply making a decision to do A instead of B often alienates the supporters of B, despite the soundness of the reasons behind the decision. Moreover, the consequences of conflict (and failed

negotiations) can be costly to an organization, whether the conflict is between labor and management, groups, individuals, or nations. In an era of increasing business competition both from abroad and at home, reducing conflict is important. For these reasons, contemporary managers need a firm grasp of the dynamics of intergroup and interorganizational conflict and of negotiation processes.

We begin with a discussion of the conflict process, followed by a look at negotiations both within and between organizations.

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8.2: Conflict in Organizations - Basic Considerations

How do you recognize and resolve short- and long-term conflicts among group members and among groups?

By any standard of comparison, conflict in organizations represents an important topic for managers. Just how important it is can be seen in the results of a study of how managers spend their time. It was found that approximately 20 percent of top and middle managers' time was spent dealing with some form of conflict. In another study, it was found that managerial skill in handling conflict was a major predictor of managerial success and effectiveness.

A good example of the magnitude of the problems that conflict can cause in an organization is the case of General Concrete, Inc., of Coventry, Rhode Island. Operations at this concrete plant came to a halt for more than three weeks because the plant's one truck driver and sole member of the Teamsters Union began picketing after he was laid off by the company. The company intended to use other drivers from another of their plants. In response to the picketing, not a single employee of General Concrete crossed the picket line, thereby closing the plant and costing the company a considerable amount in lost production and profit. Could this problem have been handled better? We shall see.

In the sections that follow, several aspects of conflict in organizations are considered. First, conflict is defined, and variations of conflict are considered by type and by level. Next, constructive and destructive aspects of conflict are discussed. A basic model of the conflict process is then examined, followed by a look at several of the more prominent antecedents of conflict. Finally, effective and ineffective strategies for conflict resolution are contrasted. Throughout, emphasis is placed on problem identification and problem resolution.

There are many ways to determine conflict as it relates to the workplace. For our purposes here, we will define **conflict** as the process by which individuals or groups react to other entities that have frustrated, or are about to frustrate, their plans, goals, beliefs, or activities. In other words, conflict involves situations in which the expectations or actual goal-directed behaviors of one person or group are blocked—or about to be blocked—by another person or group. Hence, if a sales representative cannot secure enough funds to mount what she considers to be an effective sales campaign, conflict can ensue. Similarly, if A gets promoted and B doesn't, conflict can emerge. Finally, if a company finds it necessary to lay off valued employees because of difficult financial conditions, conflict can occur. Many such examples can be identified; in each, a situation emerges in which someone or some group cannot do what it wants to do (for whatever reason) and responds by experiencing an inner frustration.

Types of Conflict

If we are to try to understand the roots of conflict, we need to know what type of conflict is present. At least four *types of conflict* can be identified:

1. *Goal conflict*. **Goal conflict** can occur when one person or group desires a different outcome than others do. This is simply a clash over whose goals are going to be pursued.
2. *Cognitive conflict*. **Cognitive conflict** can result when one person or group holds ideas or opinions that are inconsistent with those of others. This type of conflict is evident in political debates.
3. *Affective conflict.* This type of conflict emerges when one person's or group's feelings or emotions (attitudes) are incompatible with those of others. **Affective conflict** is seen in situations where two individuals simply don't get along with each other.
4. *Behavioral conflict*. **Behavioral conflict** exists when one person or group does something (i.e., behaves in a certain way) that is unacceptable to others. Dressing for work in a way that "offends" others and using profane language are examples of behavioral conflict.

Each of these types of conflict is usually triggered by different factors, and each can lead to very different responses by the individual or group.

Levels of Conflict

In addition to different types of conflict, there exist several different *levels* of conflict. *Level* refers to the number of individuals involved in the conflict. That is, is the conflict within just one person, between two people, between two or more groups, or

between two or more organizations? Both the causes of a conflict and the most effective means to resolve it can be affected by level. Four such levels can be identified:

1. *Intrapersonal conflict*. **Intrapersonal conflict** is conflict within one person. We often hear about someone who has an approach-avoidance conflict; that is, she is both attracted to and repelled by the same object. Similarly, a person can be attracted to two equally appealing alternatives, such as two good job offers (approach-approach conflict) or repelled by two equally unpleasant alternatives, such as the threat of being fired if one fails to identify a coworker guilty of breaking plant rules (avoidance-avoidance conflict). In any case, the conflict is within the individual.
2. *Interpersonal conflict*. Conflict can also take form in an **interpersonal conflict**, where two individuals disagree on some matter. For example, you can have an argument with a coworker over an issue of mutual concern. Such conflicts often tend to get highly personal because only two parties are involved and each person embodies the opposing position in the conflict. Hence, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the opponent's position and her person.
3. *Intergroup conflict*. Third, conflict can be found between groups. **Intergroup conflict** usually involves disagreements between two opposing forces over goals or the sharing of resources. For example, we often see conflict between the marketing and production units within a corporation as each vies for more resources to accomplish its subgoals. Intergroup conflict is typically the most complicated form of conflict because of the number of individuals involved. Coalitions form within and between groups, and an "us-against-them" mentality develops. Here, too, is an opportunity for groupthink to develop and thrive.
4. *Interorganizational conflict*. Finally, we can see **interorganizational conflict** in disputes between two companies in the same industry (for example, a disagreement between computer manufactures over computer standards), between two companies in different industries or economic sectors (for example, a conflict between real estate interests and environmentalists over land use planning), and even between two or more countries (for example, a trade dispute between the United States and Japan or France). In each case, both parties inevitably feel the pursuit of their goals is being frustrated by the other party.

The Positive and Negative Sides of Conflict

People often assume that all conflict is necessarily bad and should be eliminated. On the contrary, there are some circumstances in which a moderate amount of conflict can be helpful. For instance, conflict can lead to the search for new ideas and new mechanisms as solutions to organizational problems. Conflict can stimulate innovation and change. It can also facilitate employee motivation in cases where employees feel a need to excel and, as a result, push themselves in order to meet performance objectives.

Conflict can at times help individuals and group members grow and develop self-identities. As noted by Coser:

Conflict, which aims at a resolution of tension between antagonists, is likely to have stabilizing and integrative functions for the relationship. By permitting immediate and direct expression of rival claims, such social systems are able to readjust their structures by eliminating their sources of dissatisfaction. The multiple conflicts which they experience may serve to eliminate the causes for dissociation and to reestablish unity. These systems avail themselves, through the toleration and institutionalization of conflict, of an important stabilizing mechanism.

Conflict can, on the other hand, have negative consequences for both individuals and organizations when people divert energies away from performance and goal attainment and direct them toward resolving the conflict. Continued conflict can take a heavy toll in terms of psychological well-being. As we will see in the next chapter, conflict has a major influence on stress and the psychophysical consequences of stress. Finally, continued conflict can also affect the social climate of the group and inhibit group cohesiveness.

Thus, conflict can be either functional or dysfunctional in work situations depending upon the nature of the conflict, its intensity, and its duration. Indeed, both too much and too little conflict can lead to a variety of negative outcomes, as discussed above. This is shown in Figure 8.2.1. In such circumstances, a moderate amount of conflict may be the best course of action. The issue for management, therefore, is not how to eliminate conflict but rather how to manage and resolve it when it occurs.

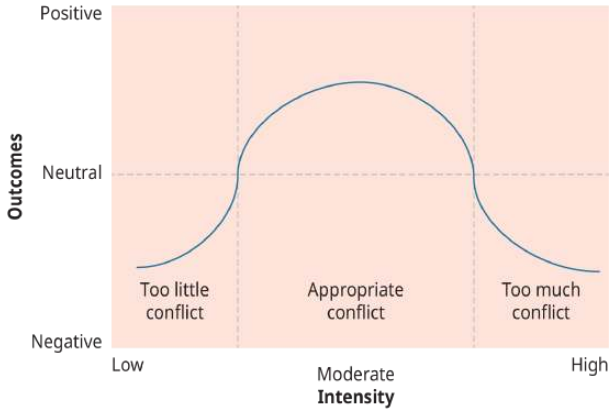


Figure 8.2.1 **The Relationship Between Conflict Intensity and Outcomes** *Source*: Adapted from L. David Brown, *Managing Conflict at Organizational Interfaces*, 1986 by Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., Reading, Massachusetts, Figure 1.1, p.8. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Managerial Leadership

Executive Conflict Resolution Strategies

A good way to see how conflict can be functional or dysfunctional is to observe the behaviors of many of America's CEOs. Classic examples include the cases of Jack Welch, former chairman of General Electric, and Fred Ackman, former chairman of Superior Oil. Welch enjoyed a good fight and took pleasure in the give-and-take of discussions and negotiations. On one occasion, he engaged a senior vice president in a prolonged and emotional shouting match over the merits of a certain proposal. Several managers who were present were embarrassed by the confrontation. Yet after the argument, Welch thanked the vice president for standing up to him and defending his views. This is what Welch calls "constructive conflict," also termed **constructive confrontation.**

On the other hand, according to one account, Fred Ackman approached conflict quite differently. Ackman has been accused of being autocratic—he often refused even to discuss suggestions or modifications to proposals he presented. Disagreement was seen as disloyalty and was often met with an abusive temper. As one former subordinate said, "He couldn't stand it when someone disagreed with him, even in private. He'd eat you up alive, calling you a dumb S.O.B. . . . It happened all the time."

Many today will suggest that Jack Welch's management approach and the conglomerate approach of GE has led to the company's fiscal problems, while others fault the direction that Jack Welch's successor Jeff Immelt. Others say that leaders at other companies, such as Apple's Tim Cook, are making the same leadership errors as Jack Welch.

Questions:

1. How do you feel you respond to such conflict?
2. Would your friends agree with your assessment?

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Exercise 8.2.1

How can the use of power help and harm organizations?

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8.3: Causes of Conflict in Organizations

How does conflict arise in organizations?

Here we will examine two aspects of the conflict process. First, several factors that have been found to contribute to conflict will be identified. After this, a model of conflict processes in organizations will be reviewed.

Why Organizations Have So Much Conflict

A number of factors are known to facilitate organizational conflict under certain circumstances. In summarizing the literature, Robert Miles points to several specific examples.These are as follows:

Task Interdependencies. The first antecedent can be found in the nature of **task interdependencies.** In essence, the greater the extent of task interdependence among individuals or groups (that is, the more they have to work together or collaborate to accomplish a goal), the greater the likelihood of conflict if different expectations or goals exist among entities, in part because the interdependence makes avoiding the conflict more difficult. This occurs in part because high task interdependency heightens the intensity of relationships. Hence, a small disagreement can very quickly get blown up into a major issue.

Status Inconsistencies. A second factor is **status inconsistencies** among the parties involved. For example, managers in many organizations have the prerogative to take personal time off during workdays to run errands, and so forth, whereas nonmanagerial personnel do not. Consider the effects this can have on the nonmanagers' view of organizational policies and fairness.

Jurisdictional Ambiguities. Conflict can also emerge from **jurisdictional ambiguities**—situations where it is unclear exactly where responsibility for something lies. For example, many organizations use an employee selection procedure in which applicants are evaluated both by the personnel department and by the department in which the applicant would actually work. Because both departments are involved in the hiring process, what happens when one department wants to hire an individual, but the other department does not?

Communication Problems. Suffice it to say that the various *communication problems* or ambiguities in the communication process can facilitate conflict. When one person misunderstands a message or when information is withheld, the person often responds with frustration and anger.

Dependence on Common Resource Pool. Another previously discussed factor that contributes to conflict is *dependence on common resource pools*. Whenever several departments must compete for scarce resources, conflict is almost inevitable. When resources are limited, a zero-sum game exists in which someone wins and, invariably, someone loses.

Lack of Common Performance Standards. Differences in performance criteria and reward systems provide more potential for organizational conflict. This often occurs because of a *lack of common performance standards* among differing groups within the same organization. For example, production personnel are often rewarded for their efficiency, and this efficiency is facilitated by the long-term production of a few products. Sales departments, on the other hand, are rewarded for their short-term response to market changes—often at the expense of long-term production efficiency. In such situations, conflict arises as each unit attempts to meet its own performance criteria.

Individual Differences. Finally, a variety of *individual differences*, such as personal abilities, traits, and skills, can influence in no small way the nature of interpersonal relations. Individual dominance, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and tolerance for ambiguity all seem to influence how an individual deals with potential conflict. Indeed, such characteristics may determine whether or not conflict is created at all.

A Model of the Conflict Process

Having examined specific factors that are known to facilitate conflict, we can ask how conflict comes about in organizations. The most commonly accepted model of the conflict process was developed by Kenneth Thomas. This model, shown in Figure 8.3.1, consists of four stages: (1) frustration, (2) conceptualization, (3) behavior, and (4) outcome.

Stage 1: Frustration. As we have seen, conflict situations originate when an individual or group feels **frustration** in the pursuit of important goals. This frustration may be caused by a wide variety of factors, including disagreement over performance goals,

failure to get a promotion or pay raise, a fight over scarce economic resources, new rules or policies, and so forth. In fact, conflict can be traced to frustration over almost anything a group or individual cares about.

Stage 2: Conceptualization. In stage 2, the conceptualization stage of the model, parties to the conflict attempt to understand the nature of the problem, what they themselves want as a resolution, what they think their opponents want as a resolution, and various strategies they feel each side may employ in resolving the conflict. This stage is really the problem-solving and strategy phase. For instance, when management and union negotiate a labor contract, both sides attempt to decide what is most important and what can be bargained away in exchange for these priority needs.

Stage 3: Behavior. The third stage in Thomas's model is actual *behavior*. As a result of the conceptualization process, parties to a conflict attempt to implement their resolution mode by competing or accommodating in the hope of resolving problems. A major task here is determining how best to proceed strategically. That is, what tactics will the party use to attempt to resolve the conflict? Thomas has identified five modes for conflict resolution, as shown in Figure 8.3.1. These are (1) competing, (2) collaborating, (3) compromising, (4) avoiding, and (5) accommodating. Also shown in the exhibit are situations that seem most appropriate for each strategy.

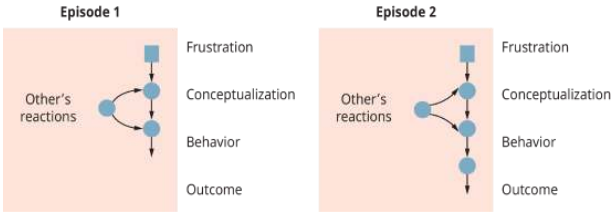


Figure 8.3.1. **A Model of the Conflict Process** *Source*: Adapted from Kenneth Thomas, "Conflict and Conflict Management," in M. D. Dunnette (ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1976), p. 895. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

The choice of an appropriate conflict resolution mode depends to a great extent on the situation and the goals of the party. This is shown graphically in Figure 8.3.2. According to this model, each party must decide the extent to which it is interested in satisfying its own concerns—called **assertiveness**—and the extent to which it is interested in helping satisfy the opponent's concerns—called **cooperativeness**. Assertiveness can range from assertive to unassertive on one continuum, and cooperativeness can range from uncooperative to cooperative on the other continuum.

Once the parties have determined their desired balance between the two competing concerns—either consciously or unconsciously—the resolution strategy emerges. For example, if a union negotiator feels confident she can win on an issue that is of primary concern to union members (e.g., wages), a direct competition mode may be chosen (see upper left-hand corner of Figure 8.3.2). On the other hand, when the union is indifferent to an issue or when it actually supports management's concerns (e.g., plant safety), we would expect an accommodating or collaborating mode (on the right-hand side of the exhibit).

Five Modes of Resolving Conflict

Conflict-Handling Modes	Appropriate Situations
Competing	1. When quick, decisive action is vital—e.g., emergencies 2. On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing—e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline 3. On issues vital to company welfare when you know you're right 4. Against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
Collaborating	1. When trying to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised 2. When your objective is to learn 3. When merging insights from people with different perspectives 4. When gaining commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus 5. When working through feelings that have interfered with a relationship
Compromising	1. When goals are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes 2. When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals 3. When attempting to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues 4. When arriving at expedient solutions under time pressure 5. As a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful
Avoiding	1. When an issue is trivial, or when more important issues are pressing 2. When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns 3. When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution 4. When letting people cool down and regain perspective 5. When gathering information supersedes immediate decision 6. When others can resolve the conflict more effectively 7. When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues
Accommodating	1. When you find you are wrong—to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness 2. When issues are more important to others than yourself—to satisfy others and maintain cooperation 3. When building social credits for later issues 4. When minimizing loss when you are outmatched and losing 5. When harmony and stability are especially important. 6. When allowing subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes.

Source: Adapted from K. W. Thomas, "Toward Multidimensional Values in Teaching: The Example of Conflict Behaviors," *Academy of Management Review 2* (1977), Table 1, p. 487.

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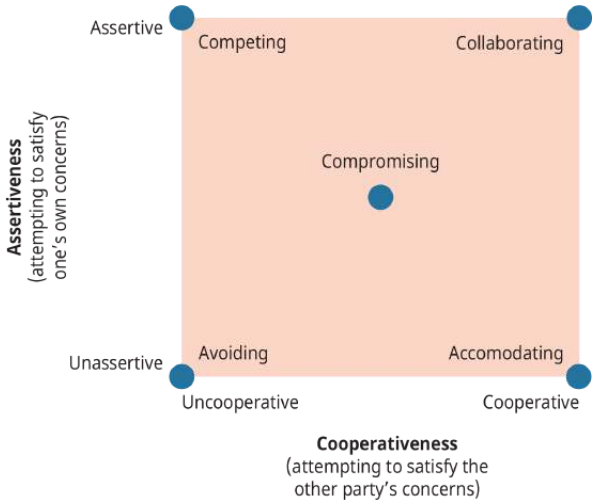


Figure 8.3.2 **Approaches to Conflict Resolution** *Source*: Adapted from Kenneth Thomas, "Conflict and Conflict Management," in M. D. Dunnette (ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1976), p. 900. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

What is interesting in this process is the assumptions people make about their own modes compared to their opponents'. For example, in one study of executives, it was found that the executives typically described themselves as using collaboration or compromise to resolve conflict, whereas these same executives typically described their opponents as using a competitive mode almost exclusively. In other words, the executives underestimated their opponents' concern as uncompromising. Simultaneously, the executives had flattering portraits of their own willingness to satisfy both sides in a dispute.

Stage 4: Outcome. Finally, as a result of efforts to resolve the conflict, both sides determine the extent to which a satisfactory resolution or outcome has been achieved. Where one party to the conflict does not feel satisfied or feels only partially satisfied, the seeds of discontent are sown for a later conflict, as shown in the preceding Figure 14.1.1. One unresolved conflict episode can easily set the stage for a second episode. Managerial action aimed at achieving quick and satisfactory resolution is vital; failure to initiate such action leaves the possibility (more accurately, the probability) that new conflicts will soon emerge.

? Exercise 8.3.1

Describe the process of the conflict model.

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8.4: Resolving Conflict in Organizations

When and how do you negotiate, and how do you achieve a mutually advantageous agreement?

We have discovered that conflict is pervasive throughout organizations and that some conflict can be good for organizations. People often grow and learn from conflict, as long as the conflict is not dysfunctional. The challenge for managers is to select a resolution strategy appropriate to the situation and individuals involved. A review of past management practice in this regard reveals that managers often make poor strategy choices. As often as not, managers select repressive or ineffective conflict resolution strategies.

Common Strategies that Seldom Work

At leave five conflict resolution techniques commonly found in organizations prove to be ineffective fairly consistently. In fact, not only do such techniques seldom work—in many cases, they actually serve to increase the problem. Nonetheless, they are found with alarming frequency in a wide array of business and public organizations. These five ineffective strategies are often associated with an avoidance approach and are described below.

Nonaction. Perhaps the most common managerial response when conflict emerges is *nonaction*—doing nothing and ignoring the problem. It may be felt that if the problem is ignored, it will go away. Unfortunately, that is not often the case. In fact, ignoring the problem may serve only to increase the frustration and anger of the parties involved.

Administrative Orbiting. In some cases, managers will acknowledge that a problem exists but then take little serious action. Instead, they continually report that a problem is "under study" or that "more information is needed." Telling a person who is experiencing a serious conflict that "these things take time" hardly relieves anyone's anxiety or solves any problems. This ineffective strategy for resolving conflict is aptly named **administrative orbiting**.

Due Process Nonaction. A third ineffective approach to resolving conflict is to set up a recognized procedure for redressing grievances but at the same time to ensure that the procedure is long, complicated, costly, and perhaps even risky. The **due process nonaction** strategy is to wear down the dissatisfied employee while at the same time claiming that resolution procedures are open and available. This technique has been used repeatedly in conflicts involving race and sex discrimination.

Secrecy. Oftentimes, managers will attempt to reduce conflict through *secrecy*. Some feel that by taking secretive actions, controversial decisions can be carried out with a minimum of resistance. One argument for pay secrecy (keeping employee salaries secret) is that such a policy makes it more difficult for employees to feel inequitably treated. Essentially, this is a "what they don't know won't hurt them" strategy. A major problem of this approach is that it leads to distrust of management. When managerial credibility is needed for other issues, it may be found lacking.

Character Assassination. The final ineffective resolution technique to be discussed here is **character assassination**. The person with a conflict, perhaps a woman claiming sex discrimination, is labeled a "troublemaker." Attempts are made to discredit her and distance her from the others in the group. The implicit strategy here is that if the person can be isolated and stigmatized, she will either be silenced by negative group pressures or she will leave. In either case, the problem is "solved."

Strategies for Preventing Conflict

On the more positive side, there are many things managers can do to reduce or actually solve dysfunctional conflict when it occurs. These fall into two categories: actions directed at conflict *prevention* and actions directed at conflict *reduction*. We shall start by examining conflict prevention techniques, because preventing conflict is often easier than reducing it once it begins. These include:

1. *Emphasizing organization-wide goals and effectiveness.* Focusing on organization-wide goals and objectives should prevent goal conflict. If larger goals are emphasized, employees are more likely to see the big picture and work together to achieve corporate goals.
2. *Providing stable, well-structured tasks.* When work activities are clearly defined, understood, and accepted by employees, conflict should be less likely to occur. Conflict is most likely to occur when task uncertainty is high; specifying or structuring jobs minimizes ambiguity.
3. *Facilitating intergroup communication.* Misperception of the abilities, goals, and motivations of others often leads to conflict, so efforts to increase the dialogue among groups and to share information should help eliminate conflict. As groups come to

know more about one another, suspicions often diminish, and greater intergroup teamwork becomes possible.

4. *Avoiding win-lose situations.* If win-lose situations are avoided, less potential for conflict exists. When resources are scarce, management can seek some form of resource sharing to achieve organizational effectiveness. Moreover, rewards can be given for contributions to overall corporate objectives; this will foster a climate in which groups seek solutions acceptable to all.

These points bear a close resemblance to descriptions of the so-called Japanese management style. In Japanese firms, considerable effort is invested in preventing conflict. In this way, more energy is available for constructive efforts toward task accomplishment and competition in the marketplace. Another place where considerable destructive conflict is prevented is Intel.

Managerial Leadership

Sustainability and Responsible Management: Constructive Conflict that Leads to Championships

Dealing with conflict lies at the heart of managing any business. Confrontation—facing issues about which there is disagreement—is avoided only at a manager's peril. Many issues can be postponed, allowed to fester, or smoothed over; eventually, they must be solved. They are not going to disappear. This philosophy not only applies to business but to sports dynamics as well.

Take two NBA all-stars, Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal. Although they are world-renowned athletes now, when they first started in the NBA, there was plenty of conflict that could have caused their careers to take a much different path.

In 1992, O'Neal was the first play taken in by the NBA draft, he dominated the court with his size and leadership from day one. Four years later, Kobe Bryant, the youngest player to start in the NBA was brought onto the same team: the Los Angeles Lakers. The two were not fast friends, and the trash talk started as Bryant publicly criticized his teammate—and continued for years.

Ultimately in 1999, Phil Jackson was brought in to coach the LA Lakers, and his creative approach to their conflict changed everything. Instead of seeing this tension and ignoring it, or chastising the players for their feud, he used their skills to develop a new way of playing the game. O'Neal brought power and strength to the court, while Bryant was fast and a great shooter. Jackson developed a way of playing that highlighted both of these talents, and he built a supporting cast around them that brought out the best in everyone. The outcome: three NBA championships in a row.

While many may have just ignored or tried to separate the two superstars, Jackson was innovative in his approach, saw the opportunity in using the conflict to create a new energy, and was able to build a very successful program.

Questions:

1. What was the key to the success for Phil Jackson and his team?
2. How would you have approached the two players (or employees) that were in conflict and causing tension on your team?
3. What strategies would have been important to employ with these two individuals to resolve the conflict?

Sources:

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M. Chiari, "Kobe Bryant Discusses Getting into Fist Fight with Shaquille O'Neal," *Bleacher Report*, March 9, 2018, https://bleacherreport.com/articles/...haquille-oneal.

Strategies for Reducing Conflict

Where dysfunctional conflict already exists, something must be done, and managers may pursue one of at least two general approaches: they can try to change employee *attitudes*, or they can try to change employee *behaviors*. If they change behavior, open conflict is often reduced, but groups may still dislike one another; the conflict simply becomes less visible as the groups are separated from one another. Changing attitudes, on the other hand, often leads to fundamental changes in the ways that groups get

along. However, it also takes considerably longer to accomplish than behavior change because it requires a fundamental change in social perceptions.

Nine conflict reduction strategies are shown in Figure \(\PageIndex{Exhibit 14.5. The techniques should be viewed as a continuum, ranging from strategies that focus on changing behaviors near the top of the scale to strategies that focus on changing attitudes near the bottom of the scale.

1. Physical separation. The quickest and easiest solution to conflict is physical separation. Separation is useful when conflicting groups are not working on a joint task or do not need a high degree of interaction. Though this approach does not encourage members to change their attitudes, it does provide time to seek a better accommodation.
2. Use of rules and regulations. Conflict can also be reduced through the increasing specification of rules, regulations, and procedures. This approach, also known as the bureaucratic method, imposes solutions on groups from above. Again, however, basic attitudes are not modified.
3. Limiting intergroup interaction. Another approach to reducing conflict is to limit intergroup interaction to issues involving common goals. Where groups agree on a goal, cooperation becomes easier. An example of this can be seen in recent efforts by firms in the United States and Canada to work together to “meet the Japanese challenge.”
4. Use of integrators. Integrators are individuals who are assigned a boundary-spanning role between two groups or departments. To be trusted, integrators must be perceived by both groups as legitimate and knowledgeable. The integrator often takes the “shuttle diplomacy” approach, moving from one group to another, identifying areas of agreement, and attempting to find areas of future cooperation.
5. Confrontation and negotiation. In this approach, competing parties are brought together face-to-face to discuss their basic areas of disagreement. The hope is that through open discussion and negotiation, means can be found to work out problems. Contract negotiations between union and management represent one such example. If a “win-win” solution can be identified through these negotiations, the chances of an acceptable resolution of the conflict increase. (More will be said about this in the next section of this chapter.)
6. Third-party consultation. In some cases, it is helpful to bring in outside consultants for third-party consultation who understand human behavior and can facilitate a resolution. A third-party consultant not only serves as a go-between but can speak more directly to the issues, because she is not a member of either group.
7. Rotation of members. By rotating from one group to another, individuals come to understand the frames of reference, values, and attitudes of other members; communication is thus increased. When those rotated are accepted by the receiving groups, change in attitudes as well as behavior becomes possible. This is clearly a long-term technique, as it takes time to develop good interpersonal relations and understanding among group members.
8. Identification of interdependent tasks and superordinate goals. A further strategy for management is to establish goals that require groups to work together to achieve overall success—for example, when company survival is threatened. The threat of a shutdown often causes long-standing opponents to come together to achieve the common objective of keeping the company going.
9. Use of intergroup training. The final technique on the continuum is intergroup training. Outside training experts are retained on a long-term basis to help groups develop relatively permanent mechanisms for working together. Structured workshops and training programs can help forge more favorable intergroup attitudes and, as a result, more constructive intergroup behavior.

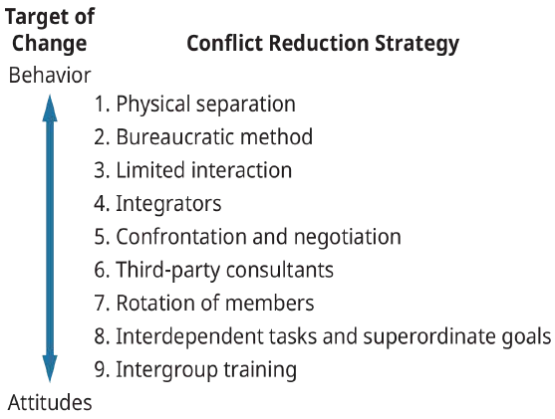


Figure 8.4.1. **Conflict Reduction Strategies** *Source:* Adapted from concepts in E. H. Neilsen, "Understanding and Managing Conflict," in J. Lorsch and P. Lawrence, eds., *Managing Group and Intergroup Relations* (Homewood, III.: Irwin, 1972). (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

? Exercise 8.4.1

What are the strategies that managers can use that can reduce conflict?

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8.5: Negotiation Behavior

How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

We have seen the central role conflict plays in organizational processes. Clearly, there are some areas where managers would prefer to solve a problem between two parties before it results in high levels of conflict. This is usually accomplished through negotiation. **Negotiation** is the process by which individuals or groups attempt to realize their goals by bargaining with another party who has at least some control over goal attainment. Throughout the negotiation process, considerable skill in communication, decision-making, and the use of power and politics is required in order to succeed.

We will consider several aspects of negotiation, including stages of negotiation, types of negotiation behavior, and the negotiation process itself. We begin with the reasons why people engage in negotiation and bargaining in the first place.

Stages of Negotiation

In general, negotiation and bargaining are likely to have four stages. Although the length or importance of each stage can vary from situation to situation or from one culture to another, the presence and sequence of these stages are quite common across situations and cultures.

1. *Non-task time.* During the first stage, the participants focus on getting to know and become comfortable with each other and do not focus directly on the task or issue of the negotiation. In cultures such as ours, this stage is often filled with small talk. However, it is usually not very long and is not seen as important as other stages. North Americans use phrases such as “Let’s get down to business,” “I know you’re busy, so let’s get right to it,” and “Let’s not beat around the bush.” However, in other cultures such as Mexico or South Korea, the non-task stage is often longer and of more importance because it is during this stage the relationship is established. In these cultures, it is the relationship more than the contract that determines the extent to which each party can trust the other to fulfill its obligations.
2. *Information exchange.* The second stage of negotiations involves the exchange of background and general information. During this stage, participants may, for example, provide overviews of their company and its history. In Japan, this is an important stage because specific proposals or agreements must be considered and decided in the larger context. The information exchanged during the second stage provides this larger context.
3. *Influence and persuasion.* The third stage involves efforts to influence and persuade the other side. Generally, these efforts are designed to get the other party to reduce its demands or desires and to increase its acceptance of your demands or desires. There are a wide variety of influence tactics, including promises, threats, questions, and so on. The use of these tactics as well as their effectiveness is a function of several factors. First, the perceived or real power of one party relative to another is an important factor. For example, if one party is the only available supplier of a critical component, then threatening to go to a new supplier of that component unless the price is reduced is unlikely to be an effective influence tactic. Second, the effectiveness of a particular influence tactic is also a function of accepted industry and cultural norms. For example, if threats are an unacceptable form of influence, then their use could lead to consequences opposite from what is desired by the initiator of such tactics.
4. *Closing.* The final stage of any negotiation is the closing. The closing may result in an acceptable agreement between the parties involved or it may result in failure to reach an agreement. The symbols that represent the close of a negotiation vary across cultures. For example, in the United States, a signed contract is the symbol of a closed negotiation. At that point, “a deal is a deal” and failure to abide by the contents of the document is considered a breach of contract. In China, however, there is not the strong legal history or perspective that exists in the United States, and a signed document is not necessarily a symbol of the close of the negotiations. In fact, to some extent it symbolizes the beginning of the final points of negotiation. The signed document identifies the key issues that still need to be negotiated despite the fact that it may contain specific obligations for the involved parties concerning these issues. Quite simply, even though the document may obligate one party to deliver a product on a certain day and obligate the other party to pay a certain price for delivery, the document itself does not symbolize that the negotiation concerning these specifics is closed.

Each of these four stages and the sequence described above are common across most situations and cultures. However, the length of time devoted to each stage, the importance of each stage, and the specific behaviors associated with each stage can vary by situation and certainly do vary by culture.

Bargaining Strategies

Within the context of these four stages, both parties must select an appropriate strategy that they believe will assist them in the attainment of their objectives. In general, two rather distinct approaches to negotiation can be identified. These are **distributive bargaining** and **integrative bargaining.** A comparison of these two approaches is shown in Table 8.5.1.

Distributive Bargaining. In essence, distributive bargaining is "win-lose" bargaining. That is, the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize her share of these resources. Finally, in most cases, this situation represents a short-term relationship between the two parties. In fact, such parties may not see each other ever again.

A good example of this can be seen in the relationship between the buyer and seller of a house. If the buyer gets the house for less money (that is, she "wins"), the seller also gets less (that is, she "loses"). This win-lose situation can also be seen in classes where the professor insists on grading on a specified curve. If your friends get an A, there are fewer As to go around, and your chances are diminished.

Two Approaches to Bargaining		
Bargaining Characteristic	**Distributive Bargaining**	**Integrative Bargaining**
Payoff structure	Fixed amount of resources to be divided	Variable amount of resources to be divided
Primary motivation	I win, you lose	Mutual benefit
Primary interests	Opposed to each other	Convergent with each other
Focus of relationships	Short term	Long term

Table 8.5.1. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Under such circumstances, each side will probably adopt a course of action as follows. First, each side to a dispute will attempt to discover just how far the other side is willing to go to reach an accord. This can be done by offering outrageously low (or high) proposals simply to feel out the opponent. For example, in selling a house, the seller will typically ask a higher price than she actually hopes to get (see Figure 8.5.1) The buyer, in turn, typically offers far less than she is willing to pay. These two prices are put forth to discover the opponent's resistance price. The **resistance price** is the point beyond which the opponent will not go to reach a settlement. Once the resistance point has been estimated, each party tries to convince the opponent that the offer on the table is the best one the opponent is likely to receive and that the opponent should accept it. As both sides engage in similar tactics, the winner is often determined by who has the best strategic and political skills to convince the other party that this is the best she can get.

Integrative Bargaining. Integrative bargaining is often described as the "win-win" approach. That is, with this technique, both parties try to reach a settlement that benefits both parties. Such an approach is often predicated on the belief that if people mutually try to solve the problem, they can identify some creative solutions that help everyone. A good example can be seen in bilateral trade negotiations between two nations. In such negotiations, participants usually agree that a trade war would hurt both sides; therefore, both sides attempt to achieve a balance of outcomes that are preferable to a trade war for both sides. In doing so, however, the trick is to give away as little as possible to achieve the balance.



Figure 8.5.1. Distributive Bargaining in Buying a Home (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

As shown previously in Table 8.5.1, this approach is characterized by the existence of variable resources to be divided, efforts to maximize joint outcomes, and the desire to establish or maintain a long-term relationship. The interests of the two parties may be convergent (noncompetitive, such as preventing a trade war between two countries) or congruent (mutually supportive, as when two countries reach a mutual defense pact).

In both cases, bargaining tactics are quite different from those typically found in distributive bargaining. Here, both sides must be able and willing to understand the viewpoints of the other party. Otherwise, they will not know where possible consensus lies. Moreover, the free flow of information is required. Obviously, some degree of trust is required here too. In discussions, emphasis is placed on identifying commonalities between the two parties; the differences are played down. And, finally, the search for a solution focuses on selecting those courses of action that meet the goals and objectives of both sides. This approach requires considerably more time and energy than distributive bargaining, yet, under certain circumstances, it has the potential to lead to far more creative and long-lasting solutions.

The Negotiation Process

The negotiation process consists of identifying one's desired goals—that is, what you are trying to get out of the exchange—and then developing suitable strategies aimed at reaching those goals. A key feature of one's strategy is knowing one's relative position in the bargaining process. That is, depending upon your relative position or strength, you may want to negotiate seriously or you may want to tell your opponent to "take it or leave it." The dynamics of bargaining power can be extrapolated directly from the discussion of power Table 8.5.2 and indicate several conditions affecting this choice. For example, you may wish to negotiate when you value the exchange, when you value the relationship, and when commitment to the issue is high. In the opposite situation, you may be indifferent to serious bargaining.

When to Negotiate		
Bargaining Strategies		
Characteristics of the Situation	**Negotiate**	**"Take It or Leave It"**
Value of exchange	High	Low
Commitment to a decision	High	Low
Trust Level	High	Low
Time	Ample	Pressing
Power distribution*	Low or balanced	High
Relationship between two parties	Important	Unimportant
* Indicates relative power distribution between the two parties; "low" indicates that one has little power in the situation, whereas "high" indicates that one has considerable power.		

Table 8.5.2. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Once goals and objectives have been clearly established and the bargaining strategy is set, time is required to develop a suitable plan of action. Planning for negotiation requires a clear assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of your opponents. Roy Lewicki and Joseph Litterer have suggested a format for preparation for negotiation. According to this format, planning for negotiation should proceed through the following phases:

1. Understand the basic nature of the conflict. What are the primary areas of agreement and disagreement?
2. What exactly do you want out of this negotiation? What are your goals?
3. How will you manage the negotiation process? Here, several issues should be recognized:
    a. Identify the primary issues to negotiate.
    b. Prioritize these issues.
    c. Develop a desirable package including these important issues.
    d. Establish an agenda.
4. Do you understand your opponent?
    a. What are your opponent's current resources and needs?
    b. What is the history of your opponent's bargaining behavior? What patterns can you see that can help you predict her moves?



Figure 8.5.2. Negotiating with the Referee. Minnesota Gophers coach, Lindsay Whalen talks to a referee during a University of Minnesota Gophers game against Cornell University. Is this negotiation or persuasion? (Attribution: Laurie Schaul/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Research indicates that following such procedures does, in fact, lead to more successful bargaining. In Table 8.5.3, for example, we can see differences in both the planning approaches and the actual behaviors of successful and average negotiators. Preparation clearly makes a difference, as does interpersonal style during the actual negotiation.

Differences Between Successful and Average Negotiations

Negotiation Behavior	Skilled Negotiators	Average Negotiators
Before the Negotiation		
Number of options considered per issue	5.1	2.6
Portion of time spent focusing on anticipated areas of agreement instead of conflict	39%	11%
During Negotiation		
Portion of time spent asking questions of opponent	21%	10%
Portion of time spent in active listening	10%	4%
Portion of time spent attacking opponent	1%	6%

Source: Based on data reported in N. J. Adler and A. Gunderson, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* 5th edition (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008), pp. 165–181.

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Cultural Differences in International Negotiations

In view of the increased emphasis on international industrial competitiveness, it is important to understand what happens when the two parties to a negotiation come from different cultures or countries. A knowledge of cultural differences can assist the manager both in understanding the other party's position and in striking the best possible deal given the circumstances.

A good way to start this analysis is by recognizing how different cultures approach the art of persuasion; that is, how do people in different countries try to win you over to their side in a dispute? Although we cannot possibly examine all cultures, consider the results of a study of differences in *persuasion techniques* for North America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. As can be seen in Table 8.5.4, Americans, Arabs, and Russians have significantly different approaches to persuasion. Americans tend to enter into a discussion emphasizing facts and figures, whereas Arabs may focus on emotions. The Russians may talk about ideals.

Moreover, in a negotiation situation, the American is ever-conscious of deadlines, whereas the Arab takes a more casual approach, and the Russian is often unconcerned about time. Americans make small concessions early in the bargaining process to establish a relationship. Arabs, on the other hand, make concessions throughout the bargaining process, and the Russians try not to make any concessions at all. Clearly, this study has only highlighted trends, and exceptions can be easily found. Even so, a knowledge of such differences, however general, can greatly facilitate improved interpersonal relations and bargaining success for both parties.

National Styles of Persuasion			
	North Americans	**Arabs**	**Russians**
Primary negotiating style and process	Factual: appeals made to logic	Affective: appeals made to emotions	Axiomatic: appeals made to Ideals
Conflict: opponent's arguments countered with	Objective facts	Subjective feelings	Asserted ideals
Making concessions	Small concessions made early to establish a relationship	Concessions made throughout as a part of the bargaining process	Few, if any, small concessions made
Response to opponent's concessions	Usually reciprocate opponent's concessions	Almost always reciprocate opponent's concessions	Opponent's concessions viewed as weakness and almost never reciprocated
Relationship	Short-term	Long-term	No continuing relationship
Authority	Broad	Broad	Limited
Initial position	Moderate	Extreme	Extreme
Deadline	Very important	Casual	Ignored
Source: Adapted from J. S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Pearson, 2005).			

Table 8.5.4. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

We can also examine the personal characteristics of negotiators from different countries. A study by John Graham focused on the key characteristics of negotiators from different countries, in this case the United States, Japan, Taiwan, and Brazil. Results of the study are shown in Table 8.5.5, which shows the rank order of the defining characteristics. Again, we can see major differences in negotiators from around the world. Each has certain strengths, yet these strengths vary considerably from country to country. Americans are seen as prepared and organized, thinking well under pressure, whereas Japanese are seen as more dedicated and shrewd. Taiwanese negotiators were found in the study to be highly persistent and determined, working hard to win the opponent's respect, and the Brazilians were amazingly similar to the Americans.

Key Individual Characteristics of Negotiators (Rank Order)			
American Managers	**Japanese Managers**	**Chinese Managers (Taiwan)**	**Brazilian Managers**
Preparation and planning skill	Dedication to job	Persistence and determination	Preparation and planning skill
Thinking under pressure	Perceive and exploit power	Win respect and confidence	Thinking under pressure
Judgment and intelligence	Win respect and confidence	Preparation and planning skill	Judgment and intelligence
Verbal expressiveness	Integrity	Product knowledge	Verbal expressiveness
Product knowledge	Listening skill	Interesting	Product knowledge
Perceive and exploit power	Broad perspective	Judgment and intelligence	Perceive and exploit power
Integrity	Verbal expressiveness		Competition
Source: "Key Individual Characteristics of Negotiators" by John Graham, Graduate School of Management, University of California, Irvine.			

Table 8.5.5. (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Finally, we should note that negotiators from different countries differ markedly in their verbal and nonverbal *communication patterns*. In one study (again among Americans, representing North America; Japanese, representing East Asia; and Brazilians, representing South America), observers counted the number of times each negotiator did certain things within a given time limit. The results are shown in Table 8.5.6. As can be seen, these negotiators use both verbal and nonverbal communication in very different ways. Note, for example, that Brazilians on average said "no" 83 times within a 30-minute segment, compared to 5 times for Japanese and 9 times for Americans. On the other hand, Japanese appealed to ideals and societal norms and simply sat in silence more than the others. Such differences affect not only the negotiation process but also, in many cases, the outcomes. That is, if a negotiator from one culture has annoyed or insulted the opponent (intentionally or unintentionally), the opponent may resist doing business with that person or may fail to offer attractive terms. Hence, again we see the value of better understanding cultural variations in negotiations, as in other matters.

Communication Patterns during Negotiations for Three Cultures			
Tactic	**Japan**	**United States**	**Brazil**
Verbal Communication			
Making promises	7	8	3
Making threats	4	4	2
Making recommendations	7	4	5
Appealing to ideals and norms	4	2	1
Giving a command	8	6	14
Saying “no”	5	9	83
Making initial concessions	6	7	9
Nonverbal Communication			
Periods of silence	6	3	0
Interrupting opponent	12	10	29
Looking directly into opponent’s eyes	1	3	5
Touching opponent	0	0	5
Source: Based on data reported in J. Graham, “The Influence of Culture on Business Negotiations,” Journal of International Business Studies, Spring 1985, pp. 81–96.			

Table 8.5.6 (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license)

Concluding Thoughts about Conflict and Negotiations

One of the classic negotiations approaches that you might encounter is the book, Getting to Yes. This book expound the authors favored method of conflict resolution, which they term *principled negotiation*. This method attempts to find an objective standard, typically based on existing precedents, for reaching an agreement that will be acceptable to both interested parties. Principled negotiation emphasizes the parties’ enduring interests, objectively existing resources, and available alternatives, rather than transient positions that the parties may choose to take during the negotiation. The outcome of a principled negotiation ultimately depends on the relative attractiveness of each party’s so-called **BATNA:** the “Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement”, which can be taken as a measure of the objective strength of a party’s bargaining stance. In general, the party with the more attractive BATNA gets the better of the deal. If both parties have attractive BATNAs, the best course of action may be not to reach an agreement at all.

Conflict is most likely to occur when the goals, expectations, and/or behaviors of at least two parties differ and when those differences are difficult to avoid (such as when interdependence among the parties involved is high). Conflict itself is neither good nor bad, productive nor destructive. The key to the outcome of conflict is the manner in which it is managed. Negotiation, as a key means of managing conflict, has four distinct stages. However, the length, importance, and norms for each stage can vary by situation and especially by culture.

Expanding Around the Globe

Negotiating Styles in Malaysia and America

One of the emerging countries in Southeast Asia is Malaysia, whose natural resources and stable economic growth are allowing it to develop as an important manufacturing center in the region along with Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand. What happens

when American businesspeople visit Malaysia to do business? In the following example, cross-cultural researcher George Renwick describes major differences between the two cultures as they approach a negotiation.

Americans' patterns of negotiation, like all of their patterns, differ somewhat depending upon their context. The negotiating patterns of government officials working out a treaty, for example, are somewhat different from those of a business executive "hammering out" a contract. The pattern portrayed here will be that of the business executive.

The American businessperson usually begins a series of negotiating sessions in a cordial manner, but he is intent on getting things under way. He is very clear as to what he and his company want, when it is wanted, and how he will go about getting it; he has planned his strategy carefully. And he has done what he could to "psyche out" his counterpart, with whom he will be negotiating. From the outset, the American negotiator urges everyone to "dispense with the formalities" and get on with the business at hand. As soon as possible, he expresses his determination, saying something like, "Okay, let's get down to brass tacks."

The American usually states his position (at least his first position) early and definitely. He plans before long to "really get down to the nitty gritty." He wants to "zero in" on the knotty problems and get to the point where "the rubber meets the road" (the point, that is, where "the action" begins). Once the negotiations are "really rolling," the American usually deals directly with obstacles as they come up, tries to clear them away in quick order, and becomes impatient and frustrated if he cannot.

Most of what the American wants to convey, of course, he puts into words—often many of them. His approach is highly verbal and quite visible—and thoroughly planned. He has outlined his alternative ahead of time and prepared his counterproposals, contingencies, backup positions, bluffs, guarantees, and tests of compliance, all carefully calculated, and including, of course, lots of numbers. Toward the end, he sees that some bailout provisions are included, but he usually doesn't worry too much about them; making and meeting business commitments "on schedule" is what his life is all about—he is not too concerned about getting out. If he has to get out, then he has to, and he will find a way when the time comes.

The American experiences real satisfaction when all the problems have been "worked out," especially if he has been able to get provisions very favorable to his company—and to his own reputation as a "tough negotiator." He rests securely when everything is "down in black and white" and the contract is initialed or signed.

Afterward, the American enjoys himself; he relaxes "over some drinks" and carries on some "small talk" and "jokes around" with his team and their counterparts.

Malay patterns of negotiation, as might be expected, differ considerably. When they are buying something, Malays bargain with the merchant, and when they are working, they socialize with their boss and coworkers. Their purpose is to develop some sense of relationship with the other person. The relationship then provides the basis, or context, for the exchange. Malays take the same patterns and preferences into their negotiating sessions. When all is said and done, it is not the piece of paper they trust, it is the person—and their relationship with the person.

A Malay negotiator begins to develop the context for negotiations through the interaction routines appropriate to this and similar occasions. These routines are as complicated and subtle as customary American routines; they are cordial but quite formal. Like Americans and their own routines, Malays understand the Malay routines but are seldom consciously aware of them. Neither Malays nor Americans understand very clearly the routines of the other.

As the preliminary context is formed, it is important to the Malay that the proper forms of address be known beforehand and used and that a variety of topics be talked about that are unrelated to the business to be transacted. This may continue for quite a while. A Malay negotiator wants his counterpart to participate comfortably, patiently, and with interest. As in other interaction, it is not the particular words spoken which are of most importance to the Malay; rather he listens primarily to the attitudes which the words convey—attitudes toward the Malay himself and toward the matter being negotiated. Attitudes are important to the relationship. At this point and throughout the negotiations, the Malay is as much concerned about the quality of the relationship as the quantity of the work accomplished. Motivation is more important to the Malay than momentum.

The Malay negotiator, as in other situations, is also aware of feelings—his own and those of his counterpart, and the effects of the exchanges upon both. He is also aware of, and concerned about, how he looks in the eyes of his team, how his counterpart looks in the eyes of the other team, and how both he and his counterpart will look after the negotiations in the eyes of their respective superiors.

The Malay is alert to style, both his own and that of his counterpart. Displaying manners is more important than scoring points. The way one negotiates is as important as what one negotiates. Grace and finesse show respect for the other and for the matter under consideration. Negotiating, like other interaction, is something of an art form. Balance and restraint are therefore essential.

The agenda that the Malay works through in the course of the negotiation is usually quite flexible. His strategy is usually rather simple. His positions are expressed in more general terms than the American's, but no less strongly held. His proposals are more offered than argued: they are offered to the other party rather than argued with him. Malays do not enjoy sparring. They deeply dislike combat.

In response to a strong assertion, the Malay negotiator usually expresses his respect directly by replying indirectly. The stronger the assertion and the more direct the demands, the more indirect the reply—at least the verbal reply.

The Malay and his team usually formulate their positions gradually and carefully. By the time they present their position, they usually have quite a lot of themselves invested in it. Direct rejection of the position, therefore, is sometimes felt to be a rejection of the person. Negotiating for the Malay is not quite the game that it is for some Americans.

If the Malay and his team have arrived at a position from which they and those whom they represent cannot move, they will not move. If this requires a concession from the counterpart, the Malays will not try to force the concession. If the counterpart sees that a concession from him is necessary, and makes it, the Malays, as gentlemen, recognize the move and respect the man who made it. A concession, therefore, is not usually considered by the Malay team to be a sign that they can press harder and extract further concessions. Instead, a concession by either side is considered as evidence of strength and a basis for subsequent reconciliation and cooperation.

What about getting out a contract? Making and meeting business commitments is not what a Malay's life is all about. He has other, often prior, commitments. He therefore enters into contracts cautiously and prefers to have an exit provided.

In addition, Malays are certain of their control over the future (even their control of their own country) than are Americans. Therefore, promising specific kinds of performance in the future by specific dates in a contract, especially in a long-term contract where the stakes are high, is often difficult for Malays. It is even more difficult, of course, if they are not certain whether they can trust the persons to whom they are making the commitment and from whom they are accepting commitments. Malays therefore give a great deal of thought to a contract and to the contracting party before signing it. And they are uneasy if provisions have not been made for a respectable withdrawal should future circumstances make their compliance impossible.

Questions:

1. How are the different approaches important to understanding negotiations and cultural differences?

Sources:

G. Renwick, *Malays and Americans: Definite Differences, Unique Opportunities* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1985), pp. 51–54.

? Exercise 8.5.1

1. Understand the strategies in bargaining.
2. Understand the role that cultural differences have in the negotiation process.

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8.6: Chapter Introduction

Introductory Exercises

1. If you could eliminate conflict from every group's activities, would you? Why or why not?
2. Identify someone you know who is particularly skilled at operating in conflict situations. Based on your experience with the person, identify some of the person's specific effective behaviors in such situations.
3. List the headlines of stories on the first five pages of a recent newspaper. Identify which of the items describe conflict of some kind and write a brief description of three of the conflicts. What approaches do the parties to the three conflicts seem to be taking? What prospects do you feel each conflict has of being resolved? What is it that makes you see the prospects as you do?

I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict. - Plato

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll explore the nature, leadership implications, and prevalence of an enduring human reality: conflict in groups. We'll also consider a variety of styles whereby people can engage in conflict and review some strategies for managing conflict effectively. You will learn how to deal with conflict in the workplace and how to create and implement a crisis communication plan.

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8.7: What Is Conflict?

Learning Objectives

1. Define conflict
2. Identify five subjects of conflict in groups
3. Acknowledge four major dangers of group conflict

My athletes are always willing to accept my advice as long as it doesn't conflict with their views. - Lou Holtz (college and professional football coach)

Most people probably regard conflict as something to avoid, or at least not something we go looking for. Still, we'd all agree that it's a familiar, perennial, and powerful part of human interaction. For these reasons, we need to know what it is, how to identify it, what it may deal with, and what damage it may cause if it isn't handled wisely.

Definitions of Conflict

Hocker & Wilmot (Hocker, J.L., & Wilmot, W.W. (2001). *Interpersonal conflict* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill) defined conflict as an expressed struggle between interdependent parties over goals which they perceive as incompatible or resources which they perceive to be insufficient. Let's examine the ingredients in their definition.

First of all, conflict must be expressed. If two members of a group dislike each other or disagree with each other's viewpoints but never show those sentiments, there's no conflict.

Second, conflict takes place between or among parties who are interdependent—that is, who need each other to accomplish something. If they can get what they want without each other, they may differ in how they do so, but they won't come into conflict.

Finally, conflict involves clashes over what people want or over the means for them to achieve it. Party A wants X, whereas party B wants Y. If they either can't both have what they want at all, or they can't each have what they want to the degree that they would prefer to, conflict will arise.

When it came to Lou Holtz and the players on his football teams, it's obvious that Holtz's views of who should take the field and what plays should be run were not always the same as his players'. In a football game it's possible to attempt a pass or to execute a run, for instance, but not both on the same play. In this kind of situation, conflict is inevitable and is probably going to be constant.

Consider the case, likewise, of a small group assigned to complete a project in a biology class. One student in the group, Robin, may be a political science major with a new baby at home to attend to. Robin may be taking the course as an elective and want to devote as little time as possible to the project so as to be able to spend family time. Another member of the group, Terry, may be on the pre-med track and feel strong curiosity about the topic of the presentation. If Terry is determined to create a product which earns a high grade and helps get the professor's recommendation for a summer research internship, then Robin and Terry will experience conflict over how, when, or how hard to work on their project.



Figure 8.7.1: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/dave-goodman/208072430/

As any conflict takes shape, each person brings a combination of perceptions, emotions, and behavior to bear on it. This combination will evolve and change with time, depending on how people interact with each other and with the forces in their environment.

We can't stop perceiving things in our surroundings. How we perceive others—whether positively or negatively—influences both how we feel about them and how we behave toward them, and *vice versa*. The perceptions we experience of ourselves and of others affect our emotional states, which in turn create new perceptions in those around us.

At the beginning of the biology course we just mentioned, Robin may perceive Terry as intelligent and as someone who can pull most of the weight in their class project. Robin may compliment and praise Terry at this point, and Terry may glow with the satisfaction of being appreciated. Their mutual perceptions are then positive, and their emotional state is favorable.

When the first deadline in the project comes along and the portion of the group's work assigned to Robin turns out to be mediocre, however, things will probably change. Terry is apt to start perceiving Robin as a laggard and as a threat to Terry's own ambitions for the class and beyond. Robin, meanwhile, may feel angry and resist Terry's pressure to put more energy into the remainder of their assigned work.

Subjects of Conflict

Beyond the setting of the biology class we've described, group conflicts may deal with many topics, needs, and elements. Marylin Kelly, (Kelly, M.S. (2006). *Communication @ work: Ethical, effective, and expressive communication in the workplace*. Boston: Pearson) identified the following five subjects of conflict:

First, there are conflicts of substance. These conflicts, which relate to questions about what choices to make in a given situation, rest on differing views of the facts. If Terry thinks the biology assignment requires an annotated bibliography but Robin believes a simple list of readings will suffice, they're in a conflict of substance. Another term for this kind of conflict is "intrinsic conflict."

Conflicts of value are those in which various parties either hold totally different values or rank the same values in a significantly different order. The famous sociologist Milton Rokeach (Rokeach, M. (1979). *Understanding human values: Individual and societal*. New York: The Free Press), for instance, found that freedom and equality constitute values in the four major political systems of the past 100 years—communism, fascism, socialism, and capitalism. What differentiated the systems, however, was the degree to which proponents of each system ranked those two key values. According to Rokeach's analysis, socialism holds both values highly; fascism holds them in low regard; communism values equality over freedom, and capitalism values freedom over equality. As we all know, conflict among proponents of these four political systems preoccupied people and governments for the better part of the twentieth century.

Conflicts of process arise when people differ over how to reach goals or pursue values which they share. How closely should they stick to rules and timelines, for instance, and when should they let their hair down and simply brainstorm new ideas? What about

when multiple topics and challenges are intertwined; how and when should the group deal with each one? Another term for these disputes is “task conflicts.”

Conflicts of misperceived differences come up when people interpret each other’s actions or emotions erroneously. You can probably think of several times in your life when you first thought you disagreed with other people but later found out that you’d just misunderstood something they said and that you actually shared a perspective with them. Or perhaps you attributed a different motive to them than what really underlay their actions. One misconception about conflict, however, is that it always arises from misunderstandings. This isn’t the case, however. Robert Doolittle, (Doolittle, R.J. (1976). *Orientations to communication and conflict.* Chicago: Science Research Associates) noted that “some of the most serious conflicts occur among individuals and groups who understand each other very well but who strongly disagree.”

The first four kinds of conflict may interact with each other over time, either reinforcing or weakening each other’s impact. They may also ebb and flow according to the topics and conditions a group confronts. Even if they’re dealt with well, however, further emotional and personal kinds of conflict can occur in a group. Relationship conflicts, also known as personality clashes, often involve people’s egos and sense of self-worth. Relationship conflicts tend to be particularly difficult to cope with, since they frequently aren’t admitted for what they are. Many times, they arise in a struggle for superiority or status.

Dangers of Conflict

As we’ll see later in this chapter, conflict is a normal component of group interaction and can actually be beneficial if it is identified accurately and controlled properly. It can also be dangerous, however, in several major ways. Galanes & Adams (Galanes, G., & Adams, K. (2013). *Effective group discussion: Theory and practice.* New York: McGraw-Hill) identified three such ways.

The first danger is that individual group members may feel bad. Even when everyone’s intentions are good and they intend to be constructively critical, people who receive negative comments about their ideas or behavior may take those comments personally. If the people feel demeaned or mistreated, their level of trust in other members will probably dwindle.

The second danger is an outgrowth of the first. It is that the cohesiveness of the group can be diminished if its members have to nurse hurt feelings that have arisen through conflict. At the very least, someone who has to wonder whether he or she has the respect of someone else in the group may spend time mulling that question which could otherwise be used to contribute to the group’s work.

The third danger is that conflict can actually split a group apart. Although inertia can sustain a group for long periods of time if no threats or disruptions occur, intense conflict can cause members to decide to invest their energy somewhere else. Relationship conflicts, in particular, may lead to all kinds of unhelpful behavior: rumor-mongering; power plays; backing out on promises; playing favorites; ignoring problems or appeals for help; insulting others; innuendo; backstabbing; or dismissing suggestions without considering them seriously. You’re probably aware of at least a few groups and organizations whose origins were encouraging but which eventually disintegrated because of internal conflict.

A fourth danger is that conflict can deteriorate into physical violence. Some people in the heat of a conflict may forget this saying, which has been attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: “The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins.”

In 1997, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (1997). Violence in the workplace. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/niosh/violfs.html) reported that more than one million workplace assaults occurred in the United States annually. More recent statistics from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2012). Workplace violence. Retrieved from www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/) suggest that twice that many workers may be subject to violence each year; that 506 workplace homicides were committed in 2010; and that homicide is the leading cause of death for women in American workplaces.

Key Takeaway

Conflict, which is a struggle over goals or resources, may take many forms and lead to several kinds of harm if it is not skillfully dealt with.

Exercise 8.7.1

1. Find news online of a conflict that erupted into violence. What factors in the situation do you feel contributed to that outcome?
2. Tell a fellow student about a values conflict you've experienced in a group. Describe how you concluded that the conflict dealt with values. Did the group make the same determination at the time?
3. Identify a personality clash you believe you have observed in a group. Write 4-6 pieces of advice you think might have helped each party to that conflict.
4. If a conflict has been brought about by a combination of incompatible goals and insufficient resources, what do you believe will happen if one of the two causes is eliminated? Give an example that substantiates your viewpoint.

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8.8: Leadership and Conflict

Learning Objectives

1. Describe four roles that a leader might play with respect to conflict
2. Assess the effectiveness of leadership behavior exhibited in an illustrative academic situation

"The hope of the world is that wisdom can arrest conflict between brothers. I believe that war is the deadly harvest of arrogant and unreasoning minds." - Dwight Eisenhower

To lead a group successfully through conflict requires patience, goodwill, and determination. Robert Bolton, (Bolton, R. (1979). *People skills: How to assert yourself, listen to others, and resolve conflicts*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall) noted that leaders with low levels of defensiveness tend to help people in their organizations avert unnecessary strife because they are able to focus on understanding and dealing with challenges rather than on saving face or overcoming resistance from others in their groups. Bolton also wrote that employing power judiciously, displaying charisma, and employing effective communication skills can positively affect the way conflict is handled. In this section, we will examine four general roles a leader may adopt with respect to preparing for inevitable instances of conflict. We will also provide an example of how one leader adopted the fourth role in a conflict situation.

The Leader as Motivator

Just as it takes more than one person to create conflict, it generally requires more than a single individual to resolve it. A leader should, therefore, try somehow to cause other members of a group to identify benefits to themselves of engaging in productive rather than destructive conflict. Randy Komisar, a prominent Silicon Valley executive who has worked with companies such as WebTV and TiVo and co-founded Claris Corporation, had this to say about the importance of this kind motivational role as his companies grew:

"I found that the art wasn't in getting the numbers to foot, or figuring out a clever way to move something down the assembly line. It was in getting somebody else to do that and to do it better than I could ever do, in encouraging people to exceed their own expectations; in inspiring people to be great; and in getting them to do it all together, in harmony. That was the high art." (Komisar, R., & Lineback, K. (2000). *The monk and the riddle: The education of a Silicon Valley entrepreneur.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press). We'll talk later about specific strategies that leaders and other group members can employ to manage conflict by means of motivation and other strategies.

The Leader as Delegator

No leader, even the leader of a handful of other people in a small team, can handle all the challenges or do all the work of a group. In fact, you've probably encountered leaders throughout your life who either exhausted themselves or alienated other group members—or both!—because they tried to do just that. Beyond accepting the sheer impossibility of shouldering all of a group's work, a leader can attempt to prevent or manage conflict by judiciously by acting as a delegator, turning over responsibility for various tasks to others.

Warren Bennis, a pioneer in the field of leadership, wrote that such delegation is a vital component of the leader's role. When it is practiced skillfully, according to Bennis, delegation may confine conflicts to the levels at which they occur and free the leader to conduct higher-level undertakings (Bennis, W. (1997). *Why leaders can't lead.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).

The Leader as "Structuralist"

Michael Thomas, a professor for many years at the University of Texas, served as a respected consultant to numerous businesses and educational institutions. As he went from group to group, he tackled their problems primarily by reviewing their organizational charts and tinkering with their structure. As an admired organizational theorist and structuralist, he believed that nearly any problem, tension, or conflict in a group could be solved structurally (Professor emeritus Thomas, Jr., dies at 76. (2008, Nov 14). *US Fed News Service, Including US State News*. Retrieved from ProQuest Database). How people behave, he said, is largely determined by where they sit in an organization and whom they report to and supervise. If Mike saw that people in two separate sections of a group were at odds, for instance, he would propose that the sections be consolidated so that both became responsible

to the same supervisor. Mike certainly used further techniques in his consultant's role, but his emphasis on structural changes stands as one kind of advice for leaders who hope to lessen the damaging effects of conflict in their groups.

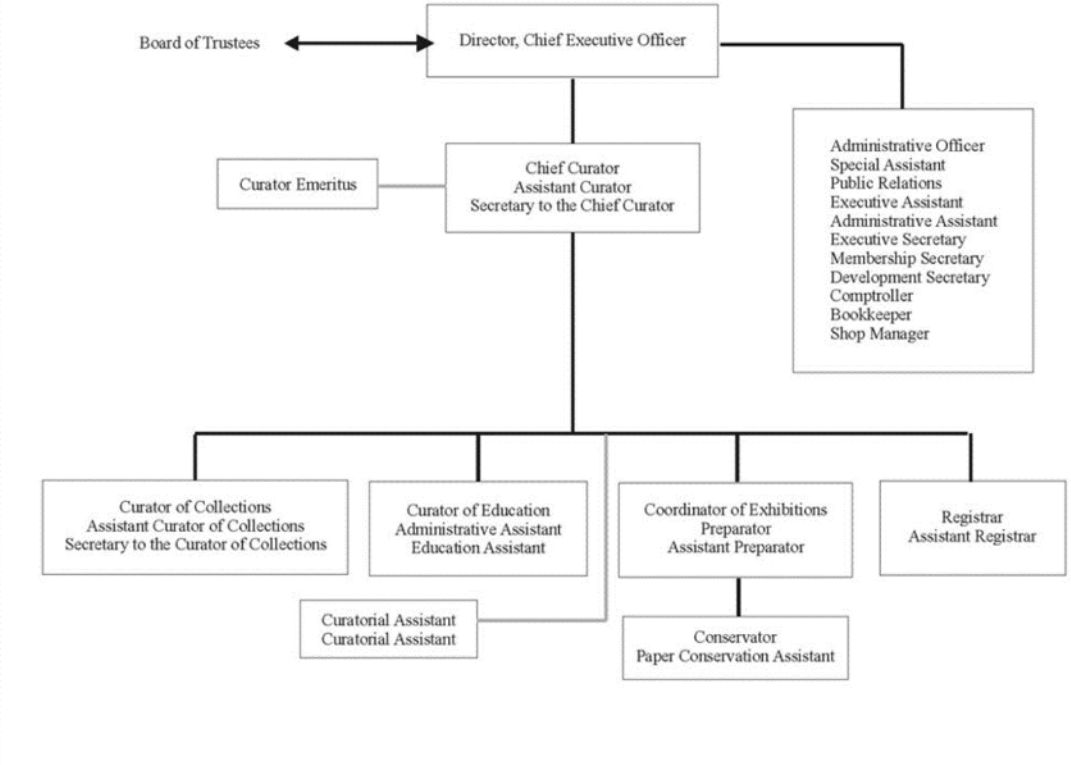


Figure 8.8.1: Organization chart for a museum. Source: www.flickr.com/photos/zerne/19747286/

Realistic Conflict Theory, or Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT), likewise stresses the importance for leaders of configuring subgroups within a larger group so that they are required to meet common goals. A classic study by social psychologist Muzafer Sherif, (Sherif, M., Harvey, O.J., White, B.J., Hood, W., & Sherif, C.W. (1961). *Intergroup conflict and cooperation: The robbers cave experiment*. Norman, OK: The University Book Exchange) with 22 twelve-year-old boys in a summer camp in Oklahoma exemplifies the nature of RGCT and illustrates the concept of "leader as structuralist."

The boys were split into two groups at the start of the study, after which leaders quickly emerged in each group. The two groups were then required to compete in camp games and were rewarded on the basis of their performance. Soon conflict arose as negative attitudes and behavior developed within each group toward the other.

In the third part of the study, the structure of the camp was changed in such a way that the two antagonistic groups were called upon to share responsibility for accomplishing a variety of tasks. The outcome of this structural change was that attitudes within each group toward the other became favorable and conflict lessened dramatically. (Sherif, Muzafer (1966). *In common predicament: Social psychology of intergroup conflict and cooperation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin).

Paradoxically, a leader may also deal with conflict by separating people rather than bringing them together. If a team is experiencing internal conflict that seems to be related to intense personality differences between two individuals, for instance, the leader may decide to change the composition of the team so as to reduce their interaction. (Think about the third-grade teacher who finds two children pummeling each other during recess and sends them to opposite ends of the schoolyard).

The Leader as Promoter of "Constructive Deviation"

Civil disobedience. . . is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience…The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory. - Howard Zinn

I was at a conference in Jackson Hole, talking with Peter McLaren and Donaldo Macedo and David Gabbard. This guy in a herring-bone suit, all prim and proper, came over and said, "Well, Dr. Macedo, very, very interesting talk. I enjoyed it very much. Dr. Gabbard, very interesting talk. I enjoyed it very much."

He was going around being polite. And then he turned and looked at Peter McLaren, and he said, "Mr. Mclaren..."—not "doctor"—"your discourse stretches my comfort zone just a little too much."

And before any of us could say anything, Donaldo turned to him and said, "There are millions of people born, live their entire lives, and die on this planet without ever knowing the luxury of a comfort zone."

The guy was speechless. It was a very polite way for him to say, "You know, I'm tired of hearing white men tell me that they're feeling a little oppressed by discourse."

*The guy walked away, and Peter McLaren turned to me and said, "F**k! Why didn't I say that?" But that's Macedo. Macedo is on his toes, all the time. He's never caught tongue-tied. He knows exactly how to turn it around. - Roberto Bahruth*

A deviate is someone who differs in some important way from the rest of a group. Research (Valentine, K.B., & Fisher, B.A. (1974). An interaction analysis of verbal innovative deviance in small groups. *Speech Monographs*, *41*, 413–420) indicates that interaction with deviates may account for up to a quarter of many groups' time and that such interaction may serve a positive function if it successfully causes people who hold a majority opinion to examine their views critically. In essence, dealing with deviates can keep group members on their toes and counteract the tendency to engage in groupthink. Encouraging deviates is one measure a leader can take to promote constructive conflict which brings a group to a higher level of understanding and harmony.

Of course, listening to a deviate may be disconcerting, since it may push us outside our comfort zone in the way that Peter McLaren did in the story told by Roberto Bahruth. In fact, deviates naturally have great difficulty influencing a group because of other people's resistance. For this reason, part of a leader's responsibility may sometimes consist in simply making sure that a deviate is not outright silenced by members of the majority. In other cases, it is the leader who at least at times assumes the role of deviate herself or himself.

Because deviates by their very nature call the members of the majority in a group to stop and seriously question their attitudes and behavior, which is usually disconcerting and uncomfortable, the most successful deviates are generally those who attempt to lead others in a cautious fashion and who demonstrate loyalty to their group and its goals. (Thameling, C.L., & Andrews, P.H. (1992). Majority responses to opinion deviates: A communicative analysis. *Small Group Research*, *23*, 475–502). Timing can also determine whether a deviate's influence will be accepted. Waiting until a group has developed a sense of cohesiveness is most likely to be more effective, for instance, than jumping in with an unexpected or unconventional proposal during the group's formative stages.

A Leadership Example

In early 1980 the brutal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia had just been defeated at the end of many years of fighting, and several hundred thousand Cambodian refugees flooded hastily-constructed camps in eastern Thailand. (Chandler, D.P. (1992). *A history of Cambodia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press). Many Americans became concerned about the suffering in the refugee camps, and a group of 25 graduate students in Vermont studying international administration nearly played a direct role in the situation because their program's director was willing to speak out as a deviate.

The students were seated in a circle one morning, engaged in a discussion about human service agencies. One of them noticed that the director of the program, Walter Johnson, had been silent for some time and asked, "Walter, what do you think?"

Walter took a deep breath and replied, "I think what we're talking about is all well and good, but what I'd really like to do is call a colleague of mine at the U.N. and see if we could help the Cambodian refugees in those horrible camps in Thailand."

A stunned silence fell over the group. Someone asked, "Are you serious?"

Walter replied, "Yes, I am."

Silence returned. Finally, one of the students said, "Walter, if you believe what you're saying, go ahead and talk to your friend."

Walter left the room and returned in half an hour to say that his U.N. colleague was willing to investigate humanitarian service options in Thailand for the students. The challenge, then, was to explore whether the students themselves would consider

performing such service.

For the next two days, the whole group engaged in difficult, soul-searching discussions about what it would mean for them to go to Thailand. They quickly realized that if they made that choice they would have to abandon their curriculum at the school and might imperil their financial aid. Some of them would probably have to leave a spouse or children behind. And they might be putting themselves in danger of disease or violence. On the other hand, they could potentially be able to act according to their shared ideal of contributing to world peace in a personal, direct, and powerful manner.

Ultimately, the group realized that it was facing an “all or none” question: either every one of them would have to agree to travel to Thailand, or none of them should. Walter’s role as a constructive deviate in the Vermont group stimulated it to consider an option—the “go to Thailand option”—which in turn spurred earnest and productive conflict which most likely would not otherwise have taken place.

Key Takeaway

To harness conflict in a positive manner and contribute to the healthy functioning of a group, a leader should play the roles of motivator, delegator, structuralist, and promoter of constructive deviation.

Exercise 8.8.1

1. Think of someone you met in a group whom you would consider to be a “deviate.” On what basis did you make that determination? To what degree did others in the group share your assessment of the person?
2. Do you share the view that any conflict What examples from your own experience support your answer? Consider a group that you’re currently part of, imagine a change in its structure which you feel could reduce its conflict, and share the information with two fellow students.
3. All other things being equal, would you prefer to address a conflict by bringing the parties together or separating them? Explain your reasons and provide an example that you believe supports them.

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8.9: Conflict is Normal

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the role of contradiction, negation, and rational unit in the thought of Friedrich Hegel
2. Identify two opposing models for characterizing conflict
3. List ways in which healthy conflict can benefit a group

That which is willed happens but rarely; in the majority of instances the numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realization, or the means of attaining them are insufficient. Thus the conflicts of innumerable individual wills and individual actions in the domain of history produce a state of affairs entirely analogous to that prevailing in the realm of unconscious nature. - Friedrich Engels

I don't like that person. I'm going to have to get to know him better. - Abraham Lincoln

A cartoon from the 1970s shows two women standing behind a couch where their husbands are sitting and watching a football game. One woman says to the other, “I thought they settled all that last year!” Do you suppose it would be nice if people could settle their differences once and for all, if conflict would just go away, and if everyone would just agree with each other and get along all the time?

Of course, those rosy developments aren’t going to take place. Conflict seems to stubbornly retain its position as part of the human landscape; you can hardly find a group of people who aren’t experiencing it right now or have never experienced it.

There’s reason to believe, too, that a moderate amount of conflict can actually be a healthy and necessary part of group life if it is handled productively and ethically. (Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, *39*, 123–148). We may actually be better off, in other words, if we experience conflict than if we don’t, provided that we turn it to advantage.

The 19th-century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel believed that contradiction and negation, which constitute both causes and ingredients of conflict, lead every domain of reality toward higher rational unity. He wrote that each level of interaction among human beings, including those which take place in larger social structures, preserves the contradictions of previous levels as phases and subparts Pelczynski, A.Z. (1984). ‘The significance of Hegel’s separation of the state and civil society. (In A.Z. Pelczynski (Ed.), *The State and Civil Society* (pp. 1–13). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.).

Much more recently, research by Jehn and Mannix, (Jehn, K. A., & Mannix, E. A. (2001). The dynamic nature of conflict: A longitudinal study of intergroup conflict and group performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *44*, 238–251) indicated that “effective teams over time are characterized by low but increasing levels of task conflict, low levels of relationship conflict with a rise toward the end of a project, and moderate levels of task conflict in the middle of the task timeline.”

Conflict and the Hope of Social Change

Many years ago one of the authors attended a multi-day workshop in New York City on how to promote international peace and reconciliation. After hearing a presentation at the workshop about nuclear proliferation and biological weapons, a participant asked, “Human history is full of violence, bloodshed, and cruelty. What hope do we have of ever saving ourselves?”

The presenter replied, “Yes, we’ve had violence and bloodshed and cruelty throughout history. And as long as there are differences between people and their opinions, the danger will exist that we’ll destroy ourselves, especially now that we have weapons that can wipe out our whole species. But the question isn’t, ‘Can we eliminate conflict?’ The question is really, ‘Can we accept conflict as part of the human condition and handle it so that we move forward instead of annihilating ourselves?’”

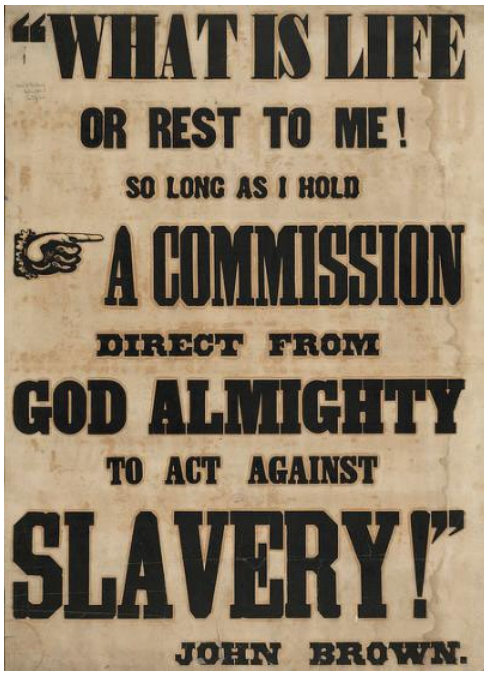


Figure 8.9.1 Source: www.flickr.com/photos/boston_public_library/7645379730/

The presenter then offered what she said were signs of hope that groups of people can, indeed, work through even profound differences without descending into chaos or perpetual hatred. Slavery was once considered a normal part of society, she said, but no more. Child labor, too, used to be considered acceptable. And miscegenation laws existed in the United States until 1967. The presenter's point here was that, with hard work, groups can overcome past evils and deficiencies if they're willing to work through the conflict that invariably crops up when individuals are asked to change their behavior.

Two Models of Conflict

The presenter in New York went on to say that we can conceive conflict in terms of two models. The first is the cancer model, which portrays conflict as an insidious and incessantly expanding element which if left to itself will inevitably overwhelm and destroy a group. If we accept this model, conflict must either be prevented, if possible, or extirpated if it does manage to take root.

In the friction model, by contrast, conflict is seen as a natural by-product of human relations. Any machine generates waste heat simply through the interaction of its component parts, and this heat seldom threatens to halt the actions of the machine as long as people conduct preventive and ongoing maintenance—adding oil, greasing joints, and so forth. Likewise, according to this model, groups inevitably produce conflict through the interaction of their members and need not fear that it will destroy them as long as they handle it wisely. Saul Alinsky, a prominent 20th-century community organizer, wrote these words in support of the friction model of conflict: "Change means movement. Movement means friction. Only in the frictionless vacuum of a nonexistent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict." (Alinsky, S. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals.* New York: Random House).

Benefits of Healthy Conflict

Without conflict, life in general can easily become stagnant and tedious. When conflict is absent in a group, it often means that people are silencing themselves and holding back their opinions. If group discussions are significant, rather than merely routine, then varying opinions about the best course of action should be expected to arise. If people suppress their opinions, on the other hand, groupthink may spread and the final result may not be the best solution.

One favorable feature of healthy conflict is that people engaged in it point out difficulties or weaknesses in proposed alternatives and work together to solve them. As noted in another section, a key to keeping conflict healthy is to make sure that discussion remains focused on the task rather than upon people's personalities.

If it is properly guided and not allowed to deteriorate into damaging forms, conflict can benefit a group in several ways. Besides broadening the range of ideas which group members take into consideration, it can help people clarify their own views and those of

others so that they have a better chance of sharing a common understanding of issues. It can also help group members unearth erroneous assumptions about one another. Finally, it can actually make a group more cohesive as members realize they are surmounting difficulties together. In short, conflict is indeed normal.

Key Takeaway

Conflict may be viewed as a pernicious and destructive element of group interaction, but considering it as a normal by-product of human relationships is a more accurate perspective.

Exercise 8.9.1

1. An adage says, “If you want an omelet, you have to break some eggs.” To what degree do you subscribe to this folk saying? What reservations, if any, do you have about how it has been or might be used with respect to social change?
2. Some conflict throughout history has spread perniciously, as the cancer model might suggest. Have you personally experienced such enlargement of conflict in a group? If so, what factors do you believe contributed to the situation? At what point did normal friction among the group’s members turn into a more harmful form of conflict?
3. Describe a situation in which you gained increased important understanding as a result of conflict in a group you were part of.

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8.10: Conflict Styles

Learning Objectives

1. List and describe a range of styles which people may use in cases of conflict
2. Distinguish between concern for self and concern for others as elements of conflict styles
3. Assess the nature and value of assertion as an ingredient in conflict

The hard and strong will fall. The soft and weak will overcome. - Lao-tzu

If you're a member of a group, you most likely want to minimize futile conflict—conflict that is unlikely to be resolved no matter what you do to address it. You also probably prefer to avoid conflicts that might weaken your group, or those whose nature or outcome is irrelevant to your goals. Once you and the other members of a group recognize that you are involved in a significant conflict whose resolution may make it more likely that you can achieve your goals, you may engage in the conflict via several styles. In this section, we'll consider "menus" of styles proposed by three groups of communication authorities.



Figure 8.10.1

Three Style "Menus"

All three style "menus" include a range of approaches, as represented in Table 10.1. The styles described by Linda Putnam and Charmaine Wilson, (Putnam, L.L., & Wilson, C.E. (1982). Communicative strategies in organizational conflicts: Reliability and validity of a measurement scale, in M. Burgoon (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 6* (pp. 629–652). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage) range from nonconfrontational to controlling and cooperative. According to Putnam and Wilson, if you adopt a nonconfrontational style, you refrain from expressing your thoughts and opinions during a conflict. This may be because you're shy or feel intimidated by the group environment or the behavior of some of its members. It may also be because you don't know how to express viewpoints constructively under the time constraints of a conflict situation or lack information about the topic of the conflict. If you adopt a controlling style, by contrast, you'll try to monopolize discussion during a conflict and make a serious effort to force others in the group to either agree with you or at least accept your proposals for how the group should act. The cooperative style of conflict, finally, involves active participation in the group's conflicts in a spirit of give and take, with the group's superordinate goals in mind.

Rahim, Antonioni, and Psenicka, (Rahim, M.A., Antonioni, D., & Psenicka, C. (2001). A structural equations model of leader power, subordinates' styles of handling conflict, and job performance. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *12*(3), 191–211) enlarged upon Putnam and Wilson's three-style "menu" by adding two further options. They framed their conceptualization in terms of potential combinations of two dimensions, concern for self and concern for others. Here are the options resulting from the combinations:

- High concern for self and others (integrating style): Openness; willingness to exchange information and resolve conflict in a manner acceptable to all parties.
- Low concern for self and high concern for others (obliging style): A tendency to minimize points of difference among parties to a conflict and to try to satisfy other people's needs.
- High concern for self and low concern for others (dominating style): A win-lose orientation and a drive to compel others to accept one's position.
- Low concern for self and low concern for others (avoiding style): Sidestepping areas of conflict, passing the buck to others, or withdrawing entirely from the conflict situation.
- Intermediate concern for self and for others (compromising style): Mutual sacrifice for the sake of achieving an outcome that all members of the group can accept.

Table 8.10.1 Individual Styles of Conflict in Groups

Putnam & Wilson	Rahim, Antonioni, & Psenicka	Adler & Rodman
Nonconfrontational	Integrating	Nonassertive
	Obliging	Directly Aggressive
Controlling	Dominating	Passive Aggressive
	Avoiding	Indirectly Communicating
Cooperative	Compromising	Assertive

Adler and Rodman, (Adler, R.B., & Rodman, G. (2009). *Understanding human communication* (10th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press) emphasized communication elements in their listing of five conflict styles. First of all, they designated nonassertion as a style of conflict in which the group member is unable or unwilling to express him- or herself. According to these theorists, this conflict style is widely used in intimate relationships such as marriages, in which the partners may disagree with each other frequently yet decide not to provoke or prolong conflicts by voicing their differences. People in groups can display a nonassertive style by either ignoring areas of conflict, trying to change the subject when a conflict appears to be arising, physically removing themselves from a place where a conflict is taking place, or simply giving in to someone else's desires during a conflict.

Direct aggression is the second conflict style identified by Adler and Rodman. A group member who attacks someone else willfully —by saying "That's ridiculous" or "That's a crazy idea" or something else that attempts to demean the person—is engaging in direct aggression. Direct aggression need not be verbal; gestures, facial expressions, and posture can all be used to convey aggressive meaning.

Passive aggression, referred to as "crazymaking" by George Bach, (Bach, G.R., & Goldberg, H. (1974). *Creative aggression.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday), is a subtle conflict style in which a person expresses hostility or resistance to others through stubbornness, resentment, procrastination, jokes with ambiguous meanings, petty annoyances, or persistent failure to fully meet expectations or responsibilities. Someone who displays this style of conflict may disavow any negative intent if confronted or questioned about his or her behavior.

Indirect communication is a style that avoids the unmistakable force of the aggressive style and which instead implies concern for the person or persons it is directed toward. (Kellermann, K., & Shea, B.C. Threats, suggestions, hints, and promises: Gaining compliance efficiently and politely. *Communication quarterly, 44*, 145–165). Rather than bluntly saying, "I'd like you to get out of my office now" when a discussion is bogging down, for instance, you might yawn discreetly or comment on how much work you have to do on a big project. Indirect communication may comprise hints, suggestions, or other polite means of seeking someone else's compliance with one's desires. Sometimes it can be used to send "trial balloons" to group members—proposals that are tentative and provisional and don't have a great deal of ego investment behind them.

Assertion is the final style of communication identified by Adler and Rodman, and it is also the one that we recommend in most cases. Group members who operate according to this style express their feelings and thoughts clearly but neither coerce nor judge others while doing so. If you choose to use what Adler and Towne, (Adler, R.B., & Towne, N. (2002). *Looking out/looking in* (10th

ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers) called a “clear message format,” you can practice assertion by following five steps in a conflict situation.

1. The first step is to offer an objective description of behavior being exhibited by those with whom you are in conflict. Don’t interpret or assess the behavior; just describe it. For example, you might say, “Lee, you just rolled your eyes at me.”
2. The second step is to present your interpretation of the behavior, but without stating the interpretation as fact. For instance, “Lee, I get the impression that you may have dismissed my proposal, because you rolled your eyes at me.”
3. The third step is to express your feelings about the behavior you’ve described and interpreted. For example, “When you roll your eyes like that, I get the impression that you’ve dismissed my proposal, and I feel resentful.”
4. The next step is to identify the consequences of the behavior, your interpretation, and your feelings. For instance, “Lee, I see that you rolled your eyes at me when I made my proposal. I get the impression that you’ve dismissed it, and I’m resentful. I don’t feel like discussing the matter any further now.”
5. The final step is to state your intentions, based on the four preceding ingredients of the situation. For example, “Lee, you rolled your eyes at me when I made my proposal. I get the impression that you’ve dismissed it, and I’m resentful. I don’t feel like discussing the matter any further now, and if I see you act this way again I’ll probably just leave the room until I calm down.”

We admit that following a list of communication behaviors like one this can feel unfamiliar and perhaps overly complex. Fortunately, being responsibly assertive can sometimes be a very simple matter which immediately yields positive results. In fact, following just one or two steps from the five outlined here may be sufficient to prevent, defuse, or resolve a conflict.

A friend of ours named Gus told us about a time when he was part of an enthusiastic crowd watching a football game at Washington State University. A few rows below him in the stadium sat an elderly woman, and directly in front of her was a man many inches taller and substantially heavier than she was.

The first time the WSU team made a good play, the man leapt to his feet and screamed wildly, blocking the woman’s view of the field. As the widespread cheering subsided, but with the man still standing in front of her, the woman calmly but forcefully said, “Sorry sir, but I can’t see.”

The man grunted roughly in response and kept standing until the rest of the crowd quieted. The next couple of times that WSU managed an impressive play—and this was one of those rare contests in which they did so on several occasions—the man jumped up again, preventing the woman from seeing the action over and over again.

Every time this happened, the woman spoke up, saying “Sir, I really can’t see” or “You’re blocking my view.” According to Gus, the effect of the woman’s assertive statements was like a series of weights being placed on the man’s shoulders. Eventually, he succumbed to the cumulative weight of her statements—the power of her assertions—and moved to an empty nearby seat.

Of course, not everyone who behaves in ways that we find objectionable will respond as positively as the oafish gentleman did to the elderly woman. Some people in the heat of a disagreement may resist even the mildest and least judgmental statements of assertion. How to deal with people who resist even responsibly assertive communication, along with other strategies to manage conflict in general, will be the subjects of our next section.

Key Takeaway

Theorists have identified a range of conflict styles available to members of groups, including a five-step assertion approach which may offer the greatest general applicability and prospects for effectiveness because it avoids coercing or judging others.

Exercise 8.10.1

1. Consider the adage “Discretion is the better part of valor.” To what degree do you feel it corresponds to what Putnam and Wilson called a “nonconfrontational” style of conflict?
2. Think about a time when you experienced a conflict in a group that was eventually resolved. What style(s), from among those described in this section, did the parties to the conflict exhibit? Do you feel the people chose the best style for the circumstances? Why or why not?
3. What specific statements or questions would you use to attempt to communicate with someone who habitually employs passive aggression in conflicts? Provide examples of your past experiences with such behavior, if you have them.

4. Take another look at the cartoon in which the woman says “The remark you’ve just made has hurt me and I’m feeling anger toward you.” Does it seem funny to you? If so, what elements of the cartoon and its text amuse you? How would you change the drawing or the words to portray a healthful interaction between people based on responsible assertion?

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8.11: Conflict in the Work Environment

Learning Objectives

1. Understand evaluations and criticism in the workplace, and discuss several strategies for resolving workplace conflict

The word “conflict” produces a sense of anxiety for many people, but it is part of the human experience. Just because conflict is universal does not mean that we cannot improve how we handle disagreements, misunderstandings, and struggles to understand or make ourselves understood. Hocker and Wilmot, (Hocker, J., & Wilmot, W. (1991). *Interpersonal conflict.* Dubuque, IA: Willam C. Brown) offer us several principles on conflict that have been adapted here for our discussion:

- Conflict is universal.
- Conflict is associated with incompatible goals
- Conflict is associated with scarce resources
- Conflict is associated with interference
- Conflict is not a sign of a poor relationship
- Conflict cannot be avoided
- Conflict cannot always be resolved
- Conflict is not always bad

Conflict is the physical or psychological struggle associated with the perception of opposing or incompatible goals, desires, demands, wants, or needs (McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon). When incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference are present, conflict is a typical result, but it doesn’t mean the relationship is poor or failing. All relationships progress through times of conflict and collaboration. How we navigate and negotiate these challenges influences, reinforces, or destroys the relationship. Conflict is universal, but how and when it occurs is open to influence and interpretation. Rather than viewing conflict from a negative frame of reference, view it as an opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship.

Conflict Management Strategies

As professional communicators, we can acknowledge and anticipate that conflict will be present in every context or environment where communication occurs, particularly in groups. To that end, we can predict, anticipate, and formulate strategies to address conflict successfully. How you choose to approach conflict influences its resolution. Joseph DeVito, (DeVito, J. 2003. *Messages: builing interpersoanl skills.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon) offers us several conflict management strategies that we have adapted and expanded for our use.

Avoidance

You may choose to change the subject, leave the room, or not even enter the room in the first place, but the conflict will remain and resurface when you least expect it. Your reluctance to address the conflict directly is a normal response, and one which many cultures prize. In cultures where independence is highly valued, direct confrontation is more common. In cultures where the community is emphasized over the individual, indirect strategies may be more common. Avoidance allows for more time to resolve the problem, but can also increase costs associated with problem in the first place. Your organization or business will have policies and protocols to follow regarding conflict and redress, but it is always wise to consider the position of your conversational partner or opponent and to give them, as well as yourself, time to explore alternatives.

Defensiveness Versus Supportiveness

Gibb (Gibb, J. (1961). Defensive and supportive communication. *Journal of Communication, 11*, 141–148) discussed defensive and supportive communication interactions as part of his analysis of conflict management. Defensive communication is characterized by control, evaluation, and judgments, while supportive communication focuses on the points and not personalities. When we feel judged or criticized, our ability to listen can be diminished, and we may only hear the negative message. By choosing to focus on the message instead of the messenger, we keep the discussion supportive and professional.

Face-Detracting and Face-Saving

Communication is not competition. Communication is the sharing of understanding and meaning, but does everyone always share equally? People struggle for control, limit access to resources and information as part of territorial displays, and otherwise use the process of communication to engage in competition. People also use communication for collaboration. Both competition and collaboration can be observed in group communication interactions, but there are two concepts central to both: face-detracting and face-saving strategies.

Face-detracting strategies involve messages or statements that take away from the respect, integrity, or credibility of a person. Face-saving strategies protect credibility and separate message from messenger. For example, you might say that "sales were down this quarter," without specifically noting who was responsible. Sales were simply down. If, however, you ask, "How does the sales manager explain the decline in sales?" you have specifically connected an individual with the negative news. While we may want to specifically connect tasks and job responsibilities to individuals and departments, in terms of language each strategy has distinct results.

Face-detracting strategies often produce a defensive communication climate, inhibit listening, and allow for little room for collaboration. To save face is to raise the issue while preserving a supportive climate, allowing room in the conversation for constructive discussions and problem-solving. By using a face-saving strategy to shift the emphasis from the individual to the issue, we avoid power struggles and personalities, providing each other space to save face (Donohue, W., & Klot, R. (1992). *Managing interpersonal conflict.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

In collectivist cultures, where the community well-being is promoted or valued above that of the individual, face-saving strategies are common communicative strategies. Groups are valued, and the role of the individual is de-emphasized. In Japan, for example, to confront someone directly is perceived as humiliation, a great insult. In the United States, greater emphasis is placed on individual performance, and responsibility may be more directly assessed. If our goal is to solve a problem, and preserve the relationship, then consideration of a face-saving strategy should be one option a skilled business communicator considers when addressing negative news or information.

Empathy

Communication involves not only the words we write or speak, but how and when we write or say them. The way we communicate also carries meaning, and empathy for the individual involves attending to this aspect of interaction. Empathetic listening involves listening to both the literal and implied meanings within a message. For example, the implied meaning might involve understand what has led this person to feel this way. By paying attention to feelings and emotions associated with content and information, we can build relationships and address conflict more constructively. In management, negotiating conflict is a common task and empathy is one strategy to consider when attempting to resolve issues. We can also observe that inherent in the group development process is the presence of conflict. It is not a sign of bad things to come, nor a reason to think something is wrong. Conflict is a normal part of communication in general, and group communication in particular. In fact, conflict can be the antidote to groupthink, and help the group members refrain from going along with the flow, even when reason or the available information indicated otherwise.

Gunnysacking

Bach and WydenBach, (G., & Wyden, P. (1968). *The intimacy enemy.* New York, NY: Avon) discuss gunnysacking (or backpacking) as the imaginary bag we all carry, into which we place unresolved conflicts or grievances over time. If your organization has gone through a merger, and your business has transformed, there may have been conflicts that occurred during the transition. Holding onto the way things used to be can be like a stone in your gunnysack, and influence how you interpret your current context.

People may be aware of similar issues but might not know your history, and cannot see your backpack or its contents. For example, if your previous manager handled issues in one way, and your new manage handles them in a different way, this may cause you some degree of stress and frustration. Your new manager cannot see how the relationship existed in the past, but will still observe the tension. Bottling up your frustrations only hurts you and can cause your current relationships to suffer. By addressing, or unpacking, the stones you carry, you can better assess the current situation with the current patterns and variables.

We learn from experience, but can distinguish between old wounds and current challenges, and try to focus our energies where they will make the most positive impact.

Managing Your Emotions

Have you ever seen red, or perceived a situation through rage, anger, or frustration? Then you know that you cannot see or think clearly when you are experiencing strong emotions. There will be times in the work environment when emotions run high, and your awareness of them can help you clear your mind and choose to wait until the moment has passes to tackle the challenge.

"Never speak or make decision in anger" is one common saying that holds true, but not all emotions involve fear, anger, or frustration. A job loss can be a sort of professional death for many, and the sense of loss can be profound. The loss of a colleague to a layoff while retaining your position can bring pain as well as relief, and a sense of survivor's guilt. Emotions can be contagious in the workplace, and fear of the unknown can influence people to act in irrational ways. The wise business communicator can recognize when emotions are on edge in themselves or others, and choose to wait to communicate, problem-solve, or negotiate until after the moment has passed.

Evaluations and Criticism in the Workplace

Guffey, (Guffey, M. (2008). *Essentials of business communication* (7th ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson-Wadsworth. pp.320) wisely notes that Xenophon, a Greek philosopher, once said "The sweetest of all sounds is praise." We have seen previously that appreciation, respect, inclusion, and belonging are all basic human needs across all contexts, and are particularly relevant in the workplace. Efficiency and morale are positively related, and recognition of good work is important. There may come a time, however, when evaluations involve criticism. Knowing how to approach this criticism can give you peace of mind to listen clearly, separating subjective, personal attacks from objective, constructive requests for improvement. Guffey offers us seven strategies for giving and receiving evaluations and criticism in the workplace that we have adapted here.

Listen Without Interrupting

If you are on the receiving end of an evaluation, start by listening without interruption. Interruptions can be internal and external, and warrant further discussion. If your supervisor starts to discuss a point and you immediately start debating the point in your mind, you are paying attention to yourself and what you think they said or are going to say, and not that which is actually communicated. This gives rise to misunderstandings and will cause you to lose valuable information you need to understand and address the issue at hand.

External interruptions may involve your attempt to get a word in edgewise, and may change the course of the conversation. Let them speak while you listen, and if you need to take notes to focus your thoughts, take clear notes of what is said, also noting points to revisit later. External interruptions can also take the form of a telephone ringing, a "text message has arrived" chime, or a co-worker dropping by in the middle of the conversation.

As an effective business communicator, you know all too well to consider the context and climate of the communication interaction when approaching the delicate subject of evaluations or criticism. Choose a time and place free from interruption. Choose one outside of the common space where there may be many observers. Turn off your cell phone. Choose face to face communication instead of an impersonal email. By providing a space free of interruption, you are displaying respect for the individual and the information.

Determine the Speaker's Intent

We have discussed previews as a normal part of conversation, and in this context they play an important role. People want to know what is coming and generally dislike surprises, particularly when the context of an evaluation is present. If you are on the receiving end, you may need to ask a clarifying question if it doesn't count as an interruption. You may also need to take notes, and write down questions that come to mind to address when it is your turn to speak. As a manager, be clear and positive in your opening and lead with praise. You can find one point, even if it is only that the employee consistently shows up to work on time, to highlight before transitioning to a performance issue.

Indicate You Are Listening

In mainstream U.S. culture, eye contact is a signal that you are listening and paying attention to the person speaking. Take notes, nod your head, or lean forward to display interest and listening. Regardless of whether you are the employee receiving the criticism or the supervisor delivering it, displaying of listening behavior engenders a positive climate that helps mitigate the challenge of negative news or constructive criticism.

Paraphrase

Restate the main points to paraphrase what has been discussed. This verbal display allows for clarification and acknowledges receipt of the message.

If you are the employee, summarize the main points and consider steps you will take to correct the situation. If none come to mind, or you are nervous and are having a hard time thinking clearly, state out loud the main point and ask if you can provide solution steps and strategies at a later date. You can request a follow-up meeting if appropriate, or indicate you will respond in writing via email to provide the additional information.

If you are the employer, restate the main points to ensure that the message was received, as not everyone hears everything that is said or discussed the first time it is presented. Stress can impair listening, and paraphrasing the main points can help address this common response.

If You Agree…

If an apology is well deserved, offer it. Communicate clearly what will change or indicate when you will respond with specific strategies to address the concern. As a manager you will want to formulate a plan that addresses the issue and outlines responsibilities as well as time frames for corrective action. As an employee, you will want specific steps you can both agree on that will serve to solve the problem. Clear communication and acceptance of responsibility demonstrates maturity and respect.

If You Disagree…

If you disagree, focus on the points or issue and not personalities. Do not bring up past issues and keep the conversation focused on the task at hand. You may want to suggest, now that you better understand their position, a follow-up meeting to give you time to reflect on the issues. You may want to consider involving a third party, investigating to learn more about the issue, or taking time to cool off.

Do not respond in anger or frustration; instead, always display professionalism. If the criticism is unwarranted, consider that the information they have may be flawed or biased, and consider ways to learn more about the case to share with them, searching for a mutually beneficial solution.

If other strategies to resolve the conflict fail, consider contacting your Human Resources department to learn more about due process procedures at your workplace. Display respect and never say anything that would reflect poorly on yourself or your organization. Words spoken in anger can have a lasting impact, and are impossible to retrieve or take back.

Learn from the Experience

Every communication interaction provides an opportunity for learning if you choose to see it. Sometimes the lessons are situational, and may not apply in future contexts. Other times the lessons learned may well serve you across your professional career. Taking notes for yourself to clarify your thoughts, much like a journal, serve to document and help you see the situation more clearly.

Recognize that some aspects of communication are intentional, and may communicate meaning, even if it is hard to understand. Also know that some aspects of communication are unintentional, and may not imply meaning or design. People make mistakes. They say things they should not have said. Emotions are revealed that are not always rational, and not always associated with the current context. A challenging morning at home can spill over into the workday and someone's bad mood may have nothing to do with you. Team members aren't always the same day to day, and the struggles outside of the work environment can impact the group.

Try to distinguish between what you can control and what you cannot, and always choose professionalism.

Key Takeaway

Conflict is unavoidable and can be opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship.

Exercise 8.11.1

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. Discuss your ideas with your classmates.
2. Of the strategies for managing conflict described in this section, which do you think are the most effective? Why? Discuss your opinions with a classmate.
3. Can you think of a time when a conflict led to a new opportunity, better understanding, or other positive result? If not, think of a past conflict and imagine a positive outcome. Write a 2–3 paragraph description of what happened, or what you imagine could happen. Share your results with a classmate.

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8.12: Effective Conflict Management Strategies

Learning Objectives

1. List four preventive steps that a group and its members may take to lessen the likelihood of experiencing damaging conflict
2. Identify measures related to space and time that a group may employ to mediate against potentially destructive conflict
3. Describe steps which members of a group may take to manage conflict when it arises
4. Explain the “SLACK” method of managing conflict

I've led a school whose faculty and students examine and discuss and debate every aspect of our law and legal system. And what I've learned most is that no one has a monopoly on truth or wisdom. I've learned that we make progress by listening to each other, across every apparent political or ideological divide. - Elena Kagan

In calm water, every ship has a good captain. - Swedish Proverb

To be peaceable is, by definition, to be peaceable in time of conflict. - Progressive magazine

If group members communicate effectively and show sensitivity to each other’s needs and styles, they can often prevent unproductive and destructive conflict from developing. Nevertheless, they should also be prepared to respond in situations when conflict does crop up.

Before considering some strategies for dealing with conflicts, it’s worth pointing out that the title of this section refers to “management” of conflict rather than to “resolution.” The reason for this choice of terminology is that not all conflict needs to be—or can be—resolved. Still, most conflict needs to be managed to keep it from side-tracking, slowing down, weakening, or eventually destroying a group.

First Things First

We’ve all heard that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Managing conflict is easiest if we’ve acquired some tools to prevent it from getting out of hand. One way to gain such tools is to undergo some actual formal training in conflict management. A Google search of educational sites related to “conflict management courses” yields several thousand results from around the United States and elsewhere, including numerous certificate and degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Commercial entities offer hundreds more opportunities for professional development in this realm.

A second, more specific preventive measure is for members of a group to periodically review and reaffirm their commitment to the norms, policies, and procedures they’ve set for themselves. In more formal groups, it’s a good idea to assign one member to look over the bylaws or constitution every year to see if anything needs to be changed, clarified, or removed in light of altered circumstances. The danger in not paying attention to such details is represented in the story, told by Robert Townsend, (Townsend, Robert (1970). *Up the organization*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf), of a British civil service job created in 1803 which called for a man to stand on the Cliffs of Dover with a spyglass. The man’s role was to ring a bell if he saw Napoleon coming. The job was not abolished until 1945.

A third measure which groups can take to lessen the possibility that damaging conflict will take place within them is to discuss and distinguish between detrimental and beneficial conflict—between that which promotes improvement and that which obstructs progress. The initial “forming” stage of a group, when people are apt to act tentative and be on their best behavior, is probably the best time to set aside some group time to let members share their views, experiences, and expectations with regard to “bad” and “good” conflict. It may be a good idea to ask members of the group to cite specific examples of conflict which they would accept or endorse, and also examples of conflict which they would hope to avoid.

A fourth preventive measure is for the group to explicitly remind its members that “deviates” are to be appreciated and respected for the diverse perspectives they can share and the unconventional opinions they may hold. This kind of statement may give creative members the impression that they have intellectual “free space” for generating and sharing ideas later in the evolution of the group.

Logistical Measures

Proponents of feng shui believe that configurations of furniture affect people's moods and behavior. Employees at the National Observatory in Washington, DC, maintain an atomic clock that keeps precise universal time. You don't need to belong to either of these groups to believe that how a group uses space and time can affect the level and nature of conflict it will experience.

With respect to proxemics, for instance, research has demonstrated that conflict between people who disagree with each other is more likely to flare up if they sit directly across from each other than if they are seated side by side. (Gordon, J., Mondy, R. W., Sharplin, A., & Premeaux, S. R. (1990). *Management and organizational behavior*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 540). Why not, then, purposefully plan where people are going to sit and the angles from which they'll see each other?

Decisions about when and for how long groups will gather can also affect their level of conflict. Research into human beings' circadian rhythm—the 24-hour cycle of energy highs and lows-shows that 3 a.m. and 3 p.m. are the two lowest-energy times (www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2004/10/17/night-shift.html) Depending on whether group members clash more or less when their energy level is low, it, therefore, may or may not be wise to meet at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Whenever people in a group get together, it's natural that the mood and outlook they bring with them will be influenced in part by what's happened to them earlier that day. For any individual, a touchy discussion, a disappointment, or an embarrassing episode might precede the group's interactions. Unfortunate events like these—as well as other powerful experiences, whether positive or not—may consciously or unconsciously color the demeanor of group members at the start of their interaction.

Another time-related conflict management strategy, thus, is to begin a discussion with a "time out" for people to rest and loosen up. We know of college instructors who initiate each of their class sessions with two minutes of silence for this same purpose.

Once Conflict Occurs…

Numerous authorities have offered suggestions on how to manage conflict once it reaches a level where it should not or cannot be allowed to dissipate on its own. Hartley & Dawson, first of all, (Hartley, P., & Dawson, M. (2010). *Success in groupwork.* New York: St. Martin's Press) suggested taking the following steps:

1. Make sure the lines of communication are open. If they aren't, open them.
2. Define the issues. Don't allow a nebulous sense of overpowering disagreement to develop. Be specific about what the conflict pertains to.
3. Focus on the task, rather than on personalities. Discourage or deflect comments that question a group member's motives or personal qualities.
4. Proceed according to your established ground rules, policies, procedures, and norms. After all, you established these components of your group's identity precisely to deal with difficult circumstances.

In addition to following rules and procedures peculiar to its own history, a group that's experiencing conflict should strive to maintain civility (Meyer, J.R. Effect of verbal aggressiveness on the perceived importance of secondary goals in messages. *Communication Studies, 55*, 168–184) and follow basic etiquette. As Georges Clemenceau wrote, "Etiquette is nothing but hot air, but that is what our automobiles ride on, and look how it smoothes out the bumps."

Malcolm Gladwell's popular book, *The Tipping Point*, describes how New York City's subway system was revitalized by David Gunn and William Bratton in the 1980s and 90s (Gladwell, M. (2000). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference.* New York: Little, Brown and Company). Together, Gunn and Bratton launched a campaign to eliminate vandalism, including graffiti on the sides of train cars, and to prosecute "fare-beaters." At the start of the campaign, doubters complained that more serious crime in the subways and streets needed to be attacked first. Gunn and Bratton insisted, however, that setting a broad example of civility would ultimately create an atmosphere in which potential criminals would be less likely to engage in serious criminal acts. After many years of relentlessly enforcing basic laws mandating public decency, not only did graffiti nearly disappear entirely from the subway system, but overall crime in the New York metropolitan area declined substantially.

Hopefully, you will never witness vandalism, much less felonious behavior, in a small group. Malicious verbal interchanges, nevertheless, can poison the atmosphere among people and should be prevented if at all possible. As an old Japanese saying puts it, "The one who raises his voice first loses the argument." It doesn't hurt to calmly and quietly ask that discussion of particularly contentious topics be postponed if comments seem to be in danger of overwhelming the group with negativity.



Figure 8.12.1: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/joeshlabotnik/842977816/

In addition to reminding people that they should exercise basic politeness, it may be wise at times for someone in the group to ask for a recess in a discussion. Calvin Coolidge said, “I have never been hurt by anything I didn’t say,” and it may be a good idea in irate moments to silence people briefly to prevent what Adler and Rodman, (Adler, R.B., & Rodman, G. (2009). *Understanding human communication* (10th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press) referred to as an “escalatory spiral” of hurtful conversation.

If the tone of a group discussion permits thoughtful reflection, it can be helpful to separate task and relationship goals and deal with conflict over each kind separately. (Fisher, R., & Brown, S. (1988). *Getting Together: Building a relationship that gets to yes.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin). Using indirect communication, rather than confronting another group member head-on, may also defuse extreme emotions and preserve other people’s faces.

Here are further techniques for managing conflict in group interactions:

1. “Test the waters” for new ideas without making it seem that you’re so attached to them that you’ll fight to impose them on others.
2. If an ego clash erupts, see if you can identify something that the disagreeing individuals *can* agree on. Perhaps this will be a superordinate goal. It could also be a common opposing force, since the idea that “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” can serve to bind people together.
3. Employ active listening. Strive to fully understand other people’s viewpoints before stating your own.
4. If people’s comments meander to topics that aren’t germane, steer the discussion back to the key issues under discussion.
5. Frame the situation as a problem to be solved, rather than as a struggle which must be won.
6. Treat everyone as partners on a common quest. Invite continued frank interchanges and assure group members that they may speak out without fear of reprisal.
7. Consider carefully how important it is for you to prevail in a particular conflict or even just to express your views. Ask yourself whether the potential negative consequences of your action will be worth it.
8. Unless a disagreement is over an essential point, consider whether it might be best to “agree to disagree” and move on.



Figure 8.12.2: Source: www.flickr.com/photos/buddawiggi/5987710858/

“Going with the Flow”

As we’ve seen, there is no shortage of specific strategies and techniques for people to choose from when conflict occurs in a group. In fact, it may be overwhelming to try to decide which strategies and techniques to use, at which times and with which people, under which circumstances. Randy Fujishin, a therapist and writer from California, proposed an attitude that might help people deal both with conflict itself and with the feelings of stress it often engenders. He suggested that we regard conflict as neither a call to battle nor a warning to dissolve or disband a group. Instead, Fujishin proposed that people regard conflict as “an invitation to listen, learn, explore, and grow (Fujishin, R. (1998). *Gifts from the heart: 10 communication skills for developing more loving relationships.* San Francisco: Acada Books).” His advice when conflict takes place is this: “Instead of tensing, relax. Instead of stiffening, bend. Instead of arguing, listen. Instead of pushing or running away, get closer. Flow with the disagreement, situation, or individual for a period to discover where it may lead.”

Fujishin also developed what he called the “SLACK” method of managing conflict. Although he intended it to be brought to bear primarily on disputes in one-on-one relationships, its components may apply also in group situations. “SLACK” is an acronym standing for “sit, listen, ask, compromise, and kiss.” Major emphasis in this method is placed on being receptive to what other parties in a conflict have to say, as well as to their emotional states. Fujishin really does suggest kissing or hugging as the final step in this method, but of course many groups will choose instead to celebrate the achievement of post-conflict reconciliation and progress through words.

Perhaps the central message we can derive from Fujishin’s writings on this topic is that, although we should respond to conflict earnestly, we should take a long view and avoid losing our composure in the process of managing it. Even at moments of extreme tension, we can remind ourselves of an ancient saying attributed first to Persian mystics and later cited by such notable figures as Abraham Lincoln: “This too shall pass.”(Taylor, A. (1968). “This Too Will Pass (Jason 910Q)”. In F. Harkort, K.C. Peeters, & R. Wildhaber. *Volksüberlieferung: Festschrift für Kurt Ranke* (pp. 345–350). Göttingen, German: Schwartz).

Key Takeaway

Conflict can be managed by implementing a combination of preventive, logistical, and procedural actions, as well as by maintaining composure and perspective.

Exercise 8.12.1

1. What proportion of conflicts within small groups do you feel can actually be resolved rather than merely managed? Provide a rationale and example(s) for your answer.
2. Think about a conflict that you recently observed or took part in. What elements of its timing, location, or physical surroundings do you think contributed to its nature or severity? Which of those elements, if any, do you think someone might have been able to change to lessen the intensity of the conflict?
3. Labor negotiations sometimes include a mandated “cooling-off period.” Describe a conflict situation you’ve witnessed which you believe might have turned out better had such a cooling-off period been incorporated into it. Describe areas of conflict in your life, at school or elsewhere, in which you feel it would be helpful to make use of such a technique?

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8.13: Crisis Communication Plan

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how to prepare a crisis communication plan

A rumor that the CEO is ill pulls down the stock price. A plant explosion kills several workers and requires evacuating residents on several surrounding city blocks. Risk management seeks to address these many risks, including prevention as well as liability, but emergency and crisis situations happen nevertheless. In addition, people make errors in judgment that can damage the public perception of a company. The mainstream media has no lack of stories that involve infidelity, addiction, or abuse that, from a company's standpoint, require a clear a response. In this chapter, we address the basics of a crisis communication plan.

Mallet, Vaught, and Brinch, (Mallet, L., Vaught, C., & Brinch, M. (1999). *The emergency communication triangle.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Saftey and Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Research Laboratory) indicate the importance of focusing on key types of information during an emergency including:

- What is happening?
- Is anyone in danger?
- How big is the problem?
- Who reported the problem?
- Where is the problem?
- Has a response started?
- What resources are on-scene?
- Who is responding so far?
- Is everyone's location known?

You will be receiving information from the moment you know a crisis has occurred, but without a framework or communication plan to guide you, valuable information may be ignored or lost. These questions help you quickly focus on the basics of "who, what, and where" in the crisis situation.



Figure 8.13.1: Crisis communication requires efficiency and accuracy. Source: Jupiter Images 4218613.jpg

Developing Your Own Crisis Communication Plan

A crisis communication plan is the prepared scenario document that organizes information into responsibilities and lines of communication prior to an event. With a plan in place, if an emergency arises, each person knows his or her role and responsibilities from a common reference document. Overall effectiveness can be enhanced with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for an effective and swift response.

The plan should include four elements:

1. Crisis communication team members with contact information,
2. Designated spokesperson,
3. Meeting place/location, and
4. Media plan with procedures.

A crisis communication team includes people who can:

1. Decide what actions to take,
2. Carry out those actions, and
3. Offer expertise or education in the relevant areas.

By designating a spokesperson prior to an actual emergency, your team addresses the inevitable need for information in a proactive manner. People will want to know what happened and where to get further details about the crisis. Lack of information breeds rumors and that can make a bad situation worse. The designated spokesperson should be knowledgeable about the organization and its values, comfortable in front of a microphone, a camera, and media lights, and able to stay calm under pressure.

Part of your communication crisis plan should focus on where you will meet to coordinate communication and activities. For your own house in case of a fire, you might meet in the front yard. For an organization, a designated contingency building or office some distance away from your usual place of business might serve as a central place for communication in an emergency that requires evacuating your building. Depending on the size of your organization and the type of physical facilities where you do business, the company may develop an emergency plan with exit routes, hazardous materials procedures, and policies for handling bomb threats, for example. Safety, of course, is the first priority, but in terms of communication, a key goal is also to eliminate confusion about where people are and where information is coming from.

Whether or not evacuation is necessary, when a crisis occurs, your designated spokesperson will gather information and carry out your media plan. He or she will need to make quick judgments about which information to share, how to phrase it, and whether certain individuals need to be notified of facts before they become public. The media and public will want to know information and reliable information is preferable to speculation. Official responses help clarify the situation for the public, but an unofficial interview can make the tragedy personal, and attract unwanted attention. Remind employees to direct all inquiries to the official spokesperson and to never speak “off the record.”

Enable your spokesperson to have access to the place you indicated as your crisis contingency location to coordinate communication and activities, and allow that professional to prepare and respond to inquiries. When crisis communication is handled in a professional manner, it seeks not to withhold information or mislead, but to minimize the “spin damage” from the incident by providing necessary facts, even if they are unpleasant or even tragic.

Key Takeaway

Because crises are bound to happen despite the best planning, every organization should have a crisis communication plan, which includes designating a crisis communication team and spokesperson.

Exercise 8.13.1

1. Locate the crisis communication plan where you go to school or work, or find one online. Briefly describe the overall plan and please note at least one part, element, or point of emphasis we have not discussed. Post and compare with classmates.
2. When people don’t know what to do in a crisis situation, what happens? How can you address probable challenges before the crisis occurs? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.
3. As a case study, research one crisis that involves your area of training or career field. What communication issues were present and how did they affect the response to the crisis? Compare your results with classmates.
4. Locate a crisis communication online and review it. Share and compare with classmates.
5. Do you always have to be on guard with members of the media? Why or why not? Explain your answer to the class as if they were members of the media.

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8.14: Summary

In this chapter, we have dealt with managing conflict. We have defined conflict and identified dangers that can arise from it. We have leadership approaches to conflict and reviewed the nature of conflict in the work environment. We have also explored effective conflict management strategies and explained how to develop and when to use a crisis communication plan. Conflict is a perennial and nature part of group communication which can be managed effectively if we understand the important concepts and skills shared in this chapter.

Review Questions

Interpretive Questions

1. In what 2–3 ways has your view of conflict changed as a result of reading this chapter?
2. To what degree do you feel that techniques which are effective for managing conflict in small groups can produce positive results within large organizations or between nations? On what evidence or experience do you base your view concerning this question?

Application Questions

1. Think of one of your ongoing relationships in which conflict plays a larger or more harmful part than you would prefer. Which conflict management strategies from this chapter are you willing to put into use in that relationship? Please report back to one or more of your classmates in two weeks concerning the outcome of your plan.
2. Think of a leader you know who you believe manages conflict particularly effectively. Arrange an interview with the person in which you ask him/her for examples of how s/he used one or more of the strategies mentioned in this chapter. Ask also if the person has further advice for you to use in a conflict situation. Present your instructor with a short written description of the results of your interview.

Summary of Learning Outcomes

Conflict in Organizations: Basic Considerations

How do you recognize and resolve short- and long-term conflicts among group members and among groups?

Conflict is the process by which a person or group feels frustrated in the pursuit of certain goals, plans, or objectives. Conflict may take one of four forms: (1) goal, (2) cognitive, (3) affective, or (4) behavioral. Conflict may occur on several levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational.

Causes of Conflict in Organizations

How does conflict arise in organizations?

Conflict in organizations can be caused by task interdependencies, status inconsistencies, jurisdictional ambiguities, communication problems, dependence on common resource pools, lack of common performance standards, and individual differences. A model of the conflict process follows four stages. Conflict originates (stage 1) when an individual or group experiences frustration in the pursuit of important goals. In stage 2, the individual or group attempts to understand the nature of the problem and its causes. In stage 3, efforts are made to change behavioral patterns in such a way that the desired outcome, or stage 4, is achieved.

Resolving Conflict in Organizations

When and how do you negotiate, and how do you achieve a mutually advantageous agreement?

Ineffective conflict resolution strategies include nonaction, administrative orbiting, due process nonaction, secrecy, and character assassination. Strategies for preventing conflict include (1) emphasizing organization-wide goals; (2) providing stable, well-structured tasks; (3) facilitating intergroup communication; and (4) avoiding win-lose situations. Strategies for reducing conflict include (1) physical separation, (2) use of rules and regulations, (3) limiting intergroup interaction, (4) use of integrators, (5) confrontation and negotiation, (6) third-party consultation, (7) rotation of members, (8) identification of interdependent tasks and superordinate goals, and (9) use of intergroup training. Negotiation is the process by which individuals and groups attempt to reach

their goals by bargaining with others who can help or hinder goal attainment. Negotiation is helpful in three primary instances: (1) a conflict of interest, (2) the absence of clear rules or procedures, and (3) when there is a desire to avoid a fight. Distributive bargaining attempts to resolve a win-lose conflict in which resources are limited and each party wishes to maximize its share of these resources. Integrative bargaining occurs when both parties attempt to reach a settlement that benefits both sides in a dispute.

Negotiation Behavior

How do you recognize and respond to cultural differences in negotiation and bargaining strategies?

A resistance point is the point beyond which an opponent will not go to reach a settlement. Planning for a negotiation session involves (1) understanding the basic nature of the conflict, (2) knowing what the group wants to achieve in the session, (3) selecting a chief negotiator, and (4) understanding one's opponent. Cultural differences play a major role in the negotiation process and influence such factors as persuasion techniques, the key characteristics of the negotiators, and communication patterns.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Identify the types of conflict commonly found in organizations, and provide examples of each.
2. How can conflict be good for an organization?
3. Identify some reasons for the prevalence of intergroup conflict in organizations.
4. How does intergroup conflict affect behavior within a work group? behavior between two or more groups?
5. Review the basic conflict model discussed in this chapter. What lessons for management follow from this model?
6. Of the various strategies for resolving and preventing conflicts that are presented in this chapter, which ones do you feel will generally be most effective? least effective? Why?
7. What is the difference between distributive and integrative bargaining? When would each be most appropriate?
8. How can cultural differences affect bargaining behavior? If you were negotiating with a Japanese firm, what might you do differently than if you were facing an American firm? Explain.

Management Skills Application Exercises

1. You might find it interesting to see how you approach conflict resolution. To do this, simply complete this self-assessment. When you are done, refer to Appendix B for scoring details.

What Is Your Approach to Conflict Resolution?

Instructions: Think of a typical situation in which you have a disagreement with someone. Then answer the following items

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concerning how you would respond to the conflict. Circle the number that you feel is most appropriate.

	Highly Unlikely			Highly Likely	
1. I firmly push for my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I always try to win an argument.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I try to show my opponent the logic of my position.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I like to discuss disagreements openly.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I try to work through our differences.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I try to get all concerns on the table for discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I try to work for a mutually beneficial solution.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to compromise with the other person.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I seek a balance of gains and losses on each side.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I don’t like talking about disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I try to avoid unpleasantness for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I avoid taking positions that may incite disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I try to think of	1	2	3	4	5

the other person in any disagreement.					
14. I try to preserve relationships in any conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5

Managerial Decision Exercises

The president of your company has just told you that an Indian multinational company is interested in purchasing a large amount of the products that you and your group are responsible for. You have been charged with meeting with the team from India, hosting their visit, and negotiating the agreement, including pricing. How do you communicate during the meeting with your colleagues? What are some aspects of the social and business interactions that you will want you and your staff to avoid? What will you report back to the president regarding the meeting, and will you encourage her to take part in the meeting?

Critical Thinking Case:

College Corp.

Janice just graduated college, she's ready to head out on her own and get that first job, and she's through her first interviews. She receives an offer of a $28,000 salary, including benefits from COLLEGE CORP, from an entry-level marketing position that seems like a perfect fit. She is thrown off by the salary they are offering and knows that it is lower than what she was hoping for. Instead of panicking, she takes the advice of her mentor and does a little research to know what the market range for the salary is for her area. She feels better after doing this, knowing that she was correct and the offer is low compared to the market rate. After understanding more about the offer and the rates, she goes back to the HR representative and asks for her preferred rate of $32,500, knowing the minimum that she would accept is $30,000. Instead of going in for her lowest amount, she started higher to be open to negotiations with the company. She also sent a note regarding her expertise that warranted why she asked for that salary. To her happy surprise, the company counter offered at $31,000—and she accepted.

Questions:

1. What key points of Janice's negotiation led to her success?
2. What could have Janice done better to get a better outcome for her salary?

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8.15: Additional Resources

- A Literary Zone article describes the literary devices of internal monologue and stream of consciousness. literaryzone.com/?p=79
- For another twist on the meaning of “stream of consciousness,” visit this blog from the retail merchant Gaiam. blog.gaiam.com/
- Read an informative article on self-concept and self-esteem. psychology.suite101.com/article.cfm/impact_of_selfconcept_and_selfesteem_on_life
- PsyBlog offers an informative article on self-disclosure. Don’t miss the reader comment fields at the end! www.spring.org.uk/2007/02/getting-closer-art-of-self-disclosure.php
- The job search site Monster offers a menu of articles about employment interviews. career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/careers.aspx
- About.com offers an informative article about different types of job interviews. jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewsnetworking/a/interviewtypes.htm
- The Boston Globe’s Boston.com site offers tips on handling conflict in the workplace from management consultant Sue Lankton-Rivas. www.boston.com/jobs/galleries/workplaceconflict/
- An article by M. Afzalur Rahim which describes in detail the challenges posed by organizational conflict and offers approaches for managing it.193.140.134.6/~gokturk/sbox/Rahimtowarddevtheory.pdf

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8.16: Glossary

Key Terms:

Administrative orbiting An ineffective strategy for resolving conflict.

Affective conflict Seen in situations where two individuals simply don't get along with each other.

BATNA An acronym popularised by Roger Fisher and William Ury which stands for 'Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement'. BATNA answers the question: 'What would you do if you weren't able to agree a deal with your negotiation counterparty?' Your BATNA is the alternative action you'll take should your proposed agreement fail to materialize.

Behavioral conflict Exists when one person or group does something that is unacceptable to others.

Character assassination An ineffective resolution technique where the person with a conflict attempts to discredit and distance an individual from the others in the group.

Cognitive conflict Can result when one person or group holds ideas or opinions that are inconsistent with those of others.

Conflict The four types of conflict are goal conflict, cognitive conflict, affective conflict, and behavioral conflict.

Constructive confrontation A conflict that leads to a positive result.

Cooperativeness The extent to which someone is interested in helping satisfy the opponent's concerns.

Distributive bargaining Where the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize its share of these resources.

Due process nonaction The strategy of wearing down a dissatisfied employee while at the same time claiming that resolution procedures are open and available. This technique has been used repeatedly in conflicts involving race and sex discrimination.

Frustration May be caused by a wide variety of factors, including disagreement over performance goals, failure to get a promotion or pay raise, a fight over scarce economic resources, new rules or policies, and so forth.

Goal conflict Can occur when one person or group desires a different outcome than others do. This is simply a clash over whose goals are going to be pursued.

Integrative bargaining Essentially "win-lose" bargaining where the goals of one party are in fundamental and direct conflict with those of the other party. Resources are fixed and limited, and each party wants to maximize its share of these resources.

Intergroup conflict Usually involves disagreements between two opposing forces over goals or the sharing of resources.

Interorganizational conflict Disputes between two companies in the same industry, two companies in different industries or economic sectors, or two or more countries.

Interpersonal conflict Where two individuals disagree on some matter.

Intrapersonal conflict A conflict within one person. Assertiveness - Can range from assertive to unassertive on one continuum.

Jurisdictional ambiguities Situations where it is unclear exactly where responsibility for something lies.

Negotiation The process by which individuals or groups attempt to realize their goals by bargaining with another party who has at least some control over goal attainment.

Resistance price The point beyond which the opponent will not go to reach a settlement.

Status inconsistencies Situations where some individuals have the opportunity to benefit whereas other employees do not. Consider the effects this can have on the nonmanagers' view of organizational policies and fairness.

Task interdependencies The greater the extent of task interdependence among individuals or groups, the greater the likelihood of conflict if different expectations or goals exist among entities, in part because the interdependence makes avoiding the conflict more difficult.

Third-party consultation An outside consultant that serves as a go-between and can speak more directly to the issues because she is not a member of either group.

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