When Teamwork Isn’t Fair

Have you ever been on a team in which some members slacked off and did not pull their weight? In other words, did you do all of the work on a class team project, and the slacking members got an A? This is known as social loafing. Social loafing is the number one reason why students don’t want to work on team projects—it’s just not fair. A study was conducted to investigate the causes of social loafing in student teams. Researchers found that the incidence of social loafing increases with the scope of the project and the size of the student team. Social loafing affected students’ satisfaction with team members’ contributions and the perceived fairness of the project grade. This study also found that there are ways to reduce social loafing, and these will be discussed later in this chapter. Social loafers are “invisible students.” But they are not the only students you will meet in team projects. Teamwork isn’t always pleasant. However, your team projects are providing you with a realistic view of the types of people you may meet in the workplace.

Students You Meet in Team Projects

In a FastWeb article, Elizabeth Hoyt writes, “The truth is these group exercises are also exercises in life because, in the workplace, you’re going to experience the same exact types of people.” She refers to these problematic team members as the invisible student, the silent student, the procrastinator, the control freak, and our personal favorite, the person who likes to overpromise and underdeliver. Read her descriptions below and think about whether you have ever worked with one of these group members or, perhaps more importantly, whether you have ever been one of them. Also think about how you have or how you could try to improve your working relationships with each type of team member.

The Invisible Student

These are the social loafers. You have asked your professor three times if they are actually still on your team because you never see them. Your professor swears that they are actually in your class, but she admits she hasn’t seen them in class either. To make sure their name is still on your final project paper, they will answer an email now and then. They are vague and don’t commit to showing up at team meetings. You and the other team members don’t count on them and assign their work to others.

The Silent Student

This person probably attends all of your team meetings but says nothing. They really have no opinion on how the project is going and don’t volunteer to help. What’s interesting is that this silence doesn’t seem to be attributed to shyness or an introverted personality but rather to disinterest or laziness. Be on the lookout for the person texting during the first team meeting—that’s your clue.

The Procrastinator

They offer to take on tasks but they don’t answer emails when you follow up. They wait until hours before the assignment is due to start the task and, of course, don’t get it done very well. They give the appearance of doing the work, but you have a sense that you can’t trust them. Everyone ends of scrambling an hour before the assignment is due to clean up their mess. The good thing about this person, unlike the invisible student and the silent one, is that they seem to care about the assignment and accept some of the workload—they just don’t get it done on time. This causes the team to stress out at the last minute.
The Control Freak

You’ll definitely recognize this person because they’ll be the one in constant contact via all communication channels: email, Facebook, Twitter, and cell phone. They take charge at the beginning of the project, create an outline, and collect everyone’s contact information. They assign who is going to do what on the project. The good news is that they care about the quality of the final project. The bad news is that they don’t trust anyone to do the work as well as they think they can. They often end up doing most of the work. However, other team members resent not being allowed to participate and being micromanaged through the process.

The Teammate Who Overpromises and Underdelivers

This team member talks big and promises to deliver the best writing, graphics, analytics, and other key aspects of the project. They have a friend of a friend of a friend who can get you into a video studio to record your own vignettes for the presentation. No, you can’t all meet this friend, just trust that she will make it happen. This team member is a classic overpromiser, underdeliverer (OPUD). In most cases, the promises are well intended but they are too much to deliver in the time allowed, and they will fall short. However, the real problem is that your group structured the project around these promises and you are left with big holes when they don’t happen.

On presentation day, OPUD shows up with no video (“My friend got the flu and I couldn’t sit in the studio, but I tried so hard to make this happen. I am sorry, guys.”). She does bring a flip chart with some marker drawings on it (“Looks great—it has color after all, right guys?”), and her proudest achievement is a PowerPoint slide with some clip art in it (“The clip art really adds interest, doesn’t it?”).

A lot of courses require students to complete team projects. Professors assign team projects because organizations want to hire graduates with teamwork experience. Let’s start learning about teams and how to work with the types of students we will meet in them.

What Is a Team?

**Learning Objective 11.1:** Explain the difference between a working group and a team.

A common definition of a team is “a group of individuals who work together to produce products or deliver services for which they are mutually accountable.”3 Basically, a team has two or more people who share a specific goal, and they work together to attain it. The team having a common goal is important, since not all groups of people share a common goal. Managers must understand the difference between a group and team, and this will be discussed next.

**Group Versus Team**

*Group* and *team* don’t mean the same thing. A group is a number of people located near one another or part of the same classification. A useful way to think about the difference is that groups and teams lie along a continuum based on how much team members depend on each other.4 For example, a person can be part of a group but not depend on others to produce a product or service. A working group interacts primarily to share information with other members (e.g., members of a work group attend a monthly staff meeting and share what they are working on). They are not responsible for shared work (i.e., they are not interdependent). In other words, their individual contributions can just be added together. Members of a team, on the other hand, depend on one another to do their work. They must interact to create something that no one person on the team could create.

Teams produce something more than just adding up the contributions of individual team members and this is known as **synergy**. Synergy is defined as group performance that exceeds the performance of the best group member when working alone.5 The gains from synergy come from social support from other team members, the perceived importance of the team goal, the inclusion of experts for both task and team processes, the use of multiple perspectives and information, team learning, and members identifying with the team.6 One review concludes: “Just by putting a few people together to accomplish task(s) does not result in teamwork. Whether a team would lead to synergy or negative outcomes largely depends on the way it is managed.”7 Creating such synergy triggers performance to levels that exceed what can be expected based on the individual team members’ capabilities alone. Some of the differences between groups and teams are summarized in Table 11.1.

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**TABLE 11.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Differences Between Groups and Teams</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work on individual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monthly staff meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Members are independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Members accountable to the manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Performance measured by individual output (sum of individual contributions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effectiveness defined by the manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

What different task and team process skill sets do you think are needed for a team to experience synergy? Provide an example of a team that has synergy.
There are different types of teams in people’s lives. Many of these teams relate to the workplace and these will be reviewed next.

Types of Teams

In organizations, formal teams are created by the organization (e.g., a sales team), and other informal teams are created by workers (e.g., a friendship group of employees who go to happy hour after work each Friday). Workers are more satisfied at work when they have friendships with coworkers. Research conducted by Gallup found that close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by 50% and people with a best friend at work are seven times more likely to engage fully in their work. These informal groups may focus on issues that run counter to the organizational objectives or they may improve morale. Examples of informal work groups are groups organized to do charity work or run in 5K corporate races. Sometimes friendship groups form in which members provide social support to one another and engage in social activities after work. One review of team types identified 42 different types of teams that have been studied in the organizational sciences. These types included student teams, project teams, decision-making teams, ad hoc teams, cross-functional teams, self-managing teams, and top management teams, to name a few.

Teams in organizations are defined by their goals. An in-depth study of teams found that formal groups used in organizations have different goals:

- **Problem-resolution teams**: the goal of problem-resolution teams is to resolve problems on an ongoing basis, by enabling trust and focusing on issues.
- **Creative teams**: the goal of creative teams is to create something, and such teams emphasize autonomy and exploration.
- **Tactical teams**: the goal of tactical teams is to execute well-defined plans by having high-level tasks and ensuring that team members understand their roles.

Different types of organizational teams and examples are shown in Table 11.2. Some teams provide advice, such as committees and advisory councils, and are known as advice/involvement teams. These teams may also be committees that recommend solutions to a specific problem. When these teams include members from different functional areas of the organization, they are called cross-functional teams. Other teams focus on the core mission of the organization, and their work is organized around specific projects or activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type/Examples</th>
<th>Skill Differentiation</th>
<th>External Integration</th>
<th>Work Cycles</th>
<th>Typical Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advice/involvement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Brief or long, single cycle</td>
<td>Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory councils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/service</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Repeated, continuous, brief</td>
<td>Retail sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight attendant crews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data processing teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project/development</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Differs by project, single</td>
<td>Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cycle</td>
<td>Designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task forces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action/integration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Brief performance events,</td>
<td>Lawsuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>often repeated</td>
<td>Concerts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery teams</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

of the organization in producing products or delivering services. Such teams are known as production/service teams and include assembly teams and flight attendant crews, as examples. This type of team is also known as a command group or traditional work group. In some cases, production/service teams have managerial responsibilities and these are known as management teams, which provide direction for their organizational department, and they have hierarchical rank over the unit.

Another team type that is formally created by the organization are project/development teams, where the goal is to invent new products or services and include research and development (R&D) teams and task forces. Task forces are temporary teams that focus on solving problems. Finally, teams are sometimes created to put on events or resolve disputes and such teams are called action/negotiation teams. Examples of these teams are sports teams and negotiating teams. Teams that interact through electronic means more than face-to-face are called virtual teams. Virtual teams present challenges to managers, and these will be covered in more detail later in this chapter in the section on team challenges.

Some organizations have experimented with allowing production/service teams to have managerial responsibilities and these are known as self-managed work teams (SMWTs). In a self-managed team, the members make their own decisions about the control and execution of their daily work. They are fully responsible for the output of the team. Organizations have experienced positive results from self-managed teams, including higher productivity, quality of work, and improved safety.13

As indicated in Table 11.2, this framework also shows the team processes that can be expected in different types of teams. Differentiation refers to the different types of skill sets that are needed on the team. External integration refers to the degree to which the team must interact with other teams or those outside of the organization, including suppliers, managers, peers, staff, and customers.

Work cycles or time spent in team activities also vary in different types of teams (brief, repeated events or longer-term development). The outputs expected from the teams also vary depending on the type of team. Advice/involvement teams produce decisions or suggestions. Production/service teams produce the actual products or deliver the services. Project/development teams develop research reports and designs for new products and services. Action/negotiation teams may produce events such as concerts or resolve lawsuits.

The types of teams described above are created by the managers in organizations to meet organizational goals. Their members have a shared interest in common. Goals are central to the effectiveness of teams and they are discussed in the next section.

## Team Goals

### Learning Objective 11.2: Develop an example of how a team charter helps a team meet its goals.

Goal setting increases both motivation and performance, as we learned in Chapter 10 on motivation. Setting goals for teams is just as important as it is for individuals. It’s important to keep in mind that team goals should also be SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time bound). Recalling the definition of a team, they have a sense of shared purpose for which members are mutually accountable. Specific team goals predict specific team performance (e.g., setting challenging goals for quantity results in higher team output).14 Also, feedback on performance affects the allocation of resources when individuals strive to accomplish both individual and team goals. Finally, goals provide feedback on team performance, which is essential for managers. Team members who receive no team performance feedback can’t effectively set team goals and, as a result, they set unrealistic goals.15

A review of the effects of team goal setting on team performance concluded that specific difficult goals resulted in significantly higher team performance compared with nonspecific
goals. Also, individual goals aimed at maximizing individual performance had a negative effect on team performance unless the individual goals were for the good of the group. Thus, team goals have a clear effect on team performance, but individual goals should be used with caution. Team goals need to include both results measures (e.g., sales revenue) and process measures (e.g., orders fulfilled). Results measures tell the managers where they stand in terms of organizational goals, whereas process measures monitor the tasks and activities employed to get the results obtained. One of the best ways for team members to set results and process goals is to create a team charter in the first team meeting.

The Team Charter

A manager can make performance expectations clear and communicate them to team members by engaging the team to develop a team charter. A team charter is a document that describes the team goals and work processes (the ground rules for acceptable team behaviors). In creating a team charter, not only is the team purpose clarified but the expectations for behavior are set forth (e.g., required level of participation in meetings). The team charter sets forth the team norms that provide important regulation of team behavior. These rules and guidelines that a team establishes shape the way that team members interact with one another and with others outside of the team. Once expectations are developed through a charter and agreed upon, misunderstandings should be fewer and a team member violating the ground rules in the charter (e.g., lack of follow-through) can be reminded of the team’s commitment.

A business strategy simulation was used to study the influence of having a team charter and performance strategies of 32 teams of MBA students. Taking the time to develop a high-quality team charter and performance strategies paid off in terms of more effective team performance over time. Teams that had quality charters and strategies outperformed teams with poor-quality charters and strategies. Charters are an important tool the leader can use to get their team off to a good start by developing a sense of purpose and setting forth the ground rules for team interaction. An abbreviated example of a team charter for a team given the goal of improving the times that patients must spend in hospital waiting rooms is shown in Figure 11.1. The team was charged with the goal of minimizing wait times to within 15 minutes of arrival and given resources to try different interventions with doctors, nurses, and reception staff. Representatives for each of these groups were part of the team.

You can develop a team charter for your team in this class by completing Toolkit Activity 11.1.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

Create a results measure and a process measure for the team charter example shown in Figure 11.1. Explain how the process measure helps the team reach the team goal of improving wait times.

Setting specific and challenging goals will set a working group on the path to becoming a real team. Next, models of how teams develop over time will be discussed.
Team Development

Learning Objective 11.3: Describe the five stages of team development.

Five-Stage Model

The five-stage model of team development is probably the most well known and recognized in team management. The five stages are as follows:

- **Forming** is testing and dependence. In this stage, the group becomes oriented to the task, creates ground rules, and begins to test what is acceptable in terms of behavior. This is also the stage in which team members establish relationships with the team leader and each other.

- **Storming** is characterized as a time of intergroup conflict. There is a lack of team unity and there are difficulties around interpersonal issues. Group members resist the leadership of the team and may even become hostile toward one another to assert their individualism.

- **Norming** occurs when the team becomes cohesive and establishes roles and norms for interaction. In this stage, the team develops a “we” feeling and wants to stay together. Conflict may be avoided to maintain harmony during the norming phase.

- **Performing** is the next stage and the team begins to solve problems and coordinate tasks. The team develops a structure that supports task performance.

- **Adjourning** is the final stage in which the team disbands after completing its tasks.

Some of the specific behaviors that you can expect to see during each of these stages of team development are shown in Figure 11.2. It’s important to recognize that storming is a natural team occurrence and to be prepared to address it by enforcing team norms and emphasizing performance goals.

Punctuated Equilibrium Model

By observing teams in action, researcher Connie Gersick learned that teams don’t always develop in an orderly sequence of stages. Her research, which is based on the concept of punctuated equilibrium from biology, found that teams have an initial period of inactivity (inertia) until about the midpoint of the time allowed for their task. Punctuated equilibrium in teams is illustrated in Figure 11.3. The research is based on a study of over 12 task forces assigned to complete a specific project. Each team began with a unique approach to accomplishing its project in its first meeting (Phase 1). Phase 1 continues until one-half of the allotted time for project completion expires. At this midpoint, a major transition occurs where the team’s old norms are dropped, and they increase progress toward completing the project. This happens due to the pressure of having a deadline. Toward the end of the time allowed to complete the project, there is significant activity toward completion of the task (Phase 2).
Each team experienced its transition at the same point, which was halfway between the first meeting and the completion deadline. The teams procrastinated at the beginning, then experienced a crisis at the midpoint, and then ramped up their activity to complete the project. The midpoint effect was the emergence of an awareness that time was limited and the teams needed to start doing real work. Given these findings, managers should try to anticipate the midpoint effect by establishing a series of benchmarks so that teams do not delay their work. An example of how to do this is taking a 12-month construction project and then breaking it down into six significant milestones every two months, with the challenge of meeting each deadline. This would create the needed tension for moving the team toward performance.

Research has discovered some of the underlying reasons for the midpoint effect. When a large number of people on the team are procrastinators, teams are then more likely to procrastinate. Also, the teams’ motivation matters—teams that have the goal of learning are less likely to procrastinate. This research also found that team procrastination has negative effects in terms of higher stress and lower performance.

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

Have you ever been on a team that procrastinated on starting work? What did you do? Do you think that you could have moved the team forward more rapidly by setting midpoint goals? Explain.

**Team Performance Curve**

The team performance curve is shown in Figure 11.4. These stages of development recognize that performance may decline during the storming phase.

- **Working groups** have no significant performance standards. They primarily exist to share information and best practices and to make decisions to help individuals perform their work in the best way possible. They do not produce a joint work product or have team goals. Many work groups are large and they may break down into smaller groups with some real team characteristics. Such groups are very common in organizations and do contribute to organizational goals, but they don’t have team performance goals. They usually have one person who is the supervisor or manager and they direct the working group’s activities.

- **Pseudo-teams** are groups that could have performance objectives and a common purpose but they emerge during the team storming stage. Due to conflicts, they are dysfunctional and produce almost nothing.

- **Potential teams** recognize the need for team goals and try to improve their team efforts. They accomplish some team goals and produce about as much as the working group. However, they need more clarity in their purpose and objectives. They may also need to develop norms and a working approach to solving team problems.

- **Real teams** by definition are small groups of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.
• **High-performance teams** are real teams who perform beyond the level of real teams and team members are personally committed to one another’s individual learning and success. These teams outperform all expectations of both the organization and the individual members.

High-performance teams are rare. Most organizations strive to create real teams with the hope that some of them will evolve into high-performance teams. There are six characteristics that define a real team. They are:

- **Small number.** This is practical and based on real teams in organizations. Under some circumstances, large teams can perform but organizing work with a large group of people can be difficult. Team members must be able to communicate often and meet regularly. Large groups tend to break down into cliques or rely on policies and procedures to accomplish their goals. Most real teams have fewer than 10 members.

- **Complementary skills.** There are three types: functional/technical, problem-solving/decision-making, and interpersonal skills. All three are needed within the team. While it is possible for team members to develop these skills, having a good mix of skill types at the beginning gets the team off to a good start.

- **A common meaningful purpose.** A purpose that is meaningful to all members of the team is the most important aspect of a real team. A team purpose articulates the goals of the team and gives it direction. This is best accomplished when the team develops its own common purpose by creating a team charter. When asked, team members should be able to state the common purpose of the team.

- **Specific performance objectives.** Performance objectives are part of the common purpose and they are also an important part of defining a real team. The team needs to own their performance objectives even if they are set by the organization. They should be clear, simple, and measurable so that the team can receive feedback on their progress. They should be aspirational but must also be realistic and set forth specific work products to be created.

- **A common working approach.** The team process must be understood by all members. Real teams must have ground rules. For example, there should be an expectation that all members participate in team meetings. Team members must understand these rules and contribute to the work of the team.

- **A sense of mutual accountability.** Team members should feel responsible for the work of team. They need to feel individually responsible for the team’s purpose, working approach, and results. Team success is more important to the members of a real team than individual success.

In high-performance teams, individual team members celebrate when the team succeeds. It is important to realize that success can be determined in various ways in teams. Next, the dimensions of team effectiveness are discussed.
Team Effectiveness

Learning Objective 11.4: Provide examples of team effectiveness.

So far in this chapter, you have probably noticed a recurring focus on high-performance, successful, and otherwise effective teams. Naturally these are desirable goals, but how do we define and measure team effectiveness?

Broadly speaking, there are three contributors to overall team effectiveness: attitudes, behaviors, and performance, as shown in Figure 11.5.27 These are not independent, of course. Just as with individual people, the attitudes of team members influence their behaviors, which, in turn, impact their performance. In this section, we will explore these components in more detail to get a sense of how managers can measure team performance and shape the attitudes and behaviors of members to increase the overall effectiveness of a team.

Team Attitudes: Affect and Viability

It is no great secret that positive attitudes toward a person, place, or thing generally translate into favorable behaviors toward that person, place, or thing. Think back to your favorite subjects in school, for example, even as a child. If you loved science, you probably kept up with your homework, paid attention in class, and maybe even read some parts of your textbook that were not required. In subjects you disliked, however, you might have missed a few due dates, daydreamed in class, and generally did only what was necessary to get through it. The workplace is no different.28 As such, it can be helpful to examine the affective reactions, which are emotional responses of teams and their individual members to their work and to each other as an indicator of team effectiveness.29 This is especially true when a team’s performance is difficult to observe or quantify, as is often the case in fields such as consulting and research.30

Team members’ collective attitudes toward the team and its work can help give managers a sense of whether or not a team has the motivation and viability necessary to succeed. Team viability refers to members’ collective sense of belonging and desire to continue working together.31 In short, teams that enjoy working together tend to experience less turnover and higher productivity levels. From a manager’s perspective, these are both outcomes that can make managing a team much easier.

Team Behaviors: Creativity and Learning

One way of assessing a team’s effectiveness is to examine the creativity of its behaviors and outputs. Defined as “members working together in such a manner that they link ideas from multiple sources, delve into unknown areas to find better or unique approaches to a problem, or seek out novel ways of performing a task,”32 team creativity is a sign of a well-designed and well-managed team. Because they consist of members with different knowledge, skills, and abilities, teams have the potential to draw on a wider set of resources than individual employees typically can access by themselves.

In addition to sharing knowledge amongst themselves, teams can collectively acquire, combine, and apply new knowledge through an ongoing process called team learning.33 By engaging in behaviors like asking questions, analyzing past mistakes and errors, seeking
feedback, and solving problems together, teams can learn in two unique ways. One is relational job learning, in which members develop an understanding of how their individual job functions are interconnected and interdependent upon those of other employees in the organization. The other is personal skill development, in which team members increase their own knowledge and skills, enabling them to work more effectively with each other and employees outside the team.34

Team Performance

Many of the same performance measures used to evaluate individual employees are used to evaluate teams. These include supervisor and customer ratings of the quality, accuracy, efficiency, profitability, and error rates of the work performed by the team.35 There are times, however, when a blend of team-based and individual employee performance measures is useful. Measures of role-based performance, the ability of each member to perform their assigned task, are commonly used in situations where one or more team members has a specialized task that must be done competently.

Six beneficial team roles have been identified by research:36

- Organizer—someone who acts to structure what the team is doing. An organizer also keeps track of accomplishments and how the team is progressing relative to goals and timelines.
- Doer—someone who willingly takes on work and gets things done. A doer can be counted on to complete work, meet deadlines, and take on tasks to ensure the team’s success.
- Challenger—someone who will push the team to explore all aspects of a situation and to consider alternative assumptions, explanations, and solutions. A challenger often asks “why” and is comfortable debating and critiquing.
- Innovator—someone who regularly generates new and creative ideas, strategies, and approaches for how the team can handle various situations and challenges. An innovator often offers original and imaginative suggestions.
- Team builder—someone who helps establish norms, supports decisions, and maintains a positive work atmosphere within the team. A team builder calms members when they are stressed and motivates them when they are down.
- Connector—someone who helps bridge and connect the team with people, groups, or other stakeholders outside of the team. Connectors ensure good working relationships between the team and “outsiders,” whereas team builders work to ensure good relationship within the team.

To learn more about your effective behavior in these roles, complete Self-Assessment 11.1.

A team’s overall performance often depends on these individual member roles. For example, a struggling goal keeper will hurt a sports team’s performance no matter how talented the other athletes are; a talented goalie can compensate for the weaknesses of other team members. Because the performance of individual members is not always as obvious as this example might suggest, role-based performance measures can be used in addition to team-based measures to provide managers with important diagnostic information about what is causing a team to fail or succeed. Another tool that a manager can use to measure various aspects of team performance is a team dashboard. Dashboards help teams receive frequent feedback, which leads to excellent performance.37 An example of a dashboard for a fishing operation with measures of team satisfaction, conflict, and performance is shown in Figure 11.6. Each week the dashboard is updated so that team members can track their progress.
How to Build Effective Teams

To build an effective team, a manager must pay attention to both **task functions** and **maintenance functions**. Task functions relate to what the team is working on. Maintenance functions relate to the support that the manager provides to the team. These functions are both essential to team effectiveness and are summarized in Figure 11.7.

According to team consultant Rosalind Cardinal, there are five steps to building effective teams.38 A manager should implement these steps to ensure that the team experiences positive affect and viability.

**Step 1: Establish and demonstrate your leadership skills.** Trust between employees and managers is essential. When employees trust a leader’s decision-making skills and integrity, they will want to do a good
Since we were all kids, we’ve been told that we need to work well as part of a team, that the team trumps the individual, and that every leader is only as good as their team. Can we really believe that this idea of team is the key to productivity and success? Anyone whose days are spent trying to squeeze in work between all of their meetings can tell you that teamwork can be a waste of time. Can teams be too much of a good thing? Let’s look at some of the facts and fiction about teamwork.

**Top Five Myths of Teamwork**

1. **Teams are always needed.** Managers should analyze every task to make sure that they really need a team to do it. Teamwork may not always be efficient. Sometimes it’s better to delegate a task to one or two people, especially if the task is simple or routine. In his book *The Myths and Realities of Teamwork*, David Wright states: “If a task or a process is simple, an organizational can cope without teamwork.”  
   For example, a manager should not have a team meeting to discuss a trivial issue such as what color to paint the walls in the conference room.

2. **Teams should come to a consensus.** Time spent trying to reach consensus on decisions could be better spent acting on the decisions. There are other decision-making methods that are less time-consuming and the job gets done. For example, rather than reach consensus, a manager can speak to each team member individually. If all are in agreement, there is no need for a meeting to reach consensus.

3. **There’s no “I” in team.** This is an old idea that has been refuted by recent research. It is important for a manager to attend to the needs of the individuals within the team. By understanding the “I”s in team, the benefits of individual motivation are not lost. People still need individual coaching and development, even if they are on a team. Wright states: “There is no I in team, but there is a ME and ignore the me at your own peril.”  
   For example, a team member may feel that they are not being personally recognized for their contributions to the team on the performance evaluation. They are a top performer but quit the team.

4. **You must get along with your teammates.** We don’t have to like everyone on our team—personality clashes are real. But team members have to respect one another and their opinions. There should be clear guidelines for appropriate behavior (remember the team charter). You don’t have to spend happy hour with your team for it to be productive. Conflict actually enhances team performance. Wright states, “Conflict is an energy source, so harness it.”  
   For example, a team that has a healthy debate on an issue may avoid making a poor decision.

5. **The more the merrier.** Large teams don’t outperform smaller ones. It might seem like adding more people will increase performance, but teams lose some of their effectiveness when they get larger than seven members. The larger a team gets, the harder it is to coordinate efforts. Just finding a time when eight people can all meet may be impossible. For example, in a large team of 15 people, half of the people break out and form their own clique with the people they like the best.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss whether you agree or disagree with each of the five team myths and why.
2. Provide an example of a task that would be better assigned to an individual than a team. (Myths 1 and 2)
3. Explain how you would keep team members happy, invested in the task, and excited about their team work. Do you agree, what are some other ways to ensure team effectiveness? (Myth 3)
4. Do you agree that “conflict actually helps a team stay innovative”? Describe how a manager can keep conflict in a team healthy so that it does not tear the team apart. (Myth 4)

work, employees will be more satisfied and productive. As a manager, you should also look for opportunities to include the team in decision-making and to allow the team to work on open-ended projects rather than simply assigning tasks. To establish a strong, productive working relationship with employees, you should encourage their interests, engage them in making decisions, and empower them to solve problems.

**Step 3: Foster relationships between your employees.** Take a look at how employees work together. Seek out opportunities to make communication stronger, encourage collaboration, and build trust among team members. If and when there are conflicts, as a manager, you should step in to help employees find a workable solution. Encourage respect and cooperation. In order to do so, remain objective and act as a mediator rather than taking sides. Empower team members by encouraging them to brainstorm solutions, which may lead to innovative problem-solving.

**Step 4: Value and encourage teamwork.** Once team members have strong, conflict-free relationships and/or the skills to effectively resolve conflicts, it’s time for teamwork. As a manager, you should foster the open flow of communication and encourage collaboration. Support the team by encouraging them to share information amongst themselves, and also throughout the company. When it comes to creating a culture of open communication, think beyond simply holding meetings. Good leaders are always open to feedback, questions, and concerns. Check in often with employees, and offer your assistance when they need it. Most importantly, model transparency for your team by communicating constantly, clearly, and honestly.

**Step 5: Create and stick to ground rules for the team.** When you have strong individual and team relationships, as well as open communication, you can establish group values and goals. You can also evaluate performance on an individual and team level. You can engage your team in developing ground rules, guidelines, and best practices. Be sure that each team member is part of the process, understands the expectations, and agrees they can meet them.

Despite a manager’s best efforts to build the team’s effectiveness, teams face challenges that the manager should be prepared to address. These challenges are discussed next.

**Team Challenges**

**Learning Objective 11.5: Describe the symptoms of groupthink.**

Managers should understand that leading a team has a number of challenges. These will be described in the following sections, along with remedies that may be applied to avoid them.

**Groupthink**

Groupthink is a team decision-making challenge that arises due to a high degree of cohesiveness and group norms that result in conformity. Groupthink is defined as the conformity-seeking tendency of the group, which results in compromised decision-making. Due to group pressure, the team does not survey all alternatives and expressions of views that go against the majority of team members are suppressed. Team members apply direct pressure on dissenters and urge them to go along with the majority. The following are symptoms of groupthink:

1. *Group rationalization.* The team members generate explanations that support their preferred course of action.
2. *Direct pressure.* Those who speak out against the group decision are pressured into conformity.
3. *Suppression.* Members with differing views don’t share them with the group for fear of ostracism and/or ridicule.
4. *Illusion of unanimity.* The team members believe that they are in agreement but, in fact, they are not. Dissenting views have been suppressed. Not speaking is interpreted as support for the team decision.
Groupthink occurs most often in highly cohesive groups and when the group is confident about their course of action early in the process.44 Experimental research has supported the existence of groupthink.45 For example, an experiment tested groupthink and found partial support for the theory in that direct pressure from managers increased the symptoms of groupthink.46 Teams with directive managers proposed and discussed fewer alternatives than groups with leaders who encouraged member participation. These teams were also willing to comply with their managers’ proposed solutions when the leaders stated their preferences early in the group discussion. The Challenger space shuttle disaster was one of the worst disasters in the history of the U.S. space program. The case has been interpreted using groupthink.47 In this scenario, the decision by NASA to launch the space shuttle when temperatures were too low for O-rings to function properly resulted in the death of six astronauts and a civilian teacher. The analysis concludes that directive leadership and time pressure contributed to the impaired decision-making process of NASA engineers.

To minimize groupthink, the leader can:

- avoid being too directive and encourage everyone to participate fully in team discussions;
- assign a member of the team to play the devil’s advocate, which is a role that challenges team assumptions and decisions throughout the process; and
- employ decision-making techniques other than consensus decision-making to provide more structure and avoid conformity.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

Why are directive leadership and time pressure the strongest antecedent to groupthink? What else can leaders do to prevent putting undue pressure on a team in the decision-making process?

Most students recognize groupthink symptoms because they have probably occurred in student project teams. Think about a time when you felt like disagreeing with your team but stayed silent because the team was cohesive or you didn’t want to create conflict. You may have been a victim of groupthink. A second group challenge that is common in student project teams is social loafing. You will recognize this one if you have ever been in a team where you (or a subgroup of team members) did all the work but others that didn’t contribute got the credit.

Social loafing is defined as a “decrease in individual effort when performing in groups as compared to when they perform alone.”48 The social loafing effect is not new. It has plagued teamwork since people started working in groups. Max Ringelmann, a French agricultural engineer, conducted the earliest research that found that increasing numbers of workers does not increase productivity as expected.49 In fact, social loafing is sometimes called the Ringelmann effect, and he collected his data on the performance of agricultural workers between 1882 and 1887, but did not publish his research until 1913. He studied the maximum performance of human beings as a function of the method that the worker used to push or pull a load horizontally.

How did Ringelmann study this? He measured the performance of one person pulling a load, and then added workers to the pulling of the load one at a time, up to eight workers. Ringelmann asked workers to pull as hard as they could on a rope, alone or with one, two, or seven other people, and then used a gauge to measure how hard they pulled in kilograms of
He found that performance did not increase as one might expect: adding a second worker did not double the performance of pulling weight. In fact, when the eighth worker was added, there was no increase in performance at all. He explained this by stating that “coordination losses” occur as more workers are added to groups. The effect is shown in Figure 11.8.

Ringelmann’s research has been replicated in modern settings. A study examined rope-pulling by students to see if participation in team sports reduced the effect of social loafing. Male participants had to pull a rope individually and then with others. Groups of two, three, four, and six persons were formed and grouped into those with no previous team sports experience, those with individual sports experience, and those with team sports experience. For each team, the sum of individual contributions of the participants constituting a team was computed using a device designed to measure back strength (a dynamometer). The researchers stated, “This sum served as the anticipated result (expected value). The expected values were later compared to the actual achievements (i.e., the value achieved by the whole team). The results of the study suggested that previous experience in collective (team) sports eliminated the effect of social loafing.” It is interesting that students who had participated in individual sports had the most dramatic performance decrement when the size of the group got larger.

Research on the Ringelmann effect has been ongoing for over 100 years. Another interesting study examined the causes of social loafing. In other words, is social loafing due to just coordination losses or do people really put in less effort in groups? In the study, groups of six undergraduate males were recruited from introductory psychology classes at a Midwestern public university. They were seated in a semicircle, one meter apart, in a large soundproofed laboratory and told that researchers were interested in studying the noise people make in social settings (like football games) by cheering and applause. They were asked to cheer, clap their hands, and be as loud as possible, and researchers measured the noise level with a sound meter for five seconds. After some practice, there were 36 trials of yelling and 36 trials of clapping. Within each
type of noise, each person performed twice alone, four times in pairs, four times in groups of four, and six times in groups of six. The experiment produced results consistent with the Ringelmann effect. Of course, the more people making noise resulted in more noise overall; however, it did not grow in proportion to the number of people: the average sound pressure generated per person significantly decreased with increasing group size. In other words, two-person groups performed at only 71% of the sum of their individual capacity, four-person groups at 51%, and six-person groups at 40%. The researchers concluded, “As in pulling ropes, it appears that when it comes to clapping and shouting out loud, many hands do, in fact, make light the work.”55 A second experiment was conducted, in which the students wore noise-canceling headphones so that they could not hear one another and this limited their ability to coordinate efforts. This experiment demonstrated that the effect was due to lower effort, and not coordination losses.

Can social loafing be prevented in teams? Research has examined this question, and there are steps that a manager can take to reduce social loafing. A research study56 of 420 college students was conducted to see what reduces social loafing during group projects. This research identified three factors that reduce social loafing:

- **Limiting the scope of the project.** Instructors can reduce social loafing by either dividing a big project into two or more smaller components or replacing semester-long projects with a smaller project and some other graded work. Also, breaking up a big project into smaller components can be beneficial. For example, allocating responsibility so that each individual is spearheading certain aspects of a larger project ensures accountability and helps prevent social loafing.57

- **Smaller group size.** Limiting the group size can make it harder for social loafers to hide behind the shield of anonymity provided by a large group. In smaller groups, each member will feel that their contribution will add greater value.58

- **Peer evaluations.** Peer evaluations send a signal to group members that there will be consequences for nonparticipation. It has been found that as the number of peer evaluations during a project goes up, the incidence of social loafing goes down.59

**Virtual Teams**

In today’s world of work, more is being done through the internet in virtual teams. Virtual teams are “functioning teams that rely on technology-mediated communication while crossing several different boundaries.”60 Such teams rely on technology to communicate, and this has significantly changed how teamwork is conducted. A real advantage of virtual teams is that members can be located in different countries.

Virtual teams have more challenges.61 A comparison of computer-based teams to face-to-face teams found that performance depended on experience with the technology.62 The results also suggested that the newness of the computer program to team members and not the newness of the group led to poorer task performance for computer groups. A review of studies on computer-mediated groups reported that computer-based groups generated more ideas but had more limited interactions and took longer to complete their work compared with teams that met face-to-face.63 Virtual teams may have less social support and direct interaction among team members, which is needed to build trust.64 Virtual teams share less information.65 Also, virtual work and the use of email in combination may change how information is shared.66
Virtual teams face a number of obstacles. Members are less familiar with one another; they may have never met face-to-face. This makes it difficult to develop strong working relationships. In many cases, virtual team members are geographically dispersed and may even be working in different countries and time zones. The differences in time zones create a challenge when the organization wants to use audio or video conferencing for team meetings. In some situations, team members must stay awake all night to participate in a team meeting. Organizations are now rotating meeting times to be fair to all team members to avoid resentment from the members who must always be on call at all hours of the day and night. Virtual teams often do not actually work together and lack interdependence. Virtual team members are tempted to just break down a project into components and everyone works independently.

A study of virtual teams found that the following team member behaviors improved trust and performance in virtual teams:

- Carefully select members for participation in virtual teams. Not all employees have the desire and skills to participate effectively in this type of team.
- Provide clear guidelines for responsibilities, and make sure that team members understand goals.
- Give the team guidelines on how to communicate, and develop regular patterns of communication.
- Engage in open and thoughtful messages early in the team’s life cycle.
- Effectively handle conflict; don’t delay addressing it, since virtual team members communicate less frequently than face-to-face teams.
- Ensure that team members provide other team members with timely accounts of the work they are doing individually.
- Provide feedback to the team often on their progress.
- Emphasize the quality and predictability of communication rather than the quantity.

It’s also important to use the right technology in virtual teams. In addition to email, the following tools are available and are the most frequently used to communicate:

- **Videoconferencing.** In addition to email, managers of virtual teams should use conference calling with systems that don’t require access codes (sometimes team members are driving) but do record meetings for those who can’t attend. Videoconferencing provides visual cues that help establish empathy and trust.
- **Direct calls and text messages.** By supporting real-time conversation between team members, direct calls are one of the simplest and most powerful tools. Texting is a surprisingly effective way to maintain personal relationships.
- **Discussion forums or virtual team rooms.** Software is now available that allows team members to present issues to the entire group, and records the meeting for team members to comment on when they have time. This is critical for completing complex projects. All interaction is documented and therefore becomes a searchable database.

In today’s global environment, virtual teams often have members who are located in different countries. So, the challenges of a virtual team have the added challenge of being multicultural as well. Next, the challenge of multicultural teams is discussed.

**Multicultural Teams**

Cross-cultural issues affect teams for a number of reasons. Team members may be assigned to work in another country. Another reason is that teams are made up of people from different cultures. As noted above, virtual teams may be spread out all over the world. Culture represents a challenge because it may be more difficult to get all the team members “on the same page”...
with respect to the team purpose and common working approach. Culturally diverse teams struggle with the following:

- performing complex tasks,
- face-to-face interactions that can feel awkward,
- conflict when members are required to work together closely, and
- team size; if the team is too large members from some cultures may withdraw from participation.71

In addition to the above challenges, managers must realize that not all team processes translate cross-culturally. For example, in the United States, teams are often empowered to make their own decisions in Self Managed Work Teams (SMWTs). Such teams have no leader. This works in the United States, but a study found that leaderless teams were resisted in the Philippines.72 Resistance to SMWTs was affected by culture because Filipino team members viewed the manager as incompetent when they delegated authority to the team. Also, the degree of determinism (i.e., the belief that “people should not try to change the paths their lives are destined to take”) affected reactions to the implementation of SMWTs. Similar reactions to the offer of team participation were reported in studies done in Russia and Mexico.73 Caution should be exercised when implementing team participation in some cultures. Managers should check cultural assumptions before offering participation to multicultural teams. You will learn more about cultural value differences in Chapter 13.

**Team Conflict**

Conflict in teams creates stress and arguments that distract the team from working and harms performance.74 Conflict is detrimental to member satisfaction.75 However, moderate levels of task conflict actually improve team performance because this stimulates information exchange among team members. Task conflict and differences of opinion may improve decision quality by forcing members to see other viewpoints and think creatively.76 In other words, conflict can result in higher performance in teams. What matters is how the conflict is managed. Teams can improve or maintain top performance by using three conflict resolution strategies:

1. Focus on the content of interactions rather than delivery style.
2. Explicitly discuss reasons behind any decisions in distributing work assignments.
3. Assign work to members who have the relevant task expertise rather than assigning by other common means such as volunteering, default, or convenience.77

High-performing teams are more proactive in resolving their conflicts and search for strategies that apply to everyone.78 Task conflict may improve performance if relationship conflict can be kept to a minimum. When performance goals are more specific, there is a stronger effect of team conflict on performance. This provides support for the idea that team conflict is productive to a point, and then starts to harm team performance. Two separate studies of work teams in Taiwan and Indonesia79 found team effectiveness depends on relationship conflict in the team. Team members who bicker so intensely cannot have even the slightest task conflict without harming performance.80 Both task and relationship conflict matter in terms of understanding how conflict may harm team performance. Self-Assessment 11.2 will help you learn how much team conflict you are experiencing due to the task, the relationships, and your team process.

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

How would you address one essential team member who continually interrupts others, creating conflict within the team, which harms the team’s productivity? Outline the talking points you would use to discuss their behavior.
Ethical Concerns From Peer Pressure

Being in a team exerts a powerful force on individuals to go along with the team. This is due to the combined forces of cohesion and norms. Cohesion is defined as “the resultant of all the forces acting on the members to remain part of the group.” These forces depend on the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the prestige of the group, the group members, and/or the group’s activities. The mutual attraction of the member to the group is the most important determinant of cohesion. When cohesion is strong, the group is motivated to perform and better coordinate activities for success. In cohesive teams, there is a sense of “we-ness” and team members tend to use we rather than I to describe the team and its activities. Reviews of these studies have found that team cohesion and team performance are positively related. For example, one review reports that the average cohesive team performed 18% higher than the average noncohesive team.

In addition to cohesion, team norms also have a powerful effect on team member attitudes and behaviors. Norms are defined as informal and interpersonal rules that team members are expected to follow. These standards may be explicit and formally stated by the leader or members of the team. But norms may also be implicit. They are not written down, and communication of the norms to team members depends on the ability of the leader (or team members) to effectively convey the expected behaviors. Norms have a powerful influence on team behavior, and they are often difficult to change. For example, at football games, everyone is expected to wear hats and shirts with the team’s logo on them. While this isn’t written down anywhere and football games do not post dress codes, you will notice that most people wear team apparel at the game. This is an example of an implicit norm. If you show up at game in the opposing team’s apparel and sit in the student section, your peers may give you the “side eye” for not understanding the norms of supporting your team by wearing the team colors. Implicit norms are tricky in that they are difficult to detect, and it is easy to misinterpret them.

With the combined effects of cohesion and strong team norms, sometimes team members experience peer pressure that results in unethical behavior. Unethical behavior by managers has been linked to pressure from bosses and/or peers. Another example is cheating behavior in school. Cheating is unethical, and a study of over 5,000 students found that business students cheat more than their nonbusiness-student peers. Student perceptions that peers were cheating had the strongest relationship to cheating behaviors.

Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Patrick Lencioni developed a good summary of team challenges in his best-selling book, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. This approach is shown in Figure 11.9, and the five dysfunctions are described as follows:
A team coach is an internal consultant to the team. Despite millions being spent on team training, trainers cannot anticipate every situation that will arise for the team. Having a team coach is a great way to reinforce training and provide ongoing assistance as the team moves through its stages of development. The coach helps team members put their training into action. The team coach also helps teams work through conflict and overcome obstacles. The team coach is an advisor and challenges the team. Teach coaches are change agents who work at the team level to make sure the team is aligned with organizational change. Having team coaches sends the right message that the top management is committed to change. An example of team coaching in practice is Google’s Guru Program.

Google is investing in managers to create internal team coaches with their Guru Program. A recent report, The Conference Board’s Global Executive Coaching Survey 2016, describes the program as a cutting-edge strategy of developing employees into team coaches. Google launched Career Guru in 2010 and expanded it into Guru-plus with 350 internal coaches in 60 offices around the world. The team coaching is accomplished virtually using Google Hangouts. Depending on the topic, the one-on-one sessions can range from one to eight sessions.

The program covers 12 different topics that employees can receive coaching on. Topics include career, team development, leadership, manager, parenting, innovation, new employees, well-being, presentations (reports and TED Talks, for example), and respect. For example, a sales employee working in Australia who is preparing to make a big sales pitch may get coaching from a “sales guru” working in the same industry in another country.

It’s a revolutionary program but it makes a lot of sense for Google. The process to become a guru is rigorous. To become a team coach, applicants must have been at Google for at least two years, serve at the organization’s senior level or be subject matter experts, have their manager’s support for serving as a guru, and be considered an employee in good standing by their manager and human resources. Gurus undergo training and are evaluated by those they coach.

The Conference Board expects to see more personalized coaching with measurable outcomes. Rebecca L. Ray, executive vice president of knowledge organization at the Conference Board, noted in a news release that there is much anecdotal evidence on the power of coaching: “But turning this tool of individual development into an organizational catalyst will depend on rich analytics, scalable deployments and objective, repeatable results. The next frontier [in coaching] will bring in the latest in technology, neuroscience, mindfulness and more.”

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about the “virtual” coaching used by Google versus traditional face-to-face coaching? What are some pros and cons of each?
2. If “Coaching is not telling people what to do and barking orders,” what do you think an effective team coach needs to be able to do?
3. Who are some effective coaches or “gurus” you have met in your life? How did they help you?


1. The first dysfunction is an absence of trust among team members. Essentially, this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust.
2. This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.
3. A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it ensures the third dysfunction of a team: lack of commitment. Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate
and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions, although they may feign agreement during meetings.

4. Because of this lack of real commitment and buy-in, team members develop an avoidance of accountability, the fourth dysfunction. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven people often hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that seem counterproductive to the team.

5. Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive. Inattention to results occurs when team members put their individual needs (e.g., ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their divisions above the collective goals of the team.

Some managers consider these dysfunctions separately, but this is not how Lencioni explains them. They cannot be addressed separately because they form an interrelated set of team challenges in which having one dysfunction makes the team vulnerable to the others. When teams face challenges, they may bring in a consultant known as a team coach to help them address problems and become functional. The Careers in Management feature explains what a team coach does.

Team Decision-Making

Learning Objective 11.6: Understand the advantages and disadvantages of team decision-making.

As you have probably noticed in your own experiences, decision-making in groups or teams is a bit more complicated than it is when you are working alone. More people means more ideas, opinions, and more conflict. A manager should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of using a team to make a decision. Table 11.3 shows the advantages and disadvantages of team decision-making. The key advantage to using a team to make a decision is gaining insights from a number of people who can brainstorm more alternatives to consider. Also, research has shown that participation in decisions increases team innovation due to minority opinions being considered. The next sections discuss procedures that a manager can use to reduce the disadvantages of team decision-making—the devil’s advocate and dialectical inquiry approaches.

Devil’s Advocacy

As noted earlier, devil’s advocate is an antidote for groupthink. A devil’s advocate is a person (or persons) assigned by the manager to critique the team’s ideas. Devil’s advocacy can reduce groupthink and other pressures to conform. How does devil’s advocacy work? After a team has developed a solution to a problem, it is then sent to one (or more) people who were not on the original team, with instructions to point out its flaws. If the proposal can withstand the scrutiny of the devil’s advocates, it can then be implemented. Although devil’s advocacy can be used as a critiquing technique after alternative solutions to a problem have been developed, it can also be used during the early stages of the decision-making process. For example, during a decision-making session, one member could be assigned the role of devil’s advocate, expressing as many objections to each alternative solution to a problem as possible.

Dialectical Inquiry

Dialectical inquiry is another way to ensure that the team reaps the benefits of team decision-making and avoids the problems. This approach generates two diametrically opposed viewpoints and then attempts to reconcile them in the final solution. The process is as follows.
1. Two or more groups with divergent views are formed to express the full range of possible alternatives to a problem. The groups are intentionally different from one another but similar within the group. Collectively they cover all positions that might have an impact on the ultimate solution to a problem.

2. Each group meets separately, identifies the assumptions behind its position, and rates them on their importance and feasibility. Each group then presents a “for” and an “against” position to the other groups.

3. Each group debates the other group’s position and defends its own. The goal is not to convince others but to confirm that what each group expresses as its position.

4. The information that is generated by both groups is then analyzed. This process results in the identification of information gaps and identifies areas where further research on the problem is needed.

5. An attempt to achieve consensus among the two positions takes place. Solutions are sought that best meet the requirements of both positions. Further refinement of information needed to solve the problem is then generated. Although agreement on a plan is a goal of this approach, a complete consensus does not always result from the process. However, this procedure can produce useful ideas regarding the pitfalls of an approach.

We now turn to the various options that a manager can use to implement team decisions. One of the most famous of these procedures is Robert’s Rules of Order.

**Robert’s Rules of Order**

The first edition of the book *Robert’s Rules of Order* was published in 1876 by U.S. Army Major Henry Martyn Robert. Its procedures are based on parliamentary procedures and are modeled after those used in the U.S. House of Representatives. It’s amazing that these procedures are still used in many organizations today.

Here are the basic elements of Robert’s Rules:

1. **Motion.** To introduce a new action, a motion must be made by a group member (“I move that...”). A second motion must then be made (raise your hand and say, “I second it.”). After discussion, the group votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More knowledge and expertise available</td>
<td>Social pressure to conform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A greater number of alternatives considered</td>
<td>Domination of one member or a dominant clique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final decision better understood and accepted</td>
<td>Decisions take longer</td>
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<tr>
<td>More commitment to make final decision work</td>
<td>Team conflict results in stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved decision quality</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**TABLE 11.3**

Advantages and Disadvantages of Team Decision-Making


In a dialectical inquiry, divergent views are formed to express the range of alternatives to a problem.
2. **Postpone indefinitely.** This basically kills a motion during the meeting. When passed, the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion (“I move to postpone indefinitely…”). A second is required for this postponement to move to vote. A majority vote is required to postpone a motion indefinitely. It may not ever be brought up again.

3. **Amend.** To change a motion, a person suggests an amendment. Let’s say you support an idea in principle but not exactly as presented. Raise your hand and make the motion: “I move to amend the motion on the floor.” This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amended proposal is accepted. Then a vote is taken. Sometimes, a “friendly amendment” is made: If the person who made the original motion agrees with the changes, it can be voted on without a second.

4. **Commit.** This is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second motion. There must be a majority vote for it to be carried forward to the next meeting. A committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed before the next meeting. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.

5. **Question.** To end a debate, the question is called (say “I call the question”) and needs a second. A vote is held without additional discussion. A two-thirds vote is required for passage.

6. **Table.** To table a discussion is to lay aside the matter so that it is considered later (“I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.”). A second is needed and a majority vote is required to table the item.

7. **Adjourn.** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

Although these rules date back to the 1800s, many organizations follow Robert’s Rules of Order, particularly universities and government organizations. The rules involve decision-making by majority voting, but voting creates winners and losers, and so an alternative to simple majority voting is discussed next.

**Multivoting**

In practice, it is often required that votes be taken. Given that voting has a number of disadvantages including dissatisfaction with decisions and lack of commitment, a manager should know that multivoting is another option. The steps for multivoting follow.

1. **Display the list of options.** Combine duplicate items. Organize large numbers of ideas, and eliminate duplication and overlap. List reduction may also be useful.

2. **Number (or letter) all items.**

3. **Decide how many items must be on the final reduced list.** Decide also how many choices each member will vote for. Usually, five choices are allowed. The longer the original list, the more votes will be allowed—up to 10.

4. **Working individually, each member selects the five items (or whatever number of choices is allowed) they think are most important.** Then each member ranks the choices in order of priority, with the first choice ranking highest. For example, if each member has five votes, the top choice would be ranked 5, the next choice 4, and so on. Each choice is written on a separate paper, with the ranking underlined in the lower right corner.
5. *Tally votes.* Collect the papers, shuffle them, and then record the votes on a flip chart or whiteboard. The easiest way to record votes is for the scribe to write all the individual rankings next to each choice. For each item, the rankings are totaled next to the individual rankings.

6. *If a decision is clear, stop here. Otherwise, continue with a brief discussion of the vote.* The purpose of the discussion is to look at dramatic voting differences, such as an item that received both 5 and 1 ratings and avoid errors from incorrect information or understandings about the item. The discussion should not pressure anyone to change their vote. Also, if a team member or members feel strongly that an option should be considered, the team can put it back in the voting process.

7. *Repeat the voting process in Steps 4 and 5.* If greater decision-making accuracy is required, this voting may be done by weighting the relative importance of each choice on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most important. As can be seen from this process, multivoting allows for multiple rounds of discussion as the list gets reduced. It allows team members to have more of a voice in the final decision through a series of votes rather than just one.

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

What are the advantages and disadvantages of multivoting? Would you consider using this technique? Why or why not?

**Brainstorming**

*Brainstorming* is one of the most common forms of an enhancement to team decision-making. Brainstorming should be used when the team needs to produce a creative solution. It enhances the creative process because idea generation is separated from idea evaluation. Members are trained not to critique ideas but just to write them down as the group generates solutions to a problem. Ideas are typically written on flip-chart paper or a whiteboard so that everyone can see them. The team meets in a separate session to evaluate the ideas generated and decide on a course of action.

**Consensus**

*Consensus* decision-making is another technique that is commonly used in organizations. In many cases, consensus is preferable to voting (although voting is more common). In a consensus decision-making process, everyone can say they have been heard and will support the final decision. The consensus model involves collaboratively generating a proposal, identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then modifying the proposal to create as much agreement as possible. The following steps are suggested for reaching consensus:

- Step 1: Have a discussion.
- Step 2: Identify emerging proposals.
- Step 3: Identify any unsatisfied concerns.
- Step 4: Collaboratively modify the proposal.
Step 5: Assess the degree of support.
Step 6: Finalize the decision.

or

- Circle back to Step 1 or 3.
- Finalize a decision.

To finalize a decision, a variety of decision rules can be applied. The following are some possible options:

- Unanimous agreement
- Unanimity minus one vote
- Unanimity minus two votes
- Super majority thresholds (90%, 80%, 75%, two-thirds, and 60% are common)
- Simple majority
- Executive committee decides
- Person-in-charge decides

After the discussion, if someone still disagrees, they can abstain from supporting the decision. However, when using consensus decision-making, it’s best to discuss the issue until everyone can support the implementation of a decision.

Consensus is one of the most commonly used and effective decision-making processes in organizations. The consensus guidelines should be followed in situations in which the support of all members of a team is needed for effective implementation of the decision. You will have the opportunity to practice consensus decision-making in a team in Toolkit Activity 11.2.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

Explain why following the consensus guidelines will result in more support for the implementation of a decision rather than simply voting on it. Which other team decision-making techniques would be effective for implementation?

Nominal Group Technique

The nominal group technique (NGT) is a more structured process that may be effective if there are status differences in the team or if the team has one or more dominating participants. The group meets face-to-face, but the discussion is more restricted than in brainstorming or consensus decision-making. This process reduces status differentials because participants write their ideas on index cards and a facilitator collects the cards. This process is particularly effective when the team has a dominating participant who shuts down the team discussion with criticism. Research has indicated that NGT works better than brainstorming. NGT is often used by senior management teams as a preparation tool for productive strategy meetings. The steps for the NGT follow:

1. Each team member independently writes their ideas on the problem on 3 x 5 cards or slips of paper.
2. Each member presents one idea to the team. The cards are collected by the facilitator who can either read them or redistribute them randomly to the team members.
who then read the ideas on the card. This way, no one is identified with a particular idea.
3. The discussion continues until all ideas are heard and recorded.
4. The team discusses the ideas and asks questions to clarify them.
5. Each team member then silently ranks the ideas independently. The idea with the highest total ranking is the final decision.

Stepladder

The stepladder technique may also be an effective way to combat the challenge of dominating participants in the team. The process is shown in Figure 11.10.

Stepladder decision-making has five steps:107

1. Present the task. Before getting together as a group, present the task or problem to all members. Give everyone sufficient time to think about what needs to be done and to form their own opinions on how to best accomplish the task or solve the problem.
2. Have a two-member discussion. Form a core group of two members. Have them discuss the problem.
3. Add one member. Add a third group member to the core group. The third member presents ideas to the first two members before hearing the ideas that have already been discussed. After all three members have laid out their solutions and ideas, they discuss their options together.
4. Repeat, adding one member at a time. Repeat the same process by adding a fourth member and so on to the group. Allow time for discussion after each additional member has presented his or her ideas.
5. Reach a final decision. Reach a final decision only after all members have been brought in and presented their ideas.

An experiment was conducted to see if the stepladder technique resulted in higher-quality decisions compared to consensus decision-making.108 Stepladder groups produced significantly higher-quality decisions than did conventional groups in which all members worked on the problem at the same time. Stepladder group decisions surpassed the quality of their best individual members’ decisions 56% of the time. In contrast, conventional group decisions surpassed the quality of their best members’ decisions only 13% of the time.

Delphi Method

The Delphi method109 is a decision-making technique that employs a panel of independent experts. It was developed by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s for the Department of Defense as a decision-making tool. Experts are given a proposal and complete an assessment of it over several rounds. These experts can be colocated or they can be dispersed geographically and submit their ideas from anywhere in the world. After each round, a facilitator
provides an anonymous summary of the experts’ predictions or problem solutions from the previous round as well as the rationale each provided. Participants are encouraged to revise their earlier answers in light of the replies of other members of the group. Over time, the expert panel converges on the best prediction. This technique allows a manager to gather information from a wide range of expert sources to make better decisions, thereby utilizing the wisdom of many.

Managerial Implications

This chapter provided an overview of managing teams. The key takeaway points from this chapter are as follows:

- There is a difference between a working group and a team. One of the most important differences is that a team has a shared goal, and members of a working group work independently without having to produce a shared product. Teams create synergy, in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
- One of the most important tools a manager has is to have their team create a team charter. A team charter states the team’s mission or goal and clearly lays out the expectations for team behavior. Examples of the ground rules are participation, rules for attendance, and how the team will resolve conflict. Toolkit Activity 11.1 takes you through the steps to create an effective team charter.
- Teams have life cycles and move through predictable stages. One approach is the team development model, which has stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Another approach is the punctuated equilibrium model, in which the team suddenly becomes more active in working on the task at the midpoint from the start and finish of a team project. The team performance curve explains how teams may suffer performance losses during storming as they move from a working group to a pseudo-team. Some teams become potential teams and the real teams that have higher performance. Finally, high-performance teams are rare, but they outperform all other types of teams.
- Team effectiveness is measured by the output or performance of the team. Other indicators of team effectiveness are team affect, viability, creativity, and learning. A useful tool to monitor team effectiveness is the creation of a team dashboard.
- Teams face a number of challenges that may inhibit performance such as group-think and social loafing. Managers need to anticipate these challenges and employ evidence-based strategies to avoid or minimize them. Other challenges are due to diversity in multicultural teams and/or working online in virtual teams. Teams also experience conflict, which must be effectively managed. Self-Assessment 11.2 allows you to measure your team conflict, which could be included on your team dashboard. Managers should also be aware that peer pressure due to team cohesion and strong team norms may lead to unethical behavior by individuals.
- Teams are often used to make decisions. They brainstorm new ideas and then have a number of techniques available to make decisions, including Robert’s Rules of Order, multivoting, consensus, the nominal group technique, and the stepladder technique. Practice consensus decision-making by getting together with your team and conducting Toolkit Activity 11.2.

Teams are now common in organizations and employers expect managers to be able to work in and effectively lead teams. Chapter 12 will go into more detail on how to become an effective managerial leader.
KEY TERMS

absence of trust 347
action/negotiation teams 331
adjourning 333
advice/involvement teams 330
affective reactions 336
avoidance of accountability 348
brainstorming 346
cohesion 346
command group 331
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TOOLKIT

Activity 11.1
The Team Charter
Getting Started: Developing Ground Rules

Anyone who plays sports has to learn the rules. Anyone who learns to play an instrument has to learn the techniques. The rules of “how we do things here” (the etiquette of the situation and the appropriate behaviors) are the ground rules.

Teams often begin by making assumptions about ground rules. Members believe that everyone knows how it should be and how everyone should behave. When someone else’s behavior fails to conform to one’s own expectations, people tend to be surprised. Even more importantly, because the rules are not clear and because there has been no discussion as to how problems will be managed, unnecessary conflict follows. This assignment serves the following objectives:

• It gives you the opportunity to get to know your team members.
• It provides a short but important task so that the team can learn to function quickly without a large portion of your grade resting on the initial outcome.

Your team will be required to submit a team charter. The following points that must be included in your charter are listed next, with some examples of the kinds of questions that might be addressed. However, use these as starting points; be sure to address any other important issues that come up in your discussions.

Attendance
How often should we meet?
How long should our meetings be?
When is it okay to miss a meeting?

Lateness
Since team meetings should start on time, how do we deal with lateness?
What does “on time” mean?

Interruptions
How do we deal with interruptions?
What is allowed? Phone calls? Messages?
Food, Coffee, and Breaks
Do we have food or coffee?  
Who cleans up?  
How many breaks should we have?  
How much socializing is permissible?

Participation
What do we mean by participation?  
How do we encourage participation?  
Are there group norms that we can establish to encourage participation?

Goals
What are the team’s goals and objectives?  
What is the team’s mission?  
How will the team keep members motivated?  
How will the team reward itself (and individual members) for a job well done?

Norms
What behaviors are permissible?  
How do we deal with inappropriate humor?  
How do we deal with people who dominate, resist, are too quiet, are too noisy, and so on?  
How will we monitor our progress?  
What important roles need to be assumed by team members during the semester? How will these roles be assigned?

Decision-Making
How do we make decisions?  
What decisions must be agreed to by all?  
What does consensus mean?

Conflict
How will the team encourage positive (creative) conflict and discourage negative (dysfunctional) conflict?  
How can the team encourage and manage differences of opinion and different perspectives?

Sanction Issues (What Will the Team Do With Deviates?)
How will the team deal with members who violate the agreed-upon norms of the team? For example, how will social loafing or inadequate participation be dealt with?

Firing Team Members
What are the specific rules or criteria for firing a team member? (You must give two written notices to the person and a copy to the professor prior to dismissal.)

Team Member Strengths and Weaknesses
Each team member should be identified (name, phone number, email) along with an assessment of their strengths and areas for improvement.

Other
Are there other issues that have a positive or negative impact on the team?

The Next Step: A Name and a Logo
After your team has prepared its team charter, create a name for your team and design a logo. The name and logo should be meaningful to the team, reflecting an attribute that the team members believe is important (humor is allowed and encouraged, but both the team logo and name should be meaningful). The name is limited to one or two words. Write a brief explanation of your name and logo choice. Give a copy to your instructor (along with your team charter). Your team charter should also include the following:

- A cover page with the following printed on it: the team name, team logo, team member names, and course name, number, and section
- A page with team member names, phone numbers, and email addresses
- Team charter rules and expectations
- A brief explanation of your team name and logo choice


Activity 11.2
Team Decision-Making by Consensus: Hurricane Survival

The Situation
You have been monitoring local news broadcasts for a week and Hurricane Tracy is certain to strike your area. You have covered the windows of your home with plywood and put sandbags around your doors. You live in an evacuation area and your governor has ordered evacuation for your area. You have discussed the situation with your neighbors and most of them have decided to stay and “ride it out.” You decide to assemble a hurricane survival kit so that you will be ready for the hurricane. Do not read ahead to see the expert rankings!

First rank the following list of items individually, without discussing it with your team. Give the item that you think is most important to your survival a 1, the item that you think is second most important to your survival a 2, and so on until you have ranked all 12 items. You must rank all items and there can be no ties. Enter your rankings in the first column, “Individual.” After you have done this ranking, meet with a team of at least five people and rank the items using the consensus decision-making method described in this chapter. You can assume that your team members are the people that live in your home, and you have all decided to stay together. Even if you are persuaded by your team members during the discussion, don’t change your individual rankings. Enter your team rankings in the column labeled “Team.”
### Interpretation

You will now compare your results to a survival expert’s rankings using a difference score method. Enter the survival expert’s rankings in the column labeled “Expert.” The expert ranking is provided below. These rankings are generally based on a YouTube video that provides more explanation of the rankings ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litakVUrWg8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litakVUrWg8)). Here are the expert’s rankings:

1. Maps of state and region
2. Backpacks
3. Car (inspected and in good condition)
4. Water
5. Canned tuna and beans (nonperishable food)
6. Flashlight with batteries
7. Gas (in car and in cans)
8. Cash
9. Ax
10. Radio with NOAA band
11. Power bank charger (for cell phones)
12. Bug spray

Write the above rankings in the center column, labeled “Expert.” To compute the degree to which you agreed with the survival expert, do the following calculations:

- Subtract your individual ranking from the expert ranking and enter it in the second column, “Difference 1.” Take the absolute value (i.e., ignore pluses and minuses).
- Then do the same for your team ranking (subtract the team ranking from the expert ranking) and enter it in the column labeled “Difference 2.”

Add down both columns to obtain an individual score and a team score. Note: Lower scores are better because this means that the score is lower than the expert ranking.

Subtract the individual score from the team score to determine whether you did better alone or as a member of the team. Positive scores indicate that your survival chances were enhanced by discussing the situation with your team members. Negative scores mean that you could have survived alone. The person with the lowest score knew the most about hurricane survival prior to this exercise.

### Discussion Questions

1. Did your team do better than your individual score? How did team decision-making help or hinder the decision?
2. How many members in your team had a score that was better (i.e., lower) than the team score? Who had the lowest (best) score? Did the team listen to this person? Why or why not?
3. If all of the individual scores were higher than the team score, you achieved “synergy” (the team did better than anyone could have done alone). Did you? Explain why you did or did not improve your overall chances for survival in this situation.
4. What did you learn about team decision-making that will enable you to effectively use teams to make organizational decisions?

Source: Adapted from Thorn, C. (2017). Top 10 best hurricane survival tip items. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litakVUrWg8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litakVUrWg8).

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Difference 1</th>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Difference 2</th>
<th>Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio with NOAA band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bug spray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maps of state and region</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gas in gas cans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power bank charger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Car with full tank of gas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One backpack per person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (2 gallons per person)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashlight with batteries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cans of tuna fish and beans</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Add the Columns (Absolute Values; Ignore + and -)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual Score:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Team Score:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study 11.1
For Companies, Virtual Teams Shrink the Map

When corporations want to bring together the brightest and best talent for a particular project, it no longer matters where the workers are located, thanks to the growing use of virtual teams. “Virtual teams aren’t an extra for a global company; they’re the real core of how we work and the value proposition we offer our customers,” says Patricia Rossman, chief diversity officer with the German chemical manufacturer BASF. “Virtual teams give you the reach to pull together a variety of different perspectives on how we meet market needs. Because we don’t all think alike, we’re able to anticipate needs in different parts of the world, and we’re able to look through different lenses.”

Nearly half of all organizations surveyed by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2012 used virtual teams, but they were much more common for multinational corporations, used by two-thirds of such organizations. More than half of the multinationals turned to virtual teams because their work is becoming more globalized, requiring more collaboration across business units.

But effectively managing a virtual team is not so easy. More than 60% of respondents in the SHRM study found that developing trust among team members was extremely challenging. Other major issues included resolving personality conflicts, settling disputes over tasks and information, and monitoring the performance of team members. On the flipside, the teams were most successful in brainstorming to address issues, setting goals, and developing plans for projects.

Teleconferences and video conferences facilitate the creation of “virtual teams” of employees in diverse locations for multinational corporations.

“The big challenge without the benefit of face-to-face regular interaction is that it’s hard to build trust and rapport,” says Madeline Boyer, teamwork consultant at the Wharton School’s executive education program and coauthor of Committed Teams: Three Steps to Inspiring Passion and Performance. One way to improve teamwork is by establishing a virtual water cooler that relies on off-topic email chains, chat platforms, and other social tools.

Committed Teams cites the example of GitHub, a software company based in San Francisco with workers around the globe: “Employees are encouraged to shamelessly boast about their accomplishments on the company’s internal messaging platforms. In response, their global teammates post selfies in which they raise a glass to acknowledge the success.” At BASF, much of a team’s success relies on its leadership, says Luciana Amaro, the company’s vice president of talent development and strategy. Some of the key skills required by a team leader include being able to successfully tap into the diversity of team members, create trust, listen effectively, empower team members, set up processes to monitor members’ work, and manage conflict.

It’s also important for the team leader to pull together employees of different generations. “We do have some situations where we have new people joining our research and development team, for example, and they’re working with people who wrote the textbook that they studied under,” Rossman says. And she’s found that employees are often interested in taking part in virtual teams “as a way to get exposure and network and participate at earlier experience levels.”

Virtual team membership also can be used as a development opportunity for employees in remote parts of the world, says William Castellano, associate dean of executive and professional education at Rutgers University. One thing corporations need to keep in mind when setting up virtual teams is the cultural differences of team members. “Processes that might be very successful here may not work in different parts of the world,” Castellano says. For example, it might be natural for members from some cultures to speak up during a meeting, but “often for people from cultures that are a little bit less assertive, they won’t offer an opinion if they’re not asked.”

At BASF, English is the working language, but employees may be hesitant to speak if it isn’t their mother tongue. To address that, a team leader may hold a round-robin session so everyone takes a turn speaking or may call on different people for their input at different parts of the meeting, Amaro says.

The real driver of virtual teams has been the advancement of technology, Castellano says. Corporations no longer have to rely just on conference calls and email. Instead, videoconferencing, document sharing, and other technological developments improve organizations’ ability to share knowledge across borders.

It also allows the incorporation of contract workers into virtual teams. “With knowledge workers, there’s often no choice but to engage outside people,” Castellano says. At BASF, virtual teams seldom meet in person, if at all. Members may come together for a kickoff meeting or for certain milestones in a project. By relying on virtual teams, the company reduces travel costs and makes international collaboration easier for employees—particularly those who have families and may not want to travel, Amaro says. “If we had to really be mobile to be able to deliver what we deliver in a virtual way, I believe it wouldn’t be sustainable from a cost perspective and also from a willingness of employees’ perspective,” she says.

Discussion Questions
1. Why do you think it is more difficult to develop trust in a virtual team compared to a team that meets
face-to-face? Explain how you would develop trust in a virtual team.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working in virtual teams.
3. Do you prefer to work on a virtual team or meet face-to-face? Explain why.


Self-Assessment 11.1
Effective Team Role Behaviors

This self-assessment exercise assesses how well you execute different role behaviors in your team. The goal of this assessment is for you to learn about your general orientation to team roles and to understand how this may affect how your behavior in a team. There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test. You don’t have to share your results with others unless you wish to do so.

Part I. Taking the Assessment

Circle the response to the following prompt that best describes your role orientation.

Based on my prior experiences, as a member of different teams . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Almost None</th>
<th>A Small Amount</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Fair Amount</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I’m comfortable being critical of my teammates.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I like it when we keep busy and get things done.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I like to challenge peoples’ assumptions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>4. I like to be the one that sorts out the details of a team project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I like to be the one who decides who will do which tasks on a team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>6. I’m always ready to support a good suggestion in the common interest of the team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I like to try out new ideas and approaches.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I can be counted on when a task needs to be done.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I’m comfortable dealing with interpersonal conflicts and helping people work through them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I enjoy coordinating team efforts with people or groups outside of the team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I can be counted on to spread ideas between my team and people outside of my team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I’m comfortable being the spokesperson for a team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I’m often the first to volunteer for a difficult or unpopular assignment if that is what the team needs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I like to be the one who keeps track of how well my team is doing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I bring a sense of organization to any job a team undertakes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I get bored when we do the same task the same way every time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I’m not afraid to question my teammates’ authority.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I typically find out what is going on outside my team and share that with my teammates.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I like coming up with new ways that our team can accomplish our tasks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I like helping different kinds of people work effectively together.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I’m comfortable producing and sharing new ideas with my team.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. It bothers me when I see teammates getting frustrated or depressed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I’m always committed to my team tasks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I can typically provide a strong rationale to refute ideas that I believe are unsound.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part II. Scoring Instructions**

In Part I, you rated yourself on 24 questions. Add the numbers you circled in each of the columns to derive your scores for the six team behaviors. During class, we will discuss each role and how this may affect your team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Doer</th>
<th>Challenger</th>
<th>Innovator</th>
<th>Team Builder</th>
<th>Connector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. ______</td>
<td>2. ______</td>
<td>1. ______</td>
<td>7. ______</td>
<td>6. ______</td>
<td>10. ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ______</td>
<td>8. ______</td>
<td>3. ______</td>
<td>16. ______</td>
<td>9. ______</td>
<td>11. ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. ______</td>
<td>23. ______</td>
<td>24. ______</td>
<td>21. ______</td>
<td>22. ______</td>
<td>18. ______</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total O</td>
<td>Total D</td>
<td>Total CH</td>
<td>Total I</td>
<td>Total T</td>
<td>Total CO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation**

- **Organizer**—You act to structure what the team is doing. An organizer also keeps track of accomplishments and how the team is progressing relative to goals and timelines.
- **Doer**—You willingly take on work and get things done. A doer can be counted on to complete work, meet deadlines, and take on tasks to ensure the team’s success.
- **Challenger**—You will push the team to explore all aspects of a situation and to consider alternative assumptions, explanations, and solutions. A challenger often asks “why” and is comfortable debating and critiquing.
- **Innovator**—You regularly generate new and creative ideas, strategies, and approaches for how the team can handle various situations and challenges. An innovator often offers original and imaginative suggestions.
• **Team Builder**—You help establish norms, support decisions, and maintain a positive work atmosphere within the team. A team builder calms members when they are stressed and motivates them when they are down.

• **Connector**—You help bridge and connect the team with people, groups, or other stakeholders outside of the team. Connectors ensure good working relationships between the team and “outsiders,” whereas team builders work to ensure good relationship within the team.

Scores can range from 7 to 28 for each dimension. In general, if your score is above 18, you demonstrate a high level of this behavior in your team. If your score is below 10, you demonstrate a below-average level of this behavior on your team.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Which two role behaviors do you demonstrate most in your team? Describe a situation of when your team or you demonstrated this behavior.

2. Which two role behaviors do you demonstrate the least? Discuss whether you would like to improve this behavior.

3. Discuss your role behaviors with members of your team. Are there any team members exhibiting the same behaviors? Are there any roles that are not being played by any member of the team? What can you do to ensure that all roles are being represented on the team?

**Self-Assessment 11.2**

**Team Conflict**

This self-assessment exercise assesses how much conflict exists in your team. Think of a team that you are a part of. This can be a team at work, in class, or in an outside group. The goal of this assessment is for you to learn about your general assumptions about people and work and to understand how this may affect how you lead them. There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test. You don’t have to share your results with others unless you wish to do so.

**Part I. Taking the Assessment**

Circle the response that best describes your team situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Almost None</th>
<th>A Small Amount</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Fair Amount</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How frequently are there conflicts about ideas in your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much friction is there among members of your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How often do members disagree about who should do what?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often do people in your team disagree about opinions regarding the work to be done?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How much are personality conflicts evident in your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How frequently do members disagree about the way to complete a team task?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How much conflict is there about the work you do?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How much tension is there among members of your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much conflict about delegation of tasks exists in your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To what extent are there differences of opinions regarding tasks?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How much emotional conflict is there among members of your team?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II. Scoring Instructions

In Part I, you rated yourself on 11 questions. Add the numbers you circled in each of the columns to derive your scores for three types of team conflict. During class, we will discuss each approach, its strengths and weaknesses, and how this may affect your team.

### Task Conflict | Relationship Conflict | Process Conflict
--- | --- | ---
1. _______ | 2. _______ | 3. _______
4. _______ | 5. _______ | 6. _______
7. _______ | 8. _______ | 9. _______
10. _______ | 11. _______ |

Total TC _______ | Total RC _______ | Total PC _______

\[\text{Total Team Conflict}: \text{Add TC} \div 4 + \text{RC} \div 4 + \text{PC} \div 3 \]

**Discussion Questions**

1. Which type of conflict does your team experience the most: task, relationship, or process? Describe a situation of when your team had this type of conflict.
2. Which type of conflict does your team experience the least: task, relationship, or process? What team behaviors do you believe have led to the avoidance of this type of conflict?
3. If your total team conflict score is over 10, it can be considered a high amount of conflict. Does your team experience a lot of conflict? What can you do to reduce the amount of team conflict?

**Interpretation**

- **Task conflict** (TC) arises when task knowledge—an understanding of the necessary activities to reach team goals—is not fully understood or shared by team members. The result may be disagreements among members about work content, appropriate tasks, or assignment of team activities.
- **Relationship conflict** (RC) arises when relational knowledge—personal understanding of team members including individual cultures and norms—is insufficient. Relational conflict may evoke negative emotions and interpersonal disagreements between members not directly related to tasks.
- **Process conflict** (PC) stems from a lack of agreement concerning how work should be done. This type of conflict surfaces when members disagree on the methods and processes required to complete tasks.


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