Does Trust Impact Team Performance?

How much time do you spend building trust with your team members? New research\(^1\) shows that leaders would do well to spend more time creating trusting partnerships among team members. A meta-analysis of 112 studies representing over 7,700 teams found that the degree to which team members trust one another increases team performance (achieving shared goals). Trust makes a significant difference. This study also revealed how trust works and the team situations when it matters most. Trust within a team setting reduces the feelings of vulnerability that members experience, and this helps them to work more effectively together to achieve team goals. In other words, when trust is present, team members are more likely to admit they don’t know something and critique one another’s ideas. They are more likely to share creative ideas and resolve conflict. But the opposite holds true as well. When there is a lack of trust, people are more defensive and work at odds with the team goals. They also avoid criticism and don’t provide constructive feedback. This defensiveness impairs the team from optimal functioning. The findings of this study are summarized in Figure 10.1.

Another interesting finding from this study is that trust among team members is perhaps more important than trust in the team leader or past success. Team situations when trust matters the most are when the members must depend upon one another and when leaders depend upon followers to make decisions (rather than only one person making the decision). The bottom line from this study is that if you are interested in enhancing the performance of your team, pay attention to how much team members trust one another and create opportunities to strengthen trust.

Research on teams at work is not new. Beginning in the 1960s, organizations experimented with teams in the workplace, and there was an explosion in interest in team-based organizations in the 1980s. At the same time, research on teams in organizations began to expand rapidly and has increased significantly since 2005.\(^2\) Some employees were skeptical and viewed teamwork as a “fad” that would
However, it is now clear that teamwork is here to stay, and most organizations employ teams to make significant decisions and develop new ideas. After the downsizings of the 1980s and 1990s, leaders needed a way to get more done with fewer people. Teams turned out to be one answer to this challenge. By the 1990s, the digital age had arrived, and leaders looked for new ways to structure and manage work flows. Team-based work arrangements created much-needed flexibility and became even more common. The competitive landscape has become increasingly global and complex requiring more teamwork. One study found that the time spent by managers and employees in collaborative teamwork has increased by more than 50% over the last 2 decades. Teams allow for more creative solutions and build commitment to the implementation of innovative ideas. Teamwork revolutionized the world of work. It is thus essential for a leader to understand team basics and how to lead teams effectively.

This chapter reviews the essential research on small groups from social psychology and discusses current approaches to work teams. The emphasis is on leading teams, since this is a core competence given that most organizations now use work teams to maximize organizational performance. As we learn in this chapter, teams are

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**Figure 10.1 How Might Trust Impact Team Performance?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN WE TRUST</th>
<th>WHEN WE DON’T TRUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We expect others to behave positively towards us . . .</td>
<td>We might be more suspicious of how others may act toward us . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, we may tolerate more vulnerability &amp; uncertainty . . .</td>
<td>We can become defensive, trying to reduce our vulnerability . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . and tend to work better with others and stay focused on team goals.</td>
<td>We may lose sight of team goals and focus on personal interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

also one of the best forums for learning, since employees share their skills and expertise with one another. Teams are now often charged with making important decisions, and a variety of techniques for team decision making are discussed.

WHAT IS A TEAM?

Learning Objective 10.1: Explain the difference between a working group and a team.

Numerous definitions of teams appear in the literature. An influential book, *The Wisdom of Teams*, defines a team as follows: “A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.” Another often-cited research definition of a team is

(a) Two or more individuals who; (b) socially interact (face-to-face or, increasingly, virtually); (c) possess one or more common goals; (d) are brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; (e) exhibit interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and outcomes; (f) have different roles and responsibilities; and (g) are together embedded in an encompassing organizational system, with boundaries and linkages to the broader system context and task environment.

These definitions reflect evidence-based research that has shown that teams engage in social interaction, members depend upon one another, and are part of larger systems (i.e., organizations). Also, research has shown that commitment to a common goal and performance strategies enhances performance. Finally, team members must accept relevant team goals and make a commitment to being accountable for them.

A question often asked is whether all work should be done by teams. The answer to the question is no. In many cases, teams become dysfunctional when there is actually no need for the task to be performed by a team at all. The team may flounder as it searches for a meaningful goal that everyone on the team can commit to. Teams should not be used when an individual can perform the task as well as a team (e.g., the leader could delegate the ordering of supplies to one person rather than having a team discussion about it). Also, if a performance goal can be met by adding up individual contributions (known as an additive task), then members of the work unit can work independently and their efforts can be combined later. The right time to use teams is when a performance goal requires collective effort and a work project that reflects the contributions of everyone on the team. To accomplish a team goal, different skill sets, perspectives, or experiences are often needed. So sometimes a work group is needed, and other times, a team is needed. There is an important distinction between a work group and a team, and this is discussed next.

Work Group Versus Team

Some of the literature on groups and teams is confusing because the terms group and team are used interchangeably. To clarify this, the distinction between the group and team has been articulated. A work 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 a collective work effort, or their individual contributions
can be added up to create something. An example of a work group is the service department of an automobile dealership, which consists of a service manager and 12 service advisers who report to the manager. Each service adviser meets with their own customers independently, and the contributions are summed for an overall customer rating of the dealership’s service department. If conflicts arise in work groups, the group typically looks to the leader to resolve them.

A work team, in contrast to a work group, depends on one another, and they must interact to create something that no one person on the team could create. There is synergy on the team, which means that the team can produce something beyond the sum of individual member contributions. An example of a work team is a task force assembled to brainstorm ideas for improving patient safety in a hospital. The team depends highly on the participation of all members for success since each member contributes a unique perspective that influences the quality of the suggestions for patient safety. If conflicts emerge within a work team, the members manage it internally since there may be no designated leader. Some work groups can become teams, and a strong purpose or performance challenge sets a work group on the path to becoming a real team.

**TEAM PURPOSE**

**Learning Objective 10.2:** Illustrate the relationship between team purpose and performance by using a team charter.

Setting goals for teams is just as important as it is for individuals. As discussed in Chapter 8, goal setting increases both motivation and performance. It's important to keep in mind that team goals should also be SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time based). Effective teams have a sense of shared purpose, and it is one of the components of the definition of a team. Specific team goals predict specific team performance (e.g., setting challenging goals for quantity results in higher team output). Also, feedback on performance affects the allocation of resources when individuals strive to accomplish both individual and team goals. For example, allowing team members to decide on how resources are distributed (a team regulatory process) increases team performance. Also, feedback on team performance is essential for teams to make the correct allocation of resources for future team performance. Team members who receive no team-level feedback can’t effectively set team goals and, as a result, set completely unrealistic goals. Once a team has established its purpose, team norms emerge and have a powerful effect on team member attitudes and behaviors.

**Team Norms**

Team 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 strong influence on team members’ behavior, and they are often difficult to change. For example, some teams allow team members to miss team meetings, and this disrupts the flow of work. While this isn’t written down anywhere that it’s OK to miss meetings, it just starts happening. One team member misses without an excuse, and since there is no penalty, others start to miss too. This is an example of an implicit norm. Implicit norms are tricky in that they are difficult to detect, and it is easy to misinterpret them. Of course, norms can have a positive influence on team member behavior as well. An example of the power of team norms was demonstrated by the results of research conducted by Google’s People Operations department who set out to study teams with the goal of building the perfect team. The project was code-named Project Aristotle, and hundreds of Google teams were studied to learn what made some more effective than others.
No matter how they analyzed the data, the composition of the teams did not matter (nothing showed that demographics or personality combinations created a great team). What the analysts learned was that team norms made the difference. These “unwritten rules” defined the team performance culture. The specific norms they identified were communication and empathy. High-performing teams engaged in conversational turn-taking in which all members spoke in roughly equal proportions (communication). The second norm was that high-performing team members had high social sensitivity—they were good at interpreting team members’ feelings based on their tone of voice and facial expressions (empathy). The Google research team shared their findings about communication and empathy with Google employees to make these implicit norms more explicit. Explicit norms are written down and discussed. One way to make norms explicit is by developing a team charter.

The Team Charter

One of the best ways that a leader can make norms explicit and clearly communicate them to team members is by engaging the team to develop a team charter. In creating a team charter, not only is the team purpose clarified but the expectations for behavior are set forth (e.g., required on-time attendance at meetings). Norms provide an important regulatory function in teams. Once they are developed through a charter and agreed upon, misunderstandings should be fewer and a team member violating a norm (e.g., missing meetings) can be reminded of the group’s commitment to attendance. Some groups even apply sanctions to the violation of norms, such as small fines or social ostracism. However, sanctioning systems are ineffective if they are not applied consistently. In other words, it is important to be fair and apply the principles of organizational justice described in Chapter 8 if sanctions are included in a team charter.

The influences of having a team charter and performance strategies of 32 teams of MBA students were studied using a business strategy simulation. 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 high-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 performance strategies. Toolkit Activity 10.1 contains specific guidelines for developing a team charter.

Strong team norms give rise to shared understandings within teams, known as team mental models (TMMs). These models and why they are important for team process and performance are discussed next.

Team Mental Models

TMMs “are team members’ shared, organized understanding and mental representation of knowledge about key elements of the team’s relevant environment.” TMMs are related to effective team processes and performance because they serve a number of functions, including (1) allowing team members to interpret information similarly, (2) sharing expectations concerning the future, and (3) developing similar reasoning as to why something happens. Teams with highly developed TMMs are fundamentally “on the same page” with respect to sharing a common view of what is occurring in the team. This makes decision making more efficient and enhances team performance. A summary of how TMMs affect performance and other team outcomes is shown in Figure 10.2. The shared similarity and/or accuracy of TMMs translates demographic factors, skills, and training into shared norms, effective team processes, and higher performance. A meta-analysis of 65 studies of TMMs and performance found that teams with shared mental models interacted more frequently, were more motivated, had higher job satisfaction, and were rated as more productive by others.

TMMs affect a team’s purpose and team processes, including how team members back one another, coordination, and communication. For example, shared understandings emerge in TMMs, which determine how much participation by members is allowed. Team purpose, norms, and mental models are typically established in the early stages of a team’s development. Teams then follow predictable patterns over their life cycles. Team development is discussed in the following section.
Learning Objective 10.3: Compare and contrast the five-stage and team performance curve models of team development.

Teams don’t emerge just by putting individuals together. Teams go through a process of development over time, and success is not guaranteed. Research on teams recognizes the role of time in the development of the team. Next, two important models of team development are discussed: the five-stage model and the team performance curve.

Five-Stage Model

A classic model of team development is the five-stage model, which includes five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. During the forming stage, team members may experience stress due to the uncertainty of not knowing the other team members and understanding their role on the team. Initial interactions may be tentative as team members “test” one another to determine what the norms and expectations will be. The team leader should clarify the team purpose and set up ground rules through a team charter, as previously discussed. As the team interacts on project work, conflicts begin to emerge regarding the goals and contributions of team members, and the team enters the storming stage. There may be challenges to the leader of the group (either a formally assigned leader or...
an informal one). The team leader should openly address conflict and maintain a focus on the team purpose and ground rules established in the charter. At the end of this stage, the leadership question is typically resolved, and it is clear who will lead the group. Also, a status hierarchy, or pecking order, may be established. If the storming phase does not destroy the team and result in abandonment of the team by all of its members, the team moves to the next stage of development, which is called norming. In this stage, the members of the team form a cohesive unit and close relationships among team members develop. The group establishes additional implicit norms regarding what is acceptable behavior (beyond that specified in the team charter). For example, if the team members who show up late for meetings are called out by their teammates, then lateness is unacceptable and the tardy members start to show up on time. During the norming phase, the leader should remind the followers of the ground rules and address deviations constructively. Once norms are established, the team should be performing by producing collective work products. The group shifts from relationship development and norm articulation to the work itself and goal attainment. For a work group or a task force that is permanent, the performing stage is the last stage. In this phase, the team leaders should celebrate success along the way to achieving the team goal. However, in some cases, teams are temporary and have a specific goal to accomplish. When this is the case, the team finalizes their work in the adjourning stage and disbands. The team leader should arrange a celebration activity such as a party or dinner to reward the members for achieving the team goals.

While the model proposes that teams move through the phases smoothly, in actuality, the team may regress to a previous stage or runs the risk of adjourning at any stage. For example, the level of conflict during the storming stage may result in team members deciding it’s just easier to work alone. Even after the norming stage, the group is at risk of adjournment if the performance norms are repeatedly violated and the team determines that members aren't really committed.

In many student project teams—and also at work—teams are temporary and have a clear deadline. Teams don’t follow the typical stages of development in such teams. In fact, there is a transition between an early phase of inactivity followed by a second phase of significant acceleration toward task completion. This process is called punctuated equilibrium.22 There is an initial meeting in which the group’s goals are discussed. Following this meeting, not much gets done until about halfway to the deadline. This midpoint transition occurs regardless of the total time allowed for the project. In other words, it doesn’t matter whether the total time for the project is 1 hour or 6 months. At about halfway toward the completion of a project, team members begin to revisit goals and discuss how to get the group moving toward finishing the task. Following this midpoint discussion, there is a burst of new activity as team members scramble to reach their goals in time.

You may be able to relate to this by recalling times when you and your team pulled an “all-nighter”—a meeting that lasts hours and is intense right before your team project is due for a class. It is important to recognize that this doesn’t apply to all types of teams; the punctuated equilibrium effect appears to be most prevalent in temporary teams with a fixed deadline.21 The takeaway message from this research is clear: Try not to procrastinate when a team project is assigned. The team leader should get the momentum going early by setting benchmarks to avoid having to rush at the end of the project.

Not all team development follows an upward pattern of productivity. A second model of team development addresses the potential performance losses that may occur during the initial storming or procrastination phases. This model is known as the team performance curve.

Team Performance Curve

Like the punctuated equilibrium model, the team performance curve recognizes that team performance over the course of the life of the team is not always linear, and performance does not always increase over time.24 Figure 10.3 combines the five-stage model with the team performance curve and shows there may be a performance decrease as the team goes through the storming phase. A working group is a collection of people without a common sense of purpose. As the figure shows, this produces a certain level of performance, and some tasks are appropriate for a working group.
because they are additive. The team leader may attempt to transform his or her group into a team by introducing a common goal—particularly a challenging one. As team members organize to attain the goal, storming occurs and the team performance may actually **decline** for a period of time. Some working groups remain at this point as a pseudoteam because they are not on the path toward becoming a high-performance team. If the team gets past the storming and establishes productive norms, they reach a point where they can be considered a potential team. At this stage, the team has the potential to become a real team, which exhibits the characteristics of the definition of a team (i.e., they are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable). A small number of teams become high-performance teams, which have all of the characteristics of real teams plus team members are deeply committed to the growth and development of the other team members. For example, a team member would teach another member how to use new presentation software. Research has shown that team leaders play a critical role in the development of high-performance teams (also known as **intense teams**). During the launch phase, the team leader must emphasize the vision and establish trust. The second phase is focused on sustaining trust between team members and creating a team identity. In the third phase, team members collaborate and begin performing and evaluating their work compared to their goals. A high-performance team is enabled by six key factors:

1. team member competencies;
2. skills, processes, tools, and techniques;
3. interpersonal skills, communication, understanding personality differences;
4. a shared value system;
5. shared vision, purpose, goals, direction; and
6. supporting organizational values including openness.
Thus, in high-performance teams, team interests become more important than individual interests. High-performance teams are rare. If you think about it, this would mean that team members would celebrate the success of a teammate receiving a promotion rather than feeling jealous. They would do everything to help their teammate be successful in the new position. Given that high-performance teams are rare yet essential for organizations, the next sections discuss team performance effectiveness and how it is defined and measured.

**TEAM EFFECTIVENESS**

Learning Objective 10.4: Describe the three main aspects of team effectiveness.

The question of how to know if a team is effective is an important one. Team effectiveness has a number of dimensions. The input-process-output model defines the different aspects of team effectiveness.27 First, input refers to the individual characteristics of team members (e.g., skills and abilities) and the resources they have at their disposal. Inputs may also refer to knowledge and personality. For example, a study of 51 teams found that both general mental ability (IQ) and personality (particularly conscientiousness, agreeableness, extroversion, and emotional stability) increased team performance.28

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Critical Thinking Questions: How can the use of a team charter help a team get through the storming phase? How could it help establish team norms and lead to high performance?
Process is the second aspect of team effectiveness and refers to how the team interacts. Examples of process include team development and patterns of participation. Also, trust, cross-training, and coordination relate to team effectiveness. Third, the most obvious measure of team effectiveness is team output—the collective work product generated from the team (team performance). Output has three components: (1) performance as rated by those outside of the team, (2) how well team member individual needs are met, and (3) the willingness of team members to stay on the team.

Team effectiveness reflects three broad categories: performance, behaviors, and attitudes as shown in Figure 10.4. The figure indicates important inputs to team processes such as the organization environment and design of the task. On the output side, performance is the team’s productivity, quality, or innovation as examples (i.e., the collective work effort). Behaviors are what individual team members do, such as going the extra mile for the team. “Extra milers” engage in more helping behaviors outside of their roles than other team members. A study of these extra milers found that they influence team processes and, ultimately, team effectiveness beyond the influences of all the other members.

An important team process that has received much research attention is team conflict, which is covered in Chapter 11. Attitudes are team members’ reports on their experience in the team, such as team satisfaction. These attitudes and behaviors matter because organizational behavior (OB) research has demonstrated that team behaviors relate to team outcomes such as job performance and satisfaction. For example, motivating and confidence building are teamwork processes that develop and maintain members’ motivation and confidence that the team will accomplish its goals.

### Team Metrics

In addition to the team charter, it is also important to have measures (or metrics) to assess how a team is performing over time and to provide feedback to team members. Metrics are important to assess team effectiveness. There are three types of metrics for teamwork:

1. **Task metrics.** These are the “what” of teamwork. They relate to the actual work the team is performing. For example, task metrics might be goals for quantity and/or quality and deadlines for the project completion. It is important to set 30-day targets as mini-goals toward task completion so team members have a sense of forward momentum.

2. **Process metrics.** These are the “how” of teamwork. These metrics are assessment of how the teamwork is operating. For example, process metrics might be assessments of team communication or who is participating. Teams often focus on task goals to the exclusion of process goals, but they are important because the process affects task performance.

3. **Individual development metrics.** These metrics relate to how much individuals are developing new skills and learning through teamwork. For example, individual development metrics might be how well one team member is developing leadership abilities from working with the team. Individual development is important to track, since the hallmark of a high-performance team is when team members genuinely care about the development of their teammates.

As indicated, team process metrics are important indicators of team effectiveness. In addition to team affect and viability, team learning is another outcome that reflects team process effectiveness. Also, team creativity and innovation are additional outcomes of effective team process. These team effectiveness outcomes are emerging as important outcomes of teamwork and are covered in the following sections.
Team Learning

Individual development of team members is an important metric for teams and defines a high-performance team. Team learning is now considered essential and has received a considerable amount of research. Viewing teams as a forum for learning began with the publication of the influential book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* Author Peter Senge views teamwork as one of the key experiences that lead to employee learning:

When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stands out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit.36

Team learning is an ongoing process through which teams acquire, combine, and apply knowledge.37 For example, asking questions, seeking feedback, improvising, discussing errors, challenging underlying assumptions, and reflecting on specific results or unexpected outcomes increases a team member’s knowledge.38 Team learning originates in individual intuitions, is amplified through interpretation, and emerges at the team level as collective thoughts and actions. Teams that have a higher learning orientation (a proactive climate toward learning) outperform teams that don’t.39 Research has identified two related but distinct types of personal learning that can occur in work settings: relational job learning and personal skill development. Relational job learning refers to an “increased understanding about the interdependence or connectedness of one’s job to others,” whereas personal skill development refers to the acquisition of new skills and abilities that enable better working relationships.40 Transformational leadership predicts team members’ personal learning.41 Research has also shown that team learning significantly affects team performance.42 One key factor for team learning to translate into performance is the degree to which team members agree that they feel a sense of psychological safety for taking risks.43

Team psychological safety allows members to take risks and be more creative and innovative. In addition to learning, research has also shown that teams enhance creativity and innovation. Creativity as a result of teamwork is recognized as essential to make high-quality decisions that relate to organizational effectiveness.44 The next section discusses research on team creativity and innovation.

Team Creativity and Innovation

In Chapter 5, you learned that individual creativity is a key aspect of the problem-solving process. Research has shown that creativity in teams is essential to the innovation process. In fact, research has shown that teams produce more new knowledge than individuals.45 Due to synergy, team creativity is not just the additive sum of individual team member creativity. Team creativity involves both processes and outcomes of developing new ideas for innovation. Team creativity encompasses what team members do behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally as they define problems, generate ideas, and attempt new ways of doing their work.46 Communication of new ideas and sharing information with diverse others leads to higher creativity.47 The sharing of information increases team innovation, and this is facilitated by the leader being positive.48 The positive behaviors of leaders should be directed at individuals but also at the entire team. Expressing positive affect supports being a transformational leader and stimulates creativity both in the team as well as in individuals.49 Also, shared team goals result in higher creativity. In a study of project teams, more creative teams recognized that there was a need to be creative to be successful, and they valued participation by all team members. Interestingly, more creative teams also spent more time socializing with each other, both inside and outside of work.50
For creativity to flourish, it is important that the team does not have too much structure or bureaucratic red-tape to get through. A study of 100 research and development (R&D) teams found that a team’s ability to improvise is enhanced by knowledge sharing and the minimum amount of structure needed to manage the innovation process. Team improvisation can be assessed by asking the following questions:

- Is the team good at dealing spontaneously with unanticipated problems?
- Is the team capable of responding extemporaneously to unexpected opportunities?
- Does the team have a strong capability to creatively improvise?51

In addition to knowledge sharing within teams, it is also important that teams share knowledge with other teams in the organization to enhance innovation. This helps avoid the problem of “reinventing the wheel” but also creates a culture of innovation where diverse knowledge is shared throughout the entire organization.52 In a study of 397 R&D employees (consisting of 68 teams), benevolent R&D leaders who treated their team like a family facilitated innovative behavior at the individual level through creating strong identifications with the team. These leaders also enhanced cross-team innovative behavior at the team level via identification with the R&D department.53 Thus, leaders influence both within-team and cross-team innovative behavior.

As this review has shown, team effectiveness has many dimensions and includes performance, learning, and innovation. A review of the research on team effectiveness concluded that team performance is the most commonly studied outcome. However, recent studies have considered team viability to be an important indicator of effectiveness. Team viability is a collective sense of belonging similar to team cohesion.54 Cohesion is the “team spirit” experienced in high-performing teams and is discussed next.

COHESION

Learning Objective 10.5: Demonstrate how to assess the cohesion of your team.

Cohesion is defined as “the resultant of all the forces acting on the members to remain part of the group.”55 These forces depend on the attractiveness (or unattractiveness) of the prestige of the group, the group members, and/or the group’s activities. Cohesion becomes a state in which a group tends to stick together and unite in the pursuit of team goals.66 The mutual attraction of the member to the group is the most important determinant of cohesion.57 Also, the degree to which people feel that being in a team where they fit in (i.e., a climate of inclusiveness) influences cohesion.58 Cohesion influences the behaviors of team members. Behavioral indicators of cohesiveness are team members attending meetings more often, being on time, sitting closer to one another, making more eye contact, being less likely to quit, and even engaging in longer group hugs.59 When cohesion is strong, the group is motivated to perform and is better able to coordinate activities for success. In cohesive teams, there is a sense of “we-ness” since team members tend to use we rather than I to describe the team and its activities.60 A three-wave longitudinal study of 188 project teams found that team cohesion leads to group members being engaged in the task, which in turn had a positive effect on team creative performance.61 Meta-analytic studies have found that team cohesion and team performance are positively and significantly related.62,63 For example, one review reports the average cohesive team performed 18% higher than the average noncohesive team.64 Since cohesion and performance influence one another (in other words, high performance can lead to more cohesion), a study was designed to determine which comes first—cohesion or performance. The results of this longitudinal study65 of 205 members of 57 student teams competing in a complex business simulation over 10 weeks...
found that cohesion causes performance, and this effect became stronger over time. This study also found that the leader makes a difference as well: Teams that shared leadership had higher cohesion and performance.

You may be working in a team for a project for your OB course (or another course). The extent to which your team is cohesive can be assessed by asking the following questions:66

- How well do members of your group get along with each other?
- How well do members of your group stick together (i.e., remain close to each other)?
- Would you socialize with the members of your group outside of class?
- How well do members of your group help each other on the project?
- Would you want to remain a member of this group for future projects or in future courses?

A sense of cohesion in a team may also be due to a person's allegiance to the social groups they belong to. Social identity was introduced as a way to explain how people view their own place in society through membership in various groups.67

**Social Identity Theory**

Social identity is “the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership.”68 People belong to different groups (e.g., a student can also be a coworker, a friend, and a member of a church), and these categorizations comprise their social identity.69 Also, these groups exist in relation to other groups, so people derive meaning by relating their membership in a group by comparison to other groups. Think about the team spirit we feel when our football team defeats one of its longtime rivals. We feel a sense of belonging to our university and purchase a new shirt with our team's logo to show the world we are members of that university. Leaders should increase the sense of group cohesion, or solidarity, to stay in power and motivate followers to high performance.70 Social identity binds people to a group—especially if the group has higher status or is distinctive and motivates people to behave in a manner that is consistent with the norms of the group.71 Thus, the self-attributions of who people believe themselves to be (i.e., the social identity) are an important consideration for leaders. Leaders are also members of the groups they lead and can communicate with their followers as a member of the group. This plays a key role in followers' perceptions of their leaders' effectiveness. Viewing the leader as being “one of us” increases followers' positive endorsements of the leader due to their social identity with the team. When followers' identification with the group is important to them, and followers trust the leader’s orientation to the group, they are more likely to be motivated, perform at high levels, and are more willing to accept change.72

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**RESEARCH IN ACTION**

**Coaching for Cohesion**

Sports teams represent a unique place for the effects of cohesion to take hold due to their well-defined structures, tasks, and roles.73 A review of the relationship between cohesiveness and team performance concluded that in 83% of the studies, team cohesiveness was significantly and positively related.
Research on sports psychology has examined the relationship between coaching style and team cohesion. When coaches exhibit training, being democratic, supporting, and giving feedback, team cohesion is higher. An in-depth interview study of male and female athletes in college sports plus a case study of a Division I college football team was conducted to determine the effects of coaching styles on team cohesion. This study found that using abusive language, treating the relationship as a superior or subordinate one, being unfair, lacking communication, and ridiculing players all related to lower team cohesion. Motivational coaching (being inspirational, having a personal relationship with athletes, showing support, and having dedication) was related to higher team cohesion. A case study of a football team indicated that players felt that bragging about the abilities of their teammates, giving motivational speeches, and conducting a team prayer increased feelings of team cohesion. This was confirmed by a meta-analysis examining coaching style and team cohesion that included 288 effects from 24 studies that used the same sports leadership scale. The leadership scale was the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) and is composed of five leadership dimensions for a coach’s behaviors: (1) training and instruction, which emphasizes athletes’ development of skills, tactics, and physical performance; (2) democratic, which focuses on motivating athletes to make decisions on their goals, training objectives, and game strategies; (3) autocratic, which focuses on authority and independent decision making; (4) social support, which emphasizes interpersonal relationships with athletes outside of practice; and (5) positive feedback, which focuses on rewarding and praising athletes for outstanding performance. Overall, a moderate relationship was found between leadership and cohesion, and a large relationship was found between leadership and satisfaction, with training being the highest contributor for both. The gender composition of the athletic teams was also important. When coaches displayed a high frequency of positive behavior, teams comprised of females or coed teams showed an increase in players’ satisfaction; however, this effect was not as strong for teams composed of only male athletes. It is important to recognize the influence of leadership behaviors on team cohesion, especially as sports evolve to be more competitive. This interesting research on coaching shows that being inspirational and developing the skills of your followers will likely enhance your team’s cohesion.

**Discussion Questions**

1. To what extent can these findings for sports teams be applied to teams at work? What are the limitations of using sports examples?
2. In these studies, training, being democratic, showing support, and giving feedback were important in developing team cohesion. Which do you think is most important and why?
3. Based on the meta-analysis, why do you think that coaches’ positive behaviors were more important for the satisfaction of female and coed teams but not for male teams?


Despite the best efforts to form an effective team by using a charter and establishing norms that result in cohesion, teams still encounter challenges. In fact, cohesion may work against the team and result in what is known as groupthink.
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 symptoms of groupthink are as follows:

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. Initial research on groupthink involved case studies of public policy decisions including the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Experimental research has partially supported the theory. For example, an experiment tested groupthink and found support for the ideas that direct pressure from leaders increased the symptoms of groupthink. Teams with directive leaders proposed and discussed fewer alternatives than groups with leaders who encouraged member participation. These teams were also willing to comply with the leaders’ proposed solutions when the leaders stated their preferences early in the group discussion. The Challenger space shuttle disaster case has been interpreted using groupthink. 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. The leader can 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.

Most students recognize groupthink symptoms since 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.

Groupthink represents deterioration in the effectiveness of team decision making. Fortunately, research has also indicated how groupthink can be prevented. For example, leaders can employ a variety of decision-making techniques instead of always relying on consensus decision making to provide more structure and avoid conformity. OB research has investigated other important techniques for the effectiveness of decision-making processes. These techniques are essential for a leader to know since decision quality may be affected by how the decision is made by the team. For example, involving followers in decisions by allowing participation is one important aspect of team decision making. The next sections discuss participation, brainstorming, consensus, multivoting, nominal group technique (NGT), and the stepladder technique.
TEAM DECISION MAKING

Learning Objective 10.6: Compare and contrast consensus decision making and the nominal group technique (NGT).

Participation in Team Decisions

Leadership research has long recognized that leaders have options with respect to the degree of participation they allow their followers when making team decisions. Table 10.1 shows the normative decision-making model, which shows that team decisions fall on a continuum ranging from leaders making the decision themselves to delegating the decision to the team. Between these two points, there are consultative modes of decision making. The manager can consult followers one-on-one or as a group. They also have the option of serving as the facilitator of a group decision. Involving the right people in group decision making has been shown to result in higher quality decisions and more support for decision implementation. However, key elements of the situation are important to consider when applying the normative decision-making model of participation. These factors include the following:

1. How significant is the decision?
2. How likely is it that your team members will disagree?

Table 10.1 The Normative Decision-Making Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decide</th>
<th>Consult (Individually)</th>
<th>Consult (Group)</th>
<th>Facilitate</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You make the decision alone and either announce or &quot;sell&quot; it to the group. You may use your expertise in collecting information—from the group or others—that you deem relevant to the problem.</td>
<td>You present the problem to group members individually, get their suggestions, and then make the decision.</td>
<td>You present the problem to group members in a meeting, get their suggestions, and then make the decision.</td>
<td>You present the problem to the group in a meeting. You act as facilitator, defining the problem to be solved and the boundaries within which the decision must be made. Your objective is to get concurrence on a decision. Above all, you take care to ensure that your ideas are not given any greater weight than those of others simply because of your position.</td>
<td>You permit the group to make the decision within prescribed limits. The group undertakes the identification and diagnosis of the problem, developing alternative procedures for solving it, and deciding on one or more alternative solutions. While you play no direct role in the group’s deliberations unless explicitly asked, your role is an important one behind the scenes, providing needed resources and encouragement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Do you (or your team) have the knowledge necessary to make the decision?
4. Do you need commitment from your team?
5. How likely is it that you will have commitment from your team?
6. Is there a time constraint?
7. Is team interaction difficult or impossible?
8. Do your team members function effectively as a team?
9. Is development of your team members important?
10. Do members of your team agree with your goals (and those of the organization)?

Employees value being able to participate in group decisions, and research has shown involving them in decisions increases their satisfaction and the chances of success. Results from a study of over 400 decisions that had been made by managers in medium to large organizations found that over half of the decisions failed (they were either never implemented or fell apart within 2 years). While some decisions failed due to technical issues such as the problem being defined wrong, the best predictors of success were the involvement and participation of key stakeholders. Specifically, decisions that used participation to foster implementation succeeded more than 80% of the time.

Participation is the foundation for decision-making effectiveness. Balanced participation of team members is needed for the following decision-making techniques, beginning with the process of brainstorming.

**Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is one of the most common forms of 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. IDEO is a successful product design company, and their rules for brainstorming are shown in the boxed insert.

**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). Voting creates winners and losers, and may result in a lack of commitment to implement the decision. In a consensus decision-making process, everyone can say they have been heard and will support the final decision. The following steps are suggested for reaching consensus:

1. **Introduction.** It typically takes fewer than 5 minutes and covers the following:
   - Why are we talking about this? Why does it matter?
   - History of the issue (including results of any previous meetings on it).
   - Goal for this item at this particular meeting (a report, decision, to gather input, etc.).

   At the end of the initial presentation, others who have factual knowledge of the issue are sometimes invited to add in further bits about the issue—as long as it doesn't go on for too long.
BEST PRACTICES

IDEO’s Rules for Brainstorming

1. **Defer judgment.** Creative spaces don’t judge. They let the ideas flow so that people can build on each other and foster great ideas. You never know where a good idea is going to come from. The key is to make everyone feel like they can say the idea on their mind and allow others to build on it.

2. **Encourage wild ideas.** Wild ideas can often give rise to creative leaps. In thinking about ideas that are wacky or out there, we tend to think about what we really want without the constraints of technology or materials. We can then take those magical possibilities and perhaps invent new technologies to deliver them.

3. **Build on the ideas of others.** Being positive and building on the ideas of others take some skill. In conversation, we try to use and instead of but . . .

4. **Stay focused on the topic.** We try to keep the discussion on target; otherwise, you can diverge beyond the scope of what we’re trying to design for.

5. **Have one conversation at a time.** There are lots of conversations happening at once, which is great! Always think about the topic and how the ideas could apply.

6. **Be visual.** In live brainstorms, we use colored markers to write on Post-it notes that are put on a wall. Nothing gets an idea across faster than drawing it. It doesn’t matter how terrible of a sketcher you are! It’s all about the idea behind your sketch. You could also try your hand at sketching it out or mocking it up on the computer. We love visual ideas as the images make them memorable. Does someone else’s idea excite you? Maybe make them an image to go with their idea.

7. **Go for quantity.** Aim for as many new ideas as possible. In a good session, up to 100 ideas are generated in 60 minutes. Crank the ideas out quickly.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Provide an example of how a team leader can train team members to defer judgment.

2. Evaluate the IDEO guideline for quantity of ideas. Do you feel that generating 100 ideas in 60 minutes is realistic? Why or why not?

3. What do you think a team leader should do after brainstorming? In other words, how should the final decision be made?


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2. **Clarifying questions.** These are simple questions just to make sure everyone in the room fully understands what has been presented or proposed.

3. **Discussion.** This is the exploratory phase, where people are invited to ask further questions, show the full diversity of perspectives, raise challenges and concerns, and so on. Agreements and disagreements on general direction are noted and the reasons for them examined—not just what the positions are but why and any underlying value conflicts they represent.

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4. **Establish basic direction.** What is the sense of the meeting, in terms of basic direction on this issue? Here we seek general or philosophical agreement—an agreement in principle.

5. **Synthesize or modify proposal (as needed).** Integrate what's been shared, and make it as specific as needed, recognizing that some details will always be left to implementation. Again, notice agreements and disagreements (this time on the specifics of the proposal), and work with the underlying reasons, then generate ideas for addressing and resolving concerns, emerging with a proposal that has substantial group support. Periodically, the facilitator may ask, “Are there any remaining unresolved concerns?”

6. **Call for consensus.** The facilitator clearly restates the proposal and then asks people to indicate where they are.

7. **Record.** The note taker reads back the decision to the group. In addition, they record any implementation information needed (tasks, who’s responsible, timelines, etc.).

   At the point that the facilitator calls for consensus (Step 6), participants typically have the following options:

   **Agreement:** “I support this proposal and am willing to abide by and help implement it.”

   **Stand Aside:** “I have major concerns with the proposal and agree to stand aside and let the group proceed with it.” The choice to stand aside may be based on (but is not limited to) any of the following:

   - Disagreement with the proposal or the process used to reach the decision
   - Personal values or principles
   - Personal impact or need—for example, “I can’t afford this” or “I’d have to leave the group.”

   If someone stands aside, their name and reason are traditionally recorded in the minutes. That person is relieved of lead implementation responsibilities yet is still bound to follow the decision.

   **Blocking:** “I believe this proposal would be majorly detrimental to our group, because either it goes against our fundamental principles or it would lead to a disastrous outcome.” Note that none of the following are appropriate reasons to block:

   - To get your way or because you prefer a different proposal, or no proposal
   - Because you’d have to leave the group if the proposal passed
   - Tradition: Because things have always been done a certain way
   - Because the proposed action doesn’t fit your personal needs (or finances)
   - To fulfill your personal moral values or how you want to live

   In order to function and prevent tyranny of the minority, consensus-based groups rely on having a robust response to inappropriate blocks. The form of this response varies but usually includes both procedural and cultural elements.

   **Abstain:** “I choose not to participate in the making of this decision.” It is typically used because a participant feels uninformed or not ready to participate.

   Some groups include other options, such as consent with reservations: “I support the basic thrust of this proposal and have one or more minor unresolved concerns.”

   Consensus is one of the most commonly used and effective decision-making processes in organizations. The previously given guidelines should be followed in situations in which the support of all members of a team is needed for effective implementation of the decision.

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Critical Thinking Question: Explain why following the consensus guidelines will result in more support for the implementation of a decision rather than simply voting on it.
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, the leader should know that multivoting is another decision-making option. The steps for multivoting follow.94 As with other team decision-making techniques, you need a flip chart or whiteboard, marking pens, plus five to 10 slips of paper for each individual, and a pen or pencil for each individual.

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) he or she thinks 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 five, the next choice four, 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 note-taker 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 his or her 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 and 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?

Nominal Group Technique

The 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 since participants write their ideas on index cards and they are collected by a facilitator. 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.95 NGT is often used by senior management teams as a preparation tool for productive strategy meetings. The steps for the NGT follow:96

1. Each team member independently writes their ideas on the problem on 3×5 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 is a newer technique and may also be an effective way to combat the challenge of dominating participants in the team. It has five basic steps:

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. **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. **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. 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. Since all members must contribute in the step-ladder process, it is suggested as a way to help teams address the challenge of social loafing. This and other team challenges are discussed in the following sections.

**TEAM CHALLENGES**

**Learning Objective 10.7:** Generate an example of how a team leader can reduce social loafing.

**Social Loafing**

A 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 got the credit and didn’t contribute. Social loafing is defined as the reduction in motivation and effort when individuals work collectively compared with when they work individually or coactively (i.e., they work with others but do not combine inputs into a group product). Social loafing occurs more often in larger teams where individuals can hide in the team. When there is skill redundancy, some team members may feel that their contributions are not valued. If others are slacking,
then team members may stop contributing. Team members may not see the goal as valuable or agree with it, so they
don’t contribute. There are individual differences as well: Research has shown men are more likely to social loaf
than women, and those from individualistic cultures are more likely to loaf. Leaders can prevent social loafing by doing
the following:

1. Keep teams small (four to six members).
2. Set meaningful team goals.
3. Set clear roles for team members.
4. Eliminate redundancy.
5. Select members with high motivation and affinity for teamwork.
6. Provide feedback and coaching to members who social loaf.

Virtual Teams

Today, more work is being conducted through the Internet in virtual teams. Virtual teams are defined as “func-
tioning teams that rely on technology-mediated communication while crossing several different boundaries.”\(^{102}\)
Such teams rely on technology to communicate, and this has significantly changed how teamwork is conducted.
It has been suggested that virtual teams have more challenges in developing the TMMs needed to be effective.\(^{103}\)
In many cases, virtual team members are geographically dispersed and may even be working in different countries
and time zones. A comparison of computer-mediated teams to face-to-face teams in a longitudinal study found
the relationship between technology and performance depended on experience with the technology.\(^{104}\) The results
also suggested the newness of the medium to team members and not the newness of the group led to poorer task
performance for computer groups. Another study found that communication apprehension and poor typing ability
negatively influenced the quality and quantity of communication in virtual teams, and this determined who emerged
as the team leader.\(^{105}\) A review of studies on computer-mediated groups reported 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.\(^{106}\) Research has shown that trust is essential for knowledge sharing to occur in virtual teams.\(^{107}\) However,
virtual teams may have less social support and direct interaction among team members, which are needed to build
trust.\(^{108}\) A meta-analysis of more than 5,000 teams found virtual teams share less information.\(^{109}\) Also, virtual work
and the use of e-mail in combination may change the distribution of information within an organization and change
knowledge flows.\(^{110}\)

Leaders play a central role in virtual team functioning since they influence how a team deals with obstacles and
how the team ultimately adapts to the unique challenges they face.\(^{111}\) A study of student teams was conducted in which
the leaders of virtual teams were compared with those in face-to-face teams.\(^{112}\) Researchers found that leader behaviors
focusing on the task and monitoring of performance significantly impacted the performance of virtual teams. Leaders
can enhance the effectiveness of virtual teams by establishing trust, carefully monitoring e-mail, attending to team
progress, and by sharing the team’s work with others.\(^{113}\) Establishing team goals early in the life cycle of the team
also improves virtual team cohesion and effectiveness.\(^{114}\) Advanced information technology (IT) will have a significant impact on leadership
in organizations in the future, and leaders must be aware of the impact for leading virtual teams.\(^{115}\) Additional guidelines for leading
virtual teams are shown in Table 10.2.

One of the advantages of virtual teams is that team members can be geographically dispersed. Members can contribute to teamwork

Critical Thinking Question: Provide an example of a type of work that cannot
be done by a virtual team. Why do you
think this would be the case?
from anywhere in the world. In many cases, virtual teams are diverse and comprised of members from different cultures. In addition to being virtual, cultural differences affect teams. Diversity is a challenge for teams but it also offers opportunities to increase team performance. Diversity within teams is addressed next, considering its challenges and benefits.

**TEAM DIVERSITY**

**Learning Objective 10.8:** Discuss the challenges and benefits of team diversity.

**Challenges of Team Diversity**

Consider the following hypothetical product development team at a leading manufacturer of industrial and medical products:
This four-member team is composed of one mid-level female accountant, one newly hired female biomedical engineer, one established male executive vice-president (VP) of marketing and one male mid-level production manager with a degree in industrial engineering. The biomedical engineer is passionate about biomedical innovation, while the production manager is equally committed to incrementally improving the company’s existing products for the gas and oil industry. Team members have a variety of in-house connections: the biomedical engineer meets regularly with other medical staff to discuss new products, the production manager meets weekly with other industrial engineers from the manufacturing department to coordinate workflow and the VP of marketing has executive meetings to plan marketing strategies. During lunchtime, the two females get together in the office and the two males join their old-time group of friends. Top management considers medical marketing core to business growth, whereas accounting and engineering on the industrial side are perceived as less competitive functions.116

How will the diversity of this team affect its processes and outcomes? For over 20 years, researchers have been studying the effects of diversity in teams. The previous example reflects diversity that is related to the functional areas and gender of the team members. There has also been a great deal of research on the effects of cultural differences in multicultural teams. This research has high relevance for team leaders since teams have become increasingly diverse, with individuals from different cultural backgrounds working closely with one another both in virtual as well as face-to-face teams.

Not all team processes translate cross-culturally. One study surveyed members of 461 self-managed work teams (SMWTs) in four countries: the United States, Finland, Belgium, and the Philippines.117 Resistance to SMWTs was affected by cultural values of collectivism and power distance. Collectivism is group orientation, and power distance is respect for authority. 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. Employees in the Philippines were significantly more likely to reject self-management compared to employees in the United States. Caution should be exercised when implementing SMWTs and other forms of participation in countries with high power distance. Individuals in high power distance cultures respect authority and expect the leader to have all the answers. They may be confused by a leader who asks for their input and make the attribution that the leader is not competent to make the decision alone. Similar reactions to the offer of participation might be found in Russia and Mexico. Participation in countries with high power distance may not be appropriate, and managers should check cultural assumptions before offering participation to multicultural teams. Diversity presents a challenge to the team leader in that there is a greater need to manage conflict. But it appears to be worth the effort since benefits can be realized through increased creativity and satisfaction in diverse teams.

Benefits of Team Diversity

Diverse teams can accomplish great things. For example, in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, rescue professionals from different countries had to come together quickly to fulfill critical rescue missions. These international teams, which possessed different professional capacities, did not have the luxury of negotiating clear formal leadership before undertaking time-critical, life-saving tasks at ground zero.120 Thus, these international teams had to be self-managed, and research has shown that there are certain characteristics of team members that enable self-managed multicultural teams to perform well. A longitudinal study of multicultural MBA project teams found that teams performed better when members had more tolerance for uncertainty and were more relationship-oriented.121 Diversity may enhance team creativity, and this is considered one of the benefits of having a diverse workforce. For example, different abilities are related to particular cultures: British inventiveness, for example, or Japanese pragmatism. According to the head of R&D at Hitachi Europe, the underlying consideration in the internationalization of R&D is the conviction that mixing western and Japanese mentalities achieves high-quality R&D results faster.122 This belief is supported by evidence from a study123 of 574 R&D multicultural team members, their leaders, and their
leaders' managers in 82 co-located teams in a Chinese branch of a large German global organization. Multicultural team leaders with high global identity leveraged cultural diversity to promote innovative goals, which further enhanced team communication, inclusion, and its positive impact on team innovation.

Diversity in teams can increase flexibility, creativity, and problem solving. A meta-analysis of team diversity and team performance found having members with diverse skill sets and backgrounds enhances team creativity and innovation. Specifically, differences in functional expertise, education, and organizational tenure were most related to team performance. A second meta-analysis of 108 studies in 10,632 teams found cultural diversity leads to process losses through task conflict. Effective team leaders credit diversity for being a key reason for team creative outputs that directly impact organizational success. There is some evidence that diversity training enhances creativity. An experimental study compared the creativity of teams that attended nationality diversity training to teams that did not have the training (controls). Results of the study indicated that for teams with less positive diversity beliefs, diversity training increased creative performance when the team's nationality diversity was high.

Leadership makes a difference in how well diverse teams perform. Throughout this chapter, a clear theme is that the leader can set up groups for success by directing the group toward a meaningful goal, selecting the right decision-making tools, and preventing groupthink. In the concluding section of this chapter, the importance of empowering team leadership is discussed further.

**LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS: EMPOWERING THE TEAM**

Research has shown that team leaders engage in certain behaviors that enhance team performance. The focus of team leadership has shifted from the leader to the team, and this is called *team-centric leadership*. One review notes that: “Team-centric leadership research has exploded in the past decade.” A team-centric leader creates the right climate for a team, and this increases followers’ empowerment. Leadership climate is effective when a team leader gives their team many responsibilities, asks the team for advice when making decisions, is not too controlling, allows the team to set its own goals, stays out of the way when the team works on its performance problems, tells the team to expect a lot from itself, and trusts the team. A study of 62 teams in a Fortune 500 company found leadership climate is related to team performance through team empowerment. More-empowered teams are more productive and proactive than less-empowered teams and have higher levels of customer service, job satisfaction, and commitment. However, shared leadership is most strongly related to team performance when team members have high levels of task-related competence. Empowerment is also related to lower employee cynicism and “time theft” (spending time on non-work-related activities during working hours). A meta-analysis of relationships between leader behaviors and team performance found task-focused behaviors are moderately related to perceived team effectiveness and team productivity. However, person-focused behaviors are more related to perceived team effectiveness, team productivity, and team learning than task-focused behaviors. Examining specific leader behaviors, empowerment behaviors accounted for nearly 30% of the variance in team learning. Empowerment seems to be a critical aspect of the development of highly effective teams. Team members need to feel that they have the power to make significant decisions about their work. Empowering leadership has also been found to increase the effectiveness of collaboration in virtual teams where members are geographically dispersed. Empowering leaders act more like coaches than command-and-control formal leaders. A study of 70 service teams compared formal team leaders to leaders that behaved as coaches and found that coaches significantly influence team empowerment, and thereby team processes and performance, whereas formal team leaders did not. Team coaches engaged in behaviors such as building teamwork and giving team members the technical information needed to do their jobs. Complete Self-Assessment 10.2 to learn about your team leadership style.
In some cases, empowerment takes the form of the team being SMWTs. SMWTs are teams that are empowered to lead themselves without a formal assigned leader. In SMWTs, decisions regarding the specific ways that tasks are performed are left up to the members of the team. These teams are now common at the workplace, and they have been related to higher job satisfaction and commitment. SMWTs are in place in 79% of Fortune 1000 companies and in 81% of manufacturing companies. The role of the leader in SMWTs is to relate (build trust), scout (seek information and diagnose problems), persuade (gain external support and influence the team), and empower (delegate and coach). The research evidence on SMWTs reports mixed results, however. While members report that they are more satisfied, team performance may be more difficult to attain without a leader. For example, SMWTs’ members don’t manage conflict well, and this may result in an erosion of trust. A study of SMWTs that compared them to traditional teams found that claims of the effectiveness of self-management may have been inflated; SMWTs did not perform better than traditional teams.

Leadership matters for team performance in a number of ways. Leaders can move their team through the team development process by establishing SMART goals and having the team create a team charter to guide them. The team charter establishes team norms that can lead to higher levels of cohesion, which has been shown to impact team effectiveness. Leaders should pay attention to the metrics that the team uses to evaluate their performance and include task, process, and individual development measures to assess the team. A team leader needs to assess any challenges that the team may face such as social loafing, being virtual, and the degree of diversity. Diversity can benefit team process and performance but must be effectively managed. Finally, leaders should use a variety of team decision-making processes, including participation, brainstorming, consensus, NGT, and the stepladder technique. If a vote must be taken, a leader should consider using multivoting rather than a simple majority vote that creates winners and losers. For these techniques to work, it is important that the leader create the right leadership climate for the team and empower the team to act.

Critical Thinking Question: Explain why the existence of SMWTs that also have a team leader poses a paradox for the leader. If a team is self-managed, what is the leader’s role?

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TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 10.1: 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, the appropriate behaviors) are the ground rules.

Teams often begin 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 important, 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:

- Gives you the opportunity to get to know your team members
- 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
- Enables the team to develop and understand the rules of conduct expected of each team member

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 people who dominate, resist, are too quiet, are too noisy, etc.?
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, e-mail) along with an assessment of his or her strengths and his or her 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 e-mail addresses
- Team charter rules and expectations
- A brief explanation of your team name and logo choice

Discussion Questions

1. Which part(s) of the team charter was the most difficult for your team to reach agreement on? Why do you think this was the case?
2. What did you learn about your teammates by listing their strengths and weaknesses? How can you help them develop their weak areas?
3. How do you plan to use the team charter to keep your team on track toward accomplishing its goals?


TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 10.2: The Marshmallow Challenge (Team Exercise)

The Marshmallow Challenge has been tested worldwide by consultant Tom Wujec. Wujec has run the challenge with different categories of teams such as CEO teams, teams of architects, teams of engineers, teams of business students, and teams of kindergarten children.

First, form teams of four people. Provide each team with a building kit containing 20 sticks of spaghetti, 1 yard of masking tape, 1 yard of string, and 1 marshmallow. You need a measuring tape and watch. Run the challenge with your group, and then watch the debriefing video provided at http://www.tomwujec.com/design-projects/marshmallow-challenge/

The goals and rules of the Marshmallow Challenge follow.

1. **Build the tallest freestanding structure**: The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the tabletop surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling, or chandelier.
2. **The entire marshmallow must be on top**: The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.

3. **Use as much or as little of the kit**: The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag that the materials are in as part of their structure.

4. **Break up the spaghetti, string, or tape**: Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.

5. **Observe the time limit**: You have 18 minutes to build your structure.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Was there a leader on your team? Who was this person, and who decided who the leader would be? If you had no leader, do you think having designated someone a leader would have helped?

2. Did you feel everyone’s ideas were well received during the activity? How did you deal with frustration? Were all teammates included?

3. Did your team have a plan? Did the plan work? Did you veer from the plan at all? Why or why not? What worked? What didn’t work?


**TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 10.3: How to Run an Effective Meeting (Checklist)**

Research has demonstrated that running meetings effectively increases team performance. A study of 63 team meetings including a total of 359 meeting participants from different organizations found that leaders must remember to show considerate leadership, which was positively related to satisfaction with meetings. Also, team leaders need to balance relational- and task-oriented meeting procedures. The following checklist is a useful guide to ensuring a successful meeting.

**Before the meeting**

- Set goals for the meeting, and prepare an agenda.
- Prioritize issues to be discussed, including carryover issues from previous meetings.
- Consult with team members to finalize the agenda.
- Research information necessary for making important decisions (or delegate this).
- Arrange logistics: date, time, place, catering. Select a comfortable and convenient meeting place.
- Send out announcements and reminders for the meeting, including the meeting agenda.
- Arrange for AV equipment, flip charts, markers, and other supplies.
- Arrive early to set up, and check for adequate lighting, ventilation, heating, or air-conditioning.
- Arrange seating, and post directional signs if needed.
- Prepare name tags or tent cards if needed.
During the meeting

- Greet people warmly as they arrive individually.
- Announce the nearest restrooms.
- Have the agenda at each person’s place or projected on screen.
- Set a welcoming tone: introductions (you may want to include an icebreaker exercise if time permits).
- Review minutes from the previous meeting if appropriate.
- Provide background information, and review the meeting goals.
- Be courteous, respectful, and inclusive during the discussions.
- Start and finish the meeting on time.

Bring closure

- Make decisions.
- Prepare action plans and follow up.
- Summarize main points and what was accomplished during the meeting.
- Schedule the next meeting (if needed).

After the meeting

- E-mail participants, and thank them for their contributions.
- Distribute minutes of the meeting and action plans.
- Include a reminder about the next meeting.

Discussion Questions

1. From the checklist, identify which behaviors are task-related and which behaviors are relationship-related. Explain how you would set the tone for the meeting by being a considerate leader.

2. Discuss why it is important to have an agenda for the meeting. Should the leader set the agenda or have it created by the team? Explain.

3. Why is it important to start and finish the meeting on time? What should the leader do if the agenda is not completed by the end of the meeting time?

4. Why is it important to follow up after the meeting? Create one or two additional items that should be included in the follow-up after a meeting.


CASE STUDY 10.1: Problem Solving in Virtual Teams

Shelia works for General Electric’s (GE) energy company in the wind turbine manufacturing division as an inventory controller. Her job duties include receiving the wind turbine components into GE’s inventory when vendors provide the required documentation and then moving them out of inventory when the components
reach the wind field site. She handles primarily the large components including tower segments, blades, machine heads, and hubs. The tower segments are made by firms in the United States and China and are received into inventory once the signed inspection tags are e-mailed to her. For the blades, they are shipped to the port of Houston, and once they are unloaded and pass inspection they are entered into inventory. The machine heads and hubs are made by GE at three different plants and go into inventory once completed and ready for shipment.

Sheila is based in the Greenville, NC, plant with two of the three-person buyer teams that handle the orders of the parts to make the machine heads and hubs. Another of the machine head teams is based in Schenectady, NY. She also works with a team based in Houston, TX, that handles the ordering of the wind turbine blades and the tower team that works in the plant in Pensacola, FL. She also works with a transportation specialist on each team to help with the shipment of these large wind turbine components to the client's site, and with up to two dozen wind farm site teams at any given time to capture the delivery and installation of the different wind turbine components in order to move items out of inventory and trigger billing to the client.

The majority of the work Sheila does with her teams is through the phone, e-mail, and occasional web meeting. Rarely does she get to see any of the teams outside of the two located at Greenville, as there is trust and respect among teammates as well as understanding of what is her role on these teams. However, working in such spread-out teams that span the globe as well as several organizations creates a number of challenges. Sometimes, there are issues with suppliers when they do not provide the proper documentation for completion and still are seeking payment. Sometimes, there are issues with working out replacement shipments when the blades and towers from overseas are damaged in transit. However, most of the time the job and relationship between team members goes smoothly thanks to a number of processes and procedures that have been set in place to help with those challenges.

Currently, a new team is being formed in the wind division. As can often happen when shipping goods, the hubs, machine heads, and towers frequently have components that are damaged in transit. In order to assist the wind farm sites to get the turbines up and running as fast as possible, they need all the parts fully functional. So a team is forming to help the wind farm sites quickly get the replacement parts that are needed. A ticket system has been set up for the wind farm site team to put in reports of damaged parts. The system then assigns each case to a different team member, who is responsible for finding the solution to the problem and getting the needed parts to the wind farm site as quickly as possible. In addition, there is a weekly web meeting on Wednesdays where the cases are discussed and everyone on the team is updated.

Sheila was assigned to work on this new team, but it has not been going as well as the work on her other teams. First, while she knows some of the larger components based upon the receiving she does, she does not have a clue as to the list of smaller components, cables, and wires used to make the larger components. While the on-ground crews provide pictures and a description, they don’t provide the exact part number or name that is needed, and so for her first two cases she spent nearly a week hunting down schematics and talking with engineers in both Schenectady and Greenville to figure out what part is needed. She then spent 3 more days getting the purchase orders needed to order the parts (as receivers can’t cut their own purchase orders for fraud prevention reasons), and shipping took another 2 days. The team leader was upset with the amount of time Sheila took to close the cases and reprimanded her on the weekly call. Sheila felt that this was unfair, as she does not have access to the knowledge and resources to get the job done as quickly as others. However, she still tried to do her best on her next case, getting replacement ladders for the towers at a couple different sites. However, that case took 3 weeks to close as a result of the ladders arriving damaged from transit and required Sheila to find another vendor to ship and deliver the ladders.

Discussion Questions
1. How does trust and respect facilitate the virtual teams’ ability to operate?
2. What processes and procedures are important to making the teams work?
3. Why do you think Sheila is having trouble in her role on the new team?
4. What factors should you consider when putting together a virtual team?
SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.1: Teamwork Orientation

This self-assessment exercise identifies your propensity toward working in teams. The goal is for you to learn about yourself. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The basic idea of the team concept is good.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teams are essential for effective or organizational functioning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel positive about working in a team.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teams are good for organizations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The team concept helps organizations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part II. Scoring Instructions

Add your responses to determine your total for team orientation. Higher scores suggest a higher propensity for teamwork. In general, scores from 5 to 12 indicate a lower interest in being on a team, and scores above 13 indicate a higher interest in being on a team.

Discussion Questions

1. Based on your results, are you a team-oriented person? How does this affect your attitude toward working in teams?
2. Compare your results to your teammates. Are there more people who are team-oriented compared to those who are not? How might this affect your team process?
3. How can a team leader motivate team members who don’t value the team concept (in other words, lower scores on this assessment ranging from 5 to 12)? What can a leader do to convince such reluctant members to engage with the team?


SELF-ASSESSMENT 10.2: Team Leadership Inventory (TLI)

To take this assessment, use the number 4 for the response that is MOST like you, a 3 for the one that is MODERATELY like you, a 2 for the one that is LITTLE like you, and a 1 for the response that is LEAST like you. Do not repeat any number when answering a given question. Use all four numbers when responding to a question. There are no right or wrong answers, so respond to what comes first to your mind.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I see my role as:</th>
<th>giving directions</th>
<th>expert</th>
<th>making goals exciting</th>
<th>listening to people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the example above, giving directions is most like you, being expert is moderately like you, listening to people is a little like you, and making goals exciting is least like you. Note that all four numbers are used. Now, answer the following questions about yourself:

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The most critical team activity is:</td>
<td>goal setting</td>
<td>decision making</td>
<td>brainstorming</td>
<td>supporting one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer a team that works hard</td>
<td>that is flexible</td>
<td>that creates something new</td>
<td>that gets along</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When a team has conflict:</td>
<td>stick to the goal</td>
<td>use logic to solve it</td>
<td>take risks</td>
<td>feelings should be protected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To motivate a team, I would reward them as a team</td>
<td>explain why hard work is needed</td>
<td>focus on the overall mission</td>
<td>coach them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. From my team I expect:</td>
<td>commitment</td>
<td>rationality</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I lead my team with:</td>
<td>confidence</td>
<td>decisiveness</td>
<td>a sense of mission</td>
<td>warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teams are:</td>
<td>goal-oriented</td>
<td>challenging</td>
<td>the future of work</td>
<td>social entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To improve teamwork, I reinforce deadlines</td>
<td>challenge the team</td>
<td>set stretch goals</td>
<td>encourage participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In a team, I am a(n):</td>
<td>take charge person</td>
<td>problem-solver</td>
<td>idea generator</td>
<td>conflict manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teams require:</td>
<td>clear and specific tasks</td>
<td>planning</td>
<td>a meaningful goal</td>
<td>a supportive atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To lead a team, it takes:</td>
<td>a proven track record</td>
<td>intelligence</td>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td>attention to each team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teammates see me as:</td>
<td>task-oriented</td>
<td>logical</td>
<td>forward-looking</td>
<td>nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am trying to improve my:</td>
<td>time management</td>
<td>decision processes</td>
<td>creativity</td>
<td>interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. In meetings, I prefer:</td>
<td>brevity</td>
<td>detail orientation</td>
<td>innovation</td>
<td>sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The best team leaders are:</td>
<td>in the military</td>
<td>in large companies</td>
<td>entrepreneurs</td>
<td>in volunteer organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teams should:</td>
<td>have well-defined plans</td>
<td>be organized</td>
<td>explore new possibilities</td>
<td>build consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When there is a deadline, I:</td>
<td>try to meet it</td>
<td>set up a timeline</td>
<td>consider it as a general guide only</td>
<td>see if others feel it can be met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I admire teams that:</td>
<td>work hard</td>
<td>learn together</td>
<td>take risks</td>
<td>treat one another fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In teams, I play the role of:</td>
<td>taskmaster</td>
<td>devil’s advocate</td>
<td>cheerleader</td>
<td>clown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teams are needed:</td>
<td>to increase performance</td>
<td>to avoid errors</td>
<td>to build enthusiasm for the mission</td>
<td>because people like to interact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: C:___ L:___ V:___ R:___
Interpretation

Column 1 = Command and control (C)

You stick to deadlines and reinforce this with your team. You focus on individual accomplishments and take charge of the team in an efficient manner. You are results-oriented. Power base: Legitimate.

Column 2 = Logic and persuasion (L)

You are dependable, logical, and develop arguments that persuade others. You are an effective problem solver for your team and are valued for your expertise. You are thorough and painstakingly detail-oriented. Power base: Expert.

Column 3 = Visionary (V)

You focus on the big picture for the team and see your role as a change agent. You thrive on finding new opportunities and exploring options. You have a clear understanding of the organization’s mission and translate this for your team. Power base: Charisma.

Column 4 = Relationship-oriented (R)

You focus on people and provide a supportive environment for your team. You are seen as a consensus-builder and participative manager. You are skilled in communication and listening, and develop a sense of trust in your team. Power base: Referent.

Discussion Questions

1. Which team leadership style is your dominant style (the highest score)? Are you strong in another type of team leadership? Are you balanced across three or all four?

2. Assess the basis of power you use with your team (refer back to the discussion of the French and Raven bases of power from Chapter 7). Would another power base be more effective? Explain why or why not.

3. Ask some of your team members to complete this assessment about you, and then compare your ratings to their ratings. Do you see yourself as your team members do? Can you explain why there is agreement or disagreement? How can you use this information to improve your team leadership?