

Questions for Review

1. How do you explain the growing popularity of teams in organizations?
 - a. **Answer:** Although teams are not always effective they have become popular. Some of the reasons include:
 - i. Teams are a great way to use employee talents
 - ii. Teams are more flexible and responsive to changes in the environment
 - iii. Can quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and disband
 - iv. Facilitate employee involvement
 - v. Increase employee participation in decision making
 - vi. Democratize an organization and increase motivation

2. What is the difference between a group and a team?

Answer: A group may just be individuals that are together. A work group is a group that interacts primarily to share information and to make decisions to help each group member perform within his or her area of responsibility. Often there is no joint effort required. A work team generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. The individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of the individual input. Teams have member commitment to a common purpose, establishment of specific team goals, team efficacy, a managed level of conflict, and minimization of social loafing.

3. What are the four types of teams?

Answer:

1. Problem-Solving Teams - groups of 5 to 12 employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment
 2. Self-Managed Work Teams - groups of 10 to 15 people who take on the responsibilities of their former supervisors
 3. Cross-Functional Teams - employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task
 4. Virtual Teams - teams that use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal
4. What conditions or context factors determine whether teams are effective?
Answer: The key components of an effective team are in four general categories including context; composition; work design; and process. See Exhibit 10-3. Effective teams have a common and meaningful purpose that provides direction, momentum, and commitment for members. This purpose is a vision. It is broader than specific goals.

One example is team efficacy, which is a process factor that means effective teams have confidence in themselves and believe they can succeed. Success breeds success. Management can increase team efficacy by helping the team to achieve small successes and skill training. Small successes build team confidence. The greater the abilities of team members, the greater the likelihood that the team will develop confidence and the capability to deliver on that confidence.
 5. How can organizations create team players?

Answer: Organizations can create team players through:

1. Selection - make team skills one of the interpersonal skills in the hiring process
 2. Training - individualistic people can learn
 3. Reward - rework the reward system to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive (individual) ones
 4. Continue to recognize individual contributions while still emphasizing the importance of teamwork.
6. When is work performed by individuals preferred over work performed by teams?

Answer: The complexity of the work can determine whether one or more people are needed. Teamwork often is more time consuming due to increased communication and potential conflicts. The three tests to determine whether individuals or team should be utilized are:

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

7. What are three ways in which our understanding of teams differs in a global context?

Answer:

1. Extent of Teamwork - Other countries use teams more often than does the U.S.
2. Self-Managed Teams - Do not work well in countries with low tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty and a high power distance
3. Team Cultural Diversity and Team Performance
 - a. Diversity caused by national differences interferes with team efficiency, at least in the short run.
 - b. After about three months the differences between diverse and non-diverse team performance disappear.