Chapter 10

Understanding Work Teams

(Click on the title when connected to the Internet for online video teaching notes)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (ppt10-1)

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Analyze the growing popularity of using teams in organizations.
2. Contrast groups and teams.
3. Compare and contrast four types of teams.
4. Identify the characteristics of effective teams.
5. Show how organizations can create team players.
6. Decide when to use individuals instead of teams.
7. Show how the understanding of teams differs in a global context.

INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCES

Text Exercises
- International OB: Global Virtual Teams
- An Ethical Choice: Preventing Team Mistakes
- Math or Science? Old Teams Can Learn New Tricks
- Point/CounterPoint: Sports Teams Are Good Models for Work Teams
- Questions for Review
- Experiential Exercise: Fixed Versus Variable Flight Crews
- Ethical Dilemma: Pressure To Be a Team Player

Text Cases
Case Incident 1: Toyota's Team Culture
Case Incident 2: IBM's Multicultural Multinational Teams

Instructor's Choice

This section presents an exercise that is NOT found in the student's textbook. Instructor's Choice reinforces the text's emphasis through various activities. Some Instructor's Choice activities are centered on debates, group exercises, Internet research, and student experiences. Some can be used in-class in their entirety, while others require some additional work on the student's part. The course instructor may choose to use these at anytime throughout the class—some may be more effective as icebreakers, while some may be used to pull together various concepts covered in the chapter.

WEB
EXERCISES

At the end of each chapter of this Instructor's Manual, you will find
suggested exercises and ideas for researching the WWW on OB topics.
The exercises "Exploring OB Topics on the Web" are set up so that you
can simply photocopy the pages, distribute them to your class, and
make assignments accordingly. You may want to assign the exercises
as an out-of-class activity or as lab activities with your class.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Few trends have influenced jobs as much as the massive movement to introduce
teams into the workplace. The shift from working alone to working on teams
requires employees to cooperate with others, share information, confront differences,
and sublimate personal interests for the greater good of the team.
Effective teams have common characteristics. They have adequate resources,
effective leadership, a climate of trust, and a performance evaluation and reward
system that reflects team contributions. These teams have individuals with
technical expertise as well as problem solving, decision making, and interpersonal
skills and the right traits, especially conscientiousness and openness.

Effective teams also tend to be small—with fewer than 10 people, preferably of
diverse backgrounds. They have members who fill role demands and who prefer
to be part of a group. And the work that members do provides freedom and
autonomy, the opportunity to use different skills and talents, the ability to complete
a whole and identifiable task or product, and work that has a substantial impact on
others. Finally, effective teams have members who believe in the team's capabilities
and are committed to a common plan and purpose, an accurate shared mental
model of what is to be accomplished, specific team goals, a manageable level of
conflict, and a minimal degree of social loafing.
Because individualistic organizations and societies attract and reward individual
accomplishments, it can be difficult to create team players in these environments.

To make the conversion, management should try to select individuals who have the
interpersonal skills to be effective team players, provide training to develop
teamwork skills, and reward individuals for cooperative efforts.

---

*This chapter begins with an introduction to Seagate Technologies and its policy and practice of
providing team-building activities for its employees. The implementation of the policy is an
expensive component of Seagate's operation, but CEO Bill Watkins supports the expense citing
team performance as a crucial element of Seagate's performance success. His belief is that the
expense pays for itself in efficiency and effectiveness of employee performance.*

BRIEF CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Why Have Teams Become So Popular? (ppt10-2)
   A. Decades ago, it made news because no one else was doing it. Today, it is the organization that does not use teams that has become newsworthy.
   B. The current popularity of teams seems based on the evidence that teams typically outperform individuals when the tasks being done require multiple skills, judgment, and experience.

II. Differences Between Groups and Teams (ppt10-3) (ppt10-4)
   A. Groups and teams are not the same thing. (Exhibit 10-1)
   B. In the last chapter, we defined a group as "two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives."
   C. A work team generates positive synergy through coordinated effort. Individual efforts result in a level of performance that is greater than the sum of those individual inputs.

III. Types of Teams (Exhibit 10-2) (ppt10-5)
   A. Problem-Solving Team
      1. In the past, teams were typically composed of 5–12 hourly employees from the same department who met for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment.
   B. Self-Managed Work Teams
      1. Problem-solving teams only make recommendations.
      2. Some organizations have created teams to not only make recommendations but also to implement solutions.
      3. These groups of employees (typically 10–15 in number) perform highly related or interdependent jobs and take on many of the responsibilities of their former supervisors.
   C. Cross-Functional Teams (ppt10-6)
      1. These are teams made up of employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task.
      2. Many organizations have used horizontal, boundary-spanning groups for years.
   D. Virtual Teams (ppt10-7)
      1. The previous types of teams do their work face to face. Virtual teams use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal.
      2. They allow people to collaborate online.
      3. Virtual teams can do all the things that other teams do.
      4. They can include members from the same organization or link an organization's members with employees from other organizations.
      5. Despite their ubiquity, virtual teams face special challenges.

IV. Creating Effective Teams
   A. Introduction
      1. Factors for creating effective teams have been summarized in the model found in Exhibit 10–3. (ppt10-8)
      2. Two caveats:
         a. First, teams differ in form and structure—be careful not to rigidly apply the model's predictions to all teams.
         b. Second, the model assumes that it is already been determined that teamwork is preferable over individual work.

       3. Four key components: (ppt10-9)
         a. Contextual influences
         b. Team's composition
         c. Work design
         d. Process variables

B. Context: What Factors Determine Whether Teams Are Effective? (ppt10-10)
   Four contextual factors most significant to team performance follow:
    1. Adequate Resources
    2. Leadership and Structure
    3. Climate of Trust
    4. Performance Evaluation and Reward Systems

C. Team Composition (ppt10-11)
    1. Abilities of Members
       a. Teams require three different types of skills:
         i. Technical expertise
         ii. Problem-solving and decision-making skills
         iii. Good listening, feedback, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills
       b. Research reveals some insights into team composition and performance.
       c. The ability of the team's leader also matters.
    2. Personality of Members
       a. Many of the dimensions identified in the Big Five personality model have shown to be relevant to team effectiveness.
       b. Conscientious people are valuable in teams because they're good at backing up other team members, and they're also good at sensing when that support is truly needed.
       c. Open team members communicate better with one another and throw out more ideas, which makes teams composed of open people more creative and innovative.
    3. Allocating Roles (ppt10-12)
       a. Teams have different needs, and people should be selected for a team to ensure that there is diversity and that all various roles are filled.
       b. Managers need to understand the individual strengths that each person can bring to a team, select members with their strengths in mind, and allocate work assignments accordingly.
       c. Nine roles of potential teams members are found in Exhibit 10-4.
    4. Diversity of Members
       a. Many of us hold the optimistic view that diversity should be a good thing— diverse teams should benefit from differing perspectives and do better.
       b. Two meta-analytic reviews of the research literature show, however, that demographic diversity is essentially unrelated to team performance overall.
       c. Proper leadership can also improve the performance of diverse teams.
       d. The degree to which members of a work unit (group, team, or department) share a common demographic attribute, such as age, sex, race, educational level, or length of service in the organization, is the subject of organizational demography.
       e. Conflict and power struggles are more likely and are more severe when they occur. Increased conflict makes membership less attractive, so employees are more likely to quit. Similarly, the losers in a power struggle are more apt to leave voluntarily or be forced out.
    5. Size of Teams

        a. The most effective teams are neither very small (under four or five) nor very large (over a dozen). Effective teams—managers should keep them about five to nine members.
    6. Member Preferences
        a. Not every employee is a team player.
  D. Team Processes (ppt10-14)
    1. Introduction
        a. The final category related to team effectiveness is process variables such as member commitment to a common purpose, establishment of specific team goals, team efficacy, a managed level of conflict, and minimized social loafing.
        b. Exhibit 10-5 illustrates how group processes can have an impact on a group's actual effectiveness.
    2. Common Plan and Purpose
        a. Effective teams begin by analyzing the team's mission, developing goals to achieve that mission, and creating strategies for achieving the goals.
        b. Effective teams also show reflexivity, meaning they reflect on and adjust their master plan when necessary.
    3. Specific Goals
        a. Successful teams translate their common purpose into specific, measurable, and realistic performance goals. They energize the team.
  E. Team Efficacy
    1. Effective teams have confidence in themselves and believe they can succeed—this is team efficacy. Success breeds success.
    2. Management can increase team efficacy by helping the team to achieve small successes and skill training.
  F. Mental Models
    1. Effective teams share accurate mental models—knowledge and beliefs (a "psychological map") about how the work gets done.
    2. If team members have different ideas about how to do things, the team will fight over how to do things rather than focus on what needs to be done.
  G. Conflict Levels
    1. Conflict on a team is not necessarily bad. Teams that are completely void of conflict are likely to become apathetic and stagnant.
    2. Relationship conflicts—those based on interpersonal incompatibilities, tension, and animosity toward others—are almost always dysfunctional.
  H. Social Loafing
    1. Individuals can hide inside a group. Effective teams undermine this tendency by holding themselves accountable at both the individual and team level.

V. Turning Individuals into Team Players (ppt10-15)
  A. Introduction
    1. Many people are not inherently team players. They are loners or want to be recognized for their own accomplishments.
  B. Selecting: Hiring Team Players
    1. Some people already possess the interpersonal skills to be effective team players. Care should be taken to ensure that candidates could fulfill their team roles as well as technical requirements.
    2. Many job candidates do not have team skills.
        a. In established organizations that decide to redesign jobs around teams, it should be expected that some employees will resist being team players and may be untrainable.

    C. Training: Creating Team Players
        1. A large proportion of people raised on the importance of individual accomplishment can be trained to become team players.
        2. Workshops help employees improve their problem-solving, communication, negotiation, conflict-management, and coaching skills.
    D. Rewarding: Providing Incentives to Be a Good Team Player
        1. An organization's reward system must be reworked to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive ones.
        2. Apparently, the low trust that is typical of the competitive group will not be readily replaced by high trust with a quick change in reward systems.
        3. These problems are not seen in teams that have consistently cooperative systems.
        4. Promotions, pay raises, and other forms of recognition should be given to individuals who work effectively as team members by training new colleagues, sharing information, helping resolve team conflicts, and mastering needed new skills.
        5. Finally, don't forget the intrinsic rewards, such as camaraderie, that employees can receive from teamwork. It's exciting and satisfying to be part of a successful team.

VI. Beware! Teams Are Not Always the Answer (ppt10-16)
    A. Teamwork takes more time and often more resources than individual work.
    B. Teams have increased communication demands, conflicts to manage, and meetings to run.
    C. The benefits of using teams have to exceed the costs, and that's not always the case.
    D. Before you rush to implement teams, carefully assess whether the work requires or will benefit from a collective effort.
    E. How do you know whether the work of your group would be better done in teams?
    F. You can apply three tests to see whether a team fits your situation.
        1. First, can the work be done better by more than one person?
        2. Second, does the work create a common purpose or set of goals for the people in the group that is more than the aggregate of individual goals?
        3. The final test is to determine whether the members of the group are interdependent.

VII. Global Implications (ppt10-17)
    A. Research on global considerations in the use of teams is just beginning, but three areas are particularly worth mentioning: the extent of teamwork, self-managed teams, and team cultural diversity.
    B. Extent of Teamwork
    C. Although work teams are pervasive in the United States, some evidence suggests the degree to which teams affect the way work is done is not as significant in the United States as in other countries.
    D. Self-Managed Teams
        1. Evidence suggests self-managed teams have not fared well in Mexico, largely due to that culture's low tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty and employees' strong respect for hierarchical authority.
        2. Thus, in countries relatively high in power distance—where roles of leaders and followers are clearly delineated—a team may need to be structured so leadership roles are spelled out and power relationships identified.
    E. Team Cultural Diversity and Team Performance

1. Like the earlier research, evidence here indicates these elements of diversity interfere with team processes, at least in the short term.
2. Cultural diversity does seem to be an asset for tasks that call for a variety of viewpoints.

VIII.   Summary and Implications for Managers (ppt10-18)
   A. Few trends have influenced jobs as much as the massive movement to introduce teams into the workplace. The shift from working alone to working on teams requires employees to cooperate with others, share information, confront differences, and sublimate personal interests for the greater good of the team.
   B. Effective teams have common characteristics. They have adequate resources, effective leadership, a climate of trust, and a performance evaluation and reward system that reflects team contributions. These teams have individuals with technical expertise as well as problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills and the right traits, especially conscientiousness and openness.
   C. Effective teams also tend to be small—with fewer than 10 people, preferably of diverse backgrounds.
   D. They have members who fill role demands and who prefer to be part of a group.
   E. And the work that members do provides freedom and autonomy, the opportunity to use different skills and talents, the ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product, and work that has a substantial impact on others.
   F. Finally, effective teams have members who believe in the team's capabilities and are committed to a common plan and purpose, an accurate shared mental model of what is to be accomplished, specific team goals, a manageable level of conflict, and a minimal degree of social loafing.
   G. Because individualistic organizations and societies attract and reward individual accomplishments, it can be difficult to create team players in these environments.
   H. To make the conversion, management should try to select individuals who have the interpersonal skills to be effective team players, provide training to develop teamwork skills, and reward individuals for cooperative efforts.

EXPANDED CHAPTER OUTLINE

I.   Why Have Teams Become So Popular?
     A. Decades ago, it made news because no one else was doing it. Today, it is the
         organization that does not use teams that has become newsworthy.
     B. The current popularity of teams seems based on the evidence that teams
         typically outperform individuals when the tasks being done require multiple
         skills, judgment, and experience.
     C. As organizations have restructured, they have turned to teams to better
         utilize employee talents.
     D. The motivational properties of teams = significant factor. The role of
         employee involvement as a motivator—teams facilitate employee
         participation in operating decisions.

II. Differences Between Groups and Teams
     A. Groups and teams are not the same thing. (Exhibit 10-1)
     B. In the last chapter, we defined a group as "two or more individuals,
         interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve
         particular objectives."
         1. A work group is a group that interacts primarily to share information and
             to make decisions to help each member perform within his or her area of
             responsibility.
         2. Work groups have no need or opportunity to engage in collective work
             that requires joint effort. Their performance is the summation of each
             group member's individual contribution.
         3. There is no positive synergy.
     C. A work team generates positive synergy through coordinated effort.
         Individual efforts result in a level of performance that is greater than the
         sum of those individual inputs.
         1. Management is looking for that positive synergy that will allow their
             organizations to increase performance. The extensive use of teams
             creates the potential for an organization to generate greater outputs with
             no increase in inputs. Merely calling a group a team doesn't
             automatically increase its performance.

III. Types of Teams (Exhibit 10-2)
     A. Problem-Solving Team
         1. In the past, teams were typically composed of 5–12 hourly employees
             from the same department who met for a few hours each week to discuss
             ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment.
         2. Members share ideas or offer suggestions on how work processes and
             methods can be improved. Rarely are they given the authority to
             unilaterally implement their suggested actions.
         3. One of the most widely practiced applications during the 1980s was
             quality circles.
     B. Self-Managed Work Teams
         1. Problem-solving teams only make recommendations.
         2. Some organizations have created teams to not only make
             recommendations but also to implement solutions.
         3. These groups of employees (typically 10–15 in number) perform highly
             related or interdependent jobs and take on many of the responsibilities of
             their former supervisors.

      4. This includes planning and scheduling of work, assigning tasks to members, collective control over the pace of work, making operating decisions, and taking action on problems.

      5. Fully self-managed work teams even select their own members and have the members evaluate each other's performance. As a result supervisory roles become less important.

      6. But research on the effectiveness of self-managed work teams has not been uniformly positive.

         a. Self-managed teams do not typically manage conflicts well.

         b. When disputes arise, members stop cooperating and power struggles ensue, which leads to lower group performance.

         c. Moreover, although individuals on these teams report higher levels of job satisfaction than other individuals, they also sometimes have higher absenteeism and turnover rates.

  C. Cross-Functional Teams

      1. These are teams made up of employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task.

      2. Many organizations have used horizontal, boundary-spanning groups for years.

      3. IBM created a large task force in the 1960s—made up of employees from across departments in the company—to develop the highly successful System 360.

      4. A task force is really nothing other than a temporary cross-functional team.

      5. Cross-functional teams are an effective means of allowing people from diverse areas within or even between organizations to exchange information, develop new ideas, solve problems, and coordinate complex projects.

      6. Cross-functional teams are challenging to manage.

  D. Virtual Teams

      1. The previous types of teams do their work face to face. Virtual teams use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal.

      2. They allow people to collaborate online.

      3. Virtual teams can do all the things that other teams do.

      4. They can include members from the same organization or link an organization's members with employees from other organizations.

      5. Despite their ubiquity, virtual teams face special challenges.

         a. They may suffer because there is less social rapport and direct interaction among members.

         b. They aren't able to duplicate the normal give-and-take of face-to-face discussion. Especially when members haven't personally met, virtual teams tend to be more task oriented and exchange less social–emotional information than face-to-face teams do.

         c. Not surprisingly, their members report less satisfaction with the group interaction process than do face-to-face teams.

         d. For virtual teams to be effective, management should ensure that:

            i. Trust is established among members (one inflammatory remark in a team member e-mail can severely undermine team trust)

            ii. Team progress is monitored closely (so the team doesn't lose sight of its goals and no team member "disappears")

            iii. The efforts and products of the team are publicized throughout the organization (so the team does not become invisible)

IV. Creating Effective Teams
   A. Introduction
      1. Factors for creating effective teams have been summarized in the model found in Exhibit 10–3.
      2. Two caveats:
         a. First, teams differ in form and structure—be careful not to rigidly apply the model's predictions to all teams.
         b. Second, the model assumes that it is already been determined that teamwork is preferable over individual work.
      3. Four key components:
         a. Contextual influences
         b. Team's composition
         c. Work design
         d. Process variables
   B. Context: What Factors Determine Whether Teams Are Effective?
      Four contextual factors most significant to team performance follow:
      1. Adequate Resources
         a. All work teams rely on resources outside the group to sustain it.
         b. A scarcity of resources directly reduces the ability of the team to perform its job effectively.
         c. As one set of researchers concluded, "perhaps one of the most important characteristics of an effective work group is the support the group receives from the organization."
      2. Leadership and Structure
         a. Agreeing on the specifics of work and how they fit together to integrate individual skills requires team leadership and structure.
         b. Leadership is not always needed. Self-managed work teams often perform better than teams with formally appointed leaders.
         c. On traditionally managed teams, we find that two factors seem to influence team performance:
            i. The leader's expectations and his or her mood.
            ii. Leaders who expect good things from their team are more likely to get them!
      3. Climate of Trust
         a. Members of effective teams trust each other and exhibit trust in their leaders.
         b. When members trust each other, they are more willing to take risks.
         c. When members trust their leadership, they are more willing to commit to their leader's goals and decisions.
      4. Performance Evaluation and Reward Systems
         a. How do you get team members to be both individually and jointly accountable? The traditional, individually-oriented evaluation and reward system must be modified to reflect team performance.
         b. Individual performance evaluations, fixed hourly wages, and individual incentives are not consistent with the development of high-performance teams.
         c. Management should consider group-based appraisals, profit sharing, gainsharing, small-group incentives, and other system modifications that will reinforce team effort and commitment.
   C. Team Composition
      1. Abilities of Members
         a. Teams require three different types of skills:
            i. Technical expertise
            ii. Problem-solving and decision-making skills

          iii. Good listening, feedback, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills.
- b. Research reveals some insights into team composition and performance
  - i. First, when the task entails considerable thought (solving a complex problem such as reengineering an assembly line), high-ability teams (composed of mostly intelligent members) do better than lower-ability teams, especially when the workload is distributed evenly. That way, team performance does not depend on the weakest link. High-ability teams are also more adaptable to changing situations; they can more effectively apply existing knowledge to new problems.
  - ii. Second, when tasks are simple, high-ability teams do not perform as well, perhaps because members become bored and turn their attention to other activities that are more stimulating, whereas low-ability teams stay on task. High-ability teams should be reserved for tackling the tough problems. So matching team ability to the task is important.
- c. The ability of the team's leader also matters.
  - i. Smart team leaders help less-intelligent team members when they struggle with a task.
  - ii. But a less-intelligent leader can neutralize the effect of a high-ability team.

2. Personality of Members
   - a. Many of the dimensions identified in the Big Five personality model have shown to be relevant to team effectiveness.
   - b. Conscientious people are valuable in teams because they're good at backing up other team members, and they're also good at sensing when that support is truly needed.
   - c. Open team members communicate better with one another and throw out more ideas, which makes teams composed of open people more creative and innovative.
   - d. Performance across the teams will be higher if the organization forms 10 highly conscientious teams and 10 teams low in conscientiousness. "This may be because, in such teams, members who are highly conscientious not only must perform their own tasks but also must perform or re-do the tasks of low-conscientious members.
   - e. It may also be because such diversity leads to feelings of contribution inequity.

3. Allocating Roles
   - a. Teams have different needs, and people should be selected for a team to ensure that there is diversity and that all various roles are filled.
   - b. Managers need to understand the individual strengths that each person can bring to a team, select members with their strengths in mind, and allocate work assignments accordingly.
   - c. Nine roles of potential team members are found in Exhibit 10-4.

4. Diversity of Members
   - a. Many of us hold the optimistic view that diversity should be a good thing— diverse teams should benefit from differing perspectives and do better.
   - b. Two meta-analytic reviews of the research literature show, however, that demographic diversity is essentially unrelated to team performance overall.

     c. One qualifier is that gender and ethnic diversity have more negative effects in occupations dominated by white or male employees, but in more demographically balanced occupations diversity is less of a problem.

     d. Diversity in function and expertise are positively related to group performance, but these effects are quite small and depend on the situation.

     e. One of the pervasive challenges with teams is that while diversity may have real potential benefits, a team is deeply focused on commonly held information.

     f. But to realize their creative potential, diverse teams need to focus not on their similarities but on their differences.

         i. Some evidence suggests that when team members believe others have more expertise, they will work to support those members, leading to higher levels of effectiveness. The key is for members of diverse teams to communicate what they uniquely know and also what they don't know.

     g. Proper leadership can also improve the performance of diverse teams.

         i. When leaders provide an inspirational common goal for members with varying types of education and knowledge, teams are very creative. When leaders don't provide such goals, diverse teams fail to take advantage of their unique skills and are actually *less* creative than teams with homogeneous skills.

     h. The degree to which members of a work unit (group, team, or department) share a common demographic attribute, such as age, sex, race, educational level, or length of service in the organization, is the subject of organizational demography.

         i. Organizational demography suggests that attributes such as age or the date of joining should help us predict turnover.

         ii. The logic goes like this:

           (a) Turnover will be greater among those with dissimilar experiences because communication is more difficult.

     i. Conflict and power struggles are more likely and are more severe when they occur. Increased conflict makes membership less attractive, so employees are more likely to quit. Similarly, the losers in a power struggle are more apt to leave voluntarily or be forced out.

   5. Size of Teams

     a. The most effective teams are neither very small (under four or five) nor very large (over a dozen). Effective teams—managers should keep them about five to nine members.

     b. Very small teams are likely to lack for diversity of views, requiring four to five members in a group to achieve a significant degree of diversity.

     c. Large teams have difficulty getting much done; therefore, consider creating subgroups in large teams to achieve greater performance.

   6. Member Preferences

     a. Not every employee is a team player.

     b. Given the option, many employees will select themselves out of team participation.

     c. High performing teams are likely to be composed of people who prefer working as part of a group.

D. Team Processes

   1. Introduction

     a. The final category related to team effectiveness is process variables such as member commitment to a common purpose, establishment

    of specific team goals, team efficacy, a managed level of conflict, and minimized social loafing.

   b. These will be especially important in larger teams, and in teams that are highly interdependent.

   c. Why are processes important to team effectiveness?

    i. When each member's contribution is not clearly visible, individuals tend to decrease their effort.

    ii. Social loafing, in other words, illustrates a process loss from using teams.

   d. Exhibit 10-5 illustrates how group processes can have an impact on a group's actual effectiveness.

   e. Teams are often used in research laboratories because they can draw on the diverse skills of various individuals to produce more meaningful research than could be generated by all the researchers working independently—that is, they produce positive synergy, and their process gains exceed their process losses.

  2. Common Plan and Purpose

   a. Effective teams begin by analyzing the team's mission, developing goals to achieve that mission, and creating strategies for achieving the goals.

   b. Teams that establish a clear sense of what needs to be done and how consistently perform better.

   c. Members of successful teams put a tremendous amount of time and effort into discussing, shaping, and agreeing on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually.

   d. Effective teams also show reflexivity, meaning they reflect on and adjust their master plan when necessary.

  3. Specific Goals

   a. Successful teams translate their common purpose into specific, measurable, and realistic performance goals. They energize the team.

   b. Specific goals facilitate clear communication and help teams maintain their focus on results. Team goals should be challenging.

 E. Team Efficacy

  1. Effective teams have confidence in themselves and believe they can succeed—this is team efficacy. Success breeds success.

  2. Management can increase team efficacy by helping the team to achieve small successes and skill training.

  3. Small successes build team confidence.

  4. The greater the abilities of team members, the greater the likelihood that the team will develop confidence and the capability to deliver that confidence.

 F. Mental Models

  1. Effective teams share accurate mental models—knowledge and beliefs (a "psychological map") about how the work gets done.

  2. If team members have the wrong mental models, which is particularly likely with teams under acute stress, their performance suffers.

  3. If team members have different ideas about how to do things, the team will fight over how to do things rather than focus on what needs to be done.

 G. Conflict Levels

  1. Conflict on a team is not necessarily bad. Teams that are completely void of conflict are likely to become apathetic and stagnant.

  2. Relationship conflicts—those based on interpersonal incompatibilities, tension, and animosity toward others—are almost always dysfunctional.

      3. On teams performing non-routine activities, disagreements among members about task content (called task conflicts) are not detrimental. It is often beneficial because it lessens the likelihood of groupthink.

  H. Social Loafing
      1. Individuals can hide inside a group. Effective teams undermine this tendency by holding themselves accountable at both the individual and team level.

V. Turning Individuals into Team Players
  A. Introduction
      1. Many people are not inherently team players. They are loners or want to be recognized for their own accomplishments.
      2. There are also a great many organizations that have historically nurtured individual accomplishments. How do we introduce teams in highly individualistic environments?
  B. Selecting: Hiring Team Players
      1. Some people already possess the interpersonal skills to be effective team players. Care should be taken to ensure that candidates could fulfill their team roles as well as technical requirements.
      2. Many job candidates do not have team skills.
         a. This is especially true for those socialized around individual contributions.
         b. The candidates can undergo training to "make them into team players."
      3. In established organizations that decide to redesign jobs around teams, it should be expected that some employees will resist being team players and may be untrainable.
  C. Training: Creating Team Players
      1. A large proportion of people raised on the importance of individual accomplishment can be trained to become team players.
      2. Workshops help employees improve their problem-solving, communication, negotiation, conflict-management, and coaching skills.
      3. Employees also learn the five-stage group development model.
  D. Rewarding: Providing Incentives to Be a Good Team Player
      1. An organization's reward system must be reworked to encourage cooperative efforts rather than competitive ones.
      2. Hallmark Cards, Inc., added to its basic individual-incentive system an annual bonus based on achievement of team goals.
      3. Whole Foods directs most of its performance-based rewards toward team performance.
         a. As a result, teams select new members carefully so they will contribute to team effectiveness (and thus team bonuses).
         b. It is usually best to set a cooperative tone as soon as possible in the life of a team.
         c. As we already noted, teams that switch from a competitive to a cooperative system do not share information and make rushed, poor-quality decisions.
      4. Apparently, the low trust that is typical of the competitive group will not be readily replaced by high trust with a quick change in reward systems.
      5. These problems are not seen in teams that have consistently cooperative systems.
      6. Promotions, pay raises, and other forms of recognition should be given to individuals who work effectively as team members by training new colleagues, sharing information, helping resolve team conflicts, and mastering needed new skills.

7. This doesn't mean individual contributions should be ignored; rather, they should be balanced with selfless contributions to the team.
8. Finally, don't forget the intrinsic rewards, such as camaraderie, that employees can receive from teamwork. It's exciting and satisfying to be part of a successful team.
9. The opportunity for personal development of self and teammates can be a very satisfying and rewarding experience.

VI. Beware! Teams Are Not Always the Answer
   A. Teamwork takes more time and often more resources than individual work.
   B. Teams have increased communication demands, conflicts to manage, and meetings to run.
   C. The benefits of using teams have to exceed the costs, and that's not always the case.
   D. Before you rush to implement teams, carefully assess whether the work requires or will benefit from a collective effort.
   E. How do you know whether the work of your group would be better done in teams?
   F. You can apply three tests to see whether a team fits your situation.
      1. First, can the work be done better by more than one person? A good indicator is the complexity of the work and the need for different perspectives. Simple tasks that don't require diverse input are probably better left to individuals.
      2. Second, does the work create a common purpose or set of goals for the people in the group that is more than the aggregate of individual goals? Many service departments of new-vehicle dealers have introduced teams that link customer-service people, mechanics, parts specialists, and sales representatives. Such teams can better manage collective responsibility for ensuring customer needs are properly met.
      3. The final test is to determine whether the members of the group are interdependent.
         a. Using teams makes sense when there is interdependence between tasks—the success of the whole depends on the success of each one, *and* the success of each one depends on the success of the others.
            i. Soccer, for instance, is an obvious *team* sport. Success requires a great deal of coordination between interdependent players.
         b. Conversely, except possibly for relays, swim teams are not really teams.
            i. They're groups of individuals performing individually, whose total performance is merely the aggregate summation of their individual performances.

VII. Global Implications
   A. Research on global considerations in the use of teams is just beginning, but three areas are particularly worth mentioning: the extent of teamwork, self-managed teams, and team cultural diversity.
   B. Extent of Teamwork
      1. Although work teams are pervasive in the United States, some evidence suggests the degree to which teams affect the way work is done is not as significant in the United States as in other countries. One study comparing U.S. workers to Canadian and Asian workers revealed that 51 percent of workers in Asian-Pacific countries and 48 percent of Canadian employees report high levels of teamwork.
      2. But only 32 percent of U.S. employees say their organization has a high level of teamwork. Thus, there still is a heavy role for individual

contributions in the United States. Given that U.S. culture is highly individualistic, that may continue to be true for quite some time.
- C. Self-Managed Teams
  1. Evidence suggests self-managed teams have not fared well in Mexico, largely due to that culture's low tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty and employees' strong respect for hierarchical authority.
  2. Thus, in countries relatively high in power distance—where roles of leaders and followers are clearly delineated—a team may need to be structured so leadership roles are spelled out and power relationships identified.
- D. Team Cultural Diversity and Team Performance
  1. Like the earlier research, evidence here indicates these elements of diversity interfere with team processes, at least in the short term.
  2. Cultural diversity does seem to be an asset for tasks that call for a variety of viewpoints.
     a. But culturally heterogeneous teams have more difficulty learning to work with each other and solving problems.
     b. The good news is that these difficulties seem to dissipate with time.
     c. Although newly formed culturally diverse teams underperform newly formed culturally homogeneous teams, the differences disappear after about 3 months.
     d. Fortunately, some team performance–enhancing strategies seem to work well in many cultures.
     e. One study found that teams in the European Union made up of members from collectivist and individualist countries benefitted equally from group goals.

VIII.   Summary and Implications for Managers
- A. Few trends have influenced jobs as much as the massive movement to introduce teams into the workplace. The shift from working alone to working on teams requires employees to cooperate with others, share information, confront differences, and sublimate personal interests for the greater good of the team.
- B. Effective teams have common characteristics. They have adequate resources, effective leadership, a climate of trust, and a performance evaluation and reward system that reflects team contributions. These teams have individuals with technical expertise as well as problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills and the right traits, especially conscientiousness and openness.
- C. Effective teams also tend to be small—with fewer than 10 people, preferably of diverse backgrounds.
- D. They have members who fill role demands and who prefer to be part of a group.
- E. And the work that members do provides freedom and autonomy, the opportunity to use different skills and talents, the ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product, and work that has a substantial impact on others.
- F. Finally, effective teams have members who believe in the team's capabilities and are committed to a common plan and purpose, an accurate shared mental model of what is to be accomplished, specific team goals, a manageable level of conflict, and a minimal degree of social loafing.
- G. Because individualistic organizations and societies attract and reward individual accomplishments, it can be difficult to create team players in these environments.

H. To make the conversion, management should try to select individuals who have the interpersonal skills to be effective team players, provide training to develop teamwork skills, and reward individuals for cooperative efforts.