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10

How will decision-making be managed? How will success be acknowledged and rewarded?

11

What resources are allocated to the team? How are they allocated? What wider organisational support mechanisms are available to assist the team?

12

How will the teamwork plan be developed? Is there scope for team members to have input into setting goals and activities or will their role be focused on the way these are achieved?

Types of teams

Teams vary across organisations, industries and sectors. Six common types of teams are described below.

Working

Perhaps the most common type of team, a working team is organised around the structure of the organisation. Members of the team work on similar tasks and need to have similar or complementary skills and experience. For example, a sales team, a team of nurses on a hospital ward, a firefighting team, a customer service team.

Cross-functional

In cross-functional or multidisciplinary teams, members are drawn from different functional areas in the organisation (such as sales, manufacturing and finance). Different people are needed to share their unique skills or knowledge with others in the team. In cross-functional teams, people are usually chosen for a significant reason, so it is important to ensure that team members are all able to participate in team discussions.

These teams often work on specific problems or form for information-sharing purposes. Many project teams or management teams are also cross-functional teams. Sometimes cross-functional teams include people external to the organisation, such as customers or suppliers. For example, a team that supports a sporting team might include a physiotherapist, psychologist, an administrator and a dietitian. The cross-functional team that created a winning Australian show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show in London included a designer, builder, landscaper, logistics manager and gardeners.

Participate in goal-setting processes

All team members are expected to participate and contribute their suggestions and ideas to this process. The group interacts and begins working as a team. People are encouraged to listen to what others have to say and develop a sense of ownership as they debate and discuss the important issue of what they are there to do, and how they plan to do it. During the process, team members also gain valuable insight into the roles, experiences, skills and abilities of their colleagues.

Collaborative goal-setting activities often occur at conferences or meetings in a workshop format. These may be conducted on a regular basis or at the commencement of a project or new task.

Outcomes of the goal-setting process

- The team devises a mission statement that summarises what they do and how they will do it.
- The team determines how it will achieve goals by developing a team operational plan and/or individual work plans.
- The team sets out ground rules and guidelines that direct how members will work with each other.

Example: vision and mission

The Queensland sales team at Snazzy Suede Shoes know what they are expected to do (sell products) and they have a sales target set by the national sales manager (\$100,000 worth of product each month). However, the members decide to create a team vision and mission, and look at how the team will meet those targets and work together effectively. After some debate and discussion, the sales team decide that their mission is:

‘To generate additional sales from existing clients and build our client base through excellent service and attention to detail.’

The team assigns tasks and responsibilities and determines how they will achieve the \$100,000 target each month by growing existing accounts and looking for new ones.

The team also generates guidelines that the members agree to work by, including:

- How they would make decisions: ‘The team will meet weekly to discuss important issues and will make a recommendation to the team leader who will make a decision.’
- The standards to which they would work: ‘All queries will be replied to within 24 hours.’
- How issues and concerns in the team would be managed: ‘The team will meet once a week to discuss and resolve issues and concerns.’
- How the team would want disagreements or differences resolved: ‘The team leader will act as mediator.’



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Practical team roles vary considerably depending on the working environment. Generally, there are two basic roles in a team (team leader and team member) that apply in almost all circumstances. However, team roles rely on more than simply leadership and membership, and are not necessarily limited to or defined by a job description.

Below are some examples of working environments and the teams/team members that can be found in each.

Building site**Team leader:**

Foreman

Team members and their roles:

Bricklayers, electricians, labourers, carpenters, plumbers

Operating theatre**Team leader:**

Chief surgeon

Team members and their roles:

Anaesthetist, theatre nurses, technicians, assistant surgeons

Warehouse**Team leader:**

Supervisor

Team members and their roles:

Forklift drivers, pickers, packers, order checkers

Bank branch**Team leader:**

Branch manager

Team members and their roles:

Tellers, supervisors, loan staff, back office staff

Tips for promoting a consultative team culture

The culture in a team is often determined by the leadership style of the manager. Managers who naturally consult with others and encourage group decision-making will find that many of the following activities come about naturally, as a result of the way they work. Other managers may find that they need to build these activities into their management plans and into team operational and work plans. Here are some tips for promoting a consultative team culture.

Tips for promoting a consultative team culture

1**Meetings**

Have meetings to identify and discuss roles and responsibilities.

2**Work goals**

Assist in identifying and documenting work goals and tasks for team members in their work plans.

3**Regular team meetings**

Have regular team meetings or get-togethers where everyone can share information about what they have been working on.

4**Brainstorming sessions**

Have brainstorming sessions or workshops where members' input, opinions, suggestions and expertise is expected and valued.

5**Individual meetings**

At the outset of a project or when a new team member comes on board, set up one-on-one meetings in the team so people can discuss their work and get to know each other.

6**Email and internet**

Use email and internet services to facilitate communication, particularly in remote teams. Some companies have a staff-only internet called an 'intranet'; this can be invaluable for sharing information and collaborating.

**Work health
and safety**

Work health and safety (WHS) legislation

Employers have a duty to provide a safe work environment for their employees. A breach of the act may result in prosecution and substantial fines. If a breach results in the injury or death of a worker, the employer may also have to pay compensation to the worker or their legal representative. This is legislated at the federal and state level.

WHS relates to the mental wellbeing of employees as well as their physical safety. For example, employers have a responsibility to prevent bullying.

Anti-discrimination

Anti-discrimination legislation

Managers and team leaders must prevent and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. Employees must not be treated differently on the grounds of race, colour, gender, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, nationality or social origin.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment legislation

Sexual harassment is broadly defined as an unwelcome sexual advance or unwelcome request for sexual favours, or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, principally in circumstances where the perpetrator would have anticipated that the victim or victims would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Laws regarding sexual harassment fall under the relevant equal opportunity and discrimination legislation in your state or territory.

The prohibition against sexual harassment applies to management and employees. Make employees aware of the provisions of the relevant Act. Have a clear policy against sexual harassment and a complaints procedure. Employees should understand that engaging in sexual harassment may be grounds for dismissal.

Practice task 2

In this table, categorise each of the factors that contribute to positive employee engagement into either job or organisational engagement categories.

Factors that contribute to positive employee engagement	Job engagement	Organisational engagement
1. I am committed to my organisation's core values.		
2. Our customers think highly of our products and services.		
3. My opinions count.		
4. I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me at work.		
5. I understand how I can contribute to meeting the needs of our customers.		
6. I have been fairly rewarded.		
7. Senior leaders value employees.		
8. Everyone is treated with respect at work, regardless of who they are.		
9. I can concentrate on my job when I am at my work area.		
10. My personal work objectives are linked to my work area's business plan.		
11. I clearly understand my organisation's mission.		
12. Senior leaders have the capability to make my organisation successful.		
13. I am encouraged to take ownership of my work.		
14. My organisation is involved in supporting the community.		
15. There are career opportunities for me at my organisation.		
16. You can balance work and personal interests at my organisation and still progress.		
17. My organisation allows me to maintain a reasonable balance between my family and work life.		
18. The amount of pressure I experience in my role is reasonable.		
19. There is sufficient incentive to perform well in my organisation.		
20. My pay is competitive compared to similar jobs in my organisation.		
21. My immediate manager gives me the support I need to do my job well.		

continued ...

While it costs money to provide training, it is a profitable investment for any organisation and yields long-term dividends. Providing adequate training is an organisational obligation in some workplaces (particularly where safety is concerned) and is standard practice in many others.

Management styles: career planning

Taking time to ask each team member what their goals are and what experience they have had can make a huge difference to their morale and to the contribution they can make to the team's goals. Knowing people's capabilities, motivations and interests can be a powerful tool for a manager in building a high-performance team.

Career planning may include actively helping team members find a new position in the organisation that will challenge them further and allow them to continue to grow and learn. Many organisations have in-built career planning systems, advisers and facilitators who provide assistance in developing and delivering career planning programs at a team and individual level.

The challenge of supporting a remote team

Many managers find themselves in charge of a team that is located in different places and does not work together in a geographical sense. These teams have similar needs to other teams, although special consideration needs to be taken in planning communication and team building.

Electronic communication tools such as email, telephones and teleconferencing have made remote team members' and managers' work easier. Even so, many organisations like to hold annual conferences or general meetings where colleagues from remote areas meet to make plans, review achievements and focus on new goals.



In today's global work environment, remote teams are increasingly common. They may have challenges, as shown in the following example about the Human Genome Project team, but even large, remotely located teams are able to achieve remarkable results ahead of time thanks to good planning and clear goals.

Topic 2

Lead team to develop cohesion

Cohesion is the term used to describe a number of disparate parts operating together seamlessly. Applied to a team, cohesion means that everyone understands the common purpose of the team and pulls together to achieve the goals. The role of the team leader or manager is to promote a culture of cooperation in which everyone's input is encouraged, valued and rewarded.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Provide opportunities for planning, decision-making and action
- 2B Encourage team members to take responsibility for their work
- 2C Provide feedback to team members
- 2D Recognise and address team problems
- 2E Model expected behaviours and approaches

Example: a team demonstrates the consequences of not acting responsibly

Patricia is team leader of an advertising sales team in a publishing company. Once a month, she attends a senior management meeting to make a presentation on the team's performance. She relies on her three team members to prepare reports for her to use in the presentation. In previous months, Patricia has received reports just an hour before her presentation. She speaks to her team and explains why she needs the reports on time. She suggests ways in which they can plan ahead, knowing that the report is due each month.

Stephen plans his work week around getting his report done on time, rescheduling less urgent tasks. He hands his report to Patricia half a day early and she thanks him for responding to her feedback.

The next morning, Patricia is still waiting on reports from Bronwen and Mohammed. Mohammed hands her a hard copy of his report, apologising for being late. 'I stayed back last night to get it done but I had computer problems,' he says. 'I worked on it at home and printed it out for you this morning.' Patricia is relieved to have the report, but is disappointed that Mohammed left it to the last minute again.

Bronwen is not in the office and neither Stephen nor Mohammed know where she is or the status of her report. Stephen in particular feels annoyed and disappointed – Patricia told them that if she gave a poor presentation because she didn't have the information she needed, senior management would question the whole team's performance. At 12.00 pm Bronwen arrives back from a client meeting and submits her report. Patricia has very little time to review it and finalise her presentation. She feels angry that the understanding, helpful approach she tried has been ignored by some of her staff.

It is clear to Patricia that she will have to manage the team more closely in future. She resolves to implement monitoring procedures that will make sure the reports are submitted on time.



Address problems

In many teams, plans and decisions are made by consensus. If a faulty decision or plan results in underperformance, it may be that the planning process is at fault rather than a lack of team responsibility. In such a situation, the process that led to the creation of the plan should be examined and revised so that future plans are stronger and more relevant to the team.

However, if the team members act without regard for one another or are lacking in a sense of camaraderie and teamwork, the team leader will need to work quickly and carefully to remedy the situation. Team counselling and one-on-one discussions will help, as will further efforts to build team spirit, trust and cooperation.

Here are two popular ways of giving feedback to teams and individuals.

360-degree feedback	Feedback during performance reviews
<p>This highly structured method of giving feedback involves all team members giving other individuals in the team a rating or qualitative feedback on their performance.</p> <p>For example, team members could give each other a score out of 10 on points such as communication, team spirit, contribution and preparedness at meetings.</p> <p>The results can be delivered anonymously, with participants receiving a report showing the scores they received on each point. 360-degree feedback can be confronting and needs to be managed carefully. Getting low scores from team members can be a shock; on the other hand, getting high scores lets you know that colleagues appreciate your efforts. 360-degree feedback is a useful tool, especially when plans are put in place to correct poor results.</p>	<p>Any kind of performance feedback needs to be given carefully, especially if it is negative. Feedback that constitutes part of a performance review can affect a person's career and advancement prospects and, in many cases, their earnings (if performance reviews are linked to bonuses or salary).</p> <p>Positive and negative feedback needs to be given constructively. Try to give examples and to be balanced in what you say. Link the feedback to key result areas, performance indicators, or team goals, and state the effect the positive or negative performance has had on team outcomes. If feedback is negative, move on to ways you can work together to remedy the situation.</p>

Example: a manager gives feedback on a job well done

Jeremy, a team leader, is providing feedback at a team meeting on a recently completed project.

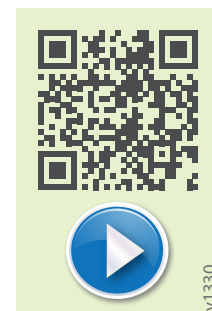
'I want to take the time now to talk about the work that Margie and Harif have been doing on the new customer service questionnaire. They have worked very hard on this project and last week the new questionnaire replaced the old one.

'Initial reports they have given me have shown that the new questionnaire provides us with 60 per cent more data on each client than we had before. This is already having a major impact on our product design department. The completion of the new questionnaire is one of the key result areas for our team, so that task can now be crossed off our list.

'On behalf of the team, thanks for your hard work and congratulations on a job well done.'

After the team meeting, Jeremy meets privately with Margie and Harif and talks to them about their project in more detail, asking them what they learnt and what they would do differently next time. She praises some specific aspects of the project, and reinforces her previous statement that they have made a major contribution to the team.

Finally, Jeremy asks Margie and Harif for their feedback on her performance as a manager during the project.



Questions to consider when analysing a team problem

- Is the problem related to the way in which the team works?
- Is the problem an external problem?
- Is the problem a result of another problem?
- What affect is the problem having (or likely to have)?

What procedures might apply?

The first step is to refer to any standard operating procedures that apply to the whole organisation or your team and dictate the action you need to take. Following procedures is particularly important when legislation governs how employees should handle certain issues, such as workplace health and safety. These policies often identify when and how problems should be addressed, who needs to be involved and even the steps that need to be taken during the process. The same is true of some human resources issues, particularly those that involve reprimanding employees for non-performance, hiring and firing, or dealing with a grievance.

Again, depending on the problem and the type of organisation the team operates in, raising an issue may be done on a formal or informal basis, or both.

Below are some of the strategies that can be used in each approach.

Formal methods	Informal methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing standard forms or templates that your organisation has in place to deal with this circumstance • Writing a report that explains the problem faced by the team, the impact the problem will have and suggested solutions • Sending an email to specialist staff in a short-report format requesting a response or assistance • Requesting a meeting with key staff • Reporting on the issue using a regular formal reporting or feedback mechanism such as a monthly review meeting, management presentation or report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a phone conversation with a specialist staff member (e.g. WHS, HR, finance) • Discussing the issue on an informal basis during a meeting or get-together • Chatting to informally to colleagues who could help or advise

2E

Model expected behaviours and approaches

There are a number of common behaviours recognised in an effective team leader of a productive team. In particular, an effective team leader displays a range of abilities as described below.

Communicates effectively

An effective team leader is able to share information and communicate to the team about:

- past success (the goals that have been achieved)
- future goals
- how the team can achieve these goals
- support mechanisms for the team.

When communicating with their team members, good team leaders use a consultative approach. This entails actively listening to team member concerns and opinions before deciding on a strategy. An effective consultative approach also means that team leaders should provide feedback to their team members on a regular basis.

Recognises the professional development needs of team members

An effective team leader will identify the professional development needs of the team members and will initiate a process to ensure that each person's skills and knowledge are extended. This has direct benefits to the individual and the team, as it increases morale in the team and helps to ensure that the best is attained from each team member. Delegation can be an effective way of providing team members with professional development opportunities.

Sets goals and motivates the team to achieve them

An effective team leader will set clear, identifiable and achievable goals and will be able to plan and monitor a team's progress towards these goals. The steps to achieving these goals will need to be mapped out and discussed with each team member.

Provides encouragement

Effective team leaders encourage and promote creative and innovative approaches to problem-solving.

continued ...

1. Absence of trust
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to develop trust in the team

2. Fear of conflict
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to use conflict and deal with differences positively

3. Lack of commitment
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to inspire team members to be committed

4. Avoidance of accountability
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to make the team accountable

5. Inattention to results
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to stay focused on results

Do some research

Consult books, business magazines and research journals. There are many well-known and tested theories and frameworks about problem-solving that you could apply to your workplace.

Consider pros and cons

If your problem is deciding between two or more options, try listing the pros and cons of each option. This can help clarify thoughts and identify options that will deliver the greatest benefit.

Team and group problem-solving

In today's organisations, team and group decision-making and problem-solving has become a part of everyday organisational life. Group problem-solving can potentially produce superior solutions through one or more of the following aspects.

Criteria

As group membership increases, more stakeholders will be represented and their interests can be incorporated into the criteria used in the problem-solving process.

Cause/effect

By including people with specialised expertise, we tend to increase the likelihood that more accurate knowledge will be used in the problem-solving process.

Alternatives

Groups tend to develop a greater number of options than individuals; groups also come up with more creative solutions by working on a problem together.

Commitment to decision

Individuals contributing to a problem's solution tend to feel greater ownership of the solution, especially when their identities are tied to it. Motivation to properly implement the solution can be increased through team participation, and resistance to change can be decreased.

Practice task 10

Consider the following approach where a whole team can get together to work on the problems or challenges being faced by the team or individuals. Win Wenger, an American writer and thinker on the subject of learning and intelligence, developed this technique, known as 'Windtunnelling'. Similar to brainstorming, this exercise is based on the idea that when people spend concentrated time thinking about a subject, they often come up with good ideas.

Here's how it's done:

Organise the team into pairs. Get each pair to sit together, away from other pairs so they won't be distracted. Ensure each person has a notepad and pen, and give each pair a problem or issue to work on – the same or different issues for each pair. Read the instructions aloud one step at a time, allowing the pairs to complete one step before moving on to the next.

1. Once the pairs are clear on the problem they are working on, have each person write down five questions about the problem, without letting their partner see their questions.
2. Participants give each question a number from one to five.
3. One person in each pair volunteers to be the 'Windtunneller' and another to be 'Listener'.
4. The Windtunneller calls out a number between one and five.
5. The Listener reads their partner that numbered question.
6. The Windtunneller now tells, in a descriptive rapid-flow torrent, everything that comes to their mind in the context of that question. The Windtunneller needs to keep this flow of information up for six minutes, without any let-up. (This can be difficult, so you might like to try a test run on some other problems unrelated to your team using a shorter burst, such as three minutes.)
7. The Listener writes down the one or two most interesting ideas they heard during that torrent of information, and then the Windtunneller writes down the best ideas they think they came up with.
8. Participants now reverse roles and repeat the process. They continue swapping roles until all ten questions have been brainstormed.

When did the most interesting ideas come up? Were they near the start or near the end of the Listener's torrent and the Windtunneller's torrent?

Win Wenger says of this process: 'You will find that 99 per cent of the time, the best ideas occurred near the end, very much in keeping with findings from brainstorming ... I guarantee that even if some silly or even plain wrong ideas are in the front of the torrent, as with a brainstorm, really good and meaningful insights will start cropping up and predominate toward the end, and you will have a spectacularly better grasp and understanding of the topic or issue than would otherwise have been the case.'

Visit www.winwenger.com and to learn more about Windtunnelling and other tools Wenger and his team have developed as part of Project Renaissance. This project aims to 'enable as many human beings as possible to become more than a match for the situations, opportunities and problems or difficulties that they find around them, and to enjoy a richer quality of life and experience'.

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Understands people

Understands people and makes an effort to get to know team members; communicates well and develops trust

Has high personal goals

Sets high personal goals, expects a lot from themselves, views mistakes as learning experiences

Has ethical motivations

Has ethical motivations; is not simply motivated by money; is honest and has strong principles by which they live and work

Can laugh at themselves

Can laugh at themselves; aren't upset by criticism from others

Keeps going

Keeps going, despite disappointments, failures or rejections

Thinks positively

Thinks positively; believes they will succeed

Gets things done

Focuses on getting things done; spends time effectively

Characteristics of good leaders

Many other researchers have developed their own lists of characteristics of good leaders. Think about whether you agree with their combined observations.

Summary of leadership characteristics of good leaders:

- Goal-oriented
- Innovative
- Has integrity
- Courageous
- Calm in a crisis
- Unconventional
- Has a desire to help
- Communicates effectively
- Delegates wisely
- Encourages experimentation
- Supports and rewards team members
- Keeps morale high
- Promotes a sense of belonging
- Is fair
- Plans well
- Encourages and supports participation

4A

Maintain open communication with line manager/management at all times

When communicating with your manager, you need to ensure the information is in context, accurate, timely and presented in a way that is easy for them to understand and act upon, if action is needed. Consider the following when communicating with your team.

Message content

What do you want to communicate? Is it something incidental that might be of interest to others, or something important, such as a major problem or achieving one of your set goals? If it is incidental or not very important, a non-urgent email or quick chat in the tearoom might be most appropriate. Urgent or high-priority information might need to be handled with a phone call or face-to-face conversation with one or two key people, followed up with a clearly written email or memo to others who need to know.

Recipient(s)

Who needs to get the information? Is it just one person or a group? If just one person needs the information then maybe a phone call is sufficient; however, groups of people are best communicated with by email or in a meeting – then everyone gets the same message.

Giving feedback

If you are giving feedback, choose an appropriate format. Often verbal feedback is suitable; in other situations both verbal and written communication helps reinforce positive and negative points.

Written communication

Written communication can be challenging for some people, especially if they worry about using complicated language or documents. The important qualities to consider in written communication are:

- logic: for instance, if you need to alert people to a potential problem, start with the problem, tell people why it's a problem and then say what you need them to do in order to manage it
- clarity: make sure readers will be able to understand what you have written
- brevity: include only the information readers need to understand in order to act on the issue
- context: include background information if it's needed
- purpose: have a call to action or some sort of outcome if possible, so readers don't finish the document thinking 'so what?'
- author: include your contact details so readers can easily get in touch with you if they have ideas or feedback.

4B

Communicate information from line manager/management to the team

There will be occasions in your meetings with management when issues, concerns or problems regarding either your team or the organisation as a whole are raised. It is your responsibility to convey this information to your team or individual team members.

Communication in a team and liaising with management takes many forms. These may be verbal or written and may require the use of electronic communication techniques such as email or written reports. They may be formal or informal, and could include methods of communicating to entire groups or to individuals.

Occasionally, information provided to you from senior managers is sensitive and needs to be communicated in ways that do not have a negative effect on morale or motivation. In such situations, apply the guidelines shown below.

Decide how much information can be shared

With your manager, or using your own judgment, decide how much information can be shared with your team, and how it can best be communicated.

Consider how the concerns should be managed

Think carefully about how you will manage concerns raised by management about the quality of your team's work or an individual member. For instance, rather than directly telling team members that senior management is disappointed in their performance, you could implement team effectiveness activities and ask the team to renew their focus on working together to achieve goals.

Communicate sensitive information in a sensitive way

Communicate sensitive information in a sensitive way. Use one-on-one meetings to raise issues with people. Try to make raising criticisms or potential issues with individuals or the team a positive experience by jointly planning how the situation can be improved, offering advice and learning from the experience. Assume the role of coach and help your staff members rise to the challenge.

Summary

1. The team leader or frontline manager acts as a link or liaison between management and the team.
2. An effective team leader will ensure that the team's progress, concerns and issues are relayed to management, whilst also relaying information and decisions made by management to the team.
3. Effective communication with management or team members must be in context, accurate, timely and presented in a manner that is easy to understand and act on.
4. You need to be clear about what you need to convey and who you need to tell.
5. When communicating verbally, choose an appropriate time and place. Prepare what you want to say beforehand. Be clear and brief, and include a call to action if appropriate.
6. Written communication can be challenging and must have the qualities of logic, clarity, brevity, context and purpose.
7. Team leaders or frontline managers must keep senior management informed of their team's progress and issues through regular progress reports and discussions.
8. Remember to report good and bad news and to be open and honest when communicating with senior managers – problems will not be avoided by only reporting good news.
9. Consult senior management when you need to refer team issues and problems that you cannot resolve yourself.
10. There will be occasions when senior management requires you to communicate information regarding the team or the entire organisation to your team. It is your responsibility to convey this information sensitively, honestly and accurately.
11. You must address unresolved issues and report back to those who raised them.