

## COM 5401: Team Based Communication Assignment

### THE BAND IMPLOSION PROJECT

Bands are virtual poster children for team-based (group) communication dynamics. They are unique in that they embody all the good times and not-so-good times that can affect groups – they just happen to live a lot of it in the public eye.

1. Choose a band (three or more members) that has had a life cycle, meaning they came together, were a group for a while then they split up. It is ok if they did reform at a later time, because if you throw enough money at most any band they will usually forget that they hate each other, for a little while at least.
2. Analyze the dynamics within the band. You'll want to select a fairly well-known band because it will make your research MUCH easier, and all of you do need to do research here. Famous bands have had lots of things written about them; obscure bands, not so much. You'll want to analyze the group by talking about a few of the more common small group dynamics listed below. I do not expect you to cover every single one of these – just the concepts you feel are most relevant to the band your group chose (3-5 is appropriate).
  - Influence of size – how does a new member or even a band member's new love interest impact the rest of the group?
  - Adaptability to change – how does the rate, degree and desirability of change within the band affect their dynamic? Consider the impact of sudden fame, oodles of cash, and all that goes along with that.
  - Group synergy – Is the whole greater than the sum of its parts? Some groups are pure magic when they're together then they split up and the various members' solo careers are, well, not that great.
  - Leadership – Who is the leader of the band? Is there one? How does that get decided? What sort of leadership style is exhibited?
  - Conformity – How did members conform to group norms? Or did they? How did the rest of the group deal with deviant members?
  - Interconnectedness – How do the actions of one member ripple through the rest of the group? What effect do the actions of one have on the experience of the others?
  - Conflict – Plenty to talk about here! What sorts of conflict arose? Why? How did the group attempt to deal with that conflict? Where did they go wrong?
  - Roles – Who plays what role within the group? Do those roles change over time? If yes, why?
  - Norms – What sorts of norms define the band? What norms did they create for themselves? How did these norms affect the overall group mentality?
  - Decision-making – How did the group make decisions? Consensus? Majority rule? Did one person simply impose their will on the others? Did the way they made decisions end up being a factor in their demise. Explain.
  - Problem-solving – How did the band go about trying to solve their issues?
  - Power – Who had the power in the band? How did they wield it? Did other members resist or defy that power? How? Did the power dynamic change over time?
  - And of course, you'll want to talk about how and why they ended. What went wrong? Could it have been avoided? What sort of fall-out resulted from their break-up?

You're free to choose whomever you want as long as they are a well-known band, but some of the juicier band stories in history can be found among the following groups:

1. The Beatles – probably the most epic break-up ever documented. Bitter fights, interloping, controlling girlfriends, drugs, business deals gone wrong, the dreaded “creative differences” – basically the whole nine yards.
2. The Supremes – The movie “Dreamgirls” deals with their story.
3. Cream – Back in the day, they were the supergroup.
4. Oasis – Fighting brothers taken to a whole new level. Sibling rivalry totally run amok.
5. Metallica – They even made a documentary about all their problems called “Some Kind of Monster”. The band is pretty embarrassed about that movie now.
6. Pink Floyd – a legendary mess – years of acrimony, bad blood, guilt over Syd Barrett’s acid breakdown, and of course, lawsuits. You know it’s bad when you’re suing each other over the rights to an inflatable pig.
7. Led Zeppelin – drugs, groupies and one dead drummer. And the remaining members still have issues with each other 30 years later.
8. The Smashing Pumpkins – Bill Corgan was a difficult front man to say the least. Still is.
9. Fleetwood Mac – Oh, what a saga, even in all their incarnations.
10. The Beach Boys – They seem so wholesome, but they weren’t.
11. Aerosmith – They’re on – they’re off, they hate each other – all is forgiven. It was like that for years.
12. The Doors - It wasn’t just Jim Morrison’s demise that did it. There is so much more.
13. Rage Against the Machine – Lots of raging, then...they’re back!
14. The Talking Heads – The front man goes solo, or does he? The rest of the band members are apparently last to know.
15. The Clash – Heroin, power struggles, big-time feuds – it’s all the ingredients of a full-scale implosion and they did not disappoint.
16. Blondie – What happens when the singer gets more famous than everybody else in the band? Nothing good.
17. The Pogues – Another out-of-control front man.
18. The Velvet Underground – By the last album, only one original member remained. Yikes. That oughtta tell you something.
19. The Band – Power issues, royalty complaints, addictions, ugly finger pointing, all the usual stuff.
20. The Sex Pistols – Fist fighting, name calling, professional jealousies, bitter rivalries, and a pretty mellow guitarist who is powerless to stop Sting and Stewart Copeland (the drummer).
21. The Mamas and Papas – Quite the 60s soap opera! Marriages, affairs, hostile fights, snippy remarks about one another, and that all happened just within the band.
22. Boston – Legal problems, perfectionism, a despotic leader, eventually it all takes a toll.
23. The Eagles – Ginormous egos, big-time feuds, etc. all eventually prevent members from physically occupying the same space.
24. The Pixies – Bad blood, public disputes, instruments thrown at each other while onstage.
25. Black Sabbath – They’re on, they’re off, they’re on...
26. Guns-N-Roses – Lots of personnel changes, and well, Axl Rose.
27. N-Sync – Cheesy boy band blues, although you’d think they’d have to know they were never going to keep Justin Timberlake around for long.
28. Blink 182 – Rumors of their breakup before their actual bust-up didn’t help anything.
29. Van Halen – The David Lee Roth version is epic, although Sammy Hagar was no picnic either. Neither was Eddie Van Halen.
30. Velvet Revolver – “on hiatus”
31. Creed – The lead singer claimed to be a devoted Christian, so why were there so many drug issues, car accidents, groupie flings, etc. going on? That’s kinda what the rest of the band wanted

to know, too. The fact that no one ever really took them seriously as a “real” rock band is just extra fun. High kitsch value with this one.

32. Nirvana – Yeah, Kurt Cobain’s suicide was the capper, but things were never easy from the beginning with him. And don’t forget Courtney Love!
33. The Black Crowes – More fighting brothers.
34. TLC – Certainly the untimely death of Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes spelled the end for this group, but even before that terrible event, they had their share of problems.
35. Destiny’s Child – Think of a more up-to-date version of the Supremes and you’re pretty much there. Beyonce’s rise created all sorts of friction with the other members of the group.

Remember, this is not just a “Behind the Music” tell-all; it is an analysis of group behavior, but that doesn’t mean you can’t have fun with this. Be creative. Be engaging. There’s no reason for these presentations to be boring or dull. You have a lot of freedom in how you want to put things together. Take advantage of that and rock your world!

Your group will be evaluated according to how well you are able to explain and illustrate group communication concepts within the band of your choice.

Presentation Requirements:

- Your presentation should be 20-25 minutes, with each team member presenting equal time and should all be introduced at the beginning. You should plan it so that you demonstrate that you are a group, not just a few individuals who happen to find yourselves doing a presentation together. If all members of your group are local and you’d like to do the presentation in-person, we can set that up. Otherwise, presentations should be recorded.
- Turn in a typed outline, references and any media that you will use, along with a clear indication of who is covering what material (this can be done by colors, headings, etc.)
- Give an overview of the area you are covering. Tell me why this is important to the understanding of small group communication and how it relates to your group’s band, as well.
- Define each term and idea you’ve found exhibited through your research. Explain how they relate to your chosen band. Be certain to cite your sources as you go. Don’t lump them all together at the end. Citing as you go helps me see exactly where you found your information and how you’re using it. This part is super important.
- Give examples of the relevant ideas you’re covering. Examples may be drawn from YouTube, other video clips you find of the band, role-playing reenactments, or whatever you feel works best.
- Your presentation should have all the organizational qualities of a good speech – an appropriate introduction, body and conclusion, transitions between topics and presenters should be clear, etc.
- Be sure to tell me what the most important things to remember regarding the band and group communication concepts related.

Grading (100 total points):

- 40% group grade:
  - Organization - division of labor among participants is balanced; division of topic into sub-categories is reasonable (10 points)

- Content – thorough treatment of topic (10 points)
- Attention – effort is made to maintain interest and attention of audience throughout symposium (10 points)
- Quality of performance (style/delivery) – use extemporaneous style of presentation; no reading and no memorization (10 points)
- 60% individual grade:
  - Organization – signpost each speech and provide internal summaries; clarity and comprehensibility are important (15 points)
  - Content – all important facets of the assignment are discussed thoroughly (15 points)
  - Attention – use attention strategies to maintain audience interest (15 points)
  - Style/delivery – use extemporaneous style; maintain eye contact; no reading (15 points)

**NOTE:** Grading group as well as individual performance reaffirms the importance of working together (We-orientation not Me-orientation).