

Team Leadership

Susan E. Kogler Hill

DESCRIPTION

Work teams are very prevalent in today's organizations. The reliance on teams is due partially to increasingly complex tasks, more globalization, and the flattening of organizational structures. A team is a type of organizational group that is composed of members who are interdependent, who share common goals, and who must coordinate their activities to accomplish these goals. Team members must work collectively to achieve their goals. Examples of organizational teams include senior executive teams, project management teams, task forces, work units, standing committees, quality teams, and improvement teams. Teams can be located in the same place meeting face-to-face, or they can be geographically dispersed "virtual" teams meeting via various forms of communication technology. The exact definition of which organizational group is a team or not is constantly evolving as organizations confront the many new forms of contemporary collaboration (Wageman, Gardner, & Mortensen, 2012).

The study of organizational teams has focused on strategies for maintaining a competitive advantage. Team-based organizations have faster response capability because of their flatter organizational structures, which rely on teams and new technology to enable communication across time and space (Porter & Beyerlein, 2000). These newer organizational structures have been referred to as "team-based and technology-enabled" (Mankin, Cohen, &

Bikson, 1996). Increasingly, companies are depending on virtual teams, or teams that are geographically dispersed and rely on technology to interact and collaborate (Muethel, Gehrlein, & Hoegl, 2012).

- The organizational team-based structure is an important way for organizations to remain competitive by responding quickly and adapting to constant, rapid changes. Studies of both face-to-face and virtual teams have increasingly become focused on team processes and team outcomes (Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005; Thomas, Martin, & Riggio, 2013). Also, researchers focused on the problems work teams confront as well as how to make these work teams more effective (Ilgen, Major, Hollenbeck, & Sego, 1993). Effective organizational teams lead to many desirable outcomes, such as

- greater productivity,
- more effective use of resources,
- better decisions and problem solving,
- better-quality products and services, and
- greater innovation and creativity (Parker, 1990).

However, for teams to be successful, the organizational culture needs to support member involvement. The traditional authority structure of many organizations does not support decision making at lower levels, and this can lead to the failure of many teams. Teamwork is an example of lateral decision making as opposed to the traditional vertical decision making that occurs in the organizational hierarchy based on rank or position in the organization. The dynamic and fluid power shifting in teams has been referred to as *heterarchy* (Aime, Humphrey, DeRue, & Paul, 2014). Such power shifting within teams can lead to positive outcomes as long as team members see these shifting sources of power as legitimate. Teams will have great difficulty in organizational cultures that are not supportive of such collaborative work and decision making. Changing an organizational culture to one that is more supportive of teams is possible, but it takes time and effort (Levi, 2011).

Leadership of teams has also become an important area of study. The ideas of “team leadership” are quite different from leadership within the organizational vertical structure. Many theories of leadership, such as situational (discussed in Chapter 5) and transformational (discussed in Chapter 8), can be applied in the team setting. However, team leadership is a unique setting for leadership, and it is very process oriented. How do teams develop their

“critical capabilities”? How do team leaders shift their actions over time to deal with contingencies as they arise? How do leader actions promote task and interpersonal development (Kozlowski, Watola, Jensen, Kim, & Botero, 2009)? Effective team leadership facilitates team success and helps teams to avoid team failure (Stagl, Salas, & Burke, 2007; Stewart & Manz, 1995). Effective leadership processes are the most critical factor in team success (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001, p. 452).

Shared or Distributed Leadership: The complexities of team processes demand the attention and focus of all members of the team. Some teams are autonomous and self-directed with no formal leader. But even those with a formal leader will benefit from shared leadership among team members. Team leadership functions can be performed by the formal team leader *and/or* shared by team members. Shared team leadership occurs when members of the team take on leadership behaviors to influence the team and to maximize team effectiveness (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012). Shared leadership has been referred to as *team leadership capacity*, encompassing the leadership repertoire of the entire team (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004). Such distributed leadership involves the sharing of influence by team members. Team members step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then step back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today’s organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues (Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009; Solansky, 2008).

Shared leadership, while very important, does involve risk and takes some courage for the member who steps forward to provide leadership outside the formal role of team leader (Amos & Klimoski, 2014). Risks aside, teams with shared leadership have less conflict, more consensus, more trust, and more cohesion than teams that do not have shared leadership (Bergman et al., 2012). Shared leadership is even more important for virtual teams. Virtual teams are more effective when there is shared team leadership (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014; Muethel et al., 2012). Virtual teams especially benefit from shared leadership when the task is complex (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014).

How leaders and members can share the leadership of teams so that these teams can truly become effective and achieve excellence will be discussed in this chapter. It will introduce a model that provides a mental road map to help the leader or any team member providing leadership diagnose team problems and take appropriate action to correct those problems.



Team Leadership Model

The Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) is based on the functional leadership claim that the leader's job is to monitor the team and then take whatever action is necessary to ensure team effectiveness. The model provides a tool for understanding the very complex phenomenon of team leadership, starting at the top with its initial leadership decisions, moving to leader actions, and finally focusing on the indicators of team effectiveness. In addition, the model suggests specific actions that leaders can perform to improve team effectiveness. Effective team leaders need a wide repertoire of communication skills to monitor and take appropriate action. The model is designed to simplify and clarify the complex nature of team leadership and to provide an easy tool to aid leadership decision making for team leaders and members alike.

Effective team performance begins with how the leader sees the situation that the team is experiencing (the leader's *mental model*). This mental model reflects not only the components of the problem confronting the team, but also the environmental and organizational contingencies that define the larger context of team action. The leader develops a mental conception of what the team problem is and what solutions are possible in this context, given the environmental and organizational constraints and resources (Zaccaro et al., 2001).

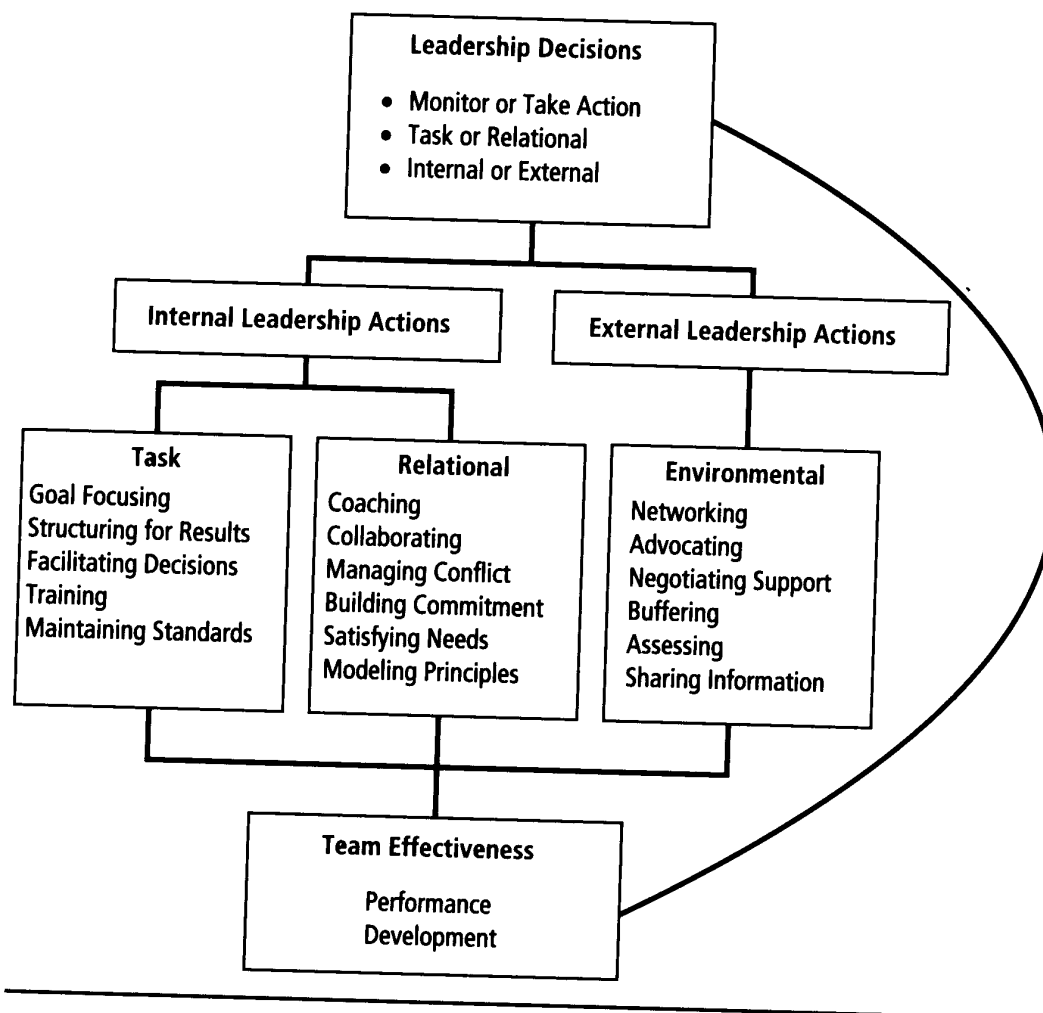
To respond appropriately to the problem envisioned in the mental model, a good team leader needs to be behaviorally flexible and have a wide repertoire of actions or skills to meet the team's diverse needs (Barge, 1996). When the leader's behavior matches the complexity of the situation, he or she is behaving with "requisite variety," or the set of behaviors necessary to meet the team's needs (Drecksel, 1991). Effective team leaders are able to construct accurate mental models of the team's problems by observing team functioning, and can take requisite action to solve these problems. Effective team leaders can diagnose correctly and choose the right action.

The leader has special responsibility for functioning in a manner that will help the team achieve effectiveness. Within this perspective, leadership behavior is seen as team-based problem solving, in which the leader attempts to achieve team goals by analyzing the internal and external situation and then selecting and implementing the appropriate behaviors to ensure team effectiveness (Fleishman et al., 1991). Leaders must use discretion about which problems need intervention, and make choices about which solutions are the most appropriate (Zaccaro et al., 2001). The appropriate solution varies by circumstance and focuses on what should be done to make the team



more effective. Effective leaders have the ability to determine what leadership interventions are needed, if any, to solve team problems. When leadership is shared throughout the team, various members are diagnosing problems and intervening with appropriate behaviors. The monitoring and selection of behaviors is shared throughout the team membership. Given the complexity of team functioning, such shared leadership can—and, in fact, does—lead to greater team effectiveness.

Figure 14.1 The Hill Model for Team Leadership



Team Effectiveness

At the bottom of the Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) is “Team Effectiveness,” which focuses on team excellence or the desired outcomes of teamwork. Two critical functions of team effectiveness are

performance (task accomplishment) and *development* (team maintenance). *Performance* refers to the quality of the outcomes of the team's work. Did the team accomplish its goals and objectives in a quality manner? *Development* refers to the cohesiveness of the team and the ability of team members to satisfy their own needs while working effectively with other team members (Nadler, 1998). Excellent teams accomplish both of these objectives: getting the job done and maintaining a cohesive team.

Scholars have systematically studied organizational work teams and developed standards of effectiveness or criteria of excellence that can be used to assess a team's health (Hackman, 1990, 2002, 2012; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphey, 1993; LaFasto & Larson, 2001; Larson & LaFasto, 1989; Zaccaro et al., 2001). Hackman (2012) has posited six enabling conditions that lead to effective team functioning: (1) Is it a real team? (2) Does it have a compelling purpose? (3) Does it have the right people? (4) Are the norms of conduct clear? (5) Is there support from the organizational context? (6) Is there team-focused coaching? Larson and LaFasto (1989) studied successful teams and found that, regardless of the type of team, eight characteristics were consistently associated with team excellence. Table 14.1 demonstrates the similarity of these excellence characteristics to the enabling conditions suggested by Hackman (2012).

It is helpful if team leaders understand the conditions that contribute to or enable team excellence. Such understanding will allow the leader to benchmark or compare his or her team's performance to these standards and to determine possible areas of team weakness or ineffectiveness. Assessing how well the team compares to these established indicators of team success provides a valuable source of information to guide the leader to take appropriate actions to improve team success.

1. *Clear, Elevating Goal*. "A compelling purpose energizes team members, orients them toward their collective objective, and fully engages their talents" (Hackman, 2012, p. 437). Team goals must be very clear so that one can tell whether the performance objective has been realized. Teams sometimes fail because they are given a vague task and then asked to work out the details (Hackman, 1990). In addition, the team goal must be involving or motivating so that the members believe it to be worthwhile and important. Teams often fail because they let something else replace their goal, such as personal agendas or power issues (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Research data from numerous teams show that effective leaders keep the team focused on the goal (LaFasto & Larson, 2001).



Table 14.1 Comparison of Theory and Research Criteria of Team Effectiveness

Enabling Conditions of Group Effectiveness (Hackman, 2012)	Characteristics of Team Excellence (Larson & LaFasto, 1989)
Compelling purpose	Clear, elevating goal
	Results-driven structure
Right people	Competent team members
Real team	Unified commitment
	Collaborative climate
Clear norms of conduct	Standards of excellence
Supportive organizational context	External support and recognition
Team-focused coaching	Principled leadership

2. Results-Driven Structure. Teams need to find the best structure for accomplishing their goals. Structural features that lead to effective teamwork include task design, team composition, and core norms of conduct (Wageman, Fisher, & Hackman, 2009). Top management teams typically deal with power and influence, task forces deal with ideas and plans, customer service teams deal with clients, and production teams deal with technology (Hackman, 1990). Problem resolution teams such as task forces need a structure that emphasizes trust so that all will be willing and able to contribute. Creative teams such as advertising teams need to emphasize autonomy so that all can take risks and be free from undue censorship. Tactical teams such as emergency room teams need to emphasize clarity so that everyone knows what to do and when. In addition, all teams need clear roles for team members, a good communication system, methods of assessing individual performance, and an emphasis on fact-based judgments (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Appropriate structures enable teams to meet their needs while still accomplishing team goals.

3. Competent Team Members. Teams should be composed of the right number and mix of members to accomplish all the tasks of the team. In addition, members need sufficient information, education, and training to



become or remain competent team members (Hackman & Walton, 1986). As a whole, the individual team members need to possess the requisite technical competence to accomplish the team's goals. Members also need to be personally competent in interpersonal and teamwork skills. A common mistake in forming teams is to assume that people who have all the technical skills necessary to solve a problem also have the interpersonal skills necessary to collaborate effectively (Hackman, 1990). Just because someone is a good engineer or doctor does not mean he or she has the interpersonal skills to function on a team. Team members need certain core competencies that include the ability to do the job and the ability to solve problems. In addition, members need certain teamwork factors such as openness, supportiveness, action orientation, and a positive personal style (LaFasto & Larson, 2001).

4. *Unified Commitment.* A common mistake is to call a work group a *team* but treat it as a collection of individuals (Hackman, 1990). Teams do not just happen: They are carefully designed and developed. Excellent teams are those that have developed a sense of unity or identification. Such *team spirit* often can be developed by involving members in all aspects of the process (Larson & LaFasto, 1989).

5. *Collaborative Climate.* The ability of a team to collaborate or work well together is essential to team effectiveness. A collaborative climate is one in which members can stay problem focused, listen to and understand one another, feel free to take risks, and be willing to compensate for one another. To build an atmosphere that fosters collaboration, we need to develop trusting relationships based on honesty, openness, consistency, and respect (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Integration of individual actions is one of the fundamental characteristics of effective teams. Team members each have their own unique roles that they typically perform to contribute to the team's success. Team failure may result from the members' "collective failure to coordinate and synchronize their individual contributions" (Zaccaro et al., 2001, p. 451). Effective team leaders can facilitate a collaborative climate by managing their own needs to control, by making communication safe, by demanding and rewarding collaborative behavior, and by guiding the team's problem-solving efforts (LaFasto & Larson, 2001).

6. *Standards of Excellence.* Clear norms of conduct (how we should behave) are important for team functioning (Hackman, 2012). Team members' performance should be regulated so that actions can be coordinated and tasks completed (Hackman & Walton, 1986). It is especially important that the organizational context or the team itself set up standards of excellence so

that members will feel pressure to perform at their highest levels. The standards must be clear and concrete, and all team members must be required to perform to standard (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). A team leader can facilitate this process by requiring results—making expectations clear and reviewing results—providing feedback to resolve performance issues, and rewarding results by acknowledging superior performance (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). With such standards in place and monitored, members will be encouraged to perform at their highest levels.

7. External Support and Recognition. A supportive organizational context includes material resources, rewards for excellent performance, an educational system to develop necessary team skills, and an information system to provide data needed to accomplish the task (Wageman et al., 2009). A common mistake is to give organizational teams challenging assignments but fail to give them organizational support to accomplish these assignments (Hackman, 1990). The leader must identify which type of support is needed and intervene as needed to secure this support (Hackman, 2002). The best goals, team members, and commitment will not mean much if there is no money, equipment, or supplies for accomplishing the goals. Also, organizations often ask employees to work on a difficult team assignment and then do not reward them with raises or bonuses for that performance. Hyatt and Ruddy (1997) found that having systems in place to support teams (clear direction, information, data, resources, rewards, and training) enables the team to become more effective and achieve performance goals. Teams can achieve excellence if they are given the resources needed to do their jobs, are recognized for team accomplishments, and are rewarded for team performance rather than for individual performances (Larson & LaFasto, 1989).

8. Principled Leadership. Effective team leadership has been found to consistently relate to team effectiveness (Zaccaro, Heinen, & Shuffler, 2009). Leadership has been described as the central driver of team effectiveness, influencing the team through four sets of processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and coordination (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Cognitively, the leader helps the team understand the problems confronting the team. Motivationally, the leader helps the team become cohesive and capable by setting high performance standards and helping the team to achieve them. Affectively, the leader helps the team handle stressful circumstances by providing clear goals, assignments, and strategies. Coordinately, the leader helps integrate the team's activities by matching members' skills to roles, providing clear performance strategies, monitoring feedback, and adapting to environmental changes.



Effective team leaders are committed to the team's goals and give members autonomy to unleash their talents when possible. Leaders can reduce the effectiveness of their team by being unwilling to confront inadequate performance, diluting the team's ability to perform by having too many priorities, and overestimating the positive aspects of team performance. Leaders can enhance the effectiveness of their team by keeping the team focused on its goals, maintaining a collaborative climate, building confidence among members, demonstrating technical competence, setting priorities, and managing performance (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). It is essential that the leadership of the team be assessed along with the other criteria of team excellence. Such feedback is essential to the health and effectiveness of the team.

The leadership of the team can use these eight characteristics of team excellence (Table 14.1) in a normative fashion to assess the health of the team and to take appropriate action to address any weaknesses. If the team leader assesses that one or more of the eight characteristics of team success are not being achieved, then he or she needs to address these weaknesses. Continually assessing the standards of team effectiveness can also provide feedback, enabling leaders to determine whether past actions and interventions had the desired results. To assess team effectiveness, team leaders need to use whatever tools are at their disposal, such as direct observation, surveys, feedback, and performance indicators. The information gained from the analysis of team effectiveness can provide feedback to the leader and guide future leadership decisions. The line on the Hill Model of Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) that connects the "Team Effectiveness" box at the bottom to the "Leadership Decisions" box at the top reflects the ongoing learning process of data gathering, analysis, and decision making. Such feedback loops demonstrate the dynamic and evolving nature of teams (Ilgen et al., 2005). Past leadership decisions and actions are reflected in the team's performance and relational outcomes. In turn, these indicators of team effectiveness shape the future analysis and decisions of the team leadership.

Leadership Decisions

At the top of the Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) are "Leadership Decisions," which include the major decisions the team's leadership needs to make when determining whether and how to intervene to improve team functioning. The first of these decisions is whether it is most appropriate to continue to observe and monitor the team or to intervene in the team's activities and take action. The second decision is to choose whether a task or a relational intervention is needed (i.e., does the team need help in accomplishing its tasks, or does it need help in



maintaining relationships?). The final decision is whether to intervene at the internal level (within the team itself) or at the external level (in the team's environment).

Figure 14.2 McGrath's Critical Leadership Functions

	MONITOR	EXECUTIVE ACTION
INTERNAL	Diagnosing Group Deficiencies 1	Taking Remedial Action 2
EXTERNAL	Forecasting Environmental Changes 3	Preventing Deleterious Changes 4

SOURCE: McGrath's critical leadership functions as cited in "Leading Groups in Organizations," by J. R. Hackman and R. E. Walton, 1986, in P. S. Goodman & Associates (Eds.), *Designing Effective Work Groups* (p. 76). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Leadership Decision 1: Should I monitor the team or take action? The first decision confronting the team's leadership is whether to keep observing the team or to take action to help the team. McGrath (as cited in Hackman & Walton, 1986) outlined the critical leadership functions of group effectiveness, taking into account the analysis of the situation both internally and externally and whether this analysis indicates that the leader should take an immediate action. Figure 14.2, "McGrath's Critical Leadership Functions," demonstrates these two dimensions of leadership behavior: *monitoring versus taking action* and *internal group issues versus external group issues*. As leaders, we can diagnose, analyze, or forecast problems (monitoring), or we can take immediate action to solve a problem. We can also focus on the problems within the group (internal) or problems outside the group (external). These two dimensions result in the four types of team leadership functions shown in Figure 14.2.

Quadrants 1 and 2 in Figure 14.2 focus on the internal operations of the team. In Quadrant 1, the leader is diagnosing group deficiencies, and in Quadrant 2, the leader is acting to repair or remedy the observed problems. Quadrants 3 and 4 focus on the external operations of the team. In the third quadrant, the leader is scanning the environment to determine and forecast

any external changes that will affect the group. In the fourth quadrant, the leader acts to prevent any negative changes in the environment from hurting the team.

Therefore, the first decision confronting the team's leadership is "Should I continue monitoring these factors, or should I take action based on the information I have already gathered and structured?" To develop an accurate mental model of team functioning, leaders need to monitor both the internal and external environments to gather information, reduce equivocality, provide structure, and overcome barriers. Fleishman et al. (1991) described two phases in this initial process: information search and structuring. A leader must first seek out information to understand the current state of the team's functioning (information search), and then this information must be analyzed, organized, and interpreted so the leader can decide how to act (information structuring). Leaders can also help their information search process by obtaining feedback from team members, networking with others outside the team, conducting team assessment surveys, and evaluating team outcomes. Once information on the team is gathered, the leader needs to structure or interpret this information so that he or she can make action plans. Virtual teams operate under the same group dynamics principles and also need to monitor and intervene as appropriate (Berry, 2011).

All members of the team can engage in monitoring (information search and structuring) and collectively provide distributed or shared leadership to help the team adapt to changing conditions. In fast-paced, rapidly changing situations, the team leader and members might have to work in concert to assess the situation accurately. The official leader of the team might be too busy processing information from the environment to process information internal to the team. The team members can help the leader by staying on top of internal problems. Together, they can form an accurate picture of the team's effectiveness.

In addition to gathering and interpreting information, team leaders must take the right action based on this information. Determining the right action to take is at the very heart of team leadership. It involves selecting from among competing courses of action to facilitate the team's work (Barge, 1996). Leaders differ in their tendencies to take action quickly (hasty to act) or their tendencies to delay taking action by analyzing the situation at length (slow to act). "Hasty to act" leaders might prevent problems from getting out of control; however, they might not make the right intervention because they do not have all the information, and such fast action might undermine the development of shared leadership. "Slow to act" leaders might encourage other team members to emerge as leaders (shared leadership), but the action-taking delay might cause the team's problem to become unmanageable.



The exact timing of a leadership intervention is as important as the specific type of intervention (Wageman et al., 2009). It has been proposed that groups go through developmental stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Tuckman & Jensen, 2010). Certain behaviors are common and even expected at each of these stages. If, for example, conflict was occurring during the storming stage of team life, the leadership might not intervene at that time but just continue monitoring. Or, the leadership might choose an intervention that advances the team to the next phase of norming. Others have described three phases of group life and the leadership needed during each: (1) motivational coaching (at start), (2) consultative coaching (at midpoint), and (3) educational coaching (at end). The important aspect of timing is that the leader should understand where the team is in its life cycle and provide the type of leadership needed at that time (Hackman, 2012).

Leadership Decision 2: Should I intervene to meet task or relational needs?

Returning to the top box in Figure 14.1 (“Leadership Decisions”), the second decision confronting the leader is whether the team needs help in dealing with relational issues or task issues. Since the early study of small groups, the focus has been on two critical leadership functions: task and maintenance. Task leadership functions include getting the job done, making decisions, solving problems, adapting to changes, making plans, and achieving goals. Maintenance functions include developing a positive climate, solving interpersonal problems, satisfying members’ needs, and developing cohesion. These two functions have also been referred to in terms of performance and development (i.e., how well the team has accomplished its task and how well the team has developed effective relationships).

Superior team leadership focuses constantly on both task and maintenance functions (Kinlaw, 1998); both types of leadership behaviors (task-focused and person-focused) have been found to be related to perceived team effectiveness (Burke et al., 2006).

Task functions are closely intertwined with relational functions. If the team is well maintained and has good interpersonal relationships, then the members will be able to work together effectively and get their job done. If not, they will spend all of their time infighting, sniping, and working at cross-purposes. Similarly, if the team is productive and successful in accomplishing its task, it will be easier to maintain a positive climate and good relations. Conversely, failing teams often take their lack of performance out on each other, and fighting teams often accomplish little.

In virtual teams connected across time and space by electronic media, focusing on building team relationships is even more critical than in traditional co-located teams. Virtual team leaders must be able to “read” all the personal and contextual nuances in a world of electronic communications. They must be able to understand the possible causes of silence, misunderstanding, and slights without any of the usual signs to guide them. Leaders must be sensitive to the team process and must pay attention to even small matters that could interfere with the team’s success (Pauleen, 2004). Virtual teams place even greater demands on team leaders—50% more time investment—than the more traditional co-located team (Dyer, Dyer, & Dyer, 2007). As the prevalence of virtual teams expands, specific leadership issues and interventions related to these virtual teams are increasingly the focus of study (Berry, 2011; Cordery, Soo, Kirkman, Rosen, & Mathieu, 2009; Zaccaro, Ardison, & Orvis, 2004).

Leadership Decision 3: Should I intervene internally or externally? If a decision was made to take action or intervene, the leader must make the third strategic leadership decision in Figure 14.1 and determine what *level of the team process* needs leadership attention: internal leadership actions or external leadership actions. Do I need to intervene inside of the team, or is the problem external to the team? Effective team leaders analyze and balance the internal and external demands of the team and react appropriately (Barge, 1996).

Is there internal conflict between members of the team? Then perhaps taking an *internal relational action* to maintain the team and improve interpersonal relationships would be most appropriate. Are the team goals unclear? Then perhaps an *internal task intervention* is needed to focus on goals. Is the organizational environment not providing proper support to the team to do its job? Then perhaps an *external environmental intervention* focusing on obtaining external support for the team might be the most appropriate intervention.

The current focus of research is on real-life organizational work teams that exist within a larger organizational environment. In addition to balancing the internal task and relational needs of the team, the leader has to help the team adapt to and function effectively in its environment. Most teams focus on the internal problems of the team. But it is increasingly important for teams to also be externally oriented to “reach across boundaries to forge dense networks of connection, both inside and outside the organization” so that they can deal effectively with the fast changing environment (Ancona, Bresman, & Caldwell, 2009).



Leadership Actions

The middle section of the Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) lists a number of specific leadership actions that can be performed internally (“Task” and “Relational”) or externally (“Environmental”). These lists are not exhaustive but are compiled from research on team excellence and team performance discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, teams that have clear goals, standards, effective structure, and decision making will have higher task performance. Teams that can manage conflict, collaborate well together, and build commitment will have good relationships. Teams that are well connected to and protected from their environment will also be more productive.

It is up to the leader to assess what action, if any, is needed and then intervene with the specific leadership function to meet the demands of the situation. The leader needs the ability to perform these skills and to make a strategic choice as to the most *appropriate function or skill* for the intervention. For example, if the leader decided that team members were arguing, he or she might decide to initiate conflict management. *To be an effective leader, one needs to respond with the action that is required of the situation.* Thus, it is the job of the leader to analyze and mediate the situation to make the best decisions for the good of the team. A detailed knowledge of group dynamics and interpersonal processes is key to effective team leadership.

A team leader also needs to recognize and interpret what is getting in the way of the team’s goal accomplishment and then make a strategic choice and respond with the appropriate action (Gouran & Hirokawa, 1996). If a problem is diagnosed as a team performance problem, then the leader needs to determine the appropriate action to solve this task problem (e.g., goal focusing, standard setting, or training). If a problem is diagnosed as a team development problem, then the leader needs to determine the appropriate action to solve this relational problem (e.g., managing conflict or building commitment). If a problem is diagnosed as an environmental problem, then the leader needs to determine the appropriate action to solve this context problem (e.g., networking, advocating, or sharing information).

Internal Task Leadership Actions. The “Task” box in the Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) lists the set of skills or actions that the leader might perform to improve task performance. After monitoring the team’s performance, the leader might choose to intervene in one of the following task areas:

- *Goal focusing* (clarifying, gaining agreement)

For example, if team members seem to be going off in different directions, the leader might intervene to clarify the team’s goals or work with members to obtain agreement on goals.

- *Structuring for results* (planning, visioning, organizing, clarifying roles, delegating)

For example, if the leader determines that the team is stuck in day-to-day affairs and not looking to or building for the future, then he or she might intervene by helping the team vision and plan for the future.

- *Facilitating decision making* (informing, controlling, coordinating, mediating, synthesizing, focusing on issues)

For example, if the leader determines that members are not adequately sharing information with each other, he or she might ask questions to seek out the information that is not being shared.

- *Training team members in task skills* (educating, developing)

For example, if the leader observes that the team members do not have the skills necessary to make well-reasoned decisions, the leader might provide a training seminar in decision making.

- *Maintaining standards of excellence* (assessing team and individual performance, confronting inadequate performance)

For example, if the leader observes that some team members are coming late to meetings or not attending meetings, the leader might have to take direct action and confront these members to address this inadequate performance.

Internal Relational Leadership Actions. The second set of internal leadership actions in Figure 14.1 reflects those that the leader needs to implement to improve team relationships. After monitoring the team's performance, the leader might choose to intervene in one of the following interpersonal areas:

- *Coaching team members in interpersonal skills*

For example, if the team leader observes that team members do not seem to be listening to one another, then he or she might intervene by leading team members in a listening exercise.

- *Collaborating* (including, involving)

For example, if the leader observes that some team members are not taking others' opinions into account, then the leader might intervene to encourage compromise.

- *Managing conflict and power issues* (fighting or avoiding confrontation, questioning ideas, avoiding groupthink)



For example, if the leader observes that the members are not questioning ideas and are just agreeing with each other in order to move quickly to a decision, then the leader might intervene by providing a discussion on the negative aspects of groupthink (Neck & Manz, 1994).

- *Building commitment and esprit de corps* (being optimistic, innovating, envisioning, socializing, rewarding, recognizing)

For example, if the team seems to have low morale, the leader could intervene to build commitment and unity by recognizing past team successes.

- *Satisfying individual member needs* (trusting, supporting, advocating)

For example, if a team member seems stressed due to disrespect from other members, the leader might provide support to the upset member and advocate to the team on his or her behalf.

- *Modeling ethical and principled practices* (fair, consistent, normative)

For example, if a team leader monitors the team and observes that he or she is inconsistent vis-à-vis the members sometimes treating in-group members differently from out-group members, then the leader might intervene and change his or her own behavior to be fair and consistent to all members.

External Environmental Leadership Actions. The “External Leadership Actions” (Figure 14.1) reflect those actions the leader might implement to improve the environmental interface with the team. Real-life teams do not exist in a laboratory—they are subsystems of the larger organizational and societal context. To stay viable, the team needs to monitor this environment closely and determine what actions should be taken to enhance team effectiveness (Barge, 1996; Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997; Zaccaro et al., 2001). If environmental monitoring suggests a leadership intervention, then the leader needs to select from the following functions:

- *Networking and forming alliances in environment* (gathering information, increasing influence)

For example, if the leader observes that the team’s members are not well known or are not well connected throughout the organization, then the leader might intervene by interacting and forming relationships with powerful and respected individuals in the organization.



- *Advocating and representing team to environment*

For example, if the leader learns that organizational superiors are unaware of the team's successes, the leader might initiate an "FYI" policy, sending information about all successes upward as they happen. The leader can also initiate a team newsletter that chronicles team efforts to accomplish the same function but to a broader context.

- *Negotiating upward to secure necessary resources, support, and recognition for team*

For example, a leader might determine that the team does not have enough clerical support to accomplish its goals. The leader then negotiates with upper management to provide the needed support or, if failing in this, to persuade upper management to alter the team's goals accordingly.

- *Buffering team members from environmental distractions*

For example, if the leader observes that the team is overloaded with tasks, then he or she might intervene by keeping unnecessary demands and distractions away from the team members so that they can concentrate on their goals.

- *Assessing environmental indicators of team's effectiveness (surveys, evaluations, performance indicators)*

For example, if the leader observes that the members of the team have no way of knowing how well they are doing, the leader can provide data from the environment as to how their performance stacks up with other teams.

- *Sharing relevant environmental information with team*

For example, if the team leader reviews the environment and finds that the organization's business is going in a new direction, he or she can share this information with the team to keep them in line with these new directions.

Team leadership is complex; there are no simple recipes for team success. Team leaders must learn to be open and objective in understanding and diagnosing team problems and skillful in selecting the most appropriate actions (or inactions) to help achieve the team's goals. It is important to reemphasize that these critical functions need not be carried out only by the leader. Experienced members in a mature team might share these leadership behaviors. As long as the team's critical needs have been met, the leadership behavior, whether enacted by the leader or team members, has been effective. *The key assertion of the functional perspective is that the leader is to do whatever*



is necessary to take care of unmet needs of the team. If the team members are taking care of most of the needs, then the leader has to do very little.

HOW DOES THE TEAM LEADERSHIP MODEL WORK?

Team leaders and team members can use the model to help them make decisions about the current state of their team and the specific actions they need to take, if any, to improve the team's functioning. The model portrays leadership as a team oversight function in which the leader's role is to do whatever is necessary to help the team achieve effectiveness. The model provides the leader with a cognitive map for identifying team needs, and offers suggestions about how to take appropriate corrective actions. The model helps the leader make sense of the complexity of teams and offers practical suggestions based on theory and research.

In using the model, the team leadership engages in the leader mediation process by deciding which option is most appropriate for the team: monitoring or taking action. If the monitoring reveals that all aspects of the team's functioning are satisfactory, then the leadership should not take any direct actions but continue to monitor the internal and external environments in terms of team performance and development. If monitoring reveals that action is needed, then the leadership decides whether to take an internal-level action or an external-level action or both. Finally, the leadership decides which action is appropriate to meet the needs of the team.

Determining the exact intervention is not as easy as it sounds, however, and it clearly reflects the skills necessary for team leadership. For example, a leader monitoring the internal functioning of the team notices there is infighting for control and power. The leader might see this as an *internal relationship problem* because of the authoritarian and autocratic behavior of one team member. Or perhaps the leader might see it as an *internal task problem* because the structure of the team is not appropriate and the roles and responsibilities of some members are unclear. The leader might also see the problem as an *external environmental problem* because the team is not given sufficient autonomy from the organization; consequently, the members are fighting over what little power and control exist. Or perhaps the leader sees the conflict as temporary given the stage of group development (e.g., storming).

In any case, the leader can decide to keep monitoring the situation and not take any immediate action because of the group's phase of development.

Or the leader can decide at which level to intervene and then decide to enact the most appropriate leadership function at that level. The leader might decide to intervene at all three levels, addressing the authoritarian individual (internal, relational), clarifying team roles (internal, task), and negotiating more team autonomy with those higher up in the organization (external).

The team leadership model aids in team analysis and improvement, much like that of sports teams. In sports, the coach does not stop working just because the team is winning. The coach keeps working to build commitment, develop young players, share expertise, create new methods and strategies, and generally improve team functioning. The effective coach never rests on past successes, but works to improve the team's functioning for the future. After a win or a loss, a football coach will have the team review videos of the game to determine areas of success and failure. Organizational team leaders could learn a great deal from sports team coaches. By comparing their own teams with established standards or criteria of team excellence, leaders can determine the areas of greatest weakness that might need critical intervention.

STRENGTHS

One of the strengths of this model is that it is designed to focus on the real-life organizational work group and the leadership needed therein. The model places the ongoing work group or team in an environmental context within the organization, industry, or society. In addition, the real-life focus on performance and team effectiveness enables leaders and members to diagnose and correct team problems. A team leader can present the model to his or her team as a teaching tool. By learning what constitutes excellent teams and applying these criteria to team performance, leaders and members can learn how to better lead teams to the highest levels of excellence.

A second strength of the model is that it provides a cognitive guide that helps leaders to design and maintain effective teams, especially when performance is below standards. Such an approach is consistent with the emerging theoretical notions of the leader as a medium whose job it is to process the complex information inherent in teamwork (Fisher, 1985). Any model or theory that tries to simplify such a complex process would be inappropriate and inadequate. The team leadership model is not simplistic, and it integrates in a manageable and practical form many complex factors that can help a leader be a good medium or processor of information.

Another strength of the model is that it takes into account the changing role of leaders and followers in organizations (shared leadership). The model does not focus on the position of power of a leader, but instead focuses on the critical functions of leadership as diagnosis and action taking. Any team member can perform the critical leadership functions to assess the current effectiveness of the team and then take appropriate action. This approach is consistent with the current movement in organizations to rethink leadership responsibilities in work teams. The responsibilities or functions of team leadership—such as setting goals, coaching, and rewarding—historically have rested with the team's formal leader, but now, with organizational restructuring, these duties and responsibilities often are distributed across the team.

In addition, this approach to team leadership can help in selection of team leaders and team members. If a leader must be chosen for the team, it might be best to select one who is perceptive, open, objective, analytical, and a good listener who has good diagnostic skills. In addition, it would be wise to select a leader who has a wide repertoire of action-taking skills and is comfortable intervening in the team's processes in many ways, such as with negotiation, conflict resolution, problem solving, goal focusing, and influencing upward. Good leaders not only can diagnose the team's problems, but also can reach into their bag of tricks and pull out the appropriate action or actions. For example, if a leader determines that two members of a team are in conflict with one another, he or she needs to be able to determine the root cause of that conflict and select the most appropriate action (or select nonaction).

CRITICISMS

The Hill Model for Team Leadership (Figure 14.1) is a conceptual framework to assist team-based leadership in its decision making. As such, it lists only some of the many skills that leadership might need to employ in making such decisions. Depending on the type of team or situation, additional skills might be needed that focus more on the environment (Cobb, 2012), coaching and training (Zaccaro, Heinen, & Shuffler, 2009), or preplanning and timing (Wageman et al., 2009). A team might need to modify the model to include skills that are particularly relevant to its effectiveness.

Even though the model does not include all possible leadership skills, it is still quite complex. Team leaders need to spend time adjusting to the framework so that it comes naturally to them when decisions are needed. This framework also does not provide on-the-spot answers to specific problems

facing the team leader, such as “When is the best time to intervene?” “What do you say to a member who is upset and crying?” or “What specific action do you take to deal with an organizational culture that is not supporting teamwork?” The model only points the leader in the right direction and suggests skills needed to solve these complex problems. The model assumes that the leader is skilled in group process, decision making, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and other abilities.

To make matters worse, many teams have shared leadership necessitating that everyone who provides team leadership has a wide range of team-oriented skills. In addition, the roles of leaders and followers can change over time, making it very important for the team leader and team members to possess the requisite leadership skills. In immature teams leaders might need to take on more of the leadership roles, whereas in a mature team the leader might be able to sit back and let the team lead itself. Increasingly, scholars are providing instruction in diagnosing weaknesses in team leadership skills and offering methods for development and improvement (Cobb, 2012; Levi, 2011; Morgeson et al., 2010; Salas, Burke, & Stagl, 2004). Instruction in teamwork and team leadership needs to focus on team diagnosing and action taking so that team leadership skills can be developed throughout the team and be more easily implemented.

APPLICATION

There are many ways to apply the team leadership model to increase the effectiveness of organizational teams. The model is useful in helping the leader make decisions: Should I act? If so, how should I do so? For example, if the team is not performing effectively (*team effectiveness*), then the leader can make the first strategic choice by monitoring the situation or acting to improve team functioning. If an action seems warranted, then the leader needs to decide whether the action should be directed inward toward team functioning, outward toward the environment, or both. Once the context for the action is determined, then the leader needs to choose the most appropriate skill for the situation from his or her behavioral repertoire. It is important to continue monitoring the results of the intervention and adapting accordingly, depending on these results.

The leader might choose to use an assessment tool such as the Team Excellence and Collaborative Team Leader Questionnaire included in this chapter to help conduct the team’s diagnosis and set the steps needed for taking action. Team members are asked to fill out the questionnaire, as is the

team leader. The results are fed back to the team members and team leader, allowing them to see the areas of greatest strength and weakness. It is particularly important that both team leaders and team members fill out the questionnaire. Research suggests that team leaders overestimate their effectiveness on these dimensions and often score themselves much higher than do team members (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). By comparing the scores by leaders and by members, the leader along with team members can determine which dimensions of team or leadership effectiveness need improvement. The team and leader can then prepare action plans to correct the highest-priority problems. Such a team assessment approach is very helpful in monitoring and diagnosing team problems. It aids in determining the complex factors affecting team excellence to build a committed team involved in action planning.

CASE STUDIES

To improve your understanding of the team leadership model, refer to the following case studies (Cases 14.1, 14.2, and 14.3). For each case, you will be asked to put yourself in the role of team leader and apply the team leadership model in analyzing and offering solutions to the team problems.

CASE 14.1

Can This Virtual Team Work?

Jim Towne heads a newly formed information technology team for a major international corporation. The team is composed of 20 professionals who live and work in Canada, the United States, Europe, South America, Africa, and Australia. All members of the team report to Jim. The team is a virtual team connected primarily via videoconference, group decision-support software, e-mail, text, and telephone. The team has met twice in a face-to-face setting to set goals and plan. All of the team members are quite competent in their respective technical areas. Some team members have a long and valued history with the company; others have recently joined the company through a corporate merger. The team members have never worked together on any projects.

The task of the team is to develop and implement technology innovations for all global business units. The team members are excited about the importance and the innovative nature of their assignment. They

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respect each other and enjoy being part of this team. However, the team is having difficulty getting off the ground, and the members report being extremely overloaded. Most team members travel to business sites at least 2 weeks each month. The travel is important, but it causes team members to get farther behind.

The team has one half-time secretary, located in New York. Her primary responsibility is to organize travel and meetings of team members. Team members are working on several projects at once and have great difficulty finishing any of the projects. One team member has 500 unread e-mail messages because each team member sends copies of all messages to everyone on the team. Jim is under great pressure to prove that this team can work and provide a valuable function to the organization.

Questions

1. Which of the eight characteristics (Table 14.1) of team excellence are lacking in this team?
2. Based on this analysis of team effectiveness, should Jim intervene at this time, or should he just keep monitoring the team? If you think he should take action, at what level should he intervene (internal or external)? If internal, should his action be task or relational?
3. What specific leadership functions should Jim implement to improve the team? Why?

CASE 14.2

They Dominated the Conversation

The local cancer center has a health team designed to coordinate the care of children with cancer. The team is composed of a physician, Dr. Sherif Hidyat (a clinical oncologist); a radiologist, Dr. Wayne Linett; a nurse practitioner, Sharon Whittling; a social worker, Cathy Ing; a physical therapist, Nancy Crosby; and a child life worker, Janet Lewis. The team members meet on a weekly basis to discuss the 18 children under their care and agree on the best course of treatment for each child. Cathy Ing, the social worker, is the head of the team and is responsible for the case management of each child. However, when the team meets, Drs. Hidyat and Linett dominate the conversation. They feel that their

medical background gives them greater knowledge and skill in treating cancer in children. They welcome input from the women on the team. When it comes to making a decision, however, they insist on doing it their way for the good of the patient. Cathy Ing (the social worker), Janet Lewis (the child life worker), Nancy Crosby (the physical therapist), and Sharon Whittling (the nurse practitioner) resent this behavior because they are the health care workers who spend the most time with the children and feel that they know best how to handle their long-term care. As a result, the patients feel as if no one cares or understands them. The team is also having trouble working together, and no one on the team is satisfied with the outcome.

Questions

1. How would you assess the effectiveness of this team?
2. In monitoring this team, at what level and function do you see the most serious problems? Internal task? Internal relational? External?
3. Would you take action to improve team functioning? If so, how would you intervene? Why?
4. What specific leadership skill or skills would you use to improve team functioning?

CASE 14.3

Starts With a Bang, Ends With a Whimper

A faculty member, Kim Green from the Management Department, was asked to chair a major university committee to plan the mission of the university for the next 20 years. Three other senior faculty and seven administrators from across the campus were also asked to serve on this committee. The president of the university, Dr. Sulgrave, gave the committee its charge: What should Northcoast University be like in the year 2020? Dr. Sulgrave told the committee that the work of this task force was of utmost importance to the future of the university, and the charge of this committee should take precedence over all other matters. The task force was allowed to meet in the president's conference room and use the president's secretary. The report of the committee was due in 2 months.

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The task force members felt very good about being selected for such an important team. The team met on a weekly basis for about 2 hours each time. At first, the members were very interested in the task and participated enthusiastically. They were required to do a great deal of outside research. They came back to the meetings proud to share their research and knowledge. However, after a while the meetings did not go well. The members could not seem to agree on what the charge to the team meant. They argued about what they were supposed to accomplish and resented the time the committee was taking from their regular jobs. Week after week the team met but accomplished nothing. Attendance became a problem, with people skipping several meetings, showing up late, or leaving early. Team members stopped working on their committee assignments. Kim didn't want to admit to the university president that the team didn't know what it was doing; instead, she just got more and more frustrated. Meetings became sporadic and eventually stopped altogether. The president was involved in a crisis in the university and seemed to lose interest in the committee. The president never called for the report from the committee, and the report was never completed.

Questions

1. Which characteristics of excellence were lacking in this task force?
2. Which characteristics of excellence were evident in this task force?
3. How would you assess Kim as a leader?
4. What actions would you take (internally or externally) if you were the leader of this task force?

LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

Larson and LaFasto developed an assessment tool to gauge team effectiveness (a team's health) based on their study of many different types of excellent organizational teams (see Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Their research demonstrated eight criteria or factors that are consistently associated with team excellence and high performance that were discussed earlier in the chapter. The complete Team Excellence Survey contains more than 40 questions across the eight factors that are used to determine a team's performance level and suggest areas that might need corrective action. The eighth factor on this instrument is *principled leadership*. Subsequent research by LaFasto and Larson led to the development of a 42-item questionnaire focusing on this criterion of leadership. The full Collaborative Team Leader Instrument and a discussion of its reliability and validity can be found in their latest text (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). The questionnaire included here provides a sample of questions from these two surveys so that the reader can see how team and team leadership effectiveness can be evaluated. (Readers who want to assess their own organizational teams are advised to use the complete versions of both surveys.)

The team members are given the questionnaire, and their scores are combined and averaged to obtain a team view; the leader fills out the same questionnaire. The responses from the team leader are then compared with the team members' responses to determine the areas of greatest weakness, if any. Based on these comparisons, the team and its leader can plan the action steps needed to correct and improve the weak areas of team functioning. The action planning is done collaboratively with leader and team members working together.

The Team Excellence and Collaborative Team Leader assessments are designed as diagnostic tools to help teams sort through any problems and to pinpoint areas for action taking. The Team Excellence and Collaborative Team Leader Questionnaire provided in this chapter combines sample questions from the two instruments developed by LaFasto and Larson. The first seven questions are taken from the Team Excellence Survey, developed by LaFasto and Larson in 1987 (cited in Larson & LaFasto, 1989) to measure a team's health in terms of the criteria of team excellence (goal, structure, team members, commitment, climate, standards, and external support). Leadership is measured by the next six questions, taken from the Collaborative Team Leader Instrument developed by LaFasto and Larson

in 1996 (LaFasto & Larson, 2001, pp. 151–154). These six questions assess the effectiveness of the leader in goal focusing, ensuring a collaborative climate, building confidence, demonstrating know-how, setting priorities, and managing performance. All of these team and leadership factors have been found to relate to team effectiveness.

As you fill out the sample questionnaire, think about a team to which you belong or have belonged as a member or as the leader. The items that you score as 1 or 2 (*False* or *More false than true*) are the areas of team weakness from your perspective. To obtain a team assessment, you would compare your scores on this instrument with the scores of the other team members. For example, if almost everyone on the team responds with a 1 or 2 to Item 3 (“Team members possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team’s objectives”), then the team leader might need to provide training to increase the competence of team members. Such an instrument that assesses team effectiveness is particularly helpful to the team leader in identifying areas of team or leadership weakness and suggesting solutions for improving team effectiveness.

Team Excellence and Collaborative Team Leader Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire contains questions about your team and the leadership within this team. Indicate whether you feel each statement is true or not true of your team. Use the following scale:

Key: 1 = False 2 = More false than true 3 = More true than false 4 = True

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. There is a clearly defined need—a goal to be achieved or a purpose to be served—that justifies the existence of our team. (team: clear, elevating goal) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. We have an established method for monitoring individual performance and providing feedback. (team: results-driven structure) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. Team members possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team's objectives. (team: competent team members) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. Achieving our team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective. (team: unified commitment) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. We trust each other sufficiently to accurately share information, perceptions, and feedback. (team: collaborative climate) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. Our team exerts pressure on itself to improve performance. (team: standards of excellence) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. Our team is given the resources it needs to get the job done. (team: external support and recognition) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. If it's necessary to adjust the team's goal, our team leader makes sure we understand why. (leadership: focus on the goal) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. Our team leader creates a safe climate for team members to openly and supportively discuss any issue related to the team's success. (leadership: ensure collaborative climate) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. Our team leader looks for and acknowledges contributions by team members. (leadership: build confidence) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. Our team leader understands the technical issues we must face in achieving our goal. (leadership: demonstrate sufficient technical know-how) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. Our team leader does not dilute our team's effort with too many priorities. (leadership: set priorities) | 1 2 3 4 |

13. Our team leader is willing to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members. (leadership: manage performance) 1 2 3 4

SOURCES: Questions 1–7: Adapted from the Team Excellence Survey (copyright 1987 LaFasto and Larson; portions reprinted with permission of Profact). Questions 8–13: Adapted from the Collaborative Team Leader Instrument (copyright 1996 LaFasto and Larson; portions reprinted with permission).

Scoring Interpretation

In addition to such targeted questions on each of the criteria of excellence, the complete surveys also ask open-ended questions to allow team members to comment on issues that might not be specifically covered in the directed questions, such as strengths and weaknesses of the team and its leadership, necessary changes, problematic norms, or issues that need to be addressed. The complete version of the survey is given to team members and the team leader, and all are involved in the diagnosis and the resulting action planning. Such a method is clearly consistent with the empowerment movement in organizational teams and helps address the enormous complexity involved in making teams effective.

SUMMARY

The increased importance of organizational teams and the leadership needed for them has produced a growing interest in team leadership theory. The team leadership model provides a framework in which to study the systematic factors that contribute to a team's outcomes or general effectiveness. Within this approach, the critical function of leadership is to help the team accomplish its goals by monitoring and diagnosing the team and taking the requisite action.

A strategic decision model has been developed to reveal the various decisions team leaders must make to improve their team's effectiveness. The model describes the decisions: What type of intervention should be used (monitoring or action taking)? At what level should the intervention be targeted (internal or external)? What leadership function should be implemented to improve team functioning?

Questionnaires filled out by team members and the team leader can aid in diagnosing specific areas of team problems and suggest action steps to be taken by the team.

The strength of this approach is its practical focus on real-life organizational teams and their effectiveness. The model also emphasizes the functions of leadership that can be shared and distributed within the work team. The model offers guidance in selecting leaders and team members with the appropriate diagnostic and action-taking skills. Furthermore, the model is appropriately complex, providing a cognitive model for understanding and improving organizational teams.

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