Chapter Seven

Leading and Working in Teams

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chapter outline

chapter objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Identify the kinds of communication that distinguish a group from a team.
2. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and virtual teams, and describe ways to address the disadvantages.
3. Compare and contrast various approaches to leadership, leader–member relations, and power distribution, and explain their impact on teams.
4. Identify and apply guidelines for effective communication in teams with regard to roles, goals, norms, cohesion, conformity, and creativity.

Political economist Robert Reich describes the importance of teamwork in an increasingly technological age:

> Rarely do even Big Ideas emerge any longer from the solitary labors of genius. Modern science and technology is too complicated for one brain. It requires groups of astronomers, physicists, and computer programmers to discover new dimensions of the universe, teams of microbiologists, oncologists, and chemists to unravel the mysteries of cancer. With ever more frequency, Nobel prizes are awarded to collections of people. Scientific papers are authored by small platoons of researchers.[1]

Working with others is a vital part of almost every job.[2] In a national survey of architects and landscape architects, more than 75 percent of the respondents reported that they "always" or "often" worked in teams.[3] Indeed, the amount of research done by teams has increased in virtually every scientific field.[4] Even the historically "cowboy" profession of surgery is increasingly becoming a team effort.[5] In the burgeoning field of multimedia, the ability to work as a team member has been identified as the top nontechnical job skill.[6] A wide varity of firms, such as Motorola, Ford, USAA Insurance, and 3M, have used teams to become leaders in their fields.

Given the prevalence of teams, no matter how talented you are, being a solo player is not an option in the modern business world. Gary Kaplan, owner of a Pasadena, California, executive recruiting firm, offers one explanation of why team players are more highly valued today than rugged individualists: "The single-combat warrior, that bright, purposeful worker, tends to suck up a lot of oxygen in an organization. And now they're often seen as too innovative and too difficult."[7] As legendary baseball manager Casey Stengel once put it, "Gettin' good players is easy. Getting 'em to play together is the hard part."

Teams have several notable advantages over individuals working alone.[8] One of these advantages is greater productivity. Research shows that the old saying, "Two heads are better than one," can be true: Well-conceived and efficiently operating teams produce more solutions than individuals working alone, and those solutions are likely to be better than one developed by a solo practitioner. In addition to the greater productivity, the accuracy of an effective team's work is higher than the accuracy of isolated individuals' work. Consider the task of creating a new product. A team of people from sales, marketing, design, engineering, and manufacturing is likely to consider all the

important angles, whereas one or two people without this breadth of perspective would probably miss some important ideas.

Teams not only produce better products, but also generate more commitment and enthusiasm from the members who created them. People are usually more committed to a decision if they have had a part in making it. Recognizing this principle, many companies create participatory management programs and quality circles that involve employees in important decisions. For example, William Deardon, chief executive officer of Hershey Foods Corporation, established a corporate planning committee to make the major plans and decisions for the company. "I figured that if we worked it out together," he explained, "the members of the group would feel that it was their plan and our plan—not my plan—and they'd work harder to implement it."[9]

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• The Nature of Teams

As Table 7-1 shows, teams play an important role in the world of business and the professions. Unfortunately, you or one of your classmates may have had a negative experience while working with others in the past. It is important that you do not let such an experience affect your perception of teamwork in general. As you will read in this chapter, there are some key differences between working in groups and working as a team. In the workplace, teamwork is often crucial for the success of an organization.

Table 7-1 Team versus Individual Performance

Team Superior to Individuals	Individuals Superior to Team
Task requires broad range of talents and knowledge	Task requires limited knowledge and information (which individuals possess)
Complicated task (requires division or coordination of labor)	Simple task (can be done by one person or individuals working separately)

Time available for deliberation	Little time available
Members are motivated to succeed	Members don’t care about the job
High standards of performance	“Social loafing” is the norm

Sources: Adapted from Rothwell, J. D., *In Mixed Company* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage, 2013; Hare, A. P., “Roles, Relationships, and Groups in Organizations: Some Conclusions and Recommendations,” *Small Group Research* 34, 2003, 123–154.

Characteristics of Workgroups

The word *group* is often used to refer to any assembly of people—the commuters on the morning train, the sightseers gathering for a walking tour of the downtown area, the rock band at a local nightspot. When we talk about people interacting at work, however, we

use this term differently. Nevertheless, not all collections of people—even people who come together in working settings—are groups.

For our purposes, a **workgroup** is a small, interdependent collection of people with a common identity who interact with one another, usually face-to-face and over time, to reach a goal. Based on this definition, we can single out several significant characteristics of workgroups that can help you develop ways to work more effectively with others on the job.

Size Most experts would say that a twosome is not a group because the partners do not interact in the same way three or more people do. For instance, two people working together can resolve disputes only by persuading each other, giving in, or compromising. By comparison, in groups, members can form alliances and outvote or pressure the minority.

Although less agreement exists about when a collection of people becomes too large to be considered a group, almost every small-group expert argues that a collection much larger than 20 people loses many of the properties that define groups—at least, effective ones.[10] Research on a number of companies has shown that 10-person groups and teams often produce better results more quickly and with higher profits than do groups consisting of several hundred people.[11] Most communication experts suggest the optimal size for groups focused on decision making is either 5 or 7 members.[12] The odd number of participants eliminates the risk of tie votes. Decision-making groups with fewer than 5 members lack the resources to come up with good ideas and to carry them out, while larger groups suffer from the problems of anonymity, domination, and lack of commitment. Recent research suggests that groups composed of 5 to 12 members can succeed, provided the type of task and the group composition are given primary consideration.[13]

Shared Purpose Guests at a reception or attendees at a convention might talk with one another, but unless they share a mutual goal, they will not collectively accomplish anything. One challenge facing anyone leading a newly created group is to give its members a clear sense of shared purpose.

Interaction over Time A collection of people studying in a library or working out at the gym are merely co-acting. Likewise, a roomful of trainees at a seminar are not considered a group unless and until the individuals start interacting. A group that interacts over a period of time develops particular characteristics. For example, it will tend to develop shared standards of appropriate behavior that its members are expected to meet. Typical expectations involve how promptly meetings begin, what contribution each member is expected to make to certain routine tasks, what kind of humor is appropriate, and so on.

Interdependence Group members do not just interact—they depend on one another. Consider the workers in a restaurant: If the kitchen crew fails to prepare orders promptly or correctly, the servers' tips will decline. If the employees who clear tables do not perform their jobs quickly and thoroughly, the servers will hear complaints from their customers. If the waiters fail to take orders accurately, the cooks will have to prepare some meals twice.

Identity Both members of a group and outsiders view groups as distinct entities. Some groups have a formal title, such as "benefits committee" or "accounting department." Others have an informal identity, such as "lunchtime power walkers" or "those guys who carpool together." In either case, the fact that the group is seen as distinct has important consequences. To a greater or lesser extent, members feel their own image is tied to the way the group is regarded. In addition, the group's identity means the addition or loss of a member feels significant to the people involved, whether the change in membership is cause for celebration or disappointment.

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Learning Teamwork from Firefighters, Comedians, and Musicians

For one action-packed afternoon, a group of corporate workers traded in their office garb for gas masks, heavy boots, and turnout gear. Coached by New York City firefighters, they assembled in four-person teams to learn about teamwork from first responders.

Dousing fires and staging subway rescues might seem far removed from routine office life. Even so, the intense demands of performing in an emergency taught the participants a great deal about what it takes for a team to perform successfully.

“Firefighting is very complex and interdependent, and that has obvious applications to the business world,” said one program planner. “Since our training puts people into crisis situations, hopefully they will be better prepared to handle any crisis that arises in the workplace.”

Firefighting isn’t the only nontraditional venue for developing teamwork. Chicago’s Second City Communications offers comedy workshops for almost 400 corporate clients, who learn that the flexibility and creativity required in an improvisational comedy troupe can transfer to organizations facing business challenges. Music offers another setting in which to teach collaboration. The Minneapolis firm Jazz Impact has trained workers from *Fortune* 500 companies to interact more effectively. Through improvisational jazz, the employees learn from unscripted performing how to integrate solo performances and accompanying players into a successful piece of work.

Whether the setting is a burning building, a nightclub, or an office, the same principles of teamwork apply: Assemble a group of talented and trained members. Be flexible. Forget about personal glory and do whatever it takes to get the job done.

Source: Kranz, G., "Corporate Leaders Train in Fire Drills and Funny Skills," *Workforce Management*, May 2011, 28–30, 32.

What Makes a Group a Team?

The term **team** appears everywhere in the business world. The positive connotations of a team—spirit, cooperation, and hard work—lead some managers to label every collection of workers as a team. You do not have to be an athlete to appreciate the value of teams, and you do not need to be a cynic to know calling a group of people a team does not make them one.[14] True teams have all the attributes of a group, but they have other distinct qualities that make them more satisfying to work in and more productive.[15]

Groups	Teams
Members are primarily concerned with their own challenges and goals	Members focus primarily on team challenges and goals
Members produce individual products	Members produce collective products
Work is shaped by the manager	Work is shaped collectively by the team leader and members

Several types of teams exist in business. Project teams work on a specific task, usually for a finite period of time. For example, a team of marketing experts might design a publicity program to accompany the rollout of a new software product. Service teams support customers or employees. For example, public utilities have service agents available around the clock to help customers. Management teams work collaboratively on a daily basis within organizations to help them perform their missions. At a university, for example, top officials meet regularly to coordinate their divisions: academic, student support, financial, physical facilities, and so on. Action teams offer immediate responses and are activated in (typically) emergency situations. For example, community health workers form teams to deal with public health threats.[16]

Although teams are more productive and successful than groups, not all teams are equally effective. Researchers Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto spent nearly three years interviewing the members of more than 75 teams that were clearly winners. The teams came from a wide range of enterprises, including a Mount Everest expedition, a cardiac surgery team, the presidential commission that studied the space shuttle Challenger accident, the team that developed the IBM personal computer, and two championship football teams. Although the teams pursued widely different goals, they all shared eight important characteristics that distinguished them from regular workgroups:[17]

- *Clear and inspiring shared goals*. Members of a winning team know why their team exists, and they believe that purpose is important and worthwhile.
- *A results-driven structure*. Members of winning teams focus on getting the job done in the most effective manner. They are organized and efficiently structured.
- *Competent team members*. Members of winning teams have the skills necessary to accomplish their goals.
- *Unified commitment*. People in successful teams put the group's goals above their personal interests. While this commitment might seem like a sacrifice to others, the personal rewards for members of winning teams are worth the effort.
- *Collaborative climate*. Another word for collaboration is *teamwork*. People in successful teams trust and support one another.
- *Standards of excellence*. In winning teams, doing outstanding work is an important norm. Each member is expected to do his or her personal best.

- *External support and recognition*. Successful teams need an appreciative audience that recognizes their effort and provides the resources necessary to get the job done. The audience may be a boss, or it may be the public whom the team is created to serve.
- *Principled leadership*. Winning teams usually have leaders who can create a vision of the team's purpose and challenge members to get the job done. Those leaders also have the ability to unleash the members' talent.

You may not be able to single-handedly transform your entire organization into a team-friendly environment, but it is still possible to influence the group of people with whom you work. Examine the eight characteristics of teams listed here and ask yourself whether you are communicating in a manner that makes that small, but important, leap possible.

Virtual Teams

Virtual teams interact and function without being in the same place at the same time.[18] As one observer put it, virtual team members are "working together apart."[19] Technology permits virtual teams to transcend boundaries of location and time. Barry Caldwell, supervisor of computer-aided industrial design technologies at Ford Motor Company's Corporate Design division, concurs, explaining how Ford's virtual teams span the globe: "We can't change the fact that Europe is five or six hours ahead [of Michigan]," he says. "But virtual teams can be extremely effective if you can have people working in Italy or Germany—five hours ahead of you—and they can hand work off to Dearborn at the end of their day, and you can carry it further and then pass it back. Instead of an eight-hour day, you can get 14 hours."[20]

TECHNOLOGY tip

Apps for Teamwork

A simple search for "to do" apps in your smartphone's or tablet's app store is likely to turn up thousands of results. Although it may seem daunting to scroll through the results, task management apps can be especially useful when you are working in a team.

To choose the best app for the job, consider the needs and preferences of the team. Will team members be working on interdependent tasks? Will a visual element (such as a checklist) help the team track its progress? Would an integrated chat or comment feature be helpful? Would it be useful if the app could sync to external calendars?

Once you have determined which features are most important, your options will narrow. For example, if team members answered "Yes" to all of the questions in the preceding paragraph, you would likely choose an app like Trello, which allows users to create a board (for example, Fundraising Event) and organize lists of tasks (Pre-event, Event, Post-event) that contain a set of to-do actions (Post-event: Send thank-you cards to donors; Publish final amount of money raised; Write a news release). This particular app would also give team members the option to assign individuals to tasks, color-code items, comment and receive notifications, and add labels, descriptions, photos, attachments, and subtasks.

Virtual teams are not always—or even usually—on separate continents. Nevertheless, technology can keep members connected while they are telecommuting or on the road. Even when people work under the same roof, keeping in e-touch can make work more efficient. Some human resources experts claim that when people work more than 50 feet apart, their likelihood of collaborating more than once a week is less than 10 percent.[21] Given this fact, virtual meetings can boost the efficiency of people who work under the same roof.

Another advantage of virtual teams is the leveling of status differences. On networked teams, rank is a much less prominent characteristic than it is in face-to-face groups.[22] When sent by e-mail, the ideas of a new or midlevel worker look identical to those of a senior manager. Back-and-forth dialogue is much less intimidating in a mediated format than it might be when you have to face the boss in person.

Despite the advantages of virtual teamwork, computer networking cannot replace all aspects of personal contacts. Furthermore, it is an oversimplification to suggest that teams are always either virtual or face-to-face. In truth, many teams are hybrid; that is, members meet from time to time and keep in touch electronically between sessions.

• Leadership and Influence in Teams

In group endeavors, successes or failures often are attributed to leadership. Coaches of losing sports teams risk being fired, while winning coaches are celebrated. CEOs of bankrupt companies are ousted by their boards of directors, while CEOs of profitable companies earn sizeable bonuses. When ethical lapses occur in an organization, a "lack of leadership" is often cited as the culprit. In this section, we look at the role of communication in effective—and ineffective—leadership.

Perspectives on Leadership

Throughout much of the history of organizations, leadership was considered to be a role held by an individual. More recently, researchers have come to recognize leadership is a process and different team members can take part in providing leadership to the

team—with or without an official leadership role. This section summarizes several of the key approaches to understanding leadership.

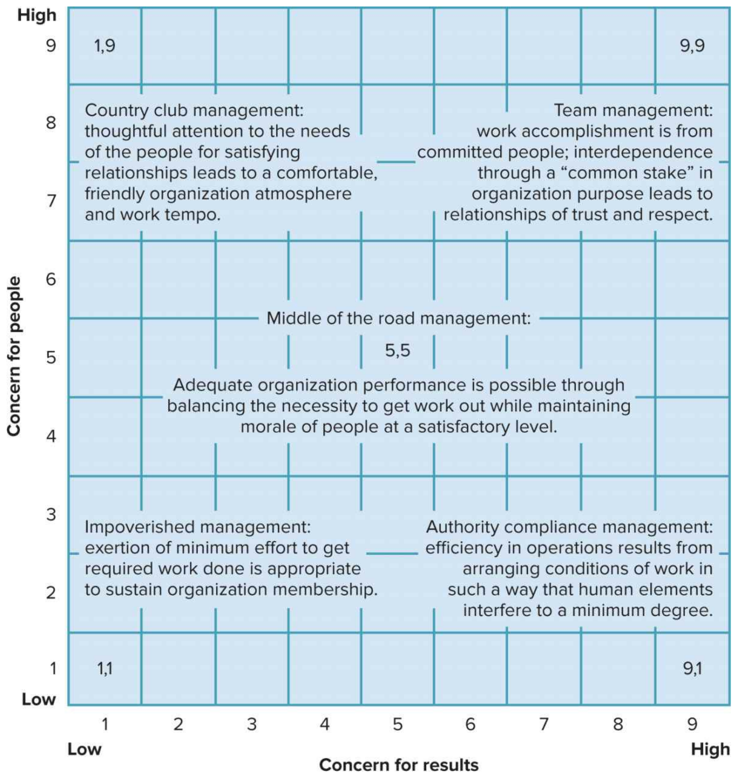
Trait Approach The **trait approach** is based on the belief that all leaders possess common traits that lead to their effectiveness. The earliest research sought to identify these traits, and by the mid-1930s scores of studies pursued this goal. The conclusions reached by the various researchers were contradictory, however, casting doubt on the validity of the trait approach. Certain traits did seem common in most leaders, including physical attractiveness, sociability, desire for leadership, originality, and intelligence.[23] Despite these similarities, the research also showed these traits were not predictive of leadership. In other words, a person possessing these characteristics would not necessarily become a leader. Another research approach, it became clear, was necessary.

Style Approach Beginning in the 1940s, researchers began to consider the **style approach**. They asked whether the designated leader could choose a way of communicating that would increase effectiveness. This research identified three managerial styles. Some leaders are **authoritarian**, using the power at their disposal to control members. Others are more **democratic**, inviting members to help make decisions. A third leadership style is described as **laissez-faire**: The designated leader gives up the power of that position and transforms the group into a leaderless collection of equals.

Early research seemed to suggest that the democratic style produced the best results,[24] and contemporary studies suggest members of groups with democratic leadership are slightly more satisfied than those run by autocratic leaders.[25] Even so, it is an oversimplification to say that a democratic approach always works best. For instance, groups with autocratic leaders are more productive in stressful situations, while democratically led groups do better when the conditions are nonstressful.[26]

One of the best-known stylistic approaches is the Leadership Grid developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (Figure 7.1),[27] which shows that good leadership depends on skillful management of the task and the relationships among group members. The horizontal axis of the grid measures a manager's concern for task or production—getting the job done. The vertical axis measures the leader's concern for people and relationships. Blake and Mouton's grid counteracts the tendency in some naive managers to assume that if they focus solely on the task, good results will follow. These theorists argue the most effective leader is one who adopts a 9,9 style, showing high concern for both product *and* people.

FIGURE 7.1 The Leadership Grid



Source: From *Leadership Dilemmas-Grid Solutions* by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCanse (formerly the Managerial Grid by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton). Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991, 29.

Contingency Approaches Unlike the style approach, **contingency approaches** are based on the idea that the "best" leadership style is flexible—it changes from one situation to the next. For instance, a manager who successfully guides a project team to develop an advertising campaign might flop as a trainer or personnel officer.

Psychologist Fred Fiedler conducted extensive research in an attempt to discover when a task-oriented approach works best versus when a relationship-oriented style is most effective.[28] He found that the decision whether to emphasize task or relationship issues in a situation depends on three factors: (1) *leader–member relations*, including the manager's attractiveness and the followers' loyalty; (2) *task structure*, involving the degree of simplicity or complexity of the job; and (3) *the leader's power*, including job title and the ability to coerce and reward the followers.

Generally, Fiedler's research suggests a task-oriented approach works best when circumstances are extremely favorable (good leader–member relations, highly structured tasks) or extremely unfavorable (poor leader–member relations, unstructured task, weak leader power). In moderately favorable or unfavorable circumstances, a relationship-oriented approach works best. While these findings are useful, it is important not to overstate their implications. In

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most cases, good leadership requires a mixture of relationship and task concerns. The question is not which dimension to choose, but rather which one to emphasize.

Another contingency approach to leadership is the situational leadership model, developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard.[29] Originally termed life-cycle theory, the situational leadership model suggests that successful leaders adapt their leadership style to the ability of the individual or group they are attempting to lead. A worker with a low level of readiness to work independently needs a highly directive and task-related style of leadership. As the subordinate becomes able to perform the task without guidance, the manager gradually withdraws the task-related supervision. Finally, when the worker's ability to handle a task is superior, the boss can cut back the amount of socioemotional support, knowing the worker is functioning at the highest level and any reinforcements are now primarily internal.

Transformational Leadership Approach Leadership expert, historian, and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership in his 1978 book *Leadership*.[30] In this approach, leaders' personality traits and ability to define a clear vision for the organization enable them to inspire subordinates to work toward common goals and empower those subordinates to exceed their normal levels of performance. Bernard M. Bass expanded upon this idea to suggest

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that transformational leadership is measured in terms of the leader's influence on his or her subordinates. Transformational leaders:

- Model integrity and fairness
- Set clear goals
- Have high expectations

- Encourage others
- Provide support and recognition
- Stir the emotions of people
- Get people to look beyond their self-interest
- Inspire people to reach for the improbable[31]

One approach to transformational leadership is known as servant leadership. If we visualize traditional leadership as a pyramid, where the leader sits at the top and makes requests of subordinates, then servant leadership would flip the pyramid upside down. The servant leader serves his or her subordinates by putting their needs first, based on the belief that empowered employees are able to do their jobs more effectively when the leader supports them. The servant leader approaches his or her job by asking a simple question: What can I do for you?

Research has shown that servant leadership improves the well-being of followers[32] and affects employees' performance through the development of an ethical work climate. Servant leaders are ethical role models and, as such, contribute to the creation of an organizational culture where doing the right thing is expected and encouraged.[33] As such, servant leadership creates a higher level of ethics that results in higher performance[34] and creativity, and less turnover.[35]

Leader–Member Exchange

So far we have been assuming leaders treat all group members equally. But your own experience probably shows that leaders have different relationships with each person on their team. Some of these relationships are characterized by positive communication and mutual satisfaction. Others can be more distant or even fraught with dissatisfaction on both sides. Recognizing this fact, **leader–member exchange (LMX)** theory views leadership as a collection of multiple relationships with organizational members, with each of those relationships being unique.

The basic premise of LMX is that leaders—no matter how good they are—have a limited amount of time and energy. As a result, they cannot give every member an equal amount of resources. Inevitably, some people get more, and some get less.[36] This "differential distribution" of resources is both the cause and the effect of some leader–member relationships being “high quality” (i.e., richer and more satisfying) and others being lower quality.

Communication in high-quality LMX relationships is typically positive and reinforcing, characterized by support statements, coaching, and joint decision making. When disagreements arise, they are handled respectfully and constructively. This treatment marks certain members as “insiders.” Communication in low-quality LMX relationships, by comparison, is dramatically different. There is often less interaction, and what does occur can include more face-threatening acts, competitive conflict, power games, and defensiveness.[37] Such patterns mark these group members as outsiders. Not surprisingly, there is a strong connection between the quality of a member’s relationship with his or her leader and the member’s overall satisfaction with that boss, coworkers, and the organization as a whole.[38]

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Servant Leadership in Action

In her book, *Dare to Serve: How to Drive Superior Results While Serving Others*, Cheryl Bachelder discusses how servant leadership has helped her revive the Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen brand.

When Bachelder became CEO of Popeyes in November 2007, she faced the challenge of solving several problems that had plagued the company for years, including a decline in guest visits, negative restaurant sales and profit trends, and a steep drop in the company’s stock price.

Bachelder found that the relationship between the company and its franchise owners was strained. As a result, she and her team focused on serving the franchise owners well. They created a workplace where people were treated with respect and encouraged to collaborate as a team and perform at the highest level. The new leadership standard led to improved guest ratings, an increase in restaurant sales and profit, and a growth in market capitalization from less than $300 million to more than $1.4 billion. The franchisees began reinvesting in the brand by remodeling restaurants in record time and opening new locations around the world.

In an interview with *Business Insider* in 2015, Bachelder summarized her efforts: “This company hadn’t been performing well in years. We asked ourselves who we would serve, and we decided on the franchise owners. We put every decision we made through the filter of how well it served the franchise owner. Then, over the course of the next several years we checked performance against the measures of what makes franchise owners successful. Together, we’ve created this high-performing company.”

Sources: Bachelder, C., *Dare to Serve: How to Drive Superior Results by Serving Others*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015; Goudreau, J., “The CEO of Popeyes Says Becoming a ‘Servant Leader’ Helped Her Turn Around the Struggling Restaurant Chain,” *Business Insider*, March 24, 2015; Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Inc. (2017). Cheryl A. Bachelder. Retrieved from https://company.popeyes.com/company/leadership/cheryl-bachelder/

As a member, you can communicate in ways that lead to a high-quality “insider” relationship with your leader.[39] Research suggests that leaders are most impressed by “work-related currencies,” such as taking the initiative, exercising responsibility, and going beyond the official job description.[40] Basic as it may sound, doing a good job and exceeding the leader’s expectations can be the best route to forging a high-quality relationship.

Becoming a Leader

Sometimes leaders are appointed by an individual with higher authority or by the team itself. For example, a football team may select a captain, or a board of directors may appoint a director as chair of a committee. In other cases, leaders emerge organically from a group. **Emergent leaders** evolve into this role over time as a result of the group’s interaction.

Emergent leaders do not always have official titles. For example, a group of disgruntled employees might urge one person to approach the boss and ask for a change. A team of students assigned to develop a class project might agree that one person is best suited to take the lead in organizing and presenting their work. Sometimes emergent leaders are officially recognized, but at other times their role is never acknowledged overtly. In fact, the designated leader may be the titular head of a group, while an emergent leader really runs the show. Fans of late-night movies will recall how the young, inexperienced lieutenant learns to defer to the grizzled, wise sergeant. This pattern often repeats itself in everyday working situations when new managers or supervisors recognize the greater knowledge of old-timers who are their subordinates on the organizational chart. In such cases, the new manager is smart to defer to the unofficial, emergent leader—at least until he or she gains more experience and wisdom.

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Communication researcher Ernest Bormann studied how emergent leaders gain influence, especially in newly formed groups.[41] According to Bormann, a group selects a leader by the *method of residues*—a process of elimination in which potential candidates are gradually rejected for one reason or another until only one remains. This process of elimination occurs in two phases. In the first round, members who are clearly unsuitable are rejected. The surest path to rejection is being quiet; less talkative members were never chosen as leaders in the groups Bormann studied. Failing to participate verbally in a group's work leaves the impression of indifference and lack of commitment. Another ticket to early rejection is dogmatism: Members who express their opinions in strong, unqualified terms are usually perceived as being too extreme and inflexible to take a leading role. A third cause of elimination as a potential leader is a lack of skill or intelligence: Competence is obviously a necessary condition for successful leadership, and members who lack this quality are rejected early.

In the method of residues, quietness, dogmatism, and incompetence are almost always grounds for disqualification. Beyond these factors, a communication style that members find irritating or disturbing is likely to knock a member out of consideration as a leader. A variety of behaviors may fall into this category, depending on the composition of the group. In one case, being too serious might be grounds for rejection, but in a different situation, a joker might earn disapproval. Using inappropriate language could also be a disqualifier. In a group with biased members, gender or ethnicity might be grounds for rejection.

After clearly unsuitable members have been eliminated, roughly half of the group's members may still be candidates for leadership. This second phase can be a tense time for the group, as the jockeying for a role of influence may pit the remaining candidates against one another. In some groups, the contenders for leader acquire what Bormann calls "lieutenants," who support the contenders' advancement. If only one candidate has a lieutenant, his or her chances of becoming leader are strong. If two or more contenders have supporters, the process of leader emergence can drag out or even reach a stalemate. The Career Tip box offers advice for the times when you want to take on leadership of a group.

In their book *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge*, Roger Fisher and Alan Sharp describe "lateral leadership" as a way to avoid the extremes of doing nothing or taking charge and bossing others. They suggest a team member can lead others by doing three things: (1) *asking* thoughtful, sincere questions to get others to think creatively and contribute their ideas; (2) *offering* ideas to help the team while inviting others to challenge your thoughts; and (3) *doing* something constructive needed by the team and modeling the behavior needed.[42]

Power and Influence of Members

Many teams have a **designated leader**—the supervisor, chairperson, coach, or manager who has formal authority and responsibility to supervise the task at hand. Other groups, called **self-directed work teams**, are responsible for managing their own behavior to get a task done.[43] For example, in 2015, lokai launched a limited-edition blue bracelet in partnership with charity: water. The company donated $3 for every blue lokai sold between March 1 and March 22 to charity: water in commemoration of World Water Day. When the partnership was launched, however, lokai's e-commerce site could not keep up with the customer demand and crashed. lokai CEO and founder Steven Izen told *Entrepreneur* that he allowed his employees to take over; within an hour, the site was back and running. According to Izen, “I need to be able to rely on my team and the people around me…. If I really put my trust in them, they will be able to execute.”[44]

Whether or not a team has a designated leader, every member has the power to shape events. More than a half-century ago, John French and Bertram Raven identified seven

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forms of power that are usually possessed by one or more members of a group—not necessarily just the designated leader.[45] Depending on how they are used, these forms of power can make or break a team’s success.

CAREER tip

Sleep Deprivation and Leadership

It is no secret that leaders have demanding schedules and often find themselves burning the midnight oil to complete tasks and meet deadlines. This practice can be detrimental to their ability to be successful leaders, however. Recent research shows that sleep deprivation can undermine leaders’ influence on their followers. Sleep-deprived leaders tend to be perceived as less charismatic than those who have had a normal night’s sleep and, therefore, have a more difficult time inspiring their subordinates.

Interestingly, researchers have also found that sleep-deprived subordinates attribute less charisma to their leaders, meaning that they are more difficult to inspire.

When possible, leaders should eliminate practices that may cause sleep deprivation for themselves and their employees, such as responding to text messages or e-mail after hours.

Source: Barnes, C. M., Guarana, C. L., Nauman, S., & Kong, D. J., “Too Tired to Inspire or Be Inspired: Sleep Deprivation and Charismatic Leadership,” *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101*(8), 2016, 1191–1199.

Position Power **Position power** is the ability to influence that comes from the position one holds. We often do things for the boss precisely because he or she holds that title. While position power usually belongs to designated leaders, people in lesser positions sometimes have jobs that involve telling higher-ups what to do. For example, a media expert might have the position power to tell the CEO or board chairman what will and will not work in a presentation to stockholders.

Coercive Power The power to punish is known as **coercive power** because we often follow another's bidding when failure to do so would lead to unpleasant consequences. Designated leaders have coercive power: They can assign unpleasant tasks, deny pay raises, and even fire people. Other members have coercive power, too, though it is usually subtle. Committee members or officemates who act as a blocker when things do not go their way are coercing others to take their views into account, implying, "If you don't follow at least some of my suggestions, I'll punish the team by continuing to object to your ideas and refusing to cooperate with you."

Reward Power The flip side of coercive power is **reward power**—the ability to reward. Designated leaders control the most obvious rewards, such as pay raises, improved working conditions, and the ability to promote. Even so, other members can give their own rewards. These may take the form of social payoffs, such as increased goodwill, and task-related benefits, such as voluntary assistance on a job.

Expert Power **Expert power** comes from the group's recognition of a member's expertise in a certain area. Sometimes one expert is better suited to make a decision than an entire team. Designated leaders, however, are not always the experts in a group. In a manufacturing firm, for example, a relatively low-ranking engineer could influence management to alter a project by using her knowledge to declare a new product will not work. Problems can arise either when management does not recognize a knowledgeable member as an expert or when unqualified people are granted expert status.

Referent Power The term **referent power** alludes to the influence members possess due to the way others in the group feel about them—that is, out of respect, attraction, or liking. It is here that the greatest difference between designated leaders and members

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with true influence becomes evident. An unpopular boss might have to resort to wielding his or her job title and the power to coerce and reward that comes with it to gain compliance, whereas a popular person, with or without a leadership title, can get others to cooperate without threatening or promising.[46] Mike Zugsmith, co-owner of a commercial real estate brokerage, captures the importance of referent power, even for a boss: "When I started this company in 1979, I was 28. I was supervising salespeople who were 20 to 30 years my senior. It readily became apparent that simply because your name is on the door doesn't mean you'll get respect. You have to earn it."[47]

CULTURE at work

Japanese Baseball: A Portrait of Collectivism

Essayist Pico Iyer uses the quintessentially American game of baseball to illustrate the difference between teamwork in individualistic and collectivist cultures. While the rules of the game are essentially identical in both Japan and the United States, the orientation of players toward their team could not be more different.

Iyer describes the adjustment an American player must make when joining a major league team in Japan:

> He had to agree not to show off his talent, not to seek out flashy statistics, not, in short, to become a star. He had to recall that unity came from unanimity that his identity lay only with the team.… In Japan, players were nothing more than verses in a single poem.

Most English speakers learn from an early age that there is no "I" in "team." But Westerners cannot truly appreciate the profoundly individualistic nature of their orientation toward teams until they experience life in collectivist culture.

Sources: Iyer, P., *Video Night in Kathmandu*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1998; Green, S. W., "Baseball and Racial and Ethnic Perspectives." In A. L. Hall & T. L. Altherr (Eds.), *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland 2002.

Information Power **Information power** is the ability of some members to influence a group because of the information they possess. This information is different from the kind of knowledge that gives rise to expert power. Whereas an expert possesses some form of talent based on training or education, an information-rich group member has access to otherwise obscure knowledge that other members value. A new employee who was hired away from a competitor, for example, is likely to play a key role in decisions about how his new company will compete against the old one. Likewise, a member who is well connected to the organizational grapevine can exert a major influence on how the group operates: "Don't bring that up now. Smith is going through a divorce, and he's saying no to everything." "I just heard there's plenty of money in the travel and entertainment budget. Maybe this is the time to propose that reception for the out-of-town distributors we've been thinking about."

Connection Power In the business world, a member's influence can often come from the connections he or she has with influential or important people inside or outside the organization—hence the term **connection power**. The classic example of connection power is the boss's son or daughter. While the official word from the top may be "Treat my kid just like any other employee," this is easier said than done. Of course, not all connection power is harmful. If one member of the organization sees a potential customer socially, he or she is in a good position to help the business. If another one knows a government official, that employee might be able to get off-the-record advice about how to handle a government regulation.

If we recognize the influence that comes with connection power, the old saying "It isn't what you know that counts, it's who you know" seems true. If we look at all the types of power described in this section, however, we can see that a more accurate statement is "What counts is whom you know [connection power], what you know [information and expert power], who respects you [referent power], and who you are [position power]." This range of

power bases makes it clear that the power to influence a group is truly shared among members, all of whom have the ability to affect how well a group works as a unit and which quality of product it turns out.

• Effective Communication in Teams

Whether you are in a team with a powerful leader or one with shared decision-making power, you can communicate in ways that help the team work effectively and make the experience satisfying. For the team to function well, each member must take into account the issues and problems that may arise whenever people try to communicate.

Fill Functional Roles

One way every member can shape the way a team operates is by acting in whatever way is necessary to help get the job done. This approach has been labeled the "functional perspective" because it defines influence in terms of fulfilling essential functions, not formal titles. These essential contributions have earned the name **functional roles** because they involve functions that are necessary for the team to do its job. Table 7-2 lists these functional roles and notes some dysfunctional behaviors that reduce the effectiveness of a team. As the table shows, there are two types of functional roles. **Task roles** play an important part in accomplishing the job at hand. **Relational roles** help keep the interaction between members running smoothly.[48]

Table 7-2 **Functional Roles of Team Members**

Task Roles

1. *Information- or opinion-giver*. Offers facts or opinions relevant to team task.
2. *Information- or opinion-seeker*. Asks others for task-related information or opinions.
3. *Starter or energizer*. Initiates or encourages task-related behavior (e.g., “We’d better get going on this”).
4. *Direction-giver*. Provides instructions regarding how to perform task at hand.
5. *Summarizer*. Reviews what has been said, identifying common themes or progress.
6. *Diagnoser*. Offers observations about task-related behavior of team (e.g., “We seem to be spending all of our time discussing the problem without proposing any solutions”).
7. *Gatekeeper*. Regulates participation of members.
8. *Reality-tester*. Checks feasibility of ideas against real-world contingencies.

Relational Roles

1. *Participation encourager*. Encourages reticent members to speak, letting them know their contributions will be valued.
2. *Harmonizer*. Resolves interpersonal conflicts between members.
3. *Tension-reliever*. Uses humor or other devices to release members’ anxiety and frustration.
4. *Evaluator of emotional climate*. Offers observations about socioemotional relationships between members (e.g., “I think we’re all feeling a little defensive now” or “It sounds as if you think no one trusts you, Bill”).
5. *Praise-giver*. Reinforces accomplishments and contributions of members.
6. *Empathic listener*. Listens without evaluation to personal concerns of members.

Dysfunctional Roles

1. *Blocker*. Prevents progress by constantly raising objections.
2. *Attacker*. Aggressively questions others’ competence or motives.
3. *Recognition-seeker*. Repeatedly and unnecessarily calls attention to self by relating irrelevant experiences, boasting, and seeking sympathy.
4. *Joker*. Engages in joking behavior in excess of the tension-relieving needs, distracting members.
5. *Withdrawer*. Refuses to take a stand on social or task issues; covers up feelings; does not respond to others’ comments.

Table 7-2 is a valuable diagnostic tool. When a team is not operating effectively, you must determine which functions are lacking. In some cases, your diagnosis of a troubled team might show that all the necessary task functions are being filled but members’ social needs are not being met. Perhaps members need to have their good ideas supported ("That's a terrific idea, Neil!"). Maybe personal conflicts need to be acknowledged and resolved ("I know I sound defensive about this. I've worked on this idea for a month, and I hate to see it dismissed in 5 minutes."). When social needs like these go unfilled, even the best knowledge and talent often are not enough to guarantee a team's smooth functioning.

Sometimes a team will transform important functional roles into formal ones. For example, at financial services giant Charles Schwab, one person in every meeting serves as an observer-diagnoser.[49] This person does not take part in the discussion; instead, he or she creates a list of what went right (e.g., "Good creativity," "Excellent use of time") and what went wrong (e.g., "Lots of digressions," "Personal criticism created defensiveness") in the meeting. This list is included in the minutes, which management reviews. It is easy to imagine how the observer's comments can help a team improve its effectiveness.

Having too many people fill a particular functional role can be just as troublesome as having no one fill it. For example, you might discover that several people are acting as opinion-givers but no one is serving as an opinion-seeker. If two or more people compete for the role of direction-giver, the results can be confusing. Even social roles can be overdone. Too much tension-relieving or praise-giving, for example, can become annoying.

Once you have identified the missing roles, you can fill them. Supplying these missing roles often transforms a stalled, frustrated team into a productive one.[50] Other members probably will not recognize what you are doing, but they will realize you somehow know how to say the right thing at the right time.

Recognize Both Team and Personal Goals

Every team operates to achieve some specific goal—selling a product, providing a service, getting a job done, and so on. In addition to pursuing a team's goals, members usually have their own individual goals. Sometimes an individual's goal in a team is identical (or nearly identical) to the group's shared goal. For example, the owner of a retail store might join the community Christmas fund-raising campaign out of a sincere desire to help the needy. In most cases, however, people also have more personal motives for joining a team. The retailer, for instance, might realize that working on the fund-raising campaign will improve both his visibility and his image in the community—and ultimately lead to more business. Notice the relationships between some common team and individual goals in the following list:

Team Goal	**Individual Goal**
Sales department wants to meet annual sales target.	Sales representative wants to earn bonus.
Retailer wants to expand hours to attract new business.	Employees want to avoid working nights and weekends.
Company wants an employee to attend a seminar in Minneapolis.	Employee wants to visit family in Minneapolis.

Individual goals are not necessarily harmful to a team or an organization if they are compatible with the overall objectives. In fact, under these circumstances they can actually help the team to achieve its goals. For instance, sales representatives who want to increase their commissions will try to sell more of the company's products. Similarly, an otherwise reluctant employee might volunteer to attend a January seminar in Minneapolis if she can see her family during the visit.

Only when an individual's goals conflict with the organization's or team's goals do problems occur. If Lou and Marian dislike each other, their arguments could keep the team from getting much accomplished in meetings. If Bill is afraid of losing his job because of a mistake that has been made, he may concentrate on trying to avoid being blamed rather than on solving the problem.

The range of personal goals that can interfere with team effectiveness is surprisingly broad. One or more team members might be concerned with finishing the job quickly and getting away to take care of personal business. Others might be more concerned with being liked or appearing smart than with doing the job as quickly or effectively as possible. Someone else might want to impress the boss. All these goals, as well as dozens of others, can sidetrack or derail a team from doing its job.

As Table 7-3 shows, teams will be harmonious and most efficient when the members are also reaching their personal goals. You can boost your team's effectiveness by doing everything possible to help members satisfy those goals. If the people in your team are looking for fun and companionship, consider ways to tackle the job at hand that also give them what they want. Conversely, if they are in a hurry because of busy schedules, concentrate on keeping meetings to a minimum. If some members like recognition, stroke their egos by offering compliments whenever you can sincerely do so. The extra effort you spend attending to members' individual needs will pay dividends in terms of the energy and loyalty the team gains from happy members.

Table 7-3 Team Process Variables Associated with Productivity

1. Members are clear about and agree with team goals.
2. Tasks are appropriate for team versus individual solutions.
3. Members are clear about and accept their formal roles.
4. Role assignments match members' abilities.
5. The level of the leader's direction matches the team's skill level.
6. All team members are encouraged to participate.
7. The team gets, gives, and uses feedback about its effectiveness and productivity.
8. The team spends time defining and discussing problems it must solve or decisions it must make. Members also spend time planning how they will solve problems and make decisions.
9. The team uses effective decision-making strategies that were outlined in advance.
10. The team evaluates its solutions and decisions.
11. Norms encourage high performance and quality, success, and innovation.
12. Subgroups are integrated into the team as a whole.
13. The team contains the smallest number of members necessary to accomplish its goals.
14. The team has enough time to develop cohesiveness and accomplish its goals.
15. The team has a cooperative orientation.

16.	Disagreements occur frequently but are usually resolved quickly.

Source: Wheelan, S. A., Murphy, D., Tsumura, E., & Kline, S. F., "Member Perceptions of Internal Group Dynamics and Productivity," *Small Group Research*, 29, 1998, 371–393.

In some cases, team members announce their individual goals. In other cases, though, stating a personal goal outright could be embarrassing or counterproductive. A committee member would not confess, "I volunteered to serve on this committee so I could find new people to date." An employee would never say openly, "I'm planning to learn everything I can here and then quit the firm and open my own business." Personal goals that are not made public are called **hidden agendas**.

Hidden agendas are not necessarily harmful. A member's dating goals need not interfere with team functions. Similarly, many other personal motives are not threatening or even relevant to a team's business. Some hidden agendas may even be beneficial. For instance, an up-and-coming young worker's desire to communicate his competence to the boss by volunteering for difficult jobs might help the team. According to international team consultant Frank Heckman, the "bottom line is that we all have personal agendas and to some degree, some are hidden even to us."[51] Other hidden agendas, however, are harmful. As Heckman notes, "the problem will come in if the individual is duplicitous and undermines what the team is trying to achieve."[52] Two feuding members who use meetings to disparage each other can only harm the team, and the person collecting ideas to go into business himself will most likely hurt the organization when he takes its ideas elsewhere.

There is no single best way to deal with harmful hidden agendas. Sometimes the best course is to bring the goal out into the open. For example, a manager might speak to feuding subordinates one at a time, let them know she recognizes their problem, and work with them to solve it directly and constructively (probably using the conflict management skills described in Chapter 5). When you do decide to bring a hidden personal goal into the open, it is almost always better to confront the member privately. The embarrassment of being unveiled publicly is usually so great the person becomes defensive and denies the hidden goal exists.

At other times, it is best to treat a hidden personal goal indirectly. For example, if a member's excessive talking in meetings seems to be a bid for recognition, the best approach

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might be to make a point of praising that individual's valid contributions more frequently. If two feuding subordinates continue to have trouble working together, the manager can assign them to different projects or transfer one or both of them to different teams.

Promote Desirable Norms

Norms are informal, often unstated rules about what behavior is appropriate.[53] Some norms govern the way tasks are handled, while others shape the social interaction of the team. A team's norms are often shaped by the culture of the organization to which it belongs. For example, 3M's success has been attributed to its "bias for yes": When in doubt, employees are encouraged to take a chance instead of avoiding action out of fear of failure.[54] Likewise, Motorola's turnaround has been attributed to its changing norms for conflict. The company's culture now makes it acceptable to disagree strongly (and loudly) in meetings instead of keeping quiet or being overly diplomatic.[55] As Table 7-4 shows, the norms in some teams are constructive, whereas other teams have equally powerful rules that damage their effectiveness.[56]

The challenge of establishing norms is especially great when members come from different cultural backgrounds.[57] For example, team members from a low-context culture (such as the United States or Canada) would be more likely to address conflicts directly, whereas those from high-context backgrounds (East Asia or the Middle East, for example) would be inclined to use indirect approaches. Likewise, members from a background where

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high power distance is the norm would be less likely to challenge a team's leader than those from a background where low power distance is the norm.

Table 7-4 Typical Constructive (and Destructive) Norms for a Team

- Handle (Ignore) business for coworkers who are away from their desks.
- Be willing (Refuse) to admit your mistakes.
- Occasional time off from work for personal reasons is (isn't) okay, as long as the absence won't harm the company.
- Do (Don't) be willing to work overtime without complaining when big, important deadlines approach.
- Say so (Keep quiet) if you disagree. Don't (Do) hint or go behind others' backs.
- Avoid (Hold) side conversations during meetings.
- Don't (Do) interrupt or ignore others' ideas.
- Arrive on time (Be late) for meetings.
- Celebrate (Don't celebrate) successes.
- Honor (Shirk) your commitments.

Source: Baum, J. A. C. (n.d.). "Avoiding Common Team Problems," *Rotman School of Management*. Retrieved from http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/?baum/mgt2003/avoid.html

Self-Assessment Evaluating Your Team's Communication Effectiveness

Use this inventory to identify how well your team is performing these important communication practices.

As a Team, How Well Did You:	Not Well			Very Well	
Define or clarify the task	1	2	3	4	5
Exchange and share information	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage expression of various points of view	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluate and analyze data	1	2	3	4	5
Use the best decision-making approach (e.g., consensus, majority rule)	1	2	3	4	5
Focus on tasks, not on individuals	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate respect for all	1	2	3	4	5

Encourage feedback	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage expression of opinion	1	2	3	4	5
Build on others’ ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Ask for clarification of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate equality	1	2	3	4	5
Address disagreements or misunderstandings	1	2	3	4	5
Stay on task	1	2	3	4	5

Once norms are established, members who violate them may create a crisis for the rest of the team, who may respond in a series of escalating steps.[58] Consider, for example,

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a worker who violates the norm of not following up on her obligations between team meetings. Her teammates might react with increasing pressure:

- *Delaying action*. Members talk among themselves but do not approach the deviant, hoping she will change without pressure.
- *Hinting about the violation*. Members tease the violator about being a “flake” or about being lazy, hoping the message behind the humor will cause her to do her share of the work.
- *Discussing the problem openly*. Members confront the nonconformist, explaining their concerns about her behavior.
- *Ridiculing and deriding the violator*. Persuasion shifts to demands for a change in behavior; the team’s pressure tactics may well trigger a defensive response in the nonconforming member.
- *Rejecting or isolating the deviant*. If all other measures fail, the team member who does not conform to team norms is asked to leave the group. If the person cannot be expelled, other members can excommunicate the deviant by not inviting her to meetings and by disregarding any attempts at communicating she might make.

There are two ways in which an understanding of norms can help you to function more effectively in a team.

Create Desirable Norms Early Norms are established early in a team. Once they exist, they are difficult to change. Thus, when you participate in a team that is just being established, you should do whatever you can to create norms you think will be desirable. For example, if you expect committee members to be punctual at meetings, it is important to begin each session at the appointed time. If you want others to be candid about their feelings, it is important to be frank yourself and encourage honesty in others at the outset.

Comply with Established Norms Whenever Possible In an established team, you have the best chance of reaching your goals if you handle the task and social relationships in the team's customary manner. If your coworkers are in the habit of exchanging good-natured insults, you should not be offended when you are the target—and you will be accepted as one of them if you dish out a few quips yourself. In a team in which the norm is never to criticize another member's ideas directly, a blunt approach probably will not get you very far. When you are entering an established team, it is wise to learn the norms by personal observation and by asking knowledgeable members about them before plunging in.

The national or regional culture can also shape the way team members communicate with one another. Differences in managing conflict are a good example. The straight-talking, low-context style that is accepted in many parts of the English-speaking world is not the norm in other places.[59] Of course, it may not always be possible to follow established norms. If a team is in the habit of cracking racist jokes, doing shabby work, or stealing company property, for example, you would probably be unwilling to go along just to be accepted. This sort of conflict between personal values and team norms can lead to a major crisis in values. If the potential for conflict is great enough and the issue is sufficiently important, you may decide to do whatever you can to join a different, more compatible team.

Promote an Optimal Level of Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness can be defined as the degree to which members feel themselves to be part of a team and want to remain with that team. You can think of cohesiveness as a magnetic force that attracts members to one another, giving them a collective identity. As you might suspect, highly cohesive teams have happier members than less closely knit groups. Workers who belong to cohesive teams are likely to have higher rates of job

satisfaction and lower rates of tension, absenteeism, and turnover than those who belong to less cohesive ones.[60] They also make better decisions.[61]

ETHICAL challenge

The Unproductive Teammate

You are a member of what was once a dream team of productive workers. Until recently, everyone worked well together to meet the team's goals. When one member took time off to care for a child who was hospitalized a few months ago, everyone was happy to cover for him. Over the next months, however, the same member began missing more work because of other problems—a spouse needing care, a sports injury, and moving to a new home. The rest of the team has begun to doubt their unproductive colleague will ever contribute his fair share to the team again, and they agree it is time to raise this issue.

Describe how the team can deal with this issue in a way that acknowledges both the unproductive member's legitimate problems and the team's need for the member to do his share.

Not all cohesive teams are productive—at least not in terms of the organization's goals. In strikes and slowdowns, for example, highly cohesive workers can actually shut down operations. (Of course, the workers' cohesiveness in such cases may help them to accomplish other team goals, such as higher pay or safer working conditions.) In less dramatic cases, cohesiveness in observing anti-organizational norms ("Don't work too hard," "Go ahead and report our lunch as a business expense—we always do that," "If you need some art supplies for your kids, just take them from the supply closet") can leave team members feeling good about one another but raise ethical issues and harm the organization’s interests. Finally, too much cohesiveness can lead to the kinds of “groupthink” described on pp. 219–220.

Cohesiveness develops when certain conditions exist in a team. Once you understand these conditions, you can apply them to groups on or off the job. You can also use them to analyze why a team’s cohesiveness is high or low and choose ways to reach and maintain a desirable level of cohesiveness. The remainder of this section presents seven factors that promote an optimal level of cohesiveness.[62]

Shared or Compatible Goals Team members draw closer together when they have a similar aim or when their goals can be mutually satisfied. For instance, the members of a construction crew might have little cohesiveness when their pay is based on individual efforts, but if the entire crew receives a bonus for completing stages of the building ahead of schedule, the members are likely to work together better.

Progress toward Goals When a team makes progress toward its target, members are drawn together; when progress stops, cohesiveness decreases. Members of the construction crew just mentioned will feel good about one another when they reach their target dates or can reasonably expect to do so; however, if they consistently fall short of meeting those targets, they are likely to get discouraged and feel less attraction to the team. When talking to their families or friends, there will be less talk about “us” and more about “me.”

Shared Norms or Values Although successful teams tolerate or even thrive because of some differences in members’ expressed attitudes and behaviors, wide variation in what members consider appropriate behavior reduces cohesiveness. For example, a person who insists on wearing conservative clothes in a business where everyone else dresses casually probably will not fit in with the rest of the group.

Minimal Feelings of Threat among Members In a cohesive team, members usually feel secure about their status, dignity, and material and social well-being. When conflict arises over these issues, results can be destructive. For example, if all of the junior executives in a division are competing for the same senior position—especially if senior positions rarely open—the team's cohesiveness is likely to suffer, at least until the job is filled.

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Interdependence among Members Teams become more cohesive when members need one another to satisfy team goals. When a job can be done by one person alone, the need for unity decreases. An office team in which each member performs a different aspect or stage of a process will be less cohesive than one in which members rely on one another.

Competition from Outside the Team When members perceive an external threat to their existence or dignity, they draw closer together. Almost everyone knows of a family whose members seem to fight constantly among themselves until an outsider criticizes one of them. The internal bickering stops for the moment, and the team unites against the common enemy. A fractured team could draw together in a similar way when another group competes with it for such things as use of limited company resources or desirable space in a new office building. Many wise managers deliberately set up situations of competition between teams to get tasks accomplished more quickly or to generate more sales.

Shared Team Experiences When members have shared an experience together, especially an unusual or trying one, they draw closer together. This phenomenon explains why soldiers who have gone through combat together often feel close for the rest of their lives. Teams that have accomplished difficult tasks are also likely to be more cohesive. Some organizations also provide social events such as annual "retreats" for their executives. These retreats might include high-ropes courses, workshops, sports events, and parties. Annual sales meetings, although not the most cost-efficient way to distribute sales information, are often partially intended to increase team cohesiveness.

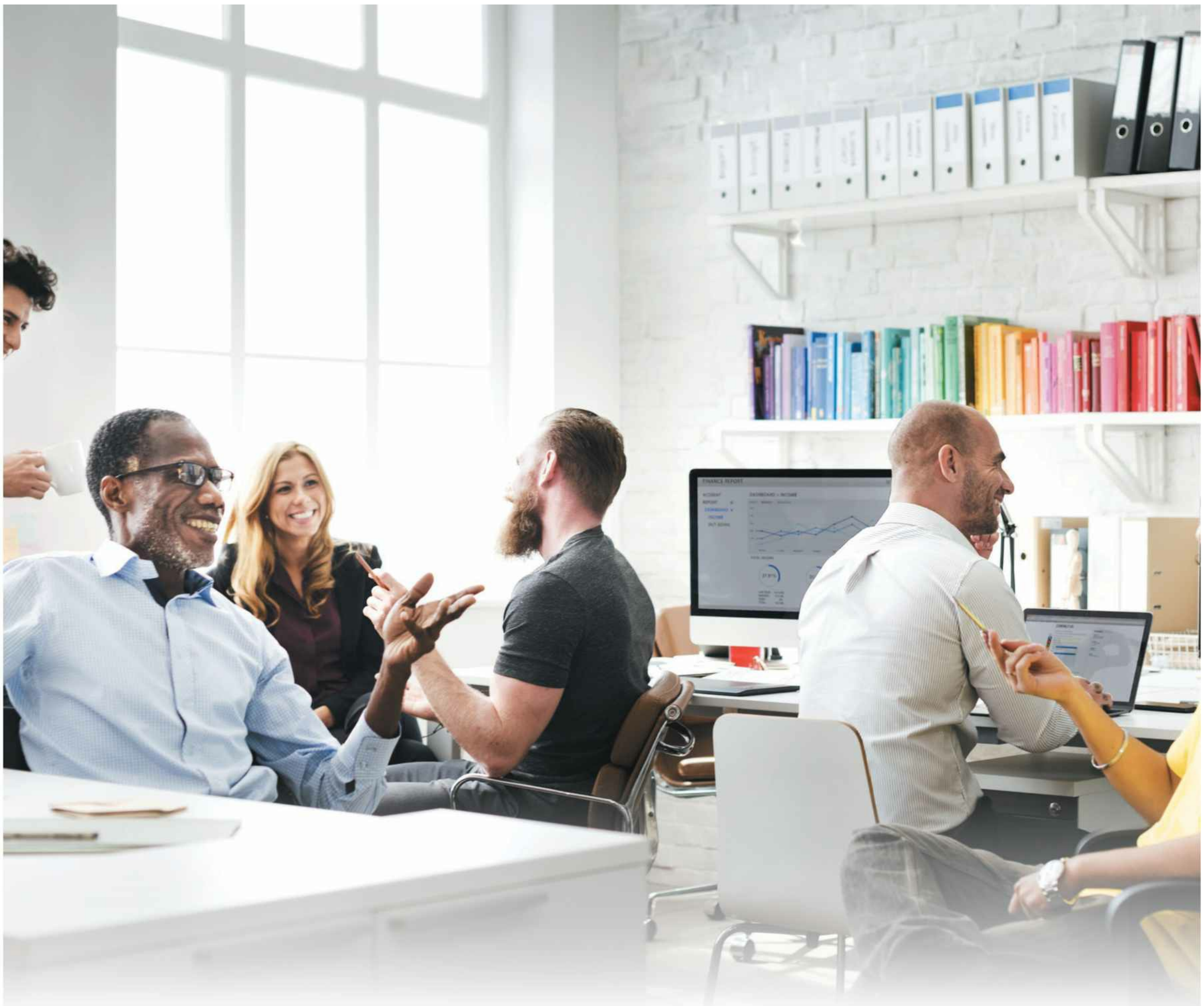
Avoid Excessive Conformity

Bad group decisions can also come about through too much agreement among members. Irving Janis calls this phenomenon **groupthink**, an unwillingness, for the sake of harmony, to examine ideas critically.[63] Janis describes several characteristics of groups that succumb to groupthink:

- *Illusion that the group is invulnerable:* "We can afford to raise the price on our deluxe-model kitchen appliances because they're so much better than anything else on the market. Even if our competitors could develop comparable models, we'd still outdo them on style."
- *Tendency to rationalize or discount negative information:* "I know the market research says people will buy other brands if our prices go up any more, but you know how unreliable market research is about things like that."

Chapter Eight

Effective Meetings



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chapter outline

chapter objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Describe various types and purposes of meetings.
2. Describe the various types and characteristics of virtual meetings.
3. Identify reasons to hold (or not hold) a meeting.
4. Construct a complete meeting agenda.
5. Identify methods to set the tone for a meeting.
6. Apply various methods for conducting business: parliamentary procedure, decision-making methods, enhancing creativity, encouraging participation, keeping discussions on track, and keeping a positive tone.
7. Effectively bring a meeting to a close and follow up appropriately.

Meetings are a fact of life on the job. Between 11 million and 20 million business meetings take place each day in the United States.[1] A typical American employee will attend 62 meetings per month,[2] at an average length of 31–60 minutes per meeting.[3] Perhaps even more astonishing is the fact that CEOs spend 60 percent of their working hours in meetings. Another 25 percent of their time is devoted to phone calls, conference calls, and events.[4]

Just because meetings are commonplace, that does not mean they are always worth the time and effort.[5] In fact, hours spent in meetings are not always considered well spent. One research study shows that one half of meetings in the United States are considered time wasted, resulting in an estimated salary cost of $37 billion per year.[6]

Beyond wasting precious time and money, pervasively inefficient meetings contribute to an overall atmosphere of cynicism. “Meetings matter because that’s where an organization’s culture perpetuates itself,” says William R. Daniels, senior consultant at American Consulting & Training.[7] Meetings—whether they are good or bad—are a sign of an organization’s health. Efficient meetings can leave employees feeling energized and excited about their work, and are a crucial part of a productive business culture.[8]

This chapter introduces some methods for planning and participating in meetings that will produce efficient, satisfying results. We focus specifically on how teams operate in face-to-face and virtual meetings—that is, on those occasions when their members communicate simultaneously to deal with common concerns.

• Types of Meetings

People meet for many reasons. Whether they occur in person or online, in most business and professional settings, meetings can be classified into three categories: information-sharing meetings, problem-solving meetings, and ritual activities. Of course, some meetings may serve more than one purpose.

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Information-Sharing Meetings

In many organizations, people meet regularly to exchange information. This type of meeting may adhere to the format of a regular meeting held at the office. Police officers and nurses, for example, begin every shift with a meeting in which the people going off duty brief their replacements on what has been happening recently. Members of a medical research team experimenting with a new drug may meet regularly to compare notes on their results. In many office teams, the Monday morning meeting is an important tool for informing members about new developments, emerging trends, and the coming week’s tasks. For example, Perkin Elmer

Corporation, a producer of scientific measuring instruments and precision optical equipment, schedules a weekly meeting of all corporate and top executives to keep them up-to-date on the activities of the company's more than 20 divisions, which are located around the world.

In addition to following this format, information-sharing meetings may take the form of conventions, workshops, or seminars. Conventions are large group meetings designed to facilitate discussion about a specific topic or area of common interest. It is likely that your professors attend professional conventions on a yearly basis to share their research with colleagues and learn more about what other researchers are contributing to the field. Workshops and seminars are types of meetings for smaller groups, where attendees improve their knowledge and skills of a certain task. The American Red Cross, for example, hosts a variety of health and safety training workshops for employees, including those on giving first aid, administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and using an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Meetings

In other meetings, a team may decide to take some action or make a change in existing policies or procedures. With which supplier should we contract? Should we introduce a new product line? Should we delay production so we can work out a design flaw in our new keyboard? Where can we cut costs if sales do not improve this year? How can we best schedule vacations?

Problem solving is the most common reason why business meetings are held. Because problem-solving and decision-making meetings are the most challenging type of group activity, considerable attention is given to this topic in Appendix III.

Ritual Activities

In still other meetings, the social function is far more important than any specific task. In one firm, Friday afternoon "progress review sessions" are a regular fixture. This apparently serious title is really an insider's tongue-in-cheek joke: The meetings take place in a local bar and to an outsider look like little more than a TGIF party. Despite the setting and apparently un-businesslike activity, these meetings serve several important purposes.[9] First, they reaffirm the members’ commitment to one another and to the company. Choosing to socialize with one another instead of rushing home is a sign of belonging and caring. Second, the sessions provide a chance to swap useful ideas and stories that might not be appropriate in the office. Who is in trouble? What does the boss really want?

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Other rituals for some organizations are enrichment-based meetings that allow employees to use part of their workday to discuss issues that bridge their work life and their personal well-being. For

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example, companies such as Target, Nike, Google, and Apple offer their employees meditation and yoga classes with the hope of reducing stress-related maladies.[10]

As you read in Chapter 1, this sort of informal communication can be invaluable, and ritual activities provide a good setting for it. Finally, ritual meetings can be a kind of perk that confers status on the attendees. “Progress review committee” members charge expenses to the company and leave work early to attend the sessions. Thus, being invited to join the “meetings” is a sign of having arrived in the company.

• Virtual Meetings

The term *meeting* might conjure an image of people seated around a table, transacting business. In reality, in less than a generation, there has been a monumental shift in organizational life because of an influx of technological capabilities that have translated into changes in the workplace. This shift has resulted in many employees attending more virtual meetings than face-to-face get-togethers.[11] Virtual meetings may be held in real time, so that everyone attends at the time when the event is scheduled regardless of their respective time zones, or they may utilize asynchronous communication so participants are able to contribute to the meetings at different times. Several types of virtual meetings can be used to achieve your goals for a meeting.

No matter which type of format is used, virtual meetings offer several notable formats. First, they are an inexpensive way to gather participants and build engagement and productivity among teams.[12] The conversation and documents/materials being presented during virtual meetings can often be recorded, which allows participants to replay portions of the meeting or catch up on a meeting that they have missed. Additionally, participants can be patched in instantaneously to answer questions or share information, which eliminates the need for individuals to sit through an entire meeting if they are needed only briefly.

Of course, these types of meetings are not without some disadvantages. Being able to hold virtual meetings almost anywhere allows attendees to call or log in from noisy locations such as coffeehouses, airport lounges, and busy home environments, making individuals prone to distractions.[13] Additionally, just as with face-to-face meetings, poor facilitation can make virtual meetings seem awkward and dull.[14] Guidelines for hosting an effective virtual meeting are provided later in this chapter.

Conference Calls

Conference calls are essentially multiparty telephone calls. To begin a conference call, the party hosting the call (the "calling party") may call other participants to add them to the call; however, many software platforms allow participants to dial a phone number and enter a personal identification number (PIN) that enables them to access a meeting.

Conference calls may be designed to allow callers to speak on the line during the meeting, or callers may only be allowed to listen in on the meeting.

Businesses use these kinds of conference calls on a daily basis to meet with internal and external participants, as they are a useful way for parties to hash out details that would take much longer to settle via e-mail or a chain of two-person phone conversations. Common uses for conference calls include regular team meetings, training sessions, client meetings, project meetings, and sales presentations. For example, public corporations in the United States are required by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to provide quarterly earnings reports. Many of these corporations utilize conference calls to discuss the financial results with interested stakeholders.

Web Conferences

Web conferencing takes place over the Internet, with participants connecting to the meeting using shared software. This software may consist of a web browser application that participants can access using the Internet, or it may take the form of a web browser or mobile application that requires downloading and installation. Although web conferencing typically takes place in real time, most software applications allow the presentation activity to be recorded for later viewing or distribution. Common features of web conferencing include the following elements:

- Audience tracking
- Whiteboard with annotation
- Instant messaging and text chat
- Live polling and surveys
- Slideshow presentations
- Live or streaming video
- Desktop, mouse, and keyboard sharing
- Automated e-mail
- Automated reminders and follow-ups

- Promotion tools

One type of web conference commonly used in a business setting is a webinar, or web-based seminar. A webinar is a presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted over the Web with limited audience interaction. Webinars are great tools for professional development and training meetings. HootSuite, for example, hosts a variety of webinars approximately 1 hour in length on topics of interest to public relations professionals and social media managers. Webinars are discussed in more depth in Chapter 12.

Video Conferences

Videoconferencing provides real-time, two-way audio/video communication among users in various locations. This meeting format requires all participants to utilize video input and video output equipment, such as digital recorders and television screens or projectors. This setup differs from that used in web conferencing, as individuals do not connect to the meeting through a mutual website or application.

Collaborative Technologies

According to Hewlett-Packard Enterprise, the average person picks up a smartphone more than 1,500 times per week and engages with his or her phone for 3 hours and 16 minutes each day.[15] The mobile environment is rapidly becoming the primary place where social networking, video viewing, reading, and location-based searching occur.[16] The mobile revolution has also infiltrated the workplace, as many organizations are encouraging engagement by providing employees with tools to access and share information on the go. Examples of these tools include the following:

- **Wikis** are interactive websites that allow teams to add, remove, share, exchange, and edit/change content.
- **Project management tools** are apps that allow teams to develop a timeline and assign tasks to one another. One example, Trello, was discussed in the “Technology Tip: Apps for Teamwork” box in Chapter 7.

- **Internal social media** (ISM) are online communities that are accessible only to members of the organization and incorporate the same tools as regular social media.
- **Team communication platforms** (TCPs) are instant messaging applications that provide a way for colleagues to stay connected, share files, and work across multiple devices without having to access their e-mail accounts.[17]

Most ISM platforms mimic the look and functionality of popular mainstream social networking sites; however, within the ISM platform, one may also have the ability to utilize blogs and wikis, social tagging, and document sharing.[18] The adoption of such technologies has numerous implications for workplace communication. For example, they may influence interactions with new hires, knowledge sharing, and employees' abilities to form relationships.[19] Additionally, the use of ISM may contribute to a sense of belonging for employees, as some of the discussions of organizational issues that take place on ISM can develop into organizational stories that are then shared in informal conversations among coworkers.[20] Employees at Lenovo used their ISM, "Lenovo Social Champions," to share a CRN article titled "10 Hottest Laptops of 2015," which included their La Vie Z laptop as number 6 on the list. Lenovo encourages its employees to share internal content—such as photos and videos from company gatherings—and external content that is related to the brand. According to Lenovo's social media marketing director, Roderick Strother, "It's a celebration of being part of the company, it's a rallying cry."[21]

Team communication platforms tend to boast similar features: team communication being located in one place; integration with other media services, such as project organization tools and e-mail support systems; searchable content; file sharing; private groups; and accessibility.[22] Some of the documented benefits of TCPs include centralized, visible communication; strengthened knowledge sharing and social cohesion; increased self-initiative; and being able to monitor conversations about projects.[23]

• Planning a Meeting

Thinking strategically about how to plan for a successful meeting is an important step in reducing “time-wasting meetings” in the workplace. Effective meetings can boost your team’s performance and productivity.

When to Hold a Meeting

Public-sector businesses and organizations governed by boards of directors do not have a choice when it comes to holding meetings. These types of organizations are legally mandated to conduct any business that affects the public in the open. As an example, as part of this mandate, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting must make board meetings, board committee meetings, and community advisory board meetings open to the public. The organization must also provide the public with reasonable notice (at least seven days in advance) of the meeting. For a session to be recognized as an official meeting, a quorum (majority of membership) must be present, and discussions pertaining to issues that influence the membership must occur. The public must be given the opportunity to share their input during these discussions.

For other businesses that do not operate in this manner, meetings are necessary but are not always required. Given the cost and effort required to bring people together, the most fundamental question is whether to hold a meeting at all. When considering scheduling a meeting, stop for a moment and think about the meeting’s purpose. There are many times when a meeting may not be the most effective method to address the purpose:

- The matter could be effectively handled over the phone.
- You could achieve the goal with a memo or e-mail.

- Key people are not available to attend.
- The subject would be considered trivial by many of the participants.
- There is not enough time to handle the business at hand.
- Members are not prepared.
- The meeting is routine and there is no compelling reason to meet.

- The job can be handled just as well by one or more people without the need to consult others.
- Your mind is made up, or you have already made the decision.

CULTURE at work

Collaboration in Cyberspace: Geography Makes a Difference

How important is communication when team members from across the country and around the world meet in cyberspace? To answer this question, corporate giants Verizon and Microsoft commissioned a study to determine how virtual teams in a variety of industries and countries collaborate.

The study revealed that the importance of collaboration on performance was consistent across various industries (e.g., health care, government, financial services, manufacturing) and around the world. As one member of the Verizon/Microsoft study remarked, “Global companies that collaborate better, perform better. Those that collaborate less, do not perform as well. It’s just that simple.”

The researchers also discovered cultural differences in workers’ communication preferences. For example, Americans were more likely to enjoy working alone. They expressed a preference for using e-mail rather than the telephone. They were more comfortable with audio, video, and web conferencing technologies than people of other regions of the world, and they were more likely to multitask when on conference calls.

By comparison, Europeans expressed a preference for communicating in real time with colleagues. They felt more obligated to answer the phone, and they expected others to call them back rather than leave a voice mail message. Professionals in the Asia Pacific region, more than anywhere else, expressed a desire to keep in touch throughout the workday. As a result, they found the phone an indispensable tool and preferred instant messaging to e-mail. Differences like these suggest that teams can be more productive if their members take cultural differences into account when planning to communicate.

Source: Frost & Sullivan, "Meetings Around the World: The Impact of Collaboration on Business Performance," 2006. Retrieved from http://newscenter.verizon.com/kit/collaboration/MAW_WP.pdf

Employees are likely to resent an unnecessary intrusion into their schedules.[24] Keeping these points in mind, a planner should call a meeting (or appoint a committee) only when he or she can answer yes to the following questions.

Is the Job Beyond the Capacity of One Person? A job might be too much for one person to handle for two reasons. First, it might call for more information than any single person possesses. For example, the job of improving health conditions in a food-processing plant would probably require a health professional's medical background, employees' experience, and a manager who knows the resources.

Second, a job might take more time than one person has available. For instance, even if one employee were capable of writing and publishing an employee handbook, it is unlikely the person would be able to handle the task and have much time for other duties.

Are Individuals' Tasks Interdependent? Each member at a committee meeting should have a different role. If each member's share of the task can be completed without input from other members, it is better to have the members co-acting under a

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manager's supervision. Consider the job of preparing the employee handbook: If each person on the handbook team is responsible for a separate section, there is little need for them to meet frequently to discuss the task.

CAREER tip

How to Handle "Time Waster" Meetings

What should you do when you are expected to attend a meeting that you know will be a waste of time? On some occasions, you cannot escape such meetings—for example, when you are formally obligated to attend, when your absence would damage your reputation, or when your boss insists you show up. Although you must attend these meetings, it might be helpful to ask the host to provide an agenda that includes start and end times. It might also be productive to make a friendly suggestion at the beginning of the meeting that team members put away their cell phones to minimize multicommunicating.

If you believe that you can miss a meeting without incurring negative consequences, you might consider using one of the following strategies to make your nonattendance acceptable:

- Set aside your most productive hours each day by adding them to a shared calendar. Avoid making exceptions.
- Try starting a grassroots movement to have one or more "no-meeting days" each week at the office. Setting aside Friday as a no-meeting day, for example, may boost everyone's productivity at the office.
- Provide written input. If your sole reason for showing up is to provide information, a memo or written report may be a good substitute for your physical presence.
- Suggest a productive alternative. There may be other ways for you—and maybe even other attendees—to achieve your objectives without actually having a face-to-face meeting, such as through an exchange of e-mails, teleconferencing, or delegating the job to a smaller group. Suggesting these alternatives may earn you the gratitude of others who do not want to attend the meeting anymore than you do.

- Tell the truth. In some cases you may choose to diplomatically explain your reasons for not wanting to attend: “I’m not sure my attendance would serve any useful purpose.”

Sources: Lippincott, S. M., *Meetings: Do’s, Don’ts, and Donuts* (2nd ed.). Pittsburgh, PA: Lighthouse Point Press, 1999; Mock, L., “How to Cut Down on Useless Meetings,” *Gliffy*, August 30, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.gliffy.com/blog/2016/08/30/how-to-cut-down-on-useless-meetings/

Sometimes people who do the same job can profit by sharing ideas with a group. Members of the handbook team, for example, might get new ideas about how the book could be improved by talking to one another. Similarly, sales representatives, industrial designers, physicians, and attorneys who work independently might profit by exchanging experiences and ideas. In fact, generating such synergy is part of the motivation for holding professional conventions.

Many companies schedule quarterly or annual meetings of people who perform similar job functions but work independently. While this may seem to contradict the requirement for interdependence of members’ tasks, there is no real conflict. A group of people who do the same kind of work can often improve their individual performance through meetings by performing some of the complementary functional roles. For example, one colleague might serve as reality tester: “Writing individual notes to each potential customer in your territory sounds like a good idea, but do you really have time to do that?” Another might take the job of being information-giver: “You know, there’s a printer just outside Boston who can do large jobs like that just as well as your regular printer, but he’s cheaper. Call me, and I’ll give you the name and address.” Others serve as diagnosers: “Have you checked the feed mechanism? Sometimes a problem there can throw the whole machine out of whack.” Some can just serve

as empathic listeners: “Yeah, I know. It’s tough to get people who can do that kind of work right.”

ETHICAL challenge

Dealing with Opposing Viewpoints

Your manager has asked you to provide suggestions from your department about the company's policy on flex time. These suggestions will be taken seriously and have a strong chance of being adopted. You are in a position to call a meeting of key people in your department to discuss the issue.

Two of the most vocal members of the department have diametrically opposed positions on flex time. One of them (whose position on the issue is different from yours) will be out of the office for a week, and you could call the meeting while he is gone. What do you do?

Is There More Than One Decision or Solution? Questions that have only one right answer are not well suited to discussion in meetings. Whether the sales force made its quota last year and whether the budget will accommodate paying overtime to meet a schedule, for instance, are questions best answered by checking the figures, not by getting the regional sales managers or the department members to reach an agreement.

In contrast, tasks that do not have fixed outcomes are appropriate targets for committee discussion. Consider the job facing the employees of an advertising agency who are planning a campaign for a client. There is no obvious best way to sell products or ideas such as yearly physical examinations, office equipment, or clothing. Instead, developing such campaigns calls for the kind of creativity a talented, well-chosen group can generate.

Are Misunderstandings or Reservations Likely? It is easy to see how meetings can be useful when the goal is to generate ideas or solve problems. Meetings are often necessary, however, when confusing or controversial information is being communicated. Suppose, for instance, that changing federal rules and company policy require employees to document their use of company cars in far more detail than was previously required. It is easy to imagine how this sort of change would be met with grumbling and resistance. In this situation, simply issuing a memo outlining the new rules might not gain the kind of compliance that is necessary. Only after voicing their complaints and hearing why the new policy is being instituted will employees see a need to go along with the new procedure. “I can write down the vision of the company a thousand times and send it out to people,” says Dennis Stamp, chairman of Vancouver’s Priority Management Systems. “But when I sit with them face-to-face and give them the vision, for some reason it is much more accepted.”[25]

Setting an Agenda

An **agenda** is a list of topics to be covered in a meeting. A meeting without an agenda is like a ship at sea without a destination or compass: No one aboard knows where it is or where it is headed. Smart organizations appreciate the importance of establishing agendas. At computer chip giant Intel, for example, company policy requires planners to circulate an agenda before every meeting. You can start building an agenda by asking three questions:

1. What do we need to do in the meeting to achieve our objective?
2. What conversations will be important to the people who attend?
3. What information will we need to begin?[26]

As Figure 8.1 illustrates, a complete agenda contains the following information: a list of the attendees (and whoever else needs to see the agenda); the meeting’s start time, end time, and location; necessary background information; and a brief explanation of each item. Consider the following tips when creating an agenda:

FIGURE 8.1 Format for a Comprehensive Agenda

MEETING AGENDA

Louisville Design Group
Marketing Advisory Task Force

Meeting time: November 27, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
Location: Conference Room A
Invitees: Frank Brady, Monica Flores, Ted Gross, Scott Hendrickson, Kevin Jessup, Pat Rivera, Carly Woods

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Call to Order (5 minutes)
- Review and approval of minutes from November 13 meeting (Ted)

Reports (10 minutes)
- Client Appreciation Event (Monica)
- Budget (Ted)

Unfinished Business (20 minutes)
- Website Redesign (Frank)
  Frank will present two design options for the LDG website redesign.

New Business (20 minutes)
- Client Research Project (Carly)
  Please bring ideas for what your team needs to know about our clients and their design needs.

Adjournment

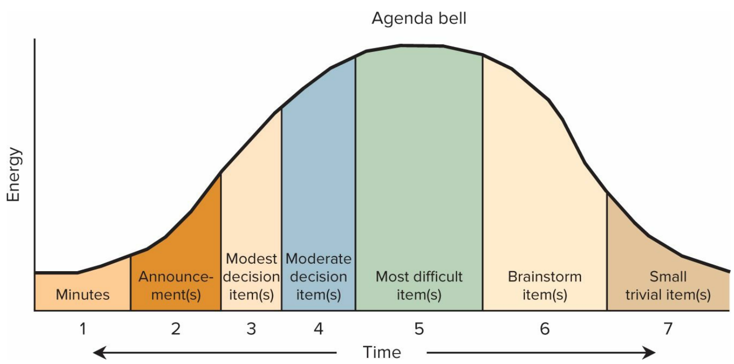
- For virtual meetings, include the time zone.
- Unless you announce the length of the meeting, expect some members to leave early.
- Failure to note the location or, for virtual meetings, instructions for accessing the meeting may result in members entering late.
- If the agenda includes one or more problem-solving items, it is best to keep the group size small (fewer than seven members) so everyone can participate in the discussions.
- Background information can educate members on the meeting's significance or provide participants with a reminder of information they may have forgotten.

Agenda items can come from many sources, including the group's leader, minutes from previous meetings, team members, or standing items (e.g., committee reports).[27] A good agenda goes beyond just listing topics, however, by describing the goals for the discussion. For example, rather than listing a general topic such as "Discuss the website redesign," an action-based goal can be provided: "Choose the design that best represents our company's image and has the greatest functionality."

For virtual meetings, avoid trying to squeeze too many items into a single meeting. Rick Maurer, author of *Beyond the Wall of Resistance* and *Why Don't You Want What I Want*, advises planners to keep the focus on one or two topics at approximately 30 minutes each. If you must cover more items, Maurer suggests giving people time to stretch, take a restroom break, or replenish their coffee in between segments.[28] Communications expert Nick Morgan suggests an even smaller time frame of 10 minutes dedicated to each topic, as recent evidence suggests that attention spans may be only 10 minutes long in the information age.[29]

The order of agenda items is also important. Some experts suggest the difficulty of items presented should form a bell-shaped curve, with items arranged in order of difficulty (Figure 8.2). The meeting ought to begin with relatively simple business: minutes, announcements, and the easiest decisions. Once members have hit their stride and a good climate has developed, the team can move on to the most difficult items. The final third of the meeting should focus on easier items to allow a period of decompression and goodwill.

FIGURE 8.2 A Bell-Shaped Agenda Structure



Source: Tropman, J. E., *Effective Meetings: Improving Group Decision Making* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995.

You might argue such a detailed agenda would take too much time to prepare. Once you see how preparing the attendees with this sort of information produces better results, though, you will realize the advance work is well worth the effort.

Pre-Meeting Work

Pre-meeting work helps ensure that the time spent in a meeting is focused and productive. Copies of the agenda should be distributed to attendees in advance. This will provide attendees with time to review the items that will be discussed, formulate ideas or questions, and prepare their thoughts. The meeting planner should set the tone by requesting that the agenda be read in advance.[30] This can easily be done by adding preparation instructions to the agenda. If certain members have specific jobs to do, the meeting organizer can jot down these tasks on their individual copies: “Sarah, be sure to bring last year’s sales figures.” Attendees should be provided with an additional copy of the agenda once they arrive to the meeting to help keep them focused.

For virtual meetings, planners must also consider which technology will best help the team achieve its goals. Evidence suggests that video makes people feel more engaged because attendees can see one another’s nonverbal reactions.[31] Audio is considered the next best option, as it allows attendees to hear what speakers are saying and interact with others.[32]

To ensure that the meeting proceeds smoothly, planners should know how to operate the various meeting-related software features:

- Toggling mute on and off
- Posting questions

- Retrieving responses or questions
- Transferring control between participants
- Changing the window (such as toggling between the presentation and camera view)[33]

Once the technology has been determined, planners should send login information (call-in numbers, access codes, or URLs) to attendees at least one day in advance. Attendees should be asked to log in at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting to test their connectivity.[34]

• Conducting the Meeting

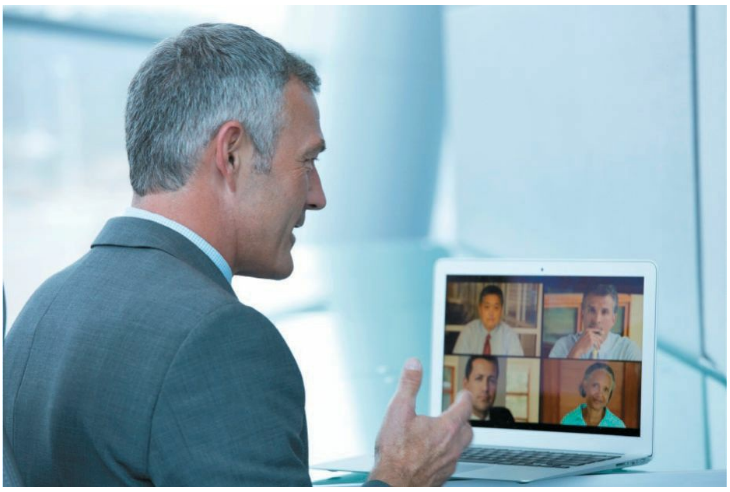
Effective openings get the meeting off to a good start. First, they give everyone a clear picture of what is to be accomplished. Second, they define how the team will try to reach its goal. Finally, they set the stage for good teamwork and, therefore, good results. The first few remarks by the person who called the meeting can prepare the team for a constructive session.

Setting the Tone

Creating a comfortable and professional environment will go a long way toward fostering good relationships and problem-solving discussions. Two great ways to set the tone include establishing etiquette and creating goodwill.

Establish Etiquette In a virtual environment, establish some rules for etiquette and remind attendees of these guidelines. Participants may be asked to mute their microphones when they are not speaking to reduce background noise.[35] Participants may also be encouraged to say their names aloud before speaking if there is not a video component.[36] Multitasking should be addressed as well. Some virtual meetings—particularly those without a video component—are ineffective because participants have their phones on mute and are using the time to work on unrelated tasks.

Additionally, virtual meetings present several unique challenges associated with the technology used. Because there is always the potential for technology to fail, technical support personnel should be on standby. The meeting planner should always have a backup plan ready for the meeting (such as moving to a conference call) and should make that plan known to the participants. Another challenge is the awkwardness that comes with the common 2- to 3-second video delay. To combat this issue, instruct participants to move at a slightly slower pace, make sure there are sufficient pauses after speaking, and call attention to themselves by providing a verbal or nonverbal signal (such as raising their hand or saying "question") and then waiting a few seconds before speaking.[37]



©Ariel Skelley/Blend Images/Alamy Stock Photo RF

Create Goodwill Once etiquette been established, begin the meeting with a personal–professional check-in to help create goodwill among attendees. In a virtual setting, conduct a roll call and introduce all participants. For virtual and face-to-face meetings, attendees should be prompted to take 1 minute to share something that is going on in their personal or professional lives.[38] Remind them that they should provide only information that they are comfortable sharing. Go first to model the approach.

CAREER tip

Members Can Be Leaders, Too

Good leadership drives successful meetings, but members can also play an important role in making a meeting successful. Every person involved in a meeting can use the following tips to improve his or her effectiveness during the meeting:

- Ask that an agenda be sent out before the meeting or agree on an agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

- Ask for help at the beginning of the meeting. Seek clarification on the meeting's goal. Is it to present information? To make a decision?
- Be tactfully bold and suggest canceling an unnecessary or badly planned meeting. Convene it when there is a need and an agenda.
- Volunteer to be a record-keeper. A written set of minutes reduces the chance for misunderstandings, and keeping notes yourself creates a record that reflects your perception of events.
- Suggest that a timekeeper be appointed, or volunteer to fill this role yourself. This person advises the group when time for addressing each issue—and the meeting itself—is nearly over and alerts the group when time runs out.
- Ask for help before the meeting closes: "Exactly what have we decided today?" "What do we need to do before our next meeting?"

Source: Adapted from "Kemp, J. M." *Moving meetings*. McGraw-Hill, 1994 See: https://www.amazon.com/Moving-Meetings-Jana-M-Kemp/dp/0786303336

Upon conclusion of these informal pleasantries, identify the goals of the meeting. This will remind everyone of the purpose for meeting and help focus the discussion. For example:

> "We're faced with a serious problem. Inventory losses have almost doubled in the last year, from 5 percent to 9 percent. We need to decide what's causing these losses and come up with some ideas about how to reduce them."

Even though members should have reviewed the agenda, it can be helpful to spend a few moments previewing the agenda and goals. Background information may also be provided to explain the context of the meeting and ensure everyone has the same picture of the subject being discussed. This step prevents misunderstandings and helps members understand the nature of the information the group will consider. The format of the preview can range from providing photocopies of budget information or other key documents to delivering a short informational presentation to the team at the meeting.

Conducting Business

No meeting will be successful without committed, talented participants. But even the best attendees do not guarantee success. Someone—either the leader or a responsible member—has to be sure all important business is covered in a way that takes advantage of the talents of everyone present.

Parliamentary Procedure One of the most common practices in business meetings is to follow parliamentary procedure, or a set of rules that govern the way groups conduct business and make decisions in meetings.[39] This format can keep discussions clear and efficient while safeguarding the rights of everyone involved in deliberations. Parliamentary procedure is an appropriate way to operate a meeting when the team is faced with the following situations:

- The group's decisions are of interest to an external audience.
- A sense of urgency or being rushed may obscure critical thinking.
- Emotions are likely to be strong.

CULTURE at work

International Business Etiquette

Understanding the background, language, values, decision-making style, types of greetings, dining conventions, and common business practices for various cultures is an important key to success in the global marketplace.

In Hong Kong, for example, someone who is running late to a meeting is expected to call the host to inform the host of his or her expected arrival time, as well as to apologize for being late. While conducting business, it is customary to rise from your chair when someone enters your office. Gifts should also be accepted and given with both hands and should not be unwrapped in front of the giver.

For more business etiquette guidelines, searchable by country, visit http://www.executiveplanet.com.

According to the rules of parliamentary procedure, a standard meeting agenda has the following parts:

1. *Reading of the minutes*. A good set of meeting minutes, or a written record of a meeting, is more than formality; it gives everyone involved a chance to make sure the record describes what really happened.
2. *Reports*. Teams often use committees to handle specific tasks that do not require the involvement of everyone in the group. Reports function as a place in which these committees, as well as individual members, share information with the rest of the group.
3. *Unfinished business*. If any matters from previous meetings have not yet been settled or if ongoing projects need attention, this "old business" is covered next.
4. *New business*. During this part of the meeting, members can bring up new issues for the group to discuss and decide on.

Whenever a decision needs to be made on an item raised during discussion, an attendee may introduce a motion, or a specific proposal for action. Good motions address a single issue briefly and clearly: "I move we redirect 10 percent of the Annual Fund contributions to the endowment." Once introduced, a motion must be seconded by someone other than its sponsor. At this point, the group may discuss the motion. This procedure ensures the group only discusses those motions that at least two members deem worthy. As discussion progresses, motions can be amended by members. Once discussion is complete, a motion is decided by a public vote.

Decision-Making Methods Decision making is an important component of an effective meeting. As business instructor Joel Baum put it, "How you decide is just as important as what you decide. The process you use has a direct impact on how members feel about the decision. It can influence commitment, excitement, and buy-in; or it can create feelings of resentment and exclusion.”[40] There are a number of ways to make business decisions.

Consensus When a collective decision is made and every member is willing to support the decision, the group has achieved consensus. The purest form of consensus is unanimous, unequivocal support, indicating every member’s belief that the decision reached is the best possible one. For instance, an entire employee search committee might agree that a particular candidate is perfect for a job. This state of unanimity is not always

possible, however, and it is not necessary for consensus. Members may support a decision that is not their first choice, accepting the fact that it is the best option possible for the group at that time. In the case of the new employee, committee members might agree on a candidate who is some members’ second choice because the people who will be working most closely with her are the candidate’s most enthusiastic supporters.

CAREER tip

How to Take Meeting Minutes

Minutes are a tangible record of a meeting and its associated actions, as well as a reference for members who were unable to attend. Effectively taking minutes requires capturing important details, such as the names of attendees, decisions that were made (e.g., motions, votes), and the identification of action items. Meeting minutes are typically reviewed by the group, and suggestions for amendments or corrections are raised at the next meeting.

The following tips will help you take minutes the next time you are tasked with this important role:

- Ask your supervisor (or committee chair) what his or her expectations are for minute-taking.
- Obtain a copy of the meeting agenda and use it as an outline for taking notes.
- Sequence your notes using the same order and numbering of items on the agenda.
- Include the names of all meeting attendees (“Present”).
- List the names of participants who were unable to attend (“Absent”).
- List the date and time of the meeting.
- Outline the discussion surrounding each agenda item.
- Identify voting outcomes (including details regarding who made motions, seconded, approved, and so on).
- Include the next meeting date and time.
- Store copies of handouts that were distributed at the meeting along with the minutes.
- Ask your supervisor about the preferred procedure for distribution and storage of the minutes.

While taking minutes, you may need to ask for clarification at times. This is perfectly acceptable! You may also want to ask participants for permission to record the meeting (e.g., on your phone or tablet) to help you capture any information you may have missed.

Some cultures value consensus more highly than others. For example, British and Dutch businesspeople value the “group must be aboard” approach. By comparison, Germans, French, and Spanish communicators depend more on a strong leader’s decision and view a desire for consensus as somewhat wishy-washy.[41]

Cultural norms aside, consensus has both advantages and drawbacks. While it has the broadest base of member support, reaching consensus takes time. It requires a spirit of cooperation among team members, a willingness to experience temporary disagreements, a commitment to listening carefully to other ideas, and a win–win attitude. Given these challenges, it is wise to limit consensus decisions to important issues when the need for agreement is high and when the team can dedicate the time and effort necessary to reach agreement.[42]

Majority Vote Whereas consensus requires the agreement of the entire group, deciding by a majority vote needs only the support of most of the members. Thus, majority voting decisions are much quicker and easier to reach. A 10-member staff choosing a decorating scheme for the new office might talk almost endlessly before reaching consensus; with a majority vote, however, the decision would require the agreement of only 6 members, which might be more readily achieved. The majority vote approach works well for relatively minor issues, but it is not usually the best approach for more important decisions because it can leave a substantial minority dissatisfied and resentful about being railroaded into accepting a plan they do not support.

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Minority Decision In a minority decision, a few members make a decision affecting the entire group. This is frequently the case in business situations. For instance, the executive committee of a corporation often acts on behalf of the board of directors, which in turn represents the shareholders. As long as the minority has the confidence of the larger group, this method works well for many decisions.

Expert Opinion When a single person has the knowledge or skill needed to make an informed decision, the group may be best served by relying on his or her expert opinion. Some team members are experts because of specialized training—for example, a structural engineer who is working with a design team on a new building, or a senior airline mechanic who decides whether a flight can depart safely. Other people gain their expertise by experience—for example, the purchasing agent who knows how to get the best deals or a labor negotiator seasoned by years of contract deliberations.

Despite the obvious advantages of relying on expert opinion, following an expert's suggestions is not always as wise an approach as it might seem. It is not always easy to tell who the expert is. Length of experience is not necessarily a guarantee of wisdom or expertise.

Enhancing Creativity One advantage of teams is the greater chance for creativity.[43] As more members bring their different perspectives to a task, the chances of coming up with a winning solution increase. As one executive put it, "innovation is a team sport."[44]

One way to boost the creativity of the group is through brainstorming—an approach that encourages free thinking and minimizes conformity. This term was coined by advertising executive Alex Osborn, who noticed groups were most creative when they let their imaginations run free.[45] Three cardinal rules must be followed to ensure the success of brainstorming:

1. All evaluation and criticism of ideas are forbidden during the early phases of the process.
2. Quantity—not quality—of ideas is the goal.
3. New combinations of ideas are sought.

One expert offers several other tips for healthy brainstorming:

- Do not let the boss speak first.
- Encourage members to speak whenever they have an idea. Do not follow a set speaking order.
- Include a variety of members in a session, not just experts.[46]

Brainstorming can be even more effective in virtual groups than in face-to-face meetings.[47] More ideas are generated when brainstorming is anonymous than when members know who is contributing suggestions.

Encouraging Participation Loosely structured, informal meetings may appear to give everyone an equal chance to speak out, but—because of personality, gender, culture, and style differences—every member may not have the same access.[48] Unbalanced participation can cause two sorts of problems. First, it discourages people who do not get a chance to talk. Second, it prevents the group from considering potentially useful ideas.

To improve participation at meetings, consider giving each person adequate time to speak to foster collaboration and avoid groupthink. Keith Ferrazzi, founder and CEO of the Los Angeles, California–based research and consulting firm Ferrazzi Greenlight, suggests having attendees write down an idea or question that they have or an issue they have

been struggling with in advance of the meeting. During the meeting, time should be allotted to bring these issues to the table, one at a time, with a 5-minute discussion period. The group members should all go around and either ask a question or pass. Then, participants are given an opportunity to offer advice using the phrase "I might suggest" or pass.[49]

Especially in virtual meetings, it is easy to become fatigued by information overload and one-way communication. Nick Morgan, president of consulting company Public Words Inc., suggests that meeting leaders "take everyone's temperatures" at regular intervals during the meetings.[50] To do so, simply go down the list of participants and ask each person for input. Meetings should also be interactive. No more than three presentation slides or 10 minutes should pass without an interactive activity taking place.[51] Web tools, such as interactive polls, can be used to encourage participation among members.

Another method for ensuring that every member's ideas have an equal chance of being considered is the nominal group technique (NGT). Researchers have found that NGT generates a larger number of high-quality suggestions than brainstorming.[52] The name of the method suggests that, for much of this process, the participants are a group in name (nominal) only because they are working independently. The NGT method consists of five phases:

1. Each member anonymously writes down his or her ideas, which a discussion leader then collects. This method ensures good ideas from quiet members will have a chance for consideration.
2. All ideas are posted for every member to see. By keeping the authorship of ideas private at this point, perceptions of them are less likely to be based on personal factors such as authority or popularity.

3. Members discuss the ideas to better understand them, but criticism is prohibited. The goal here is to clarify the possibilities, not to evaluate them.
4. Each member privately rank-orders the ideas from most to least promising. Individual ranking again prevents domination by a few talkative or influential members.
5. The group critically and thoroughly discusses those items that received the greatest number of votes. At this point, a decision can be made using whichever decision-making method (e.g., consensus, majority rule) is most appropriate.

Using questions to draw out listeners is another way to encourage participation. Four types of questions can balance members' contributions.

Overhead Questions Questions directed toward the group as a whole that anyone is free to answer are termed **overhead questions**: "Sales have flattened out in the western region. Can anybody suggest what's going on?" As long as overhead questions draw a response from all members, it is wise to continue using them. When a few people begin to dominate, however, it is time to switch to another type of question.

Direct Questions When a question is aimed at a particular individual, who is addressed by name, it is considered a **direct question**: "Greg, how's the new plan working in your department?" Direct questions are a useful way to draw out quiet members, but they must be used skillfully. Never start a discussion with a direct question, because doing so suggests that individuals should not speak unless they have been called on, which is hardly a desirable norm in most meetings. It is also important to phrase questions in such a way that they give respondents a way out of potentially embarrassing questions: "Tony, can you give us the figures for your department now, or will you need to check them and get back to us?"

Reverse Questions When a member asks the leader a question and the leader refers the question back to the person who originally phrased it, the response qualifies as a **reverse question**: "That's a good question, Laurie.

Do you think it's a practical idea?" Reverse questions work well when the leader senses a member really wants to make a statement but is unwilling to do so directly. It is important to use reverse questions with care: The member could be asking for information, in which case a direct answer is appropriate.

Relay Questions A **relay question** is a response in which the leader refers a question that one member asks to the entire group: "Cynthia has just raised a good question. Who can respond to it?" Relay questions are especially useful when the leader wants to avoid disclosing his or her opinion for fear of inhibiting or influencing the group. Relays should be phrased as overhead questions directed at the entire group.

Keeping Discussions on Track Sometimes the problem is not too little discussion, but too much. Teams can often talk on and on without moving any closer to accomplishing their goal. When this happens, the leader or another team member needs to get the discussion back on track by using one of the following techniques.

- *Remind the group of time pressures*. Acknowledge the value of the comments being made, then remind everyone about the importance of moving quickly: "Radio ads sound good, but for now we'd better stick to the newspaper program. John wanted copy from us by noon, and we'll never make it if we don't get going."
- *Use* relevancy challenges. This technique involves tactfully asking a member to explain how an apparently off-track idea relates: "I'm confused, Tom. How will leasing new equipment instead of buying it help us to boost productivity?"
- *Promise to deal with good ideas later*. Sincerely suggest a way to deal with the idea at the appropriate time and mention exactly when you would like to follow up on the matter: "A graphics package seems important to you, Lee. Why don't you look into what's available and then we can schedule a meeting to decide whether the change would be worth the cost."

Keeping a Positive Tone In meetings, getting along can be especially tough when others do not cooperate with your efforts to keep the meeting on track—or, even worse, when others attack your ideas. The following suggestions can help you handle these irritating situations in a way that both gets the job done and keeps potential enemies as allies.

Ask questions and paraphrase to clarify understanding Criticizing an idea—even an apparently stupid one—can result in a defensive reaction that will waste time and generate ill will. It is also important to remember that even a seemingly idiotic remark can have some merit. Given these facts, it is often wise to ask for some clarification: "Why do you think we ought to let Marcia go?"

You can also paraphrase to get more information about an apparently hostile or foolish remark: "It sounds as if you're saying Marcia's doing a bad job." Paraphrasing accomplishes two things. First, it provides a way to double-check your understanding. If your replay of the speaker's ideas is not accurate, he or she can correct you. Second, even if your understanding is accurate, paraphrasing is an invitation for the other person to explain the idea in more detail.

Enhance the value of members' comments It is obvious that you should acknowledge the value of good ideas by praising or thanking the people who contribute them. Surprisingly, you can use the same method with apparently bad ideas. Most comments have at least some merit. Take advantage of their potential by using a three-part response:[53]

CAREER tip

Reframing Complaints in Meetings

Problem-solving meetings can generate complaints, defensiveness, and even outright hostility. Reframing members' complaints can nudge the discussion toward constructive solutions. Here are some reframing strategies:

Reframe complaints about the past as hopes for the future.

Statement: "Why do we always have to drive across town for these meetings?"

Reframe: "From now on, you'd like to find a way to keep everybody's travel time equal, right?"

Reframe negative statements as positive desires or visions.

Statement: "I've got work to do! All this long-range planning is a waste of time."

Reframe: "You want to be sure the time we spend planning makes a difference in the long run, right?"

Reframe personal attacks as issues.

Statement: "Jaclyn is always butting in when I have a customer, stealing my commissions."

Reframe: "So, we need to make sure we have clear lines about communicating with customers."

Reframe individual concerns as community or team interests.

Statement: "I've got kids at home and no child care! I can't keep working weekends on short notice."

Reframe: "All of us have lives outside of work. Let's talk about how we can handle rush jobs without creating personal emergencies or burning out."

Sources: Littlejohn, S., & Domenici, K., *Communication, Conflict, and the Management of Difference*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2007.

- Acknowledge the merits of the idea.
- Explain any concerns you have.
- Improve the usefulness of the idea by building on it or asking others for suggestions.

"I'm glad you're so concerned about the parking problem, Craig [acknowledges merit of the comment]. But wouldn't requiring people to carpool generate a lot of resentment [balancing concern]? How could we encourage people to carpool voluntarily [builds on original idea]?"

Pay attention to cultural factors As with every other type of communication, the rules for conducting productive, harmonious meetings vary from one culture to another. For example, in Japan, problem-solving meetings are usually preceded by a series of one-on-one sessions between participants to iron out issues, a process called *nemawashi*.[54] This practice arises from the Japanese cultural pattern that two people may speak candidly to each other, but when a third person enters the discussion, they become a group, requiring communicators to speak indirectly to maintain harmony. By contrast, in countries where emotional expressiveness is the norm, volatile exchanges in meetings are as much the rule as the exception. "I've just come back from a meeting in Milan," stated Canadian management consultant Dennis Stamp. "If people acted the same way in North American meetings you'd think they were coming to blows."[55]

Concluding the Meeting

When the scheduled closing time has arrived, when the group lacks resources to continue, or when all of the items on the agenda have been covered, it is time to conclude the meeting. The way a meeting ends can have a strong influence on how members

feel about the group and how diligently they follow up on any decisions made or instructions given.[56] A good conclusion has three parts. In many discussions, the leader will be responsible for performing these steps. In leaderless groups or in groups with a weak leader, one or more members can take the initiative.

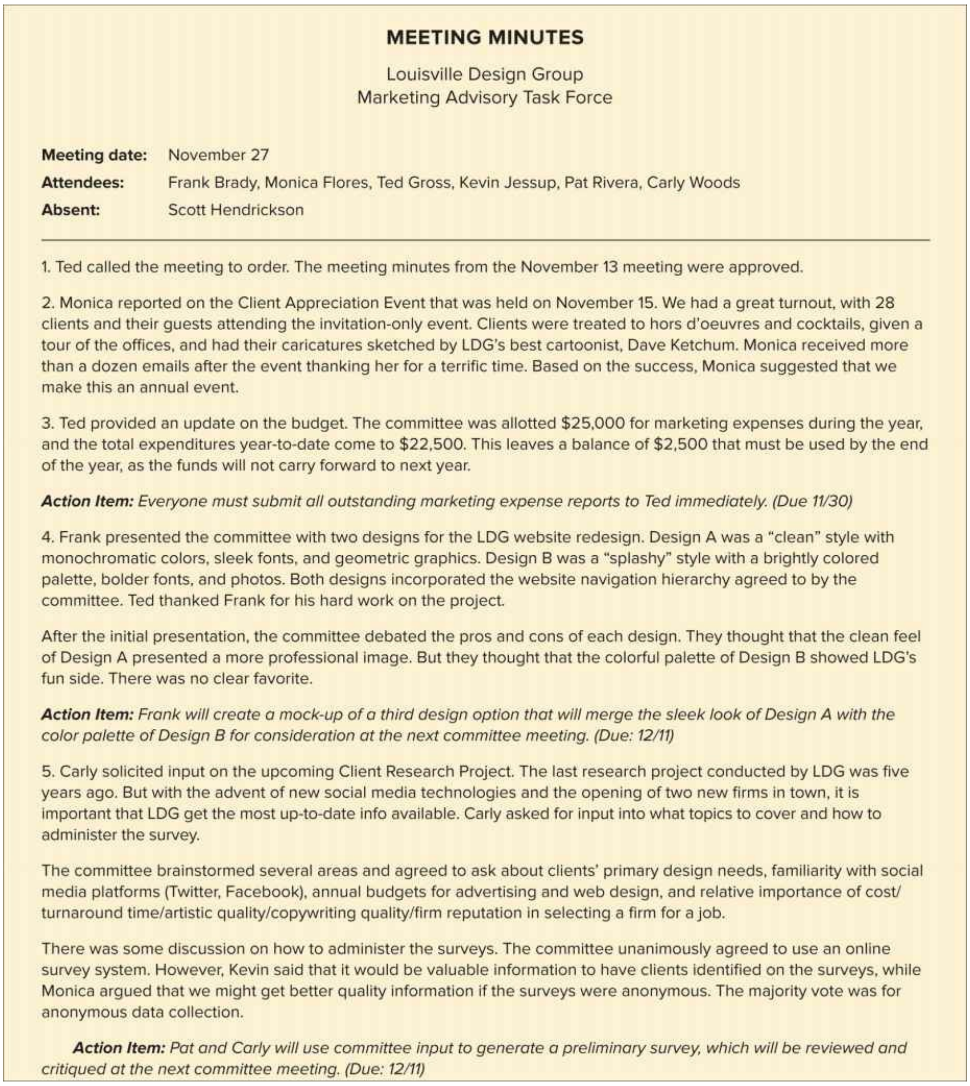
1. *Signal when time is almost up*. A warning allows the group to wrap up business and gives everyone a chance to have a final say.
2. *Summarize the meeting's accomplishments and future actions*. For the sake of understanding, review what information has been conveyed and what decisions have been made. Just as important is reminding members of their responsibilities.
3. *Thank the group*. Acknowledging the group's good work is more than just good manners. This sort of reinforcement shows you appreciate the group's efforts and encourages good performance in the future. Besides acknowledging the group as a whole, be sure to give credit to any members who deserve special mention.

Following Up the Meeting

It is a mistake to assume that even a satisfying meeting is a success until you follow up to make sure the desired results have really been obtained. A thorough follow-up involves four steps and will help the team maintain momentum between meetings.

Prepare and Distribute Meeting Minutes It may be tempting to think a meeting is over when the group members leave the room or log off of the virtual meeting space. In fact, after the meeting ends, there is still important work to be done. One of the most important follow-up steps to a meeting is to prepare and distribute the meeting minutes.

A good set of minutes should be thorough enough that someone who was not at the meeting should be able to know exactly what happened; at the same time, they should be short and to the point. Irrelevant and play-by-play information should be omitted. See Figure 8.3 for sample meeting minutes.



MEETING MINUTES

Louisville Design Group
Marketing Advisory Task Force

Meeting date: November 27
Attendees: Frank Brady, Monica Flores, Ted Gross, Kevin Jessup, Pat Rivera, Carly Woods
Absent: Scott Hendrickson

1. Ted called the meeting to order. The meeting minutes from the November 13 meeting were approved.

2. Monica reported on the Client Appreciation Event that was held on November 15. We had a great turnout, with 28 clients and their guests attending the invitation-only event. Clients were treated to hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, given a tour of the offices, and had their caricatures sketched by LDG's best cartoonist, Dave Ketchum. Monica received more than a dozen emails after the event thanking her for a terrific time. Based on the success, Monica suggested that we make this an annual event.

3. Ted provided an update on the budget. The committee was allotted $25,000 for marketing expenses during the year, and the total expenditures year-to-date come to $22,500. This leaves a balance of $2,500 that must be used by the end of the year, as the funds will not carry forward to next year.

Action Item: *Everyone must submit all outstanding marketing expense reports to Ted immediately. (Due 11/30)*

4. Frank presented the committee with two designs for the LDG website redesign. Design A was a "clean" style with monochromatic colors, sleek fonts, and geometric graphics. Design B was a "splashy" style with a brightly colored palette, bolder fonts, and photos. Both designs incorporated the website navigation hierarchy agreed to by the committee. Ted thanked Frank for his hard work on the project.

After the initial presentation, the committee debated the pros and cons of each design. They thought that the clean feel of Design A presented a more professional image. But they thought that the colorful palette of Design B showed LDG's fun side. There was no clear favorite.

Action Item: *Frank will create a mock-up of a third design option that will merge the sleek look of Design A with the color palette of Design B for consideration at the next committee meeting. (Due: 12/11)*

5. Carly solicited input on the upcoming Client Research Project. The last research project conducted by LDG was five years ago. But with the advent of new social media technologies and the opening of two new firms in town, it is important that LDG get the most up-to-date info available. Carly asked for input into what topics to cover and how to administer the survey.

The committee brainstormed several areas and agreed to ask about clients' primary design needs, familiarity with social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook), annual budgets for advertising and web design, and relative importance of cost/turnaround time/artistic quality/copywriting quality/firm reputation in selecting a firm for a job.

There was some discussion on how to administer the surveys. The committee unanimously agreed to use an online survey system. However, Kevin said that it would be valuable information to have clients identified on the surveys, while Monica argued that we might get better quality information if the surveys were anonymous. The majority vote was for anonymous data collection.

Action Item: *Pat and Carly will use committee input to generate a preliminary survey, which will be reviewed and critiqued at the next committee meeting. (Due: 12/11)*

FIGURE 8.3 Format for Meeting Minutes

Build an Agenda for the Next Meeting Most groups meet frequently, and they rarely conclude their business in a single sitting. A smart leader plans the next meeting by noting which items need to be carried over from the preceding one. What unfinished business must be addressed? What progress reports must be shared? What new information should members hear?

Furthermore, progress on action items and team goals should be tracked and shared. Celebrate the achievements of members between meetings, and include a place to recognize these achievements on the agenda for the following meeting.

Follow Up on Members You can be sure the promised outcomes of a meeting actually occur if you check up on other members. If the meeting provided instructions—such as how to use the new accounting software—see whether the people who attended are actually following the steps outlined. If tasks were assigned, determine whether they are being performed. You do not have to be demanding or snoopy to do this sort of checking. A friendly phone call or personal remark can do the trick: “Is the new phone system working for you?” “Did you manage to get hold of Williams yet?” In the case of virtual teams, a good rule of thumb is to strive for one-on-one communication at least once per month.[57]

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Take Care of Your Own Action Items Being a good team member means taking care of your action items. As you participate in the meeting, you should keep track of the tasks you have been assigned or have agreed or volunteered to complete. When you receive the meeting minutes, double-check that you have not missed any tasks. By taking care of your assigned tasks prior to the deadlines, you will solidify your reputation as a valuable team member.

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MASTER the chapter

review points

- Meetings are common, often time-consuming, and costly.
- Meetings serve one or more of the following purposes: sharing information, solving problems/making decisions, and engaging in ritual activities.
- Virtual meetings present both advantages and challenges for leaders and participants.