board made up of members of both groups that reviews progress and takes any necessary corrective action. This may take the form of a weekly or monthly meeting to track progress. To maintain the momentum for change, these follow-up interteam meetings are just as important as the personal management interviews and follow-up team meetings that we discussed in chapter 6.

Case Studies of Interteam Conflict Resolution

To illustrate how to use the various approaches to manage interteam conflict, we present two cases: ElectriGov and ExactCorp (all names are disguised). Although each case concerns interteam conflict, the methods used to manage the conflicts differ rather significantly.

Case One: ElectriGov

ElectriGov is a government agency whose mission is to supply electric power to various locations in the United States. To accomplish this task, the organization has three line crews of five to ten men whose job it is to install high-voltage power lines. Each crew is highly cohesive, led by a foreman. Moreover, crew members have worked together for many years and have an established pattern for doing their work and solving problems. The work is hard, dirty, and dangerous. Almost all of the men have had a friend who has been seriously injured or killed while on the job.

The crews typically work independently, but when there are large projects to complete, they must work together. This can create serious conflicts, since the crews often don't agree with each other's approaches to organizing and managing a particular job, and none of the three foremen wants to be subservient to the others. Thus when line crews do large projects together, they tend to compete with one another rather than cooperate. On one project, the conflict became so nasty that one crew failed to inform another crew that the wires were hot at a certain section of the project. This serious safety breach was reported to senior management, who immediately launched an investigation. We, as consultants, were initially asked to serve as part of the team investigating the causes of the safety violations.

After the initial investigation, we were asked by ElectriGov's senior management to "clean up the conflicts" between the crews. The approach we used to help the crews reduce their conflicts was a variation on design A. All three crews were brought together in one room, and the need for an interteam development program was discussed. Each crew was asked to commit to solving the conflicts between themselves and the other crews and to agree to give the program a chance. Once we had their agreement, each crew was then asked to meet separately to list their perceptions of the other crews and the specific problems that they had in working with the others. After meeting separately, the teams came back together and each reported its perceptions of the other crews.

In our consulting role, we facilitated the discussion, making sure that each crew's perceptions were made clear and that each crew described the problematic behaviors of the other crews in concrete, specific terms. As a ground rule, crews were asked to be descriptive and to avoid using emotionally laden language when critiquing the other crews. After each crew presented its perceptions, the other crews could ask questions to clarify points, but the crews were not allowed to debate the validity of the other crews' perceptions.

After each crew aired its views, the crews, together in an open session, were then asked to come up with recommendations to improve the relationships. Their suggestions were listed on large poster boards in the room. The crews discussed how they might do more advanced planning on the larger projects to determine who would do what and who would be in charge of the project. They also considered rotating crew members to improve relationships between crews. Most important, the crews agreed on a common goal: avoiding accidents at all cost.

At the end of this interteam-building session, each crew made a public commitment to change its behavior and implement the recommendations. As a result of this intervention, the crews now have a new approach to working with each other on large projects that minimizes the conflicts that they had in the past.

Case Two: ExactCorp

ExactCorp is a large retail organization with sales of over $1 billion per year. The company has grown rapidly since its inception and is operating in over thirty countries around the world. ExactCorp has been highly successful, largely due to its aggressive sales force, which is paid almost entirely on commission. Salespersons are encouraged to "always serve the customer" and think of unique ways to encourage sales. Salespersons believe they have wide latitude in offering incentives and discounts to customers in order to meet their sales targets.

ExactCorp's marketing department sets out the overall marketing strategy for the company. It also provides the product information, marketing materials, and promotional campaigns designed to help the company increase its worldwide sales. In other words, the marketing department provides the "ammunition" for the sales force to achieve its goals.

One day we received a call from the director of ExactCorp's U.S. sales force, Paul Jones, who expressed some frustration with the relationship between his sales force and the marketing department. Recently he had been reprimanded by a senior manager because his sales force was not "following the guidelines" for product promotions and incentives that Phil Snyder, senior director of marketing, had outlined. Paul had called Phil to express his concern that marketing was being "inflexible" and undermining his sales efforts. Phil responded that his role was to