

other in history. In short, the re-election team was successful because they focused on their customer—the potential voter, selected the right talent, and outlined a detailed plan of action.¹

The success of the Obama 2012 campaign points to the importance of the several factors that need to be in place for successful teamwork: talented people, motivation, and high coordination. Not surprisingly, many companies and corporations attempted to adopt the winning formula of the Obama team. Ideally, teams could benefit from a model or set of guidelines that would tell them how to organize and how to deal with inevitable threats to their goal achievement. Such a model would serve two purposes: **description**, or the interpretation of events so that managers can come up with an accurate analysis of the situation, and **prescription**, or a recommendation on what to do to fix the situation.

In this chapter, we introduce a model of team performance. The model tells us the conditions that must be in place for teams to function effectively and how to address problems with performance. The remainder of the chapter focuses on different parts of the model and provides choices to enact change.

AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF SUCCESSFUL TEAM PERFORMANCE

The best models of teamwork focus on the internal processes of teams as well as how the team works with other units.² Exhibit 2-1 is a descriptive-prescriptive model of team performance. It tells us what to expect in terms of team performance and suggests ways to improve the functioning of teams. The model in Exhibit 2-1 is based upon empirical research. This chapter steps through each element of this model.

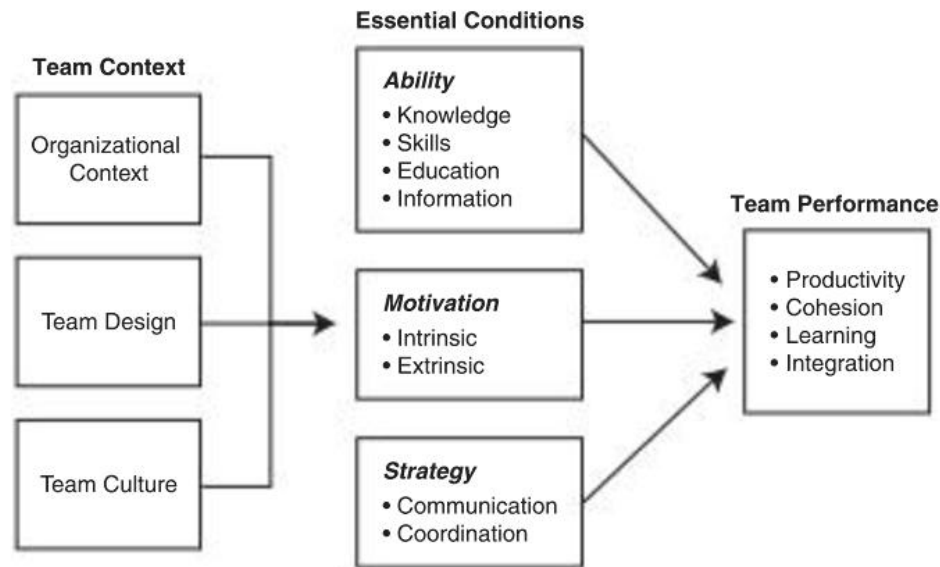
The message of the model is actually quite simple: The context of the team (referring to its internal processes and external constraints and opportunities) influences three essential conditions for team success: expertise, engagement, and execution. These essential conditions are the causal determinants of the team's ultimate performance—that is, whether it succeeds or fails. The remainder of the chapter is divided into three key sections corresponding to the three pieces of the model: team context, essential conditions, and team performance. We begin with the team context.

Team Context

The **team context** includes the larger organizational setting within which the team does its work, the design of the team in terms of its internal functioning, and the culture of the team. In Chapter 1, we stated that teams operate in a social context that shapes and confines behavior. As we discuss in Parts II and III, the team leader must

¹Green, J. (2012). Corporations want Obama's winning formula. *Businessweek*. businessweek.com; Carey, B. (2012, November 12). Academic 'Dream Team' helped Obama's effort. *The New York Times*. nytimes.com.

²Hackman, J. R. (1987). The design of work teams. In J. W. Lorsch (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall; Hackman, J. R. (1990). Introduction: Work teams in organizations: An oriented framework. In J. Hackman (Ed.), *Groups that work and those that don't*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; Hill, S. (1995). The social organization of boards of directors. *British Journal of Sociology*, 46(2), 245–278.

**EXHIBIT 2-1 Integrated Model of Teamwork**

think not only about the internal functioning of the team (i.e., expertise, engagement, and execution) but also about the external functioning of the team, including the organizational context, team design, and group norms.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT The organizational context includes the basic structure of the organization (e.g., lateral, hierarchical), the information system, the education system, and the reward system. It includes organizational policy and material and physical resources required to accomplish group tasks. Even if a team has expertise, engagement, and execution skills, lack of critical organizational infrastructure such as information, tools, equipment, space, raw materials, money, and human resources will hurt team performance. Teams ideally need a supportive organizational context—one that recognizes and welcomes their existence; responds to their requests for information, resources, and action; legitimizes the team's task and how they are achieving it; and expects the team to succeed.³ A meta-analysis reveals that teams who perceive themselves to have high-performance managerial practices, sociopolitical support from the organization, and leadership are more likely to feel empowered, which ultimately leads to greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, higher task performance, and reduced turnover intentions.⁴

TEAM DESIGN Team design refers to the observable structure of the team (e.g., manager led or self-managing). It refers to the leadership style within the team, functional roles, communication patterns, composition of the team, and training of members. In contrast to the team's culture, the team design is the deliberate, planful aspect of teamwork.

³Bushe, G. R. (1984). Quality circles in quality of work life projects: Problems and prospects for increasing employee participation. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, 3(2), 101–113.

⁴Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(5), 981–1003.

Although the team's culture evolves and grows and is not under the direct control of a manager, the design of a team is a deliberate decision or choice made by managers. Some managers may not realize that by not making decisions or leaving teamwork up to natural forces, they are, in fact, designing their team. We urge the leaders and managers of teams to carefully think through their options when designing their team.

TEAM CULTURE Culture is the personality of a team. Team culture includes the unstated, implicit aspects of the team that are not discussed in a formal fashion but that nevertheless shape behavior. Roles, norms, and patterns of behaving and thinking are influenced by the team's culture. One way in which teams develop their culture is by imposing ways of thinking and acting that are considered acceptable. A **norm** is a generally agreed-upon set of rules that guides behavior of team members. Norms differ from organizational policies in that they are informal and unwritten. Often, norms are so subtle that team members are not consciously aware of them. Team norms regulate behaviors such as honesty, manner of dress, punctuality, and emotional expression. Norms can either be prescriptive, dictating what should be done, or proscriptive, dictating behaviors that should be avoided.

Norms that favor innovation or incorporate shared expectations of success may foster team effectiveness.⁵ Certain norms may exist in teams but not the larger organization. The attitudes of one's closest peers (known as referent groups) strongly affect behaviors like absenteeism, more so than the norms established by the formal organizational units in which such referent groups are nested.⁶ In the classic study of organizational norm setting, two teams in the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Works developed highly different norms, even though they were in the same shop. One group spent much time in conversation and debate, played games involving small bets, and maintained uniformly high output. In contrast, the other group traded jobs (a prohibited activity), engaged in joking, and maintained uniformly low output.⁷

Norms develop as a consequence of precedent. The behaviors that emerge at a team's first meeting often define how the team operates in the future—just look at the consistency of seating arrangements in business meetings. Norms also develop because of carryovers from other situations or in response to an explicit statement by a superior or coworker. They may also result from critical events in the team's history. **Goal contagion** is a form of norm setting in which people adopt a goal held by others.⁸ Goal contagion is more likely between people who belong to the same group.⁹ We cover norms in greater detail in Part II.

⁵Cummings, T. G., & Mohrman, S. A. (1987). Self-designing organizations: Towards implementing quality-of-work-life innovations. In R. W. Woodman & W. A. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in organizational change and development* (Vol. 1, pp. 275–310). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press; Shea, G. P., & Guzzo, R. A. (1987, Spring). Group effectiveness: What really matters? *Sloan Management Review*, 28(3), 25–31.

⁶Bamberger, P., & Biron, M. (2007). Group norms and excessive absenteeism: The role of peer referent others. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103, 179–196.

⁷Homans, G. (1950). *The human group*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

⁸Aarts, H., Gollwitzer, P. M., & Hassin, R. R. (2004). Goal contagion: Perceiving is for pursuing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 23–37.

⁹Loersch, C., Aarts, H., Payne, B. K., & Jefferis, V. E. (2008). The influence of social groups on goal contagion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 1555–1558.

Essential Conditions for Successful Team Performance

A number of factors must be in place for a team to be successful.¹⁰ The team members must:

1. Possess the relevant expertise to perform the task.
2. Be engaged and motivated to perform the task.
3. Execute the task by coordinating with other team members.

Next, we discuss each of these essential conditions in greater detail.

EXPERTISE For teams to perform effectively, members must have the expertise, or KSAs (knowledge, skills, and ability), to accomplish the task.¹¹ This requires that the manager appropriately match people with the right skills to the tasks at hand and to the organizational human resource structure itself. There are five crucial skills for team members:¹²

1. **Conflict resolution** (recognize and encourage task conflict, but discourage relationship conflict)
2. **Collaborative problem solving** (recognize the obstacles to collaborative group problem solving and implement appropriate corrective actions)
3. **Communication** (listen nonevaluatively and appropriately use active listening techniques)
4. **Goal setting and performance management** (establish specific, challenging, and accepted team goals)
5. **Planning and task coordination** (coordinate and synchronize activities, information, and task interdependencies between team members)

Team Member Skills One consistent predictor of team effectiveness is team members' cognitive ability. For example, the average level of team members' cognitive abilities in military tank crews, assembly and maintenance teams, and service teams directly predicts their effectiveness. Trait conscientiousness also predicts effective team performance in assembly and maintenance teams and service teams.¹³

An effective team needs people not only with the technical skills necessary to perform the work but also interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills. Team members who demonstrate greater mastery of teamwork knowledge are

¹⁰Steiner, I. (1972). *Group process and productivity*. New York: Academic Press; Hackman, "Design of work teams."

¹¹Stevens, M. A., & Campion, M. J. (1994). The knowledge, skill, and ability requirements for teamwork: Implications for human resource management. *Journal of Management*, 20, 503–530; Chen, G., Donahue, L. M., & Klimoski, R. J. (2004). Training undergraduates to work in organizational teams. *Academy of Management: Learning and Education*, 3(1), 27–40.

¹²Stevens & Campion, "The knowledge, skill, and ability requirements for teamwork."

¹³Tziner, A., & Eden, D. (1985). Effects of crew composition on crew performance: Does the whole equal the sum of its parts? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 70, 85–93; Barrick, M. R., Stewart, G. L., Neubert, M. J., & Mount, M. K. (1998). Relating member ability and personality to work-team processes and team effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, 377–391; Neuman, G. A., & Wright, J. (1999). Team effectiveness: Beyond skills and cognitive ability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(3), 376–389; Neuman, G. A., Wagner, S. H., & Christiansen, N. D. (1999). The relationship between work-team personality composition and the job performance of teams. *Groups and Organization Management*, 24, 28–45.

also those who perform better on their teams. Field data from 92 teams in a U.S. Air Force officer development program revealed that teamwork knowledge increased task proficiency.¹⁴ Anyone who is a member of a team fully understands that not all of the work of teams is accomplished in the physical presence of the other group members. What types of work are best performed as a team, in the presence of a team, or independently? Teams are superior to individuals at analyzing information, convergent thinking, and assimilating information. However, teams are worse than individuals at divergent thinking.

Moreover, because teams increase performance pressure and performance anxiety, the performance of well-intentioned team members may be hindered. For experts, the physical presence of the team can be a great benefit, because the presence of others increases motivation to perform, and the expert knows the skill sets required. However, for people who are not experts, the presence of others can hinder performance. Billy Cundiff, a kicker for the 2012 Baltimore Ravens, choked during the final 15 seconds of the AFC championship game against the Patriots. Unprepared and probably a bit confused, Cundiff was rushed onto the field by screaming coaches and teammates in the final minutes of the fourth quarter. He had not missed a fourth-quarter kick all season and had been training himself on the sidelines to regulate his stress levels during the game. However, under such immense pressure to send the game into overtime, Cundiff overthought his “autopilot” actions, botched his kick, and sent the ball traveling wide and to the left of the goal posts, resulting in a loss for his team.¹⁵ **Choking under pressure** occurs when a person’s performance declines despite incentives for optimal performance.¹⁶

Learning Curves and Expertise The physical presence of other people is stimulating, and this greater arousal acts as a motivator on behavior. Whatever we might be doing, we do with more “gusto” when in the presence of other people, especially our team. However, there is a catch: The presence of other people enhances performance for well-learned behaviors (but hinders performance for less well-learned behaviors). Thus, greater arousal or stimulation enhances our performance on tasks that are well learned, but hinders our performance on novel tasks. The presence of other people triggers one of two responses: challenge (if someone is an expert) or threat (if someone is not an expert). Moreover, the cardiovascular responses of people while they perform a well-learned task in the presence of others provide physiological evidence that experts feel challenged—increased cardiac response and decreased vascular resistance.¹⁷ However, if people are performing an unlearned task in the presence of others, they go into “threat mode”—increased cardiac response and increased vascular resistance. Consider, for example, what happens to pool players when they are observed by others in pool

¹⁴Hirschfeld, R., Jordan, M., Field, H., Giles, W., & Armenakis, A. (2006). Becoming team players: Team members’ mastery of teamwork knowledge as a predictor of team task proficiency and observed teamwork effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(2), 467–474.

¹⁵Yogis, J. (2012, March 19). I think, therefore I choke. *ESPN The Magazine*. espn.com.

¹⁶Baumeister, R. F., & Steinhilber, A. (1984). Paradoxical effects of supportive audiences on performance under pressure: The home field disadvantage in sports championships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47(1), 85–93.

¹⁷Blascovich, J., Mendes, W. B., Hunter, S. B., & Salomon, K. (1999). Social “facilitation” as challenge and threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(1), 68–77.

halls.¹⁸ Novice players perform worse when someone is watching. In contrast, expert players' games improve dramatically when they are observed. Similarly, joggers speed up on paths when someone is watching them and slow down when no one appears to be in sight.¹⁹ Additionally, people giving impromptu speeches perform worse in the presence of others than when alone.

Social Facilitation Versus Social Inhibition Social facilitation is the predictable enhancement in performance that occurs when people are in the presence of others. Social inhibition occurs when people are the center of attention and are concerned with discrepancies between their performance and standards of excellence. Thus, team leaders will actually make the performance of their team suffer if they apply performance pressure to people who are not yet expert.

How can team players ensure that their behavior is the optimal response? There are two routes. Expertise is one way: Experts are trained to focus on what matters most. For example, to combat the problems of overthinking, athletes use mental strategies such as singing, reciting mantras, or, in the case of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, using music to pump himself up before races. Before winning his 18th, and final, gold medal in the 4 × 100-meter medley relay, Phelps revealed on Twitter that he psyched himself up by listening to hip-hop artists such as Young Jeezy and Lil Wayne.²⁰ Speed skater Apolo Ohno always yawns before a big race. When asked why by an interviewer, he attributed it not to fatigue, but to a psychological part of his pre-race routine. "I want to be a lion," he said with a smile.²¹ And, right-handed athletes improve their performance under pressure simply by activating certain parts of the brain by squeezing a ball or clenching their left hand just prior to competition.²²

Practice and rehearsal is another strategy: It modifies the behavioral response hierarchy, so that the desired response becomes second nature. However, being an expert does not completely protect people from choking. Just look at professional players on sports teams. In the championship series in professional baseball and basketball, the home team is significantly more likely to lose the decisive game than it is to lose earlier home games in the series. Why? Expertise is the result of overlearning. The pressure to perform well causes people to focus their attention on the process of performing—the focus of attention turns inward. The more pressure, the more inwardly focused people become. When people focus on overlearned or automated responses, it interferes with their performance.²³ It is best to avoid trying to learn difficult material or perform complex tasks in groups, because peer pressure will obstruct

¹⁸Michaels, S. W., Brommel, J. M., Brocato, R. M., Linkous, R. A., & Rowe, J. S. (1982). Social facilitation in a natural setting. *Replication in Social Psychology*, 4(2), 21–24.

¹⁹Worringham, C. J., & Messick, D. M. (1983). Social facilitation of running: An unobtrusive study. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 121, 23–29.

²⁰Couch, A. (2012, August 4). Olympics 2012: Michael Phelps reveals playlist for gold-winning finale. *The Hollywood Reporter*. hollywoodreporter.com.

²¹Horton, J. (2010, February 24). Why Apolo Ohno keeps yawning. *Yahoo! News*. yahoo.com.

²²Beckman, J., Gropel, P., Ehrlenspiel, F. (2012). Preventing motor skill failure through hemisphere-specific priming cases: cases from choking under pressure. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

²³Lewis, B. P., & Linder, D. E. (1997). Thinking about choking? Attentional processes and paradoxical performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(9), 937–944.

performance. However, if team members are experts, they will likely flourish under this kind of pressure. Practice not only makes perfect but also makes performance hold up under pressure. Not all teamwork needs to be done in a team setting; sometimes it is beneficial to allow team members to complete work on their own and bring it back to the group.

Flow: Optimal Performance At a precise point between boredom with a task and intense pressure is a state that psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls flow.²⁴ See Exhibit 2-2.

Flow is a psychological state in which a person is highly engaged in a task—so interested, in fact, that the person loses track of time, and the process of engaging the task is its own reinforcement. Engagement is critical for flow. Engaged employees are

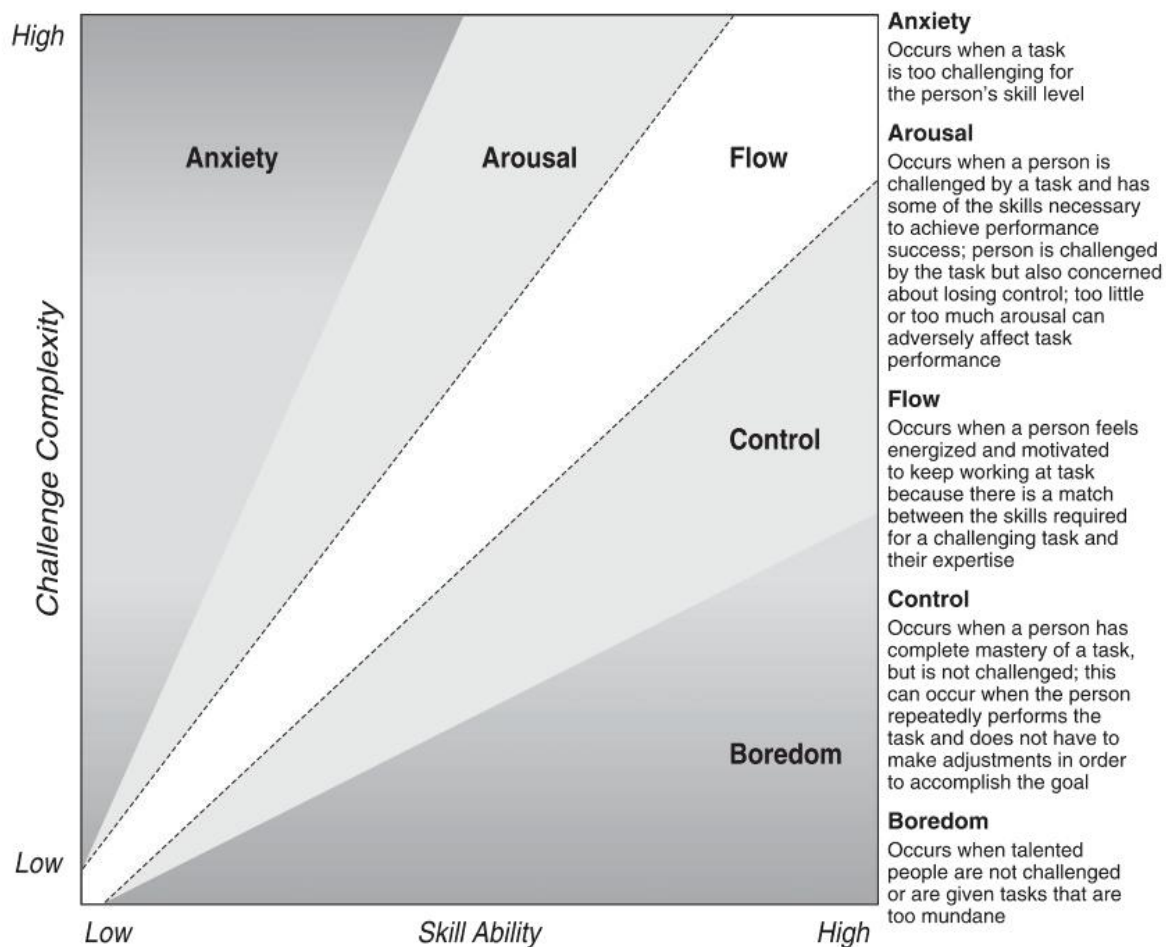


EXHIBIT 2-2 The Flow Experience

Source: Based on Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (p. 74). New York: HarperCollins.

²⁴Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2003). *Good business: Leadership, flow, and the making of meaning*. New York: Viking Press.

more productive, more focused on the customer, safer, more profitable, and more satisfied with their jobs. In a typical organization, the ratio of engaged to disengaged employees is 2:1; in highly productive organizations, the ratio of engaged to disengaged employees is 9.5:1. Moreover, a meta-analysis of more than 152 organizations reveals that businesses with a high level of employee engagement have an earnings per share rate that is 3.9 times more than organizations with lower employee engagement within the same industry.²⁵

Stress Versus Challenge There is a fine line between challenge and stress. For example, people who strive to accomplish difficult goals may perceive their goal as a challenge, rather than a threat, and perform quite well. Challenge occurs when there is an opportunity for self-growth with available coping strategies; threat is experienced when the situation is perceived as leading to failure with no available strategies for coping. For example, in one investigation, people evaluated companies' stocks and had to make decisions quickly and accurately.²⁶ The same level of goal difficulty impaired performance and adaptation to change when people appraised the situation as a "threat," but it improved adaptation to change when people appraised the situation as a "challenge."

ENGAGEMENT It is not enough for members of a team to be skilled; they must also be engaged and motivated to perform. Motivation comes both from within a person and from external factors. People by nature are goal directed, but a poorly designed team or organizational environment can threaten team dedication and persistence. At certain times, members of a team may feel that their actions do not matter, that something always goes wrong to mess things up (e.g., a sports team on a losing streak), or that their input is not listened to. This can also happen if team members feel they are unable to affect their environment or cannot rely on others. The belief that the group has in themselves, or their **group potency**, is a significant predictor of actual performance.²⁷ For example, in one investigation, officer cadets completed a task in teams. Group potency, or "thinking we can," contributed to group performance over and above measures of pure cognitive ability.²⁸ Next, we introduce two motivational effects in groups: motivation gains and motivation losses.

Motivation Gains Motivation gains refer to circumstances that increase the effort expended by group members in a collective task. Motivational gains in which the less capable member works harder is known as the **Köhler effect**.²⁹ A field study of relay swimming at the 2008 Olympics revealed that swimmers performed better (swam

²⁵Employee engagement: A leading indicator of financial performance. (2012). *Gallup*. gallup.com

²⁶Drach-Zahavy, A., & Erez, M. (2002). Challenge versus threat effects on the goal-performance relationship. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 88, 667–682.

²⁷Shea, G. P., & Guzzo, R. A. (1987, Spring). Group effectiveness: What really matters? *Sloan Management Review*, 28(3), 25–31.

²⁸Hecht, T. D., Allen, N. J., Klammer, J. D., & Kelly, E. C. (2002). Group beliefs, ability and performance: The potency of group potency. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice*, 6(2), 143–152.

²⁹Stroebe, W., Diehl, M., & Abakoumkin, G. (1996). Social compensation and the Köhler effect: Toward a theoretical explanation of motivation gains in group productivity. In E. H. White & J. H. Davis (Eds.), *Understanding group behavior*, Vol. 2: *Small group processes and interpersonal relations*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

faster) when they were late in the relay position, rather than early.³⁰ Those late in the relay apparently saw themselves as indispensable for the ultimate team outcome. The psychological mechanisms underlying the Köhler effect are social comparison (particularly when someone thinks that their teammate is more capable) and the feeling that one's effort is indispensable to the group.³¹ Group members are willing to exert effort on a collective task when they expect their efforts to be instrumental in obtaining outcomes that they value personally.³² In particular, the weakest member of a team is more likely to work harder when everyone is given feedback about people's performance in a timely fashion.³³ Although motivation gains gradually start to attenuate, they remain higher when people work with several different partners (as opposed to the same people).³⁴ And, motivation gains were significantly greater when people worked in the physical presence of their coworker (as opposed to the virtual presence).³⁵

Social Loafing A more common observation in groups is motivation losses, also known as social loafing. A French agricultural engineer named Max Ringelmann was interested in the relative efficiency of farm labor supplied by horses, oxen, machines, and men. In particular, he was curious about their relative abilities to pull a load horizontally, such as in a tug-of-war. In one of his experiments, groups of 14 men pulled a load, and the amount of force they generated was measured. The force that each man could pull independently was also measured. There was a steady decline in the average pull per member as the size of the rope-pulling team increased. One person pulling on a rope alone exerted an average of 63 kilograms of force. However, in groups of three, the per-person force dropped to 53 kilograms, and in groups of eight, it plummeted to only 31 kilograms—less than half of the effort exerted by people working alone.³⁶ This detailed observation revealed a fundamental principle of teamwork: People in groups often do not work as hard as they do when alone. This is known as **social loafing**.

Team performance increases with team size, but the rate of increase is negatively accelerated, such that the addition of new members to the team has diminishing returns on productivity. Similar results are obtained when teams work on intellectual puzzles,³⁷

³⁰Hüffmeier, J., & Hertel, G. (2011). When the whole is more than the sum of its parts: Group motivation gains in the wild. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(2), 455–459.

³¹Kerr, N. L., Messé, L. M., Seok, D., Sambolec, E., Lount, R. M., & Park, E. S. (2007). Psychological mechanisms underlying the Köhler motivation gain. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(6), 828–841.

³²Karau, S., Markus, M., & Williams, K. (2000). On the elusive search for motivation gains in groups: Insights from the collective effort model. *Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie*, 31(4), 179–190.

³³Kerr, N., Messé, L., Park, E., & Sambolec, E. (2005). Identifiability, performance feedback and the Köhler effect. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 8(4), 375–390.

³⁴Lount, R. M., Kerr, N. L., Messé, L. M., Seok, D., & Park, E. S. (2008). An examination of the stability and persistence of the Köhler motivation gain effect. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 12(4), 279–289.

³⁵Lount, R. B., Park, E. S., Kerr, N. L., Messe, L. A., & Seok, D. (2008). Evaluation concerns and the Köhler effect: The impact of physical presence on motivation gains. *Small Group Research*, 39(6), 795–809.

³⁶Ringelmann, M. (1913). *Aménagement des fumiers et des purins*. Paris: Librairie agricole de la Maison rustique. Summarized by Kravitz, D. A., & Martin, B. (1986). Ringelmann rediscovered: The original article. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50(5), 936–941.

³⁷Taylor, D. W., & Faust, W. L. (1952). Twenty questions: Efficiency of problem-solving as a function of the size of the group. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 360–363.

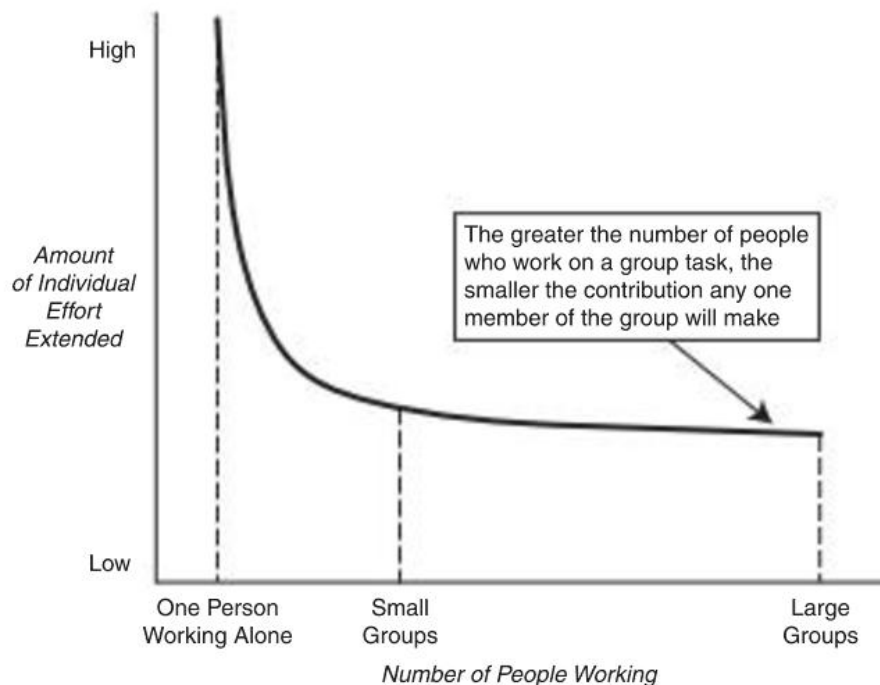


EXHIBIT 2-3 The Social Loafing Effect

Source: Greenberg, J. (1996). *Managing behavior in organizations* (p. 189). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

creativity tasks,³⁸ perceptual judgments, and complex reasoning.³⁹ Social loafing has been demonstrated in many cultures, including India,⁴⁰ Japan,⁴¹ and Taiwan.⁴² The general form of the social loafing effect is portrayed in Exhibit 2-3.

Free Riders People's motivations often diminish in a team. Also, the larger the team, the less likely it is that any given person will work hard. For many team tasks, there is a possibility that others can and will do most or all of the work necessary for the team to succeed. This means that free riders benefit from the efforts of others while contributing little or nothing themselves. Team members are sensitive to how important their efforts are perceived to be. When they think their contributions are not going to have much impact on the outcome, they are less likely to exert themselves on the team's behalf.

³⁸Gibb, J. R. (1951). *Dynamics of participative groups*. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado.

³⁹Ziller, R. C. (1957). Four techniques of group decision-making under uncertainty. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 41, 384-388.

⁴⁰Werner, D., Ember, C. R., & Ember, M. (1981). *Anthropology: Study guide and workbook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁴¹Williams, K. D., & Williams, K. B. (1984). *Social loafing in Japan: A cross-cultural development study*. Paper presented at the Midwestern Psychological Association Meeting, Chicago, IL.

⁴²Gabrenya, W. K., Latané, B., & Wang, Y. (1983). Social loafing in cross-cultural perspective: Chinese on Taiwan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 14(3), 368-384.

How do teams react once a free rider has been detected? If someone is not contributing, the other team members might attempt to reduce that person's reward (e.g., not allow someone to put his or her name on the group report if he or she has not contributed) or reduce their own inputs (i.e., the other members of the group might stop working hard). People are more intolerant of free riders whom they perceive as out-group members and are more permissive of in-group members.⁴³ For these reasons it is important to have clear sanctions for free riding in teams. For example, in the NFL, fines are regularly leveled against players for flagrant disruptions to the flow of the game. For example, during the 2011 American football season, fighting carried a minimum \$25,000 penalty, as did physical contact with a game official. At the end of the season Pro Bowl, missing a team meeting set a player back \$2,000. League fines are often doubled for repeat offenses.⁴⁴ Meaningful consequences emphasize the team's core values: showing up and contributing. The leaders of these teams correctly recognize that free riding and social loafing, if unchecked, can be a serious threat to team productivity.

Three Main Causes of Free Riding Why do people free ride in teams? Three reasons: diffusion of responsibility, a reduced sense of self-efficacy, and "sucker aversion."

Diffusion of Responsibility. In a team, a person's effort and contributions are less identifiable than when that person works independently. This is because everyone's efforts are pooled into the team enterprise and the return is a function of everyone's contribution. It is difficult (or impossible) to distinguish one person's contribution from another. At an extreme, this can lead to **deindividuation**—a psychological state in which a person does not feel individual responsibility. As a result, the person is less likely to perform or contribute. Consider, for example, a real-world case. A woman named Kitty Genovese was on her way home from work late one evening in New York.⁴⁵ She was attacked by a man and stabbed to death. Thirty-eight of her neighbors in the apartment building where she lived saw the attacker approach and slay her, but not a single person so much as called the police.

Most people attribute the neighbors' lack of assistance to insensitivity. We might look at this, however, from another perspective: People are more likely to free ride as the number of others in the group increases. Perhaps this is one reason why many people employed by companies that regularly committed accounting fraud did not blow the whistle. Observers in Kitty Genovese's apartment building who knew that others were also watching felt less responsible and so less inclined to intervene. In effect, they told themselves, "Someone else has probably already called for help." Why inconvenience yourself when it is likely the woman will receive help from someone else? Of course, if everyone thinks this way, the probability that the victim eventually gets help decreases dramatically.

Reduced sense of self-efficacy. In some cases, it is not diffusion of responsibility that hinders people from contributing to a team effort, but rather the feeling that our

⁴³Hütter, M., & Diehl, M. (2011). Motivation losses in teamwork: The effects of team diversity and equity sensitivity on reactions to free-riding. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(6), 845–856.

⁴⁴Sessler, M. (2011, September 15). NFL releases details on fines, discipline. *National Football League*. nfl.com.

⁴⁵Discussed by Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1968). Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10, 215–221.

contributions will not be as valuable, efficacious, or worthwhile as they might be in a smaller group. We believe our contributions will not be sufficient to justify the effort. Consider, for example, the problem of voting. Most everyone agrees that voting is necessary for democracy. Yet, why did only 58.75 percent of the eligible U.S. population vote during the presidential election of 2012?⁴⁶ People may feel that their vote has such a small impact on the outcome that voting is not worthwhile. Similarly, team members may feel they lack the ability to positively influence a team's outcome. Indeed, when the least capable member of a team feels particularly indispensable for group success, the group actually experiences a sort of **social striving** effect, meaning that they work harder to achieve their goals.⁴⁷

Sucker Aversion. A common concern held by team members is whether someone will be left doing all of the work and getting little or no credit.⁴⁸ Because everyone wants to avoid being taken advantage of, team members hedge their efforts and wait to see what others will do. Of course, when everyone does this, no one contributes. When people see others not contributing, it confirms their worst fears. The sucker effect becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In contrast, the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) holds that hard work leads to economic success.⁴⁹ People with a strong PWE are not affected by the reasons for their partner's low output. Whether it is a lack of ability or lack of motivation, people with high PWE work hard, even if that means they are the "sucker."⁵⁰

Suggestions for Enhancing Successful Team Performance Suppose you are managing a team that processes insurance claims. Prior to the formation of teams, you measure the average claim processing time and find it to be 3 days. After forming the teams, you find the average has increased to about 9 days. Has your team fallen victim to social loafing? Your manager advises you to immediately dismantle the teams. Someone else tells you that the company's incentive system needs to be overhauled. What do you think?

Before you dismantle the teams or restructure the company's entire pay structure, consider the following strategies:

Increase Identifiability. When each member's contribution to a task is displayed where it can be seen by others (e.g., weekly sales figures posted on a bulletin board or e-mail), people are less likely to loaf, or slack off, than when only overall group (or companywide) performance is made available.⁵¹ People often regard their fellow group members as a collective rather than as individuals; if people think about the contributions made by each person in their group, they will be less likely to act in a self-interested

⁴⁶Page, S. (2012, December 23). Voter turnout higher in swing states than elsewhere. *USA Today*. usatoday.com.

⁴⁷Hertel, G., Kerr, N. L., & Messe, L. A. (2000). Motivation gains in performance groups: Paradigmatic and theoretical developments on the Köhler effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(4), 580–601.

⁴⁸Kerr, N. L. (1983). Motivation losses in small groups: A social dilemma analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 819–828.

⁴⁹Furnham, A. (1990a). *The Protestant work ethic*. New York: Routledge.

⁵⁰Abele, S., & Diehl, M. (2008). Finding team mates who are not prone to sucker and free-rider effects: The Protestant Work Ethic as a moderator of motivation losses in group performance. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 11, 39–54.

⁵¹Kerr, N. L., & Bruun, S. (1981). Ringelmann revisited: Alternative explanations for the social loafing effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 224–231; Williams, K. D., Harkins, S. G., & Latané, B. (1981). Identifiability as a deterrent to social loafing: Two cheering experiments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40(2), 303–311.

fashion.⁵² For example, at Able Engineering and Component Services, employee performance review outcomes are posted publicly so everyone on a team can see each other's scores and salaries.⁵³ However, the key is not identifiability per se, but rather the evaluation that identifiability makes possible.⁵⁴

Promote Involvement. Social loafing may be eliminated if the task is sufficiently involving,⁵⁵ attractive,⁵⁶ or intrinsically interesting.⁵⁷ When tasks are highly specialized and routinized, monotony sets in; in contrast, when team members are responsible for all pieces of a work product or service, they feel more responsibility for the work. In one investigation in a fund-raising organization, callers in an intervention group briefly interacted with a beneficiary; callers in two control groups read a letter from a beneficiary or had no exposure to him. One month later, the intervention group displayed significantly greater persistence (142 percent more phone time) and job performance (171 percent more money raised) than the control groups.⁵⁸

Challenging tasks may be particularly important for teams composed of people who are good at what they do or who believe that they are superior. Most people regard themselves to be superior on a number of intellectual and social tasks. For example, the majority of people regard themselves to be better-than-average drivers;⁵⁹ they also believe that they are more likely to have a better job.⁶⁰ However, the **positive illusion bias**—unwarranted beliefs in one's own superiority—can wreak havoc in teams. Work teams composed of people with strong motives to view themselves as distinctly more talented than others are likely to engage in social loafing when the task is unchallenging. In particular, people from individualistic cultures are most likely to have such motives.⁶¹ People who see themselves as above average are the most likely to engage in social loafing, because they have a false sense of the value of their contributions. Indeed, people who feel uniquely superior expend less effort when working collectively on easy tasks. However, they actually work harder when the task is challenging.

⁵²Savitsky, K., Van Boven, L., Epley, N., & Wight, W. (2005). The unpacking effect in allocations of responsibility for group tasks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 447–457.

⁵³Thomason, A. (2012, May 12). Employee reviews turned inside out. *USA Today*. usatoday.com

⁵⁴Harkins, S. G., & Jackson, J. M. (1985). The role of evaluation in eliminating social loafing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11, 457–465; Harkins, S. G., & Szymanski, K. (1987). *Social loafing and social facilitation: New wine in old bottles*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

⁵⁵Brickner, M. A., Harkins, S. G., & Ostrom, T. M. (1986). Effects of personal involvement: Thought-provoking implications for social loafing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(4), 763–770.

⁵⁶Zaccaro, S. J. (1984). Social loafing: The role of task attractiveness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 10, 99–106.

⁵⁷Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Kasmer, J. (1985). *Effects of need for cognition on social loafing*. Paper presented at the Midwestern Psychology Association Meeting, Chicago, IL.

⁵⁸Grant, A. M., Campbell, E. M., Chen, G., Cottone, K., Lapedis, D., & Lee, K. (2007). Impact and the art of motivation maintenance: The effects of contact with beneficiaries on persistence behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103, 53–67.

⁵⁹Svenson, O. (1981). Are we all less risky and more skillful than our fellow drivers? *Acta Psychologica*, 47, 143–148.

⁶⁰Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion of well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 193–210.

⁶¹Huguet, P., Charbonnier, E., & Monteil, J. (1999). Productivity loss in performance groups: People who see themselves as average do not engage in social loafing. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3(2), 118–131.

Reward Team Members for Performance. Team members should recognize and reward contributions by individuals. At RockYou, a social game-developing and advertising company, great ideas are recognized monthly with “You Rock Awards.” Peer nominations recognize employees for solving a problem, designing a game, or other innovations. You Rock nominees spin a wheel to choose an award such as concert tickets, extra days off, or iPads.⁶²

Rewarding team members need not mean large financial incentives: Symbolic rewards can be more important than money. Sales managers may strategically use symbolic rewards, such as high-performer sales clubs or plaques and ceremonies honoring exemplary service, to deliver messages to the sales force. It is important for team members to feel appreciated and acknowledged by the members of their team as well as by the organization. There can be serious consequences if people feel they are not valued and respected, so much so that people are more likely to cheat and steal from the organization when they feel they have been unfairly treated.⁶³ When people feel that they are respected by their superiors, they are more likely to contribute to the group’s welfare.⁶⁴ Feeling respected is most important for members who feel least included. Similarly, peer-based rational control, in which team members distribute economic rewards based on input from teammates, impacts performance. A field study of 587 factory workers in 45 self-managing teams at 3 organizations revealed that peer-based rational control led to higher team performance.⁶⁵

Strengthen Team Cohesion. Cohesive teams are less inclined to loaf.⁶⁶ For example, when team managers’ and team members’ perceptions of organizational support are high and in agreement, performance increases, but when they are in disagreement it decreases.⁶⁷ Moreover, when team members know that they have a goal in common with other members, they are more likely to intensify their effort and motivation than when they are not aware of other members’ goals.⁶⁸

Increase Personal Responsibility. When teams set their own performance goals, they are less likely to loaf.⁶⁹ Teams who have empowering leadership feel more motivated and committed to their goal.⁷⁰

⁶²Gannon, D. (2011, July 19). How to reward great ideas. *Inc. inc.com*

⁶³Greenberg, J. (1988). Equity and workplace status: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 561–568.

⁶⁴De Cremer, D. (2002). Respect and cooperation in social dilemmas: The importance of feeling included. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(10), 1335–1341.

⁶⁵Stewart, G. L., Courtright, S. H., & Barrick, M. R. (2012). Peer-based control in self-managing teams: Linking rational and normative influence with individual and group performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(2), 435–447.

⁶⁶Williams, K. D. (1981). The effects of group cohesiveness on social loafing in simulated word-processing pools. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 42(2-B), 838.

⁶⁷Bashshur, M. R., Hernandez, A., & Gonzalez-Roma, V. (2011). When managers and their teams disagree: A longitudinal look at the consequences of differences in perceptions of organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 558–573.

⁶⁸Shteynberg, G., & Galinsky, A. D. (2011). Implicit coordination: Sharing goals with similar others intensifies goal pursuit. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(6), 1291–1294.

⁶⁹Brickner, Harkins, & Ostrom, “Effects of personal involvement.”

⁷⁰Chen, G., Sharma, P. N., Edinger, S. K., Shapiro, D. L., & Farh, J.-L. (2011). Motivating and demotivating forces in teams: Cross-level influences of empowering leadership and relationship conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 541–557.

Use Team Charters. At the outset of teamwork, members should develop a written statement of objectives and practices. This should be collectively written, posted, and, most important, regularly revisited. In a study of MBA students competing in a business strategy simulation, those students who developed a team charter and invested in taskwork (performance strategies) outperformed teams that did not develop charters or strategies.⁷¹ Referred to as “stacking the deck,” laying a solid foundation of teamwork and taskwork is essential for sustained performance.

Provide Team Performance Reviews and Feedback. People often don’t realize that they are not doing their fair share. And they overestimate how much they contribute to collaborative endeavors.⁷² For these reasons, it is important to provide team members with clear and regular feedback. However, more is not always better. Feedback that is provided too frequently can overwhelm an individual’s cognitive resource capacity and ultimately reduce their motivation. Feedback frequency exhibits an inverted-U relationship with task performance, suggesting that moderate amounts of feedback, with sufficient processing time, is ideal.⁷³

Maintain the “Right” Staffing Level. As the team gets larger and larger, free-riding increases. A field investigation of 212 knowledge workers within 26 teams ranging from 3 to 19 members revealed that as team size increases, members experience **relational loss**.⁷⁴ Relational loss occurs when an employee perceives that support is less available as team size increases. The larger the team, the less support team members feel they have, and this leads to diminished motivation and lower performance.

Suppose that you implement the preceding steps and your team’s performance is still less than what you think is possible, what should you do? Consider the third source of threats to productivity: execution problems.

EXECUTION Expertise and engagement are essential and desirable for effective teamwork but insufficient for effective team functioning. A team needs to be able to execute by coordinating the skills, efforts, and actions of its members. For example, before and after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, mass transit systems in New York and New Jersey—a grid of disparate networks that depend on one other—coordinated warning and cleanup efforts by using social media to alert riders, workers, and agencies. The up-to-date information, pictures, and alerts greatly facilitated damage control, cleanup, and repair.⁷⁵

Execution problems must be surmounted for a team to be effective. Team members may be individually good at what they do, but unless they coordinate their activities, they will not meet their team objectives. Successful execution involves the combined

⁷¹Mathieu, J. E., & Rapp, T. L. (2009). Laying the foundation for successful team performance trajectories: The roles of team charters and performance strategies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(1), 90–103.

⁷²Savitsky, Van Boven, Epley, & Wight, “The unpacking effect in allocations of responsibility for group tasks.”

⁷³Lam, C. F., DeRue, D. S., Karam, E. P., & Hollenbeck, J. R. (2011). The impact of feedback frequency on learning and task performance: Challenging the “more is better” assumption. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 116(8), 217–228.

⁷⁴Mueller, J. S. (2012). Why individuals in larger teams perform worse. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 117(1), 111–124.

⁷⁵Rivera, R. (2012, December 15). Social media strategy was crucial as transit agencies coped with hurricane. *New York Times*. nytimes.com.

synchronization of the activities of all members. Teams vary in terms of their ability to execute. Consider a disaster response team—the slightest misunderstanding about an operation can result in the loss of life. Another example is a rowing team or a dance troupe—unless everyone is synchronized, they cannot achieve their performance goals, no matter how skilled and motivated the individuals. This is why teams often sing or chant to synchronize their movements and actions.

Sir Adrian Cadbury, former chairman of Cadbury Schweppes, rowed in the 1952 Olympics. Sir Adrian took more than the lesson of timing from the world of rowing when he entered corporate life. “What has always been important to me is the team—rowing taught me that. More importantly, trust.” Rowing is certainly a sport that places more emphasis on team harmony than others—there’s less scope for those with individual flare to shine. “The beauty of racing in a crew is that you learn that any victory is the combined effort of everyone. In the same way company results reflect the performance of the whole firm.”⁷⁶

Execution problems increase with team size and do so in an accelerating manner. The number of ways in which a team can organize itself (e.g., divide responsibilities, combine contributions, and coordinate efforts) increases rapidly as the team gets larger.⁷⁷ Most of the threats to team productivity are attributable to execution problems, but managers, used to thinking in terms of expertise and engagement, fail to realize this—an example of the misattribution problem discussed in Chapter 1.

Most people take coordination and communication in teams for granted. In other words, they do not anticipate that their handwriting will be misread by a teammate or that an e-mail will be directed to a spam folder. People have a biased sense about the clarity of their own messages and intentions. They may not be as clear as they think they are. The problems in communication and coordination are compounded when the medium of communication is less rich, such as in e-mail, text, and videoconferencing (a topic discussed in Chapter 13).

What are some practical steps to ensure successful execution?

Use Single-Digit Teams Most teams are too large. As the number of people on a team increases, it is that much harder to schedule meetings, move paperwork, and converge on ideas. The incidence of unanticipated failure increases. As a rule of thumb, teams should have fewer than 10 members and just enough to cover all needed skill areas.

Have an Agenda Members need a clear sense of where they are going and how they will get there. If the team does not know where it is going, its efforts will be fragmented and members will waste time and energy.

Train Team Members Together Team members who train together, as opposed to separately, work more effectively. This is because they have an opportunity to coordinate their strategies. A side benefit of training team members together is that training provides the opportunity to build trust.

⁷⁶Phelps, R. (1996, September). Cadbury trusts in teamwork. *Management Today*, p. 110.

⁷⁷Kelley, H. H. (1962). The development of cooperation in the “minimal social situation.” *Psychological monographs: General and applied*, 76(19), 1–19.

Practice Teams are low on the learning curve when the team members begin to work with one another. A team might be motivated and highly skilled but naive in terms of communicating with one another in a highly synchronized and coordinated fashion. Teams require more practice than do individuals.

Minimize Links in Communication For most tasks, it is better for team members to directly communicate with the intended recipient, rather than going through others. This becomes a challenge when team members have different status. Ronen Shilo, CEO of Israel's Conduit, does not want team members to "get all twisted up about level-jumping" and, so, encourages even those who do not formally report to him to put aside the organizational chart and come to him with ideas and issues.⁷⁸

Set Clear Performance Standards Every team needs clear performance standards. In the absence of performance standards, it is impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of a team. The most common means by which people are evaluated by organizations is through a performance appraisal, which we discuss in detail in the next chapter. Many performance appraisals are routine and occur on a regular basis. Ideally, they are objective, based upon hard facts, and deliverables. People receive clear and informative feedback about what they are doing well and what they need to work on. We've argued that performance appraisals should be used when evaluating team performance.

How does a manager know whether a team is performing effectively? If this question is hard to answer, then it will be difficult to pull together a high-performance team and diagnose problems before they threaten team performance. Furthermore, even if you happen to be in the fortunate position of working on a successful team, unless you understand what makes your team effective, you may make the wrong choices or be indecisive at inopportune times.

Team performance evaluation is more difficult than individual performance evaluation. Teams are harder to track, and higher turnover can blur the relationship between the actions that people take and the results achieved by the team. Nevertheless, it is still possible to do a rigorous performance evaluation on teams, just as it is with individual employees. In this chapter, we consider the factors important to assessing team performance. In the next chapter, we deal with the thornier issue of how to measure performance and structure the incentive system.

Performance Criteria

What are the criteria by which we should evaluate team effectiveness? By performance criteria, we mean those factors used to evaluate the success or failure of a team effort. Hackman identified three key criteria in his model of group effectiveness: productivity, cohesion, and learning.⁷⁹ We add a fourth criterion, integration, suggested by Gruenfeld.⁸⁰

PRODUCTIVITY Productivity is arguably the most important measure of team success. Did the team achieve its goals? According to LaFasto and Larson, the most

⁷⁸Shilo, R. (2011, December 28). 8 essential business rules for those who don't believe in rules. *Fast Company*. fastcompany.com

⁷⁹Hackman, "Design of work teams."

⁸⁰D. H. Gruenfeld, personal communication, 1998.

important determinant of team success is whether the team has a clear and elevating goal.⁸¹ Team productivity requires that the team have a clear goal and adapt accordingly as new information arrives, goals change, and organizational priorities shift. This also holds true for changes in the marketplace—for example, the entrance or exit of a competitor or a stock market plunge. There are many dimensions to productivity: What was the team's output? How does the output correspond to the team's original goals? How quickly or timely were results achieved? How effective was the outcome? What is the correspondence between the team output and a measurable accomplishment (such as improved market share and new product development) by the organization? Efficiency is also important. If the team's goals were accomplished, at what cost did this happen? Was it worth it? The productivity of a team is highly correlated with its goals, as well as the ability of the team to adapt, change, and accommodate the goals in the face of new information, changing organizational priorities, and the changing marketplace.

The productivity criterion asks whether the team's output meets the standards of those who have to use it—that is, the end user. It is not enough that the team is satisfied with the output or even that it meets some objective performance measure. If the team's output is unacceptable to those who have to use it, the team is not effective. For these reasons, it is important to identify the legitimate clients of the team. The various end users who depend on the team's output may focus on different performance standards (e.g., quantity, quality, cutting costs, innovation, and timeliness). At the Mayo Clinic, the best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered. All employees know that the needs of the patient come first and the entire organization is dedicated toward that goal.⁸²

COHESION A second major criterion on team performance is team cohesion. The word **cohesion** derives from the Latin word *cohaesus*, meaning to cleave or stick together. In physics and chemistry, cohesion refers to the force(s) binding molecules of a substance together. For teams, cohesion refers to the processes that keep members of a team (e.g., military unit and work group) united.⁸³ Did the team work together well, and are its members better able to work together in the future as a result of this experience? Are team members' needs more satisfied than frustrated by the group experience,⁸⁴ and "is the capacity of members to work together on subsequent group tasks enhanced or maintained"?⁸⁵ Cohesion is a consistent predictor of team performance within project teams,⁸⁶

⁸¹Lafasto, F. M. J., & Larson, C. E. (2001). *When teams work best: 6,000 team members and leaders tell what it takes to succeed*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

⁸²Lee, A. (2008, September 8). How to build a brand. *Fast Company*. fastcompany.com

⁸³Dion, K. (2000). Group cohesion: From "field of forces" to multidimensional construct. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 4(1), 7–26.

⁸⁴Sundstrom, E. D., Demeuse, K. P., & Futrell, D. (1990). Work teams: Applications and effectiveness. *American Psychologist*, 45(2), 120–133.

⁸⁵Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

⁸⁶Gillespie, D. F., & Birnbaum-More, P. H. (1980). Status concordance, coordination and success in interdisciplinary research teams. *Human Relations*, 33(1), 41–56; Greene, C. N. (1989). Cohesion and productivity in work groups. *Small Group Behavior*, 20, 70–86; Keller, R. T. (1986). Predictors of the performance of project groups in R&D organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 715–725.

but not necessarily service teams (for a review, see Sundstrom et al., 2000⁸⁷). Sometimes teams meet their goals, but relationships suffer and are not dealt with in a way that allows members to work productively together in the future: “Mutual antagonism could become so high that members would choose to accept collective failure rather than to share knowledge and information with one another.”⁸⁸ In an effectively functioning team, the capability of members to work together on future projects is maintained and strengthened.

It is worthwhile to ask why team cohesion is important, as opposed to being just a nice side benefit. For example, if a team puts a person on the moon, is this not a success regardless of whether the team was cohesive? If the team effort is really and truly a one-time effort, then maximizing team cohesion may not be necessary. However, most of us want to build teams that will last for some meaningful length of time. If team members do not enjoy working on a team, future performance will suffer.

LEARNING In addition to the functioning of the team as a whole, learning is also important. As anyone who has attended an executive education course can testify, cohesion may be present but learning may be absent. Simply stated, teams should represent growth and development opportunities for the individual needs of the members. People have a need for growth, development, and fulfillment. Some teams operate in ways that block the development of individual members and satisfaction of personal needs. In short, members’ needs should be more satisfied than frustrated by the team experience. Teams should be sensitive to members and provide opportunities for members to develop new skills. This does not mean that teams or, for that matter, organizations exist to serve individual needs; rather, successful organizations create opportunities that challenge individual members.

INTEGRATION Another perspective is that of the larger organization. Thus, a fourth criterion of team performance is integration. Does the organization benefit from the team? In many instances, the team becomes so self-serving that it loses sight of the organization’s larger goals. (This is most likely the case with teams that have greater autonomy.) This can occur when the team’s goals are incompatible with those of other departments or areas. If, for instance, a company’s sales force dramatically improves sales over a short time, this does the company no good. In fact, it could even hurt the company if the manufacturing group cannot fulfill the promises made by the sales force or if the technical support group cannot handle the new customer calls. This is an example where the sales strategy backfires at the organizational level.

In other cases, different teams in the organization may reinvent things already developed by the organization because they are not able to learn from outside their group. It is important for teams to understand the organization’s goals to work

⁸⁷Sundstrom, E. D., McIntyre, M., Halfhill, T., & Richards, H. (2000). Work groups: From the Hawthorne studies to work teams of the 1990s and beyond. *Group Dynamics*, 4, 44–67.

⁸⁸Hackman, “Introduction: Work teams in organizations.”

Conduct a performance analysis of your team using the following four criteria as a baseline. Remember, you don't have to wait until the team is finished with its task to begin an evaluation. It is actually best to continually assess performance as the team is working toward its goal.

PRODUCTIVITY

- Does the team have a clear goal?
- What objective performance measures have been established at the outset of teamwork?
- Who are the legitimate clients of the team?
- Does the team's output (e.g., decisions, products, and services) meet the standards of those who have to use it?
- Under what conditions should the goal change?
- What sources of information should the team consider to assess whether the initial goal might need to be changed?

COHESION

- Do the team members enjoy working together?
- What conditions could lead to feelings of resentment?
- What conditions could prevent team members from working together in the future?
- How can team members best learn from one another?
- How are team members expected to accommodate changes, such as additions to the team, growth, and turnover?

LEARNING

- Do the individual team members grow and develop as a result of the team experience?
- Do team members have a chance to improve their skills and develop themselves?
- What factors and conditions could block personal growth?
- Are individuals' growth needs understood and shared by group members?

INTEGRATION

- How does the team benefit the larger organization?
- Are the team's goals consistent with those of the larger organization?
- What other groups, departments, and units are affected by the team?
- What steps has the team taken to integrate its activities with those of others?

EXHIBIT 2-4 Team Performance Analysis

Source: Thompson, L. (2013). *Leading high impact teams*. Team leadership survey from the Kellogg School of Management Executive Program. Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

effectively toward them. Teams need to integrate with other units in the organization. Practically, this means that teams must disseminate information, results, status reports, failures, expertise, and ideas in a timely and efficient manner. Achieving integration requires solid planning and coordination with the rest of the company. Exhibit 2-4 summarizes the team performance analysis, which can be performed by team members or team leaders. The relative importance of each of the four criteria varies across circumstances, and there is no single best set of conditions for optimizing performance. There are many ways a team can perform well and, unfortunately, more ways for it to