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Human Relations

Interpersonal Job-Oriented Skills

TWELFTH EDITION

Andrew J. DuBrin



ALWAYS LEARNING

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6

CHAPTER

Developing Teamwork Skills

Ann Livermore, head of Hewlett-Packard's storage and servers, software and services businesses, has faced decisions at her company that might have sent some executives heading for the door. But despite deals that cut into her territory, she keeps her focus on the big picture, on the challenges at hand, and on new opportunities for growth. It's all part of knowing that "business is a team sport," she says.

That sentiment isn't common among business leaders these days. Many senior executives are more focused on their individual well-being than on furthering their company goals. They're quick to jump to new employers when they don't feel appreciated.

Some outside H-P had speculated that Livermore was unhappy about relinquishing part of her portfolio after the company announced plans to acquire Electronic Data Systems, an IT



LEARNING

Objectives

After reading and studying this chapter and doing the exercises you will be able to

1. Explain the difference between a traditional team and a virtual team.
2. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of teams.
3. Identify various team member roles.
4. Apply interpersonal-related tactics for effective team play.
5. Apply task-related tactics for effective team play.

outsourcing company. She says that she's staying put. "This isn't about me," she said in an interview. "It's about what is best for H-P. It makes sense to combine all outsourcing businesses—and with a merger this big for EDS to report directly to Mark (Mark Hurd, former CEO of H-P)."^[1]

The attitude of the executive just described illustrates a spirit of teamwork that can help a company prosper. The modern organization depends on teamwork throughout the company. Many firms rely more on teamwork than on individuals acting alone to accomplish work. To be successful in the modern organization, it is therefore necessary to be an effective team player. You have to work smoothly with other members of the team to accomplish your goals. Teamwork is more important as people work their way up through the organization. Executives, such as CEOs, preach teamwork but tend to dominate meetings and make more decisions by themselves.^[2] (Ann Livermore might be an exception.)

The challenges a team member faces come to light when the true nature of a team is recognized. A team is a special type of group. Team members have complementary skills and are committed to a common purpose, a set of performance goals, and an approach to the task. In other words, the members of a team work together smoothly, and all pull in the same direction. A workplace team should be more like an effective athletic team than a group of individuals out for individual glory.^[3]

This chapter gives you the information, insights, and preliminary practice necessary to develop effective teamwork skills. Self-Assessment Quiz 6-1 will help you assess your current mental readiness to be a contributing team member.

FACE-TO-FACE VERSUS VIRTUAL TEAMS

All teams in the workplace have the common element of people working together cooperatively and members possessing a mix of skills. No matter what label the team carries, its broad purpose is to contribute to a *collaborative workplace* in which people help each other achieve constructive goals. The idea is for workers to collaborate (a high level of cooperation) rather than to compete with or prevent others from getting their work done.

As teams have become more common in the workplace, effort has been directed toward specifying the skills and knowledge a person needs to function effectively on a team. Self-Assessment Quiz 6-2 presents a representative listing of team skills as perceived by employers.

Although many different types of teams exist, a useful distinction is between the traditional teams in which workers share the same physical space and virtual teams whereby the team members rarely see each other in person.

Face-to-Face (Traditional) Teams

The best-known workplace team is a group of workers who take some of the responsibility for managing their own work. Face-to-face teams are used in a wide variety of activities,

team

A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

Team Player Attitudes

Directions: Describe how well you agree with each of the following statements, using the following scale: disagree strongly (DS); disagree (D); neutral (N); agree (A); agree strongly (AS). Circle the number in the appropriate column.

	DS	D	N	A	AS
1. I am at my best when working alone.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I have belonged to clubs and teams ever since I was a child.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It takes far too long to get work accomplished with a group.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I like the friendship of working in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would prefer to run a one-person business than to be a member of a large firm.	5	4	3	2	1
6. It's difficult to trust others in the group on key assignments.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Encouraging others comes to me naturally.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I like the give-and-take of ideas that is possible in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is fun for me to share responsibility with other group members.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Much more can be accomplished by a team than by the same number of people working alone.	1	2	3	4	5

Total Score _____

Scoring and Interpretation: Add the numbers you circled to obtain your total score.

41-50 You have strong positive attitudes toward being a team member and working cooperatively with other members.

30-40 You have moderately favorable attitudes toward being a team member and working cooperatively with other members.

10-29 You prefer working by yourself to being a team member. To work effectively in a company that emphasizes teamwork, you may need to develop more positive attitudes toward working jointly with others.

including producing motorcycles, telephone directories, a major component for a large computer, or launching a new product. Team members interact with other frequently rather than doing their work in isolation from one another.

Members of a traditional team typically work together on an ongoing, day-by-day basis, thus differentiating it from a task force or a committee. The team is often given total responsibility for or "ownership" of an entire product or service, such as producing a telephone directory. At other times, the team is given responsibility for a major chunk of a job, such as building an airplane engine (but not the entire airplane).

A major hurdle in forming a true team is to help employees overcome the attitude reflected in the statement "I'm not paid to think." Teams often rely less on supervisors and more on the workers assuming more responsibilities for managing their own activities.

As with all teams, mutual trust among members contributes to team effectiveness. A study conducted with business students, however, showed that if the members trust each other too much, they may not monitor (check up on) each other's work enough. As a result, group performance will suffer. This problem of too much trust surfaces primarily when the team members have individual assignments that do not bring them into frequent contact with each other.^[4] An example of an individual, or autonomous, project would be preparing a statistical report that would later be given to the group.

virtual team

A small group of people who conduct almost all of their collaborative work by electronic communication rather than face-to-face meetings.

Virtual Teams

Some teams conduct most of their work by sending electronic messages to each other rather than conducting face-to-face meetings. A virtual team is a small group of people who conduct almost all of their collaborative work by electronic communication rather than by face-to-face meetings. E-mail, including IM (instant messaging), is the usual medium

Team Skills

A variety of skills are required to be an effective member of various types of teams. Several business firms use the skill inventory here to help guide team members toward the competencies they need to become high-performing team members.

Directions: Review each team skill listed, and rate your skill level for each one using the following classifications:

- S** = strong (capable and comfortable with effectively implementing the skill)
- M** = moderate (demonstrated skill in the past)
- B** = basic (minimum ability in this area)
- N** = not applicable (not relevant to the type of work I do)

<i>Communication skills</i>	<i>Skill level (S, M, B, or N)</i>
Speak effectively	_____
Foster open communications	_____
Listen to others	_____
Deliver presentations	_____
Prepare written communication	_____
<i>Self-management skills</i>	
Act with integrity	_____
Demonstrate adaptability	_____
Engage in personal development	_____
Strive for results	_____
Display a commitment to work	_____
<i>Thought process skills</i>	
Innovate solutions to problems	_____
Use sound judgment	_____
Analyze issues	_____
Think "outside the box"	_____
<i>Organizational skills</i>	
Know the business	_____
Use technical/functional expertise	_____
Use financial/quantitative data	_____
<i>Strategic (broad business perspective) skills</i>	
Recognize "big picture" impact	_____
Promote corporate citizenship	_____
Focus on customer needs	_____
Commit to quality	_____
Manage profitability	_____

Interpretation: There is no scoring key for this questionnaire. Its purpose is to raise your awareness of the types of skills that are required to be a successful team member in business.

for sharing information and conducting meetings. *Groupware* is another widely used approach to conducting an electronic meeting. Using groupware, several people can edit a document at the same time, or in sequence. Desktop videoconferencing, such as a webcam, is another technological advance that facilitates the virtual team.

Most high-tech companies make some use of virtual teams and electronic meetings. Strategic alliances in which geographically dispersed companies work with each other are ideally suited for virtual teams. It is less expensive for the field technician in Iceland to hold an electronic meeting with her counterparts in South Africa, Mexico, and California than it is to bring them all together in one physical location. Virtual teams are sometimes

the answer to the challenge of hiring workers with essential skills who do not want to relocate. Because the members of a virtual team might be working in different countries, they are often considered to be multicultural teams.

With team members geographically dispersed, precise communications are all the more important for virtual teams. The virtual team members usually need a formal document outlining the objectives, job responsibilities, and team goals. Another communication problem takes place when the virtual team is composed of both in-house workers and those in remote locations. The office-bound members become jealous of the seemingly cushy setup enjoyed by the telecommuters. One solution to this problem is for every member of the team to be given a chance to prove that he or she can work off-site.^[5] Another consideration is that the work should be distributed fairly among office-bound workers and virtual team members. Last-minute assignments are often handed to the first in-house worker the manager sees.^[6]

Establishing trust is a major challenge in a virtual team because the team members have to rely on people they never see to carry out their fair share of the workload, and to exchange reliable information. Trust is also needed in terms of what information should be shared outside of the team. For example, if the team is behind schedule on a project, can each member be trusted not to inform outsiders about the problem? For example, one virtual team had an external communication norm that prohibited team members from conveying negative information to anyone outside the team.^[7]

Despite the efficiency of virtual teams, there are times when face-to-face (or at least telephone) interaction is necessary to deal with complex and emotional issues. Negotiating a new contract between management and a labor union, for example, is not well suited to an electronic meeting.

“ virtual teams need to know that their coworkers are ‘real people.’ It’s the personal information they learn from one another that will foster the social ties that allow collaboration to occur naturally.”

—Tammy Burch, CEO of Virtual Concepts International in Milford, Michigan.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEAMS AND TEAMWORK

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

synergy

A situation in which the group’s total output exceeds the sum of each individual’s contribution.

Groups have always been the building blocks of organizations. Yet groups and teams have recently grown in importance as the basic unit for organizing work. In an attempt to cope with numerous changes in the outside world, many organizations have granted teams increased independence and flexibility. Furthermore, teams are often required to work more closely with customers and suppliers.

The increased acceptance of teams suggests that group work offers many advantages. Nevertheless, it is useful to specify several of these advantages and also examine the potential problems of groups. Being aware of these potential pitfalls can often help a person avoid them. These same advantages and disadvantages also apply to group decision making, to be described in Chapter 7.

Advantages of Group Work and Teamwork

Group work and group decision making offer several advantages over individual effort. Because so much of what is accomplished in organizations is done by groups, it may appear that groups and teams have many advantages. However, the importance of this topic warrants mentioning a few of the advantages of groups, teams, and group decision making.

Synergy. If several knowledgeable people are brought into the decision-making process, a number of worthwhile possibilities may be uncovered. It is also possible to gain synergy, whereby the group’s total output exceeds the sum of each individual’s contribution. For example, it would be a rare person working alone who could build a racing car. At the same time, groups and teams are the building block of the larger organization.



Work Accomplishment and High Productivity. Without groups, including teams, an organization could not get its work accomplished. Clarence Otis, Jr., the CEO of Darden Restaurants (which includes the Olive Garden, Red Lobster, and Bahama Breeze), says that the thrust of his leadership is to build the team because the team accomplishes so much of the work.^[8]

A major justification for relying on teams in the workplace is that under the right circumstances, they can enhance productivity and profitability. The right circumstances include an atmosphere that promotes teamwork and financial bonuses for high-performing teams. A classic example is American steel maker Nucor Corp. The company is committed to the spirit of teamwork, and bonuses for teams of steelworkers average 170 percent to 180 percent. Since Nucor had implemented its team incentive plan in 1966, the company has been profitable each quarter through 2009 despite foreign competition. Also, the company has increased the dividend to shareholders for 37 consecutive years.^[9]

A broad perspective about the advantages of groups is that because of groups and teams, large organizations can be built that provide useful goods and services to the world. For example, a company such as Apple, Inc., or Johnson & Johnson is only possible because of group effort. Furthermore, the existence of large organizations, including business firms, colleges, universities, and hospitals, helps advance civilization.

Acceptance and Commitment. Group decision making is also helpful in gaining acceptance and commitment. The argument is that people who contribute to making a decision will feel some ownership about implementing the decision. Under these conditions, it becomes more difficult to object to a decision because your contribution is included in the decision. At times, managers will deliberately ask for input into a decision they have already made as a manipulative way of gaining acceptance for and commitment to the decision.

Avoidance of Major Errors. Team members often evaluate each other's thinking, so the team is likely to avoid major errors. An advertising specialist was developing an advertising campaign to attract seniors to live in a retirement community. The proposed ads had photographs of senior citizens engaged in playing shuffleboard, visiting the pharmacy, and sleeping in a hammock. Another team member on the project pointed out that many seniors perceive themselves to be energetic and youthful. Ads emphasizing advanced age might therefore backfire. A successful advertising campaign was then developed that featured seniors in more youthful activities, such as jogging and dancing.

Increased Job Satisfaction. Working in teams and groups also enhances the job satisfaction of members. Being a member of a work group makes it possible to satisfy more needs than working alone. Among these needs are affiliation, security, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment. (Chapter 11 provides more details about psychological needs.)

A major reason that groups and teams contribute to worker satisfaction is that many people find working in groups to be a natural way of life. In school, sports, and the community, they have been accustomed to working collaboratively and therefore feel more comfortable in group than in individual effort.

Disadvantages of Group Work and Teamwork

Group activity has some potential disadvantages for both individuals and the organization, as described in the following paragraphs. Some of these disadvantages serve as alerts for preventing problems.

Time Wasting. Teams and other groups often waste time because they talk too much and act too little. Committees appear to suffer from more inaction than teams. Abigail Johnson, president of Fidelity Employer Services Division, says that committees are not effective decision makers. "They have tended to be slow and overly risk averse. Even worse, I believe, they can drain an organization of talent, because the group can only be as good as the average."^[10]

Pressures toward Conformity. A major problem is that members face pressures to conform to group standards of performance and conduct, as just implied. Some teams might shun a person who is much more productive than his or her coworkers. Also, to be liked

by coworkers, as well as avoiding conflict, a group member will sometimes agree with the opinion of other group or team members. Group members will often use the same jargon whether or not it is precise. For example, workers at Microsoft refer to e-mail as "mail," thereby snubbing postal mail.

Conformity in dress and appearance is also apparent in many work groups. You might want to examine a photo of Google, Microsoft, or Apple employees and observe how much conformity in dress you find. Conformity in dress, however, is not much of a disadvantage except when a group member is dissatisfied because of the pressure to dress in the same manner as coworkers.

Self-Assessment Quiz 6-3 gives you an opportunity to think about your tendencies toward conformity.

Shirking of Individual Responsibility (Social Loafing). Shirking of individual responsibility is another problem frequently noted in groups. Unless work is assigned carefully to each team member, an undermotivated person can often squeeze by without contributing his or her fair share to a group effort. **Social loafing** is the psychological term for shirking individual responsibility in a group setting. The social loafer risks being ostracized (shunned) by the group but may be willing to pay the price rather than to work hard. Loafing of this type is sometimes found in groups such as committees and project teams. Have you ever encountered a social loafer on a group project at school?

Fostering of Conflict. At their worst, teams and other groups foster conflict on the job. People within the work group often bicker about such matters as doing a fair share of the undesirable tasks within the department. Cohesive work groups can also become xenophobic (fearful of outsiders). As a consequence, they may grow to dislike other groups and enter into conflict with them. A customer service group might put considerable effort into showing up a sales group because the latter makes promises to customers that the customer service group cannot keep. For example, a sales representative might promise that a customer can get a loaner if his or her equipment needs repair, although customer service has no such policy.

Groupthink. A well-publicized disadvantage of group decision making is **groupthink**, a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment in the interest of group solidarity. Simply put, groupthink is an extreme form of consensus. The group atmosphere values getting along more than getting things done. The group thinks as a unit, believes it is impervious to outside criticism, and begins to have illusions about its own invincibility. As a consequence, the group loses its powers of critical analysis.^[11] Groupthink appears to have contributed to several of the major financial scandals of the previous decade. Members of top management got together to vote themselves huge bonuses just before filing bankruptcy for their company. Several of the executives, including a few from Enron Corporation, were later sent to prison for their outrageous decisions.

Two conditions are important for overcoming the potential disadvantages of teams and groups.^[12] First, the members must strive to act like a team following some of the suggestions given in the upcoming pages. Second, the task given to the group should require collective effort instead of being a task that could better be performed by individuals. For example, an international business specialist would probably learn to conjugate verbs in a foreign language better by working alone than on a team. What is your opinion on this issue? Figure 6-1 presents more information about key factors associated with effective work teams and groups. The more of these factors that are present, the more likely it is that a given team or group will be productive.

Social loafing

The psychological term for shirking individual responsibility in a group setting.

groupthink

A deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment in the interest of group solidarity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

role

A tendency to behave, contribute, and relate to others in a particular way.

TEAM MEMBER ROLES

A major challenge in learning to become an effective team member is to choose the right roles to occupy. A role is a tendency to behave, contribute, and relate to others in a particular way. If you carry out positive roles, you will be perceived as a contributor to team effort. If you neglect carrying out these roles, you will be perceived as a poor contributor.

The Conformity Quiz

Directions: Circle the extent to which each of the following statements describes your behavior or attitude: agree strongly (AS); agree (A); neutral (N); disagree (D); disagree strongly (DS). You may have to respond in terms of any team or group experience you have had if you are not currently a member of a work team, a class project team, or a sports team. Consider that having someone who is familiar with your behavior and attitudes helps you respond accurately.

	AS	A	N	D	DS
1. I rarely question the decision reached by the team.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Whatever the group wants is fine with me.	5	4	3	2	1
3. My clothing distinguishes me from the other members of the team.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I consider myself to be one of the gang.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I rarely express disagreement during a group discussion.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I routinely have lunch with other members of the team.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My teammates sometimes complain that I think too independently.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My preference is to piggyback on the ideas of others rather than contributing the ideas of my own.	5	4	3	2	1
9. When I notice that the other members of the team make the same error in speech, I will copy them rather than sound different.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I am often the first person to get up at the scheduled ending of the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I do almost all of my creative thinking for the team task when I'm with the team.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I'm particularly careful not to criticize an idea submitted by the team leader.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The number of hours I work per week corresponds closely to the number worked by my teammates.	5	4	3	2	1
14. When I think it is necessary, I bring information to the group conflicting with the path we are following.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I would rather keep my mouth closed than point out weaknesses in a teammate's ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I've been called a maverick on more than one occasion by teammates.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I encourage team members to express doubts about proposed solutions to problems.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I invite criticism of my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
19. When the team laughs at a comment, I laugh too even if I don't think the comment was funny.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Most of my social life centers on activities with my teammates.	5	4	3	2	1

Interpretation: Calculate your score by adding the numbers you have circled, and use the following guide:

80-100 You are a high-conforming individual who readily goes along with the team without preserving your individuality. In an effort to be liked, you might be overcompromising your thinking.

40-79 You have probably achieved the right balance between following group norms (standards of conduct) and expressing your individuality. With actions and attitudes like this, you are on your way to becoming a good team player, yet also in a position to attain individual recognition.

20-29 You are highly individualistic, perhaps to the point of not working smoothly in a team setting. Be careful that you are not going out of your way to be a nonconformist, thereby interfering with your ability to be an effective team player.

Skill development: Examine your responses to the 20 questions because the response might give you a clue to needed development, often just by making a subtle change within your control. Here are two examples: If you answered agree strongly or agree to question 8, you might work toward contributing ideas of your own. If you answered disagree or disagree strongly to question 14, you might work toward helping the team think more critically about the path it is following.

FIGURE 6-1 Key Characteristics of Effective Teams and Work Groups

- The group has collective efficacy, or a belief that it can handle the assigned task.
- The team has clear-cut goals linked to organizational goals so that group members feel connected to the entire organization. However, the group does not have so many goals that confusion results. Goals include having a mission that helps explain what the group is attempting to accomplish.
- Group members are empowered so that they learn to think for themselves rather than expecting a supervisor to solve all the difficult problems. At the same time, the group believes it has the authority to solve a variety of problems without first obtaining approval from management.
- Group members are assigned work they perceive to be challenging, exciting, and rewarding. As a consequence, the work is self-rewarding.
- Members depend on one another to accomplish tasks, and work toward a common goal. At the same time, the group believes in itself and that it can accomplish an independent task.
- Diversity exists within the group, including differences in education, experience, and cultural background. Different backgrounds lead to more creative problem solving. Also, the differences prompt more discussion and analysis.
- Members receive extensive training in technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills.
- Members receive part of their pay related to team or group incentives rather than strictly based on individual performance.
- Group size is generally about 6 people, rather than 10 or more.
- Team members have good intelligence and personality factors, such as conscientiousness and pride that contribute to good performance.
- There is honest and open communication among group members and with other groups in the organization.
- Members have the philosophy of working as a team—6 brains, not just 12 hands.
- Members are familiar with their jobs, coworkers, and the work environment. This experience adds to their expertise. The beneficial effects of experience may diminish after awhile because the team needs fresh ideas and approaches.
- The team has emotional intelligence in the sense that it builds relationships both inside and outside the team. Included in emotional intelligence are norms that establish mutual trust among members, a feeling of group identity, and group efficacy.
- Stronger performing group members assist weaker performing group members accomplish their task, particularly when the performance of the “weakest link” in the group is key for group performance.

Sources: Alexander D. Stajkovic, Dongseop Lee, and Anthony J. Nyberg, “Collective Efficacy, Group Potency, and Group Performance: Meta-Analysis of their Relationships, and Test of a Mediation Model,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, May 2009, p. 815; Stanley M. Gulley, Kara A. Incalcaterra, Aparna Joshi, and J. Matthew Beaublien, “A Meta-Analysis of Team Efficacy, Potency, and Performance: Interdependence and Level of Analysis as Moderators of Observed Relationships,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, October 2002, pp. 819–832; Stephen R. Covey, “Secrets Behind Great Teams,” *USA Weekend*, July 11–13, 2008, p. 7; Katherine W. Phillips, Katie A. Liljenquist, and Margaret A. Neale, “Is the Pain Worth the Gain? The Advantages and Liabilities of Agreeing With Socially Distinct Newcomers,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, March 2009, pp. 336–350; Shawn L. Berman, Vanessa Urch Druskat, and Steven B. Wolff, “Building the Emotional Intelligence of Groups,” *Harvard Business Review*, March 2001, pp. 80–90; Claus W. Langred, “Too Much of a Good Thing? Negative Effects of High Trust and Individual Autonomy in Self-Managing Work Teams,” *Academy of Management Journal*, June 2004, pp. 385–389; Bernhard Weber and Guido Hertel, “Motivation Gains of Inferior Group Members: A Meta-Analytical Review,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, No. 6, 2007, pp. 973–993.

Self-Assessment Quiz 6-4 will help you evaluate your present inclinations toward occupying effective roles as a team member. In this section, we describe a number of the most frequently observed positive roles played by team members.^[13] We will also mention a group of negative roles. The description will be followed by an activity in which the roles can be practiced.

Team Player Roles

Directions: For each of the following statements about team activity, check *mostly agree* or *mostly disagree*. If you have not experienced such a situation, imagine how you would act or think if placed in that situation. In responding to the statements, assume that you are taking the questionnaire with the intent of learning something about yourself.

	<i>Mostly agree</i>	<i>Mostly disagree</i>
1. It is rare that I ever miss a team meeting.	_____	_____
2. I regularly compliment team members when they do something exceptional.	_____	_____
3. Whenever I can, I avoid being the note taker at a team meeting.	_____	_____
4. From time to time, other team members come to me for advice on technical matters.	_____	_____
5. I like to hide some information from other team members so that I can be in control.	_____	_____
6. I welcome new team members coming to me for advice and learning the ropes.	_____	_____
7. My priorities come first, which leaves me with very little time to help other team members.	_____	_____
8. During a team meeting, it is not unusual for several other people at a time to look toward me for my opinion.	_____	_____
9. If I think the team is moving in an unethical direction, I will say so explicitly.	_____	_____
10. Rarely will I criticize the progress of the team even if I think such criticism is deserved.	_____	_____
11. It is typical for me to summarize the progress in a team meeting, even if not asked.	_____	_____
12. To conserve time, I attempt to minimize contact with my teammates outside our meetings.	_____	_____
13. I intensely dislike going along with a consensus decision if the decision runs contrary to my thoughts on the issue.	_____	_____
14. I rarely remind teammates of our mission statement as we go about our work.	_____	_____
15. Once I have made up my mind on an issue facing the team, I am unlikely to be persuaded in another direction.	_____	_____
16. I am willing to accept negative feedback from team members.	_____	_____
17. Just to get a new member of the team involved, I will ask his or her opinion.	_____	_____
18. Even if the team has decided on a course of action, I am not hesitant to bring in new information that supports another position.	_____	_____
19. Quite often I talk negatively about one team member to another.	_____	_____
20. My teammates are almost a family to me because I am truly concerned about their welfare.	_____	_____
21. When it seems appropriate, I joke and kid with teammates.	_____	_____
22. My contribution to team tasks is as important to me as my individual work.	_____	_____
23. From time to time, I have pointed out to the team how we can all improve in reaching our goals.	_____	_____
24. I will fight to the last when the team does not support my viewpoint and wants to move toward consensus.	_____	_____
25. I will confront the team if I believe that the members are thinking too much alike.	_____	_____

Total Score _____

(Continued)

Scoring and Interpretation: Give yourself one point (+1) for each statement you gave in agreement with the keyed answer. The keyed answer indicates carrying out a positive, as opposed to a negative, role.

Question number	Positive role answer	Question number	Positive role answer	Question number	Positive role answer
1.	Mostly agree	10.	Mostly disagree	19.	Mostly disagree
2.	Mostly agree	11.	Mostly agree	20.	Mostly agree
3.	Mostly disagree	12.	Mostly disagree	21.	Mostly agree
4.	Mostly agree	13.	Mostly disagree	22.	Mostly agree
5.	Mostly disagree	14.	Mostly disagree	23.	Mostly agree
6.	Mostly agree	15.	Mostly disagree	24.	Mostly disagree
7.	Mostly disagree	16.	Mostly agree	25.	Mostly agree
8.	Mostly agree	17.	Mostly agree		
9.	Mostly agree	18.	Mostly agree		

20-25 You carry out a well-above-average number of positive team roles. Behavior of this type contributes substantially to being an effective team player. Study the information in this chapter to build upon your already laudable sensitivity to occupying various positive roles within the team.

10-19 You carry out an average number of positive team roles. Study carefully the roles described in this chapter to search for ways to carry out a greater number of positive roles.

0-9 You carry out a substantially above average number of negative team roles. If becoming an effective team player is important to you, you will have to diligently search for ways to play positive team roles. Study the information in this chapter carefully.

According to the role theory developed by R. Meredith Belbin and his group of researchers, there are nine frequent roles occupied by team members. All of these roles are influenced to some extent by an individual's personality.

- 1. Creative problem solver.** The creative problem solver is imaginative, and unorthodox. Such a person solves difficult problems. A potential weakness of this role is that the person tends to ignore fine details and becomes too immersed in the problem to communicate effectively.
- 2. Resource investigator.** The resource investigator is extraverted, enthusiastic, and communicates freely with other team members. He or she will explore opportunities and develop valuable contacts. A potential weakness of this role is that the person can be overly optimistic and may lose interest after the initial enthusiasm wanes.
- 3. Coordinator.** The coordinator is mature, confident, and a natural team leader. He or she clarifies goals, promotes decision making, and delegates effectively. A downside to occupying this role is that the person might be seen as manipulative and controlling. Some coordinators delegate too much by asking others to do some of the work they (the coordinators) should be doing.
- 4. Shaper.** The shaper is challenging, dynamic, and thrives under pressure. He or she will use determination and courage to overcome obstacles. A potential weakness of the shaper is that he or she can be easily provoked and may ignore the feelings of others.
- 5. Monitor-evaluator.** The monitor-evaluator is even tempered, engages in strategic (big picture and long-term) thinking, and makes accurate judgments. He or she sees all the options and judges accurately. A potential weakness of this role occupant is that he or she might lack the drive and the ability to inspire others.
- 6. Team worker.** The team worker is cooperative, focuses on relationships, and is sensitive and diplomatic. He or she is a good listener who builds relationships, dislikes confrontation, and averts friction. A potential weakness is that the team worker can be indecisive in a crunch situation or crisis.
- 7. Implementer.** The implementer is disciplined, reliable, conservative, and efficient. He or she will act quickly on ideas, and convert them into practical actions. A potential weakness is that the implementer can be inflexible and slow to see new opportunities.

8. **Completer-Finisher.** The completer-finisher is conscientious and eager to get the job done. He or she has a good eye for detail, and is effective at searching out errors. He or she can be counted on for finishing a project and delivering on time. A potential weakness is that the completer-finisher can be a worrier and reluctant to delegate.
9. **Specialist.** The specialist is a single-minded self-starter. He or she is dedicated and provides knowledge and skill in rare supply. A potential weakness of the specialist is that he or she can be stuck in a niche with little interest in other knowledge and may dwell on technicalities.

The weaknesses in the first nine roles point to problems the team leader or manager can expect to emerge, and therefore an allowance should be made. Belbin refers to these potential problems as *allowable weaknesses* because an allowance should be made for them. To illustrate, if a team worker has a tendency to be indecisive in a crisis, the team should not have high expectations of the team worker when faced with a crisis. Team workers will be the most satisfied if the crisis is predicted and decisions involving them are made before the pressure mounts.^[14]

Another perspective on team roles is that team members will sometimes engage in *self-oriented roles*. Members will sometimes focus on their own needs rather than those of the group. The individual might be overly aggressive because of a personal need, such as wanting a bigger budget for his or her project. The individual might hunger for recognition or power. Similarly the person might attempt to dominate the meeting, block others from contributing, or serve as a distraction. One of the ploys used by distracters recently is to engage in cell phone conversations during a meeting, blaming it on "those people who keep calling me."

The many roles just presented overlap somewhat. For example, the implementer might engage in specialist activities. Do not be concerned about the overlap. Instead, pick and choose from the many roles as the situation dictates—whether or not overlap exists. Skill-Building Exercise 6-1 gives you an opportunity to observe these roles in action. The behavior associated with the roles just described is more important than remembering the labels. For example, remembering to be creative and imaginative is more important than remembering the specific label "creative problem solver."

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERPERSONAL ASPECTS OF TEAM PLAY

The purpose of this and the following section is to help you enhance your effectiveness as a team player by describing the skills, actions, and attitudes required to be an effective team player. You can regard these behaviors (the collective term for skills, actions, and attitudes) as goals for personal improvement. Identify the actions and attitudes for which you need the most improvement, and proceed accordingly with self-development. Apply the model for skill development presented in Chapter 1.

One convenient method for classifying team activities in the pursuit of goals is to categorize them as people-related or task-related. Remember, however, that the categorization of people- versus task-related activities is not entirely accurate. For example, if you are challenging your teammates with a difficult goal, are you focusing more on the people (offering them a motivational challenge) or the task (achieving the goal)? We begin first with people-related actions and attitudes, (see also Figure 6-2) followed in the next section by task-related actions and attitudes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

BACK TO THE OPENING CASE

A key aspect of Ann Livermore being a good team player was to not care about experiencing a decrease in her power and authority because her company acquired a large outsourcing firm. She said that her main concern was the prosperity of her employer, H-P. In crediting Livermore for her team spirit, recognize that Livermore already has had an outstanding career and was once

a candidate to become CEO of H-P. She still has enough responsibility left to satisfy her needs for power and influence. A person still pursuing loftier positions might not have such a strong team spirit.



Team Member Roles

A team of approximately six people is formed to conduct a 20-minute meeting on a significant topic of their choosing. The possible scenarios follow:

Scenario A: Management Team. A group of managers are pondering whether to lay off one-third of the workforce in order to increase profits. The company has had a tradition of caring for employees and regarding them as the company's most precious asset. However, the CEO has said privately that times have changed in our competitive world, and the company must do whatever possible to enhance profits. The group wants to think through the advisability of laying off one-third of the workforce, as well as explore other alternatives.

Scenario B: Group of Sports Fans. A group of fans have volunteered to find a new team name to replace "Redskins" for the local basketball team. One person among the group of volunteers believes that the name "Redskins" should be retained because it is a compliment, rather than an insult to Native Americans. The other members of the group believe that a name change is in order, but they lack any good ideas for replacing a mascot team name that has endured for over 50 years.

Scenario C: Community Group. A community group is attempting to launch an initiative to help battered adults and children. Opinions differ strongly as to what initiative would be truly helpful to battered adults and children. Among the alternatives are establishing a shelter for battered people, giving workshops on preventing violence, and providing self-defense training. Each group member with an idea strongly believes that he or she has come up with a workable possibility for helping with the problem of battered people.

While the team members are conducting their heated discussion, other class members make notes on which team members carry out which roles. Students should watch for the different roles as developed by Belbin and his associates, as well as the self-oriented roles. For example, students in the first row might look for

examples of the plant. Use the role worksheet that follows to help make your observations. Summarize the comment that is indicative of the role. An example would be noting in the shaper category: "Linda said naming the team the 'Washington Rainbows' seems like too much of an attempt to be politically correct."

- Creative Problem Solver _____
- Resource Investigator _____
- Coordinator _____
- Shaper _____
- Monitor-Evaluator _____
- Team Worker _____
- Implementer _____
- Completer-Finisher _____
- Specialist _____
- Self-Oriented Roles _____

Understanding team member roles will contribute to working effectively as a member of a team. However, a foundation contributor to effective team play is recognizing individual differences and having good communication skills. The same two factors are fundamental for effectiveness in any setting involving interaction between and among people. Here is an example of how recognizing individual differences and having effective communication skills can help in a team setting: Max and Beth are teammates, and Max notices that Beth is shy and somewhat sullen. (He observes individual differences.) Max gives Beth a playful fist in the air, and says, "Come on Beth, we need your contribution in the 10 o'clock meeting. You have one of the sharpest minds on the team, and you're hiding it from us." With such warm encouragement, Beth then has the courage to contribute more to the morning meeting.

Trust Team Members

The cornerstone attitude of an outstanding team player is to trust team members, including the leader. Working on a team is akin to a small-business partnership. If you do not believe that the other team members have your best interests at heart, it will be difficult for you to share opinions and ideas. You will fear that others will make negative statements behind your back.

Trusting team members also includes believing that their ideas are technically sound and rational until proven otherwise. Another manifestation of trust is taking risks with others. You can take a risk by trying out one of their unproved ideas. You can also take a risk by submitting an unproved idea and not worrying about being ridiculed.

FIGURE 6-2 Interpersonal Aspects of Team Play

1. Trust team members.
2. Display a high level of cooperation and collaboration.
3. Recognize the interests and achievements of others.
4. Give and receive helpful criticism.
5. Share the glory.
6. Take care not to rain on another person's parade.

One of the goals of offsite training is to help team members trust each other. As is familiar to most readers, such trust builders include falling into each other's arms, rappelling up a wall, racing down rapids in a raft, and dangling from cables over gorges.^[15]

Display a High Level of Cooperation and Collaboration

Cooperation and collaboration are synonymous with teamwork. If you display a willingness to help others by working cooperatively with them, you will be regarded as a team player. If you do not cooperate with other team members, the team structure breaks down. Collaboration at a team level refers to working jointly with others to solve mutual problems. Although working with another person on a given problem may take longer than working through a problem alone, the long-term payoff is important. You have established a climate favorable to working on joint problems where collective action is necessary. Sharing success stories with each other about what worked in the past is another useful approach to collaboration.^[16]

Achieving a cooperative team spirit is often a question of making the first move. Instead of grumbling about poor teamwork, take the initiative and launch a cooperative spirit in your group. Target the most individualistic, least cooperative member of the group. Ask the person for his or her input on an idea you are formulating. Thank the person, and then state that you would be privileged to return the favor.

Another way of attaining good cooperation is to minimize confrontations. If you disagree with the opinion of another team member, patiently explain the reasons for your differences and look for a workable way to integrate both your ideas. A teammate might suggest, for example, that the team stay until midnight to get a project completed today. You have plans for the evening and are angered by the suggestion. Instead of lashing out at your teammate, you might say, "I agree we need to put in extra time and effort to get the job done. But why can't we spread out this extra effort over a few days? In this way those of us who cannot work until midnight this evening can still contribute."

A side advantage of cooperation within the group is that the part of the brain associated with pleasure is activated when people cooperate. According to team building specialist Anna Maravelas, "It is intrinsically rewarding for human beings to pull together."^[17]

Skill-Building Exercise 6-2 is a widely used technique for demonstrating the importance of cooperation and collaboration.

Recognize the Interests and Achievements of Others

A fundamental tactic for establishing yourself as a solid team player is to actively recognize the interests and achievements of others. Let others know you care about their interests. After you make a suggestion during a team meeting, ask: "Would my suggestion create any problems for anybody else?" or "How do my ideas fit into what you have planned?"

Recognizing the achievements of others is more straightforward than recognizing interests. Be prepared to compliment any tangible achievement. Give realistic compliments by making the compliment commensurate with the achievement. To do otherwise is to

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 6-2

The Scavenger Hunt

The purpose of this teamwork exercise is to demonstrate the importance of cooperation and collaboration in accomplishing a task under pressure. The class is divided into teams of about five students. How much time you can devote to the task depends upon your particular class schedule. The instructor will supply each team with a list of items to find within a prescribed period of time—usually about 35 minutes. Given the time constraints, the group will usually have to conduct the hunt on campus. Following is a representative list of items to find in an on-campus scavenger hunt:

- A piece of chalk
- A tie
- A brick
- A cap from a beer bottle
- A pocket knife
- A flash drive

When the group returns within 30 minutes, hold a public discussion about what you learned about teamwork and what insights you acquired.

compromise your sincerity. For example, do not call someone a genius just because he or she showed you how to compute an exchange rate from one currency to another. Instead you might say, "Thank you. I am very impressed by your knowledge of exchange rates."

A technique has been developed to enable the entire team to recognize the interests and achievements of others. Playing the anonymous praise game, each team member lists what he or she admires about a specific coworker. The team leader collects the responses and sends each team member the comments made about him or her. Using this technique, team members see a compilation of praise based on how coworkers perceive them. The anonymous praise game helps overcome the hesitancy some people have to praise another person face-to-face.^[18]

Give and Receive Helpful Criticism

The outstanding team player offers constructive criticism when needed, but does so diplomatically. To do otherwise is to let down the team. A high-performance team demands sincere and tactful criticism among members. No matter how diplomatic you are, keep your ratio of criticism to praise small. Keep two time-tested principles in mind. First, attempt to criticize the person's work, not the person. It is better to say, "The conclusion is missing from your analysis" than "You left out the conclusion." (The latter statement hurts because it sounds like your teammate did something wrong.)

Another key guideline for criticism is to ask a question rather than to make a declarative statement. By answering a question, the person being criticized is involved in improving his or her work. In the example at hand, it would be effective to ask, "Do you think your report would have a greater impact if it contained a conclusion?" In this way, the person being criticized contributes a judgment about the conclusion. The person has a chance to say, "Yes, I will prepare a conclusion."

Criticism works both ways, so the effective team player is willing to accept helpful criticism, such as "You are speaking too fast for several of our team members for whom English is their second language." Becky Blalock, the vice president and chief information officer (CIO) of the electric utility the Southern Company, regards being open to feedback as one of the core principles of teamwork.^[19]

Share the Glory

An effective team player shares praise and other rewards for accomplishment even if he or she is the most deserving. Shared praise is usually merited to some extent because teammates have probably made at least some contribution to the achievement that received praise. For example, if a team member comes up with a powerful suggestion for cutting costs, it is likely that somebody else in the group sparked his or her thinking. Effective examples of sharing glory are easy to find. Think back to watching athletes and other entertainers who win a title or an award. Many of them are gracious enough to share the glory. It has become almost standard practice for an award-winning coach or player to say, "I never would have accomplished what I did if I hadn't played with such a great group of people."

Take Care Not to Rain on Another Person's Parade

As teamwork specialist Pamela Lovell observes, we all have achievements and accomplishments that are sources of pride. Belittling the achievements of others for no legitimate reason brings about tension and anger. Suppress your feelings of petty jealousy.^[20] An example would be saying to someone who is proudly describing an accomplishment, "Don't take too much credit. It looks to me like you were at the right place at the right time." If you support teammates by acknowledging their accomplishments, you are more likely to receive their support when needed.

GUIDELINES FOR THE TASK ASPECTS OF TEAM PLAY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5

The task aspects of team play also make a key contribution to becoming an effective team player. Here we describe seven major task-related tactics (see Figure 6-3). As mentioned earlier, a task aspect usually has interpersonal consequences.

FIGURE 6-3 Task Aspects of Team Play

1. Provide technical expertise (or knowledge of the task).
2. Assume responsibility for problems.
3. See the big picture.
4. Believe in consensus.
5. Focus on deadlines.
6. Help team members do their jobs better.
7. Be a good organizational citizen.

provide Technical Expertise (Or Knowledge of the Task)

Most people are selected for a work team primarily because of their technical expertise. *Technical* refers to the intimate details of any task, not just tasks in engineering, physical science, and information technology. The sales promotion specialist on a product development team has technical expertise about sales promotion, whether or not sales promotion requires knowledge of engineering or computers.

As team consultant Glenn Parker observes, to use your technical expertise to outstanding advantage you must have the willingness to share that expertise.^[21] Some experts perceive their esoteric knowledge as a source of power. As a consequence, they are hesitant to let others share their knowledge for fear of relinquishing power. It is also necessary for the technical expert to be able to communicate with team members in other disciplines who lack the same technical background. The technical person who cannot explain the potential value of his or her contribution may fail to receive much attention.

An analysis of 72 studies based on more than 17,000 individuals in a variety of work settings lends credibility to the belief that information sharing is beneficial to teams. A major finding of the analysis is that team performance is enhanced when team members share information not commonly shared by all team members. A somewhat distressing side finding of the study is that many teams do not share information when the sharing is most needed. An example of information being most needed is when the other team members are not aware of the useful information possessed by the other members.^[22]

Assume Responsibility for Problems

The outstanding team player assumes responsibilities for problems. If a problem is not yet assigned to anybody, he or she says, "I'll do it." One team member might note that the true progress on the team's effort is blocked until the team benchmarks (compares itself) with other successful teams. The effective team player might say, "You are right, we need to benchmark. If it's okay with everybody else, I'll get started on the benchmarking project tomorrow. It will be my responsibility." Taking responsibility must be combined with dependability. The person who takes responsibility for a task must produce, time after time.

See the Big Picture

Effective team players need to think conceptually, or see the big picture. A trap in team effort is that discussion can get bogged down in small details and the team might lose sight of what it is trying to accomplish. The team player (including the team leader) who can help the group focus on its broader purpose plays a vital role. The following case history illustrates what it means to see the big picture.

A group of retail sales associates and customer service representatives were sent to a one-day seminar about customer service training. The group was sent to training because customer service ratings at their store were



below the level store executives thought was acceptable. During the lunch breaks, the conversation quickly turned to the fact that the coffee was not as hot as desired, the snacks were mediocre, the restrooms were too far from the meeting room, and the presenter had a phony smile and told goofy jokes. Next came a few complaints about a couple of the PowerPoint slides having too much detail.

Alyssa, an experienced sales associate, stepped in with a comment. She noted, "I think all of you have valid complaints, but your points are minor. We are here to learn how to improve customer service. If we want our store to survive, and earn bigger bonuses, we have to learn what we can to help us do our jobs better. Whether or not you like our trainer's smile or jokes, he is trying to be helpful." The group returned after lunch with a more determined effort to focus on the purpose of the seminar—picking up ideas to improve customer service.

Consensus

General acceptance by the group of a decision.

Believe in Consensus

A major task-related attitude for outstanding team play is to believe that consensus has merit. Consensus is general acceptance of a decision by the group. Every member may not be thrilled about the decision, yet they are unopposed and are willing to support the decision. Believing that consensus is valuable enables you to participate fully in team decisions without thinking that you have sacrificed your beliefs or the right to think independently. To believe in consensus is to believe that the democratic process has relevance for organizations and that ideal solutions are not always possible.

Focus on Deadlines

A notable source of individual differences among work group members is how much importance they attach to deadlines. Some work group members may regard deadlines as a moral contract, to be missed only in case of emergency. Others may view deadlines as an arbitrary date imposed by someone external to the group. Other work group members may perceive deadlines as moderately important. Differences in perception about the importance of deadlines influence the group's ability to meet deadlines.^[23]

Keeping the group focused on the deadline is a valuable task behavior because meeting deadlines is vital to team success. Discussing the importance of the deadlines is helpful because of the varying attitudes about deadlines that are likely to be found among group members.

Help Team Members Do Their Jobs Better

Your stature as a team player will increase if you take the initiative to help coworkers make needed work improvements. Helping other team members with their work assignments is a high-level form of cooperation. Make the suggestions in a constructive spirit rather than displaying an air of superiority. Identify a problem that a coworker is having, and then suggest alternatives he or she might be interested in exploring. Avoid saying to team members that they "should" do something, because many people become defensive when told what they should do. The term *should* is usually perceived as a moral judgment given to one person by another, such as being told that you should save money, should learn a second language, or should improve your math skills.

Be a Good Organizational Citizen

A comprehensive way of carrying out the task aspects of team play (as well as relationship aspects) is to help out beyond the requirements of your job description. As discussed in Chapter 2, such extra-role activity is referred to as organizational citizenship behavior—working for the good of the organization even without the promise of a specific reward. As a result of many workers being good organizational citizens, the organization functions more effectively in such ways as improved product quantity and quality.^[24] Good citizenship on the job encompasses many specific behaviors, including helping a coworker with a job task and refraining from complaints or petty grievances. A good organizational citizen would carry out such specific acts as picking up litter in the company parking lot, and turning out lights when they are not in use. He or she would also bring a reference

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 6-3

Habitat for Homeless People

Organize the class into teams of about six people. Each team takes on the assignment of formulating plans for building temporary shelters for homeless people. The task will take about one hour and can be done inside or outside the class. The dwellings you plan to build, for example, might be two-room cottages with electricity and indoor plumbing.

During the time allotted to the task, formulate plans for going ahead with Habitat for Homeless People. Consider dividing up work by assigning certain roles to each team member. Sketch out tentative answers to the following questions:

1. How will you obtain funding for your venture?
2. Which homeless people will you help?
3. Where will your shelters be located?
4. Who will do the actual construction?

After your plan is completed, evaluate the quality of the teamwork that took place within the group. Specify which teamwork skills

were evident and which ones did not surface. Search the chapter for techniques you might use to improve teamwork. The skills used to accomplish the habitat task could relate to the team skills presented in Self-Assessment Quiz 6-2, the interpersonal aspects of team play, the task aspects of team play, or some team skill not mentioned in this chapter. Here is a sampling of the many different skills that might be relevant in this exercise:

- Speaks effectively
- Listens to others
- Innovates solutions to problems
- Thinks outside the box
- Displays a high level of cooperation and collaboration
- Provides knowledge of the task
- Sees the big picture
- Focuses on deadlines

The office that could help a coworker solve a job problem. Most of the other team player tactics described here are related to organizational citizenship behavior.

Two experiments, one with business students and one with managers, suggested that organizational citizenship behavior is even more important when people depend on each other to accomplish a task.^[25] An example is filling an order with components from different departments. Given that most tasks on a team are interdependent, organizational citizenship behavior is quite important for effective teamwork.

A recent synthesis of studies about the type of team processes described in this chapter supports the relevance of such actions by team members. (A team process is essentially an action taken by one or more team members.) A group of researchers examined the results of a variety of team member processes in 147 different samples of workers. The major conclusion reached was that teamwork processes are positively associated with both team member performance and satisfaction.^[26] You can therefore have some assurance that if you engage in the activities described in this chapter, your efforts will help increase performance and satisfaction.

Skill-Building Exercise 6-3 will help you integrate the many suggestions presented here for developing teamwork skills.

Self-Assessment Quiz 6-1 gave you an opportunity to think through the extent to which you really enjoy, or are interested, in teamwork. Being part of a close-knit team is important for many types of work, but there is always room for some people who prefer to work alone doing analytical or creative work. For example, at Microsoft Corp. the office layout gives space to people who want to work alone and not be distracted by other people. Self-Assessment Quiz 6-2 follows up your interests and attitudes about teamwork with an opportunity to review your skills. Interest and skills are not the same. A given individual who likes the idea of skydiving might lack the eye-hand coordination to pull the cord under pressure, and therefore would be a disaster as a skydiver.

If you have the attitudes for teamwork, another subtle factor about teamwork can influence your effectiveness. As measured in Self-Assessment Quiz 6-3, your level of conformity can influence your effectiveness. Too much or too little conformity can detract from your effectiveness. Self-Assessment Quiz 6-4 takes you even further into the intricacies of teamwork by measuring your tendency to play positive team roles. With few exceptions, a person needs to focus on positive team roles to be a successful team member.

Concept Review and Reinforcement

Key Terms

team 117
virtual team 118
synergy 120

social loafing 122
groupthink 122

role 122
consensus 132

Summary

To be successful in the modern organization, it is necessary to be an effective team player. Team members have complementary skills and are committed to a common purpose. All teams have some elements in common. Teams can be broadly classified into face-to-face versus virtual types. A virtual team does most of its work electronically instead of in face-to-face meetings.

Groups and teams offer such advantages as (1) gaining synergy, (2) work accomplishment and high productivity, (3) gaining increased acceptance of and commitment to decisions, (4) avoidance of major errors, and (5) increased job satisfaction.

Groups and teams also have disadvantages, such as (1) time wasting, (2) pressures toward conformity, (3) shirking of individual responsibility, (4) fostering of conflict, and (5) groupthink. The latter refers to making bad decisions as a by-product of strong consensus. Key characteristics of effective work groups are outlined in Figure 6-1.

An important part of being an effective team player is to choose effective roles. The roles studied here are: creative problem solver, resource investigator, coordinator,

shaper, monitor-evaluator, team worker, implementer, completer-finisher, and specialist. Self-oriented roles are less effective and detract from group productivity. Understanding roles does not supplant the need for recognizing individual differences and communicating well.

Guidelines for effectively contributing to the interpersonal aspects of team play include (1) trusting team members, (2) displaying a high level of cooperation and collaboration, (3) recognizing the interests and achievements of others, (4) giving and receiving helpful criticism, (5) sharing the glory, and (6) taking care not to rain on another person's parade.

Guidelines for effectively contributing to the task aspects of team play include (1) providing technical expertise, (2) assuming responsibility for problems, (3) seeing the big picture, (4) believing in consensus, (5) focusing on deadlines, and (6) helping team members do their jobs better.

A synthesis of research studies demonstrates that the types of teamwork processes described here are positively associated with both team member performance and satisfaction.

Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What do executives really mean when they say that "business is a team sport"?
2. From your perspective, what would be the satisfactions and frustrations of being a member of a virtual team?
3. How do team members know when they have achieved synergy?
4. What should the other team members do when they uncover a social loafer?

5. How can the *monitor-evaluator* role backfire for a person?
6. Assume that you are a team member. What percentage of your pay would you be willing to have based on a group reward? Explain your reasoning.
7. Many retail companies, banks, and medical offices require customer-contact employees to wear the same uniform. In what ways might these uniforms enhance teamwork?
8. A number of companies have sent employees to a team-building exercise in which they prepare a gourmet meal. Why would preparing a gourmet meal help build teamwork?
9. The “little picture” in studying this chapter is learning details about teamwork skills. What is the “big picture”?
10. How can a person achieve individual recognition yet still be a team player?

<http://www.timeanalyzer.com/lib/teamroles.htm>
(Belbin's team roles to improve team performance.)

http://www.quintcareers.com/team_player_quiz.html

(Take the quiz, “Are You a Team Player: A Quintessential Careers Quiz.”)

Internet Skill Builder: Becoming a Better Team Player

The purpose of this exercise duplicates the major purpose of the chapter—finding practical suggestions

for improving your teamwork skills. Visit several Web sites that deal with enhancing teamwork skills from the standpoint of the individual, not the manager. An example of such a Web site is www.confidencecenter.com. Write down at least three concrete suggestions you find, and compare these suggestions to those made in this chapter. If the opportunity arises, practice one of these skills in the next 10 days and observe the results.

Developing Your Human Relations Skills

Interpersonal Relations: Case Study

Leah Puts on Her Team Player Face

Leah was happy to find a position as a scanning technician at a business process outsourcing company, Expert Resource, Inc. A major part of the Expert's business was converting paperwork related to human resource management into digital form. Clients would mail their forms, such as medical claims, to Expert. Scanning technicians would then insert the claim forms into large scanning machines to make the conversion to digital. Clients would then have digital instead of paper documents for health claims and other human resource records.

The scanning technicians had to interact with other employees in several ways. Many of the claims received contained illegible identifying information, so they had to be sent to a security department that attempted to obtain the proper identification for the forms. The scanning technicians were expected to help level the workload among the technicians. For example, if one of the technicians was overwhelmed, and another was caught up, the latter was supposed to help out the former. Also, the company frequently held small celebrations in the office. A typical celebration would be to hold a brunch in honor of a new employee joining the company.

Leah believed that if she performed well in her position as scanning technician, she would be eligible for promotion to the information technology department. Eventually being promoted to a supervisor position was also within the realm of possibility. Leah also recognized that having good skills and speed in scanning documents were not sufficient to be promoted to a supervisory position. Her size-up of the situation was that being a good team player would be required to be considered for promotion. Leah then set out to develop the reputation of being a good team player.

The next Monday morning, Leah arrived at the office with a box of donuts that she placed in the break room with a note attached that said, "Enjoy your coffee or tea this morning with a treat from your coworker Leah. Several of the other scanning technicians thanked Leah; however, one technician said to her, "Why did you bring donuts? You're not our supervisor."

A week later, Leah implemented another tactic designed to boost her reputation as a team player. She sent an e-mail to the other technicians informing them that they were free to send her an e-mail or an IM anytime they were overloaded with documents to scan. Leah said that she would help the overloaded coworker so long as she was caught up on her own work.

A week later Leah reflected, "I think I am developing a reputation as a good team player, but I can't give up yet. I think I know a way to really cement being regarded as a strong team player." Leah then wrote an e-mail to the other scanning technicians, as well as her supervisor. The e-mail read in part.

"We all know that it takes a village to raise a child. But did you also know that it takes a group of friendly and cooperative coworkers to get a scanning technician up to speed? I want to thank you all for your cooperation and friendliness. You have been very helpful to me."

Case Questions

1. How effective do you think Leah's initiatives are in helping her develop a reputation as a strong team player?
2. If you were Leah's supervisor, how would you react to the e-mails she sent to the group?
3. What advice might you offer Leah to help her advance her reputation as a team player?

Interpersonal Relations: Case Study

Ruth Waves a Red Flag

Carlos is the team leader of a cost-reduction team within a well-established baked-goods company that produces bakery

products under its own label, as well as private labels for grocery-store chains such as Giant and Win-Dixie. Top-level management formed the team to arrive at suggestions

for reducing costs throughout the organization. A transcript of one of the meetings is presented next.

Carlos: We've been gathering information for a month now. It's about time we heard some specific suggestions.

Jack: At the top of my list is cutting pension benefits. Our pension payments are higher than the minimum required by law. Our medical benefits are way above average. If we cut back on pension benefits, no current employees would be adversely affected.

Melissa: I like your analysis, Jack. No sense risking laying off employees just to keep retirees happy.

Jordan: We should make absolutely certain there are no legal complications here. Then we can sharpen our cost-cutting knives and dig right in.

Gunther: I'd support cutting pension benefits. It would probably reduce expenses more dramatically than the ways I have uncovered.

Carlos: There seems to be consensus so far that we should consider making recommendations about cutting pension benefits. Ruth, what do you think?

Ruth: I think it is much too early to reach consensus on such a sensitive issue. Cutting pension benefits would

create panic among our retirees. Our older employees would be screaming as well. We'll have an avalanche of negative publicity in the media.

Jordan: Hold on, Ruth. I said the team should first check out this idea with the legal department.

Ruth: Just because cutting pension benefits could squeeze by legally doesn't mean that it's a good idea. We haven't examined the negative ramifications of cutting pension benefits. Let's study this issue further before word leaks out that we're taking away the golden egg.

Carlos: Maybe Ruth has a point. Let's investigate this issue further before making a recommendation.

Case Questions

1. What role, or roles, is Ruth occupying on the cost-reduction team?
2. How effective does she appear to be in her role?
3. What role, or roles, is Jack occupying on the cost-reduction team?
4. How effective does he appear to be in his role?
5. How effective is Carlos in his role as a team leader?