

BSBLDR403

Lead team effectiveness

Release 1

Learner guide

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Aspire Version 1.1

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BSBLDR403 Lead team effectiveness Release 1

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBLDR403 Lead team effectiveness*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples and case studies	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
Summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepares workplace plans that communicate intent and elicits feedback clearly and effectively
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engages in discussions or provides information using structure and language appropriate to the audience and situation
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selects and uses appropriate conventions and protocols when communicating with team members• Adapts personal communication style to model required behaviours, build trust and positive working relationships and to show respect for the opinions and values of others• Plays a lead role in situations requiring effective collaboration, demonstrating conflict resolution skills and ability to engage and motivate others
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops, implements and monitors plans and processes to ensure team engagement and effectiveness• Uses formal analytical thinking techniques to identify issues and generate possible solutions, seeking input from others as required

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Plan to achieve team outcomes	1A Lead the team to establish team purpose, roles and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Engage team members to achieve innovation and productivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Lead and support team members in meeting expected outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Lead team to develop cohesion	2A Provide opportunities for planning, decision-making and action	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Encourage team members to take responsibility for their work	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Provide feedback to team members	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Recognise and address team problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2E Model expected behaviours and approaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Participate in and facilitate work team	3A Encourage participation in team activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Help the team identify and resolve problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

continued ...

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Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 4 Liaise with management	4A Maintain open communication with line manager/management at all times	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Communicate information from line manager/management to the team	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4C Communicate issues between team and management	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4D Follow up unresolved issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic 1

Plan to achieve team outcomes

Team members do not operate in isolation. If a team is to be an effective unit, all members need to understand the team's objectives, everyone's role and responsibilities, the priorities of their workload, the expected standard of their work, time lines and how they are progressing.

Misunderstandings arise when people are unaware of their tasks, make assumptions, or do not know how their work fits into the organisation's overall objectives and strategic directions. The role of the team leader is to communicate with team members to ensure a common understanding and to promote a culture that encourages easy access to information, cooperative planning and commitment to team and organisational goals.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Lead the team to establish team purpose, roles and objectives
- 1B Engage team members to achieve innovation and productivity
- 1C Lead and support team members in meeting expected outcomes

1A

Lead the team to establish team purpose, roles and objectives

Why do we have teams and what purpose do they serve on a day-to-day basis? The reality is that today's workplace is an environment where teamwork is necessary if work is going to get done. Teams offer organisations and individuals many benefits, some of which are described below.

Teams can offer new solutions

The saying 'two heads are better than one' is often true. Different people looking at the same problem will find different solutions. A team of people can conceive of many ways to solve a problem and then develop a solution that incorporates the best aspects of all their ideas.

Teams are more likely to plan for problems

Just as different people are likely to see different solutions, they will also notice different problems and possible difficulties. A team of people is more likely to identify problems and correct them, or implement contingencies, than one person working alone.

A team is easier to manage

A team of people all working towards the same goal is easier to manage than a number of people all working independently. Organisations that have a team-based structure are able to have a 'flatter' management structure with fewer managers. Frontline managers have a more direct link to senior management and information is better able to flow up and down the organisation.

Teams enable completion of large-scale projects

Many organisations rely on projects in order to get work done, from developing a new product to moving locations. Many of these projects are either very complicated or have a short time frame in which they need to be completed. One person working alone may not be able to finish the project due to time limitations or because they do not have all the skills needed.

Teams create a sense of belonging

Working in a team allows staff members to interact with colleagues, make friends, build a sense of camaraderie and share information. People spend a lot of time at work and, increasingly, organisations are recognising that people who are happy at work are more likely to be productive and stay with the company for longer. Employees need to have constructive relationships with colleagues and a sense of belonging to their workplace.

What is a team?

A team can be defined in many ways, depending on the situation. Teams exist in many contexts: recreation and sporting teams and of course teams of people who work together.

Most people are familiar with the idea of being in a team and have worked in teams of some sort – whether it was organising a staff party with another fellow employee or being a member of a cross-functional team responsible for implementing a major project.



Although people's experiences of what teams do and how they do things differ, definitions of teams have a few common themes:

- Teams involve several people, with one member taking a leadership role.
- A team activity is united or organised.
- A team is cooperative and has a sense of belonging.
- The team has to work together to achieve its common goal.

In a team, people work interdependently, communicate frequently and see themselves as part of a specific group. Successful teams also need effective leaders.

Teams versus work groups

A team is not just a collection of people working on the same thing. A group of employees is not a team just because they work in the same area or on the same shift. Teams have different characteristics to groups. Teamwork is characterised by a combined effort and focus, while individuals in a group focus on their own efforts and goals. An effective team relies on all members taking responsibility for its success, even if it has a leader, as most teams do.

It takes a lot of hard work, the right support from the wider organisation and commitment from team members and leaders for a group to evolve into a team.

This does not mean that teams are good and work groups are bad. In fact, there are situations when having a work group is preferable to having a team. Work groups and teams are compared below.

Work groups	Teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leader of a group issues instructions, and disciplines and controls group members.• Members of a group are given instructions and make decisions individually.• Group meetings are led by the manager.• Groups are measured on and emphasise individual achievement.• Group members receive information from their manager and are not encouraged to feed information or opinions back up, or among themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leader of a team is like a coach, helping team members achieve.• A team is self-directed and makes decisions as a unit.• All members of a team actively participate in team meetings.• Teams focus on their performance as a team.• Communication and information flows up, down and around in a team situation.

What makes an effective team?

As a frontline manager, one of your major responsibilities is to promote the effectiveness of the team you lead. Essentially, this means that you need to be able to make your team capable of producing the results your organisation demands.

This might involve meeting sales targets, keeping customers happy, completing tasks within a set time or budget – or all of these things.

An effective team, however, is more than a group of people who are able to achieve goals, although getting things done is central to any measure of success or effectiveness.

Measures of a successful team

A successful team will gain a reputation in the wider organisation as an effective team. Other staff will want to join the team and other managers will want to make their team achieve similar results.

Team success implies that the team members and leaders are working well and contributing positively to the team. Below are some qualities that apply to different people in successful teams.

The team members

In a successful team, team members:

- work well together
- respect each other
- learn from each other's experiences and skills
- contribute to goal setting, planning, implementation and measurement
- proactively look at better ways of doing things
- share information and ideas
- think in terms of 'we' and not 'I'.

The team leader

In a successful team, the team leader:

- promotes team goals
- helps team members achieve goals
- communicates openly and honestly
- shares information
- makes decisions that are in the team's best interests
- encourages the team to take responsibility
- listens to and learns from others
- knows team members professionally and personally
- knows what team members want to achieve and their career objectives
- motivates, mentors and coaches
- trusts team members
- helps establish and then works to team values, standards and norms (protocols).

Qualities of an effective team member

There are certain qualities that an effective team member may possess.

Being an effective team member involves:

- listening to and respecting other people's points of view
- cooperating rather than competing with colleagues
- knowing team members on a professional and personal level
- trying new ways of doing things
- learning from other people
- being aware of personal strengths and weaknesses in the team context
- taking responsibility for actions
- doing the job well and completing tasks to the best of one's ability
- understanding how to contribute to team goals
- trusting team members
- helping establish and then working to team values, standards and norms.

The evolution of team-based work

Not so long ago, most organisations consisted of multiple layers of managers who made decisions, and employees who did what the managers told them. Today, work is different. In many organisations, work is done and decisions are made by teams of people who work together on achieving set goals. Teams exist at all levels of organisations. They are expected to plan, implement and measure their work as well as look for ways to improve their work methods.

Team members need to have input into the way work is done and make a positive contribution to their organisation. Team leaders also have an important role, as they need to help their team achieve its goals – even when those goals might be difficult to reach. They represent their staff and promote the projects they are working on in the organisation. They encourage, motivate and coach individual staff members, and provide experience and advice.



The foundations of an effective team

Although there are some general rules that apply in most situations, each organisation has different requirements and expectations of teams. One of the critical steps in laying a foundation for an effective team is to ensure that its purpose and role in the organisation is not only clear but also well understood.

A quick search on the internet will reveal many studies looking at why teams fail in organisations. Unclear goals, lack of role clarity and lack of mutual accountability are some of the more common problems that cause team malfunction.

The questions that apply to the initial planning stage reveal the importance of understanding and communicating a team's purpose. Exploring these issues can also be of benefit at other stages.

These questions could be organised into a checklist, grouped into key areas to provide a focus for your planning. Following are some key questions to consider about team planning.

Questions to consider about team planning

1

What is the team here to do? How do its activities link in with the organisation's operational plan and goals?

2

How will the team's performance be measured? How should the team be structured in order to achieve its goals?

3

Is the team going to carry out day-to-day operational activities or work on special projects?

4

How will the team be classified? For example, as work or responsibility based, cross-functional (also known as multidisciplinary) or project based?

5

What WHS, legislative and other issues need to be considered when running and managing the team?

6

How much administration time will be allocated for the team to plan, communicate and organise itself?

7

What is the best way to facilitate communication in the team?

8

How can the team members be motivated and supported? What roles exist in the team? What kinds of skills and experience will each team member need?

9

How much authority and accountability will the team as a whole have? How will this be assigned to team members? How will leadership of the team be established?

10

How will decision-making be managed? How will success be acknowledged and rewarded?

11

What resources are allocated to the team? How are they allocated? What wider organisational support mechanisms are available to assist the team?

12

How will the teamwork plan be developed? Is there scope for team members to have input into setting goals and activities or will their role be focused on the way these are achieved?

Types of teams

Teams vary across organisations, industries and sectors. Six common types of teams are described below.

Working

Perhaps the most common type of team, a working team is organised around the structure of the organisation. Members of the team work on similar tasks and need to have similar or complementary skills and experience. For example, a sales team, a team of nurses on a hospital ward, a firefighting team, a customer service team.

Cross-functional

In cross-functional or multidisciplinary teams, members are drawn from different functional areas in the organisation (such as sales, manufacturing and finance). Different people are needed to share their unique skills or knowledge with others in the team. In cross-functional teams, people are usually chosen for a significant reason, so it is important to ensure that team members are all able to participate in team discussions.

These teams often work on specific problems or form for information-sharing purposes. Many project teams or management teams are also cross-functional teams. Sometimes cross-functional teams include people external to the organisation, such as customers or suppliers. For example, a team that supports a sporting team might include a physiotherapist, psychologist, an administrator and a dietitian. The cross-functional team that created a winning Australian show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show in London included a designer, builder, landscaper, logistics manager and gardeners.

Project	<p>Project teams (task forces or special purpose teams) are quite common and often form to deal with a particular issue or problem that, once solved or investigated, sees the team disband. Some team members may be assigned to work on the project for the duration or for part of the project time frame and then return to their usual work. Or, at the conclusion of one project, they might join a new project team. Examples of these teams include the Sydney Olympics Organising Committee, a team of engineers and construction workers that builds a bridge, a team that investigates problems in an industry or organisation and a team that works on developing a new product or service and bringing it to market.</p>
Self-managed	<p>Self-managed teams are less common in a business environment. The defining characteristic of these teams is the absence of a team leader. Team members need to share the leadership function. For example, a string quartet organises itself without a conductor or leader.</p>
Management	<p>Management teams, as their name suggests, make management decisions. Most organisations have management teams, some at operational and some at strategic levels in the organisation. These teams are like cross-functional teams in that their members represent a variety of viewpoints, skills and experiences. A typical management team might consist of a finance manager, a sales manager, a production manager and a human resources manager, and is led by a managing director or CEO. An example is the cabinet or group of senior ministers that advise the prime minister.</p>
Remote	<p>Remote teams are teams whose members are located in various places. They are separated by distance, but may also be separated by time if they are in different time zones. They could be salespeople on the road, management staff in capital cities or freelance programmers working from home.</p> <p>Computers and electronic communications tools have improved the effectiveness of remote teams; however, these teams do represent a challenge to managers and their team members, and require special skills. Examples include the team that worked on the Human Genome Project and a team of field officers watching over wildlife in various National Parks around Australia.</p>

Work in teams

In the workplace, people often find themselves in several teams. While all employees of Snazzy Suede Shoes in the next case study are members of the Snazzy team, individuals are also members of other teams that exist in the organisation.

A whole department can be defined as a team, just as a group of three customer service personnel can also be classified as a team.

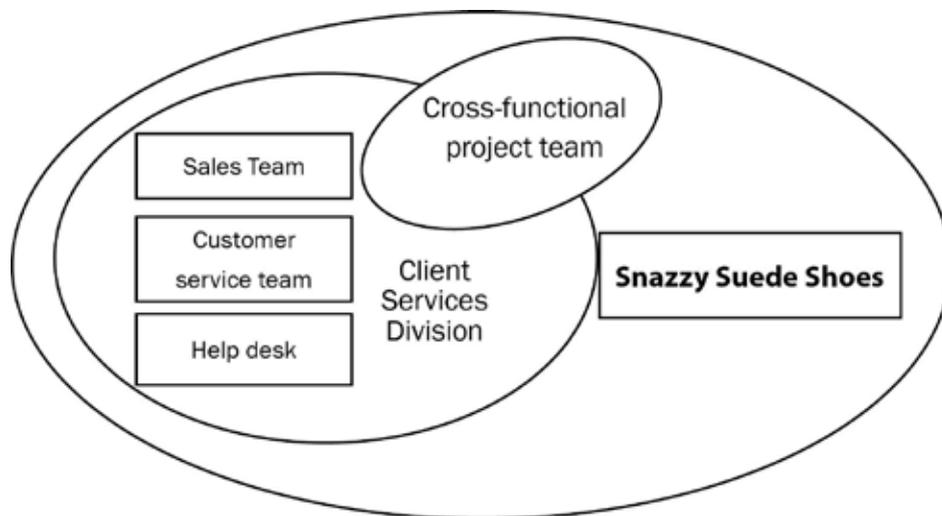
In your own workplace, you might be a member of many different teams, and hold different roles in those different teams.

Example: team structures

Sarah is a sales manager at Snazzy Suede Shoes. She is based in their Brisbane office and is team leader to four sales representatives. Together they form the Queensland Sales Team. With their counterparts located in other parts of Australia, they form a remote team – the National Sales Team – and this is just one part of the company’s Client Services Division.

Sarah is also part of a cross-functional team, where staff with expertise in various areas are brought together for a specific project or study. Unlike the five team members in Brisbane who are focused on the same day-to-day sales activities, the members of the cross-functional team are engaged in the complex task of bringing a new product to market. This team includes customer service staff, engineers, manufacturing managers, marketing and distribution staff, and sales managers. Individually they are experts in their own fields; together, they are able to pool their knowledge to complete the project assigned to them.

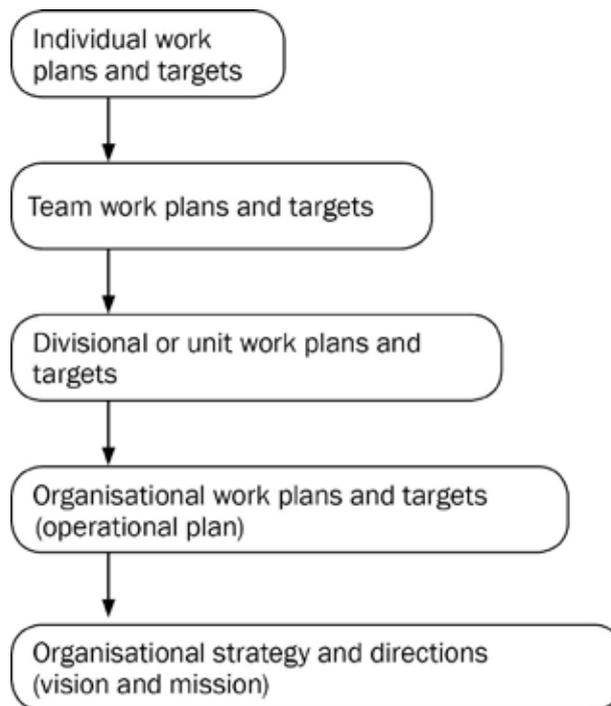
The interaction of the teams at XYZ is shown in this diagram.



Team goals

Teams are the building blocks of an organisation. Teams members work together to achieve a common goal, which, when achieved, contributes to the organisation's goals and objectives. This is true of permanent teams, project teams and cross-functional teams. All the activities of individuals, teams and the organisation division, department or unit to which they belong should reflect and contribute to the goals of the entire organisation.

This diagram illustrates how individual and teamwork plans are like building blocks that together contribute to an organisation's goals.



A common goal

Team leaders and managers agree that having a clearly stated, well-understood goal is a major motivator for team members. If everyone is clear on what needs to be done and understands the part they play in achieving the team's objectives, then individual and team effectiveness will increase.

A team's goals and objectives are usually self-evident; for instance, a sales team's job is to sell products or services. Or the goals and objectives may have been set by management. However, there is usually an opportunity for teams to come up with a simple vision or mission statement that describes what they do. Managers often use this process, known as collaborative goal setting, as it has many benefits, particularly when new teams are formed.

Participate in goal-setting processes

All team members are expected to participate and contribute their suggestions and ideas to this process. The group interacts and begins working as a team. People are encouraged to listen to what others have to say and develop a sense of ownership as they debate and discuss the important issue of what they are there to do, and how they plan to do it. During the process, team members also gain valuable insight into the roles, experiences, skills and abilities of their colleagues.

Collaborative goal-setting activities often occur at conferences or meetings in a workshop format. These may be conducted on a regular basis or at the commencement of a project or new task.

Outcomes of the goal-setting process

- The team devises a mission statement that summarises what they do and how they will do it.
- The team determines how it will achieve goals by developing a team operational plan and/or individual work plans.
- The team sets out ground rules and guidelines that direct how members will work with each other.

Example: vision and mission

The Queensland sales team at Snazzy Suede Shoes know what they are expected to do (sell products) and they have a sales target set by the national sales manager (\$100,000 worth of product each month). However, the members decide to create a team vision and mission, and look at how the team will meet those targets and work together effectively. After some debate and discussion, the sales team decide that their mission is:

‘To generate additional sales from existing clients and build our client base through excellent service and attention to detail.’

The team assigns tasks and responsibilities and determines how they will achieve the \$100,000 target each month by growing existing accounts and looking for new ones.

The team also generates guidelines that the members agree to work by, including:

- How they would make decisions: ‘The team will meet weekly to discuss important issues and will make a recommendation to the team leader who will make a decision.’
- The standards to which they would work: ‘All queries will be replied to within 24 hours.’
- How issues and concerns in the team would be managed: ‘The team will meet once a week to discuss and resolve issues and concerns.’
- How the team would want disagreements or differences resolved: ‘The team leader will act as mediator.’



What makes a good goal?

It is true that many teams have goals set for them rather than being able to choose their own, but there are ways of making even the most difficult, unpleasant or complex goals a meaningful focus for your team. A 'good' goal is one that is achievable and is understood by the whole team. Below is a list of nine tips you may like to use as a guide when you are setting goals.

Tips for setting good goals

1

Encourage the team to collaborate on some aspect of their work, such as the collaborative goal-setting exercise described earlier.

2

Even if the goal is already set, discuss it as a group. Ensure all team members are aware of the team's purpose, the person (or team) to which their achievements will be reported, performance standards (such as key performance indicators) and the time frame to which they need to work.

3

If necessary, source some team-building activities from your HR manager or adviser to help your team work together more effectively. This should ensure all team members feel responsible to each other and to the achievement of their objectives.

4

Include the team at the earliest possible stage during goal-setting and planning phases; share information and ask for group feedback.

5

Ask each team member to explain to the rest of the team how they fit into the 'big picture', and what they can bring to the team.

6

Make sure team goals are realistic and attainable. If the goal is a difficult one to achieve, and everyone knows it, be creative. Develop a way to measure progress against the goal and reward the team for making progress.

7

The goal should be specific – a sales team told to ‘sell products’ is not very focused. The team will be more effective if it is set a specific sales target; for example, \$100,000 per month.

8

If the goal is difficult to achieve and is a long-term goal, break it down into smaller chunks so the team can work on sections at a time rather than let the task ahead overwhelm them.

9

Even if your team is a permanent team that has ongoing objectives, try to assign deadlines or time frames against meeting some of these objectives. For instance, ‘Each quarter, our customer service team aims to improve customer satisfaction rates by five per cent’.

Example: stay focused on a common goal

On 20 July 1969 astronaut Neil Armstrong did something no-one had ever done before – he walked on the moon. For 21 hours, Armstrong and fellow astronaut Buzz Aldrin conducted experiments, took pictures and collected samples of moon rocks. Afterwards they rejoined Michael Collins who had stayed in the Columbia command module orbiting the moon while they did their work. On 24 July all three returned to Earth and splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean, safe and well.

This remarkable achievement was the culmination of an unprecedented effort that began in 1961, when United States President John F. Kennedy announced that the US would land a man on the moon and return him safely to the Earth before the end of the decade – a goal dramatic enough to capture the world’s attention. As it turned out, the difficulty and long-term nature of the goal would allow the US to gain an advantage over its competitors, the Soviet Union.

NASA was already working on Project Mercury when Kennedy made his speech. Mercury, along with Projects Gemini, Ranger and Surveyor were the building blocks, providing the NASA team with valuable experience in long-duration spaceflight, extravehicular activity, and rendezvous and docking of spacecraft as well as collecting data about the moon itself. The NASA team worked on each project individually so that the bigger goal of sending a man to the moon was worked on in difficult, yet achievable, chunks.

Each of the 10 missions leading up to the ultimate mission – the moon landing – required NASA to do things that had never been done before. The team that made this dream a reality had thousands of members and required an exceptionally broad knowledge base. Engineers, doctors, aeronautical experts, astronomers and physicists all worked alongside each other, pooling their knowledge and learning from one another.

The team’s goal was finally achieved after eight years of hard work and planning. For more information on the NASA moon landing of 1969, go to the Lunar and Planetary Institute website: www.lpi.usra.edu.

Team plans

Just as goals need to be understood by all team members, plans need to be agreed on, clearly stated and easy to follow. Like team goals, plans are subject to change depending on the success of the organisation, the focus and strategic goals it sets for itself and external influences such as competitor behaviour and economic and legislative changes.

As a manager, you need to ensure all members of your team understand the plans they need to work with. They should know that plans are workable documents that help the team reach its full potential. Many of the rules that apply to goal setting also apply here.

Here are some of the forms that team plans may take.

Team plans

Team plans are developed by the team and describe how the team and individual members will achieve their goals.

Individual work plans

Individual work plans are developed by each team member in consultation with their manager. These plans align with other team members' plans and, as a whole, describe how the team will achieve their goals.

Operational plans

Operational plans are developed by senior management and passed down to teams in the organisation.

Action plans

Action plans deal with a sub-section or component of the broader plan to which the team is working.

Business plans

Business plans are focused on short-, medium- and long-term goals, and do not include a lot of operational detail.

WHS plans

Work health and safety (WHS) plans describe how the team should work in order to create and promote a safe workplace.

Use plans to your advantage

If you are given a plan that is complex or long, do not be afraid to re-word it with the help of your team, and create a document that people in the team feel they can work with and will help them on a day-to-day basis.

Think about jointly developing a team plan and then creating individual work plans for each team member (using the same format for all). Plans should connect with job descriptions and describe team members' contributions, how their work will be measured and the priority of their tasks.

Summarise major points from the plan and highlight them on a noticeboard or in other communal areas where your team works. These can be changed and updated every so often to include team achievements, remaining goals and other key items or tasks.

Team planning can also mean planning to succeed as a team. Laying the foundations for success through preparing for the future is important for all types of teams.

Example: well-prepared teams

The Australian Cricket Team has been at the forefront of international cricket for many years. Many Australian children have dreamed of representing their country on the team. Yet their success is not only because of the outstanding performance of the players, but also a result of the efforts of Cricket Australia – their organisational team.

Cricket Australia, the custodian of the game in Australia, organises extensive youth programs to encourage young players. Working with players still in primary school, these youth programs provide support, mentoring, skills development and guidance. The most promising players are invited to the national academy, which prepares them for the challenge of playing first-class (domestic) cricket and a chance to represent Australia in the future. Players must impress selectors over many seasons of cricket to have a chance to play for Australia.

The Australian Cricket Team strives to be the best by having the best coaches and the best training techniques. The team is always trying to find new ways to improve its game.

One of the key reasons for Australia's cricketing prowess is that Cricket Australia plans for success at all levels of cricket in Australia and has developed programs, plans and activities that reinforce and encourage world-class cricket ability in players from an early age.

You can read more about the team at the Australian cricket team website at: www.ninemsn.com.au/cricket.

Team responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities in teams vary dramatically depending on the team, the organisation and the environment or industry in which it is operating. In all situations, though, it is crucial that team members – regardless of their role in the team – are aware of their responsibilities.

Individual job descriptions usually set out the responsibilities of a particular role; however, it may be necessary and useful to discuss individual and team responsibilities in the team context. Often, one or two responsibilities outlined in a job description may be particularly important to the success of the team. Additional responsibilities created because of a team goal may need to be added to an individual job description or work plan.

In particular, this may be the case in cross-functional teams, where it is each team member's responsibility to share knowledge and information with others. It may also be the case in project teams, where team members may be working on a special project in addition to their usual duties.

The importance of delegation

Delegation is the act of assigning tasks, powers or functions to others. A team leader or manager is normally in a position to delegate. The importance of delegation in a team environment should not be underestimated. Employees often crave trust and responsibility. Effective delegation meets these and other needs.

Delegating work is not the same thing as allocating work. Delegated tasks normally cannot be completed in a short time frame. Delegation does not tell people what to do; rather, it involves explaining the outcomes and results they are expected to achieve. They are then expected to work out what to do and the necessary steps involved to achieve this outcome.

A team leader or manager making the delegation is still required to be involved, but the extent of the involvement will vary depending on the existing knowledge and skill levels of the employee or team member receiving the delegation. If the team member is very experienced, the team leader's involvement will be minimal. If they are inexperienced, the team leader may provide more support.

If uneven workloads exist in a work team, a review of the delegations in place is warranted.

Delegation and motivation

Employees will be more involved and engaged if they feel they are being trusted with important responsibilities or activities. If they are required to think about a task, consider alternatives and make choices, the work becomes more rewarding.

Many team leaders treat allocating tasks and delegating tasks as being the same. Although dividing up and allocating work tasks is essential, it should not be confused with delegation.

Responsibility and accountability are important. As a result of past delegation failures, many managers and team leaders often think 'I'll just do it myself' as this may appear to be quicker and easier. Delegation is not easy. However, that is an excuse rather than a reason.

Example: fulfill your own role and responsibilities in a team

The London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) was founded in 1932. It consists of around 100 professional musicians. Although the members are all doing the same work – playing instruments in an orchestra – their responsibilities are all different.

An orchestra is an instance of different roles and responsibilities coming together to make a whole. Listening to the whole orchestra, with every member playing their part and fulfilling their different responsibilities, the music sounds as it should. As a team, an orchestra only works when everyone does their own job well. If the string section forget to play their parts, or does so out of time with the rest of the team, the whole piece is ruined.

Although each of the musicians are all fulfilling different responsibilities, their common goals unify and encourage the team to be the best they can be.

‘We are the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

‘We perform music to the highest artistic standards for the broadest possible audience. We thrive on musical partnerships with exceptional conductors and soloists. The beauty and dynamism of our live performances can move and inspire you. We want to share with you a live and immediate experience of the music that we love.

‘We keep on reaching out to, and welcoming in, the widest possible audience to our world-class performances.

‘We are committed to the future of live music and to innovation in all areas of our work.’

Like many other teams and organisations, the LPO’s success is due largely to the fact that it is passionate about its work and genuinely excited at the prospect of sharing it with others.

Read more about the London Philharmonic Orchestra and its vision at the LPO website at: www.lpo.org.uk.

Team roles

Team roles generally depend on a person’s skills and knowledge. The role a person in a team is often evident in the title of their position or is summed up in their job description. However, a team role can be quite different from a job function, depending on the situation and the type of team.

For example, the role of manager or team leader is clear. Usually, these people will have management, leadership and motivational responsibilities included in their job description. Similarly, people who work as administration or support staff for a team will have these responsibilities included in their job description. It can be easy to understand some roles in a team, just from people’s position titles.

Team leaders and team members

Sometimes it is less easy to know what role a person has in a team. Their job description might give you an idea of what they do on a day-to-day basis, but their role in their team might be less evident; for example, an office support assistant.

Some workplaces have less of an emphasis on team skills and the importance of the role in a team because they are not team focused.

Practical team roles vary considerably depending on the working environment. Generally, there are two basic roles in a team (team leader and team member) that apply in almost all circumstances. However, team roles rely on more than simply leadership and membership, and are not necessarily limited to or defined by a job description.

Below are some examples of working environments and the teams/team members that can be found in each.

Building site**Team leader:**

Foreman

Team members and their roles:

Bricklayers, electricians, labourers, carpenters, plumbers

Operating theatre**Team leader:**

Chief surgeon

Team members and their roles:

Anaesthetist, theatre nurses, technicians, assistant surgeons

Warehouse**Team leader:**

Supervisor

Team members and their roles:

Forklift drivers, pickers, packers, order checkers

Bank branch**Team leader:**

Branch manager

Team members and their roles:

Tellers, supervisors, loan staff, back office staff

Types of teams

Cross-functional teams, in which people with different responsibilities or areas of knowledge work together on a common goal, may have to clearly define who plays which role and elect or assign people to particular functions. Project teams, which can be similar to cross-functional teams, may have a project manager whose role is to assign resources and monitor the progress of the project, but may also have another manager who assumes the leadership role.

Management teams in many organisations consist of people who do very different jobs on a day-to-day basis. The goal of the management team as a whole, however, is to lead the organisation, determine strategy and plan for future success. A management team has a leader and team members just like other teams: a chairperson or managing director is the team leader, and senior managers from finance, sales, marketing, product development and human resources play the team roles.

Different teams, different roles

Different teams and organisations may expect different things from managers and team members. The leadership style of managers varies widely. Some managers see their roles as leaders and motivators, while others see the role of manager as more supportive. In some teams, it is important that members are able to take direction and complete tasks quickly without questioning their instructions, while in others, team members need to be creative problem-solvers and gather and provide their managers with information.

As organisations change, these roles can grow, adapt and develop. This can be demanding and unsettling for employees and team leaders who, even when faced with changing roles themselves, need to help team members through times of change. Experience has also shown that, regardless of the functional role a person might have, it is often their attributes or personality that determines their role in the team.

Example: Belbin's team roles

Dr Meredith Belbin, an English management consultant, conducted a well-known examination of personality-based team roles. He and his team of researchers studied the behaviour of managers from all over the world for nine years.

As part of the study they collected a great deal of data on the people who participated. Each person was given psychometric tests (which measure and assess behavioural responses to situations) and then placed in different teams, each time with different people in them. Each team was given a complex management problem to solve in the form of a game. During the problem-solving exercises, each person was observed and information such as their core personality traits, intellectual styles and behaviours were recorded and assessed.

Over time the researchers found that the success of the teams was largely dependent on the presence of particular types of behaviour exhibited by the team members. They observed that there were nine types of 'successful' behaviours that made a positive contribution to a team.

Dr Belbin and his researchers gave each of these roles names and described the kinds of attributes each role possessed. They found that effective teams usually had a balance of all nine roles. These role definitions are intended to help team members learn about themselves rather than 'pigeon-hole' them. People take on different roles in different teams. However, when used wisely, the nine roles can be a useful and interesting learning tool for managers and teams.

Action-oriented roles

- Shaper
- Implementer
- Complete finisher

People-oriented roles

- Coordinator
- Team worker
- Resource instigator

Cerebral roles

- Plant
- Monitor evaluator
- Specialist

Example: Belbin's team strengths and weaknesses

Dr Belbin's team developed a questionnaire that allows people to quickly define their preferred method of working in a team environment. There are many versions of this questionnaire available and they can be purchased from human resource organisations.

Belbin also defines 'allowable weaknesses' as attributes that are not necessarily bad, but need to be counterbalanced by others in the team. For example, a 'Specialist' has the tendency to dwell on technicalities, but that might be exactly what is needed. This tendency can slow down or impede a team's progress only if not well managed or used effectively.

Visit the Belbin website at: www.belbin.com for more information on Belbin's team roles.

Below you will find the strengths and weaknesses of each of the nine roles identified by Belbin. [Reproduced with permission]

Plant

Strengths:

Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems.

Allowable weaknesses:

Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.

Coordinator

Strengths:

Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, delegates well.

Allowable weaknesses:

Can often be seen as manipulative. Offloads personal work.

Monitor evaluator

Strengths:

Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options. Judges accurately.

Allowable weaknesses:

Lacks drive and ability to inspire others.

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Implementer

Strengths:

Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions.

Allowable weaknesses:

Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.

Complete finisher

Strengths:

Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time.

Allowable weaknesses:

Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.

Resource investigator

Strengths:

Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts.

Allowable weaknesses:

Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.

Shaper

Strengths:

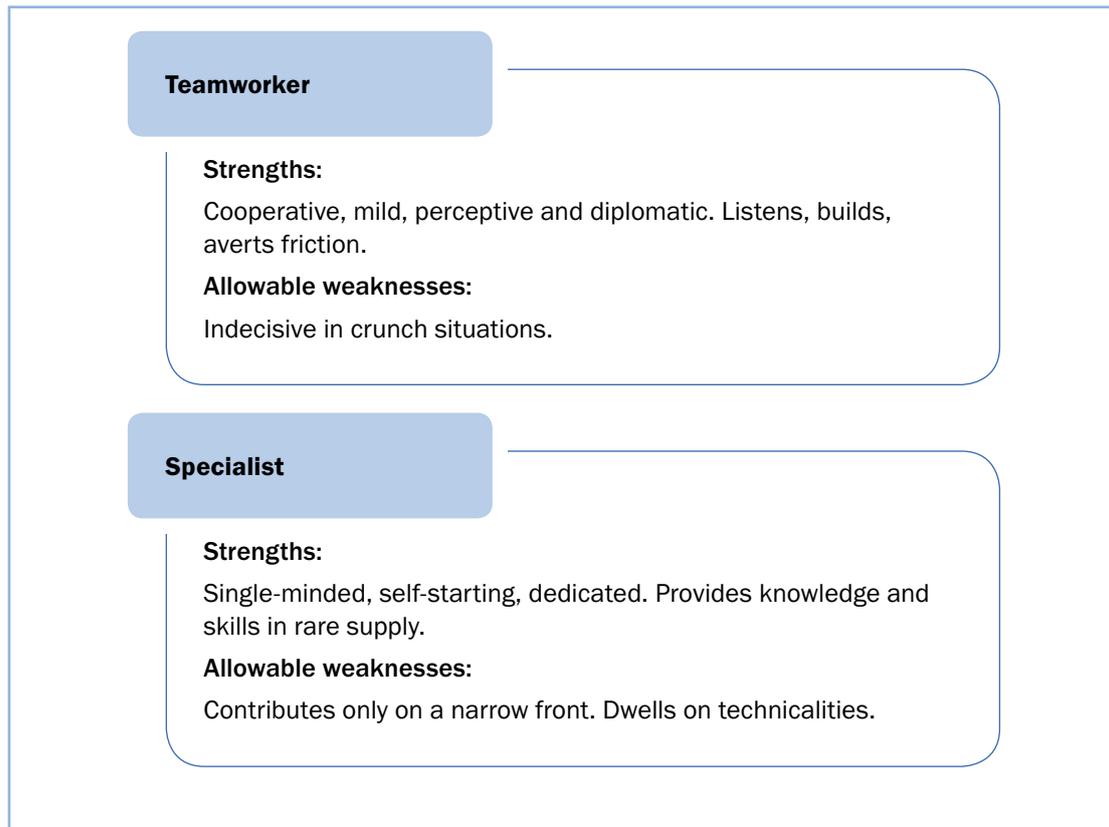
Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.

Allowable weaknesses:

Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.

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Group dynamics

One of the main sources of stress in the workplace has to do with work relationships and interactions between people. Understanding group dynamics is important for a well-functioning work team.

Group dynamics is the study of groups and a general term for group processes. Bruce W. Tuckman first described the four stages of group development in 1965. Later, he revised his theory and added a fifth stage. Tuckman's model traces the evolution of groups in a sequence. The model can also be used as the basis to explain the existence of various conditions for failure or progress, which may occur throughout a team's development.

It is difficult to pinpoint the development stage of a group at a particular time. However, an understanding of these developmental stages can assist in determining a group's level of effectiveness. The five stages are described below.

Stage 1: Forming

- People wish to be accepted by the others in the group so they avoid controversy, conflict and serious issues.
- Group members focus on routines.
- During this stage, group members are assessing one another and the scope of the task and how to approach the task.

Stage 2: Storming

- Important issues start to be addressed.
- Minor confrontations arise about the group, the task, responsibilities, and so on.
- These issues may be dealt with quickly or ignored.
- Some group members like the fact that real issues are starting to surface; others feel uncomfortable.

Stage 3: Norming

- The group becomes more established.
- Roles and responsibilities become clearer and are agreed upon.
- Confrontations help group members know each other better.
- Group members are now listening to each other better and identify themselves as part of a group.
- Group members may become reluctant to change anything if so much was invested in reaching this stage.

Stage 4: Performing

- The group is interdependent and flexible.
- Group members know and trust each other well and the focus turns completely onto the task.
- Roles and responsibilities can change as needed.
- Not all groups reach this stage.

Stage 5: Adjourning

- Some groups wind down as the task or project has been completed.
- Group members move on from the group or from the task.
- Group members have a sense of achievement and a sense of loss.

Encourage positive and productive groups

Here are some ways to encourage positive and productive group dynamics.

Ways to encourage positive and productive group dynamics

- Pay equal attention to the group and the task.
- Make sure the group members have a clear sense of their collective task.
- Encourage group members to set and take ownership of goals.
- Write down and regularly promote the group's task so everyone stays focused.
- If individual conflicts arise, review and negotiate them in terms of the task that needs to be completed.
- Encourage all group members to participate.
- Keep a written record of group decisions to avoid returning to the same discussion.
- Establish group norms that everyone feels comfortable with and hold group members accountable.
- Handle feedback and debate fairly and look for alternative strategies that still fit with the group's task.
- Recognise positive contributions to the group.
- Focus on solutions – it's easy to identify the problem but more positive to focus on finding a solution.
- Be mindful of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Affirm the importance of keeping commitments made to the group and by the group.
- Have clear expectations and communicate them throughout the group.
- Affirm that constructive conflict is acceptable but personal attacks are not.
- Provide training in problem-solving and conflict management to group members.

Team consultation

The benefits of a consultative team culture are not limited to the additional insights and ideas a group of people working together will generate. People's satisfaction levels and their interest in and commitment to their job all improve in a positive team environment. People in a team feel their opinions are valued and that they are playing an important role in the team and in the organisation.

All teams benefit from having an agreed way of working. While agreement can be partly determined by the team during collaborative goal-setting workshops, managers can also decide on, or propose, ways in which the team will come together.



Tips for promoting a consultative team culture

The culture in a team is often determined by the leadership style of the manager. Managers who naturally consult with others and encourage group decision-making will find that many of the following activities come about naturally, as a result of the way they work. Other managers may find that they need to build these activities into their management plans and into team operational and work plans. Here are some tips for promoting a consultative team culture.

Tips for promoting a consultative team culture

1**Meetings**

Have meetings to identify and discuss roles and responsibilities.

2**Work goals**

Assist in identifying and documenting work goals and tasks for team members in their work plans.

3**Regular team meetings**

Have regular team meetings or get-togethers where everyone can share information about what they have been working on.

4**Brainstorming sessions**

Have brainstorming sessions or workshops where members' input, opinions, suggestions and expertise is expected and valued.

5**Individual meetings**

At the outset of a project or when a new team member comes on board, set up one-on-one meetings in the team so people can discuss their work and get to know each other.

6**Email and internet**

Use email and internet services to facilitate communication, particularly in remote teams. Some companies have a staff-only internet called an 'intranet'; this can be invaluable for sharing information and collaborating.

7

Information sharing

Share professional and personal information through newsletters, noticeboards and other devices that encourage team awareness, celebrate successes, identify issues and focus on goals and plans.

8

Consultation and feedback mechanisms

Build consultation and feedback mechanisms into each team member's work plans so they are encouraged to seek the advice and opinions of their workmates prior to commencing a new task or project.

9

Feedback

Provide feedback to team members on the results their ideas have generated and the usefulness of these results.

10

Specialised skills

Recognise that some team members have a lot to share in the way of experience or skills that other team members, including the team leader, may not have. Ask them for their input and advice on issues they are familiar with.

11

Individual contribution

Encourage team members to share their thoughts and ideas and to communicate clearly and freely in the team.

Create a successful team

The recipe for a successful team calls for many ingredients – just one missing ingredient can mean disaster, regardless of the quality of the other components.

For all the success stories we have on teams achieving goals, there are just as many horror stories. More often than not, these teams, and the people in them, have suffered because one or more of the ingredients were overlooked, ignored, missing or not properly implemented.

Managers can use this team checklist to help ensure their team is effective. Ideally, it can be used as a team is being formed; however, it's just as useful once a team is established, and can be consulted regularly. For each of the questions, think: 'Is this happening, and if not, why not? How can things be improved?'

Team checklist	
1	<p>Goals and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is everyone clear on what the team is trying to achieve? • Are the goals realistic? • Do the team goals fit into the organisation's goals? • Does the team have the resources (human and physical) to achieve its goals? • Does the whole team have input into planning? • Does the team have all the information it needs to plan properly? • Does the team logically fit into the structure of the organisation?
2	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the leader give strong guidance when it's needed? • Does the leader understand the leadership expectations of team members?
3	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are team members supported with training and development programs? • Is there opportunity for some team members to mentor others in the team? • Does the leader understand their own and the team members' individual strengths and weaknesses? Do they use training and development to rectify problems? • Would team training or bonding sessions help the team become more cohesive?
4	<p>Attitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are team members prepared to work together to achieve results, even if this means prioritising work, doing things they do not like doing, or helping other team members? • Is there a feeling of trust in the team? • Do all team members contribute equally? • Are team members willing to contribute to and participate in decision-making?

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5	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do team members communicate well with each other?• Does the leader listen, with an open mind, to everyone in the team?• Do meetings help the team do better, or are they considered a waste of time?
6	Rapport <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the team members working toward the same goal?• Are there personality conflicts in the team that are causing problems?• Are the team members competitive or cooperative?• Are some team members angry with a team member who is not pulling his or her weight?
7	Recognition and reward <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the achievements of the team recognised?• Are individual achievements of team members also acknowledged, including team building efforts and other contributions to strengthening the team?

Legislation and safety

Teams must work in accordance with relevant legislation, codes, national standards and work health and safety (WHS) rules. Managers should note that laws and standards are complex and amended regularly. Also, while there is national legislation on many issues, states and territories have their own laws. Your organisation should provide you with details of legislation and guidelines that are relevant to your team, but it is still the manager's responsibility to ensure the team follows correct procedures.

Many of these laws, as well as ensuring workplaces are safe, equitable, respectful and nonthreatening, are also designed to improve the experience of work for employees. Adhering to them will help managers promote the effectiveness of their teams.

Further information on Commonwealth WHS requirements can be found on the Safe Work Australia website at: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

Legislation that you need to know about as it applies to your team is outlined here.

Work health and safety**Work health and safety (WHS) legislation**

Employers have a duty to provide a safe work environment for their employees. A breach of the act may result in prosecution and substantial fines. If a breach results in the injury or death of a worker, the employer may also have to pay compensation to the worker or their legal representative. This is legislated at the federal and state level.

WHS relates to the mental wellbeing of employees as well as their physical safety. For example, employers have a responsibility to prevent bullying.

Anti-discrimination**Anti-discrimination legislation**

Managers and team leaders must prevent and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. Employees must not be treated differently on the grounds of race, colour, gender, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, nationality or social origin.

Sexual harassment**Sexual harassment legislation**

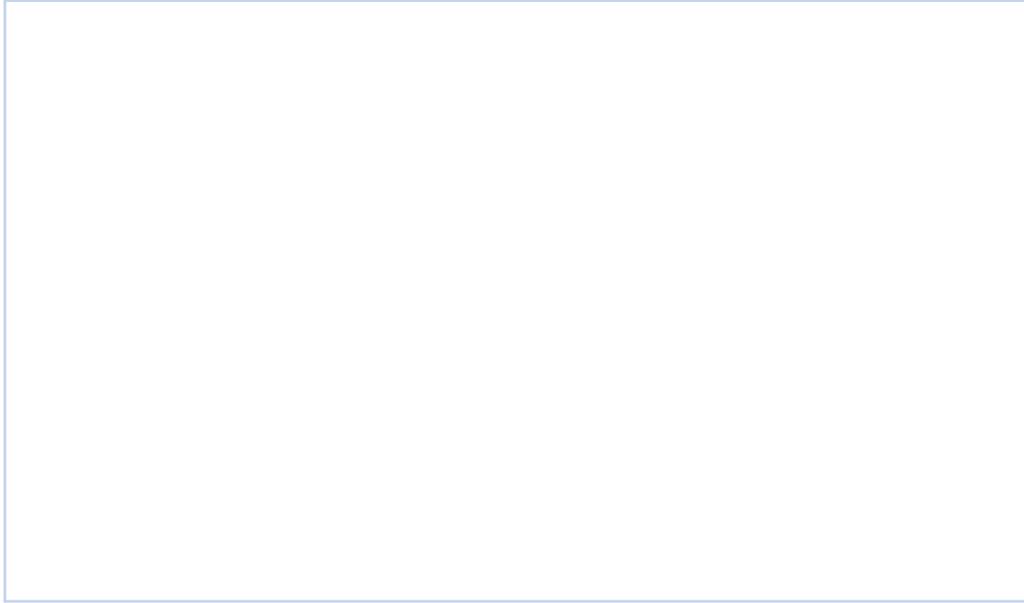
Sexual harassment is broadly defined as an unwelcome sexual advance or unwelcome request for sexual favours, or any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, principally in circumstances where the perpetrator would have anticipated that the victim or victims would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Laws regarding sexual harassment fall under the relevant equal opportunity and discrimination legislation in your state or territory.

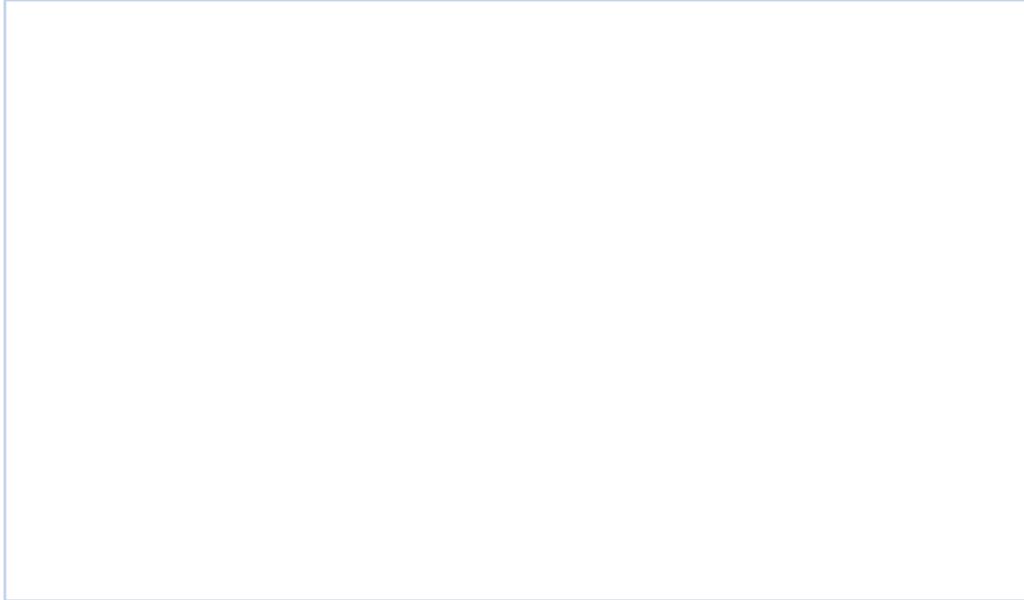
The prohibition against sexual harassment applies to management and employees. Make employees aware of the provisions of the relevant Act. Have a clear policy against sexual harassment and a complaints procedure. Employees should understand that engaging in sexual harassment may be grounds for dismissal.

Practice task 1

1. Provide three separate examples of working, cross-functional and project teams. For each team, describe its purpose and why the team has been structured this way.



2. For each of these three team examples, list two practical activities that you think would be most useful in helping to promote a consultative team culture. Justify why you have chosen these.



1B

Engage team members to achieve innovation and productivity

Economic conditions go through cycles and have peaks and troughs. The way organisations react to these cycles often determines how well they succeed or if they will survive. During downward economic cycles, many organisations are less focused on how to manage their talent and engage their employees and instead focus on how to reduce costs by cutting costs. Some shortsighted leaders may even think that employee engagement is no longer important as their employees will also focus on job security rather than productivity and innovation.

Research has consistently shown that employee engagement is positively correlated with a range of business indicators such as:

- worker performance and efficiency
- productivity
- safety
- staff attendance levels and retention rates
- customer satisfaction
- customer loyalty and retention
- profitability.



Engagement contributes to business performance

Smart leaders realise that as well as watching the expenditure side of operations they must also have longer-term employee talent management strategies to remain viable. A downward cycle may require leaders to look for immediate solutions to cut costs by reducing their workforce, but they do not lose sight of the fact that engaged employees will be the difference between surviving and thriving.

In an upward cycle, when there is the opportunity to grow and prosper, engaged employees are the key to seizing opportunities and converting them into positive outcomes. During recovery periods, engagement becomes even more crucial, as organisations will have fewer people to do more work. Engaged employees are less likely to leave the organisation as conditions improve.

Key measures of engagement

Employee engagement is a critical consideration for organisations. Most, if not all, of the other key measures that reflect and drive organisational performance (customer satisfaction, innovation, profitability, productivity and quality) are products of engaged, committed employees. Engaged employees understand the value of ensuring a positive customer experience and are more likely to demonstrate their commitment by delivering high quality products and services.

Engagement can be defined by the following four factors:

- Commitment to the job and the organisation
- Pride in the job and the organisation
- Willingness to advocate the benefits and advantages of the job and the organisation
- Satisfaction with the job and the organisation

Engagement drivers

Every organisation has its own unique dynamics, structure and culture and the answer to what drives employee engagement will be different for each organisation. In order to identify the drivers for employee engagement, internal research is required to design a suitable workforce engagement building strategy.

Past research from a number of countries and industries provides some insight into the factors that typically contribute to positive employee engagement. These are outlined here.

Factors that contribute to positive employee engagement
Engender individual commitment to organisation's core values
Train staff to meet customer needs; set high expectations of customer service
Make individual opinions count
Reward individual performance fairly; provide sufficient incentives to perform well
Provide a clear understanding of what is expected of people at work
Attract and retain talent; make pay levels competitive across similar jobs in the organisation
Demonstrate that senior leaders value employees; treat everyone with respect, regardless of who they are
Demonstrate that senior leaders have the capability to make the organisation successful
Allow people to concentrate on their job when they are in their own work area
Link individual work objectives to team work plans; encourage ownership of individual work
Provide a clear understanding of the organisation's mission
Provide career opportunities in the organisation
Provide a balance between work and personal interests that allows people to progress without sacrificing their home life
Keep the amount of pressure in individual job roles at a reasonable level; provide the necessary support from supervisors to allow people to do their job well
Give people the authority they need to do their job; ensure that people in the organisation have the capability to do their jobs effectively
Promote health and wellbeing of employees
Invest in learning and development

Levels of engagement

Engagement is a two-way process between employees and the employer. The employer attempts to engage employees who return a level of engagement to the organisation. However, research has revealed further layers to employee engagement. The first is the level of engagement that employees have with their career or profession. The second level is the engagement employees feel toward their organisation.

For example, the distinction between these levels was evident in research conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies, which looked at health professionals working for the UK National Health Service. The research clearly showed that many employees had extremely high levels of engagement with their career and professions, but were disengaged from their employer.



Organisation engagement

An engaged workforce is achieved when employees' hearts and minds are aligned to the job that they do and the organisation that they work for. This table highlights the typical Australian workforce segmentation between job engagement and workforce engagement. Note the proportions in each of the categories.

As a team leader, your job is to increase the percentage of your team who fall into the 'star' category.

Segmentation of organisation engagement and job engagement			
		Job engagement	
		Engaged	
Organisational engagement	Engaged	9% Benchwarmers (likely to underperform)	34% Stars (likely to outperform and stay)
	Not engaged	50% Disengaged (likely to underperform)	7% Free agents (likely to outperform but leave as soon as opportunity arises)

Job engagement

It is powerful information for managers and leaders to know what proportion of their workforce is engaged to both the organisation and their jobs, versus what proportion is engaged to just the organisation or just their jobs.

If employees are engaged only to their job or profession, then they will not be aligned to organisational goals and strategy. If employees are engaged to the organisation but not their job, they will be aligned to organisational goals but will find it difficult to do their jobs well and to deliver extra discretionary effort in the work that they do.

Engaged employees are:

- satisfied with their current job and their organisation as an employer
- committed to making the job and organisation successful
- proud of their organisation and the work they do
- willing to speak positively about their job and the organisation.

Practice task 2

In this table, categorise each of the factors that contribute to positive employee engagement into either job or organisational engagement categories.

Factors that contribute to positive employee engagement	Job engagement	Organisational engagement
1. I am committed to my organisation's core values.		
2. Our customers think highly of our products and services.		
3. My opinions count.		
4. I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me at work.		
5. I understand how I can contribute to meeting the needs of our customers.		
6. I have been fairly rewarded.		
7. Senior leaders value employees.		
8. Everyone is treated with respect at work, regardless of who they are.		
9. I can concentrate on my job when I am at my work area.		
10. My personal work objectives are linked to my work area's business plan.		
11. I clearly understand my organisation's mission.		
12. Senior leaders have the capability to make my organisation successful.		
13. I am encouraged to take ownership of my work.		
14. My organisation is involved in supporting the community.		
15. There are career opportunities for me at my organisation.		
16. You can balance work and personal interests at my organisation and still progress.		
17. My organisation allows me to maintain a reasonable balance between my family and work life.		
18. The amount of pressure I experience in my role is reasonable.		
19. There is sufficient incentive to perform well in my organisation.		
20. My pay is competitive compared to similar jobs in my organisation.		
21. My immediate manager gives me the support I need to do my job well.		

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Factors that contribute to positive employee engagement	Job engagement	Organisational engagement
22. People in my organisation have the capability to do their jobs effectively.		
23. My organisation is effective at attracting and retaining talent.		
24. I have the authority that I need to do my job well.		
25. My organisation promotes staff health and wellbeing.		
26. My organisation invests in its people's learning and development.		

1C

Lead and support team members in meeting expected outcomes

A manager's role is complex. It requires you to lead, motivate and direct your team, act as a support mechanism for members, and facilitate and create a working environment that helps them work at their best. A manager represents the team at higher levels in the organisation and acts as conduit for information to flow into, out of and within the team.

To complicate things further, you will find that different team members will respond to different ways of being managed. Additionally, depending on the nature of the environment in which you are working and the objectives of the team, you will need to operate differently on a day-to-day basis as work changes and develops.

HBS working knowledge, a Harvard Business School magazine, is available online at www.hbsworkingknowledge.hbs.edu (viewed 5 Aug 2014). It includes information for managers at all levels and in all industries. The magazine also provides results of research highlighting the challenges managers face when leading teams.

What do team members expect of their leader?

There have been many studies of the expectations of teams with respect to their leaders. A common theme has honesty as being one of the most critical requirements. Leaders need to fine tune the balance between keeping their teams properly informed without compromising the needs of organisations to keep some matters confidential. If honesty is a policy that is shared with respect and consideration, then team members will accept that sometimes it is not possible to be given all the facts.

Building a transparent relationship with each team member requires honesty, the ability to keep promises, being able to deliver bad news in an appropriate manner, remaining composed at all times, correctly handling mistakes, avoiding destructive comments and generally showing your team that you care about them.

Source: 'Transparency: The clear path to leadership credibility' in *The Linkage Leader*, www.linkageinc.com.

Research shows that team members expect their leaders to be:

- honest
- competent
- forward-looking
- inspiring
- intelligent
- fair-minded
- broad-minded
- courageous
- straightforward
- imaginative
- dependable.

Management styles: mentoring

In addition to ensuring your team has the resources they need in order to do their jobs well, there are other ways managers can support team members, including mentoring.

A mentoring relationship involves two people. One, the mentor, is usually a more senior staff member or someone who has considerable skills and experience. The person being mentored (mentoree) is usually someone in a more junior role who is keen to learn and capable of achieving more than they are currently. Nevertheless, anyone can benefit from being mentored.

Being a manager does not oblige you to mentor all team members. More senior or experienced team members could mentor their less-experienced counterparts, or people external to the team in your organisation or industry could mentor you or members of your team. Formal and informal mentoring may differ as shown here.

Formal	Informal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals are defined and established at the outset • Desired outcomes are specified and monitored • Available to those who apply and qualify for the program • Mentors and mentorees are paired based on their experience and learning needs • Mentoring training and support is provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No goals are specified • No outcomes are specified • Limited access • Mentors and mentorees are attracted to each other through friendship or shared interests • Mentoring happens over a long period of time

This information is from the 'Management mentors' website at: www.management-mentors.com.

Management styles: coaching

Some tactics used by coaches of sporting teams are also useful for managers in the workplace. Assuming a coaching role can be an effective strategy at an individual and a team level. The sports arena is similar to the workplace in that a team needs to be selected and trained well, there is always a goal and a plan of attack, and there is a lot that can be learnt along the way.

Helping people perform at their best and motivating them to succeed and achieve their goals is what sporting coaches do every day. Yet coaching also works well to the workplace and many managers and team leaders would do well to think of themselves as sporting coaches, making it possible for their team to achieve goals.

Managers can learn from the techniques used by sports coaches, such as:

- helping and encouraging team members to be an expert or 'pro' at what they do
- setting goals for individuals that are unique to that person and reflect their abilities and personal aspirations
- using collaborative techniques that give team members some control over the way things are done and a sense of ownership in the process
- coming up with new, different and better ways of doing things
- having an open mind when suggestions are made (and encouraging team members to do the same).

Management styles: giving feedback

Everyone needs to know how they are doing, if their work is reaching the required standard and if there are any areas they need to improve. Giving team members regular, constructive, well-placed feedback can be extremely beneficial for any team. Feedback promotes the flow of communication in a team and encourages team members to seek the advice, assistance and ideas of their colleagues.

If the feedback relates to poor performance or unacceptable behaviour, it can still have a positive outcome for the team. As long as negative feedback is given in a constructive manner, it can help team members improve their working styles for an even better result in future.

Give feedback when it is most needed, such as immediately after the team member has achieved a goal, when they handle a difficulty well or when they fail to meet a deadline. Timely feedback ensures that what you say will be more relevant because it is still fresh in the person's mind.

Management styles: training

As well as training that promotes teamwork, team members may need training in order to perform well. They may also need to attend training because of changes in organisational procedures or industry legislation (such as workplace health and safety). They may also simply be better placed to achieve more and work more effectively if training is provided.

Training is a major part of any role. At the very least, when a new employee begins with an organisation there should be an orientation program or training session.



While it costs money to provide training, it is a profitable investment for any organisation and yields long-term dividends. Providing adequate training is an organisational obligation in some workplaces (particularly where safety is concerned) and is standard practice in many others.

Management styles: career planning

Taking time to ask each team member what their goals are and what experience they have had can make a huge difference to their morale and to the contribution they can make to the team's goals. Knowing people's capabilities, motivations and interests can be a powerful tool for a manager in building a high-performance team.

Career planning may include actively helping team members find a new position in the organisation that will challenge them further and allow them to continue to grow and learn. Many organisations have in-built career planning systems, advisers and facilitators who provide assistance in developing and delivering career planning programs at a team and individual level.

The challenge of supporting a remote team

Many managers find themselves in charge of a team that is located in different places and does not work together in a geographical sense. These teams have similar needs to other teams, although special consideration needs to be taken in planning communication and team building.

Electronic communication tools such as email, telephones and teleconferencing have made remote team members' and managers' work easier. Even so, many organisations like to hold annual conferences or general meetings where colleagues from remote areas meet to make plans, review achievements and focus on new goals.



In today's global work environment, remote teams are increasingly common. They may have challenges, as shown in the following example about the Human Genome Project team, but even large, remotely located teams are able to achieve remarkable results ahead of time thanks to good planning and clear goals.

Example: physically separated teams can work effectively together

The Human Genome Project (HGP) refers to an international effort coordinated by the US Department of Energy and National Institutes of Health. The project goal was to isolate the estimated 30,000 human genes and make them accessible for further biological study. Planning commenced in 1984, the project started in 1990, and the goal of sequencing the genome was completed in 2003.

The project was highly collaborative – 18 countries participated – and required a network of international researchers. The various research centres were linked in such a way they offered many benefits, such as sharing of technology, ideas and other advances that one centre may have developed but that was used to benefit the rest.

A newsletter called Human genome news (HGN) was published during the project in order to facilitate communication among genome researchers and to inform those interested in genome research. The project was characterised by fast progress that far exceeded predictions of how long it would take – something extremely unusual for such a large and complex undertaking.

The success of the project (not to mention its early completion) is a testament to the passion and dedication of the team members; the way the project was planned, organised and managed; and the spirit of collaboration that existed between individuals, governments and communities.

Practice task 3

1. List behaviours or traits you have noticed in managers or leaders you admire. Rather than listing actual operational activities they might have undertaken, focus on the activities they have engaged in that supported the team and helped them succeed.

2. Why do you need to give positive feedback to people immediately or not long after the event?

3. Why do you need to give negative feedback to people immediately or not long after the event?

Summary

1. The role of a team leader or manager is to plan and communicate with team members to ensure all members understand the team's objectives, roles, responsibilities, priorities, workloads, expected standards and time lines.
2. Teams provide benefits for organisations and individuals, such as problemsolving, generating ideas, offering new solutions, being easier to manage, enabling largescale projects and generating a sense of belonging.
3. There are several types of teams in organisations, including working teams, cross-functional teams, project teams, self-managed teams and remote teams.
4. Teams must have a clearly stated and well-understood common goal to ensure all team members are motivated, committed and aware of what is to be achieved and their part in achieving these objectives.
5. Team plans for achieving objectives need to be agreed on by team members and clearly state how the team and its individuals will achieve their goals.
6. Team members occupy a role in a team based on the technical role or position they occupy, as well as their inherent personality traits.
7. The Belbin framework indicates that people take on action-oriented, people-oriented or cerebral roles in a team.
8. Consultation must be used in teams to gain additional insights and ideas from team members, as well as creating higher satisfaction, interest and commitment from members of the team environment.
9. Employee engagement can be defined as commitment to and pride in the job and organisation, willingness to advocate the benefits and advantages of the job and organisation, and satisfaction with the job and organisation.
10. Employee engagement occurs at two levels: job engagement and organisation engagement.
11. Team leaders and managers should support their teams through mentoring, coaching, gaining and giving feedback, training and career planning.

Learning checkpoint 1 Plan to achieve team outcomes

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in planning to achieve team outcomes.

Part A

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

In *Leading teams: setting the stage for great performances*, J. Richard Hackman, a Harvard University psychology professor, shares his extensive knowledge and research on teamwork. He suggests team leaders need to ensure there are five essential conditions in place that contribute to a team's success. These are:

1. The team must be a real team, rather than a team in name only.
2. The team must have compelling direction for its work (a clear common goal).
3. The team must have a structure that encourages and facilitates teamwork.
4. The team must operate in a supportive organisational context.
5. The team must have expert teamwork coaching.

Hackman studied what he calls 'real time teams' – teams such as airplane cockpit crews or orchestras that have no second chance to perform their work correctly. He says that examining teams such as these, which have to operate in highly stressful and pressured situations at the peak of their ability, helps us understand how everyday teams can operate more effectively. He recalls that the biggest surprise he encountered while undertaking his research on leading teams was an unhappy one:

'... how incredibly under-utilized members' talents were in most of the teams we studied ... most teams, including senior executive teams, generally leave untapped enormous pools of member talent ... team leaders and members [must] learn how to better harness and focus members' talents in carrying out the team's work – and to do so in a way that strengthens the team itself as a performing unit and that contributes to the ongoing learning and growth of individual team members.'

Source: <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2996.html>

1. How would you go about ensuring that the five conditions identified by Hackman were present for your own work team or for a team that you can observe?

Conditions for team success	How to ensure these conditions are present
The team must be a real team, rather than a team in name only	
The team must have compelling direction for its work (a clear common goal)	
The team must have a structure that encourages and facilitates teamwork	
The team must operate in a supportive organisational context	

<p>Conditions for team success</p>	<p>How to ensure these conditions are present</p>
<p>The team must have expert teamwork coaching</p>	

2. Describe whether you think each condition already exists in this team. Give examples.

3. For each condition, outline a strategy for implementing or improving it.

Conditions for team success	How to implement/improve
The team must be a real team, rather than a team in name only	
The team must have compelling direction for its work (a clear common goal)	
The team must have a structure that encourages and facilitates teamwork	
The team must operate in a supportive organisational context	

Conditions for team success	How to implement/improve
The team must have expert teamwork coaching	

4. Describe how you could ensure that you are aware of what each of your own team members is capable of, experienced in or interested in learning about.

Part B

Read the case study and complete the questions that follow.

Case study

Harvard Business School professor Teresa Amabile worked with several colleagues on the problem of what leaders can do to make their team members feel supported. The team focused on employees who worked in what they defined as 'creative' employment, such as developing new textiles and creating new databases. Their findings are relevant to team leaders in all industries, as the researchers identified a range of actions leaders take that can have either a positive or a negative effect on staff members' ability to be creative.

Amabile's team identified four leadership activities that give team members a positive perception of the level of support they receive:

1. Giving timely feedback and reacting to problems in the workplace with understanding and assistance
2. Showing support for a team member's actions or decisions; helping alleviate stressful situations for subordinates; socialising and generally interacting with the team on a personal level; keeping team members informed about stressful situations; addressing subordinates' negative feelings; interacting with the team on a personal level
3. Recognising good work privately and publicly
4. Asking for team members' ideas and opinions and acting on these ideas or wishes

The team identified three leadership activities that give team members a negative perception of the level of support they receive:

1. Checking on the status of assigned work too often; displaying an inadequate understanding of subordinates' capabilities or work; providing non-constructive negative feedback on work done; checking on the status of assigned work for too long; displaying lack of interest in subordinates' work or ideas
2. Giving assignments that are not appropriate for the team member; not providing enough clarity about an assignment; changing assignments or objectives too frequently; giving assignments that conflict with other management instructions
3. Avoiding solving problems or creating problems

Amabile discussed the leadership styles of managers from two of the teams she studied: 'Vision' was classified as a highly effective team and 'Fusion' was not.

Dave and the Vision team

The leader of the Vision team was not charismatic. Rather, he was quietly effective through a number of consistent behaviours: he monitored progress on the project at reasonable intervals, rather than making team members feel that he was monitoring them personally. In addition, he essentially monitored his own work for them, frequently reporting to them on his own project tasks. Moreover, he frequently consulted them for their ideas on the project – ideas that were often implemented.

He was a champion for the project, selling it throughout the organisation whenever he heard of doubts that others had about it. In the course of selling the project across the organisation, he gathered useful technical and tactical information that he then brought back to the team. He frequently recognised good work on the project, almost always in a public setting (such as a team meeting).

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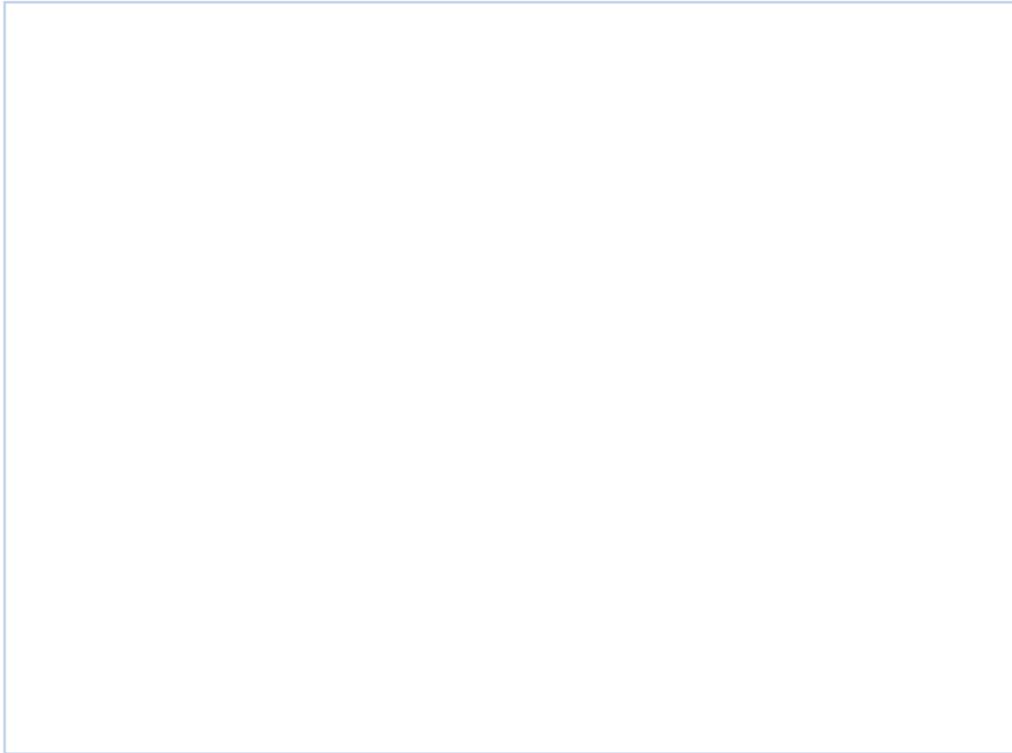
James and the Fusion team

By contrast, the leader of the Fusion team, James, was ineffective on many counts. He micromanaged the work by narrowly defining assignments, constantly inquiring about individual progress and trying to direct people's work. He didn't champion the project or serve as an information-gathering ambassador for it. James rarely recognised good work and when he did, it was in a private – rather than public – setting.

James's narrow definitions of the project tasks deprived the project of the creative ideas the team might have generated if given more latitude. Without that creative thinking, the team's performance suffered, likely reinforcing James's basic tendency to micromanage and closely monitor individual team members. The micromanaging and negative monitoring angered the team members, who wasted their time venting their frustrations about James rather than working productively on the project.

1. Dave and James have different approaches to promoting team effectiveness and leadership. How would you rate yourself as a team leader – more like a Dave or more like a James? Explain your response.

2. Give examples of work or tasks where Dave's management style would be appropriate and examples where James's management style would be appropriate. Explain why you think this is the case.



Topic 2

Lead team to develop cohesion

Cohesion is the term used to describe a number of disparate parts operating together seamlessly. Applied to a team, cohesion means that everyone understands the common purpose of the team and pulls together to achieve the goals. The role of the team leader or manager is to promote a culture of cooperation in which everyone's input is encouraged, valued and rewarded.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Provide opportunities for planning, decision-making and action
- 2B Encourage team members to take responsibility for their work
- 2C Provide feedback to team members
- 2D Recognise and address team problems
- 2E Model expected behaviours and approaches

2A

Provide opportunities for planning, decision-making and action

In a team, members are given the opportunity to raise issues and concerns, contribute knowledge and opinions, and assist in operational, decision-making and planning activities. Managers and team leaders need to work hard to foster a team culture where members are encouraged to participate and have input into the team, its outcomes and its processes.

Forums such as team meetings, one-on-one meetings, planning days, performance appraisals, conferences, communications folders, team diaries and social get-togethers all help people to develop relationships, share information, understand each other's work and discuss issues related to achieving team goals. More recently, email, videoconferencing and intranet sites have expanded opportunities for team building, especially for remote teams.



Meetings

One popular method of sharing information and facilitating teamwork is to hold a meeting. Many teams hold regular meetings; for example, daily, weekly or monthly. Meetings can be formal events with agendas and presentations, although information exchange and talking with team members can be carried out effectively on an informal basis.

Many people dread meetings and feel they are a waste of time. You have probably been to meetings that lasted too long or were not as effective as they could be.

If you decide to hold a meeting, you need to respect that the people you invite are busy and that the meeting time needs to be spent productively. Ideally, at the end of a meeting, everyone should leave feeling that they have gained from the experience. Often people think meetings are a waste of time because they have gained nothing from the time taken to attend.

Have a purpose for meeting

Many managers make the mistake of scheduling regular team and one-on-one meetings because they believe that the simple act of holding the meeting will induce team bonding and information sharing. Effective meetings, though, have a definite and known purpose. Before you start scheduling meetings, it is a good idea to think about why the meeting needs to take place.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself and suggestions to consider when deciding on the purpose for your meeting.

Do you want to promote team spirit or motivate the team?

Meetings are a great way to promote teamwork, but you will need to think about what you are going to do in the meeting and what steps or activities will directly contribute to a sense of teamwork. You could get team members to work together on deciding the agenda, or ask small groups to organise an activity or guest speaker on a topic they feel would be of interest or benefit to the team.

Encouraging team members to have a sense of ownership in the running of meetings and the issues discussed promotes interest in the agenda and in team operations. Ask team members to report successes and share specific issues with their colleagues. Meetings are an appropriate venue to reward or recognise excellent work.

Do you need to set goals or devise plans?

Planning meetings for setting goals are very important. Understand that this might take some time and that team members will want to debate these issues at length. Allocate plenty of time and consider taking meetings such as these out of the workplace, if possible. Record people's thoughts on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ensure everyone gets a say and that all opinions and ideas are heard.

Do you want to solve a problem or brainstorm ideas?

Make sure everyone has the information they need to contribute effectively and that they know their ideas, knowledge and opinions are welcome. This might mean organising information packs, sending emails or copying documents and distributing them before the meeting.

You should start the meeting by briefly identifying the reason for it, then move on to problem-solving or generating ideas. If people want to discuss other issues, make sure they have the opportunity to do this outside the problem-solving meeting by talking directly with you or placing the issue on the agenda of a more suitable meeting.

Do you want to provide training?

Think about what you want your staff to learn. Is the meeting room the best place for the training? Do you need equipment or materials in order to conduct the training? Are you the best person to do the training or should you sit in on the session as a trainee? Do all team members need to attend? Make sure staff know it's a training session, why their attendance is important, what is expected of them, who will be there (including the facilitator) and how long the session will last.

Tips for running a successful meeting

The following twelve tips can be used as a check to see whether your meetings meet the criteria for running a good meeting.

Tips for running a successful meeting

1

Do not try to squeeze everything the team needs into one weekly meeting. If you want to have a regular meeting for information-sharing purposes, do not try to conduct a training session, have a motivational activity, or solve problems at the same session. The meeting will become too long, people's interest will wane, and it will become difficult to focus.

2

Goal setting and planning activities are best done quarterly or annually.

3

Motivation and team-building activities may be more effective in an informal setting. Try going to a local park or using your company's meeting room in a less formal way. Remember to respect people's wishes, cultural backgrounds and physical abilities when planning activities.

4

Encourage participants to stick to a time frame when talking, even in informal meeting. In formal meetings, an agenda detailing each discussion item and the length of time allocated is used. The chairperson, who could be a member of the team, needs to keep time and make sure the meeting finishes on schedule without missing any important items.

5

Be organised. Make sure people have information and agendas ahead of time. Minutes taken should be brief and distributed as soon as possible once the meeting has finished.

6

Do not overuse technology. Not every meeting needs an electronic presentation, a video or overheads – a whiteboard or flip chart may be all you need. Simply talking together can encourage people to share ideas.

7

Make the meeting interactive. Ensure attendees know they are expected to participate, that they need to come prepared and that the meeting is an important time for you all to spend as a team.

- 8** If you have shy team members or if some people are nervous speaking in public, encourage them to offer their opinions without making them uncomfortable. Make sure members respect everyone's opinions and ideas – lead by example and make it clear to team members that talking over or ignoring others is not acceptable.
- 9** Work extra hard at making sure team members who join the meeting by phone or video link feel included and are not forgotten.
- 10** Only invite people who need to be there.
- 11** Keep the meeting as brief as possible. If the meeting has to be long, include breaks in the agenda.
- 12** If the meeting involves a presentation, ensure there is time for questions and answers. The presenter should not dominate a meeting.

Planning days

Many organisations arrange time for employees to come together to discuss key issues of the organisation's operations and plan for future action. Such planning sessions may last a day, a week, or more. Generally, they are carefully structured events with a set agenda.

Planning days provide an opportunity for departments and teams to have input into organisational planning as well as planning for their particular section. Strategic planning topics often include risk management, workplace health and safety procedures, environmental issues, sales performance, competitors, and future products and services – all of which will have an impact on the team's operations.

The role of a frontline manager is to encourage team members to contribute actively, as crucial decisions can be made at these times that will affect all staff.

Performance appraisals

Regular performance appraisals give employees the opportunity to provide input into the way the team operates and provide team members with a sense of ownership. Some people prefer to contribute when they are in a one-on-one situation rather than in an open forum.

Encourage team members to discuss how they think the team could improve its performance. Discussion might include suggestions for better planning strategies, or ways for staff to contribute their ideas. A team member might believe that decisions are always made by one or two people or that their ideas are not heard. Pooling ideas collected from performance reviews can be very constructive.

Make decisions

The ability to make decisions that are balanced, perceptive and based on relevant information and advice does not come easily to everyone.

Most team leaders or managers are expected to make decisions on a range of issues. Working in a close team does not necessarily make this process a difficult one. Team members need to know how decision-making works in the team and understand their role in the decision-making process.

Different teams will have different ways of making decisions. The process depends on the environment, the team culture, the organisation culture and the personalities and working styles in the team. It also depends on the manager's leadership style.

A team may use different decision-making methods in different circumstances. If this is the case, the team should understand why its advice might not be needed in some situations. Consider the different ways of coming to a decision in the scenarios that follow.

<p>Team provides significant information</p> <p>The team leader makes major decisions but relies heavily on information, opinions and advice given by team members. The team leader talks to the team about decisions that concern them and explains why he or she has chosen a certain path.</p>	<p>Team makes decision together</p> <p>The team leader facilitates and aids the decision-making process but the final decision is reached by consensus in the team.</p>
<p>Team members provide limited input</p> <p>The team leader asks team members to provide limited input prior to making a decision. This might mean input only from selected team members whose duties relate directly to the decision. Team members are informed of the decision later.</p>	<p>The team leader makes a decision</p> <p>The team leader makes a decision without consulting with team members or asking for information or opinions.</p>

Example: team relies on the extensive experience of its leaders

Commander Mick Swift is in charge of operations, education and training in the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board in Melbourne. Mick has worked in the fire brigade for 25 years; most of that time has been spent on the front line as a firefighter. These days his experience is being used to benefit all Melbourne firefighters. The learning process is ongoing and involves a significant amount of formal and on-the-job training, including learning how to work effectively in a team.

Firefighters usually work in crews of four, often representing different levels of experience and rank in the fire brigade. The ranking system begins when a firefighter is recruited. Those at lower levels are expected to work effectively as team members and those at higher levels work effectively as team leaders.

Mick explains the pattern of events when the fire brigade is dispatched to an emergency: 'On the way there in the truck, the station officer will highlight the standard procedure we follow when we attend a scene. At the scene it's the leading firefighter's job to make sure the Station Officer's instructions are carried out safely, and to fully support the more junior officers.'

Although the rank system used in the brigade may seem like communication is 'top down', Mick says this isn't the case at all. 'It's no good if new recruits just blindly follow directions. They need to be able to report dangers and make others in the team aware of what's happening.'

Often a crew will work together for years, from the same station. Mick says that working together for so long means teamwork and local knowledge are highly developed, but this can have drawbacks. The longer people are together, the more personality issues can become problems.

Practice task 4

1. What are some other tools or activities, apart from meetings, that could provide team members with opportunities to participate in running the team, including decision-making, planning and operational tasks?

2. List some strategies to encourage team members to be involved in planning and making decisions.

3. Describe two strategies that would encourage team members to participate more fully.

2B Encourage team members to take responsibility for their work

Creating a team culture where team members are enthusiastic, committed, involved, responsible and cooperative is not easy. You may have experienced teams that could have worked better than they did, where individual team members did not agree on team objectives, procedures or operational functions.

Managing a group of people, developing procedures and systems and working with them to the point where they consider themselves a unit takes time. Team leaders and managers need to promote a team culture that encourages team members to work cohesively and responsibly.



Responsibility in the team environment

A fundamental part of any effective team is the way team members work together. Working together means relying on one another, working towards a common objective and helping each other to achieve goals. Team members need to feel responsible to the team and acknowledge the role they play in achieving their goals. Furthermore, team members need to agree on and have a sense of pride in the quality of their planned outcome.

Being responsible in a team environment is more than verbally agreeing to do the work that comes your way. Team members whose performances are measured (and in some cases rewarded or recompensed) on the basis of their team effort and achievements, as opposed to being measured only on individual outcomes, will want their colleagues to work as hard as they do in order to achieve goals.

Example: a team demonstrates the consequences of not acting responsibly

Patricia is team leader of an advertising sales team in a publishing company. Once a month, she attends a senior management meeting to make a presentation on the team's performance. She relies on her three team members to prepare reports for her to use in the presentation. In previous months, Patricia has received reports just an hour before her presentation. She speaks to her team and explains why she needs the reports on time. She suggests ways in which they can plan ahead, knowing that the report is due each month.

Stephen plans his work week around getting his report done on time, rescheduling less urgent tasks. He hands his report to Patricia half a day early and she thanks him for responding to her feedback.

The next morning, Patricia is still waiting on reports from Bronwen and Mohammed.

Mohammed hands her a hard copy of his report, apologising for being late. 'I stayed back last night to get it done but I had computer problems,' he says. 'I worked on it at home and printed it out for you this morning.' Patricia is relieved to have the report, but is disappointed that Mohammed left it to the last minute again.

Bronwen is not in the office and neither Stephen nor Mohammed know where she is or the status of her report. Stephen in particular feels annoyed and disappointed – Patricia told them that if she gave a poor presentation because she didn't have the information she needed, senior management would question the whole team's performance. At 12.00 pm Bronwen arrives back from a client meeting and submits her report. Patricia has very little time to review it and finalise her presentation. She feels angry that the understanding, helpful approach she tried has been ignored by some of her staff.

It is clear to Patricia that she will have to manage the team more closely in future. She resolves to implement monitoring procedures that will make sure the reports are submitted on time.



Address problems

In many teams, plans and decisions are made by consensus. If a faulty decision or plan results in underperformance, it may be that the planning process is at fault rather than a lack of team responsibility. In such a situation, the process that led to the creation of the plan should be examined and revised so that future plans are stronger and more relevant to the team.

However, if the team members act without regard for one another or are lacking in a sense of camaraderie and teamwork, the team leader will need to work quickly and carefully to remedy the situation. Team counselling and one-on-one discussions will help, as will further efforts to build team spirit, trust and cooperation.

Two suggestions for managing team member non-cooperation are shown here.

Individual consultation	Team-based solutions
<p>If a team member is not pulling their weight, speak to them privately to find out why. If they lack knowledge or organisational skills, you could enlist the help of more able or experienced team members to mentor them or get outside training.</p> <p>If the reason is personal rather than work related, you may need to refer them to your human resources officer or suggest they seek specialist counselling.</p>	<p>If team members do not contribute, think about asking the team how such behaviour should be managed. Solutions can be incorporated into team policies and procedures that are devised and updated by the team.</p>

Tips for developing and maintaining an effective team

Here are some tips on how to develop and maintain an effective team.

Create subgroups

If you are managing a large team, split the team into subgroups to work on small projects. Move people around when the next project or problem comes along so all members get the chance to work closely with each other.

Establish accountability

Make the team accountable for their actions as a whole. Have team members report to each other on what they have done. If they have not completed their allocated work or met their responsibilities, ensure there is recourse at the team level.

Conduct an audit

Conduct a skills, knowledge and interests audit in your team on areas that are relevant to their allocated tasks. Make the results known in your team and encourage members to share their knowledge and seek help from colleagues.

Share problems

Encourage team members to share any problems they have with work in meetings. Each team member can raise an issue they have and others can help them solve it.

Learn from mistakes

Make sure team members know that it's okay to make a mistake. The whole team can learn from mistakes as long as members ask for help and are willing to help others when necessary.

Avoid a 'blame culture'

Do not allow team members to reproach or attack colleagues who they feel they are not contributing. Provide avenues and forums for the team to talk about responsibilities in a constructive manner and deal with problems cooperatively.

Practice task 5

For each of these case studies, write down the consequences of a team member not taking responsibility for their work. Think about operational problems that their actions might cause as well as how their fellow team members might feel, and the affect it would have on them. Also, make a note of how you would try to manage this problem if you were the team leader.

Case study	Consequences/management plan
A member of a team of flight attendants arrives late for a flight with no warning.	

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<p>A team member in a warehouse team takes extended breaks during the day and doesn't finish his orders in time for dispatch.</p>	
<p>Two team members in a customerservice unit are not prepared for the team's weekly meeting and their agenda items have to be skipped.</p>	

continued ...

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<p>A team of engineers are preparing drawings for a big project; one engineer doesn't check the data properly and submits incorrect drawings.</p>	
<p>A team of five takes it in turns to order stationery, tea and coffee and other office supplies. One person forgets to place the order when it's their turn and the team runs out of coffee, paper and printer toner.</p>	

2C

Provide feedback to team members

The process of communication in a team is a critical one. Team members need to communicate well between themselves and feed information to their manager; team leaders need to provide enough information and guidance to their team and communicate with their own manager.

One of the most important elements in the communication process is feedback. The process of providing constructive feedback in a team is a sign that the team is truly working together. People who do not seek or give feedback are running the risk of working in an information vacuum or isolating their colleagues. This includes managers as well as team members.

Receiving feedback from team members can be invaluable. As well as learning about what you could do to improve next time, you can benefit from the experience and insights others provide.

Informal and ongoing feedback

Feedback can be sought and provided in many situations, formal and informal.

When instructions or requests are given, elicit verbal feedback as to whether team members understand the information provided. Sometimes people say they understand when they don't. A good way to get direct feedback is to ask questions; the replies will show what has been understood. You can then clarify the aspects (if any) that need more explanation.

Ways of receiving feedback from your team are shown below.

Ask team members for feedback on your performance as a manager

This could be in general or in specific situations; for example, 'Do you think that the information I provide to you prior to brainstorming meetings is adequate?'

Encourage team members to provide feedback to each other

Team members can give each other feedback and recognition when they have worked hard, made an effort or achieved something they have been working towards.

Encourage team members to provide feedback to the team as a whole

The team can give itself feedback in sessions that are structured so that people assess the team's overall performance, as opposed to focusing on individual members' achievements or shortcomings.

Encourage frequent feedback

Feedback can be sought several times over the course of a project or activity and can be used to check how work is progressing.

Use KPIs to monitor team progress

Key performance indicators are a form of objective feedback that shows a team how progress is tracking against targets.

Pass on relevant information that you get from other sources

Give your team feedback on what happens at management meetings or other projects you are involved in as a representative of the team.

Feedback mechanisms

For many people, acknowledgment of a job well done, especially in a public setting, is reward enough, without the need for monetary or physical rewards. Taking the time to acknowledge the efforts of individuals, groups or the whole team in meetings where colleagues or more senior staff are present is an excellent way of showing people that their contribution is important and valued. Positive feedback involves explaining to the people or person involved just what their hard work means and how they have made a difference.

However, it is also necessary to give and obtain negative feedback if people are to learn where and how they can improve their performance. Managers need to create a culture of constructive criticism rather than blame, and encourage staff to learn from their mistakes rather than trying to cover up problems.

Feedback can be given verbally and in writing. It can be public and private, informal and formal. Managers who ensure that feedback is used to good effect in their team will reap the rewards of a more involved and informed team.

Here are two popular ways of giving feedback to teams and individuals.

360-degree feedback

This highly structured method of giving feedback involves all team members giving other individuals in the team a rating or qualitative feedback on their performance.

For example, team members could give each other a score out of 10 on points such as communication, team spirit, contribution and preparedness at meetings.

The results can be delivered anonymously, with participants receiving a report showing the scores they received on each point. 360-degree feedback can be confronting and needs to be managed carefully. Getting low scores from team members can be a shock; on the other hand, getting high scores lets you know that colleagues appreciate your efforts. 360-degree feedback is a useful tool, especially when plans are put in place to correct poor results.

Feedback during performance reviews

Any kind of performance feedback needs to be given carefully, especially if it is negative. Feedback that constitutes part of a performance review can affect a person’s career and advancement prospects and, in many cases, their earnings (if performance reviews are linked to bonuses or salary).

Positive and negative feedback needs to be given constructively. Try to give examples and to be balanced in what you say. Link the feedback to key result areas, performance indicators, or team goals, and state the effect the positive or negative performance has had on team outcomes. If feedback is negative, move on to ways you can work together to remedy the situation.

Example: a manager gives feedback on a job well done

Jeremy, a team leader, is providing feedback at a team meeting on a recently completed project.

‘I want to take the time now to talk about the work that Margie and Harif have been doing on the new customer service questionnaire. They have worked very hard on this project and last week the new questionnaire replaced the old one.

‘Initial reports they have given me have shown that the new questionnaire provides us with 60 per cent more data on each client than we had before. This is already having a major impact on our product design department. The completion of the new questionnaire is one of the key result areas for our team, so that task can now be crossed off our list.

‘On behalf of the team, thanks for your hard work and congratulations on a job well done.’

After the team meeting, Jeremy meets privately with Margie and Harif and talks to them about their project in more detail, asking them what they learnt and what they would do differently next time. She praises some specific aspects of the project, and reinforces her previous statement that they have made a major contribution to the team.

Finally, Jeremy asks Margie and Harif for their feedback on her performance as a manager during the project.



Practice task 6

List three strategies that could be used to provide feedback to encourage, value and reward team members.

2D

Recognise and address team problems

Every day, teams of all kinds, in all industries, come across issues and problems that could mean that team goals will not be met if the issues are not dealt with, managed and planned for. Sometimes, despite the best plans, the right people and a productive team culture, things go wrong. In such circumstances, having contingency plans and a flexible, positive team culture will help get the team back on track.

Common problems that can impede a team's progress are listed below.

Common problems that arise in teams

- Personality clashes
- A lack of understanding or acceptance of steps needed to achieve goals
- Team members do not function effectively as a result of poor leadership or direction
- Lack of resources, knowledge or skill
- Changes to the organisation's (and therefore the team's) operational plan
- Poor planning
- Decision-making processes are unclear
- Bickering, poor attitudes or other negative behaviour
- Changing priorities
- Excessive demand or expectations placed on individuals or the whole team
- Team members feel their work and achievements are not recognised or rewarded

Reasons for team failure

In *The five dysfunctions of a team: a leadership fable*, leading business researcher Patrick Lencioni maintains that there are five reasons teams fail. The five reasons why teams fail are provided below.

Absence of trust

Caused by an inability of team members to be open with each other about their mistakes and weaknesses

Fear of conflict

Results from an absence of trust and may lead to unhealthy conflict or hidden tensions because team members are incapable of debating issues honestly

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Lack of commitment

Results from the inability to participate in decision-making, meaning staff will not commit to the decisions

Avoidance of accountability

Arises when team members have no commitment to group decisions

Inattention to results

Occurs when team members put their individual needs (ego, career, recognition or reward) or even their disunity above the collective needs of the team

Example: a team that failed to achieve its goal

Prime Printing is relocating to larger premises to accommodate its rapidly expanding operations. The company is managed by a dynamic CEO who has considerable drive and energy, and expects the same from his staff.

A team is formed with representatives from the company's six departments to develop a suitable floor plan to accommodate new, larger presses and a more spacious office set-up.

Lorina, the administration manager, is appointed team leader. She is full of enthusiasm and has a clear idea of how the layout of new premises should look, even having a floor plan drawn up which she presents for comment at the team's initial meeting. The other team members do not share Lorina's enthusiasm for the task. Petra from the design team and Tony from sales and marketing have been co-opted to the team. Only Terry, the production manager, keen to ensure he gets plenty of space for the new machines, has volunteered.

Petra finds the team meetings, additional reading and research to be an unwelcome intrusion on her time. Likewise, Tony finds it difficult to fit the team requirements into his schedule, particularly as he has to liaise with internal and external customers. Petra and Tony often attend meetings unprepared. They contribute little, responding only to issues that directly affected them or their departments, or to answer direct questions.

Due to long-service leave and the pre-Christmas rush, only four of the six departments are represented at team meetings. The team begins to fall behind schedule. With only two months to go, several key milestones have not been met. Although Lorina senses tension in the group, she ploughs on ahead, believing that by keeping the team focused on its milestones, she will be able to avoid any overt conflicts. However, a flippant remark from Terry leads to full-blown argument between the team members.

Signs that things are not going to plan

Reading the signs from a team that things are not as they should be can be tricky. Little can be done to fix a situation once deadlines are missed or when a crisis point is reached. You need to be aware of problems and address them when they arise, not after the event.

Promoting a strong sense of communication in the team, asking team members for opinions and feedback on how things are going and being involved with the team at an operational level will help avoid problems. The more involved you are, the sooner you will notice if things are going downhill.

Symptoms of a team that needs help:

- A general lack of enthusiasm
- Non-stop bickering
- Inability to reach consensus on issues
- Personal agendas being placed ahead of the team's
- Team members complaining to others who are not part of the team
- Dominant team members pressuring or overshadowing their colleagues
- Missed deadlines
- Work not being shared equally

Manage complaints and feedback

Complaints and feedback from individual team members who come forward with issues should be taken very seriously. If someone has taken the time to share their concerns with you, it is vital that you listen to what they have to say. After they have stated the problem, turn the focus to a solution by asking them if they have any ideas that would be helpful, and perhaps even what they would like you to do.



Remember, though, that sometimes issues important to one person may not be serious for the team, even though the problem still needs addressing. Also, people sometimes just need to let off steam. Team members may simply want to talk through a problem with you rather than take action.

Address problems

A good team leader is a sounding board for ideas – someone who can empathise with and help staff solve problems. Even so, staff should not become over-reliant on the team leader's intervention; this could lead to them presenting a constant stream of minor problems to their manager that they could deal with themselves.

Depending on the problem or situation, the team leader may need to raise the matter with their colleagues, manager or other senior managers, or consult with specialist staff in the organisation.

When issues arise, team members need to identify the type of problem and the potential impact it could have if it is not resolved. Here are some questions that may help to identify the problem in the team.

Questions to consider when analysing a team problem

- Is the problem related to the way in which the team works?
- Is the problem an external problem?
- Is the problem a result of another problem?
- What affect is the problem having (or likely to have)?

What procedures might apply?

The first step is to refer to any standard operating procedures that apply to the whole organisation or your team and dictate the action you need to take. Following procedures is particularly important when legislation governs how employees should handle certain issues, such as workplace health and safety. These policies often identify when and how problems should be addressed, who needs to be involved and even the steps that need to be taken during the process. The same is true of some human resources issues, particularly those that involve reprimanding employees for non-performance, hiring and firing, or dealing with a grievance.

Again, depending on the problem and the type of organisation the team operates in, raising an issue may be done on a formal or informal basis, or both.

Below are some of the strategies that can be used in each approach.

Formal methods	Informal methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing standard forms or templates that your organisation has in place to deal with this circumstance • Writing a report that explains the problem faced by the team, the impact the problem will have and suggested solutions • Sending an email to specialist staff in a short-report format requesting a response or assistance • Requesting a meeting with key staff • Reporting on the issue using a regular formal reporting or feedback mechanism such as a monthly review meeting, management presentation or report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a phone conversation with a specialist staff member (e.g. WHS, HR, finance) • Discussing the issue on an informal basis during a meeting or get-together • Chatting to informally to colleagues who could help or advise

Negotiation

Negotiation is another approach that should be considered in addressing team problems. There are a number of outcomes that can be achieved through negotiation processes. In a team context, it is imperative to seek a win–win outcome. Other outcomes (such as win–lose) will build up long-term resentment, which can be disruptive and counterproductive in a team context.

Negotiating jointly is most appropriate in a team context. This involves coming to an agreement where everyone gets what they want, reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement. Mutual trust is required in joint negotiation so it requires honesty and integrity from all parties. Both sides work together to come up with a compromise solution to suit everyone’s best interests. In this process it is important that each party tries to see things from the other’s perspective.

A strategy for successful negotiation

Below are some tips for using when negotiating in a team context.

Negotiation tips
Listen carefully to the arguments of the other party and assess the logic of their reasoning.
Clarify issues you are not clear about by asking how, why, where, when and what questions.
List all the points that are important to both sides and identify the key issues.
Identify any personal agendas.
Question generalisations and challenge assumptions.
Identify common ground.
Be aware of outside forces that may be affecting the problem.
Keep calm and use assertive rather than aggressive behaviour.

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Use tact and diplomacy to diffuse tensions.

Use verbal and non-verbal persuasion skills. Use open, encouraging body language such as mirroring, rather than appearing defensive or closed.

Know when to compromise. Offer concessions where necessary, but minor ones at first.

Distinguish between needs (important points on which you can't compromise) and interests (points on which you can concede ground).

Allow the other party to save face if necessary via small concessions.

Make sure there is an agreed deadline for resolution.

Decide on a course of action and come to an agreement.

The final agreement is summarised and written down at the conclusion of the negotiations.

Plan for alternative outcomes if you can't reach agreement.

Seek external assistance

When you are raising a problem that could jeopardise the success of your team with people externally, keep your team members informed of what you are doing to solve the problem, why you are bringing it to the attention of key people and what they can do to help.

Remember that it may not be appropriate to share everything with the team. For instance, if you have a dominant team member who is causing problems for others, you may want to seek the advice of a human resources staff member.

Ensuring corrective action is swift, appropriate and targeted is critical when overcoming the challenges presented by any problem. Follow agreed protocols and processes for problem identification and resolution using resources external to the team. Discuss issues and, if possible, solve problems in the team. At the very least, problems that arise can be discussed and learnt from, so future issues of a similar nature are anticipated, planned for or avoided completely.

Contingency planning

One of the important aspects of any planning process, and an area that is particularly important from a manager's perspective, is contingency planning. Contingency planning addresses risks, that is, uncontrollable events that could affect the work of a team.

Contingency planning is one way that risks to a team can be anticipated, minimised and, if possible, avoided completely. It has additional benefits in a team situation as the process itself encourages teamwork and cooperative problem-solving.

One way of managing risks is to allocate major risk areas to individuals or subgroups in the team. This also builds team involvement, gives team members new challenges and promotes a sense of ownership in the team. In many teams, though, much of the responsibility for contingency planning will fall upon the team leader or manager.

Team-based contingency planning is comprised of five basic steps, which are outlined below.

Team-based contingency planning

1

Run a dedicated brainstorming session. Ask team members to come prepared to develop a list of things that could stand in the way of the achieving its goals. Be exhaustive and listen to everyone's concerns. Write down every issue raised and group the issues into logical chunks or major areas. You might want to use a structure such as talking about team issues, then resource issues, and so on. You can categorise the risks based on how likely they are to happen and their potential affect.

2

Develop solutions. Either as a team or in smaller subgroups, work through the major areas you have identified as being a threat to the team's progress. If there are a lot, do it in order of priority. Come up with one or more solutions to the problem should it occur, with a view to minimising impact on the team.

3

Develop avoidance strategies. For each of the major risk areas, develop strategies that could help you avoid the problem completely.

4

Incorporate strategies into team plans, procedures and guidelines. Make sure all team members know their roles in planning for and managing risks.

5

Prepare checklists to help you identify and record potential risks. Work systematically to identify possible risks, determine their likelihood, and state the consequences if they did happen. Document the results in a simple-to-access, easy-to-follow format. Intranet sites are handy for storing this information, but a ring binder, kept in a central location, can be just as useful.

Practice task 7

1. List the signs that indicate a team is not operating to its maximum potential.

2. Prepare a checklist of indicators that could be used to monitor team cohesiveness and effectiveness.

2E

Model expected behaviours and approaches

There are a number of common behaviours recognised in an effective team leader of a productive team. In particular, an effective team leader displays a range of abilities as described below.

Communicates effectively

An effective team leader is able to share information and communicate to the team about:

- past success (the goals that have been achieved)
- future goals
- how the team can achieve these goals
- support mechanisms for the team.

When communicating with their team members, good team leaders use a consultative approach. This entails actively listening to team member concerns and opinions before deciding on a strategy. An effective consultative approach also means that team leaders should provide feedback to their team members on a regular basis.

Recognises the professional development needs of team members

An effective team leader will identify the professional development needs of the team members and will initiate a process to ensure that each person's skills and knowledge are extended. This has direct benefits to the individual and the team, as it increases morale in the team and helps to ensure that the best is attained from each team member. Delegation can be an effective way of providing team members with professional development opportunities.

Sets goals and motivates the team to achieve them

An effective team leader will set clear, identifiable and achievable goals and will be able to plan and monitor a team's progress towards these goals. The steps to achieving these goals will need to be mapped out and discussed with each team member.

Provides encouragement

Effective team leaders encourage and promote creative and innovative approaches to problem-solving.

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Models acceptable behaviour

An effective team leader provides the team with an appropriate role model. The team leader will demonstrate the behaviour and skills required by the team to undertake their roles in the enterprise.

Role modeling is an important element in the development of individual team members as it enables the team to observe an example on which they can base their own performance and behaviour.

Leadership styles

The way in which a team leader uses their skills and knowledge to lead their team can be described as their leadership style. A leadership style is the way in which a team leader provides direction to their team, implements a plan to achieve a goal or desired outcome and motivates their team to achieve. There are many views on leadership styles and names attributed to the different types of styles; three distinct styles that you will probably be able to recognise from your own experience are described below.

Team leaders will usually employ a combination of leadership styles depending on the situation and their team. The skill level and the maturity of the team, in terms of their ability to work together effectively, will influence the style a team leader chooses to apply to a particular situation. Here are descriptions of these three leadership styles.

Authoritarian

The authoritarian (or autocratic) leader dictates what is to be achieved and how it will be achieved. This style is often used when a team leader begins working with a new team or in a situation where an outcome needs to be achieved quickly.

Participative

The participative (or democratic) leader works in consultation with their team when making decisions. This style motivates the team and draws on the skills of individual team members to achieve goals.

Delegative

The delegative (or free rein) leader allows the team to make decisions with little input or direction. This style suits highly skilled and mature teams.

Practice task 8

1. List five behaviours that an effective team leader should model.

2. Describe three leadership styles.

3. Think of an effective team leader you have worked with – this could be in the workplace, volunteer organisation, sporting team or at school. Write a paragraph describing their leadership style. Did they use different styles for different situations? What behaviours did they model to the team?

Summary

1. In the context of a work team, cohesion means that everyone in the team understands the common purpose of the team and pulls together to achieve the team's goals.
2. Developing team cohesion results in team members using their particular knowledge and skills effectively to help each other, take responsibility for their actions and tasks, solve problems and use everyone's ideas and suggestions to improve team performance.
3. Opportunities need to be provided for the team to give input into planning and decision-making. Meetings, planning days and performance appraisals can be used to provide these opportunities.
4. Team members need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their work and understand the responsibility they have to the team to help it achieve its goals.
5. Team members can be encouraged to take responsibility through gaining agreement on what is expected from them, developing a sense of pride in the team's work, and measuring performance based on individual efforts as well as their overall contribution to the team.
6. Problems may arise where team members act individually and without regard for one another. The team leader will need to act to remedy the situation through counselling, discussion and coaching.
7. Feedback needs to be provided to team members to encourage, value and reward their contributions to the team.
8. Providing constructive feedback is a sign that a team is working together. People who do not seek or give feedback run the risk of working in an information vacuum without a complete assessment of their own and the team's performance.
9. Feedback can be provided informally through discussions, or formally through 360-degree feedback, performance reviews and recognition tools.
10. Problems can arise in the team due to any number of reasons such as personality clashes, lack of understanding of team roles and objectives, lack of resources, poor planning and excessive demands being placed on team members.
11. Signs that problems may exist in the team include a lack of enthusiasm and motivation, frequent bickering, dominant team members pressuring less dominant members, and missed deadlines.
12. Issues that arise in the team need to be addressed by identifying whether the problem is related to the way in which the team works, the team structure and personalities in it, or external factors.
13. A leadership style is the way in which a team leader provides direction to their team, implements a plan to achieve a goal or desired outcome and motivates their team to achieve it.

Learning checkpoint 2 Lead team to develop cohesion

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in leading teams to develop cohesion.

For this learning checkpoint you should use a team with which you are involved, or one that you are able to observe. If you do not have access to a suitable team, you may use the case study below.

Case study

It has been described as one of Australia's most controversial, indeed devastating, Olympic moments: when Sally Robbins stopped rowing in the women's eights finals in the 2004 Athens Olympics.

About 400 metres from the finish line, with the Australians a medal chance, Sally Robbins 'collapsed'. There was disbelief from all who witnessed the event, her team mates included, that such a precise rower could have just stopped rowing. But Sally had stopped rowing in other events before – perhaps as many as nine times before in trials and competitions leading up to the Olympics.

In a crucial pre-Olympic trial in Europe, Sally had faded at the finish. Team members later acknowledged that their doubts about Sally's mental capacity to complete a race under pressure were as good as confirmed at this point. Nevertheless, replacing her so close to the Olympics was not considered an option.

Despite harbouring concerns about Sally's capacity to finish races, the team and their coach controlled their feelings and were prepared to support her. After all, she was an integral part of the team. She was fit: with good coaching and proper preparation she would be competitive. Besides, according to Rowing Australia, she had earned her selection.

Australia finished the final in last place. At the end of the race Sally was able to sit up and row with the rest of the crew back to a pontoon to take the boat out of the water. A lack of physical fitness was clearly not the cause of her collapse.

In the days, weeks, months and years following the incident there were accusations and recriminations as the remainder of the team turned on Sally. Only in the wash up did the other members acknowledge that there had been unresolved doubts about a crew member who, when questioned in the days before the Olympics, had promised her team mates she could do it and would give it all she had.

Adapted from: 'She's not there', *Australian Story*, ABC TV

The five reasons that teams fail (according to Lencioni, 2002) are below.

1. List the potential impact of each of the five reasons for failure on your team's effectiveness. Provide examples.
2. Suggest a solution to address each impact you have listed. Refer to the strategies for developing team cohesion to support your responses.

1. Absence of trust
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to develop trust in the team

2. Fear of conflict
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to use conflict and deal with differences positively

3. Lack of commitment
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to inspire team members to be committed

4. Avoidance of accountability
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to make the team accountable

5. Inattention to results
Potential impact on the team
Solutions – how to stay focused on results

Topic 3

Participate in and facilitate work team

Work quality and innovation levels are considerably enhanced by working in teams as opposed to working alone. Teams engender a spirit of cooperation and support that makes working towards a common goal an enjoyable and stimulating experience. A team leader or frontline manager should stimulate communication between team members and encourage them to participate in and be responsible for all team activities, not only their own work tasks. Leaders should act as role models in fostering and developing a productive team.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Encourage participation in team activities
- 3B Help the team identify and resolve problems
- 3C Lead by example

3A

Encourage participation in team activities

Be aware of the actions team members can take to participate fully in their team. If a team member is lacking in any of the behaviours that promote team cohesion and operation, encourage and guide them, and suggest ways they could improve their performance. The challenge is to do this in a way that is not threatening, so that it is received in a positive light.

Sometimes a new team can start out with the best of intentions, but it fails because some or all of the goals that were set were not realistic. Here are some behaviours that are associated with outstanding team members. As a role model, how do you rate yourself in these principles?

Characteristics of team members who participate and work responsibly

1

Take part in team meetings and other team events and functions.

2

Are prepared to contribute by being up to date, knowledgeable and informed.

3

Communicate information and ask questions, listen to others and have a proactive attitude.

4

Show concern for others, give feedback and show a general willingness to talk through ideas and issues.

5

Understand the team's goals and plans.

6

Help develop teamwork plans and set objectives and goals.

- 7** Get to know team members and take a genuine interest in the team's progress.
- 8** Are concerned if KPIs or other measures indicate progress is sub-standard.
- 9** Are accountable if their actions result in poor performance.
- 10** Know personal strengths and use them to the team's advantage.
- 11** Know personal weaknesses and work to improve or overcome these.
- 12** Commit to tasks and rise to challenges.

Gain trust and encourage responsibility

A team leader must work hard to create a trusting relationship with the team as a whole and with individual team members. If team members are unwilling to share information or talk about their ideas, raise concerns or make complaints, they need to be encouraged to contribute.

Spend time in team meetings purposefully asking people to share their knowledge or their ideas and to discuss concerns. Team members should be provided with different forums in which to contribute. Some people might not feel comfortable speaking up in a meeting and some issues need to be dealt with sensitively and discreetly.

Recognise people's opinions by taking them seriously and by showing the team that ideas and opinions can make a big difference. Use team members' ideas wherever possible and make sure that others in the organisation know it was their idea, not yours.



Encouragement and accountability

When team goals are met or individuals in a team meet their own objectives, reinforce that their hard work and effort have resulted in their great performance. Ask them if and how they think they could have done things better, what they would do if they had to do it all over again and what experiences they could share with other teams or their colleagues.

Make sure your team members see or know that you promote them, their capabilities and hard work to the wider organisation. The team should be proud of its achievements.

Make sure the team and team members are accountable for measurable goals and objectives. Consider a recourse action if members are not being accountable or do not take responsibility for team goals. Consult with your team as to what form such action might take.

Example: information sharing is imperative for teams to function effectively

Michelle Williams is a registered nurse who works in the dialysis unit at a small hospital in suburban Melbourne. The dialysis unit cares for day-stay patients with chronic kidney conditions and is associated with the Alfred Hospital, one of Melbourne's large public hospitals.

Michelle works two days per week at the unit. Each shift has a nurse unit manager (the team leader), an associate unit manager (second in charge) and up to three registered nurses. The primary duties of the unit manager are administrative, although the role also calls for the manager to provide clinical care for patients. The manager organises rosters, answers telephones and liaises with medical staff and doctors at the hospital and at their parent hospital, the Alfred.

Michelle explains that working in the dialysis unit means that staff need to be flexible; on some shifts the associate unit manager is in charge and occasionally one of the registered nurses takes on the manager's duties. Each staff member also has responsibility for a different aspect of the unit, such as quality, infection control, stores or pharmacy.

Patients come to the unit three days a week. On each shift, one nurse cares for three patients. Because the patients are regular visitors, the staff get to know them and manage each person's care on a one-on-one basis (a practice known as primary nursing). Even though the management of patient treatment is done individually, the whole team provides care.

The unit has developed procedures to ensure that the team on duty at any given time works well together. A close level of team interaction is reinforced at shift level through information sharing. After patients have begun dialysis, the three nurses on duty do a round of the patients together. The three nurses, and the patient, discuss the patient's health and the treatment that is being provided.

Communication between the nurses, who work different shifts and may not see each other for weeks at a time, is facilitated further through a communication folder, a unit diary, and files for each nurse. These tools allow nurses to communicate directly with each other and stay up to date with memos and other information.

Practice task 9

Case study

A team starts a new year or a project with enthusiasm and the best of intentions. They meet to debate their goals, create a set of team rules, and allocate tasks through a carefully thought-out work plan. They agree they want to achieve all their goals and work like a well-oiled machine. Their team leader is thrilled and provides glowing reports to the section manager. Everyone expects a lot from this group.

Their team goals and rules are typed, printed and posted on the wall. Everyone admires them. A month later the fancy statements are forgotten as everyone is working furiously on tasks and hurrying to meet deadlines.

The team rules, such as 'We will take responsibility for our actions as a team and as individuals', 'Everyone will communicate openly', 'We will contribute ideas and opinions' and 'We will listen to and value all team members' contributions', are a distant memory. Team meetings become a place where blame is allocated and people lose their temper.

The team leader is frustrated and a little scared. The project started well, but the workload was huge and a few deadlines were missed early on. The section manager is starting to ask questions about how the team is working. The team leader needs to get the team and the project back on track.

1. What do you think the team leader has or hasn't done to cause this situation?

2. List some opportunities and strategies the team leader could implement to get the team back on track.

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3. What are some things you could do to encourage participation from a team member who does their job well but has no interest in team camaraderie?



3B

Help the team identify and resolve problems

Things can and do go wrong in team situations and team leaders need to be able to recognise warning signs of potential problems before they become major issues. Techniques such as contingency planning can go a long way toward managing and avoiding major risks to team effectiveness.

Individual team members also need to be vigilant and on the lookout for potential problems that may arise. They need to be able to communicate the problem and its potential effect on the rest of the team. Team members who identify problems and are proactive problem-solvers are highly valuable staff members who need to be encouraged in their efforts.

A team that solves problems cooperatively and learns from the experience is destined for success. How do team leaders help their teams do this, particularly if each working day presents a suite of challenges for your team to overcome?



Participate in identifying problems

It is wise to have a management plan in place for when problems arise in your team. Knowing who to ask for help, such as specialists (who may be internal or external to your organisation) is very beneficial. Also, knowing the potential impact of likely scenarios gives you time to consider and implement actions and alternatives. Anticipating and planning for likely situations that could cause problems, such as team members resigning, going on leave or calling in sick ensures that you are prepared for these eventualities.

Problems take on many forms and have various levels of severity and urgency. Typical problems might fall into the categories that follow; some examples could be classified into more than one category.

People-related issues

- Team members do not get along
- One or more team members are unusually shy or overbearing
- Team members are not capable of doing the work
- Team members are underused
- Team members are bored with the work

Task and process issues

- An important process is not in place
- The process does not work
- The task is difficult or meaningless

Time and resource issues

- Not enough time to complete tasks
- Not enough people to do the work
- Equipment is inadequate or difficult to use

Communications and information-related issues

- Team members misunderstand directions or do not read or listen to information
- Processes are not understood or communicated
- Team members do not communicate with each other
- Feedback is not provided or asked for

Cultural issues

- Team members do not respect and value diversity
- There is a lack of teamwork and cooperation

Leadership issues

- The team has no direction
- The team does not understand or accept goals
- The decision-making process is unclear
- Team members do not feel valued

Participate in solving problems

Encourage a proactive attitude in your team. Do not wait for problems to occur that will cause major operational issues for your organisation and result in your team not meeting goals. Demonstrate the benefits of avoidance strategies, early detection and swift action.

One way to encourage your team to take a proactive approach to problems and challenges is to lead by example. If you have problems that you think your team members could help you with, ask them for assistance. You could include a regular five-minute session in team meetings where you ask whether members have seen or anticipated any problems that might impede their progress or the team.

When team members identify a problem, think proactively about solutions, or use their initiative to avoid potential issues, ensure that they are recognised and rewarded for their actions.

Have an open communication policy. If team members want to raise issues with you in a private setting, as opposed to a public team meeting, they should feel able to speak freely with you about problems involving other staff members or sensitive issues.

Find solutions for team leaders

If your team's efforts to resolve an issue are unsuccessful, consider the following suggestions.

Consult your manager

If a problem is beyond your control and will prevent your team from achieving its goals, raise the matter with your manager as soon as possible.

Seek expert advice

If a personality clash or disagreement between team members cannot be resolved, contact your HR department or an external mediator for dispute resolution and counselling.

Consult colleagues

Talk to colleagues or other managers who may have experienced a similar problem to see if they have any useful advice.

Do some research

Consult books, business magazines and research journals. There are many well-known and tested theories and frameworks about problem-solving that you could apply to your workplace.

Consider pros and cons

If your problem is deciding between two or more options, try listing the pros and cons of each option. This can help clarify thoughts and identify options that will deliver the greatest benefit.

Team and group problem-solving

In today's organisations, team and group decision-making and problem-solving has become a part of everyday organisational life. Group problem-solving can potentially produce superior solutions through one or more of the following aspects.

Criteria

As group membership increases, more stakeholders will be represented and their interests can be incorporated into the criteria used in the problem-solving process.

Cause/effect

By including people with specialised expertise, we tend to increase the likelihood that more accurate knowledge will be used in the problem-solving process.

Alternatives

Groups tend to develop a greater number of options than individuals; groups also come up with more creative solutions by working on a problem together.

Commitment to decision

Individuals contributing to a problem's solution tend to feel greater ownership of the solution, especially when their identities are tied to it. Motivation to properly implement the solution can be increased through team participation, and resistance to change can be decreased.

Role of a leader in group problem-solving

The first issue for the leader is to define his/her style. This could be anything from completely autocratic to full participation. If the leader opts for some form of group problem-solving, it is important that one individual be assigned as the process leader, or facilitator. This person has the responsibility of guiding the group through the problem-solving process. Here are some guidelines:

- The leader should decide if he or she desires to take an advocacy role for a particular solution. If so, he or she should have someone else facilitate the problem-solving process.
- The leader must decide if he or she has the skills to facilitate the process. If not, once again, someone else should take on this role.
- Sometimes a process leader (facilitator) emerges as the process progresses. It is important for the leader to turn over the process reigns explicitly rather than leave group members confused as to who is in charge of the process.

Group problem-solving situations

Generally speaking we can differentiate two types of group problem-solving situations as outlined below.

Group model

In the group model, members of the group attempt to arrive at a solution that is satisfactory to each group member; that is, satisfactory with respect to his or her individual interest. There is no need or expectation of a common group goal or focus. The only issue is that the decision satisfies the interest of the members acting as individuals or representatives of stakeholder groups.

Team model

In the team model, there is an overriding group goal independent of the goals and interests of the individual members. When the team operates effectively, each member focuses on the unifying team goals, placing his or her interests subservient to the group goal.

Other variables

The degree of status differentiation among group members can affect the problem-solving dynamic. Are all members at the same organisational level? Is the leader of the team the formal leader of the organisational unit?

Is there an agreed upon decision process? Over time groups tend to develop a problem-solving schema or script. This may be an effective or ineffective process.

Is the group an actual unit in the organisation's structure (for example, all members are part of a department reporting to the same supervisor) or is the group an ad hoc group with members representing many functional areas?

Group problem-solving process

At the outset of the meeting or process the leader should lay out the process being used so that members have an idea of where they are headed. This should include the following points on problem identification.

Problem identification

- Define the problem in situational or behavioural terms.
- The problem definition can make reference to causes or fault.
- Be careful not to invoke defensiveness on the part of group members.
- The problem definition should invoke mutual interests.
- The problem definition should culminate in a clear primary objective.
- A set of criteria or constraints for a successful solution should be developed.

Styles of group problem-solving

There are a number of methods or styles of group problem-solving that can be adopted. The choice of style to use will be dependent on the problem, the time frame required to resolve it, and the nature of the work group or team. Good leaders will choose the most appropriate style to use when problems are encountered. Some styles, if adopted frequently, are less effective for maintaining a consultative team environment.

Some of these styles are described below.

Autocratic or directive style

The leader defines the problem, diagnoses its causes; and generates, evaluates and chooses among alternative solutions. The leader does not seek information or feedback from their team.

Autocratic style with group information input

The leader defines the problem and diagnoses the cause of the problem with information input from the group. Using his or her list of potential solutions, the leader may once again obtain data from the group in evaluation of these alternatives and make a choice among them.

Autocratic style with group's review and feedback

The leader defines the problem, diagnoses its causes, and selects a solution. The leader then presents his or her plan to the group for understanding, review, and feedback.

Individual consultative style

The leader defines the problem and shares this definition with individual members of the team. The leader solicits ideas regarding problem causes and potential solutions. He or she usually seeks out team members with relevant expertise. Once this information is obtained, the leader makes the choice of which solution to implement.

Group consultative style

Same as the individual consultative style, except the leader shares his or her definition of the problem with the group as a whole.

Group decision style

The leader shares his or her definition of the problem with the team. The team then proceeds to diagnose the causes of the problem. The team then generates, evaluates, and chooses among solutions.

Participative style

The team as a whole proceeds through the entire decision-making process. The team defines the problem and performs all other functions as a group. The leader facilitates the process.

Leaderless style

The team has no formal leader. If no substitute for task leadership or process leadership is present, a process leader often emerges. This person may change from problem to problem. The team generates its own problem definition, performs its own diagnosis, generates solutions, and chooses among alternatives.

Practice task 10

Consider the following approach where a whole team can get together to work on the problems or challenges being faced by the team or individuals. Win Wenger, an American writer and thinker on the subject of learning and intelligence, developed this technique, known as 'Windtunnelling'. Similar to brainstorming, this exercise is based on the idea that when people spend concentrated time thinking about a subject, they often come up with good ideas.

Here's how it's done:

Organise the team into pairs. Get each pair to sit together, away from other pairs so they won't be distracted. Ensure each person has a notepad and pen, and give each pair a problem or issue to work on – the same or different issues for each pair. Read the instructions aloud one step at a time, allowing the pairs to complete one step before moving on to the next.

1. Once the pairs are clear on the problem they are working on, have each person write down five questions about the problem, without letting their partner see their questions.
2. Participants give each question a number from one to five.
3. One person in each pair volunteers to be the 'Windtunneller' and another to be 'Listener'.
4. The Windtunneller calls out a number between one and five.
5. The Listener reads their partner that numbered question.
6. The Windtunneller now tells, in a descriptive rapid-flow torrent, everything that comes to their mind in the context of that question. The Windtunneller needs to keep this flow of information up for six minutes, without any let-up. (This can be difficult, so you might like to try a test run on some other problems unrelated to your team using a shorter burst, such as three minutes.)
7. The Listener writes down the one or two most interesting ideas they heard during that torrent of information, and then the Windtunneller writes down the best ideas they think they came up with.
8. Participants now reverse roles and repeat the process. They continue swapping roles until all ten questions have been brainstormed.

When did the most interesting ideas come up? Were they near the start or near the end of the Listener's torrent and the Windtunneller's torrent?

Win Wenger says of this process: 'You will find that 99 per cent of the time, the best ideas occurred near the end, very much in keeping with findings from brainstorming ... I guarantee that even if some silly or even plain wrong ideas are in the front of the torrent, as with a brainstorm, really good and meaningful insights will start cropping up and predominate toward the end, and you will have a spectacularly better grasp and understanding of the topic or issue than would otherwise have been the case.'

Visit www.winwenger.com and to learn more about Windtunnelling and other tools Wenger and his team have developed as part of Project Renaissance. This project aims to 'enable as many human beings as possible to become more than a match for the situations, opportunities and problems or difficulties that they find around them, and to enjoy a richer quality of life and experience'.

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What do you think is the basis of this technique as an effective problem-solver for teams?



3C

Lead by example

Being a good leader means being many things – a motivator, a representative, a decision-maker, an information sharer, an organiser, a conduit to the outside world and a good listener. One of the most effective methods of building an effective team that functions well as a unit and is capable of achieving goals is to participate in the team and lead by example.

As a team leader, you have the eyes and ears of your team focused on you, especially when you are asking the team to do something that is difficult or unpleasant. The catchphrase ‘walk the walk, don’t just talk the talk’ became popular in management circles. It means that you must be ready to lead by example – whether it be pitching in to answer calls when the phones get busy, or dealing with a difficult client.

Setting an example enhances the image of your organisation among your team members. It also enhances the organisation’s image among its other internal customers and external clients. If you want an involved team, get involved. If you want team members to trust each other, trust them.

Common criticisms of managers include:

- nitpicking
- concentrating on someone’s negative aspects
- being petty
- not delegating
- not being consistent in their behaviour.

What kind of leader are you?

Psychologists and business researchers have identified four major styles that leaders use. They describe the ways leaders perform. The styles can be useful to review your own leadership style; for example, if you feel you are always telling your team what to do, these descriptions could give some ideas as to how you could vary your management style.

A manager can choose a style to suit the situation, the team, individuals in the team and the issue at hand. Learning to use elements of different leadership styles that are appropriate is important to becoming a good manager.

While one particular style might be dominant, the leaders in the case study below use a mix of the leadership styles to manage their teams.

Example: leadership styles

There are different leadership styles, four of which are described below.

Delegating leader

Meet Johanna – a delegating leader

Johanna gives her team of five nurses a lot of 'space'. They are all very experienced, and have worked together for a long time. She finds they are best left to their own devices and she is most effective as a team leader if she focuses on making sure the team has what they need to do their jobs well. She takes time to talk with each nurse individually as well as holding brief team meetings at the start of each day, usually over a cup of coffee. If particular tasks arise that Johanna's team are asked to work on, she delegates responsibility for the task to one or more of the team members, checking from time to time on progress, and to see if she can help them with anything.

Participating leader

Meet Antonio – a participating leader

Antonio's team of four sales staff work for a freight company that is going through a large restructuring program. He and his team have been together for two years and have developed an informal, yet effective, method of working. Antonio doesn't tell his team what to do – everyone knows their responsibilities. The team members discuss things and make decisions together on what needs to get done and how they will do it, not by design, but because this works well for them. Antonio facilitates this process and, by actively participating in the team, ensures everyone contributes, and time and resources are spent well.

Selling leader

Meet Jasreen – a selling leader

Jasreen manages a team of 10 customer service staff in a large call centre at an insurance company. Her team handles queries from existing customers about changes to their policies. Jasreen's team members are quite young and inexperienced. She gives them plenty of direction and support. She spends a lot of time out of her office, supervising their work, and talking to them individually and in groups. She improves their confidence levels and contribution to the team by asking for their opinions and feedback. The team has strict performance goals to meet. Jasreen often feels she needs to convince her staff to contribute and work at their best, and to explain why this is necessary for the team and beneficial to them. She builds reward and recognition activities into her operational plan to reinforce her approach.

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Telling leader

Meet Stuart – a telling leader

Stuart runs a team of casual staff who pack conference materials for exhibitors at a major conference centre in the city. He has a bank of around 100 people he can call on and a large space where materials and bags are laid out. The main function of his job is getting enough people in at short notice to get materials packed on time and on budget. At the start of each day he spends 15 minutes running through what jobs are on for the day, when they have to be finished and how they should be done. Stuart has a system worked out that is explained to staff each day when they are assigned a section on which to start work. This is because there are different people working every day. If problems arise, or they have questions, they are encouraged to talk to him about it. Generally, work runs smoothly and the team gets on with the job.

The qualities of a great leader

The qualities of effective leaders can be debated endlessly – everyone has a preferred way of being led and can usually cite examples of leaders they admire for different reasons, whether they are from government, sport, business or the community.

A well-known researcher and author on the subject of leadership, Dr Franklin Ashby, developed a list of 10 characteristics of great leaders (Arthur Pell, *The complete idiot's guide to team building*, 1999). These are shown below.

Has enthusiastic followers

Works with a team of enthusiastic followers, not just people who do things they are told; collaborates, listens and encourages participation

Never complacent

Is not complacent or ever fully satisfied; constantly reviews procedures to see if things could be done better

Seeks to learn

Always seeks to learn new things and improve their own understanding or knowledge; sees learning as a continual process

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Understands people

Understands people and makes an effort to get to know team members; communicates well and develops trust

Has high personal goals

Sets high personal goals, expects a lot from themselves, views mistakes as learning experiences

Has ethical motivations

Has ethical motivations; is not simply motivated by money; is honest and has strong principles by which they live and work

Can laugh at themselves

Can laugh at themselves; aren't upset by criticism from others

Keeps going

Keeps going, despite disappointments, failures or rejections

Thinks positively

Thinks positively; believes they will succeed

Gets things done

Focuses on getting things done; spends time effectively

Characteristics of good leaders

Many other researchers have developed their own lists of characteristics of good leaders. Think about whether you agree with their combined observations.

Summary of leadership characteristics of good leaders:

- Goal-oriented
- Innovative
- Has integrity
- Courageous
- Calm in a crisis
- Unconventional
- Has a desire to help
- Communicates effectively
- Delegates wisely
- Encourages experimentation
- Supports and rewards team members
- Keeps morale high
- Promotes a sense of belonging
- Is fair
- Plans well
- Encourages and supports participation

Practice task 11

Think of a team situation that you have been involved in, and put yourself in the role of team leader.

- Rate yourself from one to five (with five being the top score) using this list that combines the characteristics described in this section.
- Explain how you could improve those characteristics to which you have given a low score.

Score	Characteristic	Strategies for improvement
	Listens to and supports team members	
	Delegates well and encourages participation	
	Promotes a sense of belonging	
	Reviews procedures to see whether operations can be improved	
	Always seeks to learn new things and improve understanding or knowledge	
	Communicates well	
	Sets high personal goals	
	Thinks positively, focuses on getting things done and plans time effectively	
	Keeps a sense of humour	
	Is innovative	
	Keeps morale high	

Summary

1. A team leader or frontline manager should stimulate and encourage communication between team members and participation in team activities.
2. Team members should be encouraged to take an active role in team meetings: to communicate information, ask questions, listen to others, help develop the team's goals, get to know team members, and commit to the team and its tasks.
3. The team leader must gain the trust of team members to encourage them to share information and talk about their ideas, concerns or complaints.
4. Teams need to be facilitated to solve problems that arise, cooperatively and proactively.
5. The team leader must lead by example by actively seeking to resolve problems in the team. If your efforts are unsuccessful then problems beyond your control must be forwarded to relevant others.
6. Leaders can be categorised into four types: delegating, participating, selling and telling.
7. Research into leadership shows that effective leaders facilitate teamwork by possessing characteristics such as being goal-oriented, innovative, calm in a crisis, having effective delegation skills and by promoting a sense of belonging.

Learning checkpoint 3

Participate in and facilitate work team

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in participating in and facilitating a work team.

1. Research a leader you admire – it might be someone you have worked with who you can interview or it could be a well-known leader in business, government, sports, education or community work who you can research at the library or online. Describe the following:
 - a) The qualities of the person you have selected or aspects of their leadership that you admire

- b) Their greatest challenges and achievements as a leader

- c) How they encouraged their team members to participate in and take responsibility for team activities

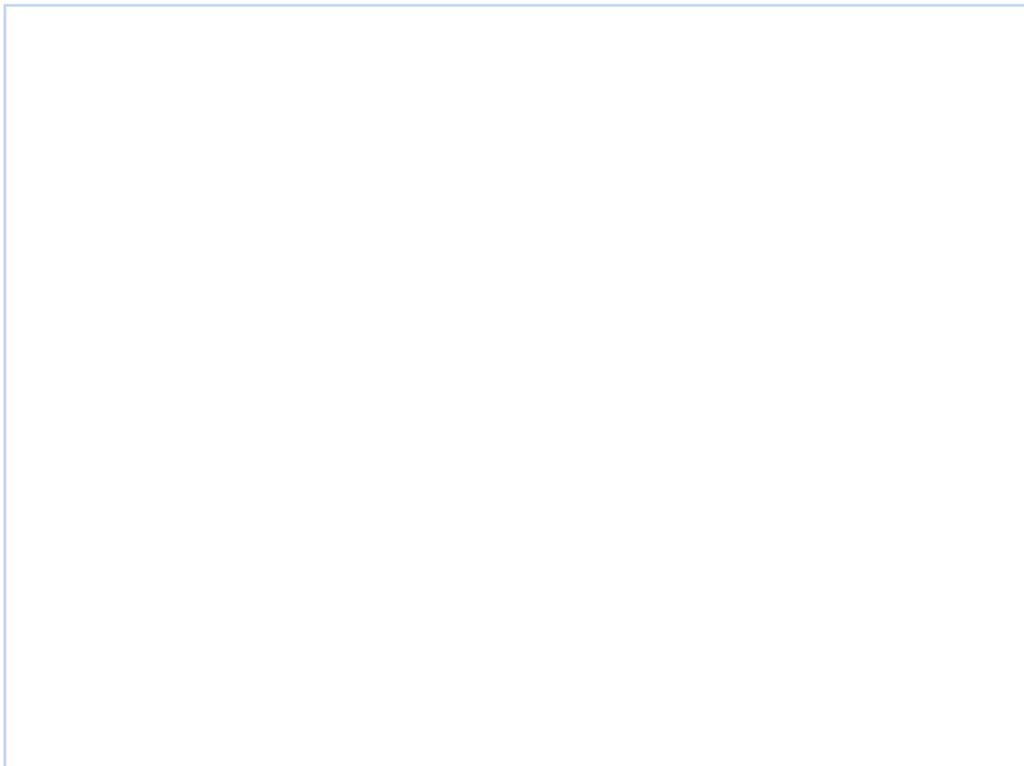
d) How they supported their team members in problem identification and resolution processes

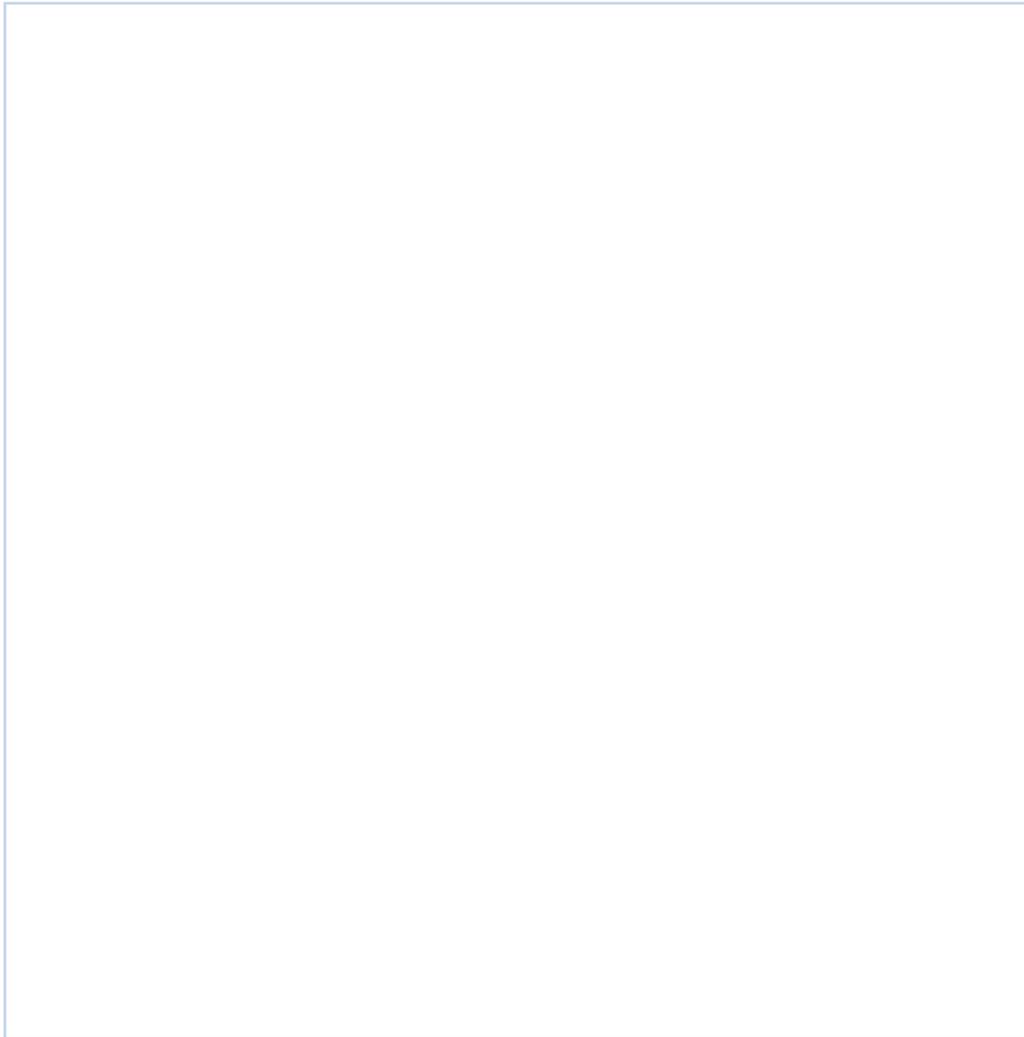
e) Instances when they led by example

2. Select four characteristics you believe are essential for a good leader and provide examples of how you would demonstrate these characteristics as a leader.



3. How could you be an effective leader by adopting some of the practices of the person the team leader you admire from Question 1?





Topic 4

Liaise with management

Communication must be a two-way process at all times – between the team leader and the team, and also between the team leader, their line or departmental manager and senior management. An effective team manager will ensure the team's progress, concerns and any other relevant issues are relayed to management when applicable. Similarly, decisions made by management and other information that directly affects the team must be conveyed to the team as soon as practicable. Open communication develops a sense of trust between all parties.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Maintain open communication with line manager/management at all times
- 4B Communicate information from line manager/management to the team
- 4C Communicate issues between team and management
- 4D Follow up unresolved issues

4A

Maintain open communication with line manager/management at all times

When communicating with your manager, you need to ensure the information is in context, accurate, timely and presented in a way that is easy for them to understand and act upon, if action is needed. Consider the following when communicating with your team.

Message content

What do you want to communicate? Is it something incidental that might be of interest to others, or something important, such as a major problem or achieving one of your set goals? If it is incidental or not very important, a non-urgent email or quick chat in the tearoom might be most appropriate. Urgent or high-priority information might need to be handled with a phone call or face-to-face conversation with one or two key people, followed up with a clearly written email or memo to others who need to know.

Recipient(s)

Who needs to get the information? Is it just one person or a group? If just one person needs the information then maybe a phone call is sufficient; however, groups of people are best communicated with by email or in a meeting – then everyone gets the same message.

Giving feedback

If you are giving feedback, choose an appropriate format. Often verbal feedback is suitable; in other situations both verbal and written communication helps reinforce positive and negative points.

Written communication

Written communication can be challenging for some people, especially if they worry about using complicated language or documents. The important qualities to consider in written communication are:

- logic: for instance, if you need to alert people to a potential problem, start with the problem, tell people why it's a problem and then say what you need them to do in order to manage it
- clarity: make sure readers will be able to understand what you have written
- brevity: include only the information readers need to understand in order to act on the issue
- context: include background information if it's needed
- purpose: have a call to action or some sort of outcome if possible, so readers don't finish the document thinking 'so what?'
- author: include your contact details so readers can easily get in touch with you if they have ideas or feedback.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication can be just as challenging as written, in both formal and informal situations. Again, guidelines to effective communication apply, which include:

- make it logical
- choose the right time and place
- make it clear and brief
- have a call to action, if necessary
- if you are nervous or have some detailed information to share, be prepared: make notes for yourself, outline the key points in writing and distribute relevant documents to your team.

Literacy issues

Remember that people you are communicating with might have different levels of literacy or might have English as a second language. In these situations, it is crucial to keep communications clear and brief, and avoid using jargon, slang and sayings that might not be understood.

Acronyms, abbreviations

In written and verbal communication try to limit the use of acronyms, abbreviations or industry terminology. This jargon can be intimidating, and often people will be too embarrassed to admit they do not understand it. For example, 'GI' could mean a soldier (as in GI Joe), a food's glycaemic index (used in the food industry), goods inwards (in a warehouse), or gastro-intestinal (in a medical setting). Some industries and organisations use abbreviations to excess and, unfortunately, some people wrongly believe that using jargon as often as possible implies a high level of knowledge.

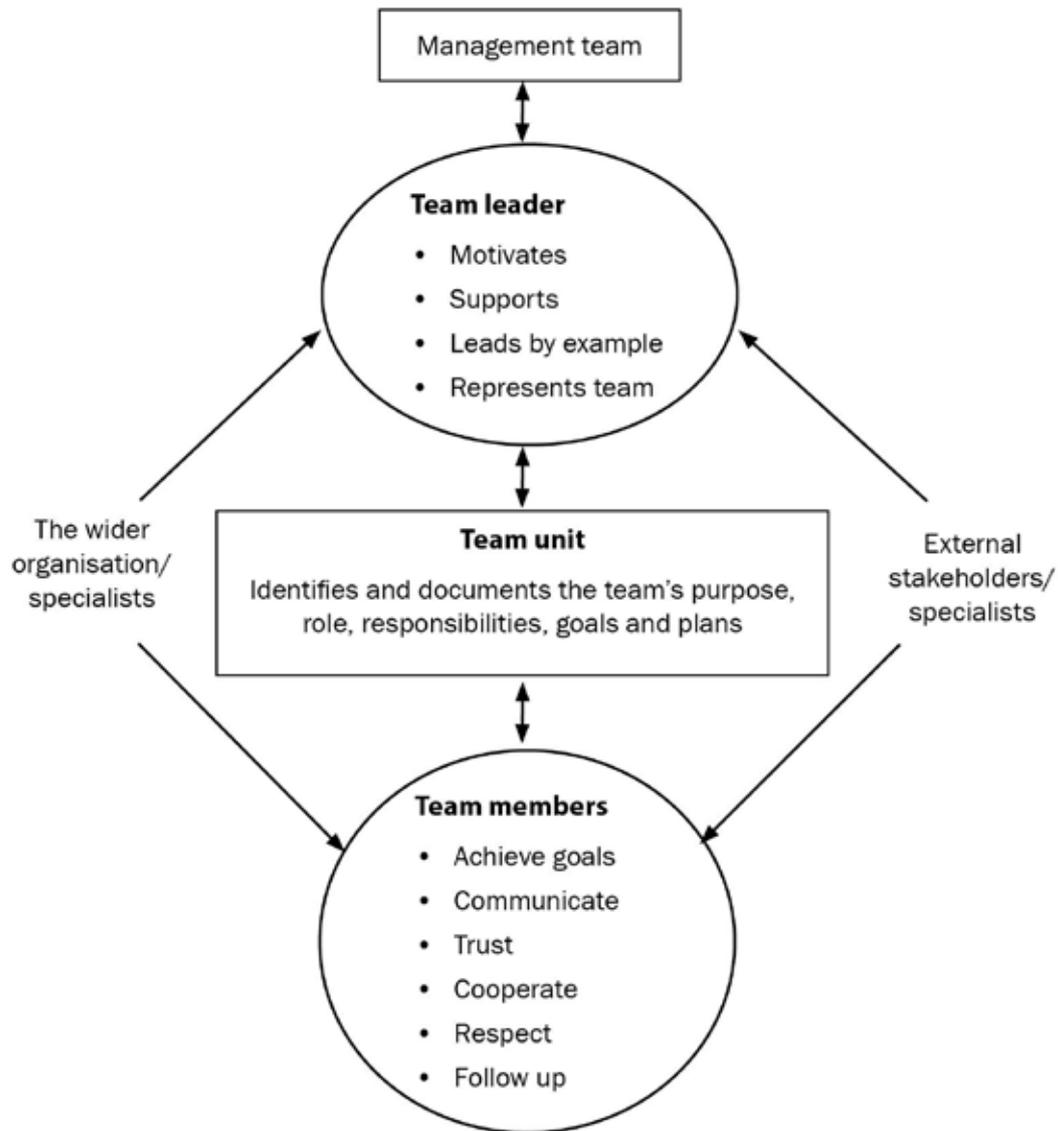
Regular reports

Regular reports are more easily absorbed if they have the same format each time and are divided into sections, so readers can easily find the information they need.

Lines of workplace communication

Encouraging the effectiveness of your team is a complex task and one that challenges even highly experienced managers. The flow chart below illustrates the importance of regular two-way communication between all sections by demonstrating the various roles of the team unit, the team leader, team members and management in an organisation.

It is clear that one of the key areas of importance for teams is the way they communicate.



Team leader communication links

Communication in a team needs to be supported by the team leader's ability to communicate well with their own manager or the organisation's management team. A team leader needs to encourage team members to communicate effectively while ensuring they do the same themselves. This is particularly the case when information from or about their team needs to be fed upwards, to the team leader's manager or to management representatives from other divisions such as human resources or customer service. It is also important when information needs to be fed into the team from managers, other teams or divisions, or external sources.

In many teams, the leader is the link to the outside world – a conduit for information coming into and going out of the team they lead. This means that they are representing their team to the organisation and the organisation to their team, which makes effective communication extremely important.

Effective communication can:

- improve the quality and quantity of information that circulates within, to and from a team
- facilitate problem-solving
- support team members' abilities, skills and personal goals
- improve morale
- promote collaboration and cooperation
- create a feeling of being valued, appreciated and recognised on an individual and team level.

Practice task 12

Read the following case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Angelina has just been called into her manager's office. Changes are afoot and the company is going to be restructured. Her manager thinks that it's best that people aren't told anything until the new structure has been decided. Angelina disagrees. She knows that rumours are already circulating and people are scared they will lose their jobs. She convinces her manager that she needs to let her team know as much as possible.

Angelina decides she has three choices:

1. Arrange for the team to meet for lunch at the pub. This will reinforce the team spirit and get them away from the unhappy atmosphere in the office. Shout a round of drinks to put everyone at ease and tell them she is sure that they won't lose their jobs as they are all hard workers. Stress that they are all in this together.
2. Call the team together for a meeting. Talk to them about the changes and explain why they are necessary. Be honest about the situation, as some people may lose their jobs, but reinforce that it's too early to know. Reassure the team that the changes will be beneficial for the company and the employees and promise to keep them informed. Tell team members that if they have any specific query they can come and chat with her privately.
3. Write a brief memo stating that the company is going through a restructure and that team members will be kept informed. The less said, the less people will have to speculate about. Put the memo on the team bulletin board and encourage everyone to focus on their KPIs for Friday.

Explain which of the three options listed you think is the most appropriate form of communication for Angelina to use. Give reasons for why you chose this form.

4B

Communicate information from line manager/management to the team

There will be occasions in your meetings with management when issues, concerns or problems regarding either your team or the organisation as a whole are raised. It is your responsibility to convey this information to your team or individual team members.

Communication in a team and liaising with management takes many forms. These may be verbal or written and may require the use of electronic communication techniques such as email or written reports. They may be formal or informal, and could include methods of communicating to entire groups or to individuals.

Occasionally, information provided to you from senior managers is sensitive and needs to be communicated in ways that do not have a negative effect on morale or motivation. In such situations, apply the guidelines shown below.

Decide how much information can be shared

With your manager, or using your own judgment, decide how much information can be shared with your team, and how it can best be communicated.

Consider how the concerns should be managed

Think carefully about how you will manage concerns raised by management about the quality of your team's work or an individual member. For instance, rather than directly telling team members that senior management is disappointed in their performance, you could implement team effectiveness activities and ask the team to renew their focus on working together to achieve goals.

Communicate sensitive information in a sensitive way

Communicate sensitive information in a sensitive way. Use one-on-one meetings to raise issues with people. Try to make raising criticisms or potential issues with individuals or the team a positive experience by jointly planning how the situation can be improved, offering advice and learning from the experience. Assume the role of coach and help your staff members rise to the challenge.

Example: good communication methods

Ben is a team leader of a goods inwards team in a warehouse that stores and distributes imported furniture and homeware items. He has six people in his team. Some are young and inexperienced; others have been working for years and know the warehouse procedures well. Ben's team is known as the best in the warehouse. Ben makes sure everyone in his team knows what's going on. He listens to his staff, takes their ideas on board, and allocates time each week for the team to talk about what they've been doing.

Every Monday morning Ben updates the team noticeboard, which has his team members' photos on it. He uses the weekly report from the managing director as well as noting how many pallets they processed, zero injuries, training courses completed, and individual team members' achievements. He also holds a meeting to tell the team what's coming up for the week. Any emails or reports he receives about incoming shipments are posted onto a job board that is split into sections for each day of the week. Team members can see exactly what they are doing each day.

Ben is always talking to his team, and they do the same. He makes sure to have a word with every team member every day. Everyone has fun but they also make sure everyone is included and informed, with the more-experienced members helping the newer ones.

Ben gives his own manager a short weekly report summarising the team's achievements and progress against KPIs. He also meets with his manager each week, one-on-one, to work through a list of topics. Ben participates in a management meeting each fortnight where he gives a formal presentation on his team and its achievements.



Practice task 13

Read the previous case study on good communication methods, and answer the following questions.

1. List the methods Ben uses to communicate with his team.

2. Describe how his approach contributes to an effective work team.

4C

Communicate issues between team and management

Frontline managers must keep other management regularly informed of their team's progress. Progress reports might be expected at formal meetings, in written reports or at informal face-to-face discussions. By keeping the lines of communication open, the frontline manager and other management will be aware of the progress of the team, how the team is performing and whether issues need resolving. Management must be confident that its goals are being met so it is crucial that information is forwarded on a regular basis.

Your role as a team leader or frontline manager in facilitating the flow of information depends on you giving accurate information when it is needed. Do not think that you will avoid problems by only reporting good news. Censoring information, disguising problems or intentionally limiting information are tactics that will backfire eventually.



Manage communication about problems

Be open and honest and keep everyone informed of positive and negative news. Teams do not function smoothly all the time. Regularly informing management of performance ensures there will be no surprises, such as projects running seriously behind schedule or problems with staff.

From time to time, your team or team members will identify issues, concerns or problems in their work or workplace and bring them to your attention. For example, 'The time lines are unrealistic' or 'we need another team member for this project.' Similarly, you may experience difficulty with a team member that you cannot resolve, or you may have concerns you wish to raise with management, such as the need for more resources or more time to complete a project. Team members may also have concerns about operations in the wider organisation. The issues raised may not be complaints but could reflect a genuine need for information.

Use your judgment, and consider the options presented below as you solve your issues.

<p>Reassure the team</p> <p>Reassure the team that their concerns, while valid, are not cause for worry and no action is needed (if appropriate).</p>	<p>Come up with individual solutions</p> <p>Think about and come up with solutions to the problems yourself.</p>
<p>Work on group solutions</p> <p>Develop a solution with the assistance and input of your whole team.</p>	<p>Discuss with management</p> <p>Ask your own manager or other managers in the organisation to advise you or to take action to resolve matters that are beyond your level of responsibility.</p>

Ensure follow-up action is taken

Sometimes, raising an issue with your own line manager will be necessary after you have tried to solve the problem or discussed the situation in your team. Dealing with problems (current or potential) by raising them with those more senior in your organisation is a necessary and important part of every manager's role. Use your judgment to determine the most appropriate way of communicating information – formal or informal, written or verbal.

Once you have discussed the issue or the team's concerns with management and formulated a plan to resolve the issue, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate action is promptly taken. This means informing team members as to the outcome of your discussion with management and the actions to be taken to resolve the matter.



Practice task 14

Read the following case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Luka is proud of his team: they are doing well against their KPIs and are on target to exceed every one of them, with just three months to go until the end of the year. He wants his manager and others in the organisation to know about this and that he has a great team that have worked hard. He also thinks that acknowledgment of their efforts from people outside the team will give the members a boost that will keep them going in the critical final few months.

Luka considers the following options:

1. Write a detailed report on everything the team has done and email it to everyone in the office.
2. Send his own boss a short email with some of the particulars and mention it at the next management meeting he attends. Also, ask his boss if she would pop down, give the team 'a pat on the back', and let them know their hard work is appreciated.
3. Include a summary of the team's progress in the KPI report he always does at the end of each quarter, and hope his boss will pick up on the team's good work and congratulate them.

Explain which of the three options listed you think is the most appropriate for Luka to use. Give reasons for why you chose this form.

4D

Follow up unresolved issues

Team leaders must follow up on information they convey to others, and report back to those who have raised issues. This is applicable when management raises issues with a team, and when a team raises issues, concerns or problems with management via their team leader.

Team members who communicate issues that managers need to convey to others in an organisation need to have their actions recognised and reinforced by taking action and responsibility for the issue, and then providing regular updates and feedback on the outcomes of their communication.

When concerns are presented to a manager, it is critical that they are:

- taken seriously
- clearly understood
- communicated to the right people, in the right way and at the right time
- followed up, so feedback can be given to the person who identified and raised the issue in the first instance.

Practice task 15

When communicating information to a team or to management, team leaders have many challenges to overcome. Think of the ways you would deal with these common workplace problems.

1. Rumours and misinformation – concerned team members come to you saying they have heard from another staff member (not in your team) that the company is moving premises and 50 jobs will be cut. What do you do?

continued ...

2. Being unable to share all information – your manager tells you that in six months' time he is retiring and that you will be promoted to his position. You are pleased and are sure that, in turn, one of your team members could step into your role. However, six months is a long time and you would prefer not to tell the team these plans in case the members lose focus. What do you do?

3. A problem that is out of your control – you discover that your finance department provided you with incorrect information when you were costing the project you're working on and, as a result, all of the team's estimates are wrong. Your team is worried and want you to do something about it. What do you do?

4. Needing help – all managers need to inform their teams that a new knowledge management system is being implemented throughout the organisation. You need to make sure your team is enthused and comfortable with the idea. The problem is, you are having trouble yourself understanding what it's all about. What do you do?

5. Not being understood – you have just delivered a long report to your manager about some urgent issues identified by you and your team that will affect the whole company. Your manager flicked through it, tossed it on her desk, and started talking about her weekend. You are worried that she doesn't understand the seriousness of the issue and that your team's hard work will go unrecognised. They will be waiting to hear what happened when you go back to your floor. What do you do?

Summary

1. The team leader or frontline manager acts as a link or liaison between management and the team.
2. An effective team leader will ensure that the team's progress, concerns and issues are relayed to management, whilst also relaying information and decisions made by management to the team.
3. Effective communication with management or team members must be in context, accurate, timely and presented in a manner that is easy to understand and act on.
4. You need to be clear about what you need to convey and who you need to tell.
5. When communicating verbally, choose an appropriate time and place. Prepare what you want to say beforehand. Be clear and brief, and include a call to action if appropriate.
6. Written communication can be challenging and must have the qualities of logic, clarity, brevity, context and purpose.
7. Team leaders or frontline managers must keep senior management informed of their team's progress and issues through regular progress reports and discussions.
8. Remember to report good and bad news and to be open and honest when communicating with senior managers – problems will not be avoided by only reporting good news.
9. Consult senior management when you need to refer team issues and problems that you cannot resolve yourself.
10. There will be occasions when senior management requires you to communicate information regarding the team or the entire organisation to your team. It is your responsibility to convey this information sensitively, honestly and accurately.
11. You must address unresolved issues and report back to those who raised them.

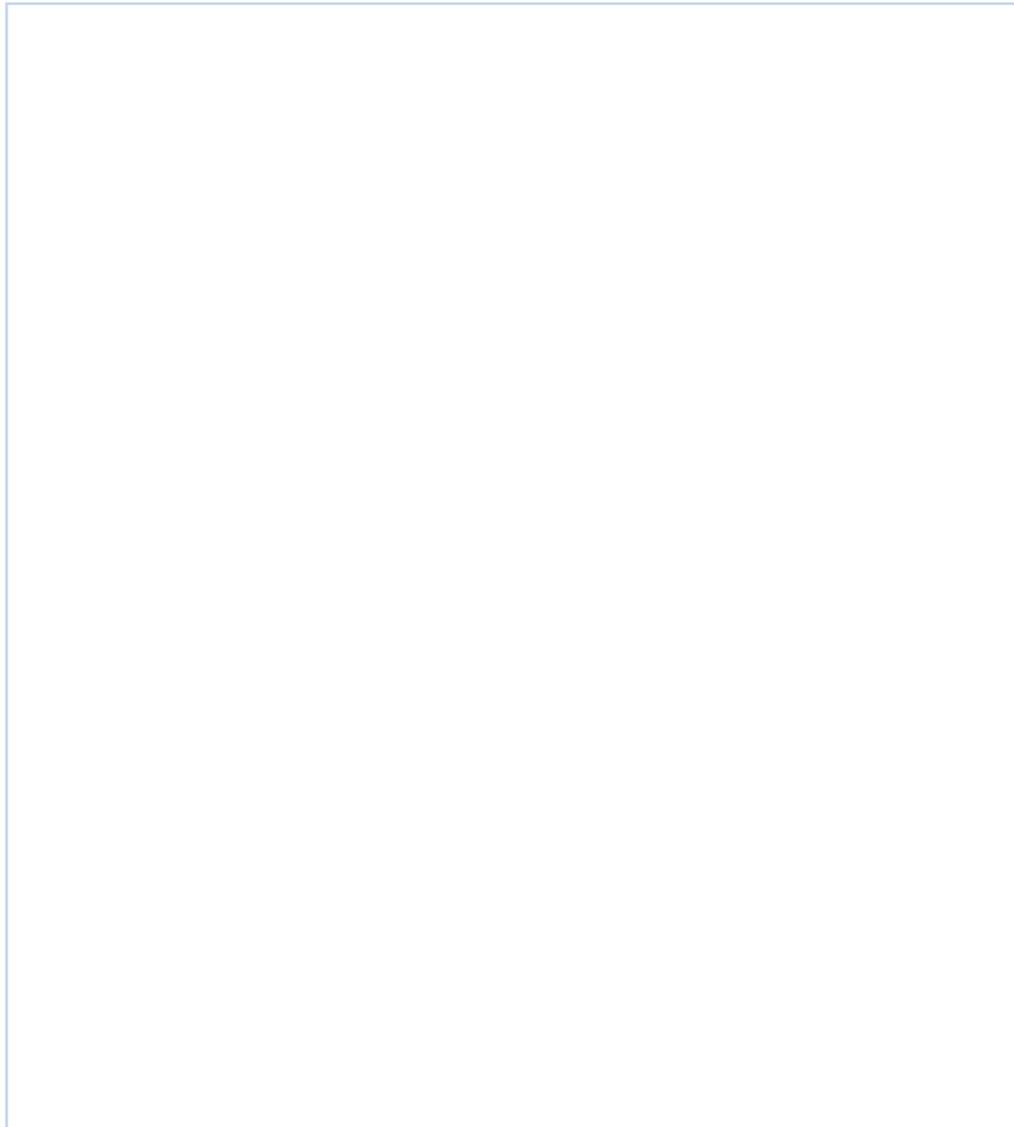
Learning checkpoint 4 Liaise with management

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in liaising with management.

Imagine that you are a team leader in an organisation (it could be a retailer, a manufacturing plant, an office or some other workplace). Prepare a plan that demonstrates how you could manage the process of liaising between your team and the management in the organisation.

Explain the measures you will take to perform the following tasks. For each one, provide ways you can facilitate the task and how it will have a positive effect on your team.

1. Ensure open communication with senior manager and/or the management team



2. Communicating information from management to the team

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3. Communicating issues raised by the team to management



4. Communicating issues raised by management to the team

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the student to write their response to the question.

